

# WE NEED TO TALK:

## Fostering Community Resilience Through Meaningful Communication & Collaboration

### A Case Study

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# AGENDA

## 1. The Case of Yukon

- Research problem & objectives
- Research methods

## 2. Results

- Climate impacts & response
- Lagging implementation

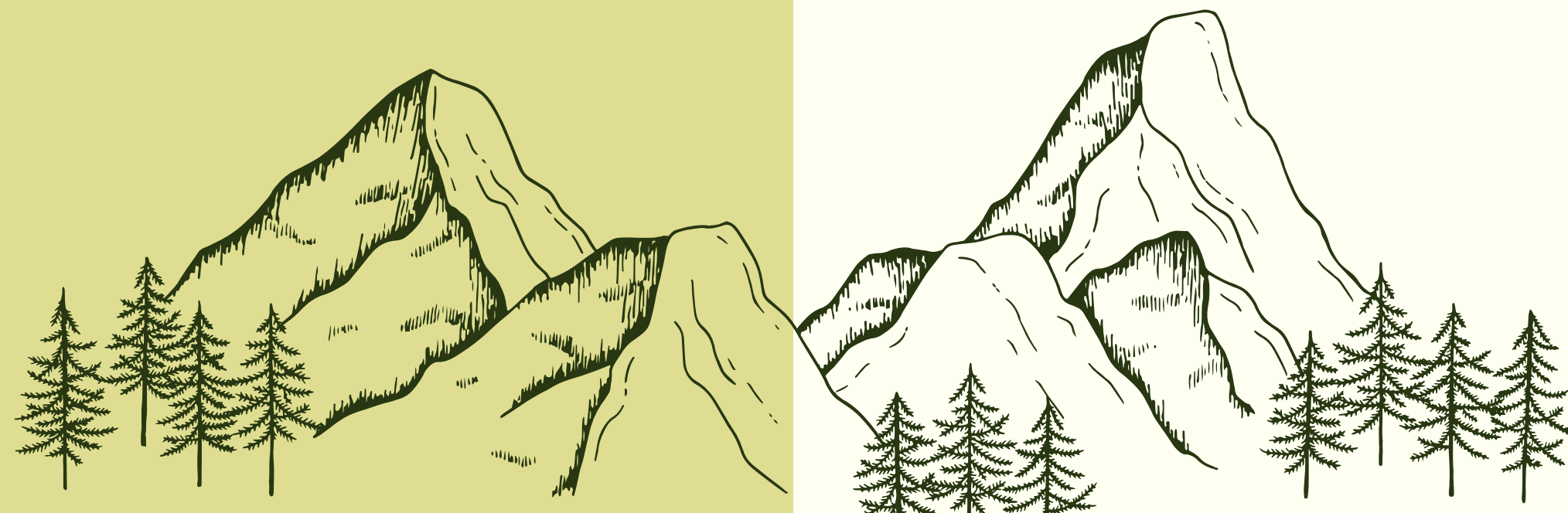
## 3. Key Insights

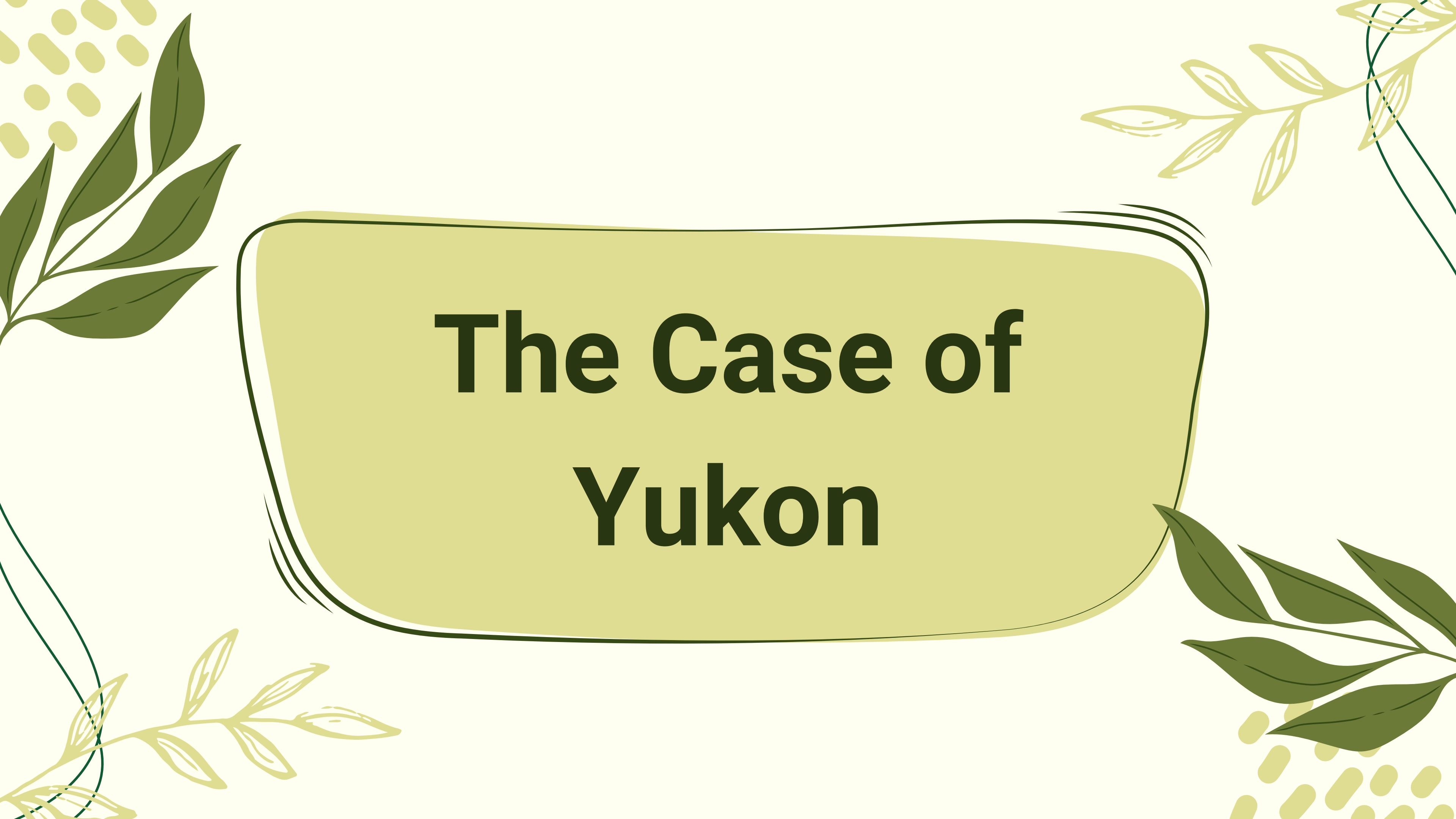
- The influence of dependencies on implementation
- The importance of communication & collaboration



" ... That causes problems, because there's a lack of communication or misinformation between the two governments" (DC3).

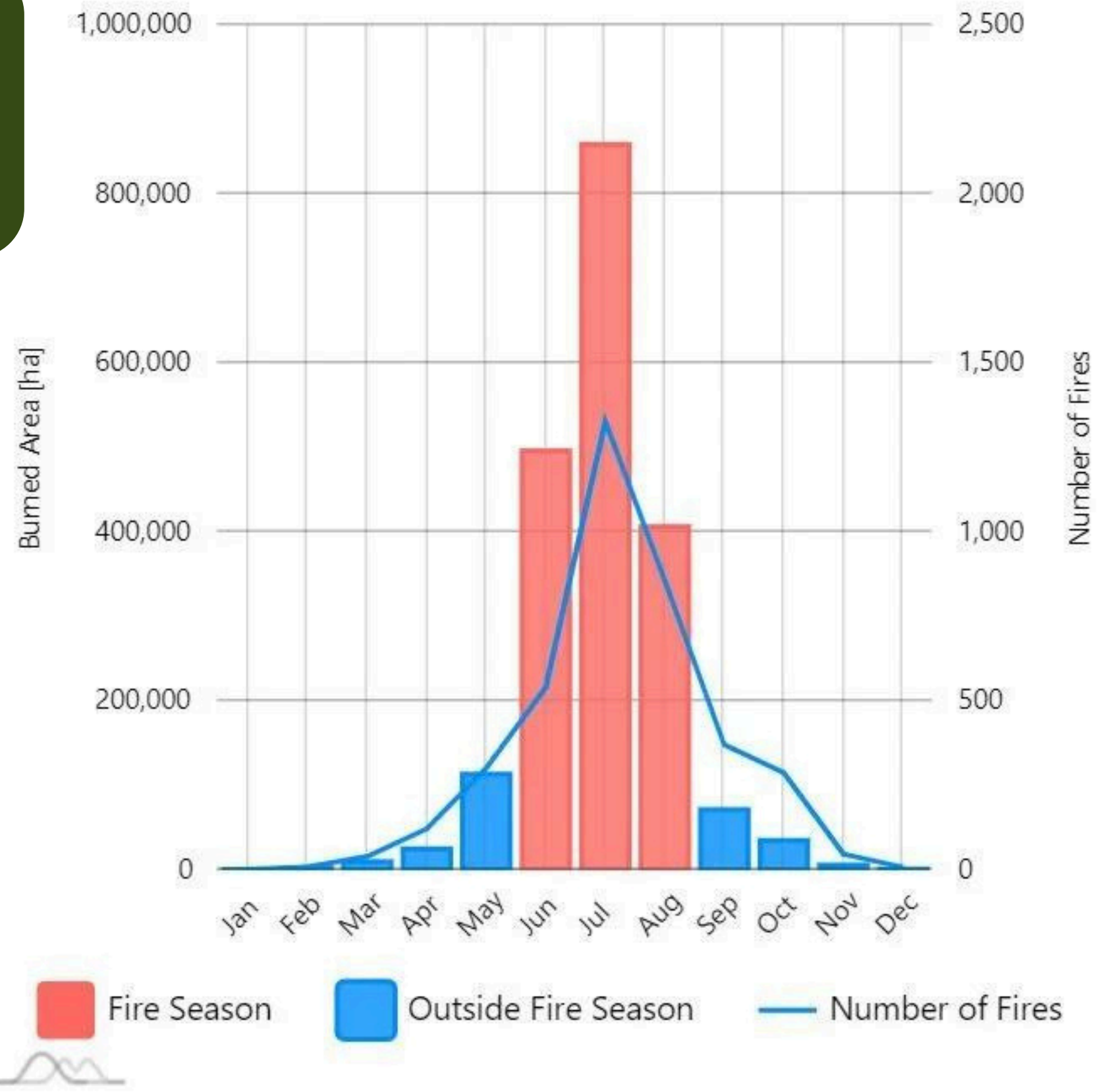
"The bigger policy decisions are made at a territorial level, and we don't always have the opportunity to have input on them, which is unfortunate because they're not on the ground to see what happens" (DC2).



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# The Case of Yukon

# Comparing Climate Impacts to Alberta



# QUICK POLL

**In the past year...**



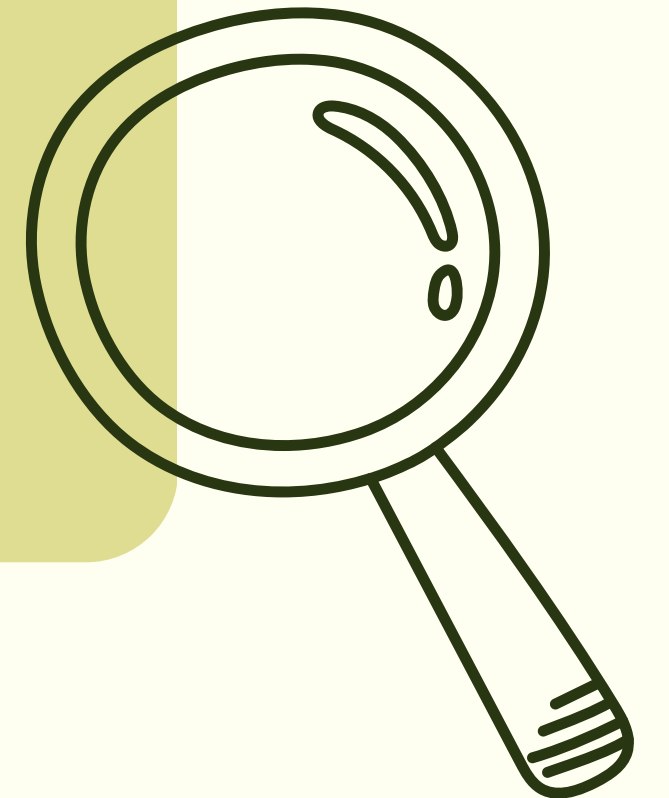
**Have you experienced a flood event in your region?**





**Have you experienced a wildfire in your region?**

# Research Problem

- Worsening climate impacts have prompted communities in Yukon to pursue adaptation.
- However, progress has waned and adaptation implementation lags in practice.



# Research Objectives



Assess local government progress on adaptation planning.

Explore how interactions between local & territorial actors & institutions enable/constrain adaptation.

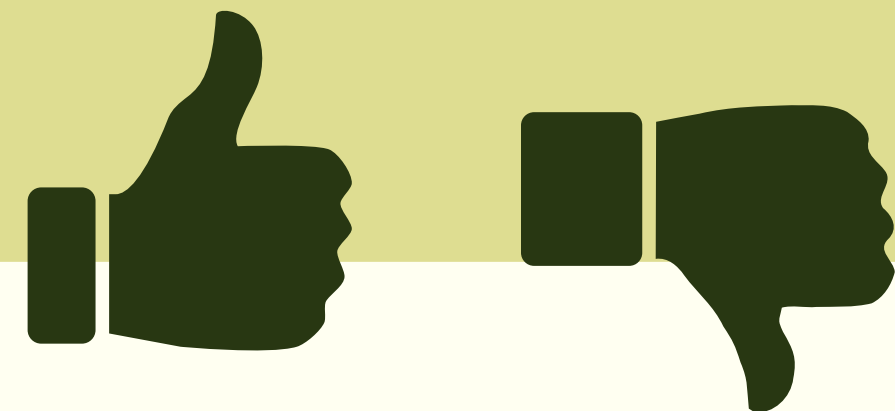
Examine how dependencies & power create enablers & barriers to adaptation in practice.



# Let's collect our own data!



Do you feel that your community has sufficient capacity (time, money, personnel, expertise, data) to develop and implement adaptation policies?



# Research Methods

## Qualitative Methodology

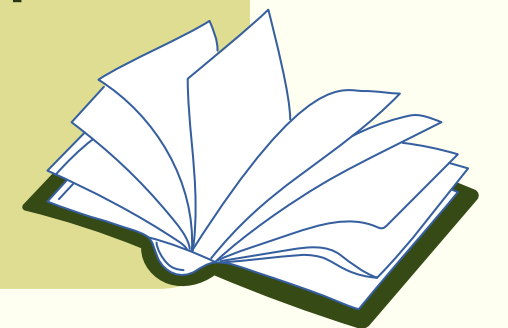
### Key Actor Interviews

- Planners
- Elected Officials
- Senior Managers
- Engineers

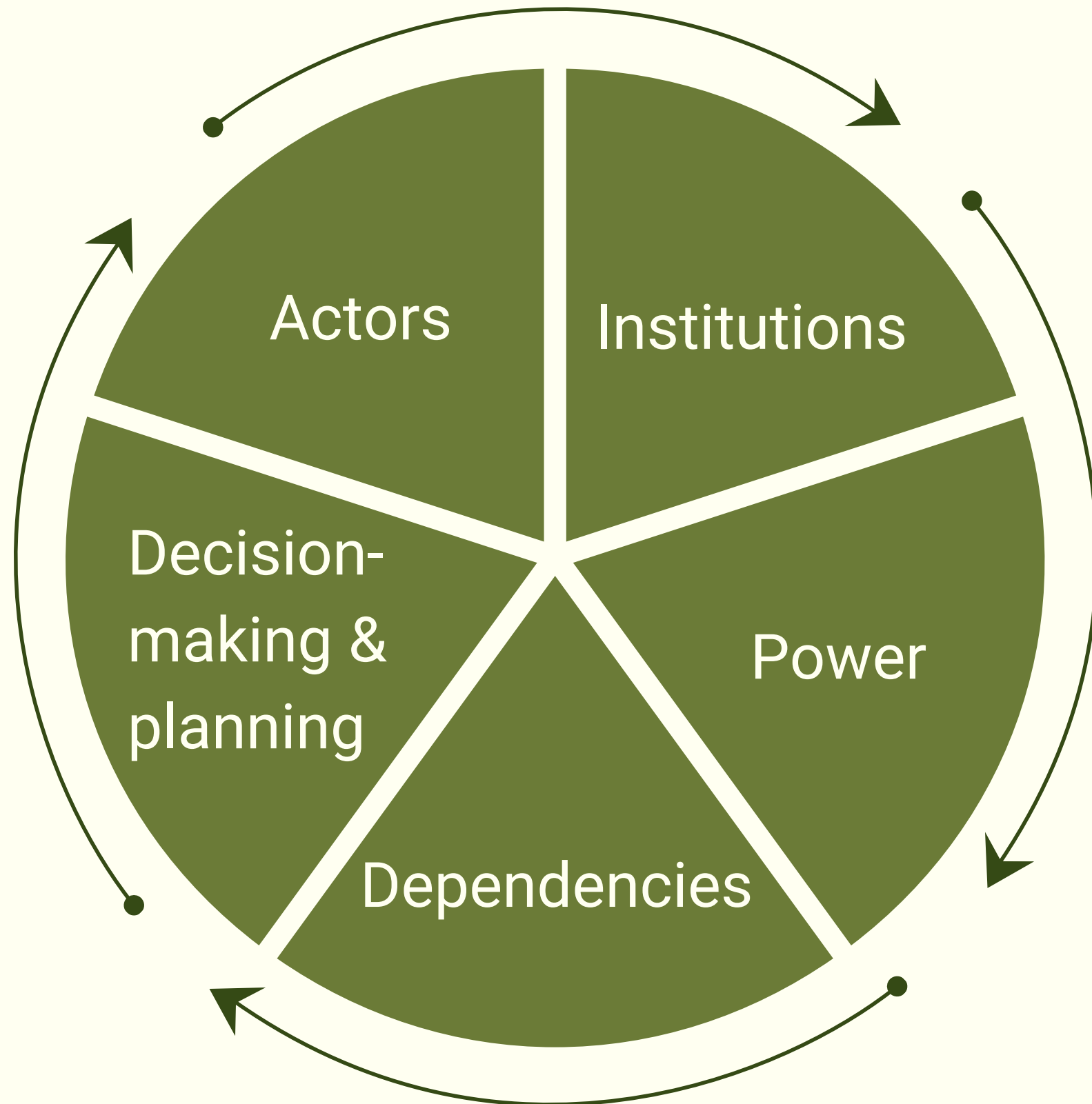


### Document Review

- Official Community Plans
- Zoning Bylaws
- Climate Adaptation Strategies



# Evolutionary Governance Theory



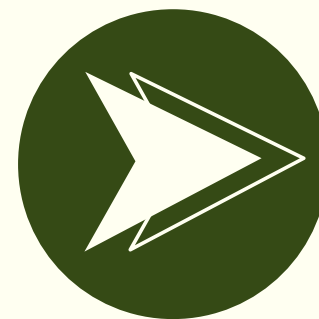
## Actors

Eg. Elected officials, planners, CAO



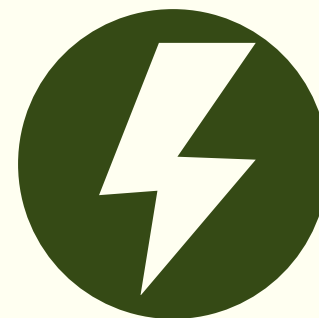
## Institutions

Eg. Planning documents, zoning bylaws




## Dependencies

Eg. Path dependency, goal dependency



## Power

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# Results

# Overview of Results



## Climate Impacts & Response

- Wildfire, flood, and permafrost thaw
- Local planning for adaptation

1



2

## Challenges to Local Adaptation

- Lack of capacity
- Unclear roles

# Stressors & Impacts



**Flood**



**Permafrost  
thaw**



**Wildfire**



**Infrastructure/  
utilities**



**Assets  
(buildings)**



**Resident health  
& safety**



“Not many things give me stress or anxiety or keep me up at night, but climate change is the one thing that makes me a little bit worried” (DC6).

“We are acutely aware of climate change” (HJ1).

# Community Response

- Education on and awareness of climate impacts
- Development of adaptation goals and policies
- Mainstreaming adaptation throughout strategic planning tools



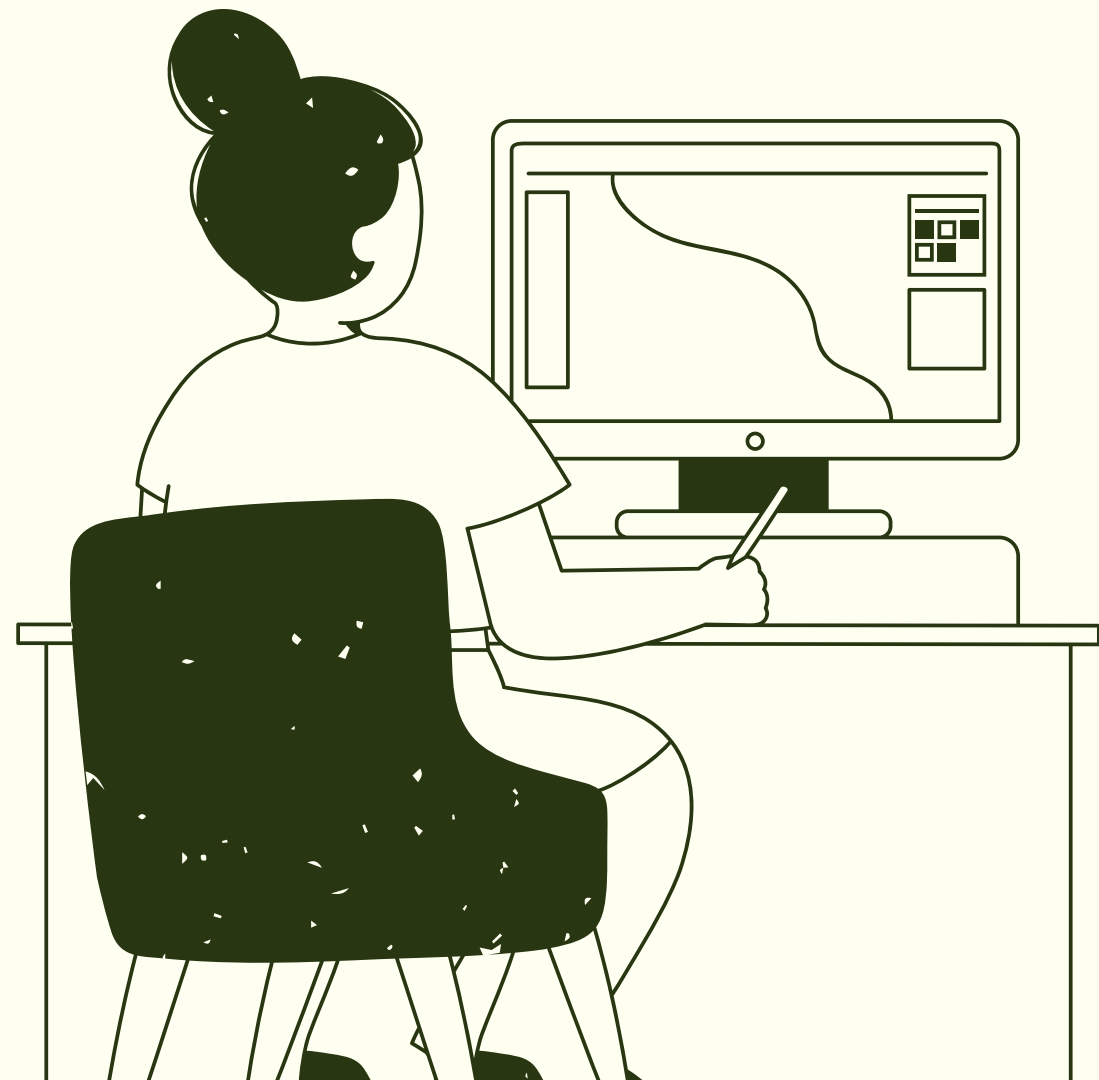


# Setbacks

- Adaptation goals remain high-level
  - Not being translated into granular plans & regulations
- Mitigation is prioritized over adaptation
- Progress has slowed and implementation is lagging



# Let's collect our own data!



Does your community  
currently focus more  
on **mitigation** over  
**adaptation**?



# What Challenges Local Government Adaptation Planning & Implementation?

## 1. Lack of Capacity

- Small tax base results in financial constraints
- Lack of personnel/ time
- Lack of expertise

“We would like to do a lot more, and we could, if we’re given the resources to do so”  
(DC4).

# What Challenges Local Government Adaptation Planning & Implementation?

## 2. Unclear Roles

- Local governments to lead, territorial government to support
- Roles break down in practice, confusion around responsibilities

“Well, that’s part of the question, and we have to figure that out” (HJ2).

# Unclear Roles in Practice



Poor communication



Limited collaboration

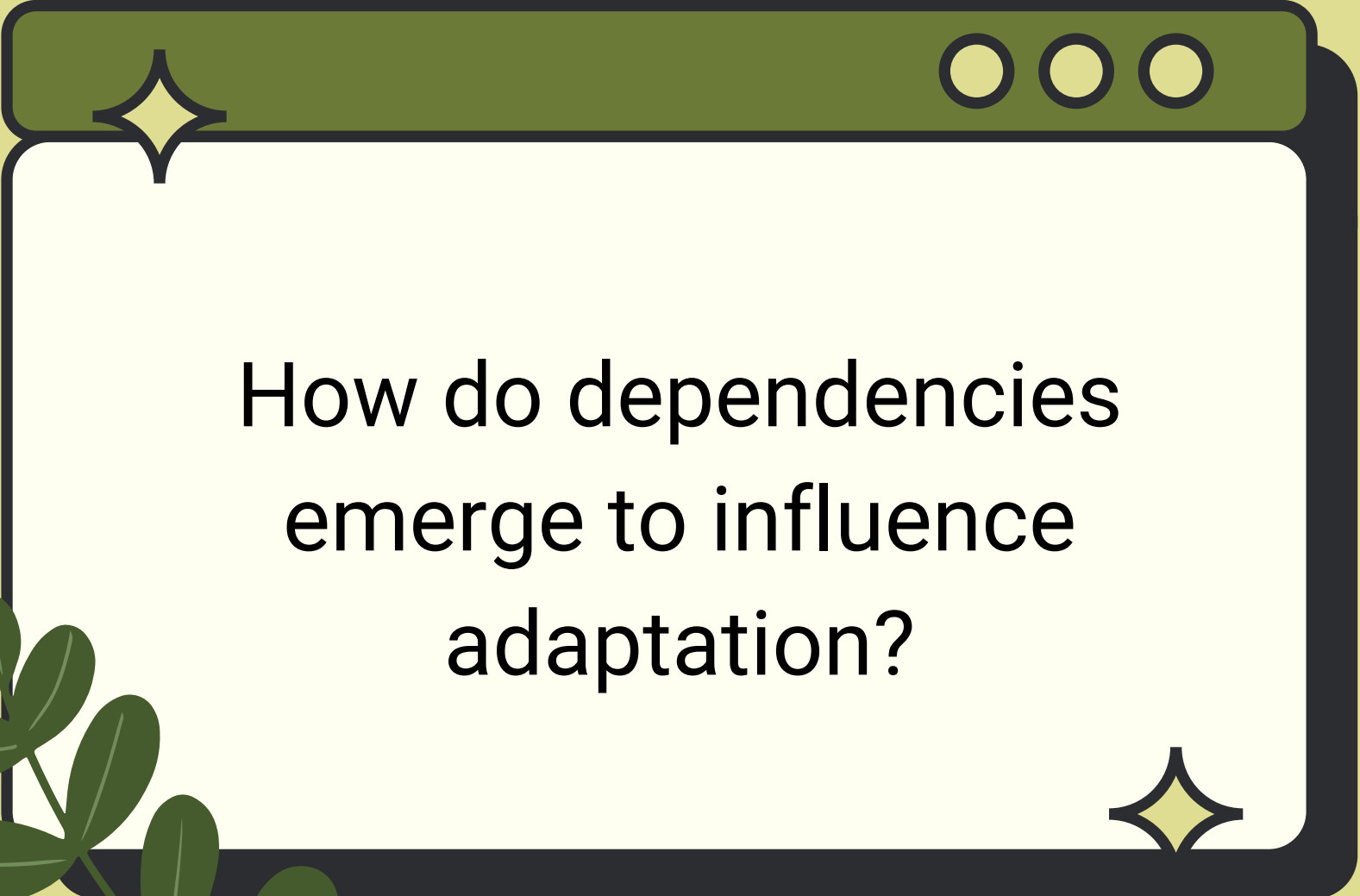



Lack of trust

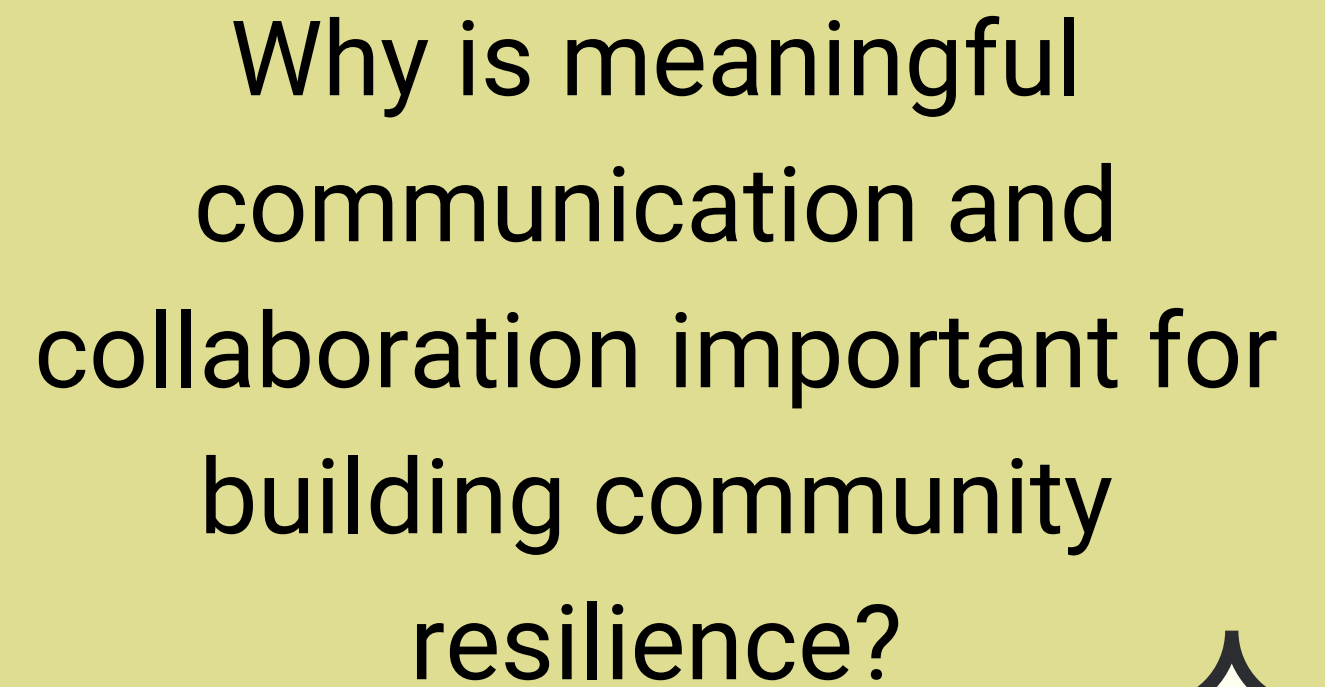



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# **Key Insights**



How do dependencies  
emerge to influence  
adaptation?



Why is meaningful  
communication and  
collaboration important for  
building community  
resilience?

# How Do Dependencies Emerge to Influence Implementation?

## Path Dependencies

- Past climate events spur local leadership



## Goal Dependencies

- Prioritization of mitigation over adaptation



## Interdependencies

- Lack of communication and trust





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## Goal Dependencies

- Prioritization of mitigation over adaptation




## Interdependencies

- Lack of communication and trust



# Path Dependency



- Past climate events result in awareness of the need to respond.
  - Awareness is translated into tangible planning priorities.
  - Adaptation is mainstreamed into planning tools.
- 

# Goal Dependency

- Mitigation is prioritized over adaptation.
- More resources are dedicated to mitigation.
- Adaptation planning and implementation is constrained.



# Interdependencies

- Reliance on higher levels of government for direction and support.
- Lack of leadership and stalling at the local level.
- Action is delayed as governments wait for each other to act.



# Why is Meaningful Communication & Collaboration Important for Building Community Resilience?

Trust building

Nearly all barriers to implementation can be addressed through strengthened communication & collaboration.

Clarified government roles

Improved capacity

Multi-level governance approach

# Strengthening Communication & Collaboration

## Trust Signals



Transparency



Reliability



Humanity

Eg. A yearly summit to bring together interested actors from local, regional, and provincial/ territorial governments.



**Thank you!**





# For Further Information

Birchall, S.J, Bonnett, N, & Rose, D. Progress on climate change adaptation in practice: Insights from local and territorial government interactions.

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# Image Sources

1. <https://globalnews.ca/news/8045796/canada-wildfires-yearly-trends/>
2. <https://wanderingcanadians.com/2023/10/29/dawson-city/%20>
3. <https://www.yukon-news.com/news/flood-devastates-farm-7004921>

The background features a light green color palette with stylized green leaves and stems scattered around the central text box. In the top-left and bottom-right corners, there are clusters of small, yellow, pill-shaped objects. The central text box is a rounded rectangle with a light green fill and a dark green border.

**Questions?**