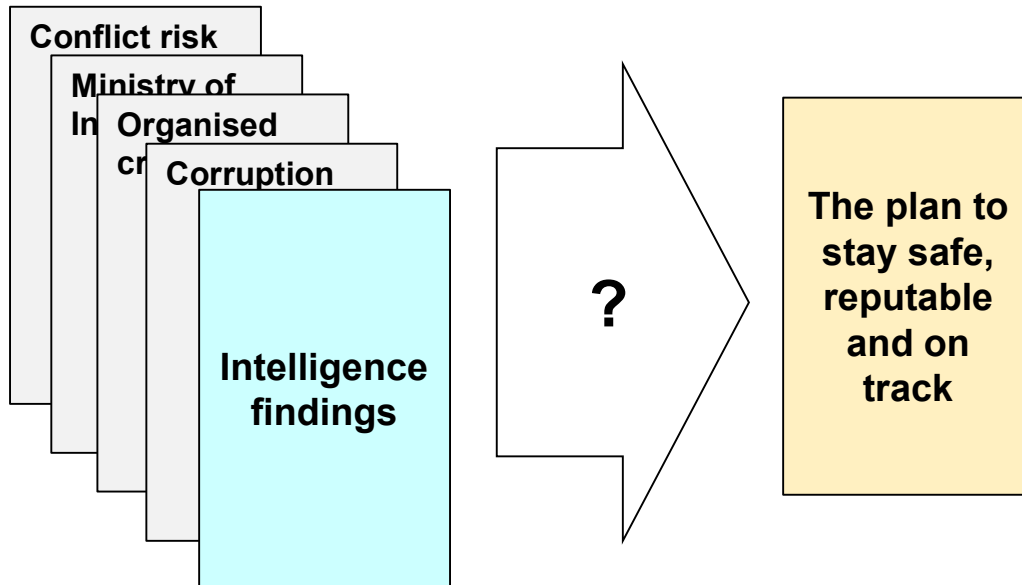


5 / 5. Planning takes the intelligence and develops initiatives and a strategy to handle the main political risks



We have a lot of nuanced intelligence.

This needs to be transformed into a plan, and the plan has to be quite concise and focused or we won't be able to act on it.

Planning turns all that stuff into a realistic map of what to do.

The steps

Integrate related challenges and issues into a few bigger problems

Build an approach to managing each problem

Integrate approaches into a concise strategy

Consider the risks in the plan and to the plan, and develop some key Plan Bs

Here is our full menu of potential challenges and issues – it is a lot of stuff, and if we tried to manage each thing it would be confusing and too much work

Challenges in environment

- Regime paranoia – official hassles / pressure
- Bureaucratic delays
- Regime favouritism – pressure to partner with its friends / NGOs
- Social tensions – hard to please all sides (secular – traditional)
- Potential protest violence – hazard & delays
- Three types of potential regime power play – three degrees of hazard, delays
- Potential urban terrorism – hazard

Dangerous scenarios

- Hard dictatorship – security hassles, harder laws
- High tension – security hassles, violence, terrorism risk
- Civil War 2 – very dangerous

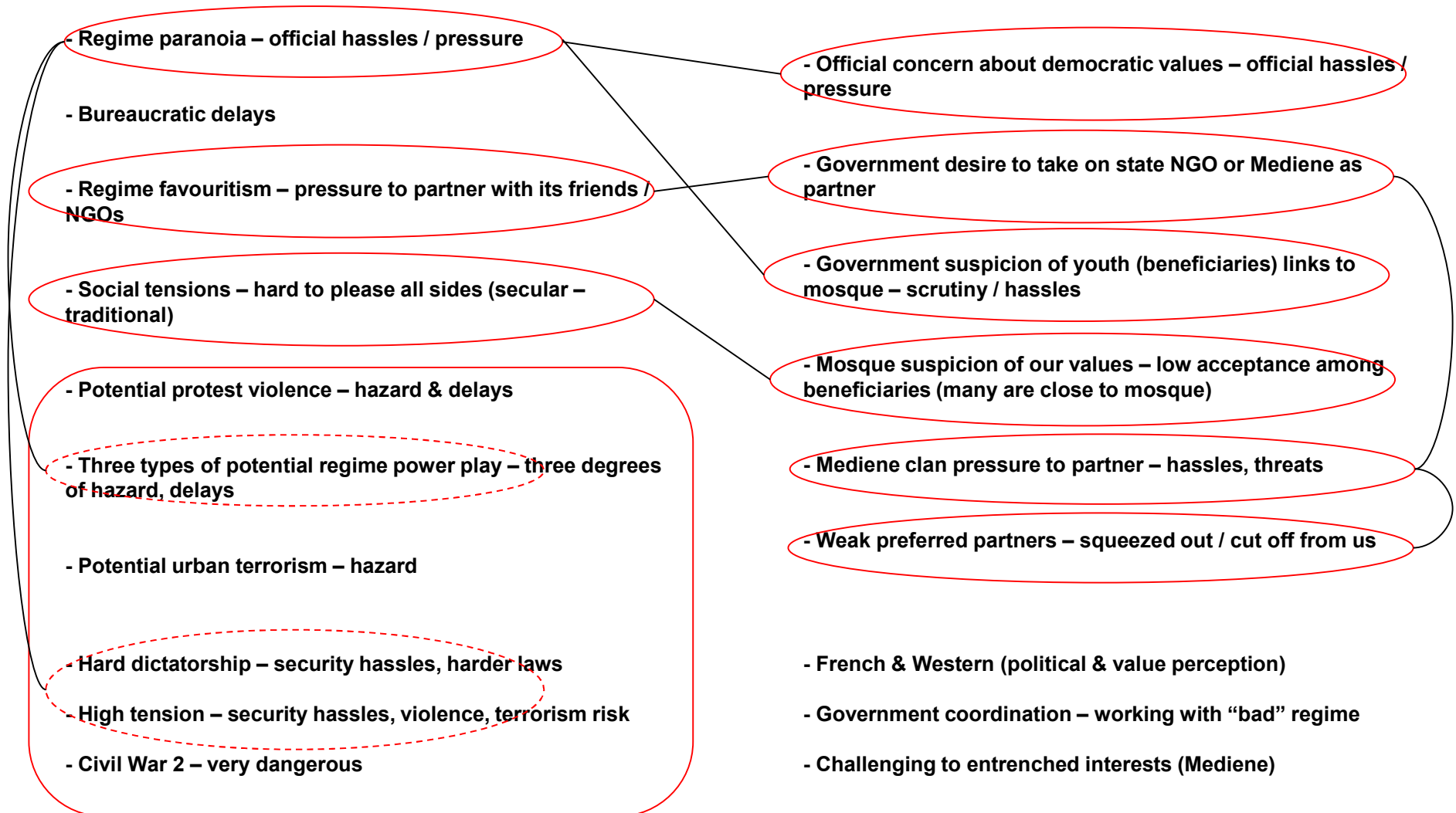
Stakeholder challenges

- Official concern about democratic values – official hassles / pressure
- Government desire to take on state NGO or Mediene as partner
- Government suspicion of youth (beneficiaries) links to mosque – scrutiny / hassles
- Mosque suspicion of our values – low acceptance among beneficiaries (many are close to mosque)
- Mediene clan pressure to partner – hassles, threats
- Weak preferred partners – squeezed out / cut off from us

Drivers of unfavourable perception

- French & Western (political & value perception)
- Government coordination – working with “bad” regime
- Challenging to entrenched interests (Mediene)

Since many things on the menu are related, we can integrate them into a few bigger problems, for example...



We get a few, but together they cover what we need to worry about

Integrated planning problems

Big set of issues / challenges

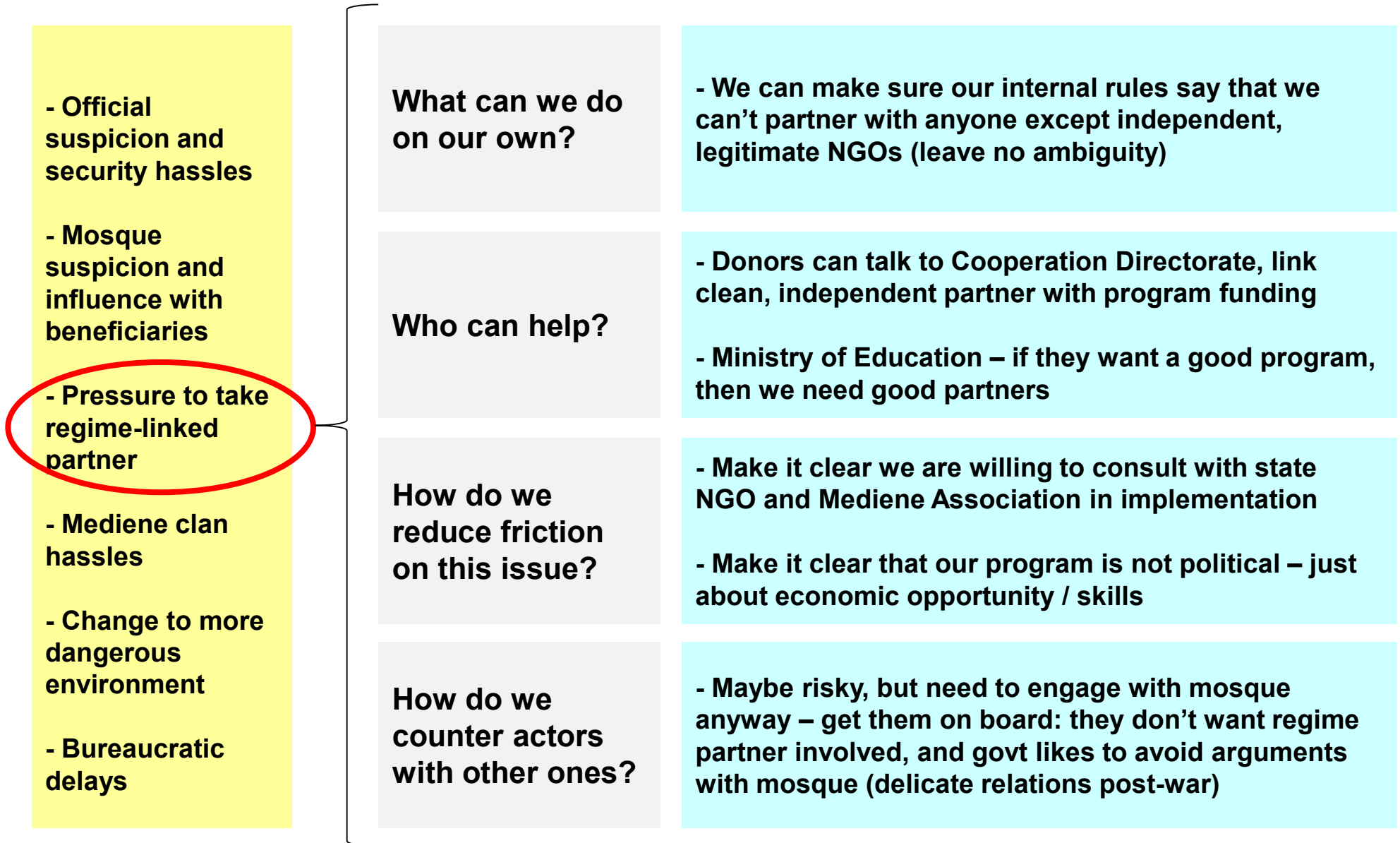
Challenges in environment	Stakeholder challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regime paranoia – official hassles / pressure - Bureaucratic delays - Regime favouritism – pressure to partner with its friends / NGOs - Social tensions – hard to please all sides (secular – traditional) - Potential protest violence – hazard & delays - Three types of potential regime power play – three degrees of hazard, delays - Potential urban terrorism – hazard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Official concern about democratic values – official hassles / pressure - Government desire to take on state NGO or Mediene as partner - Government suspicion of youth (beneficiaries) links to mosque – scrutiny / hassles - Mosque suspicion of our values – low acceptance among beneficiaries (many are close to mosque) - Mediene clan pressure to partner – hassles, threats - Weak preferred partners – squeezed out / cut off from us
Dangerous scenarios	Drivers of unfavourable perception
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hard dictatorship – security hassles, harder laws - High tension – security hassles, violence, terrorism risk - Civil War 2 – very dangerous 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - French & Western (political & value perception) - Government coordination – working with “bad” regime - Challenging to entrenched interests (Mediene)

- **Official suspicion and security hassles**
- **Mosque suspicion and influence with beneficiaries**
- **Pressure to take regime-linked partner**
- **Mediene clan hassles**
- **Change to more dangerous environment (repression, mass violence, terrorism)**
- **Bureaucratic delays**

Unfavourable perception drivers linked to regime, mosque and Mediene clan suspicions

Two points about this: 1) Looks minimal but we know all the stuff behind each problem; 2) even after integrating there are still links – only “more dangerous” and “bureaucratic delays” are independent problems

Building an approach to each problem uses details from the previous analysis (especially about stakeholders), for example...



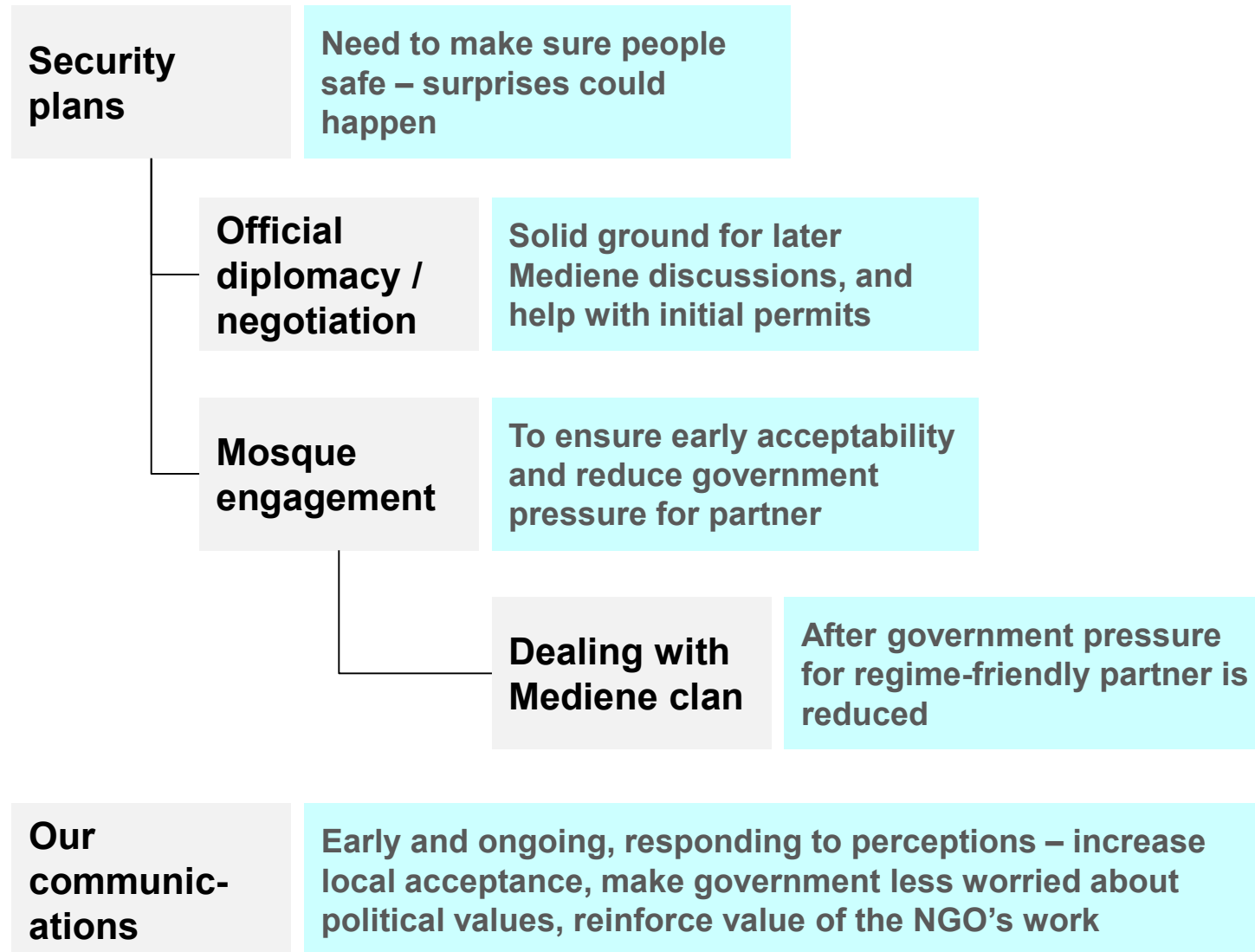
After we have thought about each problem, we can try to paint a bigger strategy that pulls all of our different approaches together as much as possible, e.g.

Official diplomacy / negotiation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Donors (> Cooperation Directorate) - Min Education (national and Wilaya levels) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Need clean partner - We're not political - Willing to consult - Need help with bureaucracy
Mosque engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Harrach Muslim organisations (Dawa Salafiya and informal ones) - Neighbourhood imams 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Shared interest in non-political project and youth opportunity - Not pushing secular values
Dealing with Mediene clan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Direct through clan Association as entry point - Indirect through government (see <i>official diplomacy</i>) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Our partnership rules - Willing to consult and ask Mediene Association to be on advisory committee
Our communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Via website, local news, and consistent in national and local discussions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Non-political, independent - About opportunity - Good for youth, local area and maybe even national economy
Security plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Our own policies, preparations and contingency plans - Coordination with police (mosque engagement reduces criminal threat) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - People first – early ability to keep people safe and react to crises - Contingency plans for more dangerous threats and scenarios

We already have an approach to each problem, so this is top level.

Helps us see the bigger picture and how approaches fit together.

Sequencing is important because some things are urgent, and some lay the foundations for others



Need to be flexible, but having a clear path in mind helps to organise and coordinate elements.

Again, this is very big picture, and specific problems are still handled with unique approaches.

We're letting the issues define plans, but we'll mention a couple of tangible political risk management methods: 1 / 2 security, a sensitive topic for NGOs

General approaches

Key considerations

- Information and data
- Cash and assets
- BUT MAINLY
PEOPLE

Types of challenges:

- Threats from actors who don't like us
- Opportunistic criminal behaviour
- Violence in our area

Avoidance

- Avoid unrest / violence
- Hide / hibernate in tense periods

Dissuasion / deterrence

- Indirect engagement
- High public profile
- Strong friends say to our enemies: "Don't bother"

Protection (& deterrence)

- Physical security
- Guards, escorts

Crisis response

- Quick reaction to people harmed, quick recovery

- Would people have what they need to survive periods of hibernation?
- Can we stay in contact with people?

- Are your sources of help legitimate?
- Would they ask too much in return for helping to protect you?

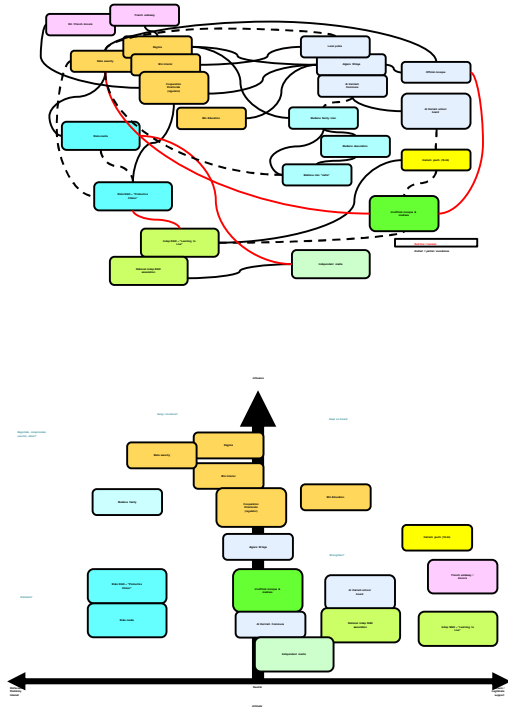
- How to not look threatening to others when you have armed security
- Guards need to be professional, respect human security, be legitimate

- Have we practiced for situations like someone hurt, kidnapped, detained?
- Do we have right support networks?

2 / 2 - In political risk management, there are opportunities to shape relationships with more friendly actors to help with difficult ones

...for ideas on strategic relationship management

Go back to these maps and the information behind them...

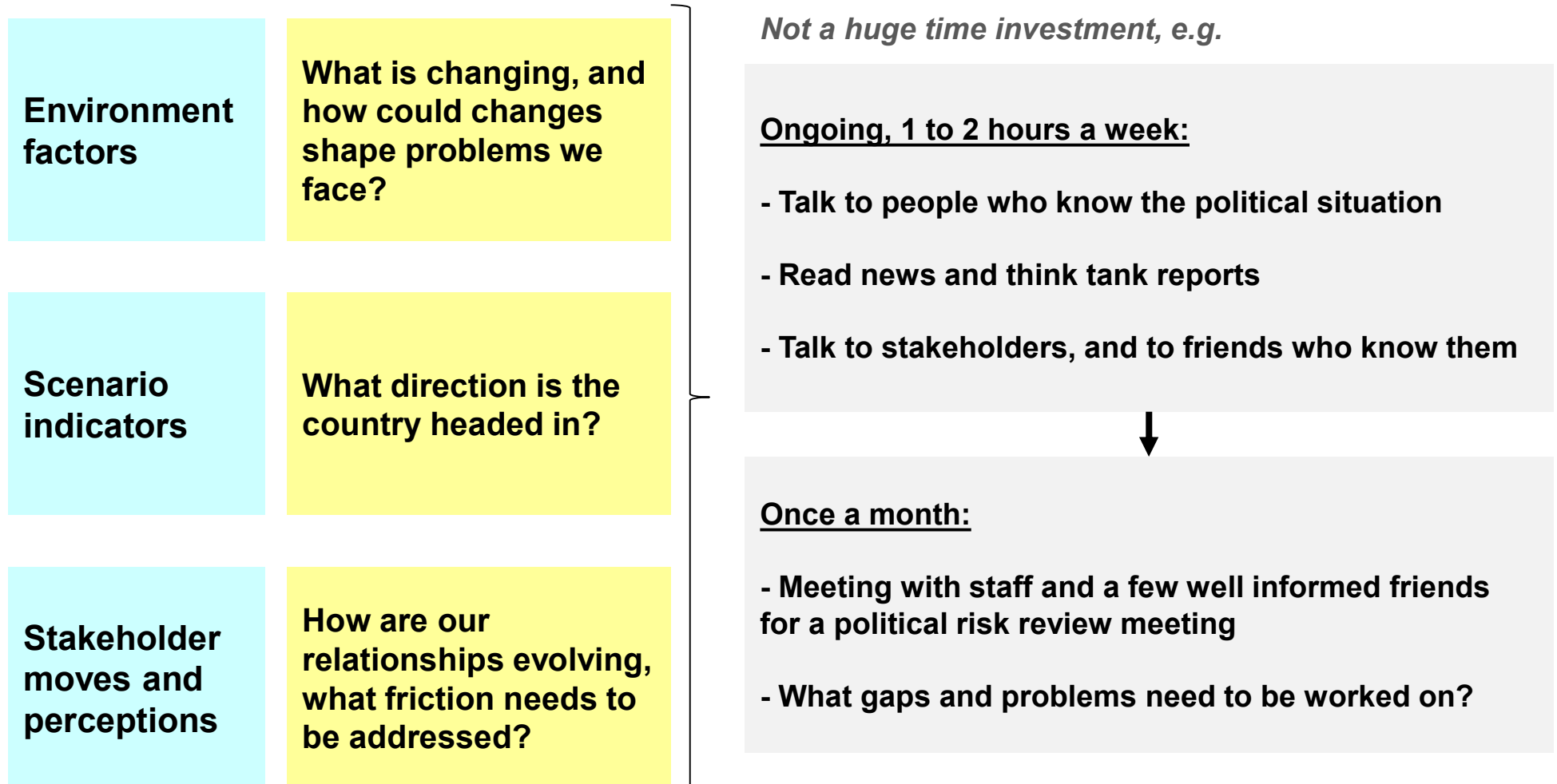


- Use an accessible and more friendly stakeholder as a back channel to communicate with ones you can't reach
- Build a friendly network among several less powerful actors – together it adds up to enough influence for bargaining with more powerful actors
- Build a relationship with an actor who is a friend with someone who is hostile to us – then the hostile actor might indirectly learn that we are actually okay
- Use good relationships to deter (dissuade) hostile actors from trying to harm us
- Become valuable to actors (e.g. programme beneficiaries and communities) whose attitudes are also important to powerful actors (if they hurt you, their acceptance goes down)...

And we need to be clear about the risks we are taking, the risks our plan could face, and the possible “Plan Bs” we might need, e.g.

Risks we are taking	Risks to the plan	Plan Bs	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Talking to unofficial mosque – government might get upset if we seem too close to them- Trying to block Mediene partnership – they can cause problems- Ministry of Education – we are appealing to their rational side, but they are also a political player	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- The mosque might not like us anyway and not want to talk- The Ministry of Education might hide behind the Ministry of Interior as main government liaison- Mediene might be planning ahead and getting official support for its own position	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- If government insists on their trusted partner, and we get no help from elsewhere...- ...then we agree to partner with state NGO – at least more legitimate than Mediene clan- Then we include independent NGOs in advisory committee	<p>Could be other problems and necessary changes, but this gives us some idea so we are not paralysed when faced with problems.</p>

The whole political risk analysis and planning exercise was aimed at about a year, but a lot can change, so to inform adaptations we need to monitor changes



Summary of process – what we get



After the process, we have:

- A picture of the political environment
- The factors that could affect us, and problems they could cause
- How the country might change and how to stay ahead of events
- Who matters and why
- Main issues and problems
- A plan to deal with them

Not perfect, and there will still be the unexpected, but it's a much better position to be in.

Final note on this process - How could a small NGO do it themselves without taking too long and being distracted from their main work? Suggestions

Similar to what we did here – a workshop format

Develop key questions, assumptions and uncertainties

Summarise the problems you've faced in the last year or so

Invite a few other trusted experts, academics and generally well informed people to participate

Provide them with a structure of the process and your key concerns so they can think about it beforehand

Run the sessions, take notes, and capture the results in a summary report

We can also discuss how a small NGO or related organisation can set up and manage its own political risk management capability without straining resources.

Because you know the place and your stakeholder landscape quite well, there doesn't have to be much research – you just need to structure your knowledge and test your assumptions. This can be a quick process, maybe a week in total (most pol risk projects for foreign organisations take a lot longer).