



People in Nature

An assessment framework to aid project development through an understanding of community uses of biodiversity

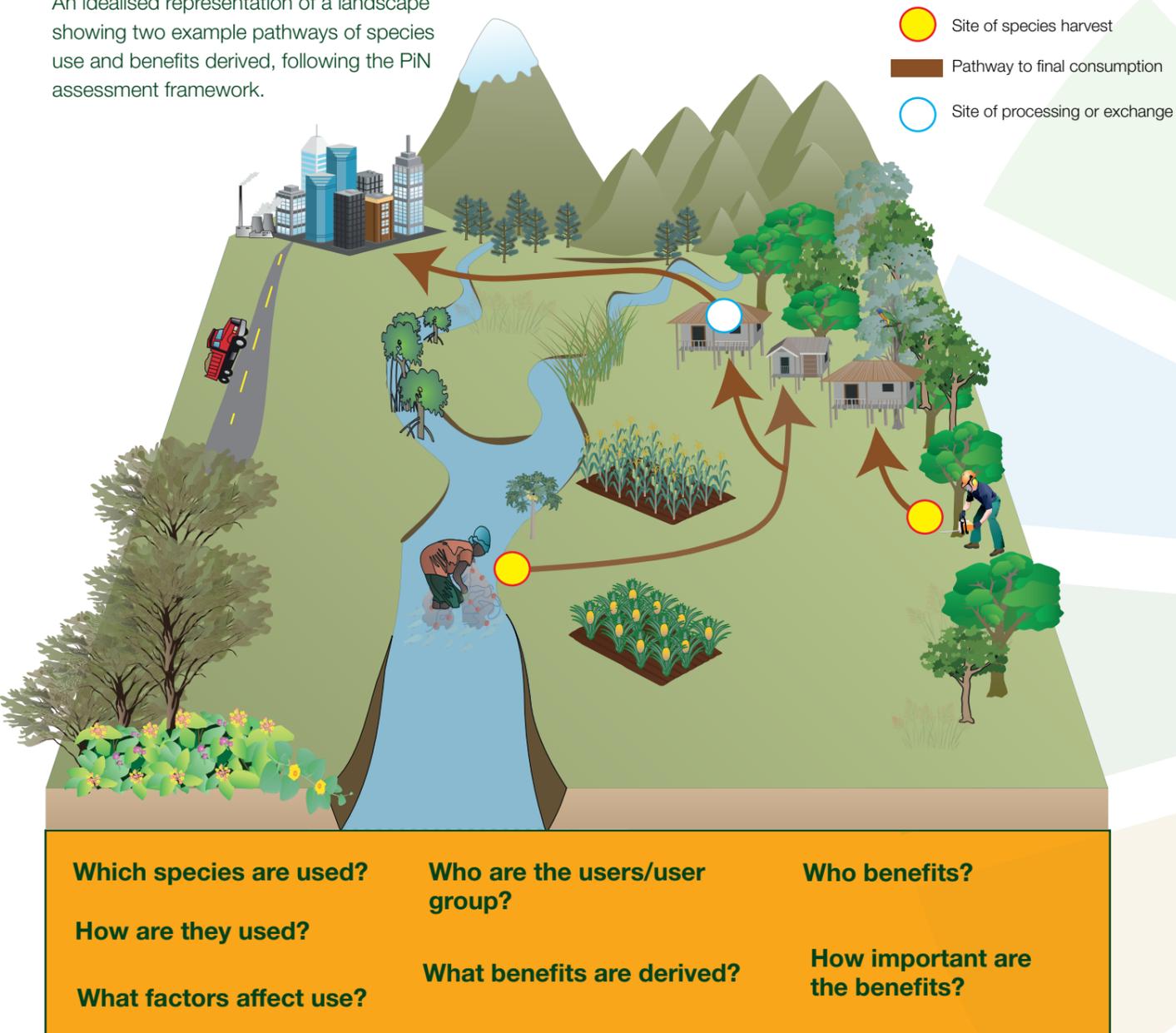
People in Nature (PiN) assessments provide a systematic approach to: identify and document the value and uses (both material and cultural) of biodiversity; identify where in the landscape the benefits can be found; and understand how these benefits are realised and distributed.

PiN assessments help decision-makers think through the implications of proposed projects and activities, and to identify opportunities for change – thereby helping to mitigate or minimise a project's negative impacts and strengthen positive impacts.

The ultimate goal of PiN assessments is to facilitate local priorities and choices about projects and activities, and to equip indigenous peoples and local communities to exercise and benefit from their rights to these resources.

The assessment process also fits within IUCN's commitment to rights-based approaches and helps to meet free, prior and informed consent obligations.

An idealised representation of a landscape showing two example pathways of species use and benefits derived, following the PiN assessment framework.



Icons by University of Maryland Integration and Application Network

The figure provides an idealised representation of the linkages between biodiversity and its use at a single point in time. The diversity of ecosystems in the landscape (e.g. forest, marsh, agricultural fields, gardens) provides opportunities for people to alter livelihood activities as a response to change. These ecosystems are modified by human use to differing degrees, and can move along a modification continuum across time.

The landscape contains a diversity of 'wild' species and non-wild or domesticated varieties that farmers reproduce or which are brought in from outside the system.

Harvested species that are not directly consumed are processed into secondary products, which can be consumed or exchanged. These exchanges may take place within or outside of the territory. Value chains for wild and cultivated species link the system within a territory to other communities at regional, national or international levels.

Though not directly represented in the figure, PiN assessments explicitly identify who is deriving benefits at each stage of use, in what form any benefits are realised, and how they are distributed. This includes details about user groups, the types of benefits derived and their relative importance.

How PiN aids project managers

PiN assessments build a dynamic picture of:

- which biodiversity is used or could be used, and where these uses occur in the landscape;
- the different phases or types of use, i.e. value chains;
- factors that influence how biodiversity is used;
- who the users and/or user groups are (individuals and collectives);
- the contribution of biodiversity to the lives and livelihoods of individuals, households and communities at the assessment site; and
- the relative importance of biodiversity use compared to other livelihood activities.

The assessment process generates information that is useful for:

- constructing ecological and livelihood baselines at site (secondary and primary);
- informing priority-setting for activities to address needs of specific (e.g. critically endangered) species or ecosystems;
- informing priority-setting for activities to be decided with local communities to maximise positive livelihood outcomes and mitigate or minimise negative livelihood outcomes; and
- designing project monitoring and evaluation systems for ecological and livelihood outcomes.

Specifically for IUCN, the PiN assessment has the potential to inform or support:

- the Restoration Opportunities Assessment Methodology (ROAM) assessments;
- the Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS); and
- the Global Standard for Nature-based Solutions.

The participatory principle of the assessment process can facilitate:

- necessary free, prior and informed consent processes and facilitate ethical engagement and partnership building with communities; and
- dialogue and consultations with other local stakeholders.

PiN workflow and framework

PiN assessments may be most useful at the project design phase, but can be incorporated at any stage of a project as it adapts to new circumstances. There are three sequential phases in the workflow:

- 1 an interdisciplinary situation analysis combined with validation workshops;
- 2 two modules of primary data collection and cultural narratives (if these are necessary for site-level project design or monitoring and evaluation); and
- 3 application of the knowledge generated for site-level project design, such as management decisions and monitoring, policy influencing, enterprise development.

These three phases use the PiN framework to provide the structure for understanding the ways biodiversity is used at a site and how it contributes to the livelihoods and well-being of individuals, households and communities. It also provides an understanding of how users are affected differentially (e.g. depending on age, gender or wealth). A landscape approach is applied for tracing uses and the distribution of benefits through social systems and along the value chain.

PiN assessments start by examining the material use of species, and focus on the domains of food and nutrition, health and medicine, energy, shelter, income, ceremony and trade, and on symbolic interrelationships. Examining both material and cultural uses of biodiversity recognises that nature is important not just for economics, but also contributes to identity and subjective dimensions of well-being.

Assessments look at current species use, historical uses, and uses within similar environments and/or among similar cultural groups. This helps to identify high impact uses, and where there may be potential for species to contribute to livelihoods by resuming historical uses, adopting or adapting uses at similar sites or by other groups, or via creative and innovative new uses.

Post-COVID project planning

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, many rural areas will have experienced significant changes in population and employment and income-generating opportunities. Changes may also be apparent in land and resource use patterns as people use biodiversity as a reservoir to meet food, income and other needs. PiN can contribute to post-COVID project planning because biodiversity remains critical for day to day needs of rural and indigenous communities.

PiN helps guide communities and supporting organisations to better respond to changes by identifying opportunities and constraints to sustainable species use and livelihood improvement by facilitating the prioritisation of desired and sustainable activities.

New management strategies will be critical to ensure sustainable biodiversity use while simultaneously helping to maintain and improve local livelihoods. PiN delivers a systematic approach to identify the interrelationships between people and nature to ensure these can continue into the future.



INTERNATIONAL UNION
FOR CONSERVATION OF NATURE

Rue Mauverney 28
1196 Gland, Switzerland
Tel: +41 22 999 0000
Fax: +41 22 999 0002
www.iucn.org

Start a conversation with
People in Nature by reaching
out to IUCN

pin@iucn.org