HCD IN GLOBAL HEALTH & DEVELOPMENT

GUIDANCE TO MAXIMIZE IMPACT AND MITIGATE RISK

PREPARED BY AVAC FOR THE BILL AND MELINDA GATES FOUNDATION

REPORT | 03.10.17

ABOUT THE PROJECT

PROJECT GOALS

The goal of this project has been to understand how the HCD process is best applied to deliver the greatest impact and what was aimed at answering some key questions . We wanted to hear from proponents, users and critics who have had a wide range of experiences with the hope of isolating the factors that tend to lead to success, and the risks and barriers met along the way.

Specifically we wanted to:

Help define "quality" in the HCD space as understood by donors, implementers, and practitioners.

Provide a framework to lay out essential steps and inputs for successful HCD programs.

Provide documentation of current best practices to help audiences (e.g., donors, etc.) understand and advocate for quality approaches.

Highlight innovative methods and tactics within those approaches.

WHAT WE DID

To do this we conducted candid, open-ended interviews with a wide variety of donors, implementing partners, and HCD practitioners. The following represents a prioritized synthesis of the biggest potential pitfalls and collected wisdom for avoiding them, as well as thoughts on the future and the still untapped potential for what HCD could mean for the social impact space.

HOW WE CHOSE WHERE TO FOCUS

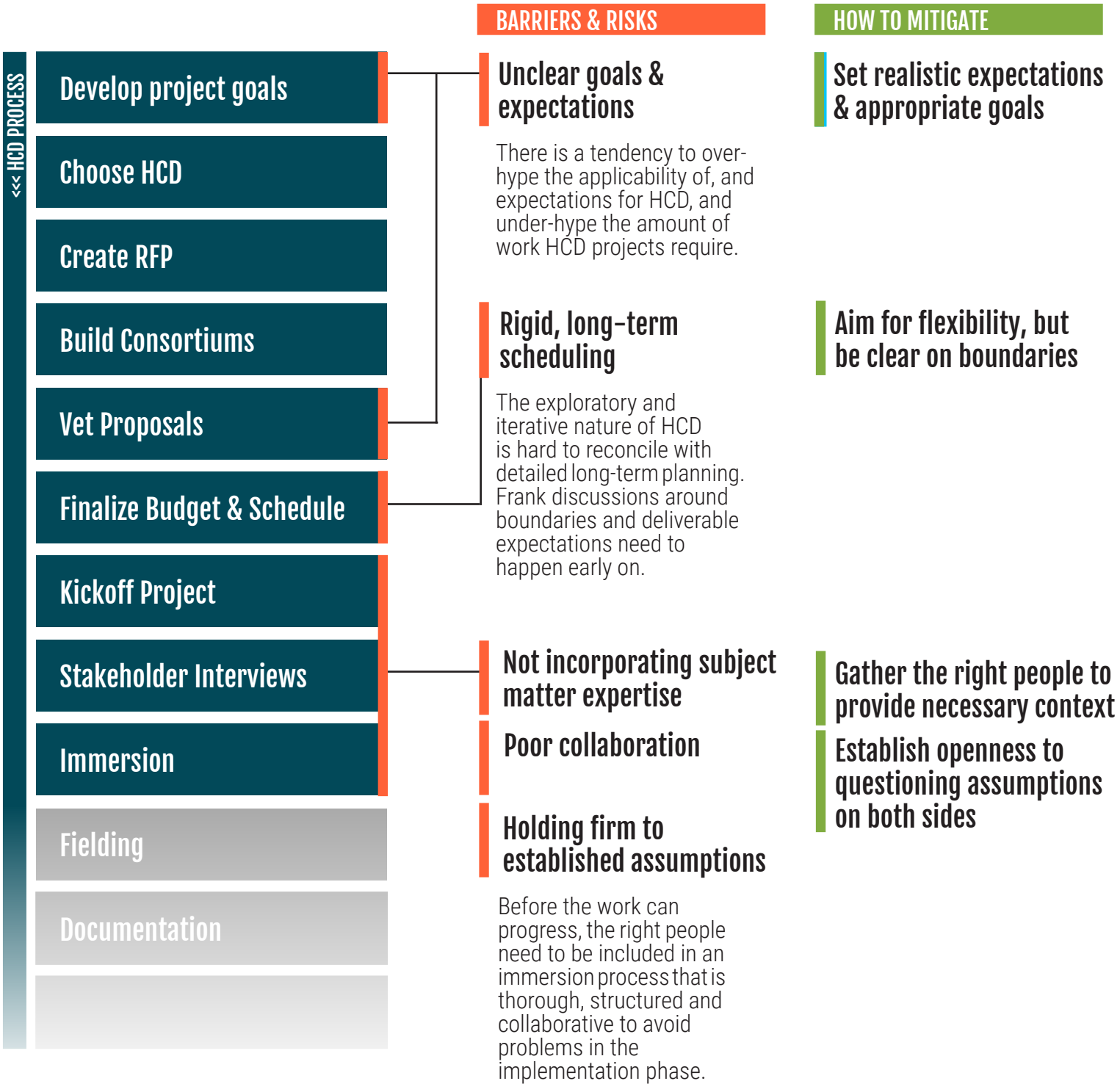
The following represents an outline of the HCD process as applied in many projects in global health and development. Not all steps will be applicable for all projects. These pain points and focus areas represent the biggest risks to HCD achieving it's full impact. These areas are based on 45 individual interviews conducted with donors, implementing partners and HCD practitioners with experience applying HCD to global health and development challenges. The interviews were conducted from July 2017 through October 2017.

In the following sections, each focus area will be broken down into risks and barriers paired with strategies for mitigating them.

We will iterate and add to this growing collection of tips and best practices.

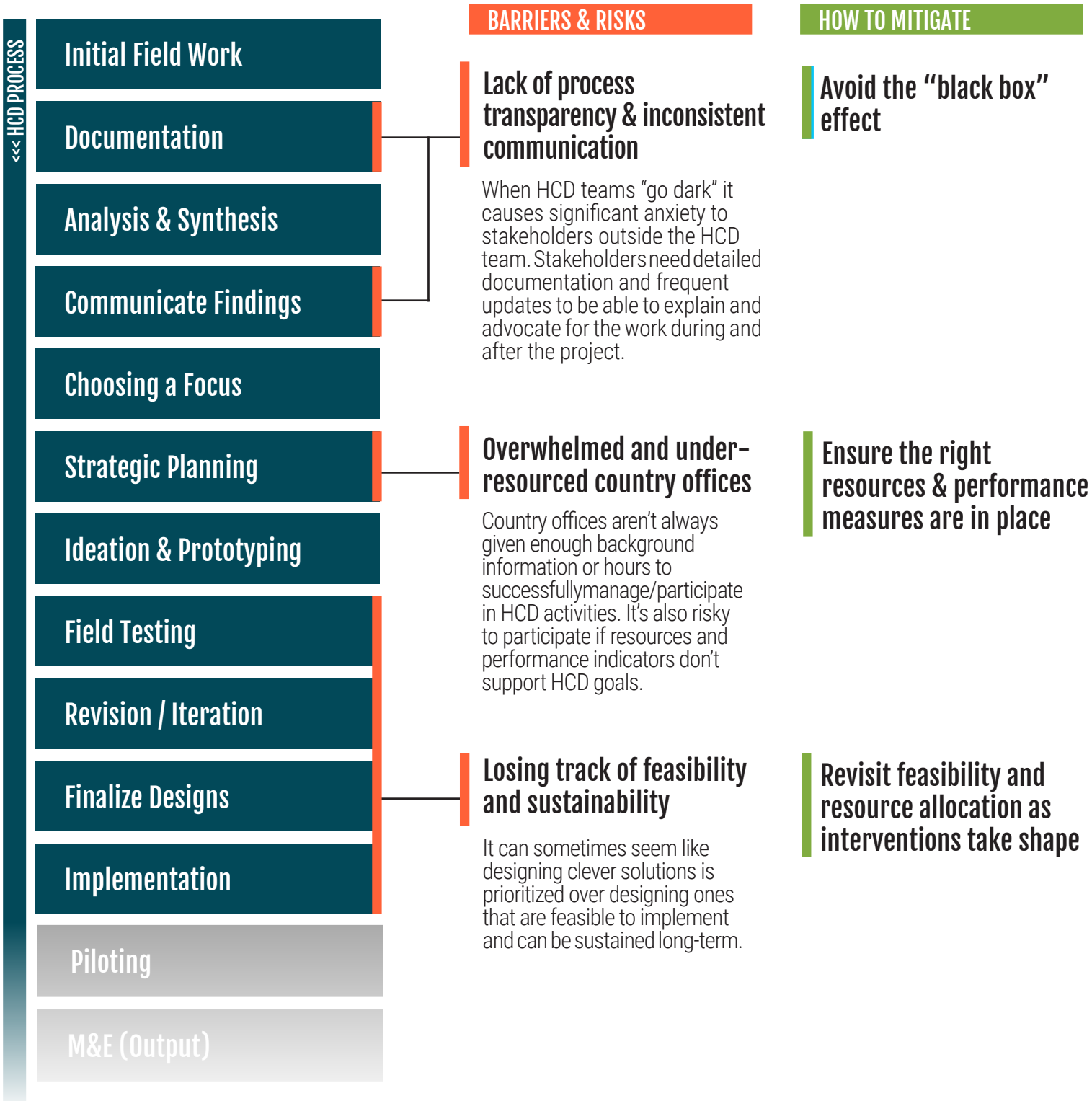
1.) PROPOSAL & PROJECT SETUP

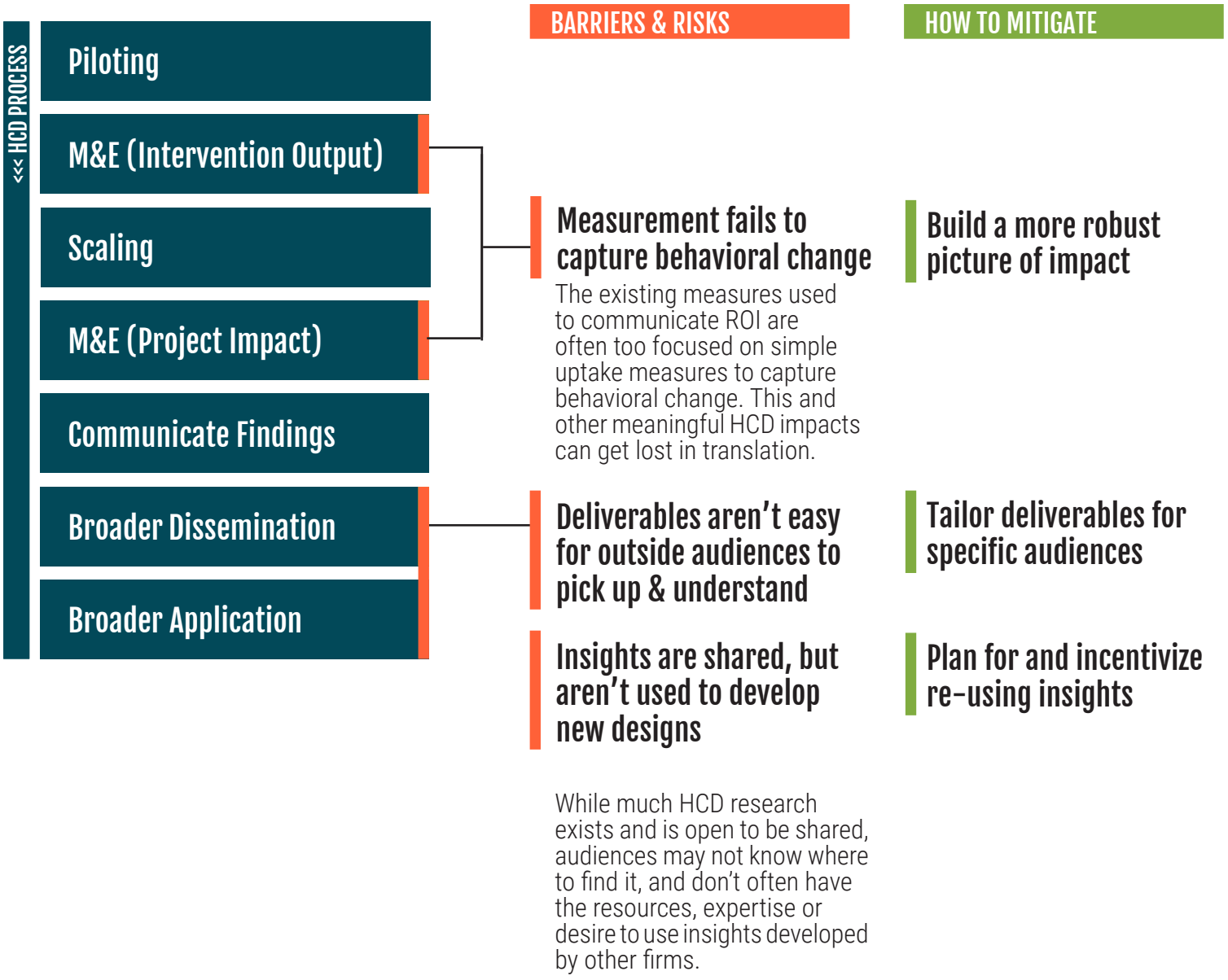
Many of the issues which undermine the effectiveness of HCD work have their roots in the planning and kickoff phases. This section will cover best practices on how to lay the groundwork for a successful HCD project, including: setting clear and realistic goals, negotiating necessary boundaries, and ensuring that the right people and perspectives are fully represented in the early stages of project planning.



2.) TURNING INSIGHTS INTO INTERVENTIONS

A common bottleneck in the process comes after insights are uncovered through research and it's time to figure out what to do next. The process is labor intensive—requiring design expertise and significant time from teams. It's also an unfamiliar process for many teams; requiring significant communication and explanation. If HCD teams go dark during this process, it results in a lot of anxiety from donors and implementing partners.



3.) IMPACT & SCALING

While many who have been on HCD project teams believe in HCD and have witnessed the impact the work can have when done well, it can be difficult to express the unique benefits through traditional measurement, and difficult to encourage and equip others to pick up existing HCD insights, especially if they haven't experienced it first hand. Both of these factors limit the impact and the scalability of HCD programs.