Planning for What's Next: Scenario Planning in Food Security Activities

December 1, 2020 | 8:00 – 9:30 am ET

Everyone must select a language!

- Click “interpretation” at the bottom of your Zoom window and select English, French, or Spanish.
- All slides are available in English, French, and Spanish. Look in the chat box for links to slides in the language of your choice.

Chacun doit choisir une langue !

- Cliquez sur « interprétation » au bas de votre écran Zoom et sélectionnez anglais, espagnol ou français.
- Toutes les diapositives sont disponibles en anglais et en français. Veuillez ouvrir le document de diapositives afin de pouvoir suivre dans la langue de votre choix.

¡Todos deben seleccionar un idioma!

- Haga clic en "interpretación" en la parte inferior de la ventana de Zoom y seleccione inglés, francés o español.
- Todas las diapositivas están disponibles en inglés, francés y español. Busque el enlace en el chat box para abrir las diapositivas en el idioma de su elección.

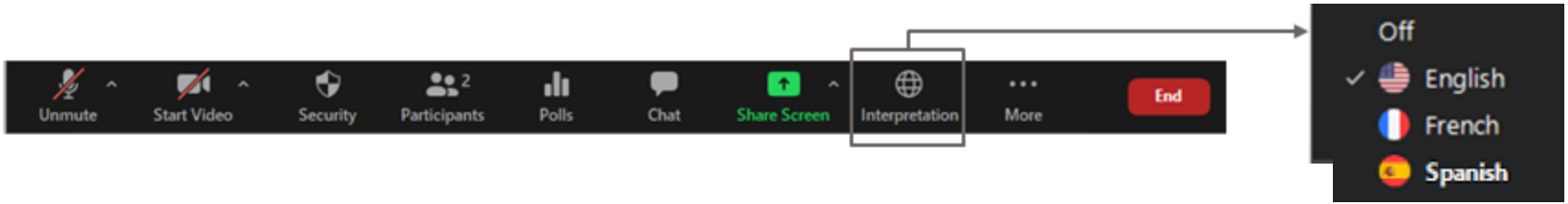


Photo Credit: Jonathan Hyams/Save the Children

Agenda

Time	Activity
8:00 – 8:10	Welcome & Overview
8:10 – 8:30	Setting the Stage: What is "Scenario Planning?"
8:30 – 8:40	Question & Answer
8:40 – 9:20	Breakout Group Discussions
9:20 – 9:30	Report-out, Next Steps, Closing & Evaluation

Welcome & Overview

Webinar Hosts

James Akai
Regional Facilitator, East & Southern Africa, IDEAL

Bianca Flokstra
Strategic Learning and Capacity Development Advisor, IDEAL

Piers Bocock
Sr. Adaptive Management Advisor, IDEAL

Salomon Matchoudo
Regional Facilitator, West & Central Africa, IDEAL

Jenny Morgan,
Sr. Knowledge Management Advisor, Resilience

Setting the Stage: What is “Scenario Planning?"

What is Scenario Planning?

Scenario

"A situation that could possibly happen."

Planning

"The process of deciding how you will do something before you do it."

- MacMillan dictionary

So by definition, "scenario planning" is
the process of deciding how you will [respond] to
a [range of] **situations that could possibly happen.**

What is Scenario Planning?

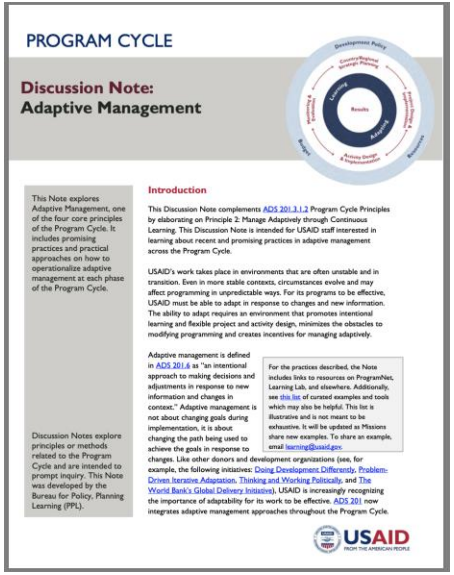
- “A technique of strategic planning that relies on tools and technologies for managing the uncertainties of the future.”
- ”A strategic planning method that some organizations use to make flexible long-term plans.”
- ”Making assumptions on what the future is going to be and how your business environment will change overtime in light of that future.”
- ”A process to explore and prepare for alternative futures.”

Photo credit: Elin Duby/Mercy Corps

What is Scenario Planning?

A fundamental component of USAID's Adaptive Management Approach.

"Systematically examining a range of possibilities in a given country or region enables the Agency to address the range of contextual changes that may occur in the course of strategy implementation. "



PROGRAM CYCLE

Discussion Note: Adaptive Management

This Note explores Adaptive Management, one of the four core principles of the Program Cycle. It includes promising practices and practical approaches on how to operationalize adaptive management at each phase of the Program Cycle.

Discussion Notes explore principles or methods related to the Program Cycle and are intended to prompt inquiry. This Note was developed by the Bureau for Policy, Planning Learning (PPL).

Introduction

This Discussion Note complements ADS 201.3.1.2 Program Cycle Principles by elaborating on Principle 2: Manage Adaptively through Continuous Learning. This Discussion Note is intended for USAID staff interested in learning about recent and promising practices in adaptive management across the Program Cycle.

USAID's work takes place in environments that are often unstable and in transition. Even in more stable contexts, circumstances evolve and may affect programming in unpredictable ways. For its programs to be effective, USAID must be able to adapt in response to changes and new information. The ability to adapt requires an environment that promotes intentional learning and flexible project and activity design, minimizes the obstacles to modifying programming and creates incentives for managing adaptively.

Adaptive management is defined in ADS 201.6 as "an intentional approach to making decisions and adjustments in response to new information and changes in context." Adaptive management is not about changing goals during implementation, it is about changing the path being used to achieve the goals in response to changes. Like other donors and development organizations (see, for example, the following initiatives: Doing Development Differently, Problem-Driven Iterative Adaptation, Thinking and Working Politically, and The World Bank's Global Delivery Initiative), USAID is increasingly recognizing the importance of adaptability for its work to be effective. ADS 201 now integrates adaptive management approaches throughout the Program Cycle.

For the practices described, the Note includes links to resources on ProgramNet, Learning Lab, and elsewhere. Additionally, see this list of curated examples and tools which may also be helpful. This list is illustrative and is not meant to be exhaustive. It will be updated as Missions share new examples. To share an example, email learning@usaid.gov.

USAID FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Link to resource

USAID FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

GUIDANCE FOR BHA DEVELOPMENT FOOD SECURITY ACTIVITY PARTNERS WORKING IN COVID-19 AFFECTED OPERATING ENVIRONMENTS

July 7, 2020

Link to resource

A directive for BHA Food Security Activity Partners

"Engage in regular scenario planning to keep pace with and adapt activities, interventions, and operations in line with a rapidly changing context on the ground, including anticipating and preparing for possible worst-case scenarios."

What is Scenario Planning?

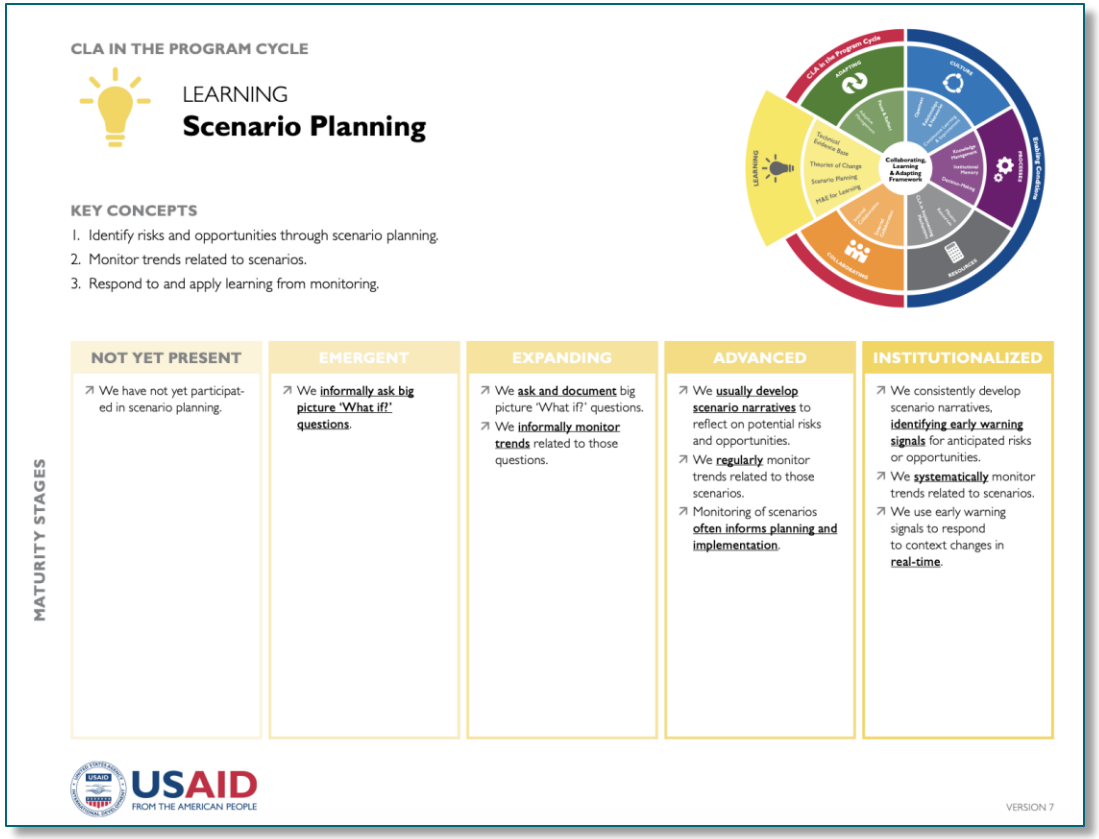
An important subcomponent of USAID's CLA (Collaborating, Learning, Adapting) approach.

KEY CONCEPTS

Identify risks and opportunities through scenario planning.

Monitor trends related to scenarios.

Respond to and apply learning from monitoring.



Why do Scenario Planning?

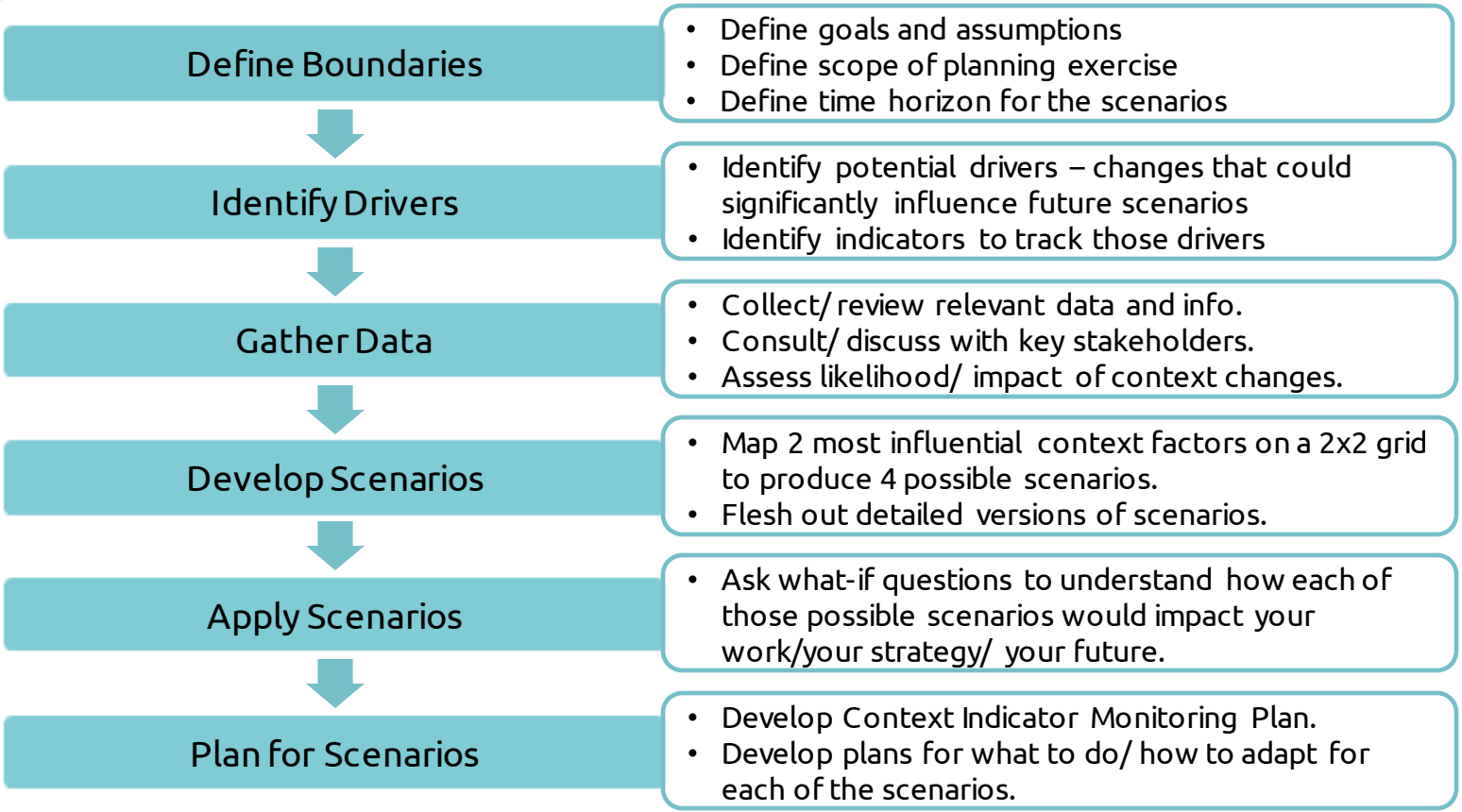
It supports overall activity effectiveness.

To prepare for changes in COVID-19 context.

It is strongly encouraged by USAID.

- The future is uncertain; our work often depends on conditions beyond our control.
- While we cannot control changes in external conditions, effective organizations are prepared to adapt to such changes.
- Intentional scenario planning allows us to create monitoring systems to identify early warning signals that conditions may be changing.
- An organizational culture that embraces Scenario Planning is better prepared to be adaptive in planning and implementation.
- To strengthen likelihood of long-term sustainability.

How do you do Scenario Planning?



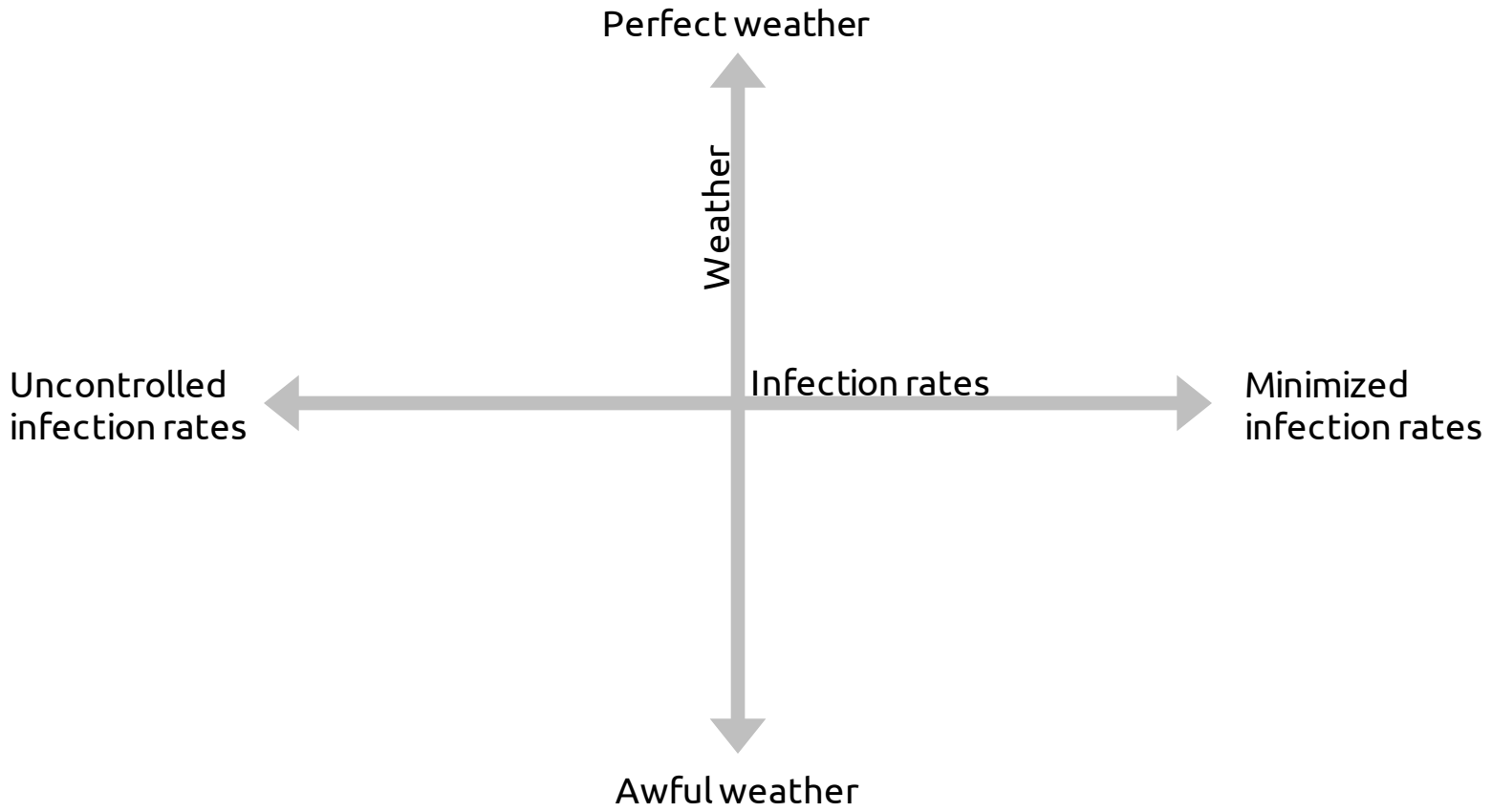
Rapid Example

Planning a Wedding 3 months from now

Define Boundaries	• Plan a wedding for 100 people • Uncertainties about COVID evolution. • Wedding is in 3 months without infections.
Identify Drivers	• COVID infection rates • Mobility Restrictions • Locations to host? Weather in 3 months?
Gather Data	• Infection rate trends in the area • Ask potential guests about comfort level • What locations could host outside?
Develop Scenarios	• What scenarios can we imagine if our top 2 context factors are COVID infection rate trends and weather conditions?
Apply Scenarios	• Ask what-if questions to understand how each of those possible scenarios would impact our wedding planning.
Plan for Scenarios	• Monitor infection rates/trends; plan for weather; consider virtual options; find locations with indoor/ outdoor options

Rapid Example

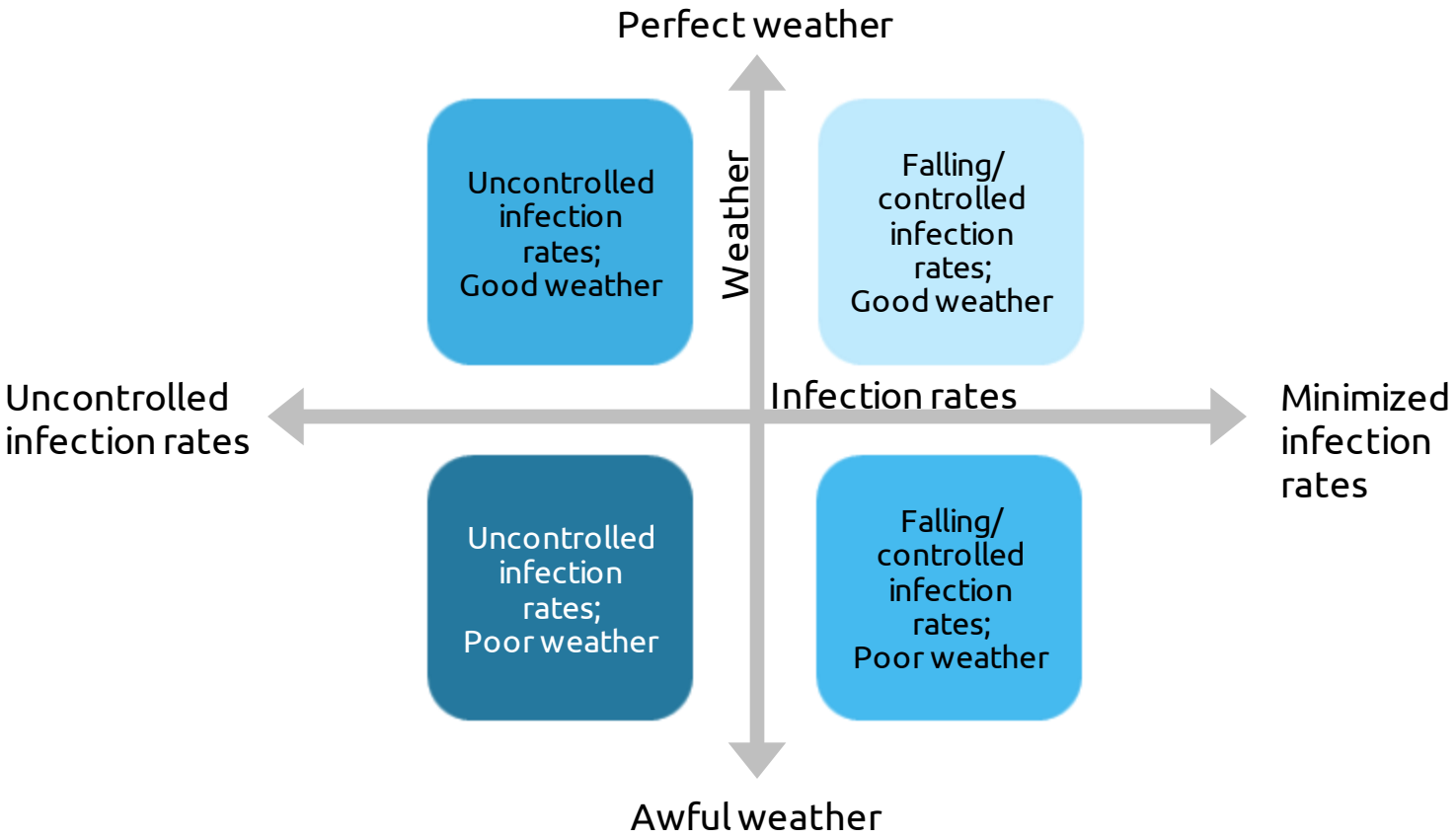
Planning a Wedding 3 months from now



Rapid Example

Planning a Wedding 3 months from now

Context-based Scenarios



Rapid Example

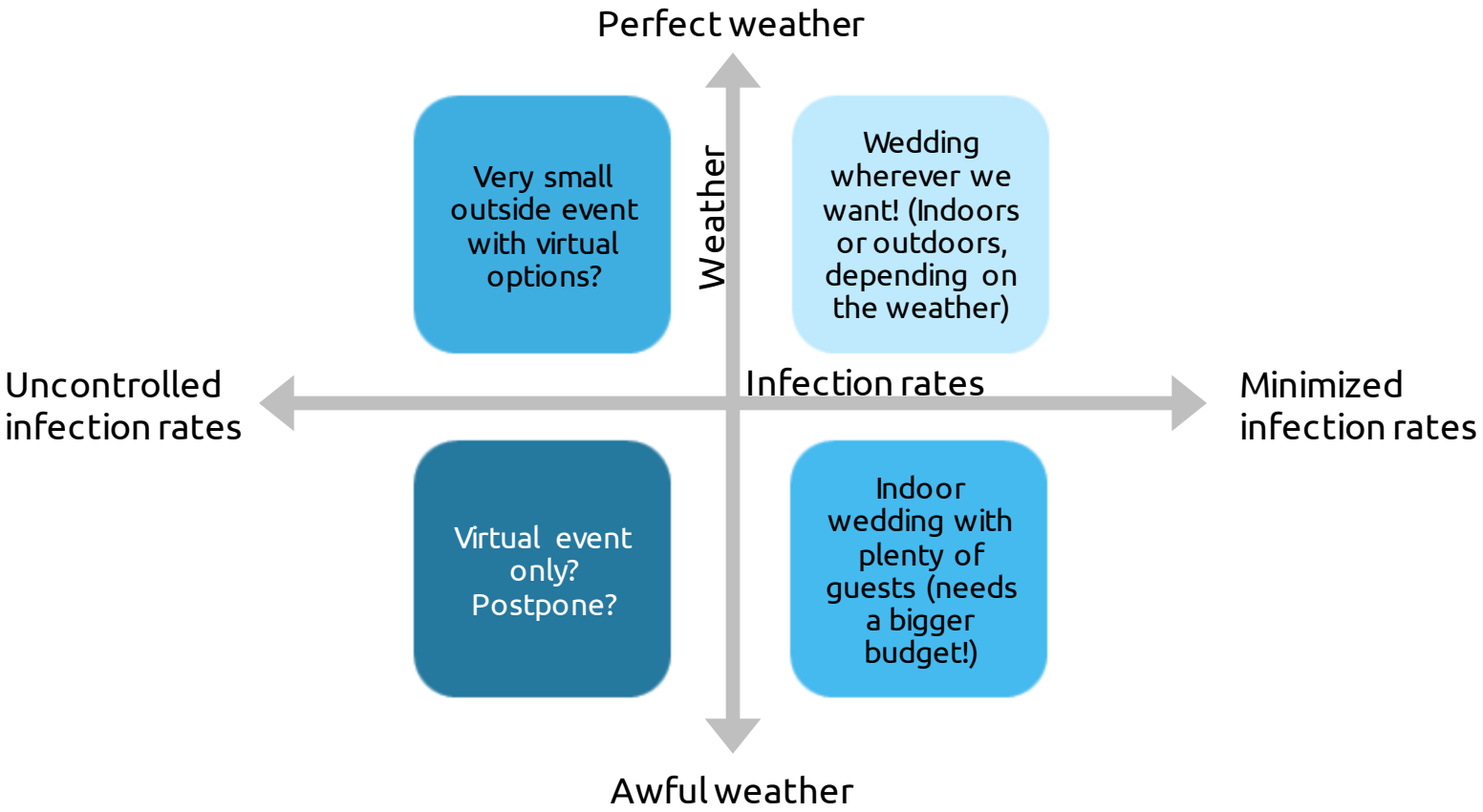
Planning a Wedding 3 months from now

Define Boundaries	• Plan a wedding for 100 people • Uncertainties about COVID evolution. • Wedding is in 3 months without infections.
Identify Drivers	• COVID infection rates • Mobility Restrictions • Locations to host? Weather in 3 months?
Gather Data	• Infection rate trends in the area • Ask potential guests about comfort level • What locations could host outside?
Develop Scenarios	• What scenarios can we imagine if our top 2 context factors are COVID infection rate trends and weather conditions?
Apply Scenarios	• **Ask what-if questions to understand how each of those possible scenarios would impact our wedding planning.**
Plan for Scenarios	

Rapid Example

Planning a Wedding 3 months from now

Context-based Implications



Rapid Example

Planning a Wedding 3 months from now

Define Boundaries	• Plan a wedding for 100 people • Uncertainties about COVID evolution. • Wedding is in 3 months without infections.
Identify Drivers	• COVID infection rates • Mobility Restrictions • Locations to host? Weather in 3 months?
Gather Data	• Infection rate trends in the area • Ask potential guests about comfort level • What locations could host outside?
Develop Scenarios	• What scenarios can we imagine if our top 2 context factors are COVID infection rate trends and weather conditions?
Apply Scenarios	• Ask what-if questions to understand how each of those possible scenarios would impact our wedding planning.
Plan for Scenarios	• **Monitor infection rates/trends; plan for weather; consider virtual options; find locations with indoor/ outdoor options**

Rapid Example

Planning a Wedding 3 months from now

Planning Table Summary

Context Monitoring	Scenario	Implications	What do we need to learn? Prepare for?	What's our Plan?
Falling/ controlled Infection Rates; Good Weather	Best case! Marry wherever we choose!	Flexibility on location, number of guests – is there a location that could handle outdoors or indoors?	What locations could be available if infection rates continue to drop? Do they have indoor and outdoor options?	Identify 2-3 affordable locations with flexibility of indoor/ outdoor options no matter what the weather.
Falling/ controlled Infection Rates; Poor Weather	Good enough! Indoor wedding.	Can have more people, but indoors – more expensive?		
Uncontrolled Infection Rates; Good Weather	Cautious celebration – small, outside	Need to find an outdoor location for fewer people.	What locations would still allow a wedding, and could host outside, no matter the weather?	Identify 2-3 locations where a small wedding *could* be hosted outdoors.
Uncontrolled Infection Rates; Poor Weather	Worst case! No in-person guests.	Consider postponing.	Would we consider a virtual guest list, or would it be better to postpone?	Ask ourselves what's more important, and how long we'd be willing to wait?

Common Principles

- **Acceptance** that our success or failure may be linked to factors beyond our control.
- **Foresight** to be deliberate to understand context factors that could impact our intentions.
- **Intentionality** about planning for multiple scenarios.
- **Preparation** to adapt is better than just flexible to react.
- **Learning** from our experience, while including others' perspectives.

Questions & Answers

Breakout Group Discussions

6. Next Steps & Closing

- Recording and other event resources will be shared soon.
- Please fill out the poll to help us define next steps!
- Please fill out the evaluation to help us improve!
- Subscribe to the FSN Network newsletter!

– see links in the chat –

Thank you!
Merci !
¡Gracias!

This presentation is made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents are the responsibility of the Implementer-led Design, Evidence, Analysis and Learning (IDEAL) Activity and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.