

# Training on Water Diplomacy & International Water Law

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# Lego Water Politics

## Serious Negotiation Game

Training Part 2

An aerial photograph showing a wide, muddy river on the right side of the frame. A dirt road runs horizontally across the middle, with a smaller path branching off towards the water. The land is a mix of green grass and brown soil. In the bottom right corner, there's a small structure or fence line near the water's edge.



## Disclaimer

Any resemblance to a real setting and/or actual characteristics, events & trends are purely coincidental



# Objectives



- Explore the concept of “**Transboundary Nexus**” in a fictional case
- Identify economic opportunities & benefits related to **water management & development** (and other natural resources)
- Endorse an **inter-sectoral** perspective
- Analyse potential for **sectoral trade-offs**
- Discuss issues related to **water allocations** & re-allocation

**Upgrade discussion: What are the specific challenges because it is a transboundary basin?**



# Time management

13:15-13:30 – Short Introduction to Exercise, by Facilitator

13:30-13:35 – Quick group arrangements, by Facilitator

13:35-13:45 – Reading/Observation time

13:45-14:15 – **First round of questions/discussion** (*already in the game*)

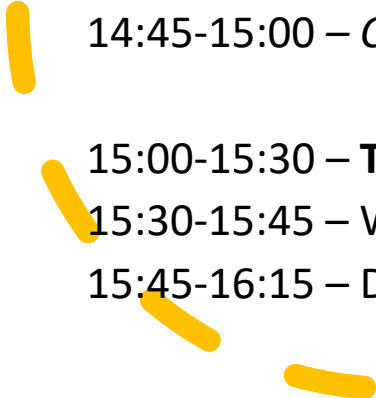
14:15-14:45 – **Second round of questions/discussion**

14:45-15:00 – *Coffee break*

15:00-15:30 – **Third round of questions/discussion** (*end of the game*)

15:30-15:45 – Wrap-up of main 'findings' by groups

15:45-16:15 – Debriefing and Collective Discussion



# Short Introduction to the Exercise (I)

One large-scale country – an Island – has no international borders with other countries, but is sub-divided in three main regions **See Map**

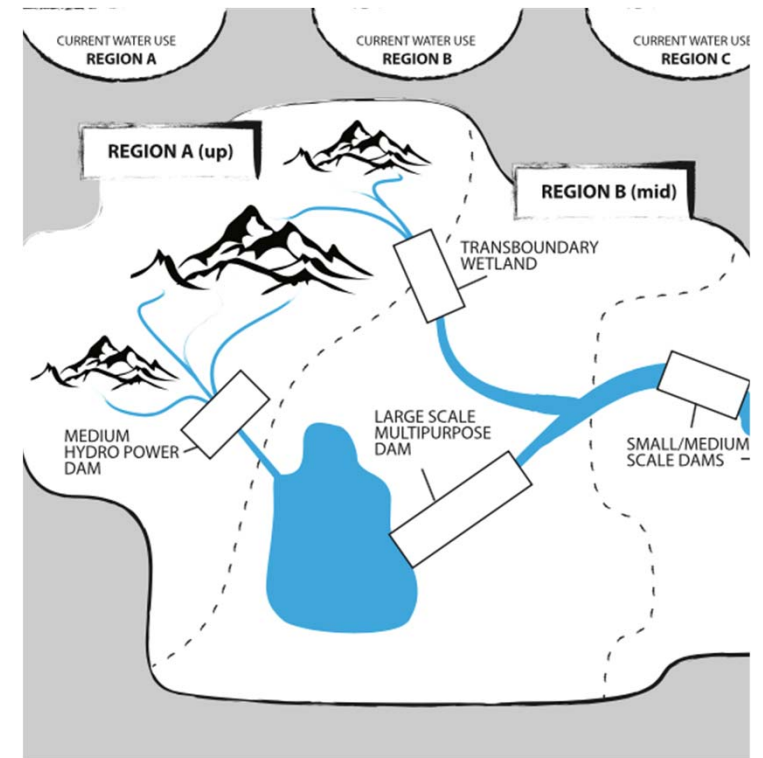
The Island is crossed by a major river called **Jazireh** (Island in English), which flows from from West to East, and crosses 3 different regions (A, B, C)

Regions have major differences in terms of geography, water and natural resources, economic development, potential, etc. **See Table**

During the Game, in each group there will be **3 Players + 1 Observer**

- **3 Official representatives** from the different regions who got a request to *informally* meet the neighbours for some *exploratory talks about current and future* mutual economic benefits
- **1 Observer** appointed by the Island's President of, who will be responsible for observing, notetaking, liaising with Facilitator, reporting & Debriefing

**You are all from the same country, BUT from different regions or institutions**



# Short Introduction to the Exercise (II)

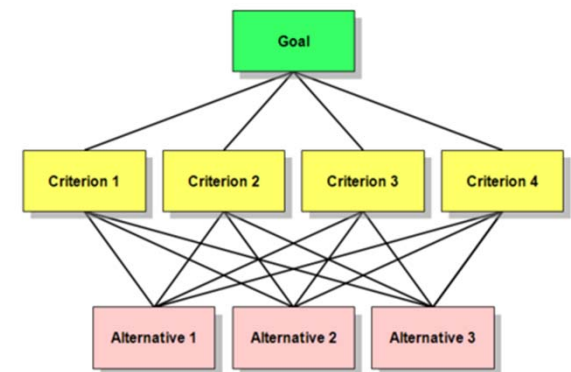
Exercise brings together **Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP)** & **Lego Bricks** –to understand economic benefits & potential trade-offs in a shared river basin

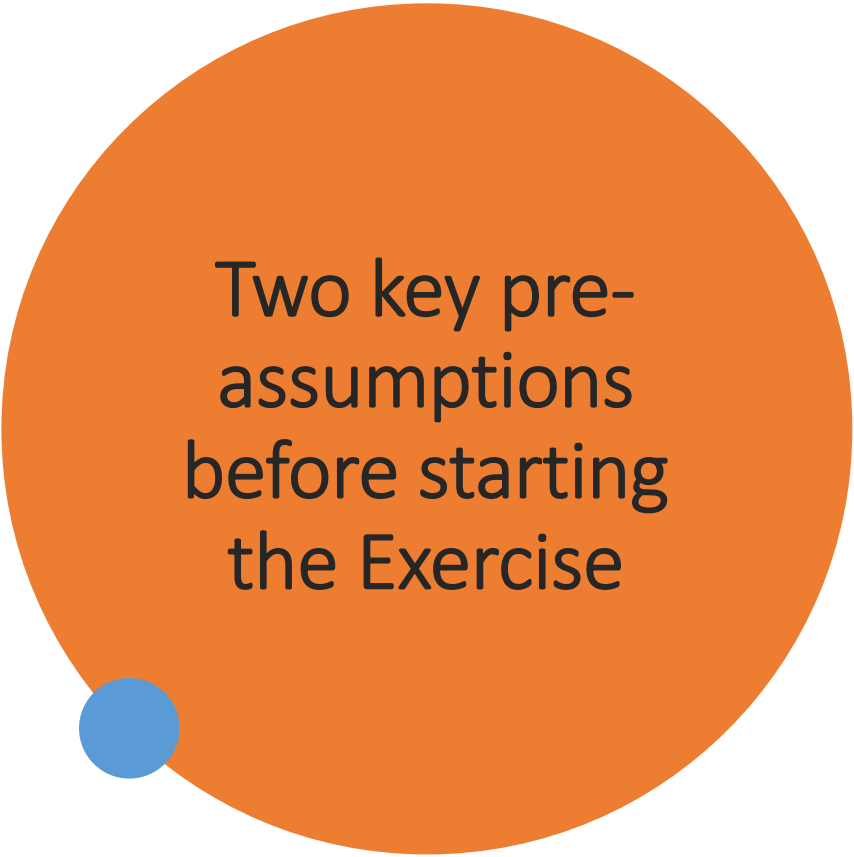
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**Analytical Hierarchy Process:** It is a structured technique for organising and analysing complex decisions, based on mathematics and psychology. It can be used in group decision-making, in a wide variety of decision situations. Rather than prescribing a "correct" decision, AHP helps decision-makers find one that best suits their goal and understanding of the problem. It provides a comprehensive and rational framework for achieving the overall goals, namely by evaluating alternative solutions


**Lego Bricks:** One of the best learning tools ever invented! For the purposes of this Game, each colour represents an economic sector:

**RED** (Domestic)  
**WHITE** (Industry)  
**PINK/PURPLE** (Tourism)  
**BROWN** (Wetlands/Deltas)  
**GREY/BLACK** (Dams/Storage & Hydropower)  
**GREENS/ORANGES/YELLOWS** (Agriculture) and  
**BLUE** is Water itself





Two key pre-  
assumptions  
before starting  
the Exercise



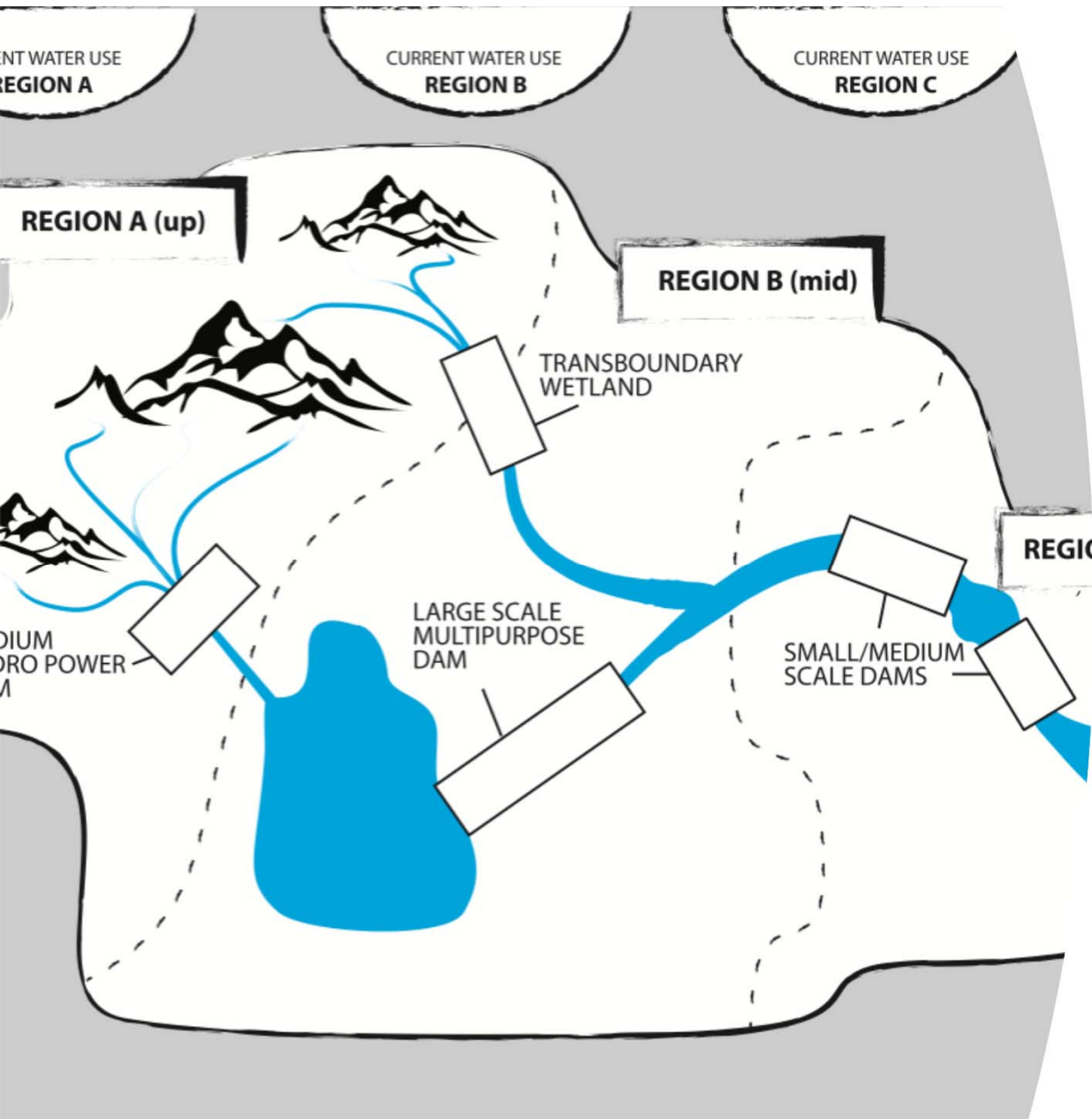
**“A focus on sharing the benefits derived from the use of water, rather than the allocation of water itself, provides far greater scope for identifying mutually beneficial cooperative actions”**

*WB paper on Benefit-Sharing in transboundary contexts*

**“A national government is the public trustee of a nation’s natural resources and must ensure that they are protected, used, developed, conserved, managed and controlled in a sustainable and equitable manner, for the benefit of all persons”**

*South Africa’s Constitution*





## The Jazireh Basin

- 1 Island - 3 regions
- 2 tributaries, 1 river - complex hydrology
- Unique environmental features
- Limited land resources
- Fast-growing economies
- Increasing socio-economic demands (e.g. food & energy security)
- High investment potential in some sectors
- Regional & sub-regional plans for infrastructure development

**Multiple Opportunities & Multiple Challenges**

# The Jazireh Riparians

Look attentively at the [Map](#)

Read carefully all the [Table](#)

Give particular attention to the details of the region you are representing

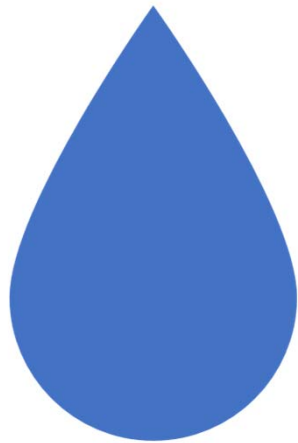
Then, you are ready to negotiate!

**O-SHEET – Brief characterisation of the Jazireh River (also called Island River)**

Brief characterisation	Region A (upstream)	Region B (midstream)	Region C (downstream)
Population (in million)	<b>100</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>30</b>
Geography & Hydrology	Mountainous region, source of the major rivers in the island. However, uneven rainfall patterns – both intra- & inter-annual	Region with 2 very different sides: a sub-tropical area in the northern shore, and desert land in the southern shore with almost nil rainfall	Very flat region, with good (but uneven) of rainfall in the delta but not elsewhere
Political Economy	Fast growing economy, increasingly attractive for national and foreign investors in many fields. But still major infrastructure challenges	Stable & diversified economy, more connected to the global system, exhibiting the best socio-economic indicators of the 3 regions	Smaller and poorer economy than other regions, but with high potential for development (tourism & commercial far)
Domestic use (in units)	<b>5,5</b> (around 50% of population)	<b>10</b> (around 95% of population)	<b>2</b> (around 80% of population)
Industrial use (in units)	<b>4</b> (current) + <b>1</b> (under development)	<b>8</b>	<b>2</b> (current) + <b>1</b> (under development)
Tourism (in units)	Nil	<b>8</b>	<b>1</b> (associated with delta)
Deltas / Fisheries (in units)	<b>10</b> (shared delta)		<b>2</b> (delta)
Agriculture (in millions of hectares of land)	<b>1</b> (mostly rainfed, very little irrigation)	<b>2</b> (exclusively irrigation)	<b>1,4</b> (mostly irrigation but some rainfed)
Agriculture production/trade	Mostly food crops for national consumption, but plans to increase exported-oriented production (mainly rainfed, but not excluding some small/medium-size irrigation schemes)	Mostly food crops (lot of cereals) & some high-value cash-crops for exports. No more capacity to expand land under irrigation. It imports a lot of food from outside the island (mostly cereals)	Very diversified/mixed agricultural production (food & cash-crops) – both for national consumption & export. Big potential to expand irrigation & exports, but limited by storage capacity
Energy needs/production	Energy needs still partially uncovered. But with a large hydropower potential & ambitious plan to become a regional and international energy hub	Energy needs are almost 100% covered. Hydropower is not a major energy source	Still lots of energy needs, with impacts in economic sectors. Limited hydropower potential
Major existing hydraulic infrastructure	Medium-scale hydropower dam (no irrigation) inaugurated recently, still limited energy production	One major large dam (mainly for storage/ agriculture); Hydropower only a by-product	Two small dams with both uses (mainly irrigation and little hydropower); Very limited capacity to expand infrastructure in current
Current Water utilisation (in bcm)	5	60	20

# Presidential Declaration ahead of your informal meeting

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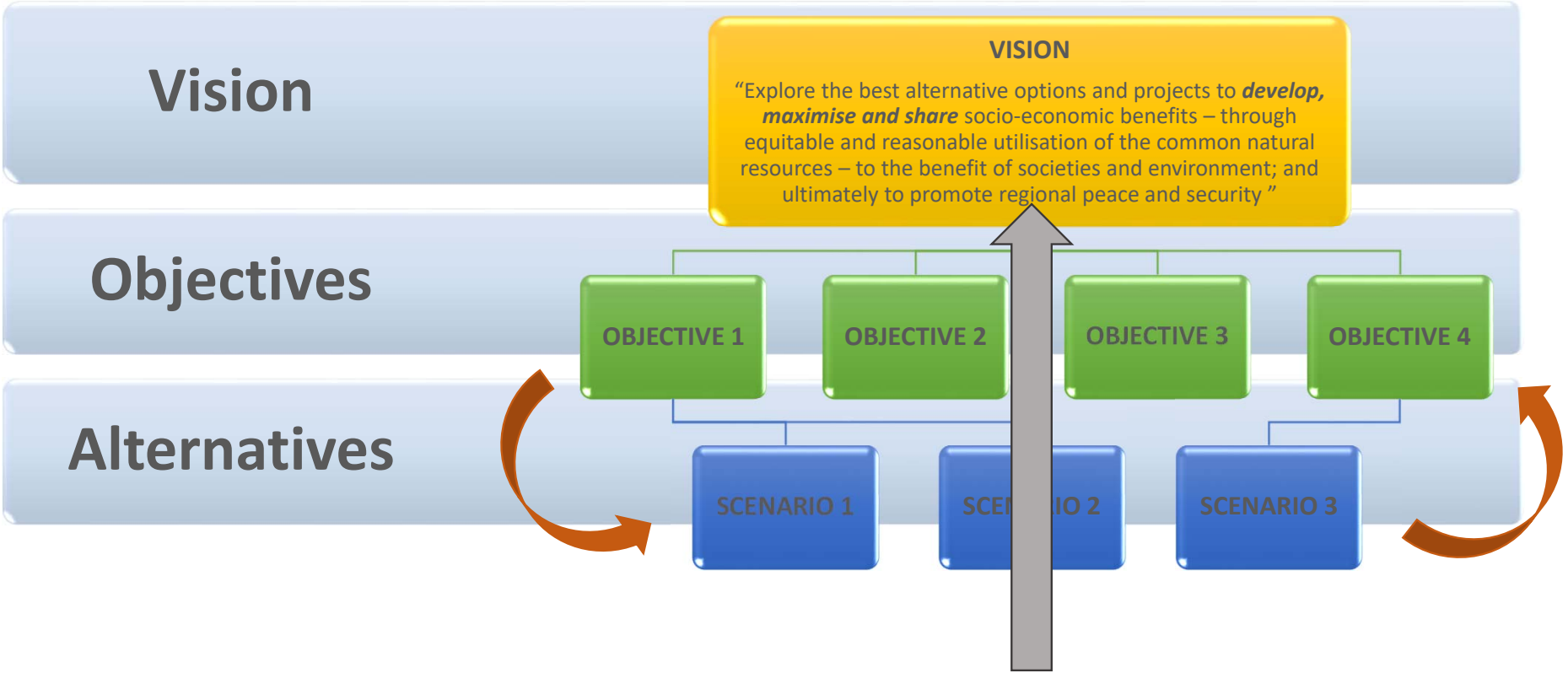


## *Jazireh - One River One People One Vision*

“Explore the best alternative options and projects to ***develop, maximise and share*** socio-economic benefits – through equitable and reasonable utilisation of the common natural resources – to the benefit of societies and environment; and ultimately to promote regional peace and security ”

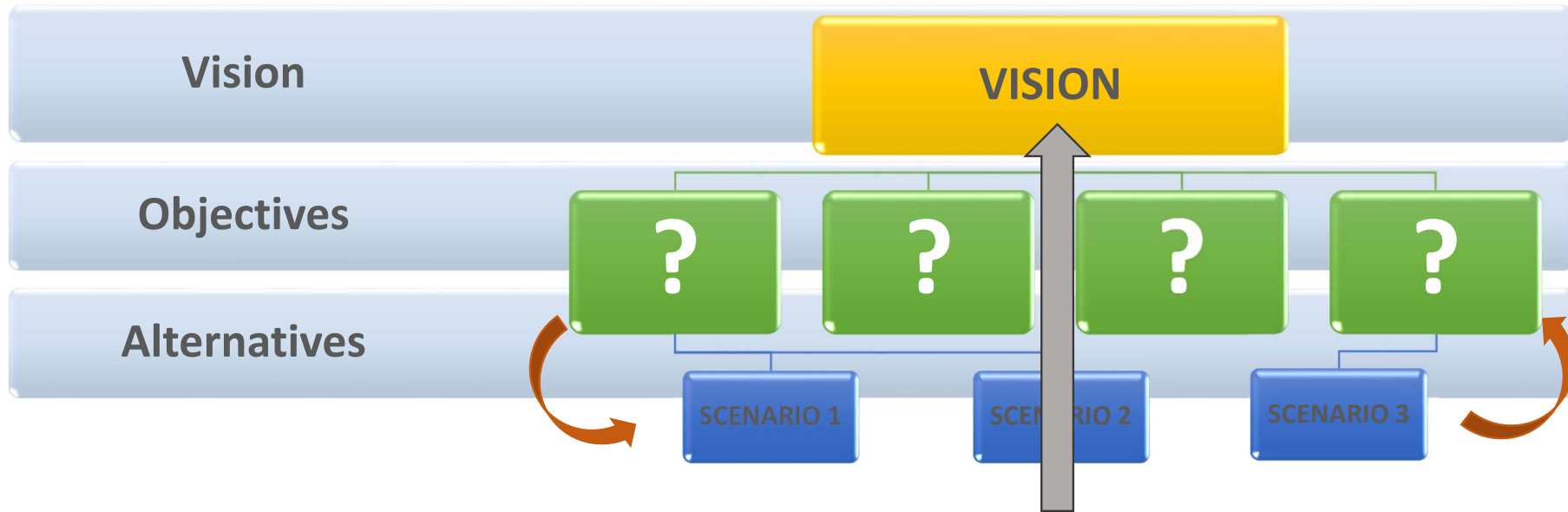
# First Round

## The Vision and how to get there



# First Round

## Select the Objectives



A few tips from AHP

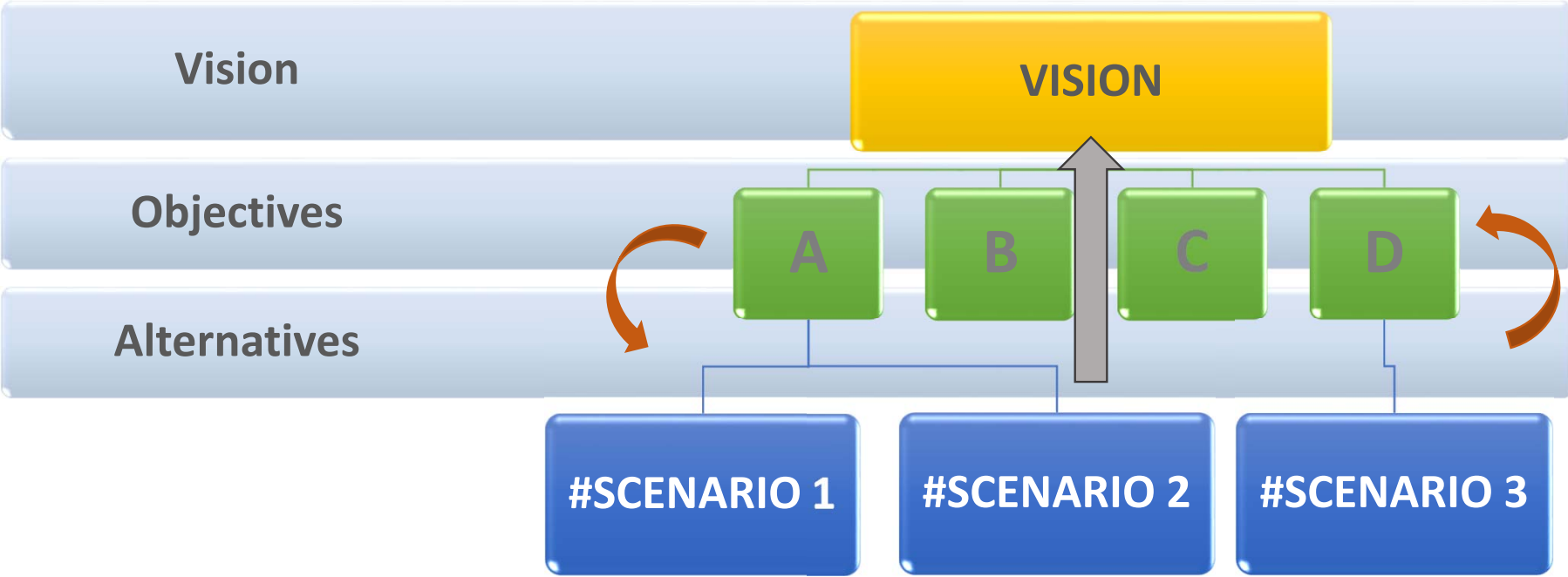
- Understand - Analyse – Compare – **Select - Prioritise**

Coffee Break



# Second Round

Analyse and select the alternative scenarios



# Second round : Select your Alternative(s)



## **NOW NOW:**

You have your **Vision**, your **Objectives**, and already understood how cross-border water cooperation is complex



As player: you now know well your Regions' **Interests, Needs and Potential**; and you are starting to understand the interests, needs and potential of the other two regions. You can now start to strategize!



**NEXT:** the 3 regions can sit down and jointly identify the **Alternative Options** – based on the background information provided about the basin, each region and its natural resources. But also based in a constant dialogue with the neighbouring regions. **Note: use your imagination beyond the short instructions**

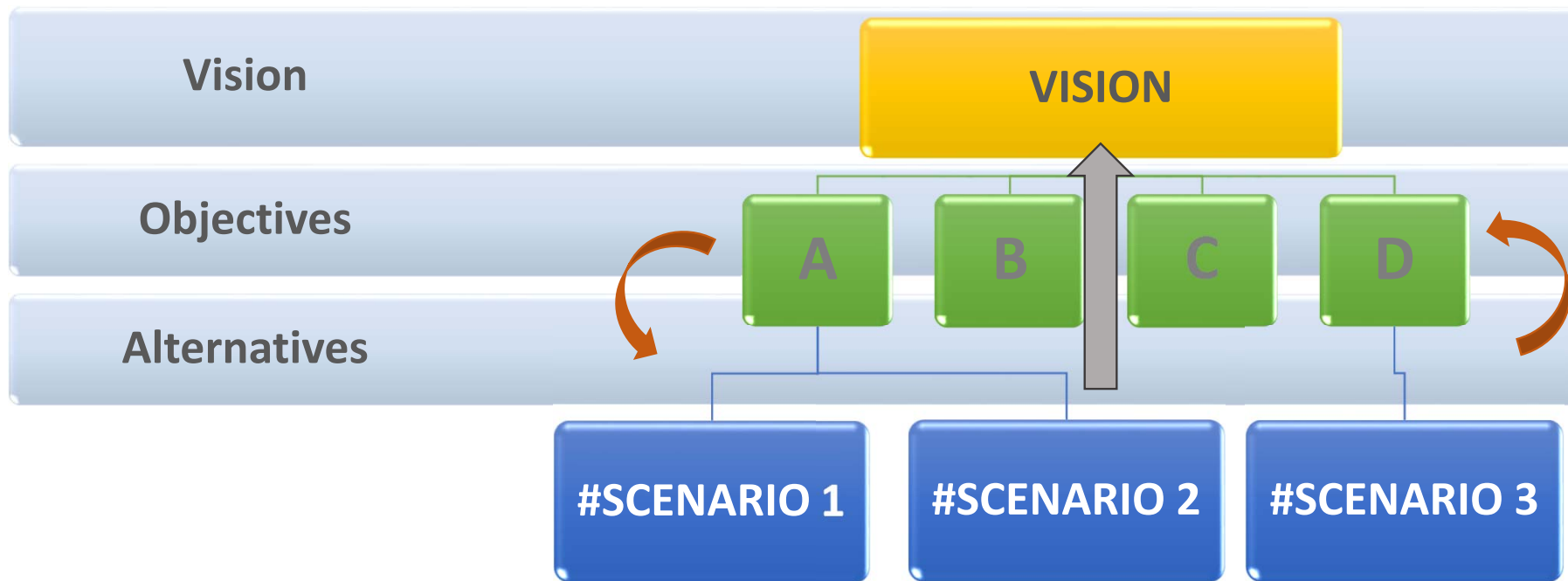


**Goal:** design the **Alternative Options/Projects/Policies** based on the Objectives earlier defined and analysis of the potential for joint investment projects in order to manage and develop the shared water resources, in an equitable and reasonable manner, in order to promote, maximise, and share economic benefits, while promoting regional security



# Second Round - You can play now

Please use the **Lego bricks** to discuss in which economic sector to **allocate and re-allocate** resources (natural & financial)



# Third round: Re-Focus based on Future Climate Scenarios



## **NOW NOW:**

You have your **Vision**, your **Objectives**, and *and 3 possible **Alternatives Options** for jointly maximising water-related economic benefits* through a **Transboundary Nexus approach**



Meanwhile: we have received two confidential studies on **Climate Change impacts** in your river basin – from 2 different renowned academic/policy institutions

Both studies predict that the current **intra-annual and inter-annual variability will increase** even further



The studies differ in the conclusions about **main trends**:

- 1) predicts a **substantial decrease** on total rainfall levels (Drought risks)
- 2) predicts an **small-to-medium increase** on the total rainfall levels (Flood risks)



**NEXT:** your discussion will be on: - How do these **climate studies impact your selection of Objectives & Alternatives?** - Does it change anything in your analysis/discussion/options? - If so, what exactly?

# Debriefing by groups

- Please use your last minutes as a group to agree (Players + Observer) on your **main findings/conclusions/ observations**, and be prepared to present it to the wide group
- Always keep in mind that there is **no need to present a consensual view** - and for sure nothing that looks like decision – as this is just an *informal and exploratory exercise*. So just tell what have been the main analyses and discussion points
- The Observer of your group will provide a short summary to the **Plenary**



The End:  
*Tour de Tables*



Thanks for your valuable contributions!