



## **Has the LPA system been successful?**

Small-scale aquaculture recruitment in Maine  
through the limited-purpose aquaculture  
("LPA") licensing system

*(Focus Group Overview)*

Micah Conkling

University of New England  
Ocean Food Systems, P.S.M.

© 2022

# What does success at the LPA level require?

Natural  
Resources

Economic  
Resources

Knowledge &  
Skills

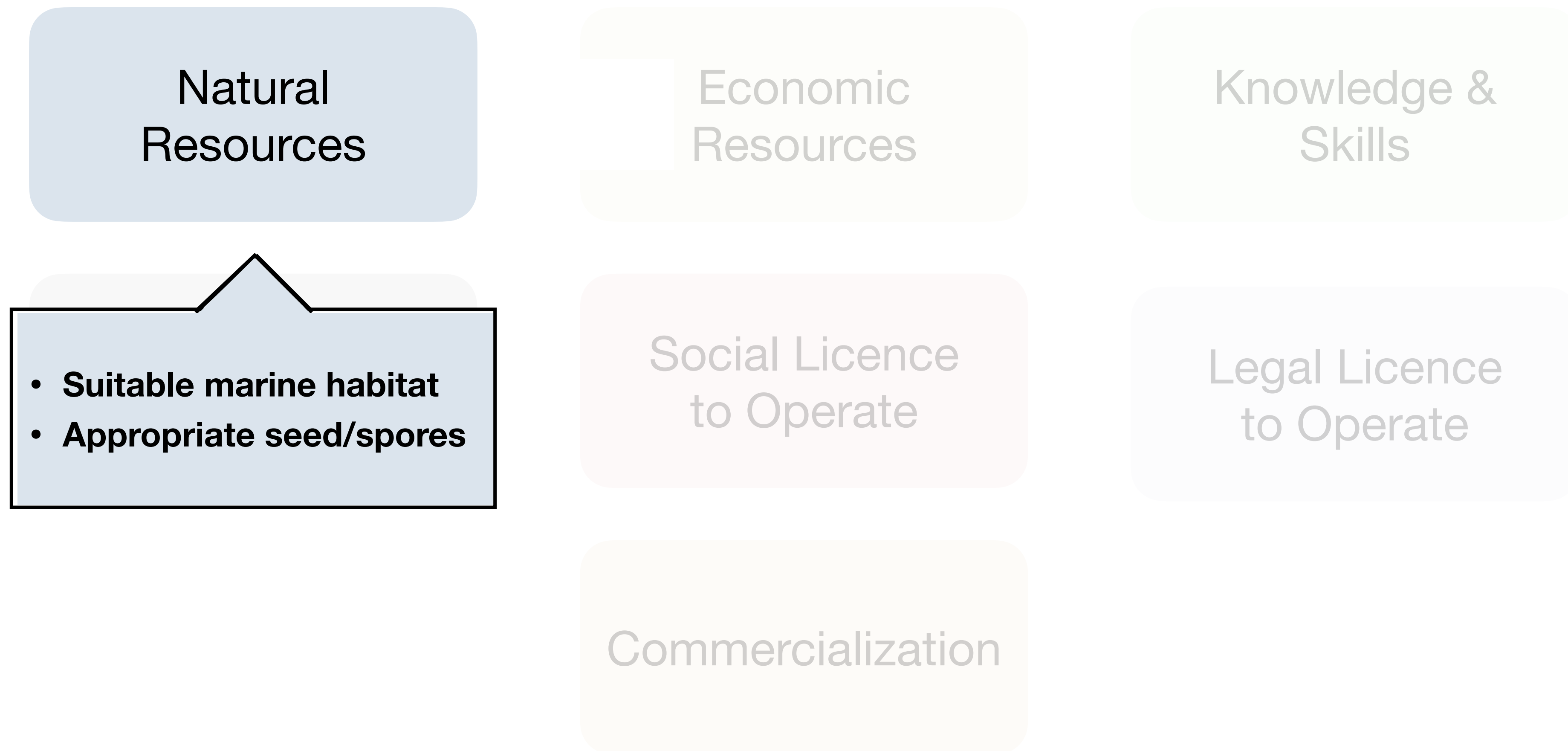
Physical  
Resources

Social Licence  
to Operate

Legal Licence  
to Operate

Commercialization

# Framework: What does success at the LPA level require?



# Framework: What does success at the LPA level require?

Natural  
Resources

Economic  
Resources

Knowledge &  
Skills

Physical  
Resources

- **LPA-holders' financial resources**
- **LPA-holders' food security**
- **Accessibility of seed/spores**
- **"FLUPSY"**

Legal Licence  
to Operate

# Framework: What does success at the LPA level require?

Natural Resources

Economic Resources

Knowledge & Skills

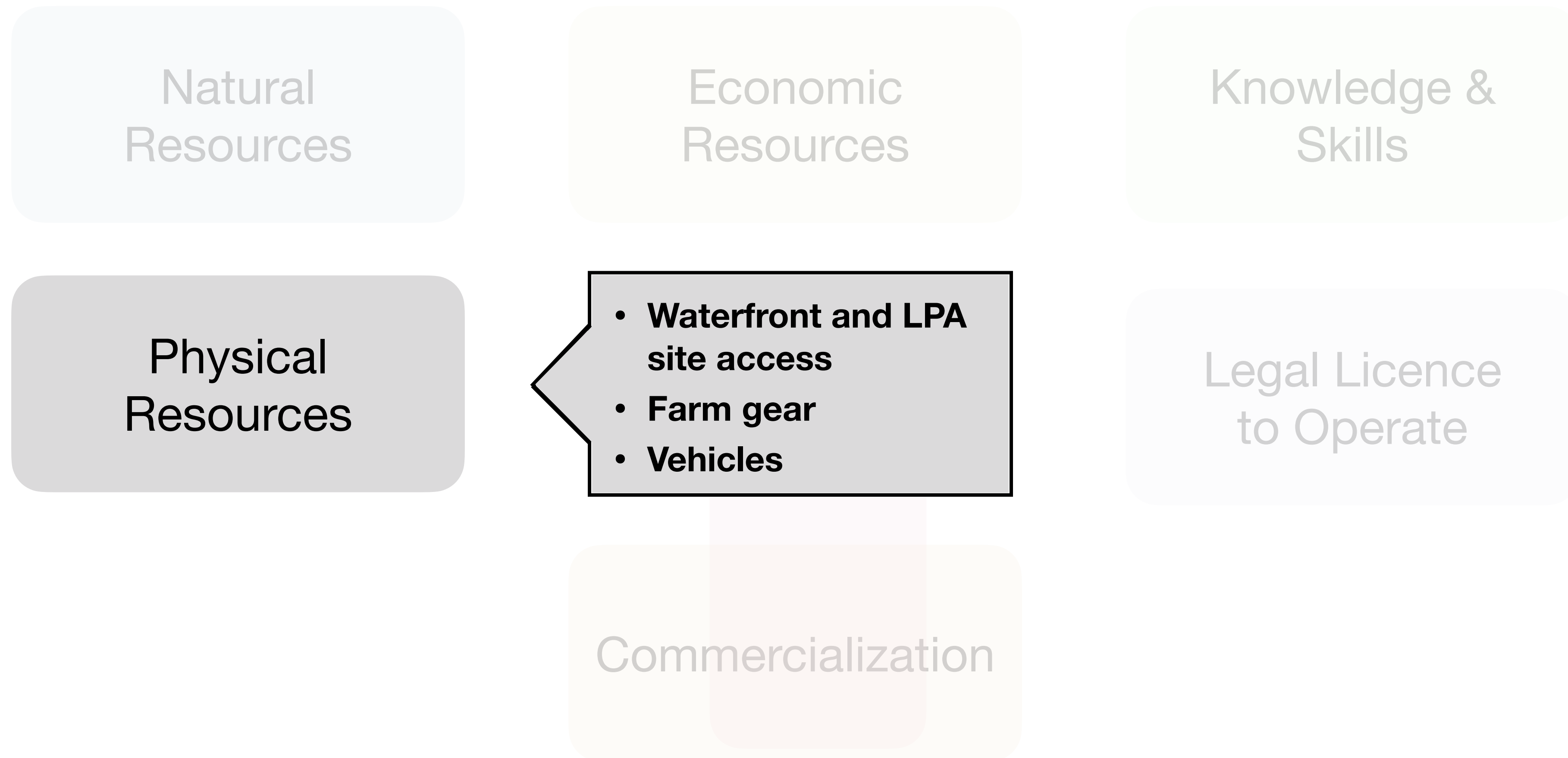
Physical Resources

Social Licence to Operate

- **LPA-holders' maritime skills**
- **LPA-holders' farming skills**
- **LPA assistants**
- **Aquaculture training programs**

Commercialization

# Framework: What does success at the LPA level require?



# Framework: What does success at the LPA level require?

Natural  
Resources

Economic  
Resources

Knowledge &  
Skills

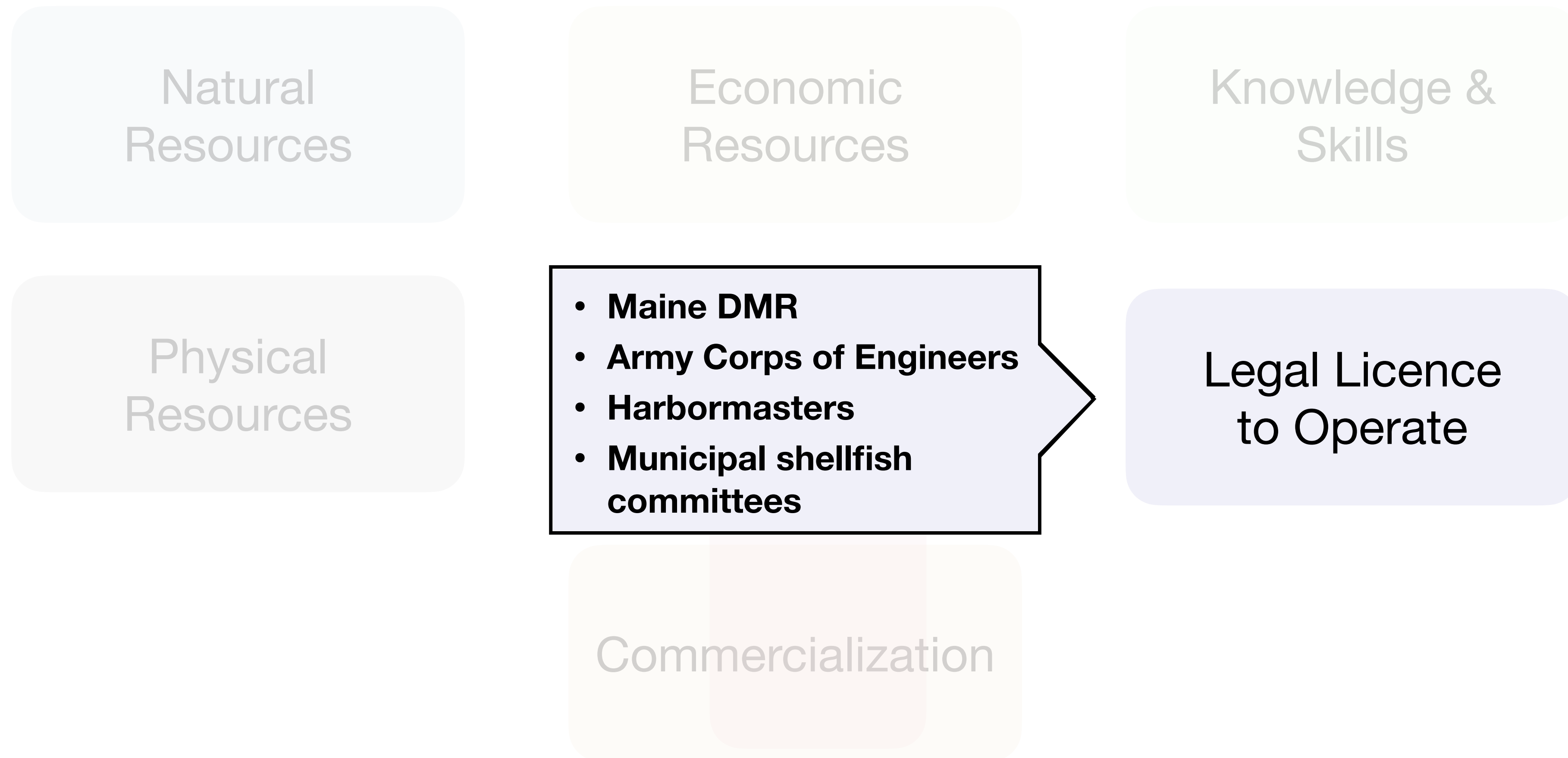
Physical  
Resources

**Social Licence  
to Operate**

- LPA-holders' relationships with:**
- **Coastal neighbors**
  - **Neighboring fishers**
  - **Recreational-use neighbors**
  - **Fellow LPA-holder neighbors**

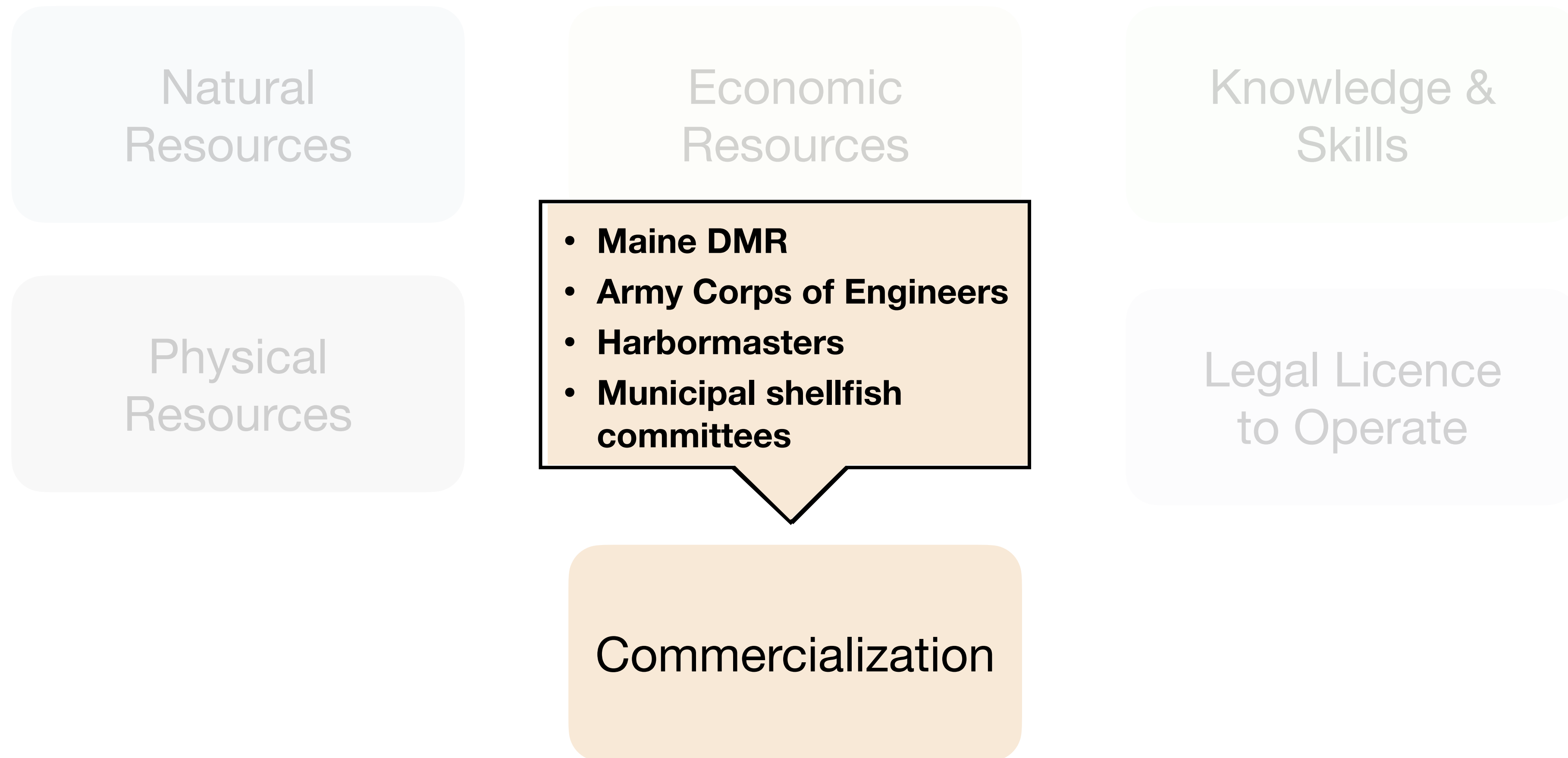
Commercialization

# Framework: What does success at the LPA level require?





# Framework: What does success at the LPA level require?



# Focus Group Highlights

## NATURAL RESOURCES

Participants indicated that:

- Obtaining seed/spores was difficult
- Obtaining seed/spores was not difficult
- Determining biological suitability for their LPA sites was challenging

## KNOWLEDGE & SKILLS

Participants indicated that their LPA required special expertise with:

- Assembling and managing their LPAs' rope lines
- Physical abilities to maintain their farms
- Maritime skills
- Operational experimentation

Participants indicated that they received help for their LPAs from:

- Local knowledgeable/previously equipped fishers, ocean farmers, and aquaculture organizations

## PHYSICAL RESOURCES

- “My wife likes to joke that I have a kelp farm to justify my ownership of a boat.”
- “I was even able to...borrow some stuff or get some hand-me-down stuff from people I knew, so that wasn't so much of a challenge.”
- “Transport [of my harvested products once on land] is a challenge on my end...I've got to get stuff in, load it, and then drive three-and-a-half hours to Portland where I can sell it.”

# Focus Group Highlights

## ECONOMIC RESOURCES

Participants indicated that:

- They often have different sources of income besides selling their LPA products; they needed exterior economic resources to sufficiently experiment on their LPAs
- Costs (time and money) of the LPA application were not onerous

## LEGAL LICENCE TO OPERATE

Participants indicated that:

- The application process for larger leases is frustratingly slow
- It can be difficult to keep up with the DMR regulations
- They were frustrated by density limits

# Focus Group Highlights

## COMMERCIALIZATION

Participants indicated that:

- Their LPAs allow for experimentation toward scaling up their aquaculture
- Making enough money on their LPAs to increase production, hire assistants, purchase additional equipment, develop their marketing skills, and/or apply for larger leases is very challenging
- Their operations change frequently because of various circumstances that developing a formal business plan feels useless
- Accessing non-local markets independently is very challenging

## SOCIAL LICENCE TO OPERATE

Participants indicated that:

- Conflicts with riparian neighbors are their primary SLO concern, and sometimes their primary concern overall
- They have often received highly beneficial help from local fishers and fellow ocean farmers