

Enhancing Integrity in Nature-Based Carbon Project Assessments



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How today's session will flow

1. What are nature-based solutions projects?



2. What is integrity and why does it matter?



3. Why is integrity a core risk to projects?



4. How does ESDD thinking benefit Impact Assessment?



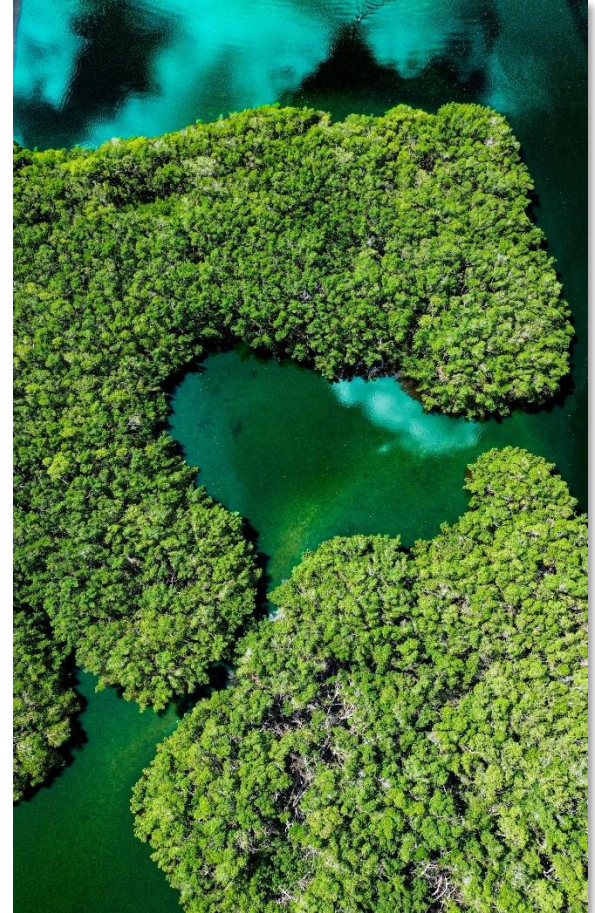
5. Case study



6. What's next?

What Are Nature-Based Solutions Projects?

- Use natural ecosystems to address climate, biodiversity, and community challenges.
- Common examples include reforestation, wetland restoration, mangrove protection, and sustainable agriculture.
- Key benefits can include carbon sequestration, stronger climate resilience, and habitat protection.
- Well-designed projects can also support local livelihoods and long-term ecosystem health.

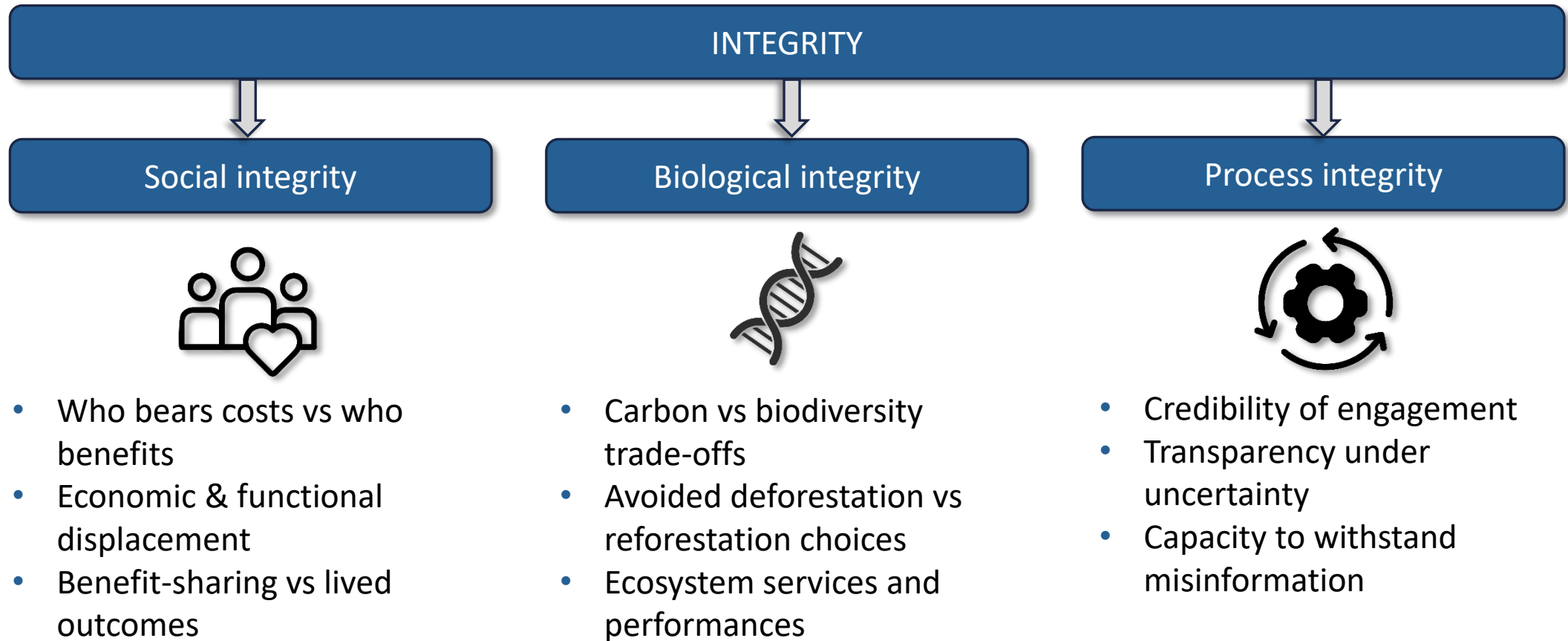


How are impacts assessed on NBS projects?



- Assessing these impacts has typically relied on community consultations and perception-based surveys.
- Reliability of responses can be ambiguous for several reasons

What do we mean by “integrity”



Why has integrity become the core risk?

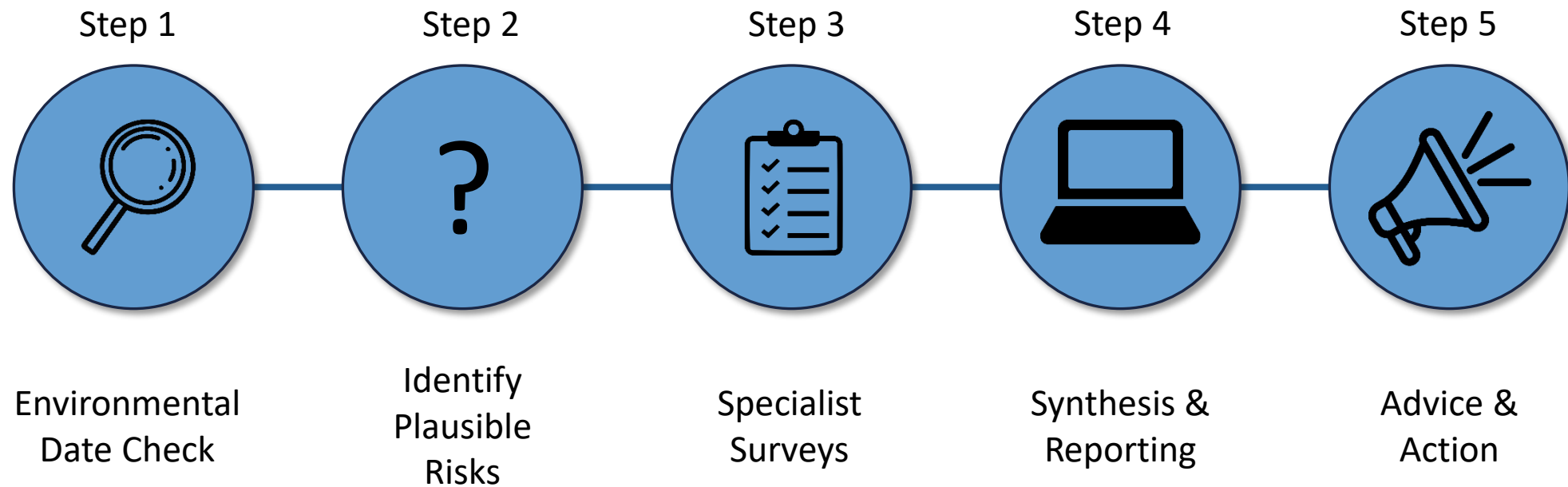
Rapid scale-up of nature-based carbon markets

High expectations, delayed benefits

Increased scrutiny, media amplification

Misinformation thriving in trust gaps

What ESDD Adds to Impact Assessment





Challenges to engagement are increasing



Misconception creep

- Developers creating miscommunication
- Locals hearing miscommunication from other sources

Limits of traditional consultation

Heavy reliance on:

- One-off consultations
- Perception-based surveys

Risks: Strategic responses

- Expectation bias
- Over/under-estimation of impacts

Case study: Carbon project South-East Asia

Context



Free



Prior



Informed Consent

FPIC

Challenges

Misalignment



Considerations

Community Involvement

What could've
been done
differently?

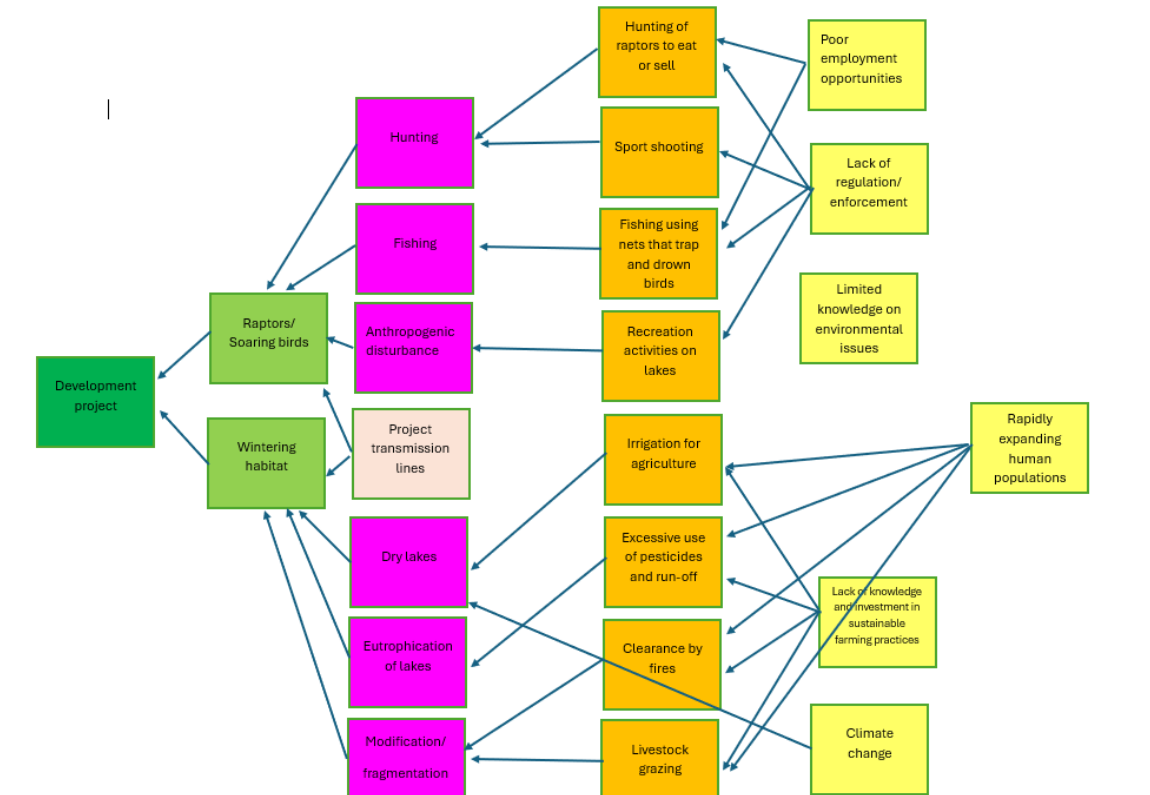
From Impacts to Pathways: Situational Analysis & Theory of Change

Situational analysis:

- Project-related threats
- Threats exacerbated by project presence

Theory of Change:

- Direct responses (e.g. bans)
- Indirect pathways (education, interim livelihoods)



Trust, Likeability & Misinformation



Trust is hard, likeability is easier



Welcoming presence matters



Weak relationships can lead to a misinformation vacuum



What This Means for Impact Assessment Practice

Integrity is practiced, not claimed or assumed.

IA must:

- ✓ Treat misinformation as an impact pathway
- ✓ Embed ESDD-informed communication
- ✓ Fund implementation, not just consultation
- ✓ Integrate situational analysis & Theory of Change



Let's continue the conversation!

Message me your questions or comments in the IAIA26 app.

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