

Congo Basin Science Initiative

Research and capacity building to confront
the climate and biodiversity crises and
promote sustainable development



PHIL WOODS/MP/GETTY

A warden with an orphaned mountain gorilla in the Virunga National Park sanctuary in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Congo Basin rainforest – invest US\$150 million in science

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The world's second-largest rainforest is key to limiting climate change – it needs urgent study and protection.

Earth's second-largest expanse of tropical forest lies in central Africa, in the Congo Basin. The region supports the livelihoods of 80 million people. The rainfall that the forest generates as far away as the Sahel and the Ethiopian highlands supports a further 300 million rural Africans.

forest's ability to absorb carbon dioxide is slowing as temperatures rise¹. Deforestation, although lower than elsewhere in the tropics over recent decades, has led to the loss of more than 500,000 hectares of forest in 2019 alone (see go.nature.com/3drtxm9e). Without new policies, this is expected to increase.

Congo Basin Science Initiative responds to the call



- Large group of scientists, mostly from the region, are working together to plan to deliver:
 - An integrated understanding of the Congo Basin in a changing Earth system
 - Training a new generation of scientists
 - Deliver scientific evidence to policy makers and civil society to benefit sustainable development



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- Inspired by the 10-year \$200 million Large Scale Biosphere Atmosphere Experiment in the Amazon
 - 120 interlinked projects, trained 7,000 MSc level and PhD level scientists.

Governance

- A Steering Committee
- Two co-Chairs
- A Secretariat at Leeds University in UK
- A Secretariat at the University of Kinshasa in DRC



Scientific challenges

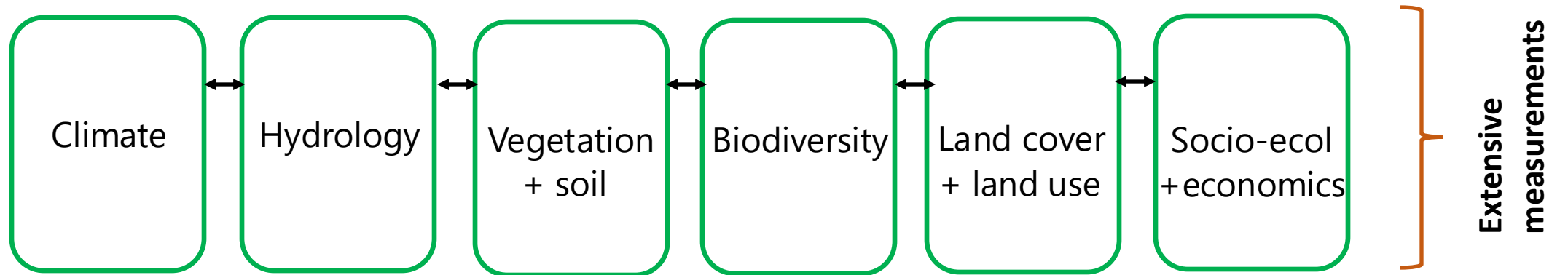
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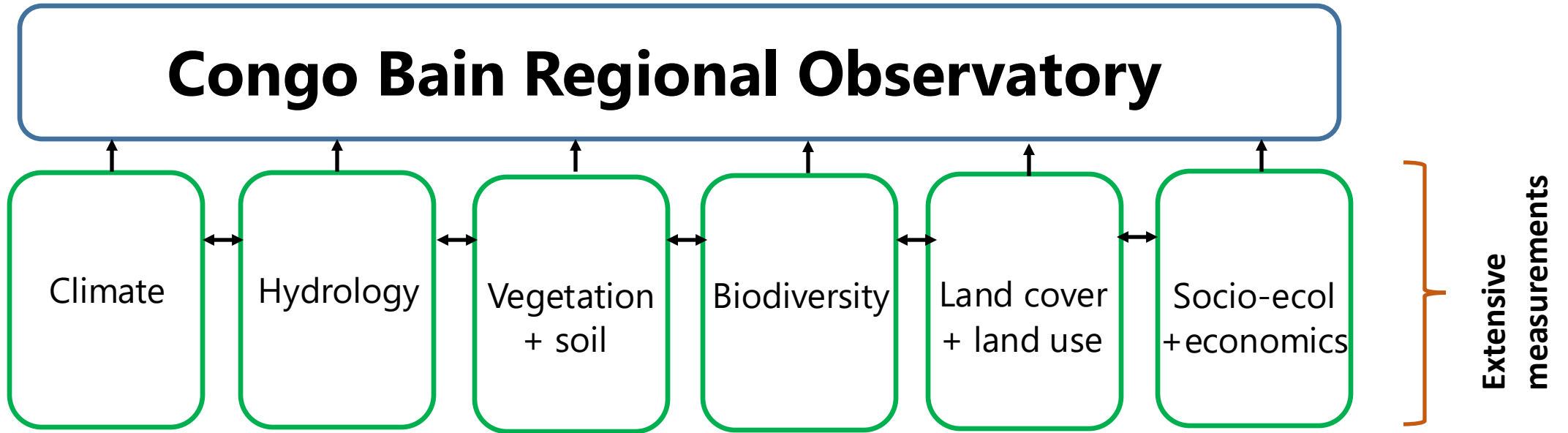
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3. How do these dynamic ecosystems, their biodiversity, and the climate of the Congo Basin interact with global, regional and local human activity?

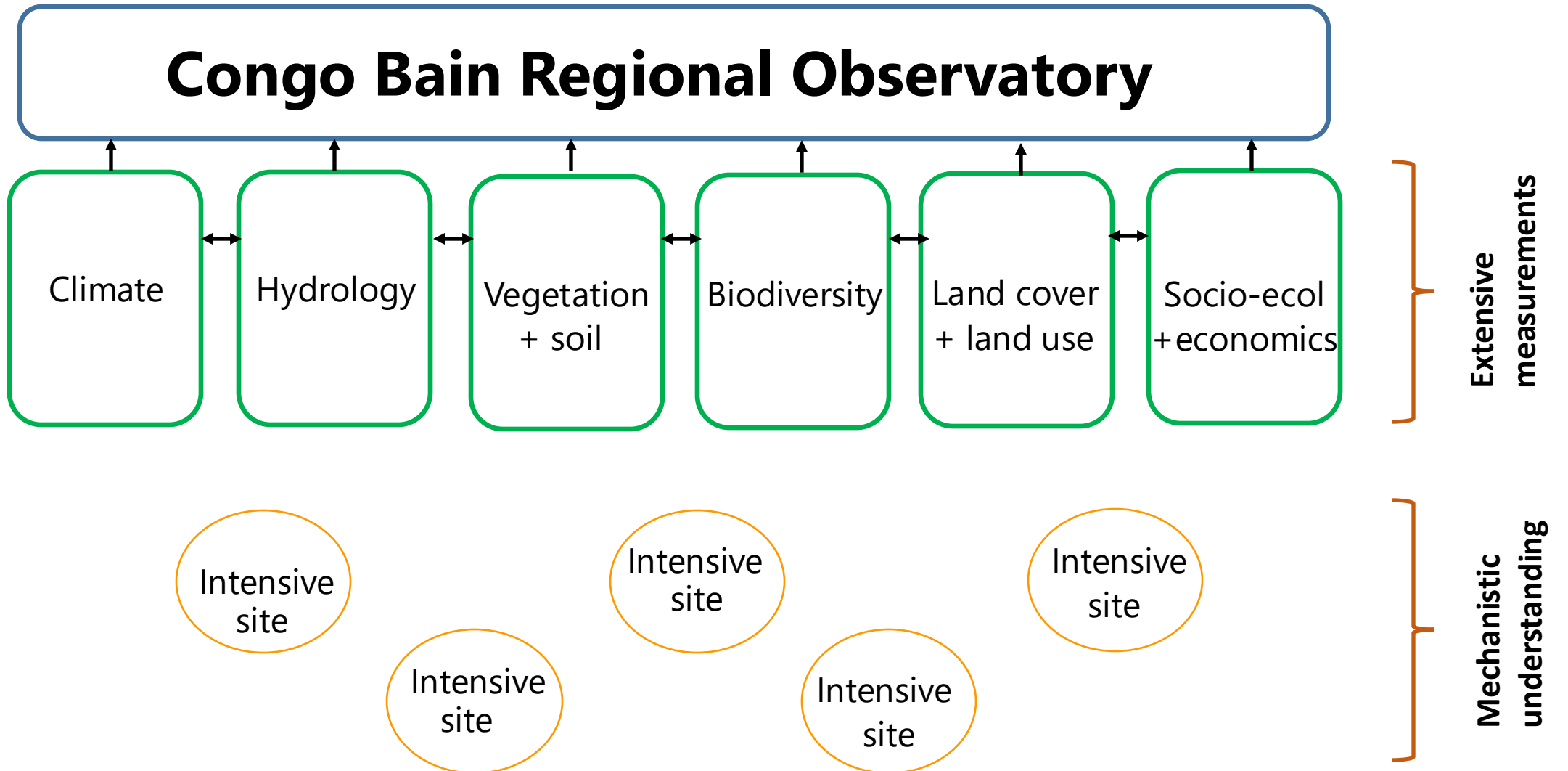
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4. How can scientific data best inform climate-resilient sustainable land-use to improve health, eradicate poverty, increase economic prosperity, and achieve other sustainable development goals across the region?

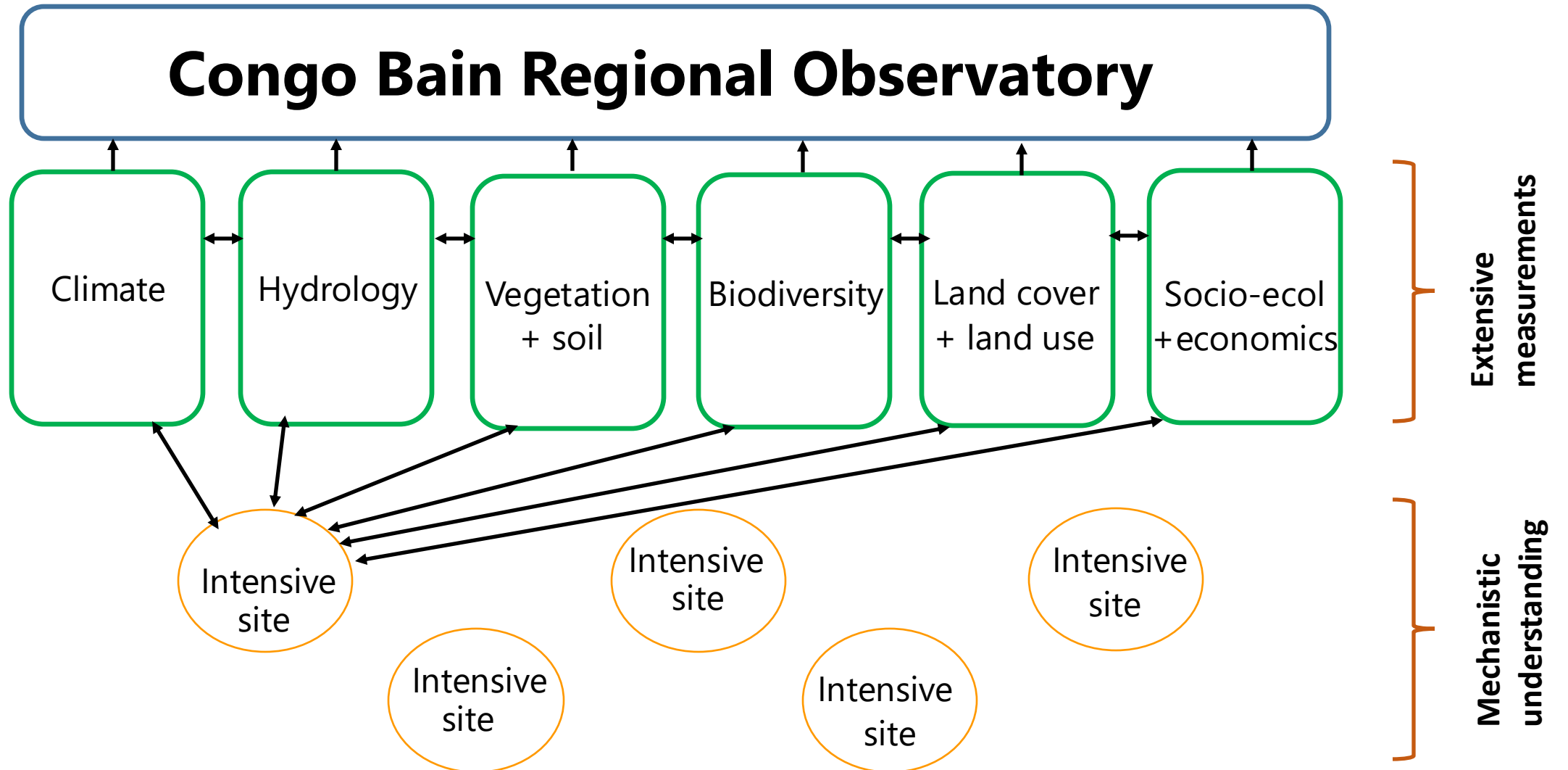
Science Plan



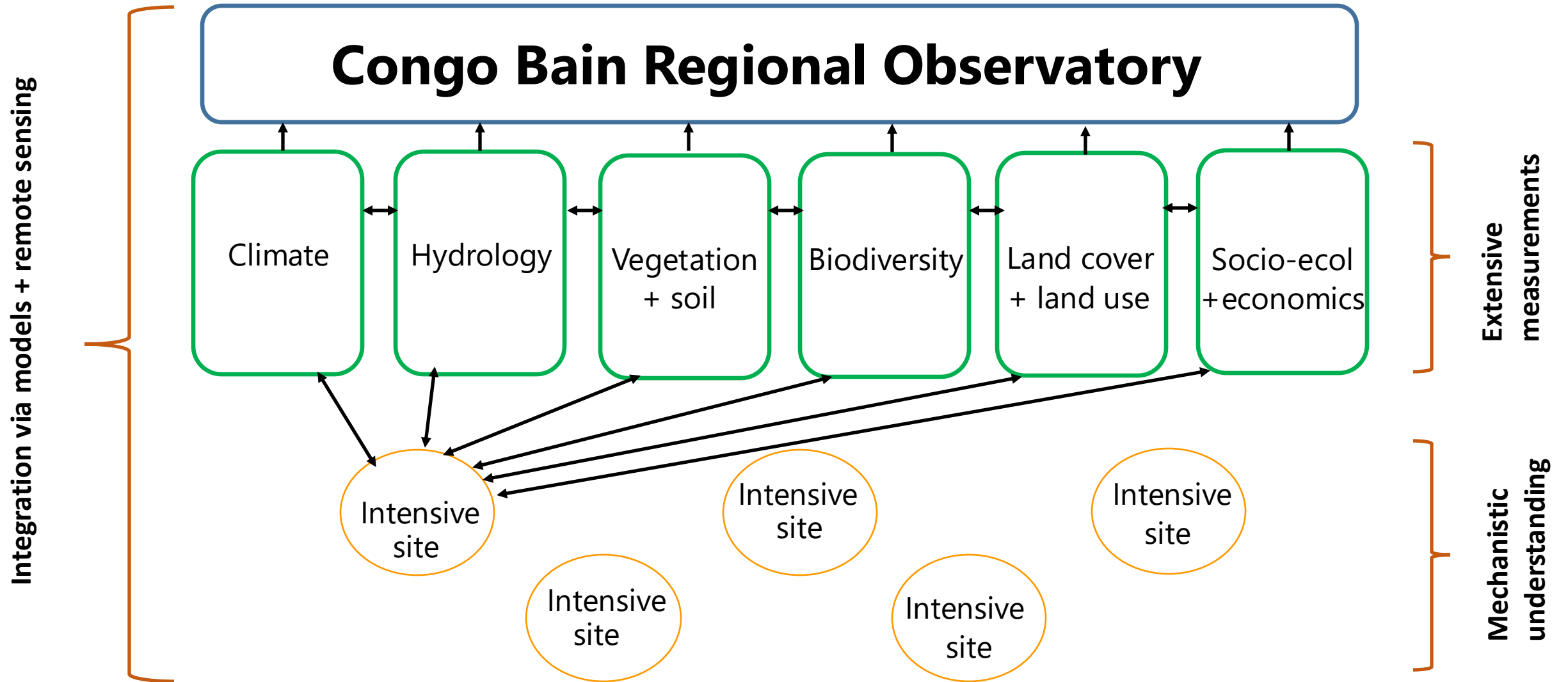


Science Plan





Science Plan



Goal

Increase scientific capacity

- ↳ Enhancing existing partnerships and building new ones
- ↳ Enabling long-term investment in institutional capacity (training scientists & developing improved career pathway for current and future scientists from the region)
- ↳ Addressing the unique needs for the region

Training scientists

1. Training scientists

↳ Train students to Masters and PhD level to become experts in their fields

↳ Students co-create research within the CBSI Science Plan allowing a synergistic win-win, to change our understanding of the Congo Basin *and* train the leaders of the future.

Increasing Investment in Congo Basin Science



New Funding from UK government,

CRAFT-Sustainable Development: Transforming Central Africa's Scientific Capacity to Protect Forests and Improve Livelihoods

- ↪ Five years of support for CBSI, including annual conferences
- ↪ Support for 12 research groups across Cameroon, DRC, Gabon, and Republic of the Congo, two in each observatory, supported by a leading UK institution.
- ↪ 21 PhD Scholarships, and 12 Masters Scholarships across all six observatories.

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