

# Fit work to people – What policy instruments work in occupational health and safety?

**PUBLIC AND OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH  
SEMINAR SERIES**

**Massey University Wellington**

**Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> March 2013, 12.30 pm to 1.30 pm**

**PETER HASLE, PROFESSOR**

CENTRE FOR INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION  
DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT  
AALBORG UNIVERSITY COPENHAGEN



**AALBORG UNIVERSITY**  
DENMARK



19 2 2006

# Challenges for contemporary occupational health and safety policy

- Limits for command-control enforcement
  - Fast social and technological development
  - Unambiguous standards difficult
  - Complex control measures
  - Limited resources for enforcement
- A more complex working environment
  - Safety concerned with not only machine guards but complex interaction between technology, organisation and humans
  - Chemical risks moves towards exposures to many chemical at low levels
  - Physiological and psychosocial risks derive from complex interactions between physiological and psychosocial strain, work organisation and individual factors

# Searching for answers

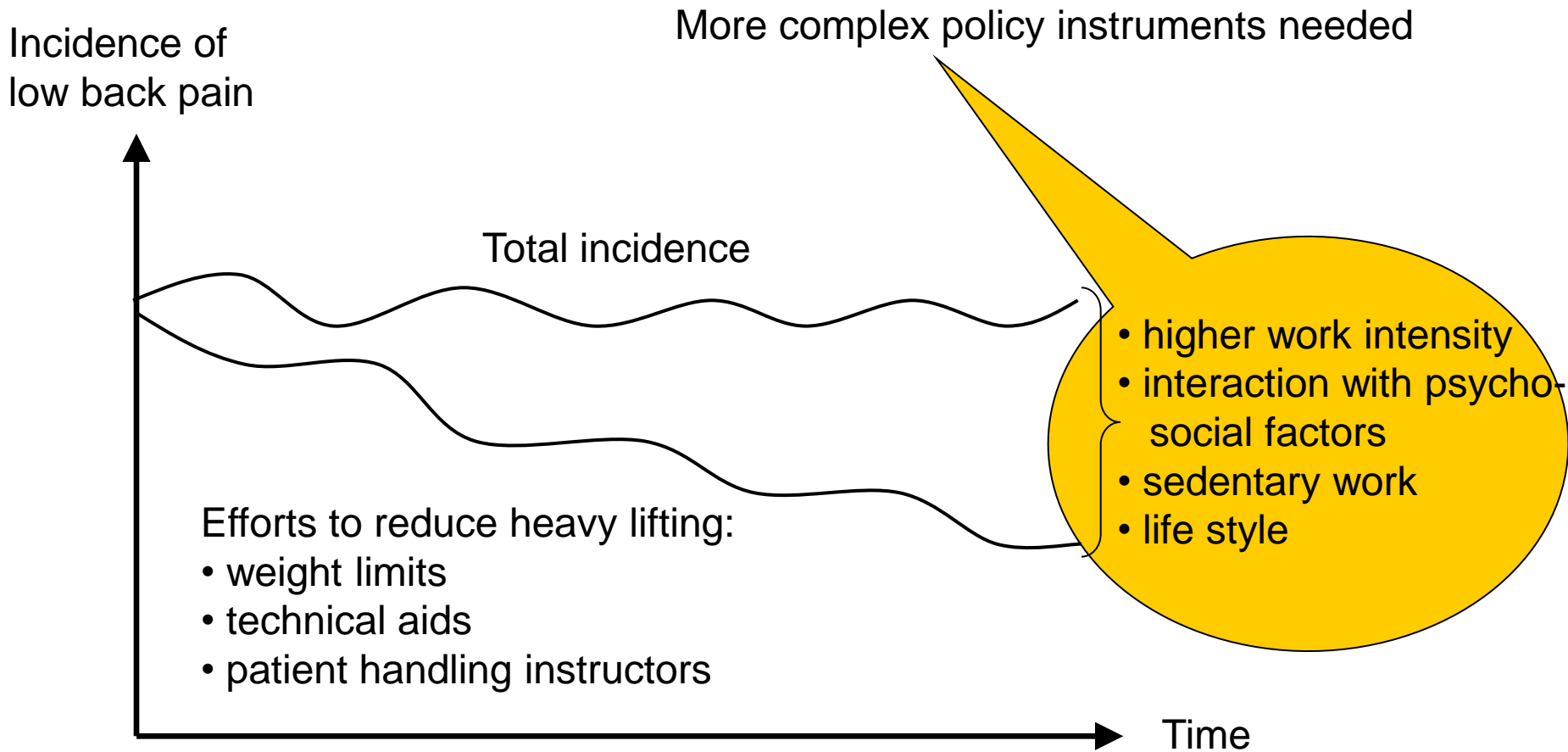
## Reflexive regulation

- Introduced by the Roben's report in 70ties in most European countries
- From content to proces standards – OHS management, risk assessment, OHS representatives
- Too much proces considered bureaucratic
- Difficult to prove effect
- Low-hanging fruits are harvested

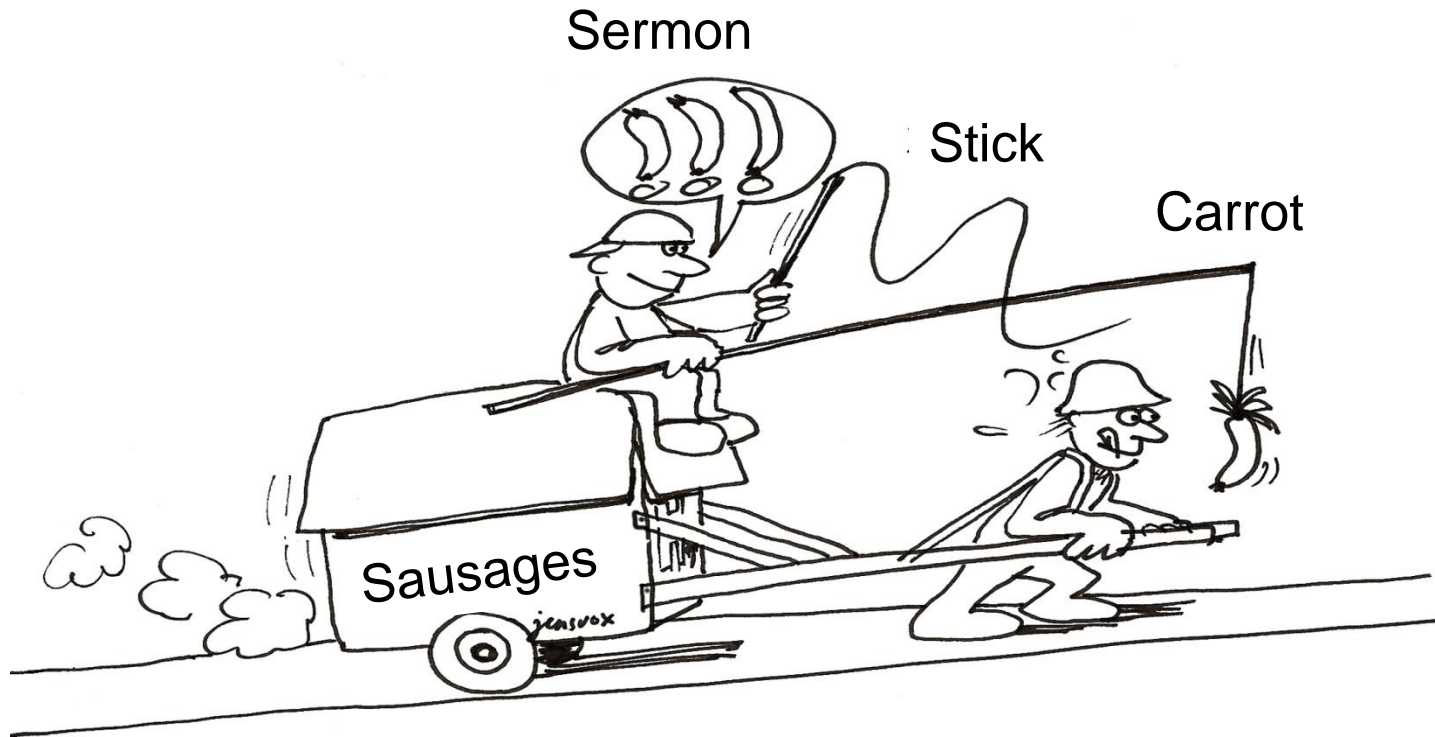
## A need to develop new strategies

- Without throwing the baby out with the bath water
- Enforcement, command-control and reflexive regulation still needed

# An example: From heavy lifting to complex interactions



# A typology of policy instruments



Vedung, 1998

# Policy instruments

## **Regulation** (stick):

- Government laws, enforcement and punishment

## **Incentives** (carrot):

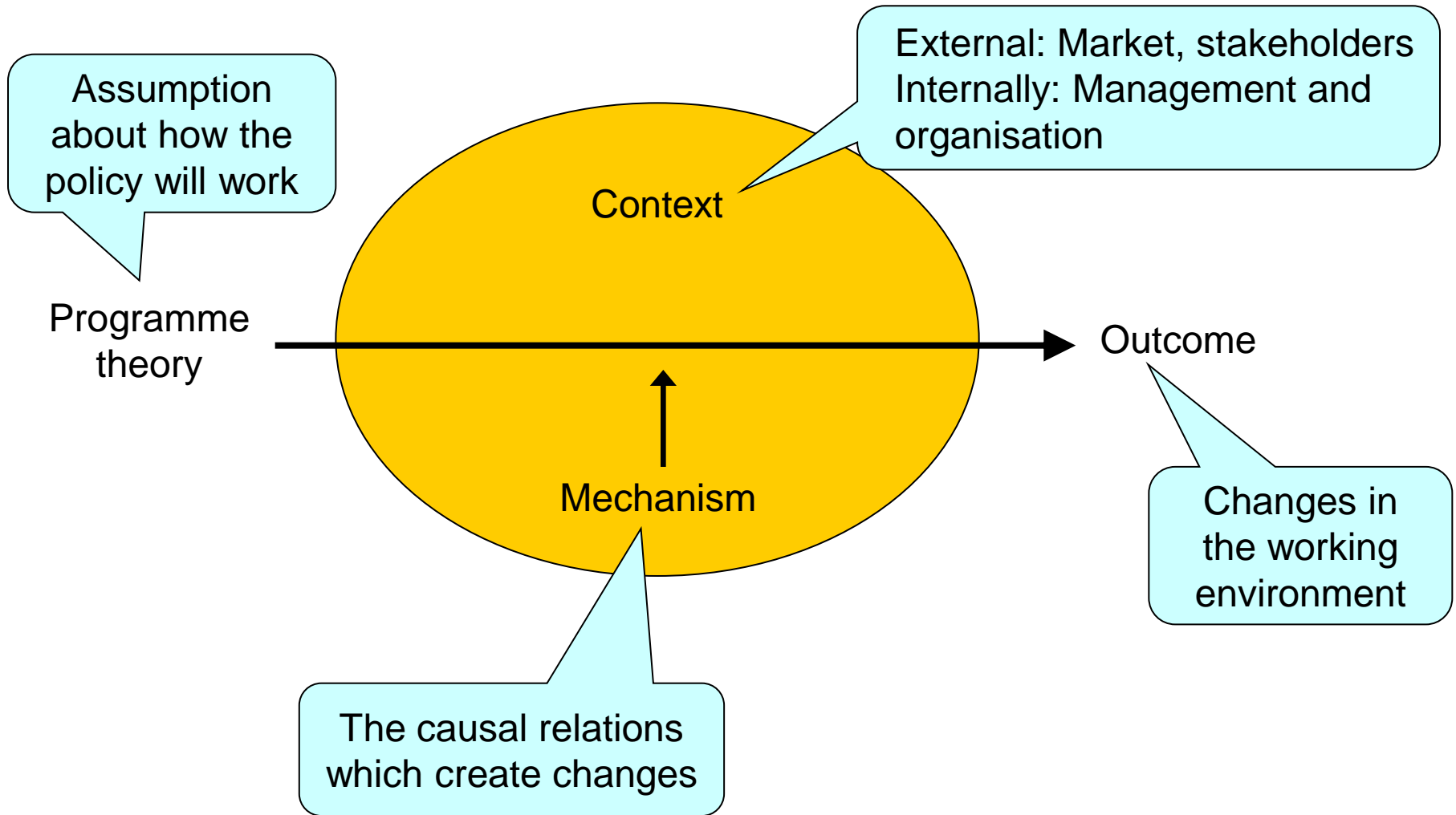
- Reduced insurance fees, certification releases from inspections, branding

## **Information** (Sermon):

- Training, dissemination of information

Most policy programmes include elements of all instruments

# Realistic evaluation – a possibility to learn how policy programmes work





# Important characteristics for policy programmes

- Based on theory
- Programmes are actively transformed by stakeholders
- Long causal chains where links have consequences for outcome
- Mechanisms are not linear and have numerous feed back loops
- Mechanisms are embedded in several partly overlapping social systems
- Programmes are opens systems changing the conditions they meet

## Conclusion:

- Programmes are complex which make them difficult to study

Pawson, 2006

# Complexity of mechanisms in policy programmes

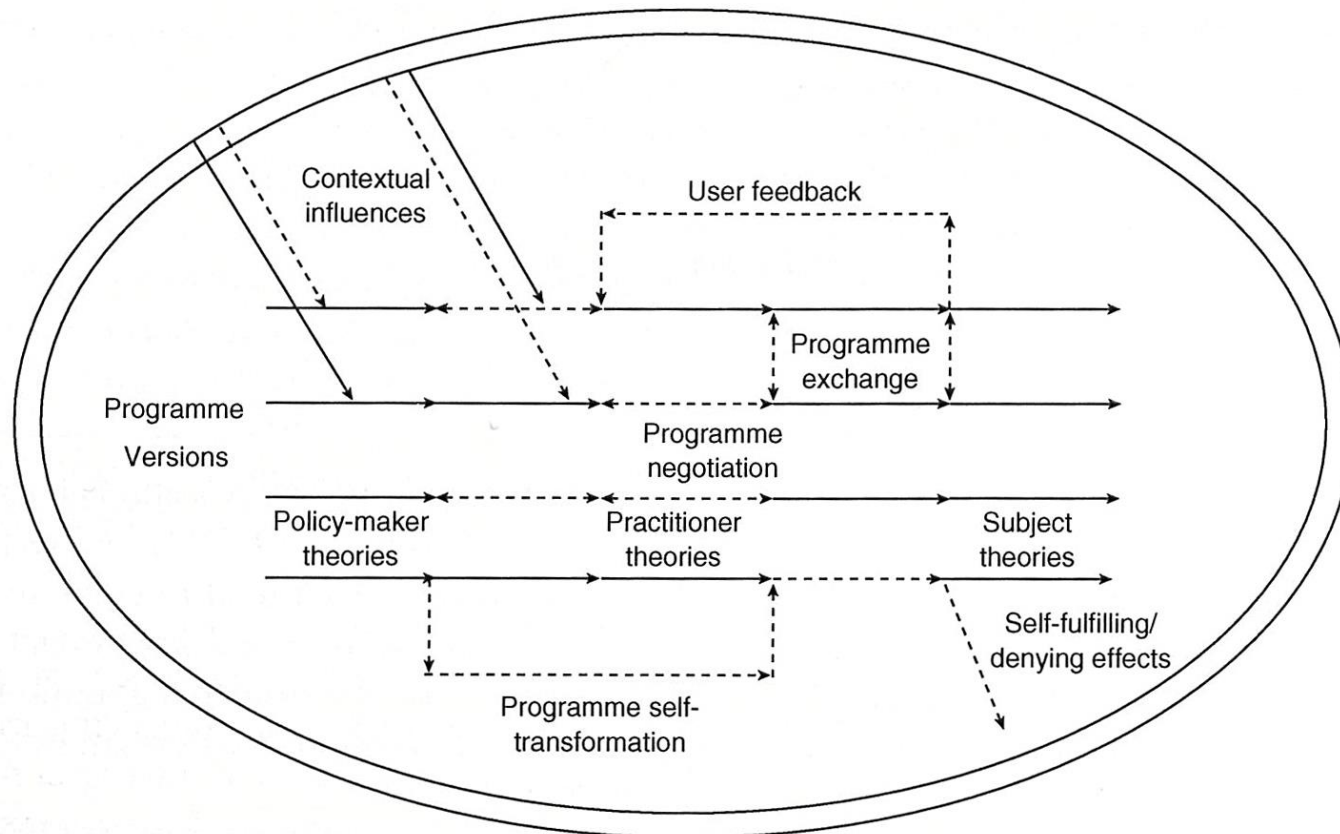


FIGURE 2.7 Programme complexity

Pawson, 2006

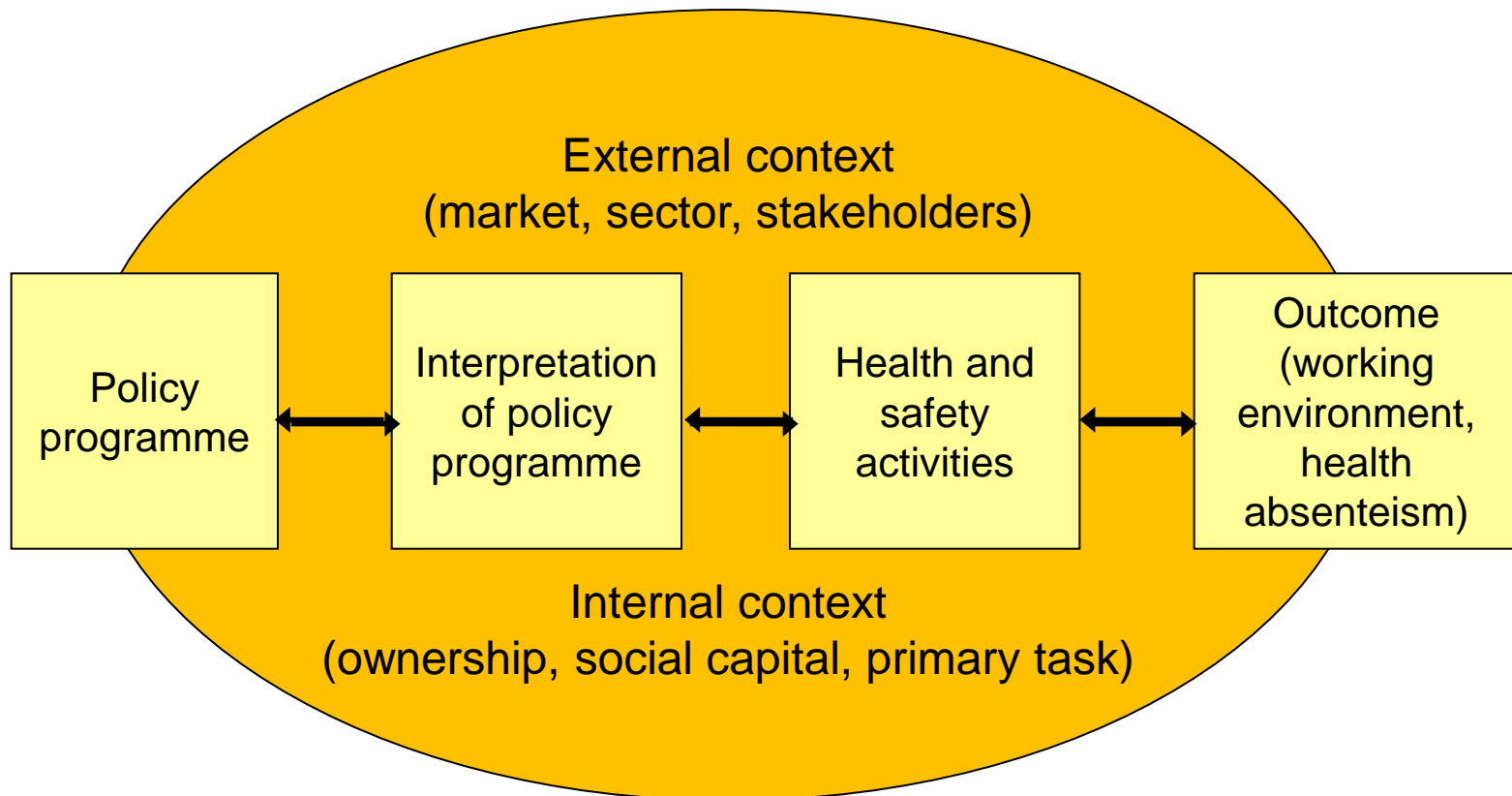
# The bio-medical paradigm dominate research in policy instruments

- Randomized control trials the golden standard
- Systematic Cochrane reviews where only randomization or similar methods count
- Useful and necessary for many kinds of research – in particular in development of medicine
- Policy programmes and many organisational interventions in companies cannot be randomized
- Research in such programmes would therefore be classified as insufficient and therefore rejected in reviews

# The need for evidence about policy instruments

- Evidence about policy instruments constitute the best available knowledge at any given time
- Recognition of social interventions complexity and non-linear causal relations
- Rephrase the question
  - From: whether it works?
  - To: why, how, when and for whom it works?
- A data collection strategy building on multiple methods and both quantitative and qualitative data
- An analytical strategy where conclusions like a puzzle are build on many pieces which fit together (or the opposite)

# An analytical model for health and safety policy programmes

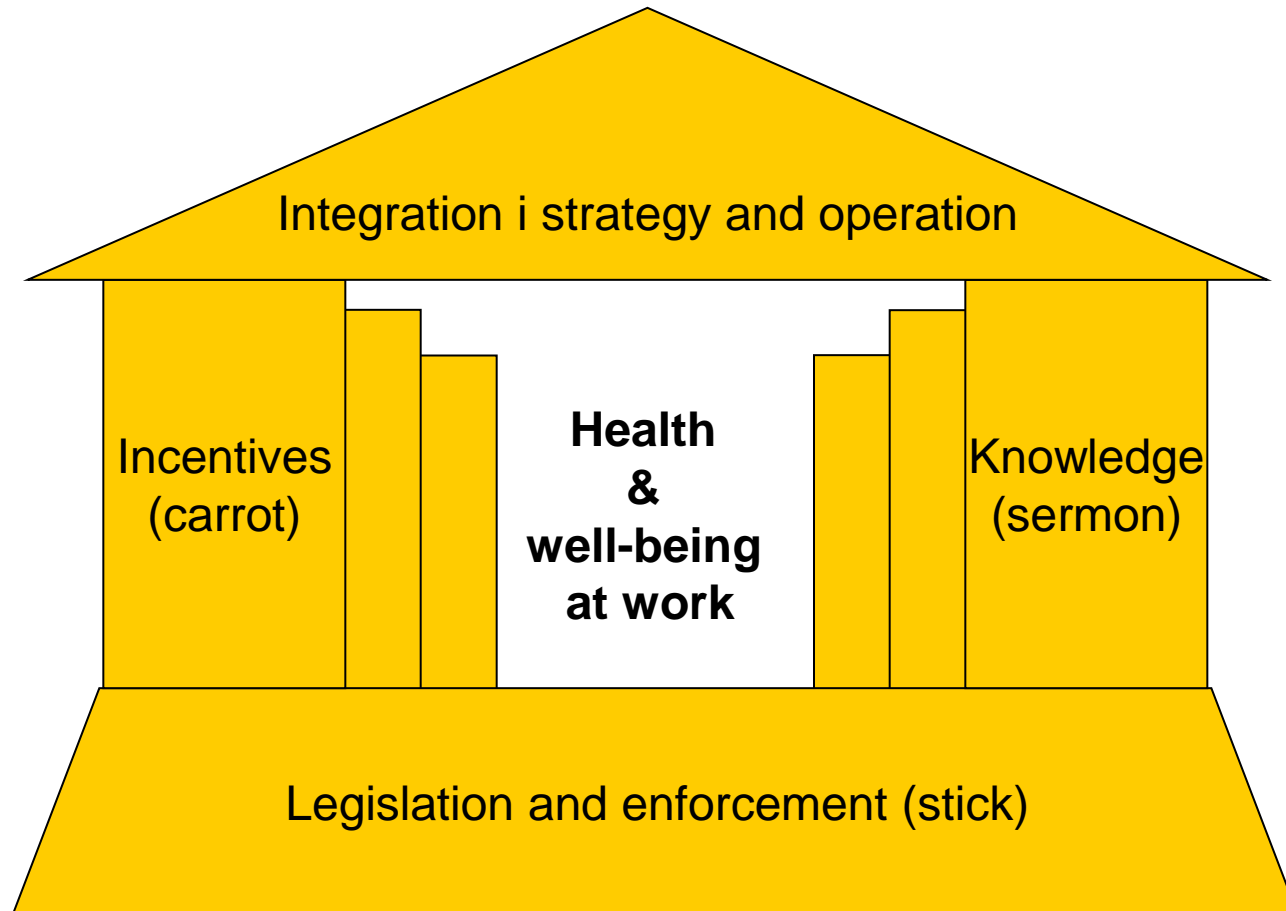


# Implications for the strategy for effective OHSpolicy programmes

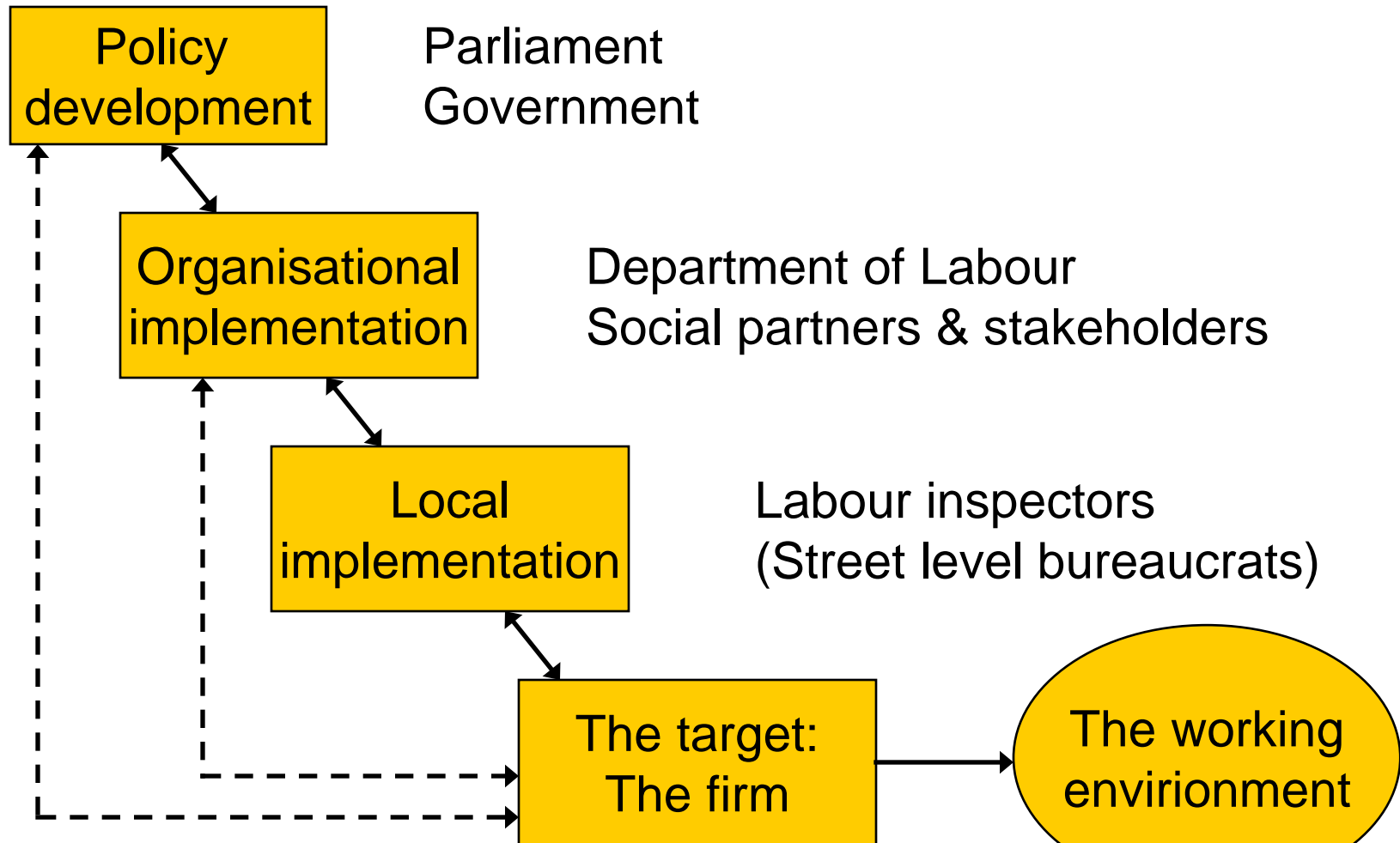
An effective policy programme must build on

- A multi-pronged effort with combination of several instruments
- Elements of both stick, carrot and sermon
- Sensemaking in firms requires integration in firm strategy and operation
- A certain level of patience

# A holistic strategy for occupational health and safety policies

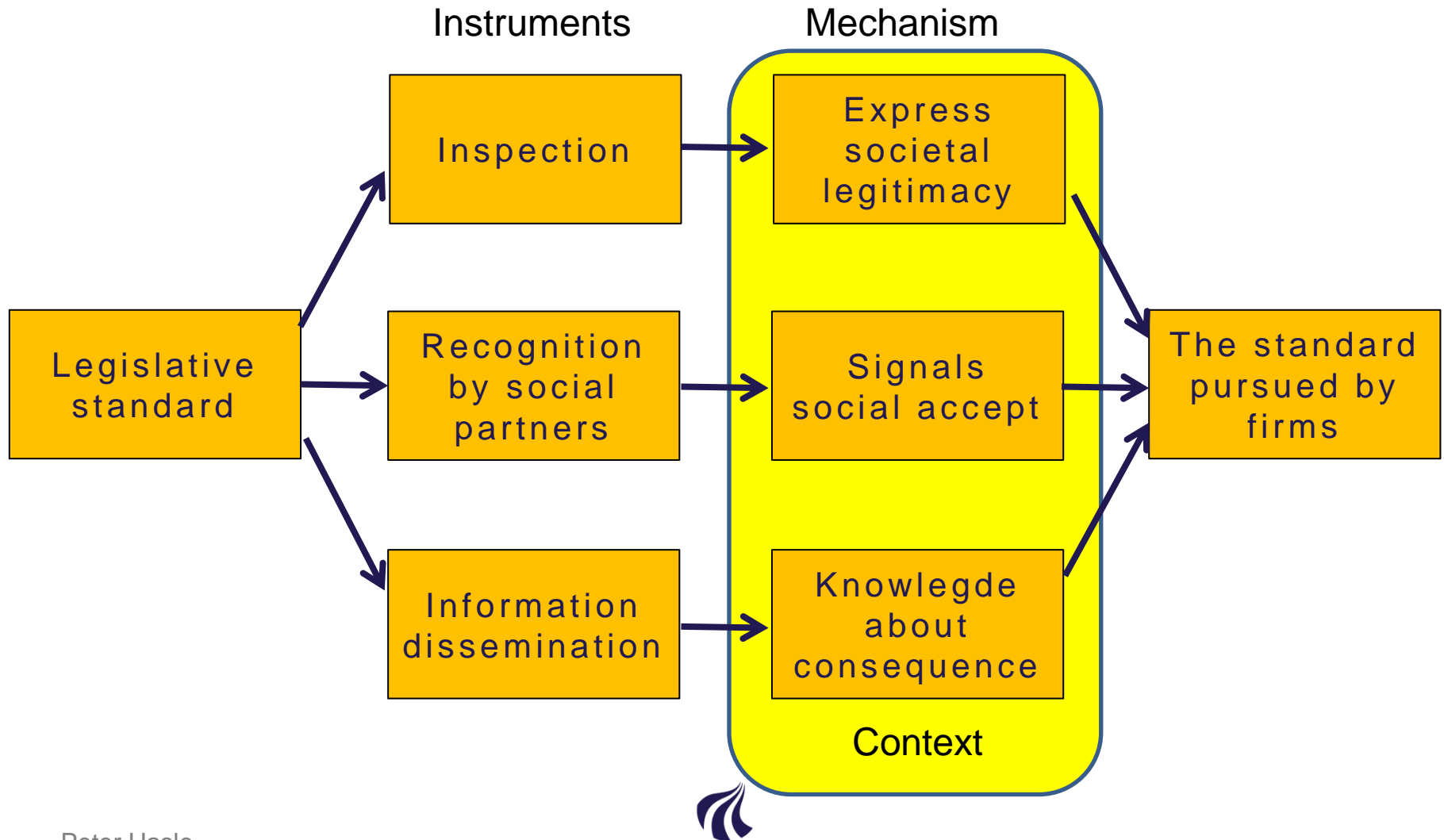


# Implementation of policy programmes

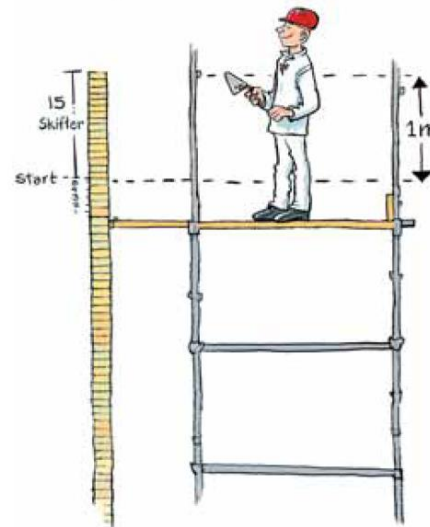
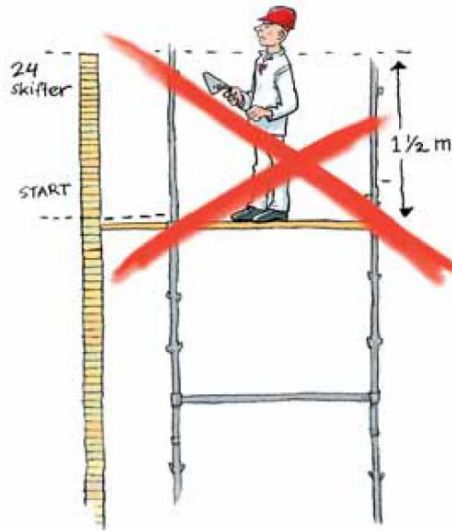
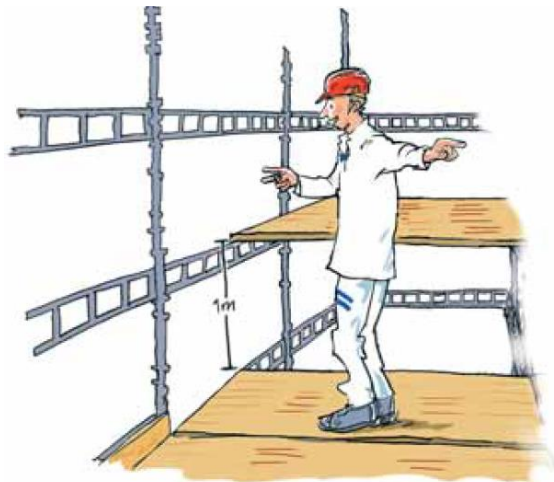




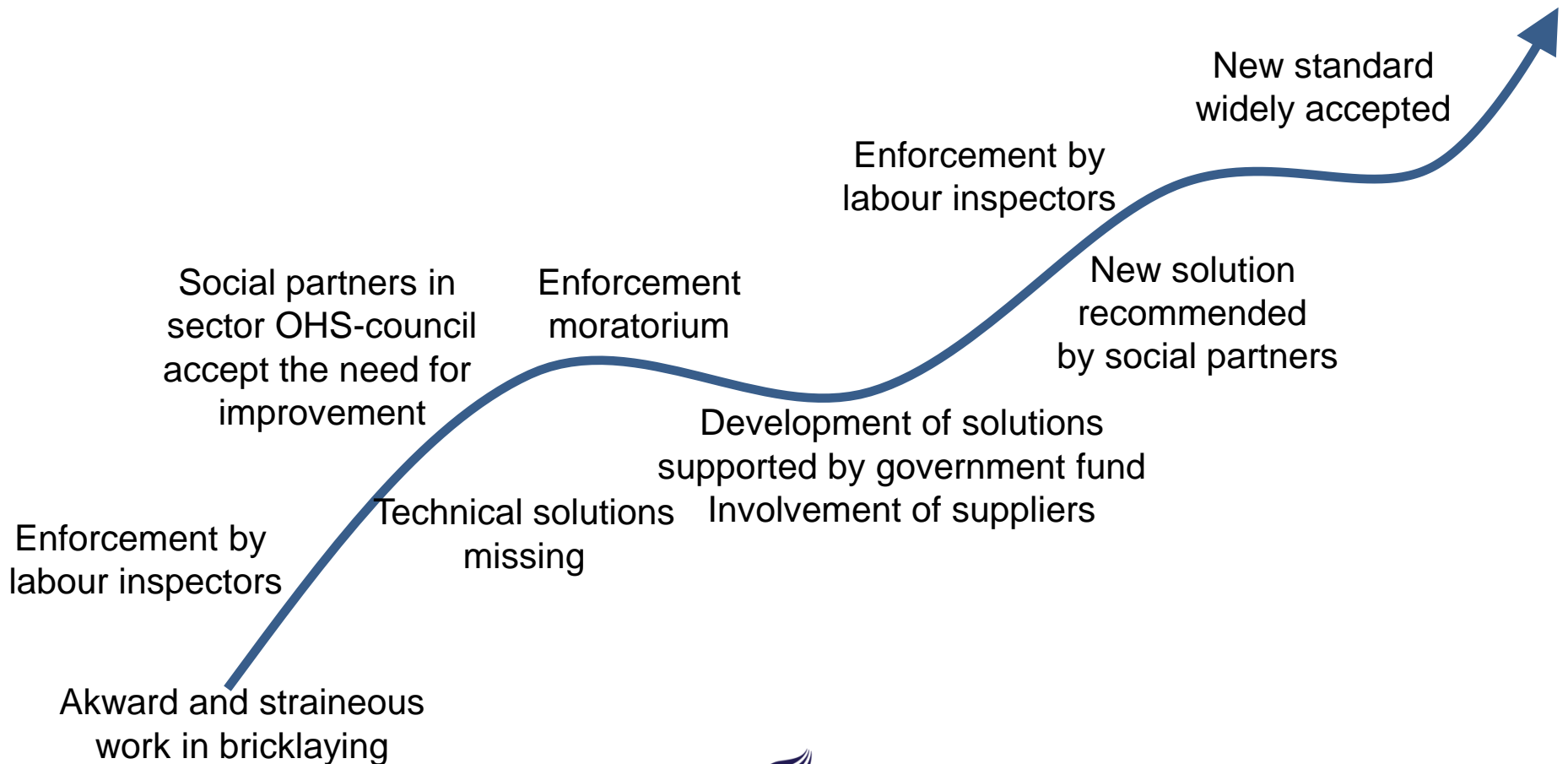
# How to implement an occupational health and safety standard



# Developing a new standard for bricklaying



# The road to a new standard for bricklaying



# The policy instruments and mechanisms in the bricklaying case

## A combination of policy instruments

### Regulation (stick):

- Improvement notices from labour inspectors
- Enforcement moratorium
- Improvement notices based on the new solutions

### Incentive (carrot):

- Government fund support development of new technical solution

### Knowledge (sermon):

- A code of practice with info on technical aids and work methods
- Disseminated through several platforms by all involved stakeholders

## Mechanisms

### Coercion:

- Initial improvement notices
- Renewed enforcement after solution developed

### Norms:

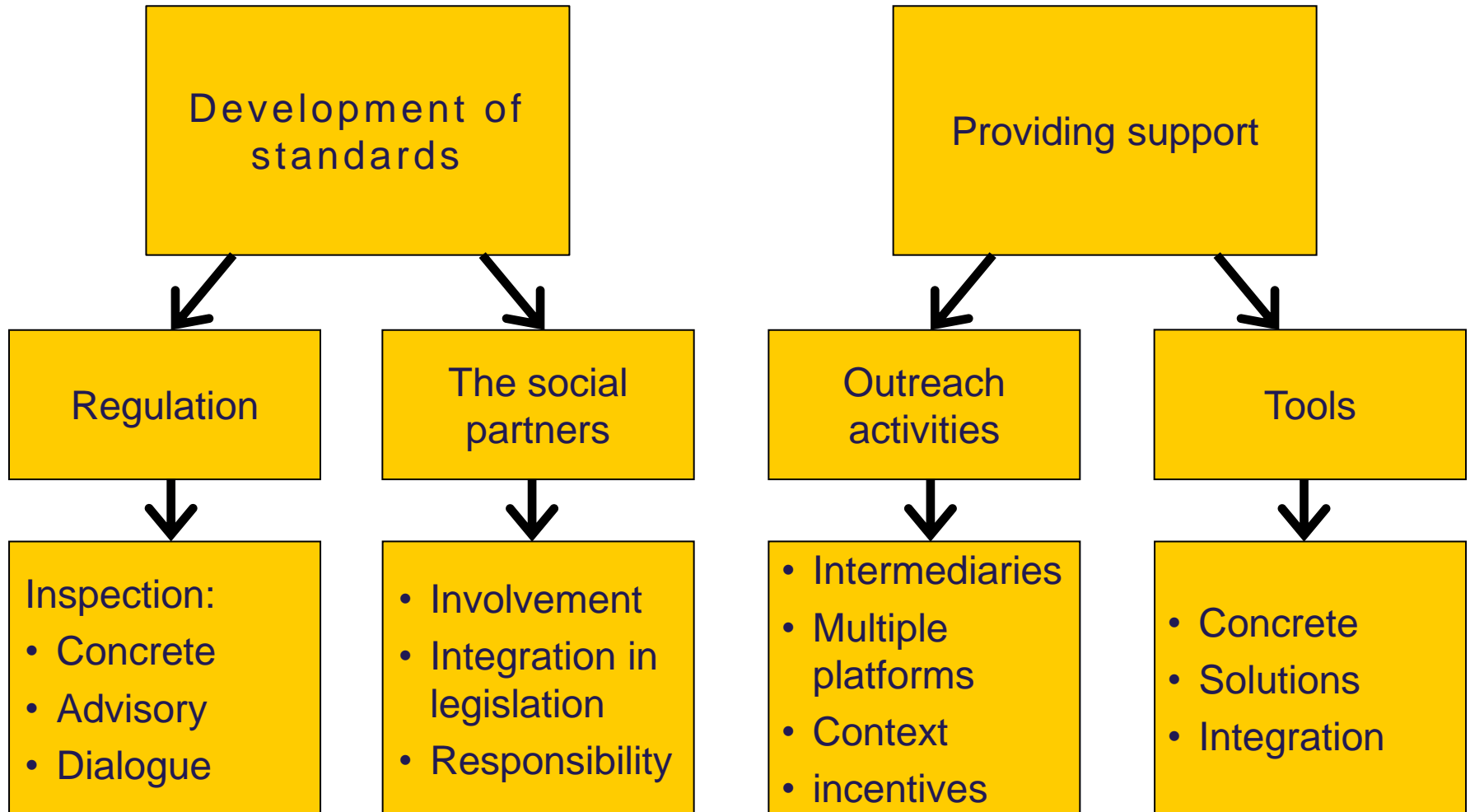
- Joint message from employers and unions signals that the new solution is both ethical responsible and economically viable

### Imitation:

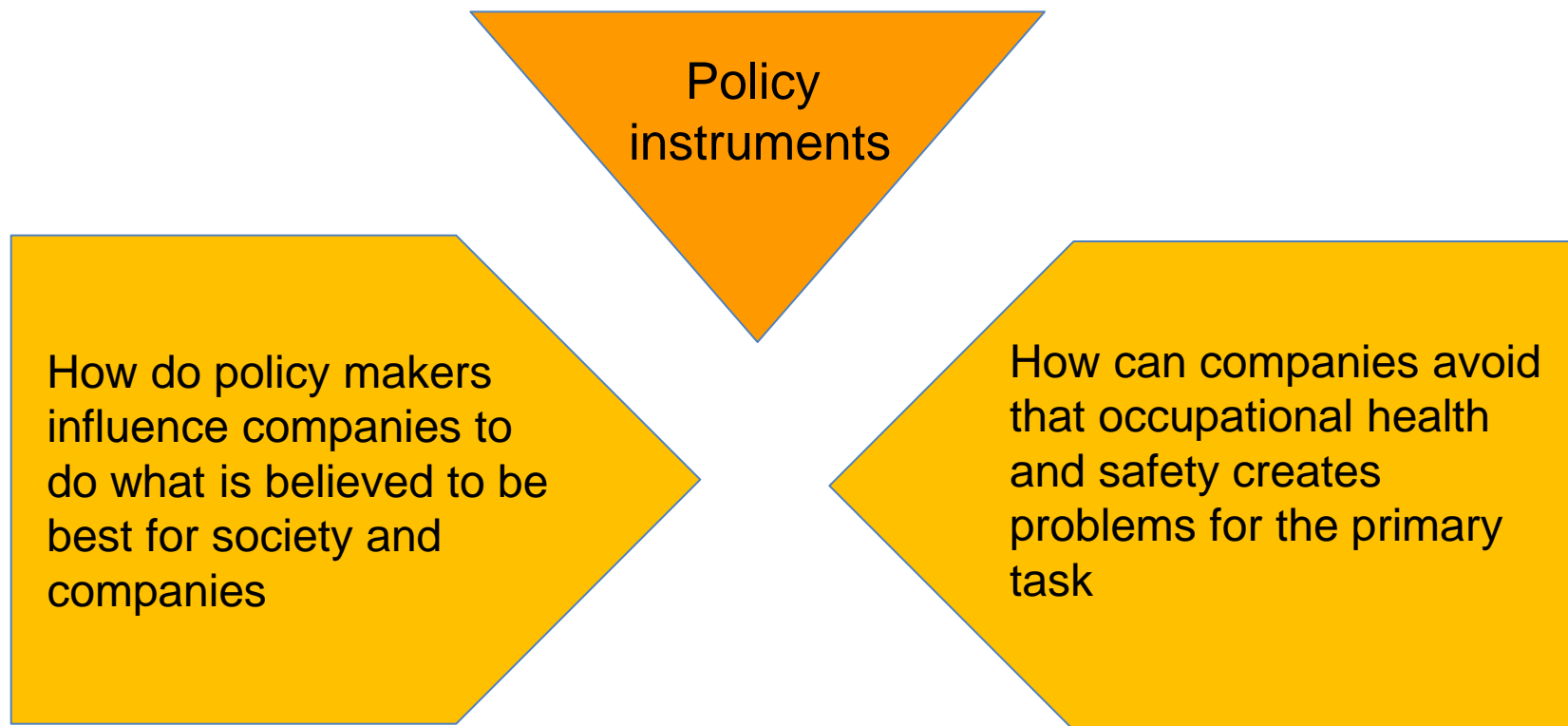
- Owner-managers and bricklayers observe still more cases with the new solutions being applied and get convinced that it is the way to do bricklaying in the sector



# Establishing an effective system



# Looking from outside – looking from inside



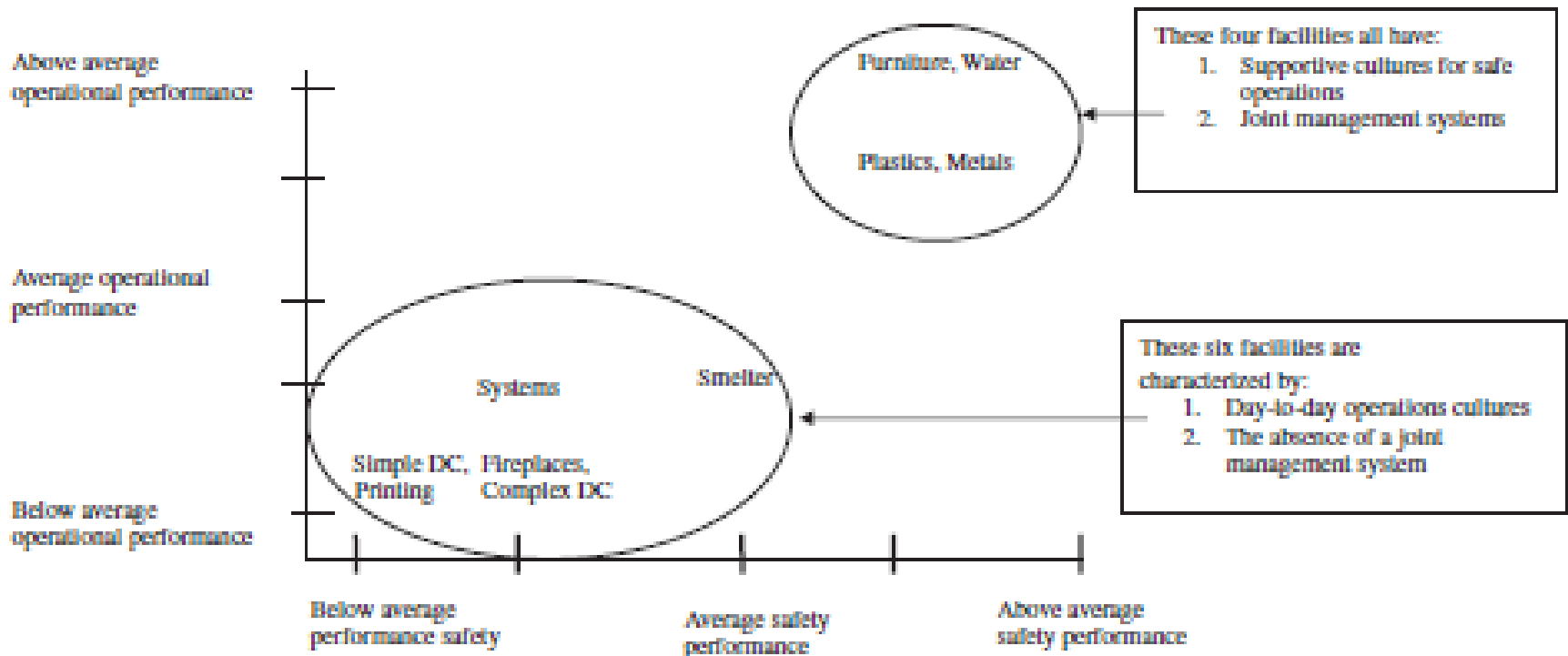
# The weak link: Integration in strategy and operation

- Traditionally of low priority for policy makers
- Each ministry and department has its own silo

From industry perspective:

- Every organisation created in order to execute a primary task
- Occupational health and safety just a peripheral issue which mostly is considered as hassle
- OHS placed in a sidecar
- Key question: what can health and safety efforts offer which contributes to our primary task?

# Integration of safety and operation



Veltri et al., Safety Science, 2013



# Collaboration about the primary task

## - a joint focal point for performance and the working environment

- Employers have an interest in performance which is secured through the execution of the primary task
- Employees have an interest in a meaningful work which is also secured through the primary task
- The primary task is the foundation for organisational social capital:
  - The ability of management and employees to collaborate about solution of joint tasks
- A need to develop OHS programmes which contribute to execution of the primary task and to improved collaboration

# Special needs for small businesses

- Higher risks and few resources (time, attention and money)
- Dominated by owner-managers fight for survival
- Expensive to reach

Development of small business programmes:

- Practical
- Positive
- Personal contact
- Integrate business goals
- Use trusted intermediaries



**Thanks for your attention**  
**Peter Hasle**  
**hasle@business.aau.dk**