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MAINSTREAMING BIODIVERSITY INTO GOVERNMENT DECISION-MAKING

A practical context analysis guide to improve understanding and strategy for the political challenge of integrating biodiversity information



What's in the guide?

Development that causes biodiversity degradation, and is ignorant of biodiversity's benefits, is unsustainable. Decades of bad development decisions have created a 'nature emergency'. There are growing demands for biodiversity information to be far better integrated in government decision-making. This guide responds to those demands.

The guide offers an iterative four-stage approach to understanding the all-important political, institutional and stakeholder context in which decisions are made. Armed with the resulting 'context analysis', readers will be able to create a much more effective information strategy – offering the right biodiversity information to the right decision-making processes, in the right forms, at the right times.

How was the guide produced?

This guidance has been produced as part of the project 'CONNECT: Mainstreaming biodiversity information into the heart of government decision-making'. It forms part of a series of publications currently being developed by the CONNECT project to help practitioners with mainstreaming, which will be made available at: www.connectbiodiversity.com/

The International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) led the development of this guide, in collaboration with CONNECT partners. Country teams based at the Ghana National Biosafety Authority, the Mozambique Ministry of Land, Environment and Rural Development (MITADER) and Uganda National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) trialed an early version of the guide working closely with IIED. This guide is based largely on the implementation experiences in the three countries and valuable inputs from all country partners.

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1 Introduction

Background

Biodiversity is declining faster than at any other period in human history.¹ Direct drivers of the decline include changes in land and sea use, over-exploitation of organisms, climate change, pollution and invasive alien species. These drivers are themselves influenced by demographic, macroeconomic and political factors. Such a rapid decline is causing significant damage to the global economy and human wellbeing and threatens to undermine efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

Recognising the scale and urgency of the challenge, in 2020 governments from more than 80 countries signed a “Leaders Pledge for Nature”, committing to reversing biodiversity loss by 2030, and sending a united signal to step up global ambition for nature, climate and people.² Despite delays due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, global leaders are also in the process of finalising a new 10-year global framework for biodiversity management to be adopted at the next Conference of the Parties to the Convention for Biological Diversity, currently scheduled for 2021. These commitments demonstrate that governments worldwide are recognising the interdependencies between the economy, society and biodiversity, and the importance of taking action. This presents an exciting, timely and important opportunity to integrate biodiversity value, its potential and its possible trade-offs with development priorities into government decision-making.

Recognising the gap between information producers and users

In practice, integrating information on biodiversity value, its potential, and trade-offs into decision-making presents a significant challenge. There is a considerable disconnect between the providers of biodiversity information and its potential users. Biodiversity analysts produce vast amounts of information and data, but this needs to be packaged and targeted with specific end users in mind. Often the information collected is not the right type (for example, economic and risk-based information is often sought more than species information), produced at the right time (information must be ready for critical decision events) or communicated effectively (in a format or language that decision-makers understand).

Improving understanding of decision-making contexts

The terms ‘biodiversity’, ‘development’ and ‘information’ each have their own political connotations associated with them. For example, unless biodiversity information is framed within the terms, narratives and priorities of “mainstream” actors such as economists, planners and politicians, it will be ignored in programming and priority-setting. Most mainstream decision-makers currently prioritise maximising development opportunities over conserving or maintaining biodiversity, without recognising that this can often undermine development in the long term. Political decisions are often made to garner votes and political support in order to retain power, and policies are not necessarily adopted on the basis of the latest scientific data and wider biodiversity impacts. Those who produce biodiversity information therefore need to be aware of the biases and barriers of those

¹ IPBES, 2019, Global assessment report on biodiversity and ecosystem services: <https://ipbes.net/ipbes-global-assessment-report-biodiversity-ecosystem-services>

² See official pledge at: www.leaderspledgefornature.org/

who make decisions if they want such information to be used. These biases and barriers are all part of the broad political context behind decisions: the stakeholder worldviews, narratives, relations, power and governance structures that heavily influence whether information is used (or ignored) and how decisions are made.

Those who want biodiversity information to influence government decision-making need to know how those decisions are made, including: (1) the processes and specific steps, and (2) the stakeholders involved and their interests, powers and relationships. In other words, it is important to have a good understanding not only of technical biodiversity issues, but also of the political context in which decisions are made and which so often constrain outcomes.

2 Purpose of this guide

This guide is aimed at project teams who want to improve the use of biodiversity information in relevant government decision-making processes. A 'project', in the context of this guide, is "a piece of planned work or an activity that is finished over a period of time and intended to achieve a particular focus".³ A project may involve a range of stakeholders and partners, and can be internally or externally funded.

In addition to supporting project teams to learn about their specific context, the guide may also prove useful for individuals who want to better understand the political context of biodiversity mainstreaming more broadly. These readers may find the sections on key concepts ([Section 3](#)), context analysis framework ([Sections 5 and 6](#)), and experiences from CONNECT partners most useful ([Annex 3](#)).

2.1 What is context analysis?

The term 'context analysis' is used in this report to refer to what is also known as a 'political economy analysis'. The term 'context analysis' was preferred when trialling the guide with partners, as 'political economy analysis' tended to confuse and alienate stakeholders from the process.⁴ A context, or political economy analysis has many different definitions, but is most commonly understood as a form of study which seeks to "understand and explain the critical role of political factors in influencing how decisions are made and with what outcomes".⁵ It examines the interaction of governance and broader political and economic processes within a society, including: (1) the distribution of power and assets between stakeholders, and (2) the processes that create, sustain and transform stakeholders' interests, power and relationships over time. The approach draws on a wide range of disciplines including economics, political science, history, law and sociology.

Undertaking a context analysis is *not a one-time activity or an academic exercise* to produce a report. It should be adopted as an iterative tool to help users continuously seek and collect information on how political agendas and interests are shaped, how political decisions are made and ways to practically influence them. Furthermore, the context is constantly evolving as a result of the projects' own interventions and other factors outside the projects' control. Thus, context analysis is a *continuous process of investigation and learning* to ensure project interventions are timely, well targeted and politically savvy.

For mainstreaming biodiversity, context analysis can add value by generating insights into government decision-making processes and how these are shaped by stakeholder interests, power and relationships. Such insights can ensure the project strategy adopts a targeted and tailored approach which navigates barriers to improving biodiversity information use.

³ Definition by Cambridge Dictionary

⁴ The term 'political economy analysis' initially introduced confusion and suspicion about the objectives of such analysis among some key stakeholders, alienating them from analysis. The word 'political' was understood differently by different stakeholders: some perceived it only to be about narrow party politics, which may often not be within their mandate to address. However, all agreed that understanding the wider context in which decisions are made - the governance structures and stakeholder power and influence - was important.

⁵ Collinson S. (2003) Power, Livelihoods and Conflict: Case Studies in Political Economy Analysis for Humanitarian Action, Humanitarian Policy Group Report 13, Overseas Development Institute. <https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/289.pdf>

2.2 How to conduct a context analysis

There are many ways to go about conducting a context analysis. This guide is not meant to prescribe a single methodology, nor an exhaustive list of options. Rather, it sets out an overarching framework, reviews key issues to consider, and outlines a basic set of four stages to take using the supplementary suggested templates and tools provided in Annexes 1-3. It draws on the lessons learnt from applying context analysis in Ghana, Mozambique and Uganda as part of the CONNECT project to integrate biodiversity information into government decision-making processes.⁶

Context analysis recognises that good projects often fail not for technical reasons, but due to persistent institutional, cultural, and/or power challenges. Conducting a context analysis helps build a systematic understanding of this kind of ‘political’ context. This guide proposes that users adopt a participatory approach when undertaking a context analysis, in order to engage with stakeholders who they may not have considered before. A participatory approach can help establish or expand relationships and networks for dialogue, build coalitions for change, and incorporate a wider range of perspectives and interests in project design. Such a participatory approach can not only help those leading interventions understand political barriers and opportunities, but the very process of engaging key stakeholders in the analysis can result in *strong multi-stakeholder buy-in and support* for the analysis’ findings. Indeed, it was noted by CONNECT project teams that the broad stakeholder engagement and participation which was required for the context analysis was critically important for its overall success.

Navigating this guide

The remainder of the guide is structured into the following four parts, with sample templates and tools set aside in the annexes. [Section 3](#) provides background on the key concepts behind context analysis. [Section 4](#) explains possible information sources, how to design a participatory approach and who needs to be involved in the analysis. [Section 5](#) sets out the overarching framework and [Section 6](#) provides specific details on the four-stage iterative process of analysis. Lastly, [Section 7](#) provides a list of further reading.

[Annex 1](#) provides users with sample templates and additional guidance to help apply the analysis. [Annex 2](#) provides material from CONNECT partners’ experience of conducting context analysis, including template terms of reference (ToRs), analysis/interview questions, and workshop agendas. [Annex 3](#) summarises the key lessons learnt by the CONNECT project partners, offering insights into the ways in which applying context analysis has helped them to achieve their objectives (see [Annex 3.1](#) in particular). Selected testimonies about the benefits of the guide in are provided in Box 1.

⁶ Further details on the CONNECT project are available at: www.connectbiodiversity.com/

Box 1. Testimonies from CONNECT project stakeholders on this guide

“The political economic issues covered under CA are nothing new to most stakeholders, but those issues are seldom analysed in a systematic way for a project. The guidance provided a useful logical framework to tie different issues together systematically to provide a basis for strategic decisions for CONNECT.”

– Ana Goncalves, Magambi Consultancy, CA consultant for Mozambique CONNECT Team

“The guide is easy to follow and simple to use. It is a good guide to clearly map political context and understand the key issues that need to be addressed for the success of the project. After CONNECT, I used it again when I started my new role at the International Water Management Institute where I lead the Resilience against Climate Change project in Ghana. The guide helped me understand political context in setting an agenda for the integration of social transformation information and analysis in development planners’ decision-making towards building climate resilience in vulnerable communities within the project area.”

– Charity Osei-Amponsah, Lead of Resilience Against Climate Change: Social Transformation Research Project; previous CA consultant for Ghana CONNECT Team

“The guide and the results from CA using the guide supported the National Steering Committee to make strategic decisions including selection of biodiversity information products for CONNECT in Uganda. It provided useful new tools to engage and understand key stakeholders, for example, power/interest mapping and identifying conflicts among different policies and laws.”

– James Okiria-Ateker, Project Manager CONNECT Uganda

3 Key concepts

3.1 Biodiversity concepts

While conducting a context analysis to improve the use of biodiversity information in government decision-making processes, users of this guide will need to engage with a wide range of stakeholders. It is therefore important for users to have a good understanding of key concepts including ‘biodiversity’ and ‘biodiversity information’, as it is likely that stakeholders will have varying (and sometimes very low) levels of understanding of these concepts. Descriptions of these concepts alongside other terms which are often confused with them are provided below.

Biodiversity: At its simplest, biodiversity means the variety of life.⁷ Some stakeholders may not understand the word ‘biodiversity’. Others may use it interchangeably with alternative commonly used terms (such as ‘nature’, ‘wildlife’, and ‘natural capital’) which are all technically underpinned by ‘biodiversity’ but distinct from it. These terms are often used interchangeably with biodiversity but are not the same thing (as set out in Table 1). Particular organisational and professional mandates tend to emphasise one term; but invariably these mandates can be more robustly pursued by exploring their links with biodiversity (see Table 1).

Table 1. Terms which are often used interchangeably with biodiversity⁸

Terms	Definition	Link to biodiversity
Nature	Nature means the world’s living and non-living natural processes and features, including species, mountains, oceans etc.	Biodiversity is the <i>variety</i> of nature’s living components, and is critical for sustaining healthy natural systems.
Wildlife	Wildlife generally refers to familiar and/or iconic species – components of biodiversity.	Biodiversity is the variety of <i>all</i> living organisms, from top predators to micro-organisms, as well as crop and livestock varieties. The biodiversity in communities of plants, animals, fungi and microbes which underpins survival of individual wildlife species.
Natural resources	Natural resources are naturally occurring materials that we exploit. Some are renewable, derived from living resources (wood, bushmeat etc.), others are finite and from non-living sources (oil, gas, minerals etc.).	Some components of biodiversity, including species we eat, are natural resources. A diversity of species, genes and ecosystems secures long-term production of renewable natural resources.
Natural capital	Natural capital is a way of explaining the value of nature and biodiversity to economically-minded decision-makers, drawing a deliberate parallel with financial systems, where capital generates income flows. Natural capital is the stock of natural assets, such as water, land, soil and wildlife, from which flow valuable goods and services.	A biodiverse portfolio of natural capital is more resilient to external shocks – as is a diverse portfolio of financial stocks.

⁷ For the official CBD definition, see: www.cbd.int/convention/articles/?a=cbd-02

⁸ Note, biodiversity is not equivalent to these terms, but supports and enhances all these other aspects of the natural world.

Ecosystem services	Ecosystem services are the natural services that nature provides such as water filtration, carbon sequestration, soil fertility, pollination and so on. The Intergovernmental Panel on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) describes ecosystem services as “nature’s benefits to people”.	Biodiversity makes ecosystems more resilient and better able to deliver ecosystem services over the long term, particularly in the context of a changing climate. Biodiversity also makes many ecosystem services more productive and efficient.
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When using this guide, it is not essential that everyone has exactly the same understanding of the word ‘biodiversity’; rather it is more important to understand how different people value biodiversity and thus how to use different terminology to speak to their values and understanding.

There tends to be three main reasons why people value biodiversity:

- **Functional reasons** – biodiversity sustains flows of many benefits that have material value and that underpin the *economy*.
- **Cultural reasons** – biodiversity is an intimate part of community, aesthetic and spiritual values that are essential for *society*.
- **Security reasons** – biodiversity is a fundamental basis for life itself, the foundation of a secure and functioning *environment*.

Note that, while certain professions and organisations may tend to emphasise a particular reason, individuals almost always appreciate and respond to other reasons too: a broad understanding is to be encouraged if biodiversity is to be comprehensively mainstreamed.

Biodiversity information: There are many different types of biodiversity information. For the purpose of mainstreaming biodiversity information into government decision-making, these can be categorised based on how people value biodiversity, as set out below and shown in Figure 1.

1. Data and information on the *diversity of life*: for example, scientific data on the diversity, abundance and distribution of species and their ecological interactions.
2. Data and information that communicates the *different values of biodiversity* across different stakeholders. Such information is more often used in policy decisions. Broadly speaking, there are three main reasons why biodiversity information is valued:
 - Economic information on biodiversity: for example, government revenue, employment and private income generated from forest, fish, wildlife and ecotourism.
 - Cultural information on biodiversity: for example, biodiversity’s significance for art, craft and cultural identity.
 - Environmental security information: for example, invasive species information, status of species (whether endemic, endangered or protected) and hotspots for biodiversity loss.

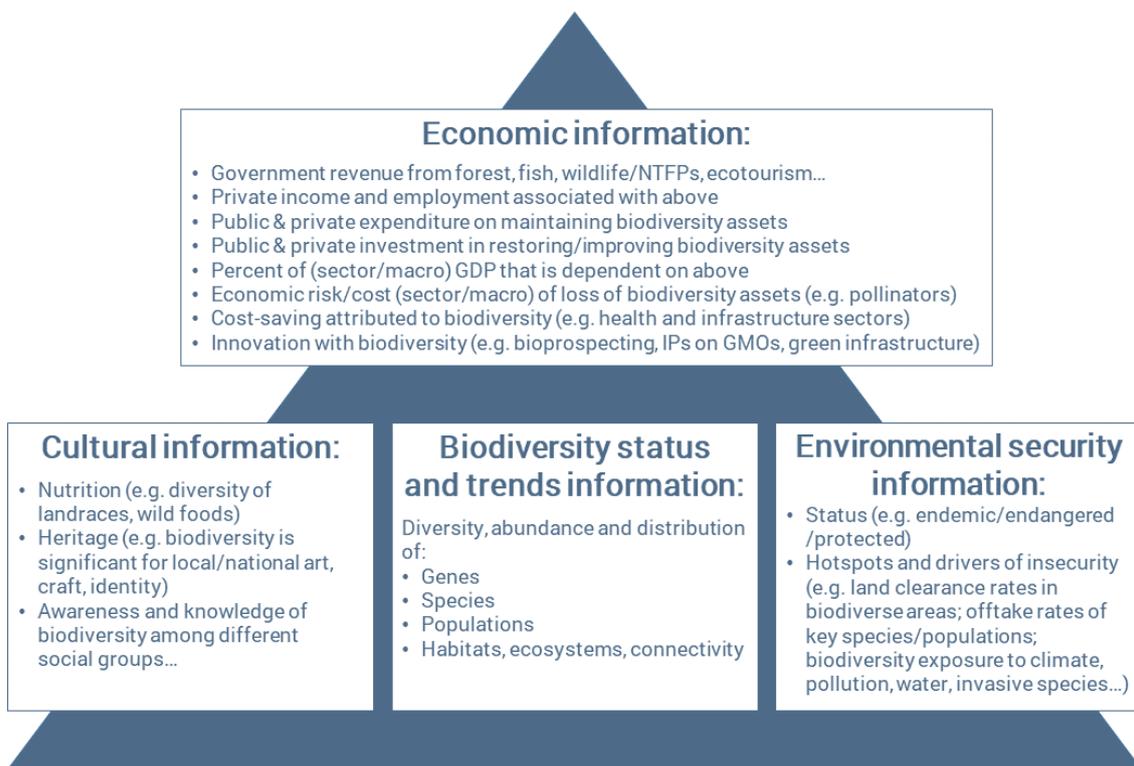


Figure 1. Different types of biodiversity information

3.2 Contextual concepts

The following four contextual concepts are essential to consider in any context analysis: stakeholders, structural factors, institutions, and government decisions. In practice, these interact and evolve over time and influence developmental outcomes in a country. By conducting a context analysis, users can better understand those interactions and whether/how they affect the way biodiversity information is used in government decision-making. Descriptions of these concepts are provided below.

Stakeholders: These can be individuals or organised groups who have identifiable interests (stakes) that are relevant to mainstreaming biodiversity into government decision-making. Examples include Heads of State, political parties, civil servants, government departments and their agencies, business associations, farmers' associations, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), religious and ethnic groups. A context analysis focuses on the relationships and interactions between these key stakeholders, which in turn are shaped by structural factors and institutions. Those relationships and interactions can either be positive or negative in relation to how biodiversity information is used in government decision-making.

Structural factors: These are factors which are beyond stakeholders' direct control but influence their interests, decisions and actions. Some factors are fixed (e.g. geographic locations of valuable natural resources and how those overlap with rich biodiversity areas), and others are changeable. The changes may be slow (e.g. climate, the quality and quantity of natural resources available, demographics and level of economic development) or fast (e.g. commodity prices and tourism numbers). An example of how these structural factors may affect stakeholders' interests, include: where valuable natural resources (e.g. oil and minerals) and high biodiversity areas coincide geographically, and where commodity prices (for those natural resources) are high, there are likely to be powerful stakeholders with strong interests in exploiting natural resources at the expense of

biodiversity. However, if a country's economy is highly dependent on eco-tourism, more stakeholders may be interested to protect the biodiversity that underpins that income. Impacts of climate change (such as severe drought) may drive people to migrate to water-rich and more biodiverse forested areas. Yet climate change impacts may also make some stakeholders more interested to learn how to ensure long-term resilience by conserving biodiversity (e.g. farmers adopting agroforestry practices to better retain water in soil).

Institutions: These can establish the 'rules of the game' which shape stakeholders' behaviour, interactions and relationships – whether formally or informally. *Formal institutions* include policies, laws, regulations and procedures, which are usually written. *Informal institutions* are unwritten, shared expectations of "normal" behaviour which is often deeply embedded in culture and tradition (such as the observance of traditional grazing patterns, or processes of patriarchy and patronage). In practice, formal and informal institutions are often indistinguishable and intertwined. For example, a policy decision-making process will often include formal written rules on voting and informal rules on who will be consulted and who is usually excluded.

Government decisions: Governments take decisions on a regular basis, covering a wide variety of issues which impact upon biodiversity. This guide can help users to strategically select and target the major decisions which impact biodiversity, within the limited resources and timeframe of a project. Government decisions tend to fall under the following three main categories:

1. *Development and implementation of strategic government plans* that have a clear mandate and high profile, and so will tend to guide the design and implementation of projects that impact biodiversity over a long period (e.g. national five-year development plans and sector plans).
2. *One-off political decisions* or ad-hoc decisions that often take place outside the context of formal plans and may be associated with high-level government officials. For example, governments' decisions to, allow foreign investment and infrastructure development in high-biodiversity areas.
3. *Recurring government processes* that impact how the above decisions may be made and/or implemented (e.g. routine budget and expenditure review processes).

Biodiversity information providers may assume that they must only target the national development plans to improve use of biodiversity information in governments' decision-making. In fact, other related decisions can be more tractable or powerful to target at times. For example, if there is no budget allocated to a national plan, it is unlikely to be implemented. Moreover, major political decisions can completely alter whether and how a plan is implemented.

Using these concepts in practice

These four contextual concepts are commonly used in the academic literature and published guidance for context/political economy analysis (see [Section 7](#) for further reading), and practitioners tend to stick to these core definitions. This guide uses the terms defined above throughout, for brevity. However, when applying the guide – especially in a participatory way involving several stakeholders – it is important to recognise that stakeholders may have different understandings of the concepts. Therefore, when engaging and communicating with stakeholders, users of this guide should adapt the terminology to minimise confusion. For example, the term 'institutions' can be particularly confusing as many people think it means 'organisations'. If this is likely to be the case, it may be better to avoid using the term 'institution' but replace it with more specifically understood terms like 'policies, laws, regulations' (i.e. formal institutions) and 'cultural and traditional norms' (i.e. informal institutions) when engaging with stakeholders.

4 Designing the approach

4.1 Information sources

Conducting a context analysis involves a qualitative review of information collected on the four contextual issues discussed in the previous section and their interrelationships. A combination of approaches can be used to gather relevant information, including:

- **Literature review and desk research:** Information can be drawn from relevant studies (including previous context analyses) which provide details of key stakeholders, governance structures, laws and regulations. Example sources might include government organograms, studies that map policy-making and decision-making processes, news articles on policy debates and implementation, research papers, surveys and other written material. Relevant information may also exist within publicly available databases, maps and other information repositories.
- **Interviews and focus groups:** Interviews can be arranged with individuals to systematically extract key information. They are best conducted in a face-to-face format and, in some cases, confidentially. Interviewing well-informed and well-connected individuals is essential to gather information that is not available publicly (including unwritten ways of doing business within government), identify other key interviewees, and validate written sources. Interviews should be semi-structured and based on prior desk research to ensure the most pertinent questions are asked and key gaps in information are filled. It is important to interview a wide range of stakeholders to ensure different perspectives are covered.
- **Workshops:** Well-facilitated workshops can not only capture participants' knowledge but also reveal their interests, their relationships with each other, and the degree of consensus or contention on an issue. Desk research and stakeholder interviews conducted prior to a workshop can help prepare and ensure focused and constructive discussions.

It is important to use a combination of approaches to triangulate information and ensure quality of the analysis (see Box 2).

Box 2. Triangulation

The political economy context of any given situation is complex, multi-faceted and dynamic. A good context analysis requires triangulation of information to capture that complexity. Triangulation refers to the cross-checking of information from different sources to assess its current reliability and validity.

During interviews, this can be achieved by asking the same questions of each interviewee to corroborate claims and/or identify different perspectives. Using a combination of approaches to gather information can also help with triangulation. It is important to triangulate anecdotal information with written sources where possible. For example, if an interviewee suggests local government agencies are too underfunded to carry out policy implementation, the public record on budgetary allocations can be used to corroborate that claim. On the other hand, it is also important to provide opportunities for a group of key stakeholders to discuss findings from context analysis to identify gaps and increase uptake of the results. For example, workshops with stakeholders to share and discuss findings can help validate desk research and interview results.

4.2 Designing a participatory approach

Making use of participatory approaches (interviews, focus groups, discussions and workshops) helps to increase stakeholder buy-in and ultimately supports the adoption of context analysis findings. This is because engagement processes build understanding and partnerships. When designing participatory approaches for context analysis, the following three key issues should be considered:

1. **The importance of tailoring participatory approaches to country needs and norms.** Users of this guide must select the most appropriate participatory approach based on what works for - and what is expected by - the stakeholders they are trying to engage with. For example, if meeting for the first time, particularly where large power disparities are present, some stakeholders may not feel comfortable to express their views freely in a workshop setting. Under these circumstances, conducting one-to-one interviews or gathering small groups of stakeholders with similar interests together may facilitate greater participation and be more effective in generating information. Conducting multiple interviews with a key stakeholder, who may be being engaged by the project for the first time, could also help build trust and create a more relaxed setting prior to their joining discussions in a focus group or workshop.
2. **The need to identify and engage with the 'right' stakeholders.** It is important but often challenging to engage appropriate stakeholders to achieve the objectives of a context analysis. Part of the difficulty stems from the fact that the type of information, inputs sought and the relevant stakeholders vary according to different stages of the analysis. For example, during Stage 2 of the analysis, technocrats and implementers may be the best informants. During Stage 4, stakeholders who hold decision-making power need to be engaged to endorse and support the strategy identified. Stakeholder selection is also a matter of representative and procedural justice: which groups have the right or particular expectation to be involved. Users of this guide can start from existing networks of stakeholders in order to find representatives who can help provide suggestions and connections to new stakeholders. They can also identify champions who have strong convening powers to help mobilise stakeholders. See [Annex 3.2](#) for lessons learnt by country teams on how to effectively identify and engage key stakeholders.
3. **Balancing participatory approaches with project resource availability.** While a participatory approach is indispensable to ensure the quality and utility of context analysis findings, its implementation can also be resource intensive. Users of this guide will need to decide the balance between desk research and participatory approaches in relation to project timescales and funding availability. See [Annex 3.3](#) for a summary of learning from different approaches used for the CONNECT project.

4.3 Whom to involve in a context analysis?

A context analysis should involve individuals and teams who will be implementing and managing a project designed to address a given biodiversity information challenge (referred to in this guide as the project team). Full engagement and participation of team members in the widest sense is critical to ensure that the context analysis is not merely confined to a report but is embedded within day-to-day project management and becomes an inherent part of project implementation.

Often the project team will need support from consultants to carry out the context analysis. Consultants can bring fresh perspectives, new stakeholder networks, an independent position, and help the project team to overcome internal biases and barriers. However, it is important to ensure

close collaboration between the consultant and project team to avoid the work becoming too consultant-driven, and detached from the project strategy and operations. See [Annex 3.8](#) for lessons learnt from country partners on the importance of close collaboration here, and [Annex 2.2](#) for a sample Consultancy Terms of Reference (ToR).

If the team seeks a consultant to support this work, it is important that they complement existing skills within the team. In selecting and bringing together the project team to implement the analysis, it is recommended that individuals collectively hold the following skills:

- **Context analysis expertise:** A good understanding of key political economy concepts and methodologies, plus experience in applying them to development challenges
- **Strong analytical skills:** The ability to address complex and wide-ranging political and economic issues together to derive strategic conclusions
- **Strong country knowledge:** Good knowledge of country-specific biodiversity and development issues
- **Good networks:** Connected with key informants in country, or has good ways to reach them, and is well-respected by a wide range of stakeholders
- **Appropriate language skills:** Can speak local dialects needed to engage and interview stakeholders
- **Practical problem-solving orientation:** The ability to translate issues identified into practical strategies and activities for the project – context analysis should not be an ‘academic’ study
- **Excellent written and personal communication skills:** Strong inter-personal skills that can help put interviewees and stakeholders at ease when discussing often sensitive issues; communications skills for engaging stakeholders, for cultivating support for the project, and for presenting sometimes-contentious findings in ways that enable further progress.

5 Context analysis: Overview of the process

This guide draws on experiences of applying context analysis as part of the CONNECT project, and encourages a sharp focus and a practical approach that can inform project strategy through the following iterative four stages (also presented at Figure 2, below):

Stage 1: Define purpose – Clarify the reasons for conducting a context analysis and how the results will be used by the project. A clear purpose and strong project team support form the foundation for choosing the most suitable approach, developing a realistic work plan, and ensure findings from the analysis become an integral part of the project's strategy to improve use of biodiversity information in government decision-making.

Stage 2: Gather information – Identify relevant stakeholders, structural and institutional factors, and map out the key factors that influence government decision-making in relation to biodiversity. The facts gathered at this stage build a foundation which can be refined to select and focus on key government decision-making processes, design stakeholder interviews and further focus stakeholder engagement during Stages 3 and 4 of the analysis.

Stage 3: Analysis and review – Understand stakeholder motivations, relationships and power dynamics. Analyse the interplay between stakeholders, structural and institutional factors and how they interact to shape the motivations, relationships and powers of stakeholders. Building on the information gathered during Stage 2, this analysis will improve understanding of when, how and by whom biodiversity information is used in government decision-making. It is important also to give some thought to how to interpret and present these findings so that they are well received and understood.

Stage 4: Develop a politically-informed project strategy – A politically-informed strategy is critical resource for improving the use of biodiversity information in government decision-making. This stage sets out how to develop a strategy that can deliver on the purposes of the analysis identified in Stage 1. Based on information from Stages 2 and 3, users of this guide can select key decision-making processes to focus on, develop a stakeholder engagement and communications strategy, identify actions to overcome barriers, and produce a list of biodiversity information which can be improved or developed to inform decision-making processes.

To achieve such a far-reaching goal as to improve the use of information in government decision-making, a context analysis should not be viewed as a one-off exercise that is done only at the start of a project. This is because the context will change, both as a result of the project's own interventions and due to other ever-changing factors that are out of the project's control. Thus, a context analysis should be treated as a *continued process of investigation and learning* for the project team that can help ensure interventions are timely, well targeted and politically savvy.

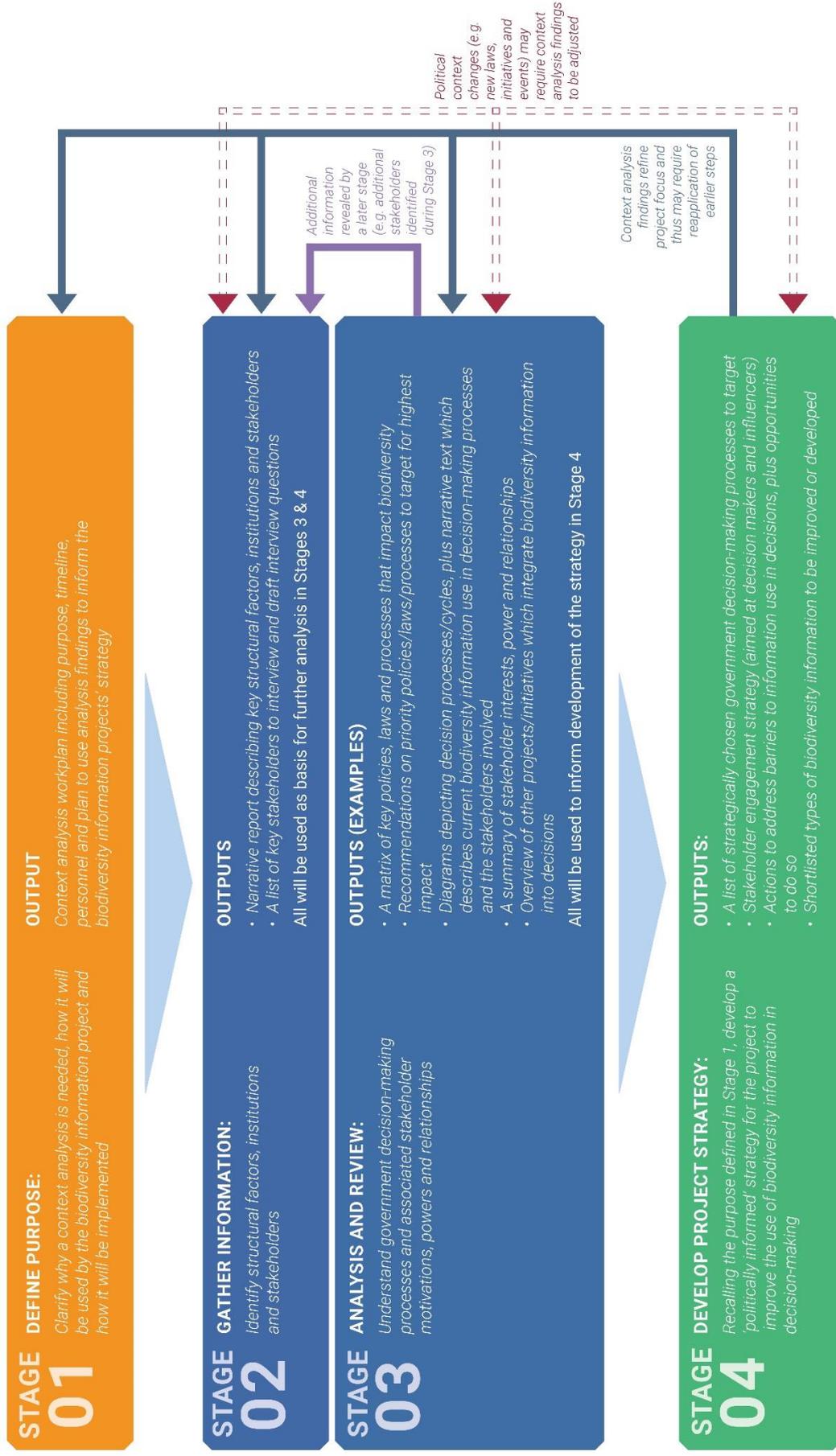
Therefore, the framework should not be viewed as a linear process but rather one that needs to be applied iteratively. Some examples of when the framework can be used in a non-linear and iterative fashion include:

- When later stages reveal important additional information relevant to earlier findings. For example, while analysing decision-making processes in Stage 3, users may identify additional stakeholders, institutions or structural factors that were not initially apparent during Stage 2.

- When later stages narrow the focus of the project, so that reapplication of the framework can refine the strategy. For example, if a shortlist of decision-making processes is identified in Stage 4, users may choose to repeat all stages in the framework in order to gain deeper understanding of the political context for the selected decision-making processes and identify specific actions.
- When the policy context for the project changes and findings need to be adjusted accordingly. For example, if new policies, laws or initiatives emerge that improve the use of biodiversity information from the project, or major government change or other new events take place that change stakeholder interests and relationships.

An overarching framework setting out these iterative approaches is presented in the diagram at Figure 2.

Figure 2. Overarching context analysis framework



6 Key stages

This section describes the process of conducting a context analysis, providing additional details about each of the four key stages outlined previously. This includes questions to consider, proposed methods to adopt and specific outputs produced.

Users of this guide should first review this document in its entirety before carrying out the first stage below. If users of this guide have no prior experience of conducting a context analysis, they should work closely with someone who does have experience and can support the first attempt.

6.1 Stage 1: Define purpose

While this guide is designed to help mainstream biodiversity information into government decision-making processes in general, the exact purpose for each mainstreaming project may vary depending on project objectives, country context and resource availability. Therefore, users of this guide should first clarify the overall purpose of conducting a context analysis, in order to identify the most suitable approach, develop a realistic work plan based on resource availability and ensure the findings are incorporated into the project mainstreaming strategy. [Annex 3.4](#) shares lessons learnt from CONNECT that illustrate the importance of this first stage.

The following questions can be used to help determine the overall purpose of the analysis:

- **Purpose:** What do you aim to achieve by conducting a context analysis? Which specific questions do you hope to answer? Is a context analysis the most appropriate tool to achieve those aims and answer those questions? Is there sufficient understanding, buy-in and support from project team members to conduct the context analysis.
- **Use of analysis findings:** How can the findings be used to achieve the purpose/s identified above? How can the analysis link with other project activities and complement them? What is the process to integrate the findings into the overall project implementation strategy and work plan?
- **Implementation strategy:** To achieve the identified purpose and ensure the utility of findings, what is the best approach to conduct a context analysis within the project's timeframe and resources? Who will be involved in the work?

Proposed methods

The above questions should be considered by the project team during a review meeting, designed to assess the potential value of conducting the context analysis in relation to the wider project aims and priorities. The meeting can be used to define the purpose and utility of the context analysis and initiate the development of a work plan. Please see [Annex 2.1](#) for a sample agenda of the project team meeting.

In answering the questions above, it is important to bear in mind that more specific responses help to refine the scope of analysis, increasing the likelihood that the context analysis will generate focused and clear action points to inform the project strategy. For example, if the question is as generic as "how can the use of biodiversity information by government in country X be improved?", there could be too many stakeholders to consider and too many decision-making processes to target at country level, to enable the context analysis to pinpoint clear, targeted action points. In those cases, users can either: (1) undertake the context analysis iteratively (repeating the process

as additional information is gleaned), or (2) apply a participatory tool to further refine the scope. Details of these two methods is provided in Box 3.

After identifying a clear purpose from the project meeting (or using the methods for refining the scope), users should now have the information needed to develop a detailed work plan setting out how the context analysis will be conducted. When developing the workplan based on a clear purpose and resource limits, users can refer to [Section 4.1](#) for guidance on choosing the best approach for the context analysis and [Section 4.3](#) to help determine who should be involved.

Outputs

Work plan: At the end of Stage 1, users of this guide will have developed a clear work plan for conducting the context analysis. The plan should clearly outline the overall purpose, the implementation process (including who will be involved in the analysis, and over what timeline) and how the findings can be used as part of the overall project strategy to influence decision-making.

Terms of Reference (ToR): The work plan may also include a ToR for any consultants who will be involved in implementation and/or for any decision-making bodies that need to be involved in strategic project decisions using the analysis' findings. [Section 4.3](#) provides further guidance, and ToR templates for consultants and steering committees are provided in [Annex 2.2](#) and [2.3](#).

Box 3. Methods for refining the scope of a context analysis

Undertake the context analysis iteratively

Steps: First, undertake a context analysis to identify which sector/specific decision-making process to focus on. Then, once the focus is clear, repeat the process a second time for that sector/specific decision-making process.

Considerations: This is more time-consuming and resource intensive as it requires going through Stages 2-4 of the guide twice. However, the relationships and general understanding developed in the first round can build strong foundations for conducting the second round.

Resources: [Annex 3.5](#) shares lessons learnt from CONNECT project on using this option.

Apply a participatory tool

Steps: Use a simple participatory tool to refine the context analysis target and scope.

Considerations: Once the target and scope are refined in this way, users can go through Stages 2-4 of the guide just once. This will not entail the same level of stakeholder engagement, but it should be a better approach for any project with a short timeframe and limited resources.

Resources: See [Annex 1.1](#) for a summary of the tool.

6.2 Stage 2: Gather information

Once the purpose of the context analysis has been clarified and a work plan finalised, users of this guide can use the following list of questions to systematically map the key contextual factors. Whilst this may seem like a lot of background information to collect, mapping these factors helps to identify the sectoral policies and laws that have, or will have, significant impacts on biodiversity and those that could be improved by better use of biodiversity information.

Proposed methods

The first step in the information gathering process is to conduct desk-based research and a literature review, mapping out the structural factors, formal and informal institutions and stakeholders influencing government decision-making in the specific context. Users of this guide should consider the issues set out in Table 2 and aim to answer the questions in as much detail as possible. To aid this mapping process, review templates which can be filled out for each of the contextual factors are provided at [Annex 1.2](#).

Interviews with key stakeholders (see [Annex 2.4](#)) and discussions during the workshop designed to validate the results (see Stage 4 for more details) can help to triangulate and complement the desk research results. It is important to interview stakeholders from diverse backgrounds (for example, spanning academia, government, the private sector and NGOs) so that a range of perspectives and interests are captured.

Table 2: Contextual factors and associated issues to explore

Contextual factors	Issues to explore
<p>Structural factors: What factors are beyond stakeholders' direct control, but have influence over their decisions and actions that impact biodiversity?</p>	<p>Geography: How is biodiversity distributed geographically? How does that distribution overlap with the distribution of other developmental assets e.g. oil, minerals, timber, or fisheries – or developmental problems such a poverty?</p> <p>Economy: What are key sectors for the national/local economy? Are any of these sectors dependent on biodiversity? Do any of these sectors impact on biodiversity? Is that impact negative or positive?</p> <p>Population: What is the current population, its growth and density in the country? Which demographic trends impact on biodiversity. <i>For example, high population growth and density combined with migration to natural-resource rich regions may increase pressure on biodiversity as demand for natural resources increases.</i></p> <p>Climate: What are the climatic trends in the country/locality (e.g., increasingly erratic rainfall that can lead to prolonged drought or/and more flooding)? How are these trends affecting biodiversity in the country?</p> <p>Innovation: How do current and emerging technological advances impact biodiversity? <i>For example, the proliferation of mobile usage and coverage may open opportunities to engage communities to collect biodiversity data through mobile apps.</i></p>
<p>Formal institutions (Laws and policies)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What are the national, sectoral and/or local policies and laws that explicitly address biodiversity? How and when are they made? How well are they implemented and with what impact on biodiversity? - What are the national, sectoral and/or local policies and laws that affect biodiversity but may not explicitly address biodiversity issues? How and when are they made? How well are they implemented and with what impact on biodiversity?

	- Are there any synergies/conflicts between the formal institutions identified? If so, between which laws and policies, and what are the synergies/conflicts between them?
Informal Institutions (Traditional, social and cultural norms)	- What are the traditional, cultural and social norms that affect decisions and activities that have impact on biodiversity? How do they impact those decisions and activities? How powerful and legitimate are the norms? - Do the norms align or conflict with formal laws and policies identified above? If so, what laws and policies do they align or conflict with, and what are the synergies and conflicts between them?
Stakeholders (including stakeholders influencing through informal institutions)	Based on the structural factors and institutions identified above: Who decides how and when policies and laws are made that will impact biodiversity? Who implements those policies and laws? Who monitors the implementation of policies and laws? Who can influence the design, implementation and monitoring of those policies and laws?

Outputs

Narrative report: At the end of Stage 2, users of this guide can prepare a narrative report describing the key structural factors, institutions, and stakeholders influencing government decision-making in their specific context. The narrative report will be useful in the subsequent stages of the context analysis, as follows:

- Structural factors mapped will be useful to: (a) identify key government decisions requiring further analysis in Stage 3: Step 1, (b) understand stakeholders' motivations, powers and relationships in Stage 3: Step 3, and (c) prioritise key government decision-making processes where there is a need to mainstream biodiversity information in Stage 4.
- Formal and informal institutions mapped will be used as: (a) a basis to identify key government decisions on which to conduct further analysis on in Stage 3: Step 1, (b) as background information to aid understanding of how institutions can shape stakeholder motivations, power and relationships in Stage 3: Step 3, and (c) as a strategy to determine which government decision-making processes to target for mainstreaming biodiversity information, identifying overall barriers and opportunities in Stage 4.
- Stakeholders mapped will be used to: (a) prepare a list of interviewees and/or focus groups for Stage 3 and Stage 4, (b) form a basis for mapping key government decision-making processes in Stage 3: Step 2, and analyse motivations, relationships, and power in Stage 3: Step 3, and (c) identify participants for the workshop to validate the analysis' findings after all steps are finalised.
- Wider project relevance: Mapping of these factors can also provide valuable background information for any stakeholders who are interested in mainstreaming biodiversity information and can be used as a basis to develop further analyses and activities beyond the project.

List of interview questions: Based on facts gathered and the guidance provided for Stages 3 and 4, users of this guide should also develop a list of interview questions to be used for stakeholder interviews conducted as part of the context analysis. See [Annex 2.4](#) for a sample list of interview questions.

6.3 Stage 3: Analysis and review

After completing Stage 2, users of this guide will have gathered a large amount of context-specific information. This next stage sets out a process for refining that information by prioritising specific structural factors, institutions and stakeholders, and then examining how they interact and affect the use of biodiversity information in the formulation, implementation, review and accountability of government decisions.

This stage involves undertaking the following four main steps: (Step 1) identifying key government decisions for further analysis, (Step 2) mapping and understanding government decision-making processes, (Step 3) understanding stakeholders' motivations, powers and relationships, and (Step 4) learning from other efforts to improve the use of biodiversity information in government decision-making. Each step is described in greater detail in the sections below.

Step 1. Identifying key government decisions for further analysis

This step involves analysing linkages between institutions and their wider interaction with structural factors in order to determine which government decisions to prioritise for further analysis. This step draws on the structural factors and institutions mapped during Stage 2 to answer the series of questions presented in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Questions to consider when exploring linkages between institutions and their wider interaction with structural factors

Points	Specific Questions
1. Identifying policies and laws that have significant impacts on biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What policies and laws govern the development and use of important/valuable resources that overlap with biodiversity distribution? Briefly describe how. - What are the key policies and laws that govern the sectors that are big contributors to GDP growth and have negative or positive impacts on biodiversity? Briefly describe how. - What are the key policies and laws that respond to important trends that will have big impacts on biodiversity in the future (including demographic, climate change, and emerging technological trends)? Briefly describe how.
2. Identifying policies and laws that can be improved through better use of biodiversity information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - For those policies, laws or informal institutions identified in Stage 2 as being in conflict with others, which conflicts can be reduced by better use of biodiversity information? Briefly discuss how. - For those policies and laws identified in Stage 2 as not well implemented, which can be improved by better use of biodiversity information? Briefly discuss how.
3. Focusing on key policies and laws for further analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Which policies and laws appear in the answers to more than one question above? The decision-making process for those policies and laws should be prioritised in the next step of analysis (Stage 3: Step 2). - Will any one-off or regular government decisions impact on the design and implementation of more than one policy or law identified under points one and two above? If so, what are they, (e.g. annual budgetary decisions, infrastructure investment decisions) and how do they impact those policy and laws? For example, budgetary decisions will impact whether there are sufficient resources for policies to be implemented and monitored.) Both one-

off and regular government decisions should also be prioritised in the next step of analysis (Stage 3: Step 2).

Proposed methods

When reviewing the questions set out in Table 3, consider the structural factors and institutions mapped during Stage 2. Prepare a matrix of responses (using the template provided in [Annex 1.3](#)) which can serve as a tool to systematically analyse and collate information. Start with the questions under the first and second points in Table 3, using desk research to populate the matrix with answers. It should then be easy to see which policies and laws feature as relevant to multiple questions and should therefore be prioritised.

Next, examine all the policies and laws that have been identified in the matrix. List all of the government decisions that will impact the design and implementation of more than one policy or law identified and briefly discuss how. Examples of the types of government decisions which could have an impact include: those relating to devising national five-year development plans, annual budget and expenditure review processes, and/or one-off decisions to allow foreign investment and infrastructure development in high-biodiversity areas.

After conducting desk research, the results can be triangulated and complemented with additional information collected from interviews with the key stakeholders mapped in Stage 2 (see [Annex 2.4](#) for sample interview questions).

The key government decisions identified through the desk research and interviews can also be presented, discussed and refined as part of a facilitated workshop designed to validate the context analysis results (see Stage 4 for more details on the workshop). Follow-up interviews and desk research can be conducted, if necessary, to fill in any gaps in information or to triangulate information that emerged from the workshop in order to further refine the findings during this step.

Outputs

List of government policies, laws, one-off decisions and regular procedures: At the end of this step, users of this guide should have prepared a list containing the key government policies, laws, decisions and procedures to prioritise for further analysis in the next step. The list can be further shortened if needed, to keep the number of decision-making processes tackled by the project within a manageable range.

Step 2. Mapping and understanding government decision-making processes

For the policies and laws and other government decisions prioritised during the previous step (Stage 3: Step 1), map the decision-making process for each. This map should identify the different stages of decision-making, the biodiversity information used in those stages and the stakeholders involved. Please note that for some policies and laws, the decision-making process and stakeholders involved may be identical. In those cases, there is no need to map the decision-making process twice, but important to note that the process is applicable to multiple policies/laws. During the mapping process, consider the questions provided in Table 4.

Table 4. Questions to consider when mapping decision-making processes

Topics	Specific questions
Stages in decision-making processes	What are the different stages of the decision-making processes? (e.g. debate, information search, evaluation, testing, prioritisation, recommendation, approval, implementation, and review...) Are they a one-off or are they regularly reviewed?
Use of biodiversity information in these processes	What biodiversity information is used in the decision-making process, if at all? What are the formats they are presented in (e.g. maps, policy brief)? What is the quality of the information? At what stages of the decision-making process are they used?
Stakeholder involvement	Who are the stakeholders involved in decision-making processes? Which stakeholders: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - provide biodiversity information? - use biodiversity information in decision-making? - make the final decisions? - are consulted in the decision-making process? - can influence decisions, even if not directly involved in the decision process?

Proposed methods

Go through the above questions for each government decision prioritised during Stage 3: Step 1.

The different stages of decision-making process can be captured through graphics:

- Any one-off decisions can be captured in a decision chain or decision tree, and
- Regular decisions can be captured in a decision cycle, because they tend to be iterative.

See [Annex 3.6](#) for examples of a decision tree and a decision cycle produced as part of the CONNECT project.

When identifying stakeholders involved in decision-making processes, users should cross-reference the stakeholder list generated in Stage 2. This can help to systematically map stakeholders and triangulate information to ensure no relevant stakeholders are missed. The questions in this section (Stage 3: Step 2) help to further clarify stakeholder roles in government decision-making processes and form a basis for further analysis in Stage 3: Step 3.

The biodiversity information used and stakeholders involved can be mapped onto the decision-making process in a graphic or discussed separately in the text accompanying a graphic.

Government decision-making processes can be complex and are unlikely to be fully codified in written documents. Therefore, it is best to obtain information through key stakeholder interviews (see [Annex 2.4](#) for sample interview questions) and/or by using the key questions listed in this step to guide a focused group discussion.

The result can be complemented by desk research and refined as part of a facilitated workshop designed to validate the context analysis results (see Stage 4 for more details on the workshop).

Outputs

A series of diagrams (decision chain, decision tree or decision cycle) which clearly map out government decision-making processes. The diagrams will be used as basis for understanding stakeholder motivations, power and relationships in the next step (Stage 3: Step 3) and for developing a project strategy in Stage 4.

A list of the relevant biodiversity information used in these processes which will be useful in Stage 4 to identify which biodiversity information to develop or improve.

A list of stakeholders involved in the decision-making process which will be used as the basis for understanding stakeholder motivations, power and relationships in the next step (Stage 3: Step 3) and to devise a stakeholder engagement strategy in Stage 4. This list of stakeholders can also be mapped onto the decision diagrams above.

Step 3. Understanding stakeholder motivations, power and relationships

For the list of stakeholders identified in Stage 3: Step 2, it is important to understand their motivations for or against using biodiversity information, and their relationships and powers for influencing decision outcomes. This kind of understanding is critical to informing the design of effective project strategies in Stage 4. To support this understanding, this step involves considering the list of stakeholders against each of the questions set out in Table 5 below, in order to analyse their motivations, relationships and power.

Table 5. Questions to consider when analysing stakeholder motivations, power and relationships.

Question no.	Specific questions
1. Stakeholder & biodiversity links	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Who depends most on what aspects of biodiversity, and for what benefits? For example, government for revenue, business for income, individuals for livelihoods. - Who are most vulnerable to biodiversity problems and what major problems have they suffered in recent years? For example, ministry of tourism lost income due to environmental degradation and loss of iconic species; farmers suffer crop production loss due to soil degradation and loss of pollinators. - Which of these stakeholders are aware of their dependency and vulnerability? Those can be good allies for the project. Which stakeholders are not aware, and why e.g. lack of good information on vulnerability and dependency. - Which stakeholders above are involved in decision-making mapped in Stage 3: Step 2? Which stakeholders are excluded and why?
2. Stakeholder power	<p>Among those stakeholders mapped in Stage 3: Step 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Which stakeholders have most power to influence the outcomes of the decision-making processes? What types of power do they hold, e.g. political, mandate, knowledge, financial and public trust? - Which stakeholders have low power? Do they include stakeholders most vulnerable to biodiversity loss and dependent on biodiversity, as mapped under Question 1 (above).
3. Stakeholder interests	<p>Among those stakeholders mapped in Stage 3: Step 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Which stakeholders have been champions in seeking positive biodiversity outcomes of government decision-making? What are their interests in biodiversity? - Which stakeholders have undermined desirable biodiversity outcomes in government's decision-making processes? What are their motivations to undermine biodiversity outcomes?
4. Stakeholder relationships	<p>Among those stakeholders mapped in Stage 3: Step 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Which stakeholders are already working closely together? Why? - Which stakeholders distrust or are in conflict with each other? Why?

5. Stakeholder motivations to use biodiversity information	<p>Among those stakeholders mapped in Stage 3: Step 2, what motivates them to use biodiversity information?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Requirement:</i> Based on the laws and policies mapped in Stage 2, what biodiversity information are stakeholders legally required to use in the decision-making process mapped in Stage 3: Step 2? At which stage is the information required to be used, and by which stakeholders? - <i>Demand:</i> For those stakeholders mapped in Stage 3: Step 2., what biodiversity information are they interested in using? Is it currently available or accessible? - <i>Need:</i> What biodiversity information needs to be included in the decision-making processes mapped in Stage 3: Step 2. to reduce biodiversity loss and/or reduce the vulnerability of stakeholders to biodiversity loss discussed in Question 1 under Stage 3: Step 3.? This type of information is often recommended by biodiversity experts and scientifically proven to be important to consider, e.g. biodiversity hotspots; rate of biodiversity loss. It may or may not be required by laws & policies or demanded by stakeholders. - Which biodiversity information is required by laws and policies, and demanded by stakeholders to meet their interests, and needed to reduce biodiversity loss and/or stakeholders' vulnerability? This biodiversity information is most likely to mobilise and attract support from a wide range of stakeholders.
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Proposed methods

Using Table 5, review each of the topics and the specific questions one by one and complete the actions set out below.

For Question 1 in Table 5, when considering stakeholder dependency and vulnerability, it is useful to reflect back on the structural factors mapped in Stage 2. For example, stakeholders who rely on natural resources for their livelihoods in high-biodiversity areas are likely to be highly dependent on biodiversity and also vulnerable to biodiversity loss. Climate change, technology and demographic trends can impact biodiversity and influence vulnerability. Once the stakeholders are listed, compare back to the stakeholder list generated in Stage 3: Step 2 to identify who is included in decision-making and who is excluded.

For Questions 2 and 3, users can organise the list of stakeholders identified in Stage 3: Step 2 into the table template provided in [Annex 1.4](#).

When answering Question 4, users should refer to information gathered during Stage 2, the decision-making processes mapped in Stage 3: Step 2, and their answers to Questions 1, 2 and 3 in Table 5 – as all of these can shape stakeholder relationships. For example, stakeholders may collaborate because they share similar interests, are involved in implementing policies and laws that complement each other, or have built trust while participating in the same decision-making process. Conversely, they may be in conflict with each other because existing laws and policies have conflicting targets or because they have very different interests. It is also important to keep in mind historical legacies that may have strong and lasting effects on stakeholder relationships. Capturing longer-term processes provides depth and perspective to the issue of 'how things have become the way they are today'. For example, past conflicts between stakeholders may result in distrust and reluctance to work together, even though their interests may now align.

For Question 5, users can use the table template or the Venn diagram provided in [Annex 1.5](#) to collate their answers.

As with government decision-making processes, stakeholder relationships, interests and powers are complex and are unlikely to be codified in written documents. Therefore, it is best to obtain information through key stakeholder interviews (see [Annex 2.4](#) for a sample list of interview questions). It is also possible to use the questions provided in this step (Stage 3: Step 3) to guide focused group discussions. However, some issues can be sensitive or contentious and will require experienced facilitation.

Lastly, the results can be complemented by desk research and refined as part of a facilitated workshop designed to validate the context analysis results (see Stage 4 for more details on the workshop).

Outputs

A **summary of stakeholder interests, power and relationships** can be presented in text, tables and diagrams (building on the decision-making processes mapped in Stage 3: Step 2).

- Answers to Question 1 can be used to target government decision-making process, inform stakeholder engagement strategy, and identify barriers and opportunities.
- Answers to Questions 2 and 3 can be presented in a table with accompanying narrative text and will provide essential information for all aspects of the strategy (Stage 4).
- Answers to Question 4 will inform the stakeholders engagement strategy as well as identification of barriers and opportunities in Stage 4.
- Answers to Question 5 can be captured in a table or a Venn Diagram. This can help to shortlist biodiversity information products and be used as basis to prioritise biodiversity information products in Stage 4.

Step 4. Learning from other efforts to improve the use of biodiversity information in government decision-making

There are likely to be recent or ongoing projects and initiatives which aim to mainstream biodiversity information into government decision-making. Past projects/initiatives can offer valuable insights and lessons, and ongoing work can also prove to be an important ally for the project. It is therefore worth collecting information on what other projects and initiatives are out there. Table 6 below sets out specific questions to support this process.

Table 6. Questions to consider when collecting information on other projects and initiatives

Topic	Specific questions
Projects/initiatives intended to mainstream biodiversity information into government decision-making processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What recent and current projects/initiatives intend to mainstream biodiversity information into government decision-making processes, e.g. natural capital accounting (NCA) and economic valuation of biodiversity? What are the specific objectives? - What is the timeframe of these projects/initiatives? - Which stakeholders are/were involved in these projects/initiatives? How are/were they engaged? Are/were there any real champions of biodiversity amongst them? - What biodiversity information is/was used? And how, e.g. in NCA? - For initiatives that have ended, did the use of biodiversity information improve biodiversity outcomes in government decision-making? If so, how? If not, why?

Proposed methods

Users of this guide should map out any other projects/initiatives which aim to mainstream biodiversity into government decision-making, by answering the questions set out in Table 6. Users can use the template provided in [Annex 1.6](#) to collate and summarise this information.

Users should first map initiatives/projects based on desk research and then validate the results through key stakeholder interviews (see [Annex 2.4](#) for sample list of interview questions). Users can also use the questions above to guide focus-group discussions among key informants who are familiar with those projects/initiatives.

The results can be complemented by desk research and refined as part of a facilitated workshop designed to validate the context analysis results (see Stage 4 for more details on the workshop).

Output

A **summary table** which provides an overview of recent and ongoing projects/initiatives. This will be used to prioritise decision-making processes and identify barriers and opportunities for ways forward in Stage 4.

6.4 Stage 4: Develop politically-informed project strategy

This section provides guidance on how insights generated through the previous stages can be used to inform the development of an influencing strategy. Before starting this stage, it may be a good moment to review the original purpose of conducting your context analysis (as identified in Stage 1) and tailor how you conduct this stage to ensure you meet that purpose. For example, if the main purpose is to map key stakeholders and tailor their stakeholder engagement strategy, users should focus most effort on designing a stakeholder engagement strategy in Stage 4. Equally, the context analysis is an iterative process and users may wish to adapt their strategy and activities in line with the evolving political context. For example, Stages 2 and 3 may reveal a new or revised purpose that was not envisioned during Stage 1.

Building on the first three stages of the context analysis, the following four areas can now be further reviewed to inform and sharpen the project strategy. These are: (a) refining government decision-making processes, (b) designing a stakeholder engagement strategy, (c) identifying overall barriers and opportunities, and (d) selecting biodiversity information. The proposed methods involved in reviewing each of these aspects are set out below.

Target government decision-making processes

If the number of government decision-making processes prioritised in Stage 3: Step 1 is still too many to tackle (e.g. due to project resource constraints) these can be further narrowed down using eight criteria provided in Table 7 below.

Table 7. Questions to consider when refining government decision-making processes

Criteria	Questions to consider
1. Risk level and likelihood	- Which government decision-making process(es) are likely to cause serious problems for biodiversity and sustainable development if biodiversity information is not better used during the process(es)?

2. Magnitude of possible gains	- Which government decision-making processes offer the greatest positive prospects for improved conditions for many stakeholder groups and for biodiversity or ecosystems if biodiversity information use is improved?
3. Potential for institutional improvements	- Within which government decision-making processes, are there good opportunities to affect positive changes in stakeholder power, motivations, and relationships so they support better long-term biodiversity outcomes?
4. Themes of highest current political/public profile	- Which government decision-making processes positively inspire (or alternatively cause most current concern) to many stakeholders (e.g. those concerning jobs and poverty reduction)?
5. Future-relevant	- Which government decisions and decision-making processes will likely be more high-profile in the future?
6. Clear mandate and high tractability	- Which government decision-making processes are most stakeholders most likely to engage with constructively?
7. Critical path	- Which government decision-making processes can build on progress to date and complement other ongoing initiatives to mainstream biodiversity?
8. Critical entry point for new or improved biodiversity information	- Which government decision-making processes are open to, and can benefit from, better biodiversity information?

Proposed methods

The criteria set out in Table 7 should be applied to each of the decision-making processes prioritised in Stage 3: Step 1. Information generated throughout Stages 2 and 3 will help provide insights and answers to each criterion. Using this information, and the table template provided in [Annex 1.7](#), users of the guide should summarise their answers to each of the questions in Table 7 for each decision-making process. The template also provides guidance on which other stages and outputs users of this guide can draw on as additional sources of information.

Based on the final table, users of the guide should then organise focus group discussions to select the top targeted decision-making processes. The discussions can usefully involve the executive decision-making body of the project (for example, the steering committee) as the final selection will be a highly strategic issue for the project. See [Annex 2.5](#) for a sample agenda for this focus group discussion.

Design a stakeholder engagement strategy

Undertaking continuous and strategic stakeholder engagement is critical for improving the use of biodiversity information in government decision-making. Through applying a participatory approach, users of the guide should have already started to build, and strengthen relationships with the stakeholders identified, and have a better understanding of their interests, power and relationships. The insights generated in Stages 2 and 3 can now be used to develop a more nuanced stakeholder strategy which addresses the following guiding questions:

1. How can the project best engage key stakeholders identified in the different government decision-making processes?

2. Who can be strong individual champions for the project – to help mobilise other stakeholders to support/complement the project?

Answers to these questions may change as the context evolves and new opportunities emerge.

Proposed methods

Users of this guide should now devise an overall project stakeholder engagement strategy, supplemented by tailored strategies for each decision-making process targeted. This can be completed by answering the questions above in the format of a matrix, following the detailed steps set out at [Annex 1.8](#). Additional actions to conduct when answering these questions are detailed below.

For Question 1, based on stakeholders' interests and powers identified in Stage 3: Step 3 generate a 'Power and Interests' matrix. This can be used to discuss possible approaches to engaging different stakeholders within the matrix.

For Question 2, for those stakeholders with high interests and power in the matrix, and the stakeholders involved in complementary projects mapped in Stage 3: Step 4 identify individual stakeholders who can become the main contact for the project. Discuss specific strategies to engage them (for example, inviting them to join the executive decision-making body for the project).

Identifying overall barriers and opportunities

Often the barriers and opportunities for improving the use of biodiversity information in government decision-making go beyond the technical robustness of biodiversity information. Insights generated in Stages 2 and 3 should have revealed a wide range of barriers and opportunities for improving biodiversity information use in government decision-making - though it's likely that not all of these can be tackled by the project. For example, capacity, timing, coordination, finance, transparency and accountability of decision-making processes, quality of institutions and stakeholder relationships and interests – can all act as barriers or conversely, opportunities for information use, depending on the context. The questions set out in Table 8 can guide users to systematically map and summarise these barriers and opportunities, and devise their project strategy accordingly.

Table 8. Questions to consider to aid identifying barriers and opportunities

Questions	Aspects to consider
1. What are the existing barriers for stakeholders to use biodiversity information in the government?	<p>Types of <u>barriers</u> may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Barriers to mutual understanding, due to diverse ways that biodiversity is understood, and the different values, metrics and 'language' attached to this - Capacity barriers to deliver, interpret and use biodiversity information - Timing barriers to get information to influence specific decisions on time - Accessibility barriers for biodiversity information to be collated, presented, and communicated in a way that can be used by decision-makers - Coordination barriers for decision-makers and biodiversity information providers to connect, build trust and long-term working relationship - Financial barriers to produce, deliver and use biodiversity information - Motivational barriers including perverse incentives in formal and informal institutions (e.g. subsidies for pesticides; traditional land use practices that

can harm biodiversity), powerful decision-makers' lack of interest in biodiversity

- Accountability and transparency barriers that plague many existing decision-making processes and leave no opening to introduce biodiversity information

Amongst the barriers listed above, which are beyond the control of the project? How will they affect the design of project activities to improve the use of biodiversity information in government decision-making? Which barriers can be addressed by the project? How can the project address them?

2. What are the key opportunities for the project? How can the project engage in the opportunities identified?

Types of opportunities to consider include:

- Timing: Are there any upcoming time windows to influence the decision-making processes short-listed during the project timeline, such as public consultations? If so, which stage(s) of the decision-making process might they influence and when will they happen? For example, public budgetary expenditure discussions will be held during a specific period by the finance ministry, so it might be possible to feed in information that could influence budget allocation for more investment in biodiversity conservation
- Finance: Are there fiscal and investment opportunities that inherently demand biodiversity information e.g. payments for ecosystem services schemes or green fiscal reforms?
- Motivations: What are the emerging synergies within and between formal institutions (laws & policies) and informal institutions (cultural, social and traditional norms) that can support better use of biodiversity information in government's decision-making? For example, new biodiversity targets set in government five-year plans; traditional knowledge of agroforestry systems that are more biodiverse that are also supported by government's agriculture policy
- Stakeholder relationships: What are the opportunities for the project to strengthen existing partnerships among key stakeholders? What are the opportunities for the project to reduce conflict and build trust among key stakeholders to support better use of biodiversity information?

Proposed methods

Users of this guide should now systematically map and summarise barriers and opportunities by answering the questions set out in Table 8. [Annex 1.9](#) contains additional guidance on how to identify barriers and opportunities through past initiatives, and users can also draw lessons from other projects and initiatives that try to improve biodiversity information use in government decision-making processes. Additional actions to conduct when answering these questions are detailed below.

For Question 1, revisit the decision-making processes mapped in Stage 3: Step 2 and stakeholder motivations, power and relationships in Stage 3: Step 3. Use the guiding questions in Table 8 to systematically discuss barriers.

For Question 2, revisit the synergies among institutions discussed in Stage 2. Review the decision-making processes mapped in Stage 3: Step 2 and stakeholder relationships analysed in Stage 3: Step 3. Use the guiding questions in Table 8 to systematically discuss existing opportunities.

Selecting biodiversity information

In order to improve the use of biodiversity information in selected government decision-making processes, users of the guide may also need to strategically select a manageable scope of biodiversity information that can be developed or improved within the projects' means. This selection will depend not only on the political context analysed, but also on technical issues (such as the availability of good quality data).⁹ The contextual criteria set out in Table 9 can be used (alongside technical criteria) to select which pieces of biodiversity information can be developed or improved.

Table 9. Questions to support the selection of biodiversity information

Contextual criteria	Questions to consider
1. Formal information requirements	- Is the biodiversity information required by law and does it directly [formally?] support decision-making processes? If so, which laws and processes? Is the biodiversity information relevant to key policy targets? If so, which targets?
2. Responds to users' demand	- Does the biodiversity information respond to identified users' interests (beyond the formal requirements)?
3. Needed to assure long-term sustainability	- Is the biodiversity information needed to ensure the outcomes of the decision-making processes are sustainable and will reduce biodiversity loss and/or stakeholders' vulnerability to biodiversity loss? If so, how?
4. Directly supports decision-making processes	- Does the biodiversity information target important government decision-making process(es)? If so, which? Are there clear entry points for the product in the decision-making processes? What are they?
5. Catalyses a critical path of biodiversity mainstreaming	- Does this biodiversity information energise, encourage or accelerate existing mainstreaming efforts?
6. Responds to key project barriers and opportunities	- Does the biodiversity information respond to barriers and opportunities identified above for the project? How?

Proposed methods

The table or Venn diagram generated in Stage 3: Step 3 can already provide a shortlist of biodiversity information to focus on that will meet Criteria 1, 2 and 3 (set out in Table 9). With this information to hand, users should develop a 'Biodiversity Information Option table' using the template provided in [Annex 1.10](#). The template provides additional guidance on the steps for filling out the table and how it can be used to compare and further select which biodiversity information the project should focus on.

Sources of information for Stage 4

Users of the guide should draw on all of the previous stages as sources of information for Stage 4. Additional inputs can be obtained through stakeholder interviews, if necessary (see [Annex 2.4](#) for a sample list of interview questions).

⁹ [Annex 3.7](#) contains further details about how CONNECT partners navigated this selection process.

For selecting biodiversity information, a focus group discussion can be arranged to select biodiversity information to ensure strong stakeholder buy-in and support. The discussion can involve the executive decision-making body for the project (see [Annex 2.6](#) for a sample agenda).

Lastly, a facilitated workshop can be organised to validate findings from the context analysis, including the final strategy derived from Stage 4. The workshop should involve key stakeholders identified as part of the context analysis process and a sample agenda is provided in [Annex 2.7](#).

Outputs for Stage 4

At the end of this stage, users of this guide should develop a **project strategy** that responds to the purpose of the analysis (as defined in the first stage). Depending on the specific objectives, the strategy could include the following:

- A shortlist of strategically chosen government decision-making processes on which the project should focus, with clear justifications
- A stakeholder engagement strategy, which may include an interests/power matrix, discussions of differentiated stakeholder engagement strategies, and a list of key individuals and descriptions of how to engage them
- A list of information-related barriers and opportunities for the project and actions to address them, and
- A shortlist of biodiversity information to improve or to develop, with brief narratives on why they were selected.

The project strategy could serve as the executive summary of findings from the context analysis. See [Annex 2.8](#) for a sample report outline. Users may not want to make all findings from the context analysis public as some information revealed can be sensitive (see Box 3 for guidance).

If the users are applying the context analysis iteratively, the main output for the first round could be:

- A shortlist of strategically chosen government decision processes on which the next iteration of the context analysis can focus on, and
- A general stakeholder engagement strategy and general list of information-related barriers and opportunities, which can serve basis for the second iteration.

Box 3. Should findings be published?

Not all the information collected for the context analysis needs to be made public as some contextual issues concern sensitive aspects of political economy. While important for informing the internal project strategy, making assumptions and rationales clear, publishing the entirety of the context analysis report may not be helpful for relationships with some stakeholders.

If users intend to publish the results, they might like to consider producing two written reports: a version with all details including sensitive/contentious issues for internal use only; and a synthesised version which can be shared publicly and provide the rationale for the project strategy. The decision on how to publish and present the findings from the context analysis should be discussed and decided by the project team based on country context.

7 Further reading

There is a vast range of literature available for context/political economy analysis. The readings presented below offer various conceptual frameworks and practical guidance. In addition, the Annexes offer unique material, unavailable elsewhere, directly from the CONNECT project.

Conceptual Frameworks

Corduneanu-Huci, C *et al.* (2013) Understanding Policy Change: How to Apply Political Economy Concepts in Practice. The World Bank Group, Washington DC. Available at: <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/11879>

The Asia Foundation (2012) Development entrepreneurship: A model for transformative institutional change. Available at: <https://asiafoundation.org/resources/pdfs/OccasionalPaperNo12.pdf>

DFID (2009) Political Economy Analysis: How to Note. A DFID Practice Paper. Available at: <https://odi.org/en/publications/political-economy-analysis-how-to-note/>

Fritz, V *et al.* (2009) Problem-driven Governance and Political Economy Analysis: Good Practice Framework. The World Bank, Washington DC. Available at: <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/16777>

Tools and Guidance

USAID (2018) Thinking and working politically through applied political economy analysis: a guide for practitioners. Available at: www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1866/PEA2018.pdf

Hudson, D *et al.* (2016) Everyday Political Analysis. Development Leadership Program. Available at: <http://www.dlprog.org/publications/research-papers/everyday-political-analysis>

Hudson, D and Marquette, H (2015) Mind the gaps: What's missing in political economy analysis and why it matters. In Whaites, A *et al.* (2015) A Governance Practitioner's Notebook: Alternative Ideas and Approaches. OECD, Paris. Available at: <http://www.oecd.org/dac/accountable-effective-institutions/Governance%20Notebook.pdf>

Kishor, N *et al.* (2015) The Political Economy of Decision-making in Forestry: Using Evidence and Analysis for Reform. Program on Forests (PROFOR). Washington DC. Available at: <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/635501468180853227/The-political-economy-of-decision-making-in-forestry-using-evidence-and-analysis-for-reform>

Nash, R *et al.* (2006) Mapping Political Context: a Toolkit for Civil Society Organisations. Overseas Development Institute, London. Available at: <https://odi.org/en/publications/mapping-political-context-a-toolkit-for-civil-society-organisations/>

Annex 1 – Templates and tools

This Annex provides templates and tools to assist context analysis. They are drawn largely from the experiences of the CONNECT project in Ghana, Mozambique and Uganda. Many of them apply to specific context analysis tasks – and so we note which of the four stages of this guide they relate to.

Annex 1.1 - Selecting strategic development targets: a tool for prioritising sectors or themes on which to focus biodiversity information

Overview: This tool supports biodiversity authorities and interest groups to select the most strategic development targets for biodiversity mainstreaming. It is developed based on experiences from Botswana, Namibia, Seychelles and Uganda.

How does it work?

The core of this guide is a two-part diagnostic. The first part - 'scoping' - provides a checklist of questions to map the development 'landscape' for biodiversity. Answers to the first part will produce a long list of possible development processes and issues for biodiversity mainstreaming, together with their entry points. The second part - 'focusing' - suggests seven criteria to help select two priority options.

The diagnostic can either be done through a cross-sectoral meeting or a working group involving knowledgeable key stakeholders. The guide also provides a suggested agenda for a one-day cross-sectoral meeting.

Full details of the tool can be found at: IIED and UNEP-WCMC (2016) Mainstreaming biodiversity. A guide to selecting strategic development targets. IIED, London. Available at:

<https://pubs.iied.org/17586iied>

Annex 1.2 - Template to summarise findings from Stage 2

1. Structural factors:

Factor	How does it impact biodiversity in the country?
Geography	<i>How is biodiversity distributed geographically? Does that distribution overlap with other important/valuable resources (e.g. oil, minerals)?</i>
Economy	<i>What is the current GDP of the country? What are key sectors contributing to GDP growth? Do those sectors have negative or positive impact on biodiversity?</i>
Population	<i>What is the current population, population growth and population density in the country? Are there any demographic trends that have impact on biodiversity (e.g. migration to natural-resource rich regions may increase pressure on biodiversity)?</i>
Climate Change	<i>How is climate change affecting biodiversity in the country?</i>
Innovation	<i>How do the current and emerging technological advances impact biodiversity?</i>
<i>Add additional rows for any other key structural factors that are relevant</i>	...

2. Institutions:

Formal Institutions (laws & policies)

Title of the policy/law	Objectives/ targets	Time period covered (<i>When is it made? When does it end</i>)	How was it made?	How does it impact biodiversity? (<i>Negative/positive</i>)	How well is it implemented?
<i>E.g. wildlife policy</i>		<i>E.g. enacted in 2014 and valid till 2020</i>	<i>E.g. through consultation with stakeholders and enacted by parliament</i>		
<i>E.g. mining policy</i>					
<i>Add an extra row for each new policy, law identified</i>					

Informal institutions (traditional, cultural and social norms):

Brief description	How does it affect decisions and activities that have impact on biodiversity?	How powerful and legitimate is the norm?
<i>E.g. customary system, bureaucracy</i>		
...		

Linkages between formal and informal institutions:

Briefly summarise the synergies/mutual reinforcing and conflicts/trade-offs among the formal and informal institutions identified.

Synergies:

- Are there any synergies between formal institutions (laws and policies) identified? If so, what are the laws and policies that have synergies? What are the synergies between them?
- Are there any synergies between formal and informal institutions identified? If so, what are the formal and informal institutions that have synergies? What are the synergies between them?

Conflicts:

- Are there any conflicts between formal institutions (laws and policies) identified? If so, what are the laws and policies that have conflicts? What are the conflicts between them?
- Are there any conflicts between formal and informal institutions identified? If so, what are the formal and informal institutions that have conflicts? What are the conflicts between them?

3. Stakeholders:

Stakeholder name	Mandate and duties	Their role in decision-making processes that impact biodiversity
<p><i>E.g. Ministry of Agriculture, Prime Minister</i></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Does the stakeholder decide how and when policies and laws are made that will impact biodiversity?</i> • <i>Does the stakeholder influence those decisions?</i> • <i>Does the stakeholder implement those policies and laws?</i> • <i>Does the stakeholder monitor the implementation of policies and laws?</i>
<p><i>Add a new row for each additional stakeholder. It is okay to have a table that is several pages long.</i></p>		

Annex 1.3 - Template to assist Stage 3: Step 1 'Identifying key government decisions for further analysis'

		Questions to address when filling out the table	Laws and policies <i>(use the list generated in Stage 1 to fill out the row below)</i>		
			<i>Law/policy #1 (insert title)</i>	<i>Law/policy #2 (insert title)</i>	...
Structural factors <i>(Refer to details in Stage 1 output)</i>	Geography	Does the policy or laws govern the development and use of important/valuable resources that have big overlap with biodiversity distribution? Briefly describe how.			
	Economy	Does the policy or law that govern the sectors that are big contributors to GDP growth and have negative or positive impacts on biodiversity? Briefly describe how.			
	Population	Does the policy or law respond to and address demographic trends that will have big impacts on biodiversity in future? Briefly describe how.			
	Climate Change	Does the policy or law respond to and address climate change impacts on biodiversity? Briefly describe how.			
	Innovation	Does the policy or law respond to and address emerging technological advances and their impacts on biodiversity? Briefly describe how.			
Institutions <i>(Refer to details in Stage 1 output)</i>	Implementation status	Can the implementation of policy or law be improved through better use of biodiversity information? Briefly describe how.			
	Conflicts with other institutions	Does the policy or law conflict with other formal or informal institutions? If so, can the conflict be reduced by better use of biodiversity information? Briefly describe how.			

Annex 1.4 - Template to map stakeholder links to biodiversity and their power and interests under Stage 3: Step 3 'Understanding stakeholder motivations, power and relationships'

		Questions to address when filling out the table	Stakeholders <i>(use the list generated in Stage 1 or Stage 3: Step 2 to fill out the rows below)</i>		
			Stakeholder 1 <i>(list name)</i>	Stakeholder 2 <i>(list name)</i>	...
Stakeholder links to biodiversity and biodiversity link	Dependency on biodiversity	Is the stakeholder dependent on biodiversity? If so, briefly describe for what benefits? (e.g. income, raw materials)			
	Vulnerability to biodiversity problems	Is the stakeholder vulnerable to biodiversity problems? If so, please briefly describe why (e.g. crop production loss due to loss of pollinators)			
Stakeholder power	High power	Political	Does the stakeholder hold high political power that can influence governments' decisions?		
		Financial	Does the stakeholder hold high financial power that can influence governments' decisions?		
		Public trust	Is the stakeholder highly trusted by the public and can use the power to influence governments' decisions?		
		..	For any other types of power, insert row for each.		
	Low power	Does the stakeholder have little power to influence governments' decisions?			
Stakeholder interests	Champions of biodiversity	Is the stakeholder a champions of biodiversity who seeks positive biodiversity outcomes in governments' decision-making process(es)? if yes, briefly describe why they are interested to champion biodiversity			
	Underminers of biodiversity outcomes	Has the stakeholder undermined biodiversity outcomes in government' decision-making processes? If so, briefly describe why.			

Annex 1.5 - Templates to map stakeholders' motivations for using biodiversity information under Stage 3: Step 3 'Understanding stakeholder motivations, power and relationships'

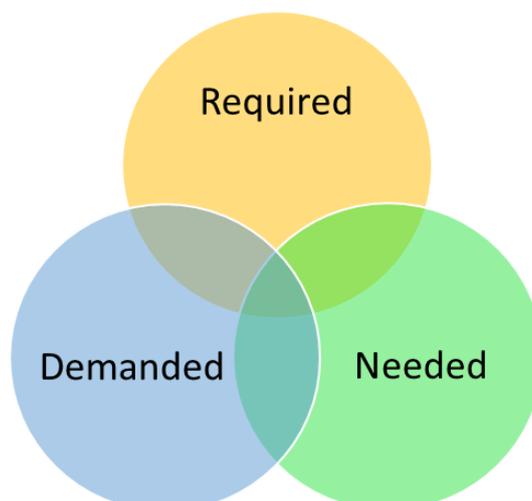
1. Table template:

For each type of motivation listed in the first column, list relevant biodiversity information in the first row. For the biodiversity information that falls under more than one type, do not duplicate them in the first row. Instead, use 'Yes' or a symbol (e.g. tick) to mark them against all the types that they respond to.

		Biodiversity Information		
		Biodiversity information 1: <i>(Insert title)</i>	Biodiversity information 2: <i>(insert title)</i>	...
Motivation to use biodiversity information	Required: legally required to be used			
	Demanded: stakeholders interested to use it but not yet available or accessible			
	Needed: important to reduce vulnerability to biodiversity loss			

2. Venn diagram:

Insert the biodiversity information based on stakeholders' motivations in the Venn diagram below. Biodiversity information that meets all three of 'required, demanded, and needed' should be inserted into centre of the Venn diagram. Those falling under two types should be inserted in the overlap areas of two corresponding circles.



Annex 1.6 - Template to summarise findings from Stage 3: Step 4 'Learning from other efforts to improve biodiversity information use in government decision-making'

Name of project/ initiative					
Objectives					
Timeframe					
Stakeholders involved and how					
What biodiversity information is used and how					
Did the use of biodiversity information lead to better biodiversity outcomes? Why or why not?					

Annex 1.7 - Template to use eight criteria to target key government decision-making processes for Stage 4 'Develop politically-informed project strategy'

Insert each decision-making process prioritised in Stage 3: Step 1 into a column in the first row. For each decision-making process inserted, go through questions listed for each criterion in Table 7 (see Stage 4). Refer back to outputs from Stages 2 and 3 following the instructions in the second column and summarise answers to each criterion in the table.

Criterion	Relevant information to draw on	Governments' Decision-Making Process A <i>(insert brief description e.g. Environment Impact Assessment Process)</i>	Government's Decision-Making Process B <i>(insert brief description)</i>	...
1. Risk level and likelihood	Stage 2 'structural factors' and 'institutions' Stage 3: Step 1 'Identifying key government decisions for further analysis' Stage 3: Step 3 'Understanding stakeholder motivations, power and relationships' Question 1 on 'Stakeholder and biodiversity links'			
2. Magnitude of possible gains	Stage 2 'structural factors' and 'institutions' Stage 3: Step 1 'Identifying key government decisions for further analysis' Stage 3: Step 3 'Understanding stakeholder motivations, power and relationships' Question 1 on 'Stakeholder and biodiversity links'			
3. Potential for institutional improvements	Stage 3: Step 2 'Mapping and understanding government decision-making processes' Stage 3: Step 3 'Understanding stakeholder motivations, power and relationships'			
4. Highest current political and public profile	Stage 2 'structural factors' and 'institutions' Stage 3: Step 1 Identifying key government decisions for further analysis' Step 3.3. 'Understanding stakeholder motivations, power and relationships' Question 3 on 'Stakeholders interests' Question 5 on 'Stakeholders and their motivations to use biodiversity information'			
5. Future-relevant	Stage 2 'structural factors' and 'institutions' Stage 3: Step 1 'Identifying key government decisions for further analysis' Stage 3: Step 3 'Understanding stakeholder motivations, power and relationships' Question 3 on 'Stakeholders interests' and Question 5 on 'Stakeholders and their motivations to use biodiversity information'			
6. Clear mandate and high tractability	Stage 3: Step 3 'Understanding stakeholder motivations, power and relationships' Question 2 'Stakeholders power', Question 3 'Stakeholder interests', Question 4 'Stakeholder relationships' and Question 5 'Stakeholder motivations to use biodiversity information'			
7. Critical path	Stage 3: Step 4 'Learning from other efforts to improve biodiversity information use in government decision-making processes'			
8. Critical entry point for new or improved biodiversity information	Stage 3: Step 2 'Mapping and understanding government decision-making processes' Stage 3: Step 3 'Understanding stakeholder motivations, power and relationships' Question 5 'Stakeholder motivations to use biodiversity information'			

Annex 1.8 - Interests/power matrix: to devise strategies for stakeholder engagement

An interest/power matrix can help inform project strategies and priorities for stakeholder engagement.

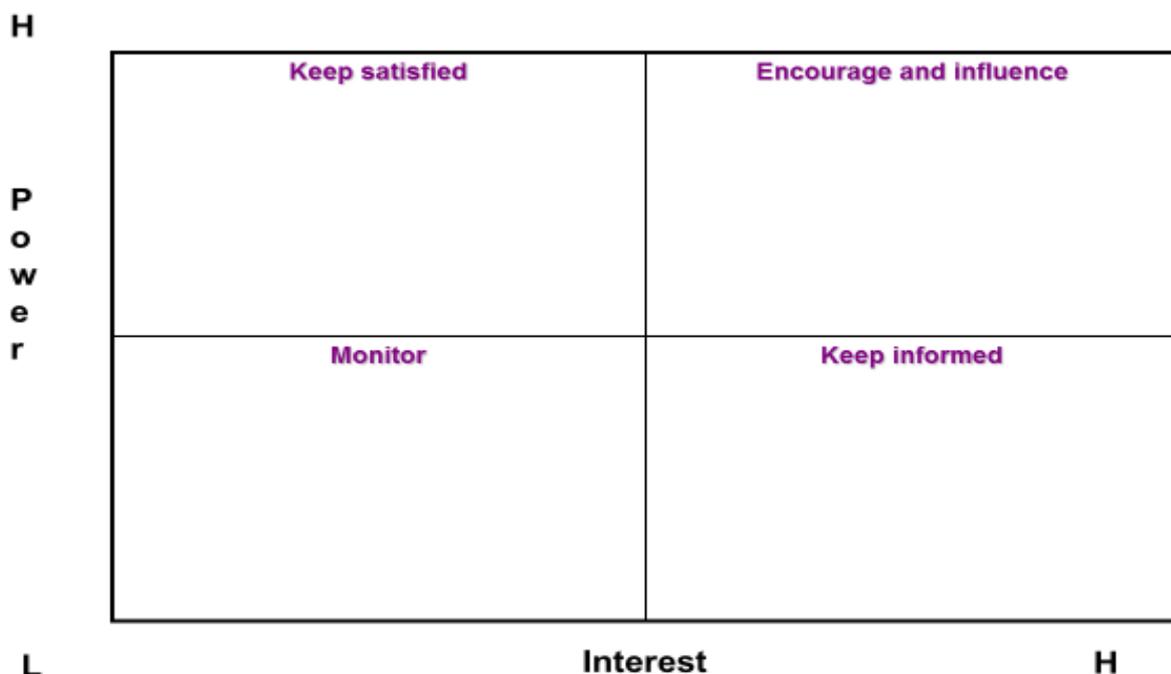
Based on the stakeholder interests and power mapped in Stage 3: Step 3 'Understanding stakeholder motivations, power and relationships' (also see [Annex 1.4](#)), classify various stakeholders in terms of their power to affect governments' decisions, and in terms of their interests in biodiversity. Plot them along x & y axes with 'x' representing interest; 'y' representing power (using the matrix diagram below).

Stakeholders with high power will be plotted towards upper part of the matrix; lower power towards the lower part of matrix; stakeholders with high interests will be plotted towards the right-side of the matrix; low interests the left-side.

The matrix then will reveal different strategies for stakeholder engagement:

- Stakeholders with high power and high interests are the people or organisations it is important to engage with fully and to bring on board.
- Stakeholders with high interest but low power need to be kept informed; if organised, they may form the basis of an interest group or coalition that can lobby for positive change.
- Those with high power but low interest should be kept satisfied and ideally brought around as supporters for the projects through strategic engagement activities.

Context analysis should have also revealed the nature of stakeholders' power and the motivations/reasons behind stakeholders' interests. The more nuanced understanding of power and interests can help the project better design targeted engagement/communication with those prioritised stakeholders.



Annex 1.9 - Stories of change: Identifying barriers and opportunities through past mainstreaming processes

Overview: Understanding how to effect change in a complex political context is sometimes a difficult process. Examining and learning from past experiences can help prompt out-of-box thinking on barriers and opportunities.

How does it work?

Task 1: Identify two past relevant projects/initiatives that tried to mainstream biodiversity into governments' decision-making process(es). Stage 3: Step 4 'Learning from other efforts to improve the use of biodiversity information in government decision-making' should have already identified a few projects/initiatives.

Task 2: Based on understanding of the political economy factors under Stage 2, discuss:

- why did the projects/initiative fail or succeed in improving use of biodiversity information in governments' decision-making processes?
- what lessons are applicable to the current project? Based on those lessons learnt, what are the key barriers and opportunities for the current project? How can the project activities be designed to address barriers and respond to opportunities?

Some basic information can be prepared through desk-research and key informants' interviews. Based on initial information generated, focused group discussion can be facilitated amongst stakeholders who are familiar with the past project(s) identified. The tool can help project identify barriers and opportunities and devise effective responses based on those past experiences.

To learn more, see examples of past mainstreaming experiences at: IIED and UNEP-WCMC (2015) *Stories of Change: Mainstreaming biodiversity and development*. IIED, London. Available at: <https://pubs.iied.org/17305iied>

Annex 1.10 - Using six criteria to select biodiversity information

Insert biodiversity information prioritised in Stage 3: Step 3 into a column in the first row. For each decision-making process inserted, go through questions listed for each criterion in Table 7 (see Stage 4) of the guidance, then refer back to outputs from Stages 2 and 3 following the instructions in the second column and summarise answer to each criterion in the table.

Italic text below provides additional guidance on how to fill out the table and compare across different biodiversity information. Users should replace the grey text with their answers.

Criterion	Where to find information in CA	Biodiversity Information A: <i>Insert brief description (e.g. Maps of biodiversity hotspots; economic evaluation of biodiversity's contribution to agriculture)</i>	Biodiversity Information B: <i>Insert brief description</i>	...
Formal information requirements	Stage 2 'Institutions' Stage 3: Step 3 'Understanding stakeholder motivations, power and relationships' Question 5 'Stakeholders and their motivations to use biodiversity information'	<i>Please briefly explain what information requirements in which policy and policies the BI responds to. Or list the policy and its policy targets the BI is relevant to.</i> <i>The biodiversity information that responds to multiple policies & laws, cross-sectoral laws and policy targets and/or most important policies/targets are more desirable.</i>		
Respond to users' demand	Stage 3: Step 3 'Understanding stakeholder motivations, power and relationships' Question 2 'Stakeholder power', and Question 5 'Stakeholders and their motivations to use biodiversity information'	<i>Please briefly describe which stakeholders and what their demands are that the BI can help meet.</i> <i>The biodiversity information that appeals to powerful stakeholders who do not currently have strong interests in biodiversity can be more desirable.</i>		
Needed for long-term sustainability	Stage 2 'Structural factors' Stage 3.3. 'Understanding stakeholder motivations, power and relationships' Question 1 'Stakeholder and biodiversity links', and Question 5 'Stakeholders and their motivations to use biodiversity information'	<i>Please briefly describe how the information product can ensure the decision outcomes are sustainable and could reduce biodiversity loss or/and stakeholders' vulnerability to biodiversity loss. E.g. does it provide better understanding of current biodiversity status and risks/drivers related to biodiversity loss?</i>		
Directly supports decision-making process	Stage 3: Step 2 'Mapping and understanding government decision-making processes' Stage 4 'Identifying overall barriers and opportunities'	<i>Please briefly describe which decision-making process the BI is relevant to and the potential entry points e.g. upcoming opportunities to input into different stages of decision-making processes: revision, budgeting, consultations...</i> <i>The biodiversity information that are relevant to more process(es) and have more</i>		

		<i>clear entry points are more desirable.</i>		
Catalyses a critical path	<p>Stage 3: Step 3 'Understanding stakeholder motivations, power and relationships'</p> <p>Stage 3: Step 4 'Learning from other efforts to improve biodiversity information use in government decision-making processes'</p>	<p><i>Please briefly describe how the BI complements ongoing mainstreaming efforts</i></p> <p><i>The biodiversity information that builds on more ongoing processes are more desirable.</i></p>		
Responding to key project barriers and opportunities	<p>Stage 4 'Identifying overall barriers and opportunities'</p>	<p><i>Please briefly describe which opportunities and barriers the information product responds to and how.</i></p> <p><i>The biodiversity information that responds to most opportunities and barriers are more desirable.</i></p>		

Annex 2 – Sample interview questionnaire, ToRs and Agenda

In this section, users can find samples of interview questions, Terms of References (ToRs), agendas for workshops, meetings and focus group discussions that can be adapted by the users in designing their own CA approaches. Most of the examples are based on experiences from the CONNECT project.

Annex 2.1 - Sample agenda for project meeting to clarify the purpose of a context analysis

Project meeting: Sample agenda

Welcome and purpose of the meeting: to discuss and agree the purposes of a context analysis (CA) and develop a workplan.

Understanding existing interests/needs within the project team: round-table discussions among the team members on 'what they think are non-technical issues/questions that are important for the project to consider in order to improve the use of biodiversity information in governments' decision-making': e.g. who are the powerful policy makers that the project needs to engage? Why are existing good quality biodiversity information not used by policy makers? Answers can be captured on post-its and displayed on a flipchart or whiteboard.

How can a context analysis respond to those interests/needs:

Responding directly to the outcomes of the discussions, someone who is experienced in using CA can present to the team on:

- What CA is in general
- Explain whether and how CA can respond to the interests/needs identified
- Add any additional possible ways CA can help the project (if those are not yet listed by the project team)

Those interests/needs that CA can help or respond to can be grouped together or marked.

Agree on the purpose of CA: Looking at those interests/needs CA can help address or respond to and reflecting on the presentation on CA, team members discuss and agree on main aims of CA. The final list of aims need to be captured and displayed on a screen or flipchart.

Brainstorming how CA complement other project components and ways to integrate CA findings:

- Project lead reminds everyone other project components in addition to conducting CA and their timeline
- Project team discuss how CA can complement and link with other project components (e.g. CA findings can inform project communication strategy) and agree on a timeline for CA that can ensure its findings are feed into other project components

Developing a workplan for CA: Based on the timeline and looking at available project resources for CA, project team discuss and agree on a work plan for CA which should include considerations for:

- Who should be involved in CA? (See Section 5 of the guide for more details)
 - Who within the team will be leading the CA process and ensuring that the findings are integrated into the overall project strategy and implementation as discussed?
 - What are the existing skill sets within the team for carrying out CA? Are there any gaps? If there are gaps, then the team needs to agree on hiring a consultant to assist the team in implementing CA.
- What is the best approach to conduct CA given the timeline and funding availability to conduct CA?
 - Does the team need to further refine the focus and purpose of CA if timeline is short and resource is limited?
 - How participatory the approach can be given the resource limits? E.g. how many workshops can be organised? How many rounds of interviews? See Section 4.1 of the guidance on sources of information for CA and the importance of participatory approach.
 - Who needs to validate and approve CA findings? Through which processes and when?

Based on above, the team develop a draft work plan that will detail purpose, rough timeline for developing CA and a proposed modality to use the findings as part of the overall project strategy.

The workplan can be further polished and finalised by the team after the workshop.

Annex 2.2 - Sample ToR for a context analysis consultant

Context Analysis Consultancy: Sample ToR

1. **Background of project and purpose of CA:** briefly introduce the objectives of the project and the purposes of CA for the project.
2. **The role of CA consultant, main deliverables and timeline:** outline the role of consultant in CA and who the consultant needs to work closely with and the modality of working; outline key deliverables and timeline for each deliverable.
3. **Desired skills:** list key desirable skills for the consultant. Those skills can include the following but should be also be adapted based on project's team's existing skill set (see Section 4.3 of the guidance on 'who should be involved in a context analysis' for more details):
 - Context analysis expertise: a good understanding of key political economy concepts- such as stakeholders, institutions, and experiences in applying them to concrete development challenges.
 - Strong analytical skill to link complex and wide-ranging political and economic issues together to derive strategic conclusions.
 - Strong country knowledge and, ideally, a good knowledge for biodiversity and development related issues.
 - Good networks of key informants in country, and well-respected by a wide range of key stakeholders.
 - Appropriate linguistic skills, if local stakeholders need to be interviewed and they may speak dialects.
 - Problem-solving and practical orientation, this is critical for translating issues identified into practical actions for the project.
 - Excellent written and in-person communication skills. Ability to put interviewees/key stakeholders at ease when discussing sometimes sensitive issues. Ability to effectively engage stakeholders and cultivate support for the project through the application of context analysis. Ability to summarise and present the sometimes-contentious findings in ways that will be helpful to making progress.
4. **Total budget and payment schedule:** Add details.

Annex 2.3 - Sample ToR for Project Steering Committee to make strategic decisions and support adoption of context analysis findings

Project Steering Committee: Sample ToR

1. **Background of the project:** briefly introduce the objectives of the project and the main activities.
2. **Role of project steering committee (SC) members:** outline key role of the Steering Committee which can include:
 - To act as a multi-stakeholder body of leaders who are interested to mainstream biodiversity into governments' decision-making processes and are trusted and influential stakeholders.
 - To provide thought leadership for strategic decision for the project. This will include making key decisions for the project and approve project strategy based on findings from CA results.
 - To help mobilise wide stakeholder support and catalyse collaborative actions to support the project. This will include help mobilise key stakeholders to engage in the CA processes (including interviews and workshops).
3. **Expectations, main activities and timeline:** briefly describe modality of working including who from the project team will support/work closely with the SC, how often SC members are expected to meet over which time period, how their costs for meeting may be covered etc.

Annex 2.4 - Sample interview questions

Below is a list of generic interview questions that should be adapted by users based on the interviewees and focus of the context analysis.

1. Understanding the stakeholders interviewed:

To all: What is your current perception of biodiversity in your country? E.g. Is it in decline? Is it well conserved? Why?

For government: What is the key policy/policies that your ministry is trying to implement? What are the key targets of the policy/those policies? What key measures has the ministry adopted/planned to achieve those targets?

For NGOs/Intergovernmental organisations/private sector: What is the main mandate/objectives of your organisation/company? What are the key activities your organisation/company carry out to achieve those objectives?

Community members: How do you or your communities use your land? What activities are carried out on your land or the communal land? Are those activities the main income source for you and your communities? If not, what is main income source?

2. Decision-making process:

For government:

- How are those key targets and measures formulated? What are the key issues considered when formulating those targets and designing those measures? Who are involved in the formulation of those key targets/measures?
- Who implements those measures discussed? How well are the measures implemented? Please explain why you think the measures are well or badly implemented.
- Who monitor achievements towards those targets? How well are the targets achieved? Please explain why you think the targets are achieved or not achieved.

For private sector and community members:

- What are the key government's decisions that impact your activities and their impacts on biodiversity?
- Are you involved in those decision-making processes? If so, how? If not, do you know how those decisions are made? Who are involved and why?
- Do you seek to influence those decision-making processes? If so, how?
- Do you think better use of biodiversity information can improve those decision-making processes if so how? If not, why?

For NGOs/intergovernmental organisations:

- Does your organisation actively seek to influence government policies, private sector investment and communities? If so, how? (E.g. who do you seek to influence? Through what process? At what stage of the decision-making process?) What are the key biodiversity issues you seek to influence them on?

3. Institutions:

For all:

- What are the key policies and laws that influence key government decision-making processes discussed above?
- Do traditional norms and beliefs impact governments' decision-making process? If so, what are they? And how do they impact the decision-making process?

4. Relationships and power dynamics among key stakeholders:

For all: (Choose the questions from the following that most relevant to the stakeholders' role in decision-making processes based on answers to earlier questions)

- Which stakeholders do you and/or your organisation/ministry/company/community interact with in those government decision-making process discussed? And at what levels of interactions? (e.g. consult, veto, advise, jointly implement)? And how frequent are the interactions?
- Are there any individuals or organisations that you would like to involve but are not currently involved or interact more with in those decision-making processes? Who are they? Why do you think there is no involvement or limited interactions at the moment?
- Which stakeholders do you and/or your organisation/ministry/company/community rely on most for information and advice in making key decisions that will impact biodiversity? Why?
- Which stakeholders do you and/or your organisation/ministry/company/community collaborate with in implementing those key decisions made? When and why was the collaboration started?
- Which stakeholders' decisions/activities (e.g. policies enacted by other ministries, investment plans by private sector, NGOs' activities and land use decisions by communities) create barriers for implementation of key government decisions that can have positive biodiversity outcomes? Why? How can those barriers be overcome? How have those barriers been addressed in the past?

For non-government stakeholders:

- Do you/your organisation/company/community seek to influence the formulation and/or implementation of government policies and laws?
 - If so, how do you/your organisation/company/community seek to influence those polices and laws? And why? How effective do you think the efforts to influence those policies and laws are? And why? Can you please describe a recent case and the outcome?
 - If not, why?

5. The importance of biodiversity in decision-making process:

For government: Does your ministry consider biodiversity issues when developing policies, targets and measures to implement those policies?

- If yes:
 - What are the main issues considered? Why are they considered?

- What types of biodiversity information is generally used? When are they used? Who provides the information? Who analyses the information? Who makes the final decision on how to use the biodiversity information? Can you please give a recent example?
- How much of your ministry/the government's budget is directed towards those biodiversity issues? For what purposes? How is the budget allocation decided? Has the budget allocation been increasing or decreasing?

- If not, why?

Are there any specific biodiversity target(s) for your ministry?

- If yes, what are those targets? What are the measures taken to achieve them? Have those targets been achieved?
- If no, why?

For non-government stakeholders:

What types of biodiversity information does your organisation usually provide to governments for their decision-making processes? In your experience, how is the biodiversity information used by those stakeholders in their decision-making process? Does the information provided have impact on the final decision? And why?

6. Motivations and incentives for better use of biodiversity information:

For government:

- Is any part of your ministry's revenue directly dependent on the status of biodiversity? Is so, what? (e.g. Forest and wildlife fees)
- For your ministry, what fiscal incentives and disincentives are there to conserve biodiversity?
- Do you think biodiversity information can be better used by your ministry in developing policies, targets and measures to implement those policies?
 - If no, why?
 - If yes:
 - What are the key barriers preventing the better use of biodiversity information in your ministry?
 - What are the key opportunities: how can the use of biodiversity information be improved? (e.g. any specific officers/office to engage with? Any specific process to target?) How to incentivise better use of biodiversity information? what type of biodiversity information does the ministry need if it is different from what are currently used? Why? Any specific policy targets/priorities the information should speak to? (e.g. economic diversification, job creation)

For private sector:

- Is any part of your company's income directly dependent on the status of biodiversity? Is so, what and how?

- For your company, what incentives and disincentives are there for your company to conserve biodiversity?
- Do you think biodiversity information can be better used by your company in developing and implementing investment plans?
 - If no, why?
 - If yes:
 - What is the biodiversity information you are interested in to use?
 - what are the key barriers preventing the better use of biodiversity information in your company?
 - what are the key opportunities: how can the use of biodiversity information be improved? How to incentivise better use of biodiversity information? what type of biodiversity information does the company need if it is different from what are currently used? Why?

For community members:

- Is any part of your or your community's income directly dependent on the status of biodiversity? Is so, what and how?
- For you or your community, what incentives and disincentives are there to conserve biodiversity?
- Do you think biodiversity information can be better used by you or your community in deciding how to use your land?
 - If no, why?
 - If so:
 - What is the biodiversity information you are interested in to use?
 - what are the key barriers preventing the better use of biodiversity information?
 - what are the key opportunities: how can the use of biodiversity information be improved? How to incentivise better use of biodiversity information? what type of biodiversity information is needed but is not currently available to you or your community?

For all non-government stakeholders:

- Do you produce, collect, or/and communicate any biodiversity information? If so, what are they? Do you use that information to influence governments' decisions? If no, why not? If so, how?
- In your experience, what is the most effective way to ensure and improve the use of biodiversity information by government decision-makers? e.g. any specific format the information should be presented? Any specific process or individuals to target? Any specific issue the information should speak to? (e.g. economic diversification, job creation) how to motivate and incentive better use of biodiversity information by those stakeholders?

7. Project strategy:

To all:

- Can you share any success story/stories on improving the use of Biodiversity information in decision-making processes? What do you think are the key reasons for success?
- Can you share any failed examples on the use of biodiversity information in decision-making processes? What do you think are the key lessons learnt from the failure?
- What do you think is the barriers to improve use of biodiversity information in governments' decision-making processes? Why?
- What do you think are the opportunities to improve use of biodiversity information in governments' decision-making processes? Why?
 - What are the best fora for mainstreaming biodiversity into development policies? What policy debates and innovations are taking place, or will soon stake place, that could have big impact on biodiversity?
 - What are the key stakeholders to engage with? Why? How to best engage them?

Annex 2.5 - Sample agenda for Steering Committee meeting to choose which government decision-making processes to target

This is normally a half-day meeting. The following agenda can also be expanded to include other key decisions the project requires the Steering Committee (SC) to make.

Steering Committee meeting: Sample agenda for selecting government decision-making processes

Welcome and purpose of the meeting: project team briefly explain the objectives of the meeting which should include selecting key decision-making processes to target (based on CA findings)

Presentation of CA findings and recommendations of key government decision-making processes to target: project team member or CA consultant present the findings of CA focusing on the short-listed government decision-making processes for the project to focus on and how they are selected using the eight criteria. Results can be presented in a table in [Annex 1.7](#).

Steering Committee members should be given opportunities to ask questions and clarifications.

Discussions among SC members on CA results: A facilitated discussion among SC members which can cover the following key questions:

- Do they agree with the eight criteria used? If not, how they would like to see it changed? If yes, is there any criteria they think should be given more weight than others? Why?
- Are there any other decision-making processes that should be included in the table that is currently not included? If so, what are they? Why should they be included? Ask the SC member to list their reasons against the eight criteria so they can be compared with others.
- Do they agree with the assessment of each decision-making processes against the eight criteria? If not, how they would like to see the assessment changed?

The project team or/and the CA consultant should take notes of the discussions and update the table based on those inputs during the meeting.

The project team or/and the CA consultant explain the next agenda items and how SC members are expected to vote on the government decision-making processes for the project to target.

Break: A break for SC members to digest information presented and discussions had before they cast their votes on the key government decision-making processes for the project to target.

Prioritisation: SC members cast votes on each of the decision-making processes. The top voted ones will be selected for the project to target. Each SC member is asked to also explain briefly how they voted and why, and to give reasons for their voting against the eight criteria. The reasons given by SC members should be recorded and used to enrich the table of eight criteria and discussed as part of the CA report.

Note: if SC members prefer not to vote against each decision-making process but just vote Yes or No on the project recommendations (which should now also include the discussion points with SC members), then it could just be a simple Yes or No vote first. If voted No, SC members can then be asked to vote against each decision-making process in order to reach a decision during the meeting.

Agreeing on next steps: SC members agree on next project steps to focus and engage with those key decision-making processes including write-up of meeting results and next steps for CA and the project.

Annex 2.6 - Sample agenda for Steering Committee meeting to choose key biodiversity information

This is normally a half-day meeting. The following agenda can also be expanded to include other key decisions the project needs the Steering Committee (SC) to make.

Steering Committee meeting: Sample agenda for selecting key biodiversity information

Welcome and purpose of the meeting: Project team briefly explain the objectives of the meeting which should include selecting the biodiversity information for the project to improve or produce (based on CA findings as well as research into technical aspects of biodiversity information).

Presentation of CA findings and recommendations of key biodiversity information to improve or produce: project team member or CA consultant presents the findings of CA focusing on the short-listed biodiversity information for the project to improve or produce and how they are selected using the six criteria. Results can be presented in a table in Annex [1.10](#) SC members should be given opportunities to ask questions and clarifications.

Presentation of technical recommendations of key biodiversity information to improve or produce: project team member or a data consultant presents technical information needed to select biodiversity information for the project. SC members should be given opportunities to ask questions and clarifications.

Both presentations should point to the same short-listed of biodiversity information for the project to improve or produce.

Discussions among SC members: A facilitated discussion among SC members which can cover the following key questions:

- Do they agree with the criteria used (including the CA six criteria and any other technical criteria)? If not, how they would like to see it changed? If yes, is there any criteria they think should be given more weight than others? Why?
- Are there any other biodiversity information should be included in the table that is currently not included? If so, what are they? Why should they be included? Ask the SC member to list their reasons against existing list of criteria so they can be compared with others.
- Do they agree with the assessment of each biodiversity information against the criteria? If not, how they would like to see the assessment changed?

The project team or/and the consultants should take notes of the discussions and update the biodiversity information option table based on those inputs during the meeting.

The project team explain the next agenda items and how SC members are expected to vote on the biodiversity information for the project to improve or produce.

Break: A break for SC members to digest information presented and discussions had before they cast their votes on the key biodiversity information for the project to improve or produce.

Prioritisation: SC members cast votes on each of the biodiversity information. The top voted ones will be selected for the project. Each SC member is asked to also explain briefly how they voted and why and they should be asked to give reasons for their voting against the existing criteria.

The reasons given by SC members should be recorded and used to enrich the table of biodiversity information options and discussed as part of the CA report.

Note: if SC members prefer not to vote against each biodiversity information but just vote Yes or No on the project recommendations (which should now also include the discussion points with SC members), then it could just be a simple Yes or No vote first. If voted No, SC members can then be asked to vote against each biodiversity information in order to reach a decision during the meeting.

Agreeing on next steps: SC members agree on next project steps to improve and produce biodiversity information selected including write-up of meeting results and next steps for CA and the project.

Annex 2.7 - Sample agenda for workshop to validate and support findings

This can be a two-day meeting where context analysis (CA) findings will be discussed alongside with other key project activities that requires inputs from stakeholders. The following agenda items cover only the workshop part related to CA and can be expanded to include other discussions for the project. The discussions from the workshop should be recorded, summarised and used to enrich CA findings.

Stakeholder workshop: Sample agenda for validating context analysis findings

Welcome and purpose of the workshop: project team welcome participants, introduce the workshop objectives and invite all participants to introduce themselves in the plenary

Introduction of the project: project team provides an overview of the project including project objectives, plan/activities and how this workshop and its discussions fit into overall project plan

Introduction of CA and its purposes: this session can be facilitated by the CA consultant or someone in the project team who is familiar with CA and its purposes for the project.

- The facilitator can ask the plenary 'in your experiences, what are the key barriers to improve biodiversity use in governments' decision-making?'
- Depending on the number of participants, participants can form a group of 2-4 to have a quick discussion among the group. They will write down the barriers they identified: one barrier on one sticky note and they can write down all they identified.
- Facilitator then invite a representative from each group to report back to the plenary and post their sticky note onto a board in front of the whole room. The facilitator should group similar ones together when posting them; and post all those barriers that are non-technical (i.e. not related to biodiversity information technical specification but related to political context including structural factors, institutions, stakeholders' interests, relationships and power) into a separate board or area on the board.
- Based on the discussion results, facilitator then explain/present what CA is and how it can help reveal and address the non-technical barriers identified by the participants.

Presentation of project strategy based on CA findings: the CA consultant or someone from project team presents the key findings from the CA focusing on the strategies proposed through CA (Stage 4 output) and explain why those strategies are proposed citing insights from Stages 2 and 3. The presentation can cover: 1) government's decision-making processes selected for the project to target and how and why they are selected (i.e. using the eight criteria); 2) stakeholder engagement strategy and the interests/power matrix; 3) overall barriers and opportunities identified: decision-making processes mapped in graphics can be used to illustrate the findings and show clearly the entry points if needed; 4) selected biodiversity information for the project to produce or improve and how and why they are selected (i.e. using the six criteria).

Discussions and feedbacks of CA findings: In plenary, facilitator can ask the participants to provide inputs based on the following questions:

- Any clarifying questions for the presenter
- Any findings resonate most with you? Any actions identified you would like to support the project doing? How?
- Any findings you disagree with or feel is incomplete? Why and how you will improve it?

Stakeholder workshop: Sample agenda for validating context analysis findings (Continued)

Break: facilitator, CA consultant and project team take this opportunity to review areas identified as most supported by stakeholders and areas identified as needing improvements and decide break-out group topics. Prioritise topics for stakeholders to discuss that can help: 1) improve the CA findings if it is identified as needing improvements, and 2) identify concrete next steps for the workshop participants to collaborate and advance if it resonates with a wide range of stakeholders. CA consultant/project team can also propose topic of discussions if they feel that participants' discussions can enrich and complement existing findings and the topic also respond to stakeholders' feedbacks on CA presentation (e.g. refining and deepening stakeholder interest/power analysis; refining and deepening mapping of decision-making processes).

Exact facilitation techniques and break out group questions will depend on topic chosen.

Breakout group exercises: Based on the topics identified based on participants' feedbacks, participants work in facilitated breakout groups. The breakout group is usually most effectively with around 7 people for about 1 hour and 30 mins. Everyone in the group should be encouraged to speak and share their views by the facilitator.

Breakout group report-back in plenary: each group nominates one person to report back. Group members can complement the report-back and others will be able to ask questions to the group.

Wrap-up, next steps and closing remarks: project team explains how the workshop findings will be used by the project (e.g. to complement and finalise project strategy and CA findings) and next steps of the project (including how the participants of the workshop can get involved going forward).

Annex 2.8 - Sample context analysis report outline

Sample Context Analysis Report Outline

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

No more than five pages, summarising key insights from the report focusing on recommendations for project strategies that respond to the purposes of CA identified in Stage 1. Include: (1) a brief introduction of what is CA and the purpose of CA for the project (as identified in Stage 1), and (2) recommendations for project strategy based on CA findings responding to the purposes defined and brief explanation. This can consist of:

- Government's decision-making processes selected for the project to target and how and why they are selected (i.e. using the eight criteria),
- Stakeholder engagement strategy and the interests/power matrix,
- Overall barriers and opportunities identified: decision-making processes mapped in graphics can be used to illustrate the findings and show clearly the entry points if needed, and
- Selected biodiversity information for the project to produce or improve and how and why they are selected (i.e. using the six criteria).

MAIN REPORT

1. INTRODUCTION:

This section should be based on outputs from Stage 1 of the guide and be no more than 2 pages, summarising why CA is important for the project, objectives of CA and methods used.

2. MAPPING KEY GOVERNMENTS' DECISION-MAKING PROCESS:

Based on findings from Stage 3: Step 1 and Stage 3: Step 2, provide summary of each key decision-making processes:

- Discuss why they are 'key' and how they impact biodiversity outcomes (based on output of Stage 3: Step 1)
- Summarise different stages of the decision-making processes using graphics to illustrate (based on output of Stage 3: Step 2)
- Discuss the current biodiversity information use in the process and the stakeholders involved in each process (based on output of Stage 3: Step 2)

3. ANALYSING MOTIVATIONS, RELATIONS AND POWER:

Based on findings from Stage 3: Step 3, provide summary of:

- Stakeholders and their dependency on biodiversity and vulnerability to biodiversity problems,
- Stakeholders' interests and power,
- Stakeholders' relationships, and
- Stakeholders' motivation to use biodiversity information: required, demanded, or needed.

4. LEARNINGS FROM OTHER EFFORTS TO IMPROVE BIODIVERSITY INFORMATION USE

Based on findings from Stage 3: Step 4, provide summary of recent and ongoing projects/initiatives and lessons learnt that are relevant for the project.

5. STRATEGIES

Based on findings from Stage 4, a more in-depth descriptions of recommended project strategy than the executive summary. It could cover:

- A short-list of strategically chosen government decision-making processes for the project to focus on with clear justifications presented in a table format.
- A stakeholder engagement strategy which can include interests/power matrix, discussions of differentiated stakeholder engagement strategies and a list of key individuals and descriptions of how to engage them.
- A list of overall barriers and opportunities for the project and discussions on how project may address them.
- Short list of biodiversity information to improve or develop and brief narratives on why they are selected.

REFERENCES

APPENDIX 1. LIST OF STAKEHOLDERS INTERVIEWED

APPENDIX 2. MAPPING KEY FACTORS: Based on Stage 2 findings, include initial mapping of structural factors, institutions, and stakeholders. Those factors mapped can be useful for other projects/stakeholders that are interested in mainstreaming biodiversity.

Annex 3 – Lessons learnt from the CONNECT Project

This section shares lessons learnt from applying context analysis (CA) in Ghana, Mozambique and Uganda as part of the CONNECT project to integrate biodiversity information into governments' decision-making process.¹⁰ Users can refer to those lessons learnt when designing their own approaches using the guide.

Annex 3.1 - Examples of the value and utility of context analysis

CONNECT project teams in Ghana, Mozambique and Uganda found the CA guide, the process of conducting CA and the findings from CA valuable for informing CONNECT's overall strategy. Examples of the ways in which context analysis was valuable for the CONNECT project include:

Identifying strategic focus for the project: CONNECT project started with a very broad scope which is: to improve biodiversity information use in governments' decision-making processes in Ghana, Mozambique, and Uganda. But there are many possible government decision-making processes as well as many types of biodiversity information for the project to choose. It is simply not possible to do all within limited project budget and timeframe. CA helped project teams to first strategically select a thematic area to focus on: Ghana and Uganda chose to focus on agriculture sector while Mozambique chose to focus on licensing processes for environment, natural resources, and land use. It also helped project team to strategically select suitable biodiversity information product(s) CONNECT can help produce for the thematic area: e.g. economic evaluation of biodiversity's contribution for agriculture production; an online information platform that can collect/coordinate different stages of licensing processes and make biodiversity data available for all stages.

Identifying new areas of work and provided new tools for the project team: For example, in Uganda, project team learnt how to use interests/power matrix to devise a stakeholder engagement strategy. CA also revealed conflicts among existing laws and policies that project teams were not aware of before which then informed project strategies on how to use biodiversity information to inform governments' decisions and reduce those conflicts.

Building and strengthening stakeholder relationships: The participatory process of CA has provided opportunities for project team to actively engage key stakeholders and build/strengthen partnerships. A lot of new partnerships were identified or nurtured through interview process and workshops as part of CA process. Examples include: in Mozambique, strong partnership nurtured between MITADER and COMBO project and fishery department; In Ghana, deepened relationships with National Development Planning Commission and also built wider networks including those with the Ghana Statistical Services. In Uganda, strengthened relationship with NGOs to co-develop biodiversity hotspot map. Strengthened or new relationship built with key stakeholders allowed them to be more open to discuss difficult issues and trust each other to develop collaborative actions to improve use of biodiversity information in governments' decision-making processes.

Ensuring strong stakeholders' support for project strategies: CA's systematic analysis of political context in each country provided strong clear rational for project strategy proposed (e.g. thematic focus, biodiversity information product choices). In addition, key stakeholders are actively engaged

¹⁰ Further details on the CONNECT project are available at: www.connectbiodiversity.com/

throughout CA process. As a result, the final project strategy proposed based on CA has obtained wide stakeholder support even though their original interests may differ from CA findings: for example, in Uganda, many stakeholders were interested to pursue 'oil and gas' as the thematic focus given its huge impact on biodiversity. But through the CA process and analysis, they concluded that though the sector's impact on biodiversity is high, there is limited scope for CONNECT to influence those decisions within project timeline given that the sector has low dependency on biodiversity and the high power and low interests of the stakeholders in the oil and gas sector. Key stakeholders instead all supported agriculture as the focus for CONNECT because CA showed the sector's impact on biodiversity is high and those stakeholders' dependency and interests in biodiversity are also high.

Annex 3.2 - Effective ways to identify and engage key stakeholders

All CONNECT project teams and CA consultants find it is extremely important to identify and engage with the 'right' stakeholders to achieve the objectives of CA. The types of 'right' stakeholders vary in different stages of CA: for example, in CA interviews, consultants and project team usually need to engage a combination of technocrats, implementers and decision-makers who can provide different perspectives on different aspects of governments' decision-making processes; in some stakeholder workshops, project team need to engage key decision-makers and influencers so they can inform and support project strategies and mobilise other stakeholders to engage with the project. It can be challenging engaging the 'right' stakeholders especially those decision-makers. The CONNECT project teams and consultants find the following methods can help overcome the challenges:

1. **Building on past strong relationships and use those networks to link with new stakeholders:** project team and CA consultants' existing networks can complement each other and help mobilise and engage with a diverse range of stakeholders and expand stakeholder network for the project.
2. **Identifying champions who have convening power:** for example, in Uganda, the Office of the Prime Minister is highly supportive and helped mobilise stakeholders to participate in CA interviews, focused group discussions for CA and project workshops.

Annex 3.3 - Different participatory approaches adopted in CONNECT and lessons learnt

In-person interviews, workshops and focused group discussions with key informants or steering committee members are all very important aspects of a participatory CA process that can help build interests and nurture new relationships for CONNECT and build stronger stakeholder ownership of the CONNECT outputs. But it is also very important for the country teams to balance such participatory approach with project resource availability and timeframe: for example, in Uganda, project team organised Expert Working Groups (EWG) in addition to stakeholder interviews and workshops to support the development of CA. EWG is a multi-stakeholder group with representatives from biodiversity information providers and key decision-makers in the government. EWG was first tasked to meet regularly to conduct CA and produce CA findings. While such participatory approach more actively engaged key stakeholders in CA, it took twice as long to generate CA findings comparing to other countries where interviews and workshops are the main participatory approach used and delayed the progress of other project activities. In order to speed up progress, the country team then adopted a more interview and desk-research based approach with EWG meets less regularly but still involved in approving different versions of CA findings led by a CA consultant. The revised approach proved to be more efficient and still ensured key stakeholders are actively engaged.

Annex 3.4 - Lessons learnt from CONNECT on the importance of defining clear purpose of CA

In the CONNECT project, the purpose of CA and the utility of CA for each country team were not clarified and discussed with country teams in a participatory manner. While the general rationale of CA is explained clearly in the guidance document, it is important to recognise that what is written on the document or explained with examples to the country team and stakeholders won't necessarily translate directly into their understanding and ownership of the process and findings. As a result, CA was conducted mainly in a silo separated from other project activities. Producing CA reports became the main purpose while there were no clear plans to fully integrate the findings into other key project strategies. This resulted in missed opportunities to fully use CA findings: for example, use the stakeholders mapped and engagement strategy developed to inform communication strategy.

Reflecting upon the experiences from CONNECT, country project team should have been actively involved in articulating and identifying specific purposes of CA before the CA process started. Such clear purpose can then also inform a plan to integrate CA findings into overall project strategy and activities at the beginning of the CA process. See Stage 1 of the guide for more details.

Annex 3.5 - Lessons learnt on conducting country-level CA then focused CA for CONNECT project

All CONNECT country teams conducted country-level CA first in order to select a thematic focus for CONNECT and then conducted a focused CA for that thematic focus selected.

The advantage of this approach includes:

- A better overall understanding of political context which can serve as strong foundation for further focused analysis: Country-level analysis provides a good overview of the key structural factors, institutions and stakeholders for improving biodiversity information use in governments' decision-making in the country. Such broad overview then provides the overall context for the specific focus (e.g. a sector or specific decision-making process(es) selected by the project. The focused CA can then provide more in-depth insights based on the overall national context.
- Strong rationale for selecting the focus for the project: systematic analysis of the country context also provides strong rationale for the selection of the focus for the project and helped ensure wide stakeholder support for the choice. This is especially important when key stakeholders may have divergent interests and preference. Strong evidence gathered through CA can then help build consensus among those stakeholders.
- Two-tiered iterative approach of CA provided more opportunities to build trust and relationships with a wide range of stakeholders: in both country-level CA and focused CA, stakeholders were interviewed and engaged in workshops or/and focused group discussions. The tiered and iterative approaches provided continuous opportunities to actively engage key stakeholders. The participatory approach and continuous engagement with stakeholders helped gradually build trust, nurtured new relationships, strengthened existing relationships, and contributed to strong stakeholder buy-in and support for the project (see [Annex 3.1](#) for more details).

The disadvantages of such approach include:

- Difficulty in conducting national-level CA: the very broad focus means that there are a lot of stakeholders and decision-making processes to map. CA is then more general, take a long-time to conduct and it is very difficult to pinpoint targeted action points beyond informing the choices of thematic focus.

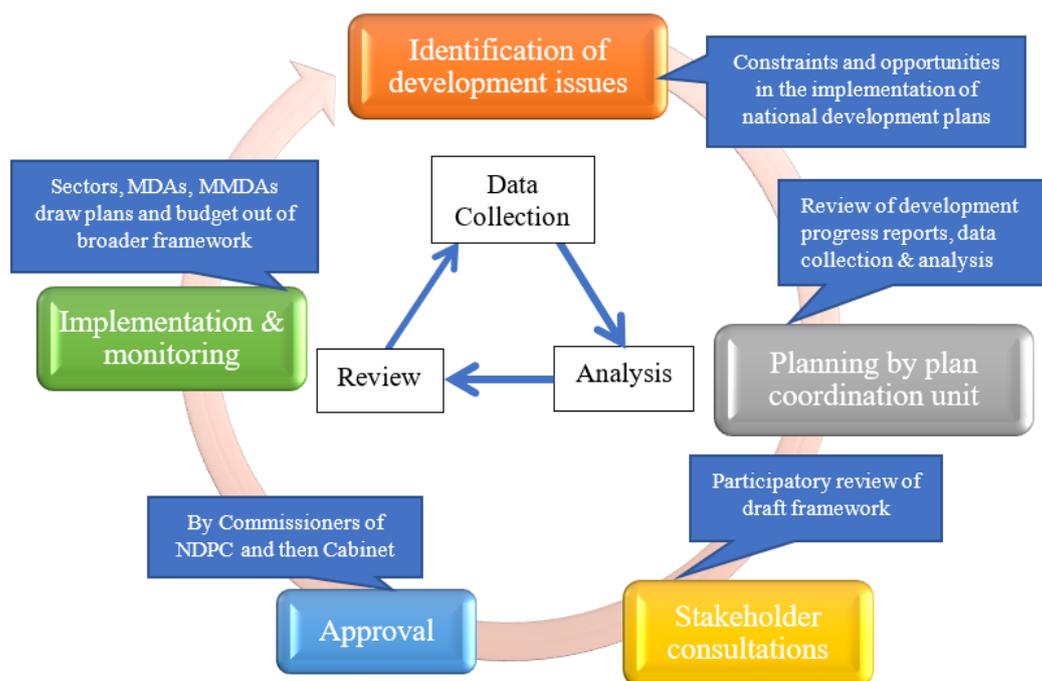
- Time and resource consuming: the two tiered and iterative approach is time consuming and resource intensive. It requires more resources for participatory approach, for consultant to support the process and more time to engage stakeholders properly to generate information for both the country level CA and focused CA.

Users of the guide need to balance the pros and cons of such approach in choosing the best approach for them to conduct CA based on project resource limitations (for more details see Stage 1).

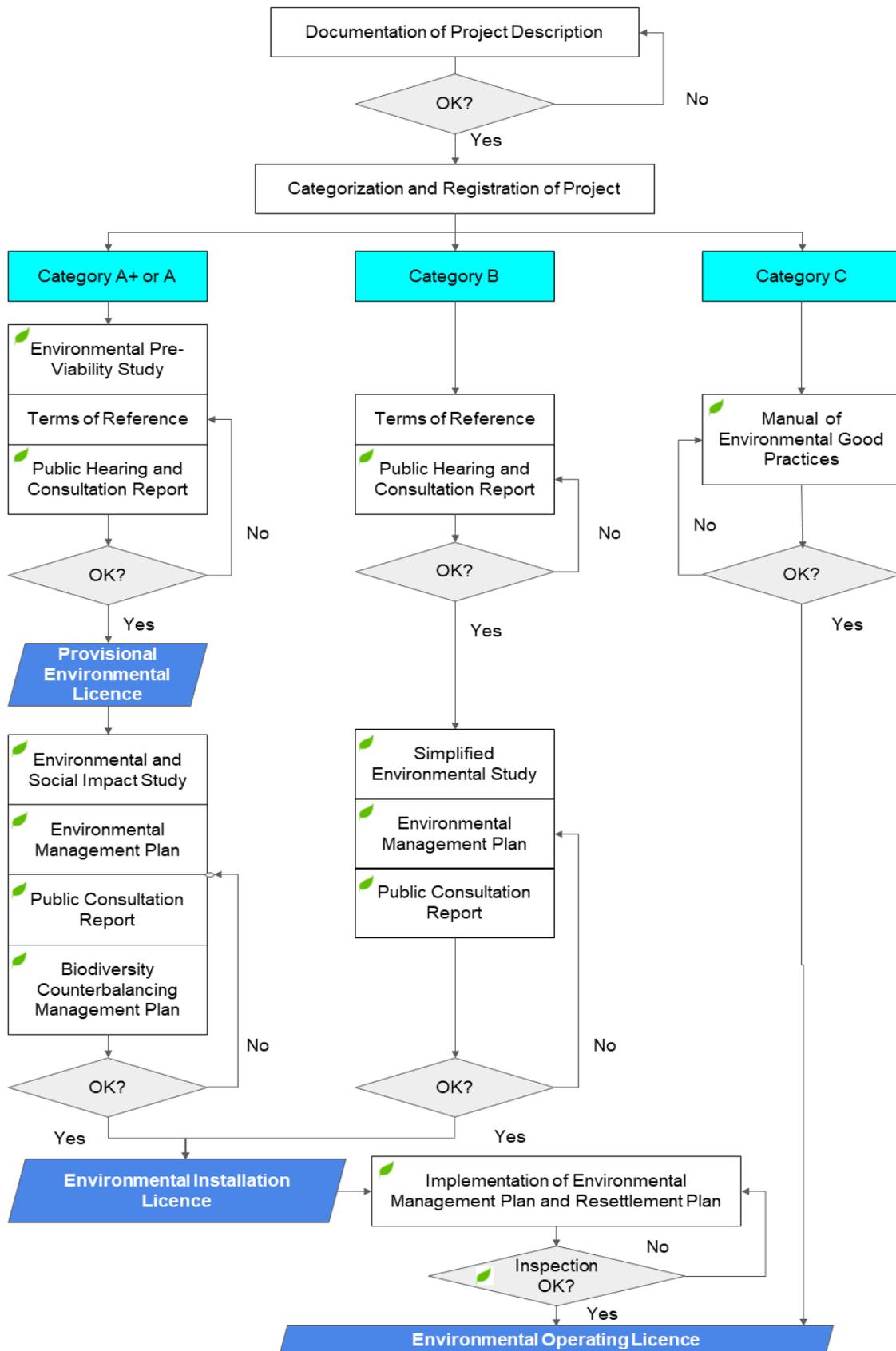
Annex 3.6 - Examples of decision-tree and decision-cycle produced for CONNECT project

The following decision-cycle and decision-tree was produced and included in the final CA findings in the CONNECT project. It provides users with examples of how to use graphics to illustrate key decision-making processes when conducting Stage 3: Step 2.

Decision-cycle: Example from Ghana on process of National Development Planning led by National Development Planning Commission



Decision-tree: Example from Mozambique on the process of Environment Impact Assessment to obtain environmental license



Annex 3.7 - Combining CA criteria and technical criteria to select biodiversity information products

The selection of biodiversity information will not only depend on the political context analysed under this guide but also technical issues: for example, data availability and quality. In addition to CA, CONNECT project also conducted biodiversity information landscape analysis which:

- identifies existing type of biodiversity information and linkages between local, national and international biodiversity information
- describes how the information is collected, collated, managed and their accessibility and availability
- analyses the current capacity of biodiversity information providers to respond to decision-makers' demand for information as well as the current capacity for decision-makers to use biodiversity information
- identifies the salient, credible and legitimate requirements from decision-makers for biodiversity information

The option table below is then developed and guide country teams to select biodiversity information to improve/develop based on both CA findings (see more details in Stage 4 and [Annex 1.10](#)) and biodiversity information landscape analysis:

	Criteria	Questions asked for each criterion
Demand	Formal information requirements	Is the biodiversity information required by law and does it directly [formally?] support decision-making processes? If so, which laws and processes? Is the biodiversity information relevant to key policy targets? If so, which targets?
	Respond to user's demand	Does the biodiversity information respond to identified users' interests (beyond the formal requirements)?
	Needed to assure long-term sustainability	Is the biodiversity information needed to ensure the outcomes of the decision-making processes are sustainable and will reduce biodiversity loss and/or stakeholders' vulnerability to biodiversity loss? If so, how? E.g. Does it provide better understanding of current biodiversity status and risks/drivers related to biodiversity loss?
	Directly support decision-making processes	Does the biodiversity information target important governments' decision-making process(es)? If so, which ones? Are there any clear entry points to link the product with the decision-making processes? What are those entry points? (e.g. upcoming opportunities to input into different stages of decision-making processes)
	Catalyses a critical path	Does this biodiversity information energise, encourage or accelerate existing mainstreaming efforts?
	Responding to key project barriers and opportunities	Does the biodiversity information respond to other persistent barriers and opportunities identified for the project? How?
Supply of data	Relevant to intended audience	Is the product easily understandable to the intended audience? E.g. aligned with a current information system
	Scientifically robust	are the data and information scientifically robust? E.g. peer reviewed methodology, verifiable data source
	Nationally accepted	Is the product/ underlying data nationally accepted? E.g. data verified by the National Statistics Office
	Responsive to change	Can the product be updated at appropriate timescales? Does the product communicate information at the appropriate timescales?

	Geographic scale	Are the underlying data suitable mapped at the scale appropriate to draw reliable conclusions? Is the resolution of the data too coarse or too detailed?
	Availability/ affordability of information	Are the data freely available? What is the cost of acquisition and update of such data
Sustainability	Data and capacity available	The data exists and capacity exists to develop and use the product
	Financing	The data exists and capacity exists to develop and use the product

Annex 3.8 - Importance of close collaborations between CA consultant and project team

In CONNECT, all country teams employed CA consultant to support the team to conduct CA. The process of CA was largely led by consultants with limited inputs and engagement with the country team. The consultant provides CA expertise and can bring in fresh perspectives, new stakeholder networks and help project team overcome internal bias and barriers. But the lack of proactive engagement from country team in CA has the following drawbacks:

- Missed opportunities to integrate CA findings into project strategies: project team may not have good knowledge of how the findings are generated and may also omit inclusion of recommendations of CA into other key project activities. For example, in CONNECT, there was a lack of integration of CA findings into the project communication strategy which could have built on the stakeholder analysis of CA.
- Missed opportunity to strengthen capacity of understanding political context within the project team so CA can be done iteratively and beyond the project timeline: team members may have various levels of understanding of political context and how to systematically map and understand political context. Some may be more technically focused. CA analysis could have helped strengthened project team's ability to gain more comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the political context for improving biodiversity use. If project's implementation team's capacity to understand CA issues and conduct CA is improved, they are also more likely to use and adapt project strategies throughout the project timeline based on changing political context.

Experiences from CONNECT also points to the importance of active involvement of project team throughout the CA processes and two specific actions that could help nurture close collaborations between CA consultant and project team:

- Clarify CA purposes and how the results will be used to complement and feed into other project activities at the beginning: before starting CA, project teams should lead the process to clarify the specific purposes of CA for the project that address their needs/interests and identify a plan to integrate CA findings into project strategies. See more details in Stage 1 of the guide and [Annex 3.4](#). The clear purposes will help strengthen project team's ownership of CA process and help them ensure there are specific actions/plans to use and adapt CA findings throughout the project.
- Establish ways of working with CA consultant that can ensure close collaboration: based on the purposes defined, country team should design and establish ways of working with the consultant before starting the CA process to ensure close collaborations throughout the

project. For example, in Mozambique, CA consultants continue to engage with and support the project team beyond producing a report summarising CA findings. The long-term engagement between the project team and CA consultant gave more opportunities for the consultant to help strengthen understanding of CA and its findings within project team and work closely with the project team to ensure integration of CA findings into project strategy and activities. CA consultant can also have opportunities to support country team to take an iterative approach for CA and adapt CA findings when new opportunities/barriers emerge.

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The content of this guidance document does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Global Environment Facility, UN Environment Programme, or partner organisations.

Development that causes biodiversity degradation and is ignorant of biodiversity's benefits, is unsustainable. Decades of bad development decisions have created a 'nature emergency'. There are growing demands for biodiversity information to be far better integrated in government decision-making. This guide responds to those demands.

The guide offers an iterative four-stage approach to understanding the all-important political, institutional and stakeholder context in which decisions are made. Armed with the resulting 'context analysis', readers will be able to create a much more effective information strategy – offering the right biodiversity information to the right decision-making processes, in the right forms, at the right times.

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