



GOVERNANCE

INTEGRITY

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

POLITICAL ECONOMY ANALYSIS FOR
CONSERVATION IMPACT (PEACI)

SEPTEMBER 2020





GOVERNANCE

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FOREWORD

Governance is about how decisions are made, who makes them, how they're applied and who's accountable. If we're going to reverse nature loss and share resources fairly, now and in the future, then good governance is essential. The WWF Governance Practice was created with the aim of helping to reduce power asymmetries and dysfunctions and to guide the use of power to attain environmentally sustainable and equitable development.

Understanding how all this happens is not easy. Understanding how to change and shift dynamics to those that support rather than undermine our work is even more difficult.

One of the tools utilized widely in the development sector is that of political economy analysis (PEA). There is large scope for applying the lessons learned and approaches from PEA to improve our conservation impact. Many donors are also requiring PEA to be built into projects.

As a driver practice, we hope that this introduction and guide will have applicability for all our work. Whether it is understanding why subsidies for fossil fuels continue to persist in certain countries, why governments may seek to change a protected area status or understanding power relations between an indigenous community and the central state government. PEA can help unpack what is going on, and how we might be able to affect the most meaningful change.

This is, of course, the start of the discussion. We hope this **Political Economy Analysis for Conservation Impact (PEACI)** strategic framework can provide some inspiration to teams to think through problems and collaborate across practices. The Governance Practice looks forward to developing and understanding case studies from across the world on how teams have worked through these approaches. We know that, as a network, different offices have different needs and resources available.

This PEACI strategic framework is a Governance Practice product which aims to serve the network and its offices, practices and programmes with an approach that can be tailored to different contexts. It will hopefully help WWF offices to better understand what is really going on and identify leverage points that help to improve conservation impact.



ABOUT INTEGRITY

Integrity is an International consultancy and service provider working in challenging and complex environments around the globe. They offer ten expert and complementary services, working across all stages of the policy, programme and project cycle. Find out more about Integrity [here](#).

Integrity recognises the importance of Political Economy Analysis (PEA) in helping to understand complex operating contexts and inform programme design. Integrity has a breadth of experience and an extensive track record delivering a range of specialist PEA services across diverse sectors, complex contexts and with a number of long-standing clients. Integrity employs a tailored approach to PEA, developing bespoke methodologies that deliver the evidence and analysis to meet our clients' decision-making needs. See Integrity's CAT approach [here](#).



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THE PURPOSE OF THIS STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

The **purpose** of this strategic framework is to create shared understanding of what political economic analysis (PEA) is and why it is important for conservation impact. It will explore some useful PEA approaches and tools and explain how to apply these in conservation programming.

OBJECTIVES

- Provide an introduction to the principles and building blocks of PEA;
- Provide a basis for shared approaches to understanding the enabling environment (political, economic and social systems) that shapes and constrains conservation interventions;
- Provide insights into where and how integrating PEA concepts and approaches can help to change ways of thinking and working; and,
- Through examples and case studies illustrate the relevance of applied PEA approaches to achieving conservation.

WHAT IS THIS FRAMEWORK?

The framework is a conceptually grounded, theory light, operational PEA framework for conservation impact (PEACI). Focusing on practitioner level challenges, it is designed to be accessible to stakeholders across the network.

The framework introduces PEA and asks the following:

- What is PEACI and why is it a useful tool;
- What are common building blocks;
- How does PEACI complement and build on current WWF practice?

The framework presents PEA as an approach to support a deeper understanding of complexity including context, situation and stakeholder analysis. It provides examples of entry points WWF teams can use to improve or strengthen what they are already doing.

CONTAINED WITHIN THIS REPORT:

1. WHAT IS POLITICAL ECONOMY ANALYSIS FOR CONSERVATION IMPACT (PEACI)?

- What is it?
- Why is it useful for the challenges WWF encounters?
- How does it contribute to achieving conservation impact?

2. BUILDING BLOCKS OF PEA

A. FOUNDATIONAL FACTORS

B. RULES OF THE GAME

C. PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONS

D. BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER - PE DYNAMICS

- What?
- How is it different to current practice?
- How to use PEACI?
- Why it is relevant to conservation?
- How could it be applied using examples?

3. LINKING PEACI TO ACTION IN WWF

- A way to assess what level of PEA is needed, for who and within what timeframe, as a route to strategic application of the framework.
- When to do it and what to think about.

4. TAKING YOUR UNDERSTANDING FURTHER

- Links to further reading and tools as well as the ODI course on OneWWF.

1. WHAT IS POLITICAL ECONOMY ANALYSIS FOR CONSERVATION IMPACT (PEACI)?

As conservationists and conservation scientists, it often feels easy to describe what we know about a species or landscape and what needs to change in order to achieve a conservation outcome. In order to programme effectively we need to know why things happen in one way (with negative effects on biodiversity) as opposed to another (where biodiversity is protected). We need to provide an explanation that interprets what we describe and allows us to provide alternative pathways for change.

Political economy analysis (PEA) is an approach to understanding why change does or does not happen. The approach unpacks the arrangement of power in specific contexts (who has power, what determines levels of power and how power is exercised). This understanding of different relative levels of power can help teams to map the extent to which the people and organisations that they rely on to support conservation can take action on issues.

WHY IS PEA IMPORTANT FOR A CONSERVATION APPROACH?

The design and implementation of conservation interventions need to consider the complexity of the contexts, organisations and people that surround, influence and have an impact on their effectiveness. We need to increase our ability to look within and outside the conservation sector. This includes identifying and engaging in new and different partnerships and agendas. It also involves deepening WWF's analysis around why certain things might happen. Putting conservation at the heart of a PEA will help strengthen understanding and open our eyes to possibilities for change, whilst being more aware of the potential barriers to conservation interventions.

The Covid-19 pandemic has had, and continues to have, an unprecedented impact globally. It is clear that the conservation sector will need to conduct careful analysis of how to construct a 'Green and Just recovery'. It will be important in a changed political and economic global landscape to examine whether and where the conservation agenda may have stalled (as public health needs take priority) or have gained prominence (in the links to the origination of the virus in animals) and, to ensure that the principles of inclusivity, rights and equity are central to any recovery.

THE THEORY - DEFINITIONS

“Political economy analysis... is concerned with the interaction of political and economic processes in society; the distribution of power and wealth between different groups and individuals, and the processes that create, sustain and transform these relationships over time”

OECD

“PEA is a structured approach to examining power dynamics and economic and social forces that influence development [or conservation].”

USAID



[PEA] “is about understanding the crazy, out of control drivers that are destroying the planet, and identifying levers for change through thinking about cultures, systems, politics, economics and the macro and micro choices that are made”.

Policy Specialist, WWF-UK

MAPPING THE LANDSCAPE

When we describe what is happening, we paint a picture. When we undertake a Political Economy Analysis we need to explain and interpret the picture – to construct a map with a legend and a key that shows what we can see as well as what lies beneath (the enabling conditions for decision-making and action). The relationships between the geography (land, water and minerals), the flora and fauna, and the people and organisations (their ways of life and systems for navigating the world) that share the space determine what it is possible to do in or change about this world to improve conservation outcomes.



WHY DOES WWF NEED TO USE PEACI TO ADDRESS CONSERVATION CHALLENGES?

WWF, as a network, focuses on a range of different issues, prioritised through its landscapes and practices. These are often described in large-scale and high-level conservation visions, with interventions engaging with multiple stakeholders with differing and competing agendas and influences. There is a challenge for WWF to link these high-level analyses to the delivery of effective interventions on the ground. WWF has been attempting to respond to this challenge in various ways: through the design and implementation of conservation standards, Project and Programme Management Standards (PPMS), the prioritisation of the Environmental and Social Safeguards Framework (ESSF) and others. PEACI approaches can complement these initiatives to support robust and equitable responses.

The application of a PEA approach at the conceptual and design stage of an intervention can help with incorporating:

- an understanding of political aspects and trends in fundraising;
- implications for WWF’s work of growing wealth disparity within a country or landscape;
- the shrinking space for NGOs to engage governments;
- why there is the potential for perverse consequences on biodiversity of government policies and regulations;
- understanding the relative power of environmental /conservation structures and organisations in relation to other influences on decision-makers;
- determining the potential influence of scientific analysis to change existing structures and legislation;
- deepening understanding of contexts, stakeholders and the influence of power on the way things are done and how change happens; and,
- strategies accounting for the de jure (what is in law) and the de facto (what actually happens) within local environments, and the impact of the difference on interventions.

The incorporation of PEA and its related tools can support teams to test assumptions, check strategy feasibility, adjust or develop new activities, influence and engage key stakeholders and ultimately increase the effectiveness and impact of interventions.

PEA is about finding solutions to problems through applying different lenses to those problems. If we look

at the same problem in a different context, it will require a different solution. Therefore, depending on the context, technical responses applied to conservation interventions might look very different. This is where we look for ‘best fit’ and not ‘best practice’.



“Conservation is political (Adams & Hutton, 2007), and while approaches like systems mapping can help integrate diverse views on conservation problems and solutions, they do not on their own remove the constraints of politics and power. It will be up to conservation stakeholders to continuously navigate power, politics, and trade-offs.”

WWF Science Team and colleagues

[Systems Thinking for Planning and Evaluating Conservation Interventions](#)

PEA BUILDING BLOCKS

There are as many approaches to PEA as there are social sciences and aid agencies. The approaches share common features or building blocks. This PEACI framework combines DFID and USAID approaches in three core building blocks:



The framework then draws attention to the political economy dynamics (represented by the blue arrows above). The dynamics are the multiple relationships between the building blocks and the ways they might combine and impact conservation work:

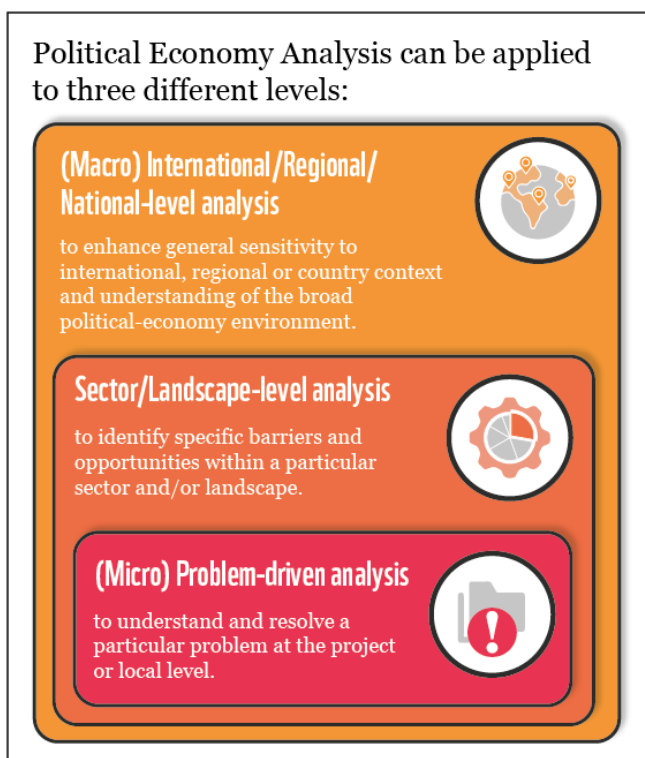


LEVELS OF PEA

PEA can be applied at a macro level to international, regional, national or landscape contexts. It can be applied to a sector (infrastructure or hydropower or wildlife trafficking). It can also be applied at a micro level to local or issue specific contexts and problems.

If time, resources (human and financial) and donor flexibility allow, starting at the macro level provides the grounding for looking at local or project level dynamics. If time is short, that analysis can start at a local level; however, it will remain important to scan the extent to which macro level factors may shape or influence the local context. The important point is that PEA helps to understand the inter-relationships between the political, economic, social and natural systems at play. These systems look and function differently depending on the level at which you examine them.

FIGURE 1. LEVELS OF PEA



WHY IS EVERYONE TALKING ABOUT PEA?

Some of the buzz around PEA is a response to the underperformance of aid and the realisation that purely technical solutions often fail to achieve development and conservation outcomes. Also, critically, PEA helps understand why interventions might be impacted by unintended consequences or surprised by unforeseen developments.

There is a realisation that programmes and projects (in governance, development and conservation) need to take political factors (and political will) out of assumptions and into their everyday work. This allows teams to generate insights into why an agreed policy is not implemented.

In one example from Africa, WWF supported the designation of a Protected Area (PA) in collaboration with a Ministry of Environment, and this was seen as a conservation success. However, soon after, the Ministry of Transport, responding to external economic influences, proposed to construct a road through the PA. The road posed a threat to the conservation objectives of the PA. This proposal was an unexpected surprise and had not been considered in the original analysis. Whilst this type of conundrum may not be solved, as such, by PEA, it could be mitigated by a deeper and wider reading of the context. Equally, a deeper analysis of the people and organisations involved might have revealed different understandings of what a 'Protected Area' constitutes and requires of the broader group of stakeholders. If this had been the case, the WWF team could design activities to support the development of a common understanding of the implications of establishing a PA.

PEA is being demanded increasingly by donors. This represents an opportunity for WWF to be ahead of the curve in thinking about how this approach might be applied in conservation. WWF has increasingly been asking questions of its own network about how to 'bend the curve' and 'create system shifts' and scale up in a way that comprehensively responds to macro-level global challenges, rather than a piecemeal approach. PEA can be used to identify feasible alternative solutions that factor in the complexity of global challenges.



“WWF needs deep understanding of rights and stakeholders and the underlying power dynamics to come up with the equitable and effective interventions and, where possible, co-created with communities.”

WWF Governance Practice Lead speaking on the Human Rights Online Exchange

IS PEACI MORE THAN SIMPLY ADDING POLITICS AND ECONOMICS TO CONSERVATION SCIENCE?

PEACI is more than the sum of its parts. Like an ecosystem, there are overlapping influences and interactions. The approach adds an understanding of power to conservation challenges.

Power can be political, economic, social or can stem from ideas. It is most often a combination of all of those elements. There is the power a state has through its monopoly on violence. The power a village elder has through tradition. The power patriarchy confers on men over women. The power of an ideology as it shapes ideas.

The task is to see the differences, understand their implications and programme to work through, to work around or to change them.



“Putting politics and economics together into political economy changes the meaning of the words as separate fields of study or analysis. The separate words inform what the words mean together but they mean something different when put together.”

CEO, WWF National Office

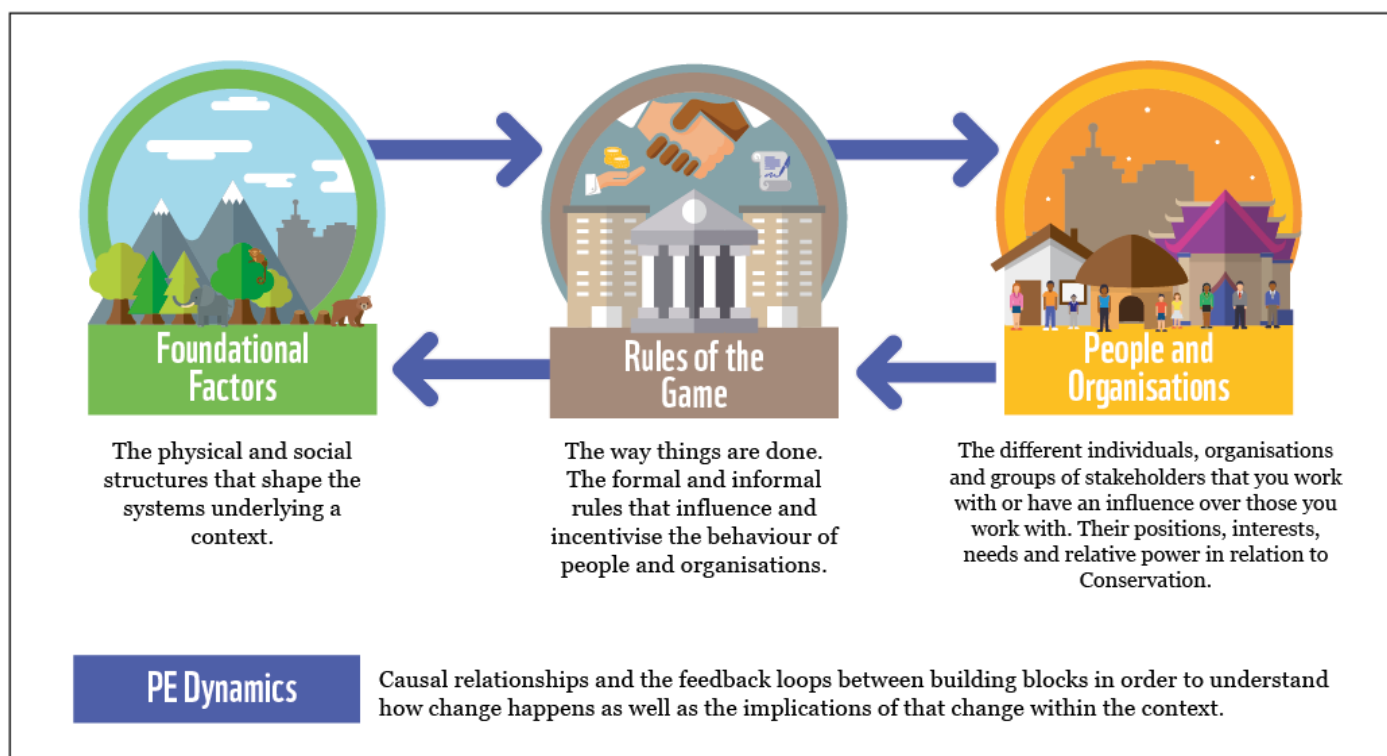
CORE PRINCIPLES

- ✓ PEA is about *best fit*, not best practice. It is about programming to solve the problems presented in specific locations at specific times on particular issues.
- ✓ PEA, in its focus on power, should seek to understand the perspectives, needs and interests of those without power or with less power and to shape programming to ensure broad social inclusion.
- ✓ PEA is about entry points, opportunities and the possible – not just risk.
- ✗ PEA is not just political analysis (of political actors and current events).
- ✗ PEA is not the endpoint; it is the start of a process to change the ways in which you work to achieve impact.

2. BUILDING BLOCKS OF PEA

This section introduces the three building blocks of PEA. It also provides tools that can be used to apply the building blocks and, to focus your thinking on the PE dynamics between the building blocks. As you read through it, some concepts may be more familiar to you than others and you may already incorporate elements into your day to day work.

FIGURE 2. THE BUILDING BLOCKS



The three building blocks – Foundational Factors, Rules of the Game and, People and Organisations have been described as an ‘emerging analytical core’ (Harris, ODI, [2013](#)). The use of this ‘core’ in the PEACI framework does not reinvent the wheel; it draws on approaches already used across aid agencies and INGOs. The approaches do differ in terms of their emphasis. PEACI, for example, places particular emphasis on noticing and incorporating the implications of PE Dynamics. PEACI applies PEA building blocks as a tool to focus attention on the specifics of individuals, groups, contexts and landscapes.

In conservation, for example, a project will not effectively save an individual tiger if it only focusses on species conservation. The project analysis needs to understand the tiger’s forest habitat, the other species that share it, the communities that overlap with it (people and organisations), and the external (landscape, national, regional and global) influences (foundational factors and rules of the game) that impact it. Overlaid on this, the project needs to consider the policies, politics and economic incentives (rules of the game) that have a bearing on the tiger’s eco-system. The project also needs to factor in how the rules are interpreted by people and organisations (PE dynamics, the games within the rules).

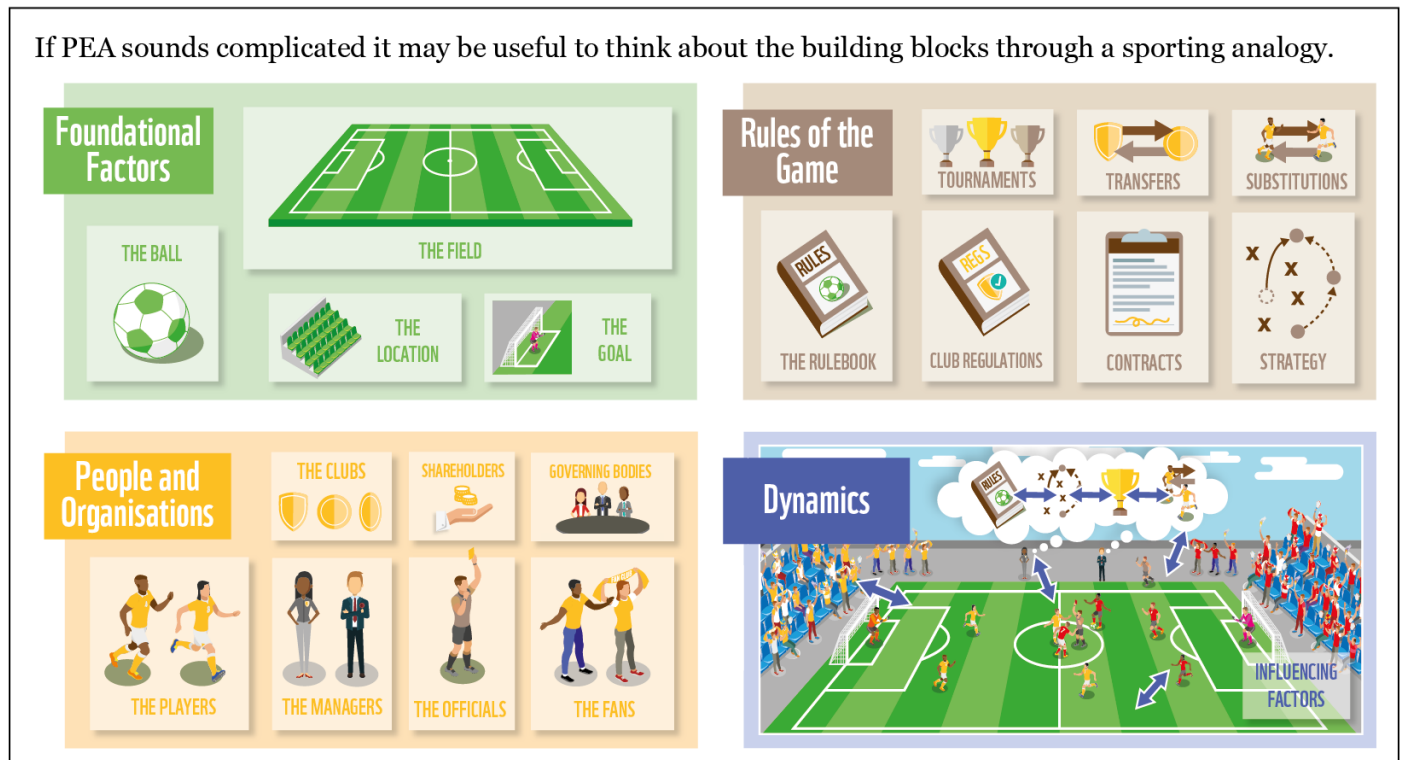
PEA EXPLAINED - USING A SPORTS ANALOGY

If PEA sounds complicated it may be useful to think about the building blocks through a sporting analogy.

The Foundational Factors are the field (this is fixed). The Rules of the Game are formally written, include formations, and each team plays a particular game within the rules. There are also teams that bend the rules and hope not to get caught (informal rules of the game). The People and Organisations are the players,

the managers, the fans and the shareholders. However, no two games are alike and this is where the PE Dynamics come in to play. It may be raining on match day. It makes a difference if you are playing on your home ground. The pitch may be full of holes. It can make a difference if you are the underdog team or the defending champions. Your strategy must shift depending on how the opposition responds or if a star player is injured or gets a red card.

FIGURE 3. PEA OF FOOTBALL - ANOTHER WAY TO THINK ABOUT THE BUILDING BLOCKS



FOUNDATIONAL FACTORS

WHAT ARE THEY?

Foundational factors are the physical and social structures that shape the systems underlying a context. One way to think about them is as the history of the space. For example – the history of the formation of continents and geography, the history of political competition or the narratives that tell the story of the evolution of cultures and traditions. Foundational factors include but are not limited to:

- **Physical structures** – mountains, rivers, natural resources, biodiversity, local climate - are the foundational factors of ecosystems.

- **National or regional demographics** – they can influence who has access to power or spaces, the characteristics of the communities that are engaged or need to be engaged and the levels of inequality between groups.
- **Geo-political factors** are a route in to understanding regional dynamics on issues as well as their potential importance for powerful groups or the relative power of nations and groups.
- **Social structures** – are more often than not relationships of power – who has it and who they exercise power over. It could be the relationships between labour and capitalists or landowners and tenant workers. Social structures are also seen in cultural norms or traditional relationships of power (between

people or in the relationship between people and nature or the land).

- **Historical legacies** are a cross-cutting foundational factor that shape demographics, geo-political relationships and social structures. The importance of knowing the history is a function of recognising our own biases and assumptions about what we know or ‘see’ today. It is also about acknowledging the weight of the past as it influences today and the future.

Foundational Factors are given (mountains and geographic location which are easier to identify) or embedded (patriarchy or cultural understandings of the role of the land). They are difficult or slow to change. A programme or project is unlikely to influence the foundational factors but cannot ignore their implications for the way the world is understood or interpreted and what can be done within these constraints.

THE THEORY - DEFINITIONS

DON'T WORRY if you come across other frameworks or theories that talk about structures in a different way – it is just about the name, the substance remains the same.

“[Foundational factors] are deeply embedded, longer-term national, subnational and international socio-economic and power structures that shape the nature and quality of a given political system, sector or problem, and why it works or looks the way it does”

USAID Glossary

“Many are slow to change such as borders with conflict-affected countries, natural resource endowments, or class structures.”

USAID Applied PEA Fieldguide

WHY IT IS RELEVANT TO CONSERVATION?

Taking time to identify and understand the foundational factors allows us to have a multi-faceted analysis of a particular context whilst ensuring that there is a collaborative space for these factors to be represented. This also helps us to challenge assumptions about what are the most important technical elements to consider, and bring in new viewpoints that we might not have considered at the outset. So, for example, we might assume that the most effective conservation intervention in a forest landscape would take a community forestry approach, but with PEA applied, we might decide, instead, to adopt a human rights or territorial rights emphasis.

It is crucial for the WWF network to recognise the importance of historical context when making decisions about approach. This requires that teams facilitate home-grown, locally-owned analysis rather than, or in addition to using external facilitators or international consultants. The approach needs to recognise that some elite groups have a ‘history’ because they are the ones who have, historically, controlled the analysis, including its funding and production. This can be done by ‘de-colonising’ the approach through placing an emphasis on the use of tools, spaces and processes within the project cycle to harness local knowledge and expertise. This should have a dual effect. First, it will facilitate an organisational culture of analysis within the programmes of work. Second, it will make sure that WWF offices are more equipped to respond to donor requests for PEA analysis from a robust and local conservation perspective.



“So often at WWF, we don’t have space or time to think about the ‘why’. We only concentrate on the ‘what’. The ‘why’ is the thing that you do on the side....PEA helps us to understand the world, to work more smartly in a way that helps advance the conservation agenda”

Social Development Expert and Anthropologist, WWF

HOW TO USE?

Research needs to be undertaken to identify the full range of foundational factors, particularly those not always thought about, and to understand them from the perspective of the people living within the context and how they shape the way things are done (this is the ‘rules of the game’, our second building block).

What to think about: ideas, ideologies and history tell us how people think about and organise the world in which they live. These are not the only factors in how they think or make decisions. However, belief systems or physical structures can, and do, shape what is possible or what people see as possible in their day to day lives.

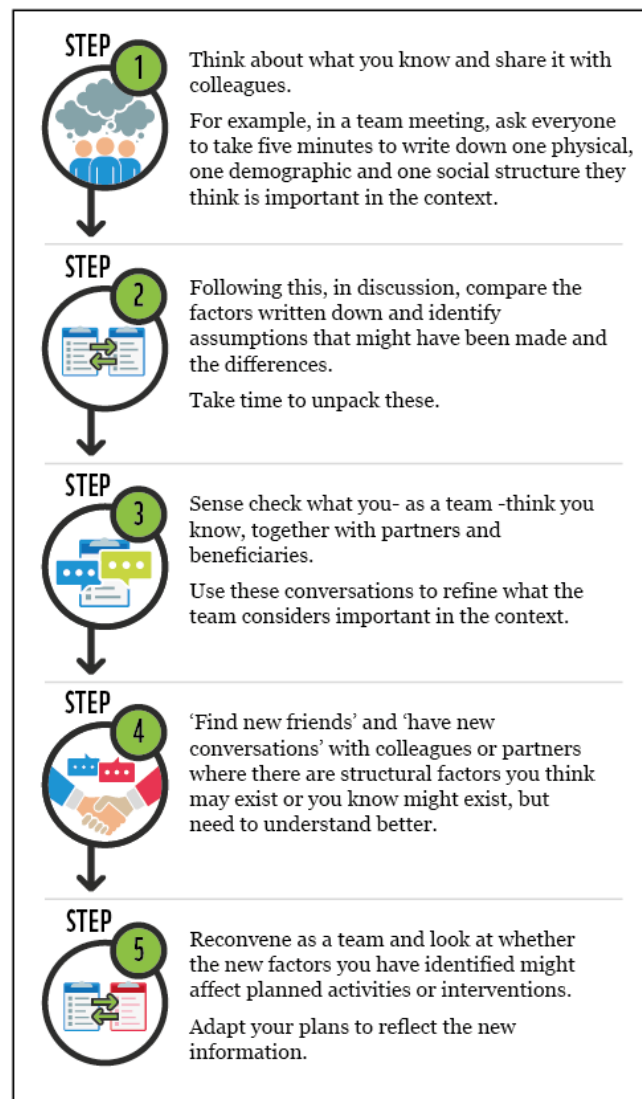
The aim is to check your assumptions. We can unconsciously conclude that one context is like another, for example we may take it for granted that:

- “political competition in one place is organised the same as it is in another place” OR
- “ethnic differences are not important where I come from” OR
- “I understand how pastoralist communities see the world because I come from a country with pastoralist communities” OR
- “understanding gendered impacts is not an important issue for a forestry project”.

Some things to do include examining assumptions by researching the underlying organising structures of a context.

The physical features of the environment and geography may be well understood by WWF teams. It may be less intuitive for teams to identify and think about the impact of demographic features (ethnic dimensions of a context is an example) or social structures (how a society or nation addresses competition).

FIGURE 4. ANALYSING FOUNDATIONAL FACTORS



RULES OF THE GAME

WHAT?

The Rules of the Game (RoG) are about the way things are done today. The ideas behind the RoG will have structural elements but the rules are present day versions of those foundational factors. They are a set of codes of conduct that influence how people and organisations behave and their ability to take action and the nature of that action.

THE THEORY - DEFINITIONS

DON'T WORRY if you come across other frameworks that talk about Institutions as opposed to the Rules of the Game. Here again, it is a question of language and not substance.

A helpful rule of thumb is to remember that it is about the way things are done not about institutions in the sense of organisations (such as the Ministry of Environment, for example)

“Formal and informal institutions (rules and norms) that influence actors’ behavior, their incentives, relationships and their capacity for collective action. This encompasses both the formal constitutional and legal framework, as well as informal norms, social and cultural traditions that guide behavior in practice.”

USAID Applied Fieldguide

Rules of the Game can be formal: a Constitution or a policy or a set of regulations. They are considered formal because they are written down (codified), accessible to everyone (known or at least available to be known) and tend to have third party monitoring and enforcement mechanisms.

FORMAL RULES

Legislation (environmental and non-environmental - for example, land tenure)

Regulations

Official Codes of conduct – for administrations, bureaucracies (park management and rangers)

Bi-lateral or multi-lateral agreements or contracts

Trade rules (tariffs and subsidies)

Human and indigenous rights

Rules of the Game can also be informal and are frequently a deviation from the formal rules, based on networks and relationships. Informal rules are not usually written down, are malleable and are usually known only to those in a network, a relationship or familiar with a specific context. A useful example is the difference between a contract and a handshake as the basis for an agreement. They are agreed to by those party to them and could be followed by members of a group or be structured on the basis of the power and authority in ways that create an uneven playing field.

INFORMAL RULES

Land stewardship / management and environmental protection

Traditional practices, local customs

Unofficial unwritten Codes of Conduct, verbal agreements within communities

Cultural practices relating to natural resources

Elite deals (in the private sector or between government actors), alternative payment systems at local level

Indigenous customs, different world views

Gendered roles and practices

The Rules of the Game do not change easily but can and do change over the medium term. Why is that? If you think about yourself, we as people can and do change the way we behave (see [Andrew Sayer, Realism and Social Science](#), 2000). It is worth remembering that formal rules can be a stronger context for progressive action given that they include accountability mechanisms. That said, in many contexts, the formal rules are not the dominant way in which things are done.

HOW DIFFERENT TO CURRENT PRACTICE?

PEA helps to provide a realistic understanding of context, to understand interests and incentives and how they shape and constrain action at all levels. It is also about understanding the interplay of those different elements.

The task is to work out how to help people and organisations to change (what information or evidence might do that) and what conditions (contexts) enable people to take different action. This is why applying a purely technical solution to a problem often does not produce the desired results as it can neglect the social, economic or political processes that influence the effectiveness of the approach.

Understanding the rules of the game, can help us to avoid surprises, anticipate responses, have some knowledge about what shapes decisions and which decisions a person or organisation will take in particular contexts. These influences on action may be differently expressed in a conversation with WWF, and when they argue for a conservation action in parliament or in their community forum.

Corruption could be seen as an example of informal rules and/or the outcome of informal rules. For example, it could be used as an expected means of getting things done in the political sphere, but could also be about meeting cultural obligations, or responding to specific economic pressures and/or incentives.

HOW TO USE?

What to think about: what might explain why what you observe does not conform to the formal rules of the game?

Taking time to map what we know of the Rules of the Game, particularly whether formal or informal rules dominate in any setting, helps to understand the behaviour of people and organisations you engage with in your work. In addition, it allows teams to recognise the expectations of those your stakeholders interact with who might be critical to advancing or frustrating your objectives.



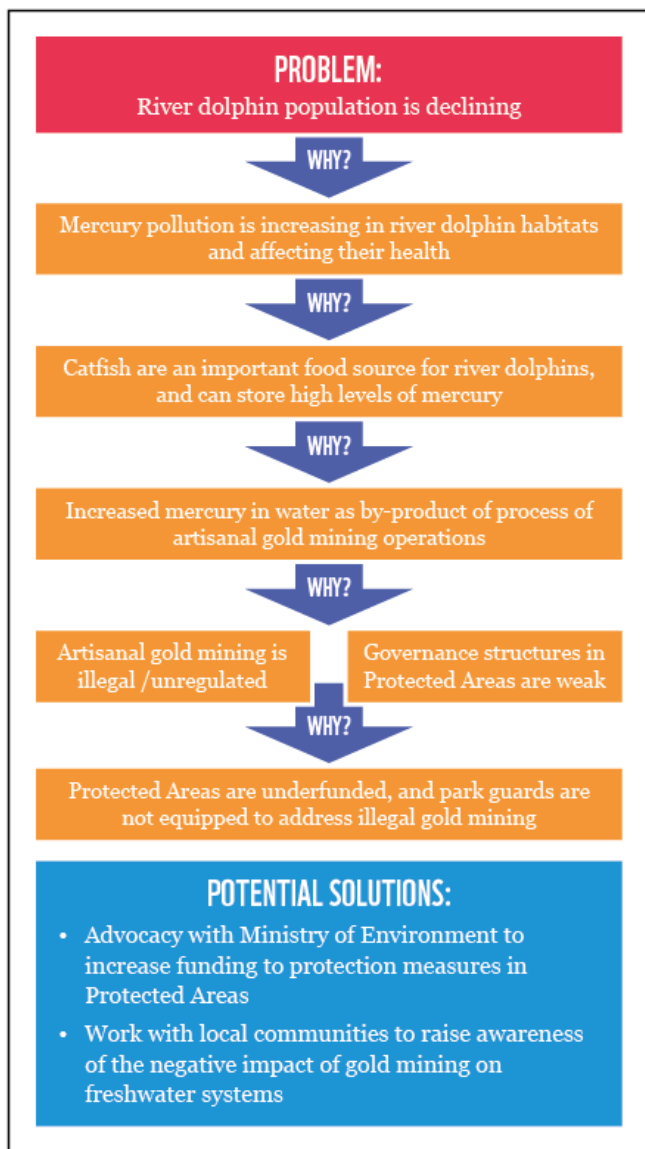
“We do try to understand the rules of the game, try to play the game to eventually change the rules of the game. Question is how deep do we dive into the analysis.”

Fundraising, Legal and Policy Officer, Africa Regional and National Office, WWF

What to do: An approach to better understanding Rules of the Game is to use conversations to understand the difference between what people say is the way things are done and the way things are actually done. If it is clear that legislation protects the rights of Indigenous Peoples and yet, economic and power interests, or conservation projects systematically undermine those rights, it could be that there is an informal set of rules of the game followed by people and organisations. They will follow the informal rules because they serve their interests and needs better or there are incentives for behaving in informal ways (linked to career progression or profit).

Another approach to better understanding Rules of the Game (and also Foundational Factors) is to use tools to unpack what Conflict Analysis calls the ‘root causes’. There are different tools to do this from [Fishbone Diagrams](#) and the [5 Whys with its origins in the private sector](#) (where you work to answer why until you cannot break down the cause into any smaller parts) to [conflict trees](#) (where you work from the branches back to the roots). These conflict analysis tools also help to emphasise the importance of conflict sensitivity as framed in WWF’s social policies. This backstops the approaches used in the ESSF assessments and in the deliberations of the Conservation Quality Committee (CQC).

FIGURE 5. AN EXAMPLE OF ‘5 WHYS’ APPLIED TO A PROBLEM



WHY IT IS RELEVANT TO CONSERVATION?

To maximise the impact of conservation interventions, it is crucial to understand how the rules of the Game apply, from high level advocacy (“business suits”) to on-the-ground engagement (“muddy boots”). Often, conservation approaches focus on stakeholder analysis at the outset, which can incorporate an analysis of power and interests, but if this fails to address how these are used, or whether the system is dominated by informal or formal rules, the analysis becomes less effective.

APPROACHES AND EXAMPLES

A focus on the Rules of the Game often involves identifying and bringing into the light the unofficial and unwritten codes of conduct and functional behaviours (the informal rules) that deviate from the official codes. Often, informal rule systems dominate where there is insufficient third-party monitoring, skewed incentive structures or cultural systems that influence incentives.

The conservation world is full of conflicting world views and varied starting points on natural resource use. For example, for many, forests are seen as a resource to be exploited, whereas for others, the forest is a home, a habitat, a source of livelihoods, and central to survival. The rules that dominate (eg, the contract or the legislation) when it comes to private sector profit-led initiatives and extractives will be different from those that apply to environmental protection measures.

A key area for WWF to really get to the heart of the rules of the game is where corruption impacts on, and skews, conservation objectives. For example, the WWF project on Targeting Natural Resource Corruption (TNRC) found that they need to improve their analysis of the potential impact of the informal set of behaviours that progress the objectives of people and organisations within corrupt networks. The criminal element of corruption also has significant impact on conservation in some places. Whereas WWF often works on it from a wildlife perspective, there is frequently not a sufficiently robust analysis of how corruption affects resources, access to land, and to benefits.

The WWF Governance Strategy identifies other external trends, systems and actors that could be framed as problems or challenges that can be better responded to using PEA. Two examples that relate to the rules of the game are: a) a situation in which governments are struggling to keep pace and plot out integrated plans for sustainable development; and b) a situation in which the interests and needs of marginalised groups, and the environment, are outweighed by power asymmetries and corruption.

PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONS

WHAT ARE THEY?

PEA approaches extend stakeholder analysis to include power. People and organisations, the third building block, focuses on the need to understand:

- Positions, interests, and needs
- Power and relative power
- Incentives

of the different people or organisations that you will work with or who have an influence on those you work with.

THE THEORY - DEFINITIONS

As people, individuals or when collectively organised or part of an organisation, we have to balance competing influences and claims on our decisions and actions.

We may state **positions** (which we say out loud in meetings or on platforms) but these are not always the same as our **interests** (what we want to achieve), our **incentives** (why we want to achieve the interests) and our needs (what we are not willing to forgo).

At the same time, all of the above will shift slightly depending on whether we are talking to or engaging people we see as like-minded or people we have power over or people who have power over us.

*[The World Development Report 2017]
“defines **power** as the ability of groups and individuals to make others act in the interest of those groups and individuals and to bring about specific outcomes”*

WORLD BANK

If the focus is on political power, for example, the theory identifies four principle sources:

- access to resources (including natural resources);
- the machinery of the social, economic or political systems (it could be the state parliament and judiciary or it could be

customary power over community belief systems);

- the use of force (often very state focused however it could relate to a national park and rangers with weapons); and
- ideas (belief systems, ideologies, narratives).

The incentives for people to act as they do or change their behaviour depend on their level of power. This will be different depending on the space in which they find themselves. Power is relative to and impacted by the relationships and networks that people and organisations leverage or through which their power is leveraged by others. It can be easy to think about incentives in economic or monetary terms – cost saving or profit providing. There are however a range of possible incentives – all of which can be positive or negative. These include: power, status or visibility, professional advancement, maintaining tradition, the possibility of reward or sanction (including within formal or informal rules of the game).

HOW IS IT DIFFERENT TO CURRENT PRACTICE?

Power mapping is a step beyond stakeholder mapping that helps to unpack why as humans we regularly behave in ways to do with conservation or climate change that do not advance our collective interests. It might help to think about it as helping the stakeholder analysis to ‘live and breathe’ in that it is an active document that can be revisited and re-analysed periodically. A focus on power also reminds us that as a project is implemented it could affect or shift power dynamics within the context. It is important to reflect on how our actions impact power relations and to notice where our actions might impact our assumptions or the chances of success.

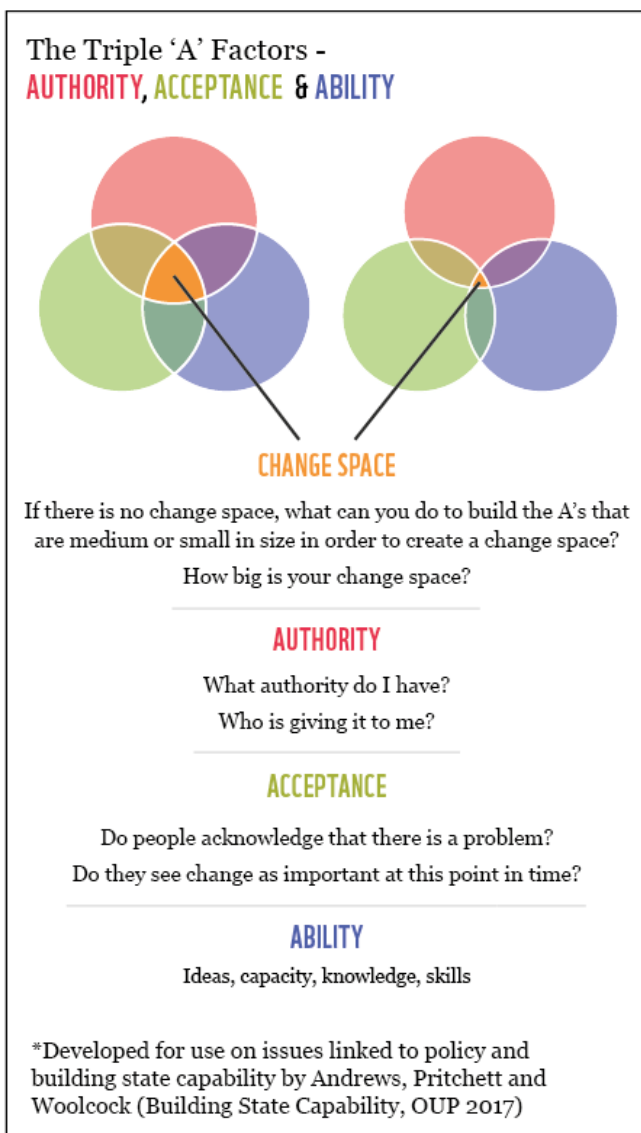
HOW TO USE?

What to think about in moving to action: For any person or organisation, remember to look not just at their interests and influence relative to your issue or problem but also at their interests and influence relative to other issues and their relationships to other stakeholders of interest or with power in relation to decision making on conservation (whether budget allocation or the bureaucratic system that will have to implement any policy or reform).

It can be useful to assess to what extent each person or organisation a) accepts that there is a problem (that requires a conservation solution) and b) accepts and/or sees that now is the time to do something about it.

A tool to use is one the team from Harvard’s Centre for International Development call ‘[assessing your change space](#)’ - part of their Building State Capability tools. The tool asks what **authority** does the person you are analysing have in her context, and who is giving it to her? It then asks whether there is **acceptance** – that there is a problem and it is important now? Finally, it looks at the **ability** of the person to drive change. If each A represents a circle (bigger or smaller depending on your assessment) and you create a Venn Diagram, the cross-over between the circles gives you a sense of the size of the change space (if a change space exists) and areas to work on to increase the change space. The tool is most often applied to state actors, it could usefully be applied to communities and traditional or customary systems too but may require some adaptation.

FIGURE 6. ASSESSING YOUR CHANGE SPACE



What to do: move from stakeholder mapping to power mapping and from there, to identifying what action to take relative to stakeholders who support, are neutral about or are against your proposed strategy.

Power mapping differs from stakeholder mapping in the nature of the questions that are asked about the stakeholders. The answers to the questions help to understand the difference between what people or organisations say, what they do (how they act) and what they want (often not said out loud). A second step is to assess whether all the relevant stakeholders are within the analysis?

PEA can potentially help us to do this by mapping stakeholders at the outset of a project, setting targets for where we want stakeholders to be in a power map within a defined number of years, and referring to this when re-visiting the analysis at a future time. It may be that the dynamic has not changed, or has indeed, changed in a way that we do not think is helpful, or that we had not anticipated. Taking time to regularly reassess your understanding of people and organisations can help embed PEACI and ensure that the analysis is dynamic and living.

Below is a matrix for expanding stakeholder analysis from a PEA perspective derived from an [EU tool for Governance Assessments](#) with some additions that draw on Conflict Analysis tools. The approach used adds nuance to existing [WWF guidance on stakeholder analysis](#).

WWF

“Why is it for example that with all the data telling them to continue doing something it doesn't pay off? Decision makers constantly invest in other things. They have different interests on their minds.”

Social Development Expert and Anthropologist, WWF

FIGURE 7. MATRIX FOR EXPANDING STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

TOWARDS UNDERSTANDING THE POWER OF PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONS	
Role & Importance (in Conservation decision-making)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What role does the actor play, or what influence do they have in conservation decision making (direct/indirect)? • How important is the actor, and the conservation agenda, relative to other decision makers/ people with power? • From a future perspective, will this actor be more – or less – important?
Positions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What the actor says they want. • What they express as their priorities. • What they say out loud or in public. • Are these positions based on an effective understanding of the conservation agenda?
Interests pursued	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the short- and long-term agendas of the actor? • What mix of formal and informal objectives is the actor pursuing? • What is the mix of conservation objectives and objectives around bureaucratic policies and power struggles, or individual positioning and individual interests? • Which of these agendas would prevail over the others, and where does conservation sit in that mix?
Power & resources for influencing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What (informal and formal) power and resources does the actor have at their disposal? • Is the formal power undermined or counteracted by the informal power of other actors? • What constraints does the actor face? • What other actors outside the conservation sector play a role in or for the sector?
Key formal & informal linkages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To whom is the actor connected, formally and informally? • Who knows whom? • What connections, allegiances and pressures does the actor have? (NB. The informal relations may be of more interest, but also more difficult to map.)
Incentives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What incentives (rewards or sanctions) would the actor perceive they would achieve from maintaining or enhancing the status, prioritisation or governance of conservation? • Would, for example, service providers and civil servants be motivated to perform by professional ethos, pay and conditions, adequate supervision and/or competitive pressure?

WHY IT IS RELEVANT TO CONSERVATION?

At a global level, for example, for Climate Change and Biodiversity negotiations, it is relatively easy to identify government positions based on discussions and subsequent final political decision (has a country committed to the agreement or not?). However, once these negotiations have led to successful commitments at a global level, the next step is to undertake analysis at the macro level (regional, national, landscape). This building block can help us to define if and where there is acceptance and ability to ratify and deliver on these positions.

Again, at a macro level, this analysis can help us to understand, for example, the relative power relationships within and outside a given landscape. For example, does the Minister of Environment **recognise and accept** the conservation issue? Do they have the necessary **ability**: the ideas, capacity, knowledge and skills to drive change or reform? Even if the answer to both of these is yes, are there any other people or organisations who may have the power to impact or negate the position of the MoE?

APPROACHES AND EXAMPLES

What is happening when some formal rules are applied and others not? When there are competing formal rules and prioritisation this could be linked to competing levels of power in people and organisations. What is the relationship of environmental legislation in terms of power and influence, compared to other legislation? It is worth remembering that it is not the legislation itself that does or does not hold the power, but instead, the people who implement it.

For example, in the 1990s, the previous military regime of an island nation, where WWF works, promoted a large-scale plan for the development of 1 million hectares for rice production to supply the country, which would have had a devastating effect on the environment. The opening up and clearing of the peatland meant that the area of land was exposed to a significant increase in devastating forest fires. CSOs and local people at the time understood the environmental and livelihood risks of the project and opposed the activity, but the project went ahead. Eventually, the plan was halted. Over 20 years later, with a different president and political system, the fear of economic recession compounded by concerns about Covid19 and a possible food security crisis, the response is, again, a plan that proposes clearing an extensive area, in the same location,

for large-scale rice production. There will be further discussions and modifications, but the new proposal brings with it a number of questions: Why would the current, democratic government, operating in such a different political space, make the same proposal as the previous dictator? What political and economic interests are influencing this situation? Why, with all the available data pointing in different directions, do decision makers consistently take other decisions, or invest in other things? How can we better analyse a situation to learn from history, and mitigate future impacts?

It is important to consider not only the research methodologies used to produce the information on which we base conservation decisions, but also, who has carried out the research, and who has been consulted. Are there enough different people and organisations in that decision-making? Do we need to find new friends and build trust with others, in order to build a more robust, sustainable response? In some cases, this might mean creating alliances with new and unlikely partners, or finding new linkages for gaining the attention of governments. For example, whilst the issue requires a careful and accurate analysis, there are some links between poaching, wildlife trade and financing of criminal activity, which mean potential interest and engagement beyond the traditional conservation sector.

A WWF programme in Nepal found that they were working in a situation where policies and economy were rapidly changing. It was crucial to be constantly updated on what was happening, and how this would impact on the programme. The valuable consortium relationship with a large INGO kept WWF attuned to the detail, updated with progress reports and learning from the different information and analysis that they had available to them. Therefore, the partnership with a more, or differently engaged partner can potentially be a step towards a deeper PEA, without WWF having to do everything alone.

One of the challenges in complex environments is that a 'light' analysis of people and organisations, without investing in an in-depth power analysis, could mean that we only see the tip of the iceberg, or what is reported in the media. A danger of always consulting with the same key informants is that they might tell you what you want to hear, or deliberately hide facts. Equally, voices that need to be listened to could easily be missed, and only come to the fore at a later date.

POLITICAL ECONOMY (PE) DYNAMICS

WHAT IS IT?

We include PE Dynamics in this section as a reminder to look at causal relationships and the feedback loops between building blocks in order to understand how change happens as well as the implications of that change within the context. The PE Dynamics arrows remind us that there is constant interaction between foundational factors, rules of the game and, people and organisations. PEA approaches ask that we revisit our understanding of the operational environment as a route to figuring out what foundational factors drive the systems in which people and organisations operate, which rules of the game are more or less likely influence (or cause) actions and decision-making and, what power people and organisations have within the context.

The foundational factors help us to understand the arrangement of power - in the country and relative to conservation. This affects the way things are done (rules of the game) in government, the private sector and communities. It also constrains governance in relation to conservation. The rules of the game manifest in certain types of behaviour by people and organisations that can be constructive for or counter to conservation. These behaviours have an impact on the efficiency, effectiveness and equity of conservation activities.

HOW DIFFERENT TO CURRENT PRACTICE?

The PEA approach to the analysis of foundational factors, rules of the game and, people and organisations overlaps in many ways with the WWF approach to inclusive conservation. It foregrounds the importance of making sure that WWF brings people together around the table. It includes deepening understanding of ownership structures, financing, ideologies and cultural dimensions, to ensure that assumptions are not made, and all influences are taken into account.

The WWF network has good examples of this inclusive practice. Projects have been successful in bringing people from communities and from local government together to inform them of their rights and responsibilities under national law, meaning that that the power of information is shared collaboratively from the outset. Another excellent example from WWF is the development of a territorial management plan, but developed, and re-named a 'Life Plan' that

more accurately represented the community dynamics, based on consultation with and the incorporation of the analysis of communities. This expanded approach allowed the communities to consult with all of their important stakeholders, which in their worldview and traditional practices includes a process for consultation with people from prior generations (those that had already died), present generations (people who are currently alive) and future generations (those whom have not yet been born). This approach, therefore, allowed the community, and WWF, to fully acknowledge all of the stakeholders with influence in the territory.

THE THEORY - DEFINITIONS

In his [beginners guide to PEA](#), Whaites talks about the need to engage in –‘a continual process of reflection and change’

“the ways in which the [building blocks] interact: how do they affect each other, and how do they influence/shape prospects for change? “

USAID Glossary TWP through applied PEA

“What features are in flux and may drive an opening or closing of space for change? What foreign or domestic drivers of change are acting on society already? What levels of complexity and uncertainty are there in any potential changes that are identified?”

USAID Applied Fieldguide

HOW TO USE?

A focus on PE Dynamics reminds us that change is not linear. It asks that you dive into one building test block, dive into the next and then look at how they relate. Then add the next building block and look at how all three relate. The next step is to apply what you know to your challenge and current strategy or activity plans against it by asking: have we assumed something that is not the case? Did we target the right decision maker? Did we anticipate how our issue intersects with others and the impacts in both directions? Depending on the answers, PEA can help a team map and adapt

strategies as well as pathways for action (implementation) as well as to anticipate unintended consequences (the ripple effects and risks associate with any action).

One way to enter into analysis of dynamics is to look for contests with complex systems. In order to do this, you can place WWF at the centre of a contextual map or, alternatively, place conservation at the centre of a contextual map.

Outside-in Thinking (traditionally a private sector strategy tool): a tool to identify perspectives your team do not have or had not thought might be relevant to the effectiveness of interventions. It can be used to identify gaps in your understanding of the context and the actors who might be able to help you fill the gaps. To put it differently, a tool to better map what issues and which people or organisations have a bearing on programmes and projects.

FIGURE 8. THE OUTSIDE-IN THINKING TOOL

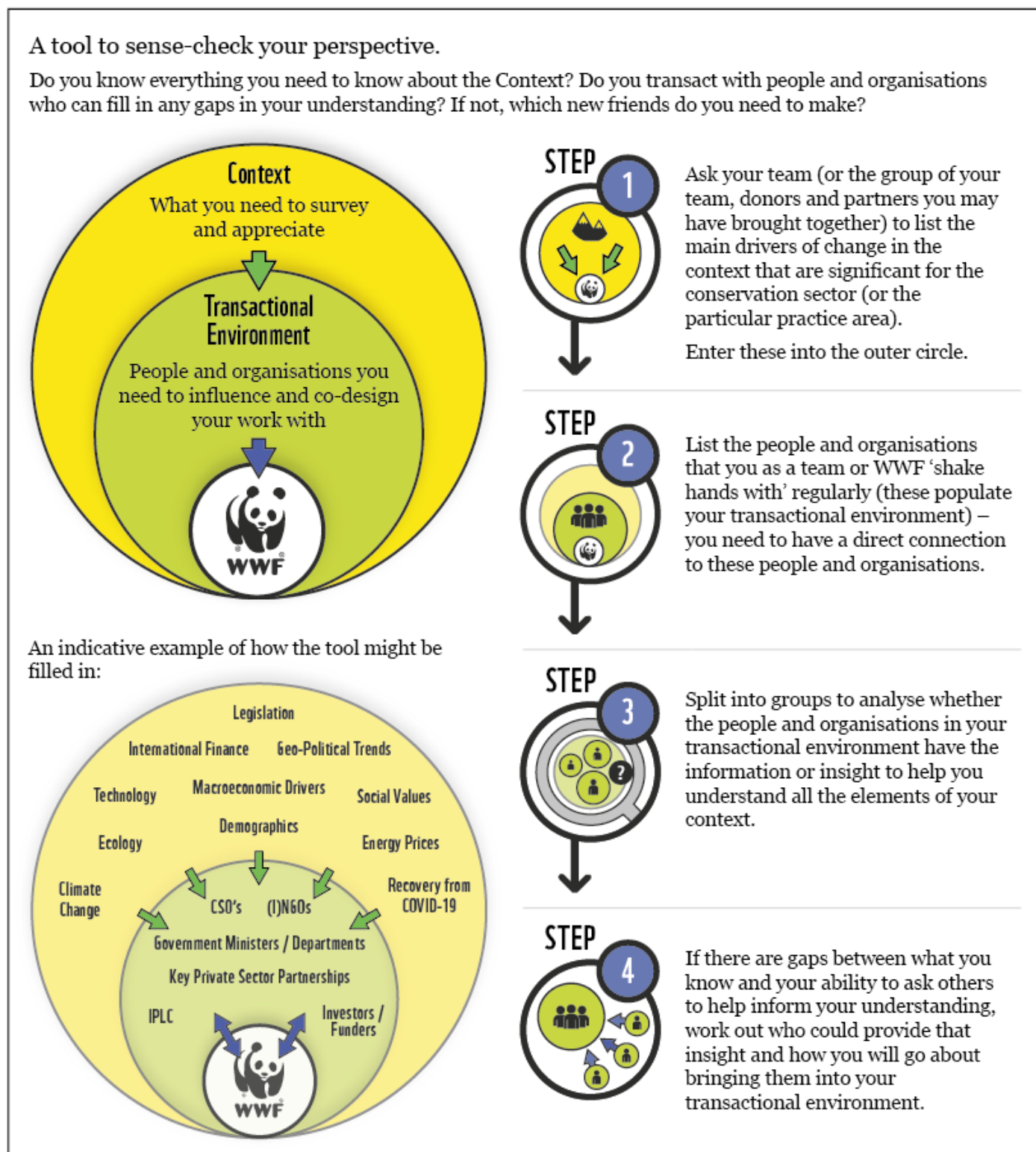
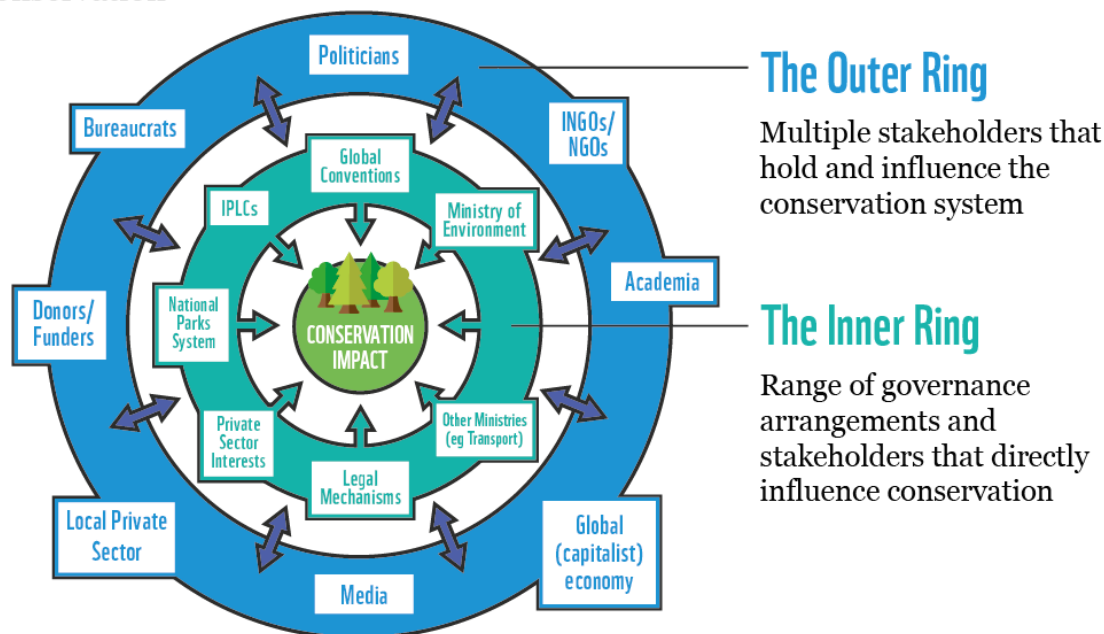


FIGURE 9. A DIFFERENT WAY TO USE OUTSIDE-IN THINKING TO UNDERSTAND CONSERVATION COMPLEXITY

An indicative visual representation of the multiple relationships and influences within the context of conservation*



The Outer Ring

Multiple stakeholders that hold and influence the conservation system

The Inner Ring

Range of governance arrangements and stakeholders that directly influence conservation

*adapted and derived from Brian Levy, Robert Cameron, Ursula Hoadley, and Vinothan Naidoo (eds). *The Politics and Governance of Basic Education: A Tale of Two South African Provinces*. Oxford University Press (2018)

What to think about: A useful rule of thumb is to try to identify where contests exist – over issues, rules, systems or approaches. Contest implies efforts to change the way things are done (the status quo). In order to programme effectively it is useful to know what PE Dynamics are at play, what elements are contested (often a fertile site for change) and, to pause when change happens in the political, social or economic systems that may shift the PE Dynamics in your context. You want to get to a place where you understand what issues are contested and why so that you can offer alternatives that are positive for conservation rather than negative.

WWF 

“We can’t do our jobs effectively by working in a bubble and keeping our heads down. Making the right partnerships to ensure good analysis and engagement is important. There was a huge benefit to a partnership with (social development NGO) to help us think differently”.

Senior Director Innovative Conservation, WWF USA

WHY IT IS RELEVANT TO CONSERVATION?

PEA helps to put a focus on how change happens and who is likely to support or resist that change. This understanding can then be used to assess which routes to influence change are likely to be successful and what that means for programmes and projects. It can then also be used to question assumptions held by teams, to reflect critically on the work as well as to map and assess alternative strategies for achieving change.

WHAT CAN YOU DO COST-FREE TODAY?

- ✓ Create PEA reference groups (part programme staff, part external ‘friends’, can involve donors to support buy-in)
- ✓ Add a context analysis conversation to monthly meetings, get 1 person to buy in and drive
- ✓ Set your team a challenge - everyone has to meet one new person every fortnight
- ✓ Challenge your team to read a particular report or to identify and share one reading on an element of the building blocks every month (these can be blogs, articles or a full report – blogs and articles are likely to have higher traction given busy teams on tight deadlines)
- ✓ Take a look at the example of a [Terms of Reference](#) for a PEA in the Governance Practice resource drive and adapt it to suit your focus and the person or team you have working on the analysis.

APPROACHES AND EXAMPLES

In regional or transboundary landscapes, it is necessary to hold an understanding of the differences and similarities between regions or nations. This deepens understanding of the potential levers for change and identifies possible spaces for interaction and collaboration. Whilst often, this understanding is held in the minds of project managers and leads, it can be a helpful exercise to bring this information together to check assumptions, particularly when needing to work across multiple systems to achieve a common objective.

Using a complexity grid: Producing a Complexity grid for transboundary and complex landscapes.

For example, WWF’s transboundary programme in the Greater Mekong region works across five different countries. The countries have different histories, legal and political systems, interpretations, cultures, and approaches to negotiation and engagement, some of them potentially skewed by corruption. Agreements on governance of water resources are non-binding, and therefore, leave room for interpretation. However, if countries don’t interpret the rules of the game in the same way, then there would be no agreement. As a starting point, it is important to understand the ‘pillars’ of the governance system for each country, and have a broad understanding of the nature of the political systems and structures in place. The rules of the game give us information on: the way that laws are interpreted; whether there is too little governance, or over-governance; if there is mandate fragmentation; and, how cultural issues will impact on all of these things. In addition to this, WWF has identified the technical issues and areas of engagement needed for conservation impact.

A complexity grid (fig.10) can be a helpful way to present some of these key issues in one place in order to begin to think about similarities, differences, and opportunities for making links. It can also act as an input to inform a Theory of Change, particularly when engaging on large or multi-scale initiatives (for example, ivory markets, jaguar and tiger global programmes.) To effect change at landscape level, it is crucial to have a developed social understanding. We need to understand the nature of interactions with actors in specific spaces, the role of institutions, formal and informal approaches, and how interests are negotiated.

FIGURE 10. THEORETICAL EXAMPLE OF A COMPLEXITY GRID

COUNTRY / IDENTIFICATION OF ISSUES	COUNTRY 1: TIGERLANDIA	COUNTRY 2: JAGUARIA	COUNTRY 3: LEOPARDIA
Government type	Authoritarian	Communist /Centrally planned	(Liberal) democracy
Governance structure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legal and political issues (Rules of the Game) Effectiveness of the state (PE Dynamics, also Foundational Factors) Parliament, independence of the Judiciary and its role in decision making, etc - (Rules of the Game, PE Dynamics – could also be Foundational Factors depending on the political system) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National assembly is very weak No independent judiciary Unclear electoral system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National assembly is weak in areas Independent judiciary in some areas, weak on environmental legislation Formal electoral system, no opposition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National assembly very effective Strong judiciary, with some evidence of political meddling Transparent elections, with some evidence of corrupt practices
Rule of Law (Rules of the Game) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing Laws Whether they are introduced through formal or informal systems De jure v De facto (do the formal or informal rules dominate the way things are done?) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many convoluted laws Mixed formal and informal rule-based system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unclear process of introduction of laws Dominant informal rule-based system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sketchy / jumbled with uneven implementation Mixed formal and informal rule-based system
Cultural issues/Social Practice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Corruption (Rules of the Game) Inequality (Foundational Factors) Ethnicity (Foundational Factors) Gender (Foundational Factors, Rules of the Game) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear evidence of nepotism/ corruption Ethnic cleansing against a minority group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No evidence of corruption No evidence of inequality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigations being carried out into political corruption
Transboundary issues (PE Dynamics)			
Role of NGOs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> State - civil society relations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> International NGOs being banned from country 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some NGOs/ CSOs allowed to operate, with heavy scrutiny 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NGOs/CSOs have strong relationship with MoE on some conservation issues / National Parks
Country's transboundary Relationships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Global agreements Bi-lateral agreements Regional agreements Upstream/downstream benefits (eg benefits are upstream, impacts are downstream) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ratified Paris Climate Agreement, 2016 Hydropower agreement signed with neighbouring Jaguarua Signed Regional environmental protection pact (not operationalised) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ratified Paris Climate Agreement, 2016 Hydropower agreement signed with neighbouring Tigerlandia Signed Regional environmental protection pact (not operationalised) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ratified Paris Climate Agreement, 2016 Signed Regional environmental protection pact with accompanying plan of action, implemented
Conservation objectives			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreements on water stewardship Strengthened community engagement in resource management Species conservation objectives 	<p>Low potential for national government agreements on resource use, some potential for community-level management</p>	<p>Some potential for national commitments on freshwater and species conservation, strong engagement with communities</p>	<p>Government committed in practice to meaningful conservation objectives</p>

Notes for using the complexity grid:

- Do not be concerned if the grid is complex, and complicated. This is expected.
- This information is often sensitive, and should not be shared externally to the organisation.
- Recognise that this type of analysis needs to be based on local knowledge and understanding. At the same time, make sure that local staff feel comfortable discussing issues openly. In some cases, this may not be possible.
- It is possible to use any starting point to populate this grid; the important thing is that the information is represented and allows us to look at the complexity. For example, it is possible to begin with the conservation objectives at the top (eg. species, river dolphin protection, freshwater system) and then dive down, or place these at the bottom, and work upwards.

3. LINKING PEACI TO ACTION IN WWF

This section of this framework provides some tips on thinking through the use of PEA relative to your work and entry points for linking the framework to programme or project action.

A WAY TO ASSESS WHAT LEVEL OF PEA IS NEEDED, FOR WHOM AND WITHIN WHAT TIMEFRAME

Integrity developed the [CAT approach](#) to its delivery of PEA which helps to remind teams that a PEA must consider the **C**ontext (including resources), the **A**udience (is it donors, your project team, stakeholders you are working with) and the **T**imeframe available. In practice, this involves factoring in five principles that can be used as a guide in allocating human and financial resources.

FIGURE 11. 5 PRINCIPLES FOR THE CAT APPROACH

FACTOR IN	WHAT THAT MEANS
Pragmatic & Usable	<p>An optimal process accounts for the timeframe, intended audience and operational constraints involved.</p> <p>If the aim is to change a policy, a two-page report may get more traction than a 60-page scientific study; a six-month in-depth analysis is unlikely to be useful if a rapid response is required.</p> <p>A Minister of Environment may need to know and understand the science of conservation, the political colleagues that need to be convinced to allocate budget to a conservation intervention will need different information in a shorter format.</p> <p>Know the budget implications of an intervention – its cost relative to the overall budget, its potential impact on revenue (income or tax).</p> <p>Know the trade-offs a community may face in choosing one conservation approach over another – acknowledge those and offer alternatives.</p>
Problem-Driven and Action-Oriented	<p>Technocratic solutions are often not appropriate to the political context. It is important to try to understand what barriers and challenges are preventing the use of scientific approaches. Analyse and address those in order to unlock the enabling conditions for moving forward.</p>
Contextually Expert	<p>Making sense of complexity also requires specific contextual experience. Local people, with local languages, partners and local expertise – you don't have to hire outsiders, it's about recognising and harnessing people in your teams and networks. This is also a way to build relationships or re-set relationships as you seek to better understand the perspectives and insights of others.</p>
Visually Engaging	<p>Complex dynamics are best understood when visualised. Use available PEA tools to organise and present information in a participatory and accessible way, consider using maps and images.</p>
Conflict-Sensitive & Inclusive	<p>Working in conflict-affected environments requires additional precautions, (and a clear understanding of social and political context) to ensure the safety of staff and research participants.</p> <p>Recognise the issues related to political conflict and security implications for both on the groundwork and the profile of political work. Deepen understanding of conflict over resources, land rights, cultural barriers.</p>

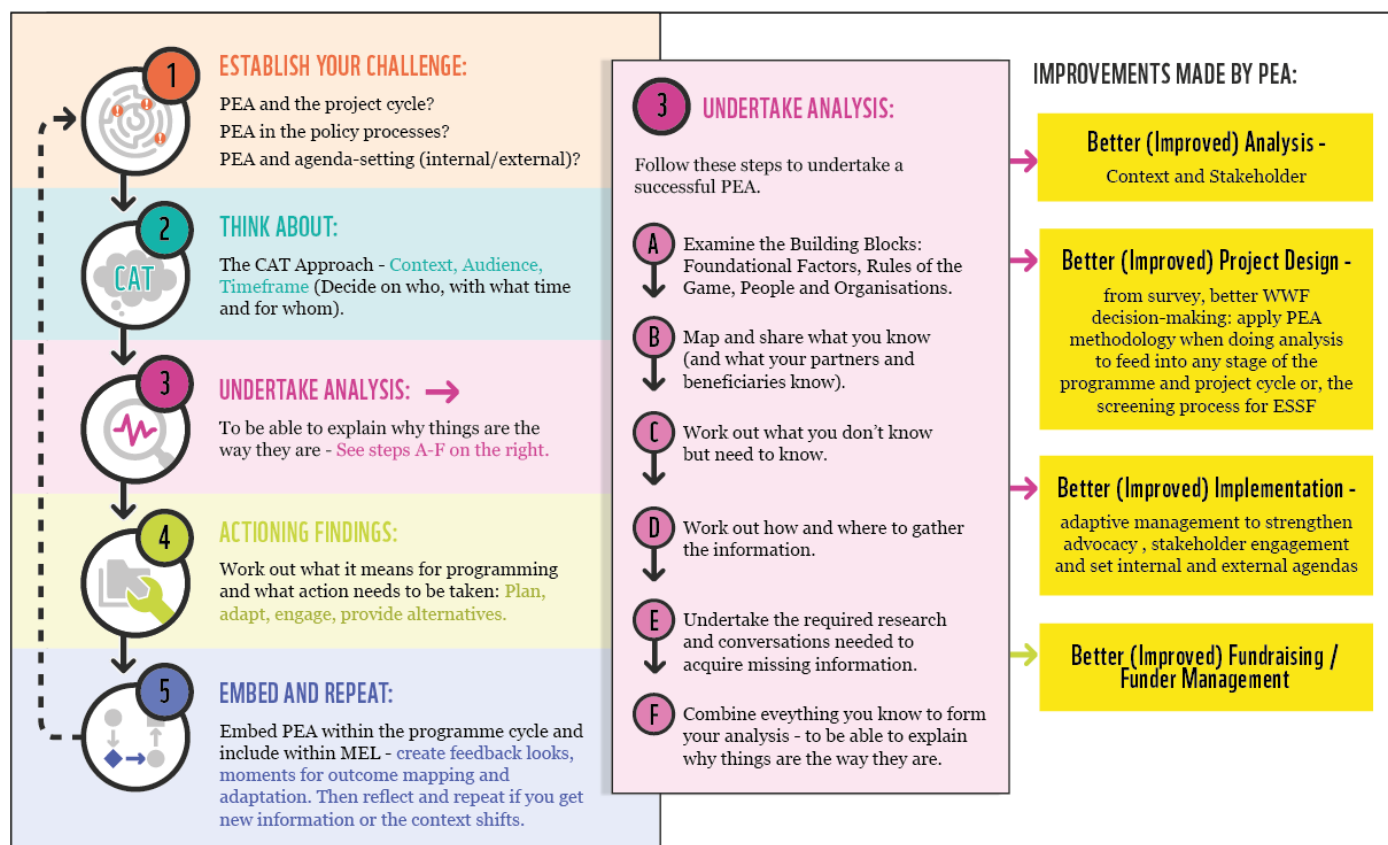
WHEN TO DO IT AND WHAT TO THINK ABOUT - TOWARDS A PROCESS

In a world where we all had enough time, resources and spare capacity PEA can form an integral part of the full programme cycle. It makes for improved pre-proposal analysis, proposal preparation, inception design and strategy, programming and monitoring, evidence generation for evaluation and learning. In conservation where resources and time are stretched it can be used to rethink activities, to engage a donor or reset relationships. There is no reason not to use it on just one part of a programme cycle as an entry point:

- to revisit an earlier stakeholder or context analysis in order to address a challenge or navigate a blockage;
- if you want to understand the situation (required for ESSF) taking a PEA approach might help you understand it better;
- as an approach to help navigate political networks during project implementation; or,
- as an approach to revising an existing Country Brief within the annual cycle

PEA is one approach to developing a better understanding of complexity, not the only approach.

FIGURE 12. STEPS IN A PEA



PEA does not have to involve an external expert or require teams to have in-house political science, anthropology or economics expertise. It can be done based on the knowledge of teams and those they bring into the analysis space. To make a start all you need is an interest within your team, a good set of local connections and the time to gather some information, have a set of deep conversations and generate evidence for what you think needs to be done or why certain things need to be done differently.

Whether an expert is brought in or you work as a team the analysis is subjective (shaped by what we think and know). Additionally, to work against our own biases it must be grounded on evidence. The information and evidence available are used to ask different questions of the challenges, people and organisations you are working with at the time you undertake a PEA. This means that you may get it right or may only get parts of it right (as situations change or more information becomes available). **It is therefore important to test your analysis, revisit your analysis and be open to expanding the analysis as more information or evidence becomes available to you.**

4. TAKING YOUR UNDERSTANDING FURTHER

It may be that this framework has grabbed your attention or piqued your interest but isn't quite framing the concepts and approach in ways you find easy to access.

There are many introductory guides on PEA and good places to start are [The Beginner's Guide to Political Economy Analysis \(PEA\)](#) and a recent blog on [What is PEA and why does it matter for development](#) that has links to theory, history, do's and don'ts and is easy to apply to conservation not just development. There is also writing that identifies gaps in the current approaches [Mind the gaps: What's missing in political economy analysis and why it matters](#) and looks at [how the use of PEA is evolving and its impact](#).

There are many PEA 'How to' guides that break down the theory and building blocks as well as introducing tools used by international NGOs, research institutes and funding agencies. If you find the methodology interesting and useful, it can help to read around a bit in order to find the definitions and approaches that feel like the best fit for your needs or to get a more in depth understanding of how to apply PEA to sectors or problems – see for example the guides prepared by [DFID](#), [USAID](#), [Oxfam](#), [ODI](#) that informed some of this Strategic Framework. There are useful glossaries that help unpack the concepts involved, often embedded in How to Guides, with one available from [USAID](#).

If the building blocks are an area of interest, the [GSDRC Topic Guide on Inclusive Institutions](#) (Rules of the Game) has useful guidance including thinking about the Rules of the Game in terms of communities and families, economic relations and political governance but also about making them inclusive. Conflict analysis offers useful [ways to think about](#) and [tools](#) to map the difference between positions (what someone might say), interests (what they want to get out of a discussion, policy or process) and needs (what they must have).

In your work or engagement with methodologies to strengthen impact you may have come across other terms or concepts often linked to PEA. As a starting point if you want to branch out, there are useful approaches to [Political Analysis](#) and the use of [Everyday Political Analysis](#); there is Thinking and Working Politically (TWP) and the [TWP Community of Practice](#); and the [Building State Capability](#) team at Harvard's Center for International Development (the Problem Driven Iterative Adaptation (PDIA) methodology that they developed can be usefully applied to conservation challenges and their toolkit includes useful exercises to understand cause).

The WWF has a [growing set of resources on issues linked to political economy](#) and its potential as an approach to understanding the ways in which power can impact on governance as a driver of conservation progress or challenges. The Governance Practice folder includes WWF writing on political economy and conservation and the links to political ecology as an emerging issue. The Governance Practice ran a course on PEA in 2019 and the course materials, including theory and further detail on the building blocks, are also available through the above link.

PEA can also usefully be integrated into the [Standards](#) and as a method to improve or deepen how you define, design, implement, analyze and adapt, and share your programme and project. PEA methodologies will also strengthen the analysis programmes and projects conduct in order to feed into and complete the [ESSF screening process](#). Where feasible, elements of the framework will also be made available through [Project Compass](#) – the ongoing process to integrate guidance related to the project/programme design and management for the Network.

WORDS THAT WORK FOR PEACI

TRY THIS APPROACH	INSTEAD OF THIS	NOTES
External facilitators to support community expertise	International experts and local communities	We need to recognise that community analysis is expert analysis, though it may benefit from support of external facilitation
Stakeholder analysis that includes power and dynamics	Stakeholder analysis	We need to recognise the power and influence of stakeholders to act in favour of (or against) the objectives
Power holders, elite, and formal and informal use of power	Decision makers	We need to analyse why people make decisions, rather than just accepting that they do make decisions
Best fit	Best practice	We need to ask ourselves: what are the limitations of our 'normal' approaches? In doing what we always do we assume the same response to a conservation challenge will work in every context OR will continue to work despite changes in a particular context.
Understanding complexity in the context can be a messy process, but can help deepen our understanding	It's a complicated and difficult situation	We need to engage with the full complexity of a situation, in order to analyse what is important. There is sometimes a tendency to try to 'simplify' things before we have engaged, which can mean some important issues are overlooked.
Every context is unique and I need to interrogate what I think I know	Making assumptions	We need to question our assumptions, see our biases and seek out local and context specific knowledge and information
We see analysis as an ongoing process	Our analysis is done	We need analysis to be continuous. It is important to test, revisit and be open to expanding our analysis.

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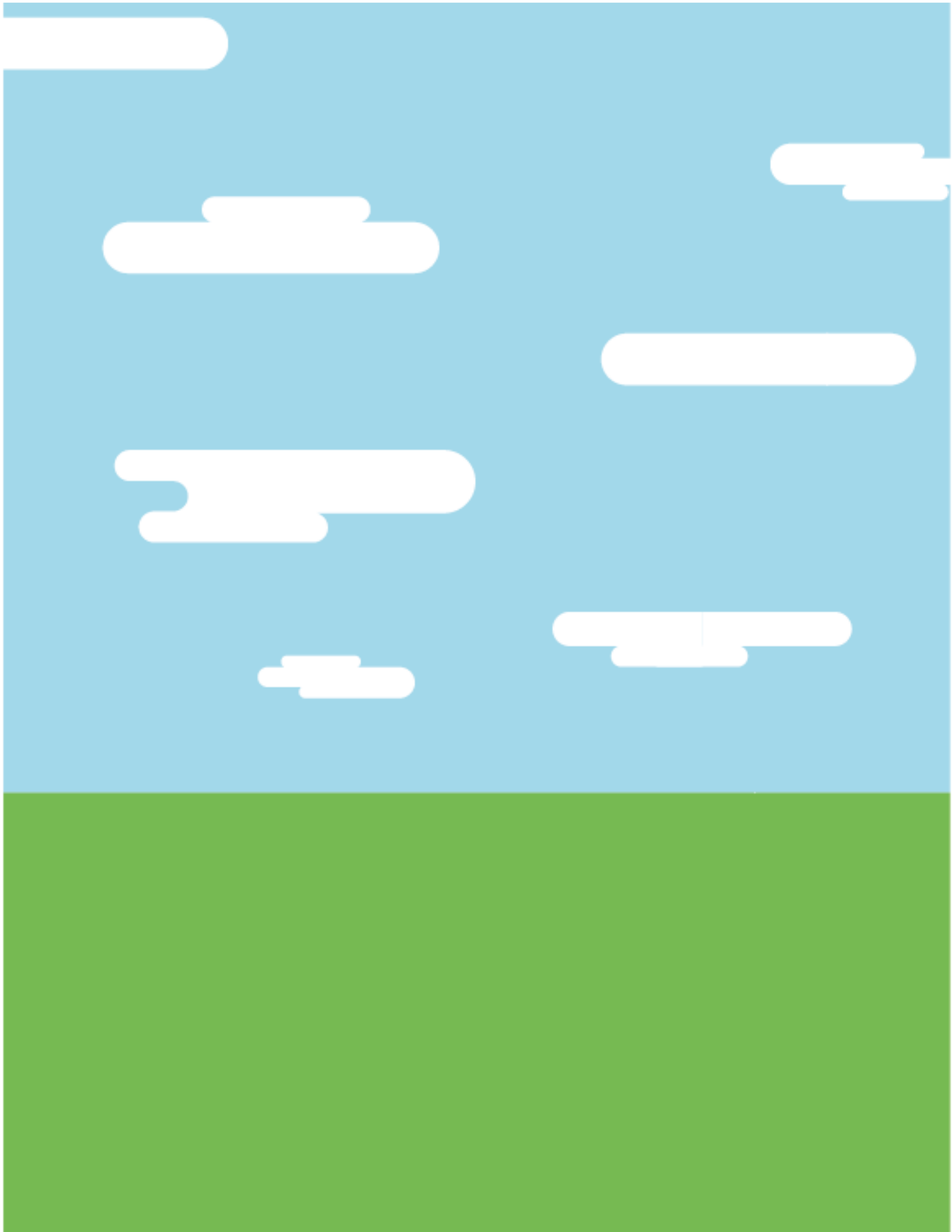
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WWF's [Social Policies](#) on Indigenous Peoples, Human Rights, Gender, Safeguarding Children and their rights, and poverty.

WWF-UK (Marion A. Osieyo, 2020) '[Nature in all goals](#)'- document showing the relationship between people, nature and the Sustainable Development Goals with case studies from conservation projects.



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