

Positive and Resilient Landscape Futures – The role of governance and justice

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Dialogue Matters 



About

Achieving bold and ambitious landscape futures means working in new ways with others who care about, use, live, and work in the landscape.

This summary provides evidence-based insights and recommendations about what works.

It is based on research carried out by leading academics and stakeholder participation practitioners.

The focus is on ideas and practices to inspire – a brief overview of the research evidence is at the back.

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Vision: deciding with not for



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4. Systems Thinking

5. Reflective Learning



Pathway



Evidence



An aerial photograph of a lush green valley. The landscape features rolling hills, dense forests, and large agricultural fields with visible furrows. A river or stream flows through the valley. The sky is a clear, pale blue. The overall scene is peaceful and idyllic, representing a vision of a sustainable future.

A vision for the future

Vision: positive resilient outcomes



A group of leading national landscape experts think resilient landscape futures will be:

Regenerative, thriving, adaptive

Thriving for 'more than humans' too

Enable a diversity of belonging

Vision: deciding with not for



The same landscape experts think that for landscape decision making to be transformative, it should:



Share power to decide and shape the future with many different kinds of people and perspectives. This includes young people having real influence and hearing ‘beyond human’ voices



Embrace different cultural visions, ways of knowing, experiences, feelings, arts, stories, as well as science



Recognise the intrinsic value of landscape and nature - for their own sake - not narrowing understanding to ecosystem services and how nature serves human interests



Do Systems Thinking so solutions are wise, integrated & ethical

An aerial photograph of a rural landscape. On the left, a steep, forested hillside slopes down towards a valley. The valley floor is dominated by large, rectangular green agricultural fields, some showing distinct rows and tracks. A narrow, winding road or path cuts through the fields on the right side. In the background, more rolling hills and a small bridge over a stream are visible under a clear, bright sky. The overall scene is peaceful and scenic.

Best Practice

What characterises best practice?

Best practice includes:

- 1) **Regenerative governance group** at the core
- 2) **Co-design and co-delivery** ethos
- 3) **Procedural justice** in deciding landscape change
- 4) **Systems Thinking** woven in
- 5) **Reflective learning** to stay aligned to values and ethos

Each is explained more below.





1. Regenerative Governance




Regenerative Governance Group at the core

The idea of taking a regenerative approach to nature, farming and soils is now familiar



But what about a regenerative approach to the governance culture?



An approach focused on restoring healthy relationships within teams, with management, and with communities and other stakeholders.

Principles of Regenerative Governance

Here are some guiding principles for the core governance group:





2. Co-design & Co-delivery



Co-design and Co-delivery ethos

”
“

Working together with diverse others, as equals, to share resources, power and responsibility to both plan and implement change... and share and enjoy the benefits.

D. Pound, 2016





3. Procedural Justice



What is procedural justice in deciding landscape change?

- New to the environment is the phrase **Procedural Justice**.
- To be regarded as ‘procedurally just’ the process needs to have certain characteristics¹ – and goes well beyond mere engagement and consulting



Transparent, accountable, neutral, trustworthy process

A wide variety of people with different perspectives have agency, voice, and share in decisions as equals

A culture of mutual respect

Balanced inclusion for legitimacy and to integrate knowledge systems

Unbiased neutral process design & facilitation

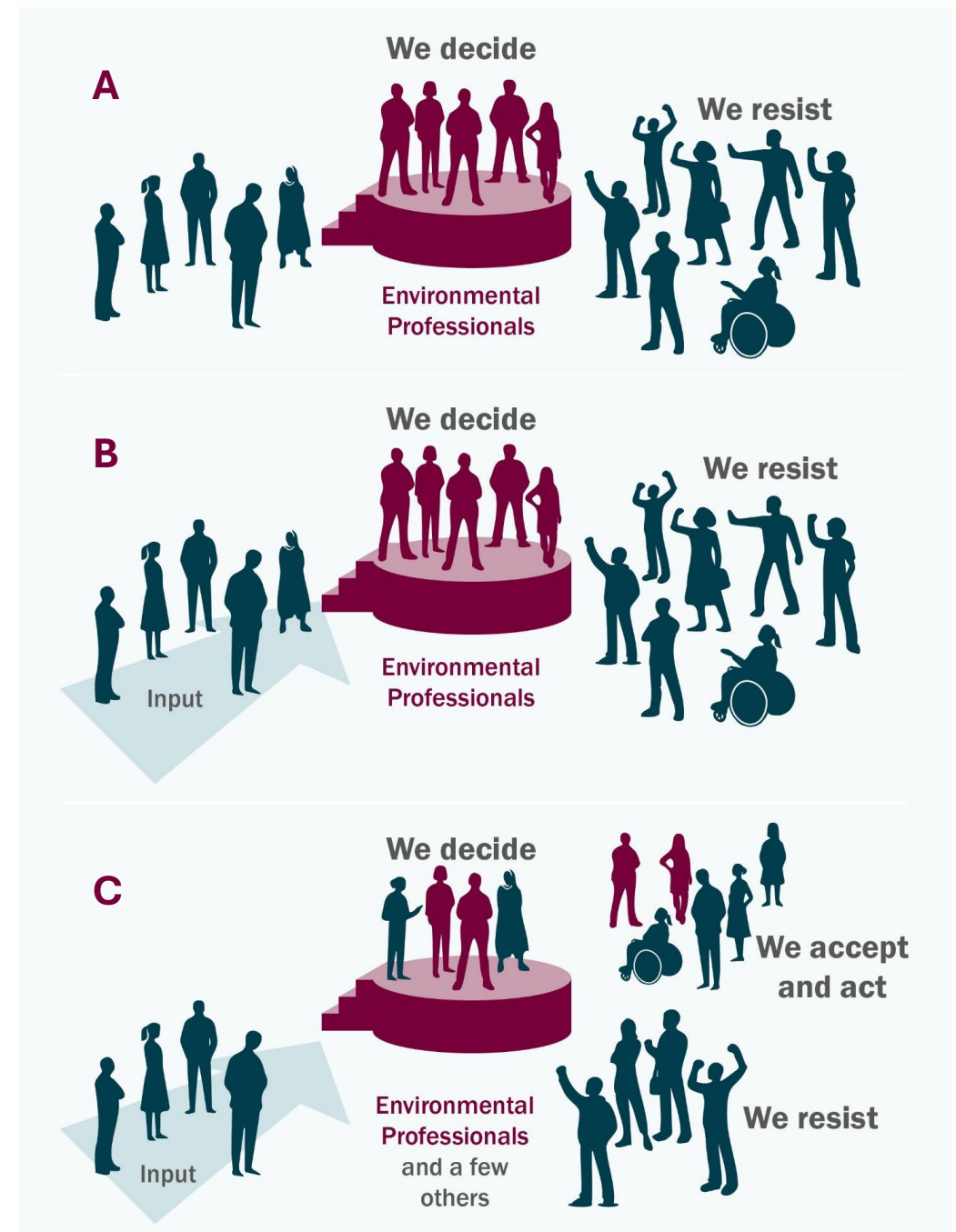
Deliberative & principled negotiation (seeking win/wins and building on what is agreed about)

Avoid making decisions for others in these ways

Typically, environmentalists make decisions about landscapes involving others to various extents.

A, B and C are all ways of making decisions for others. They are all forms of ‘power over’ rather than ‘power with’.

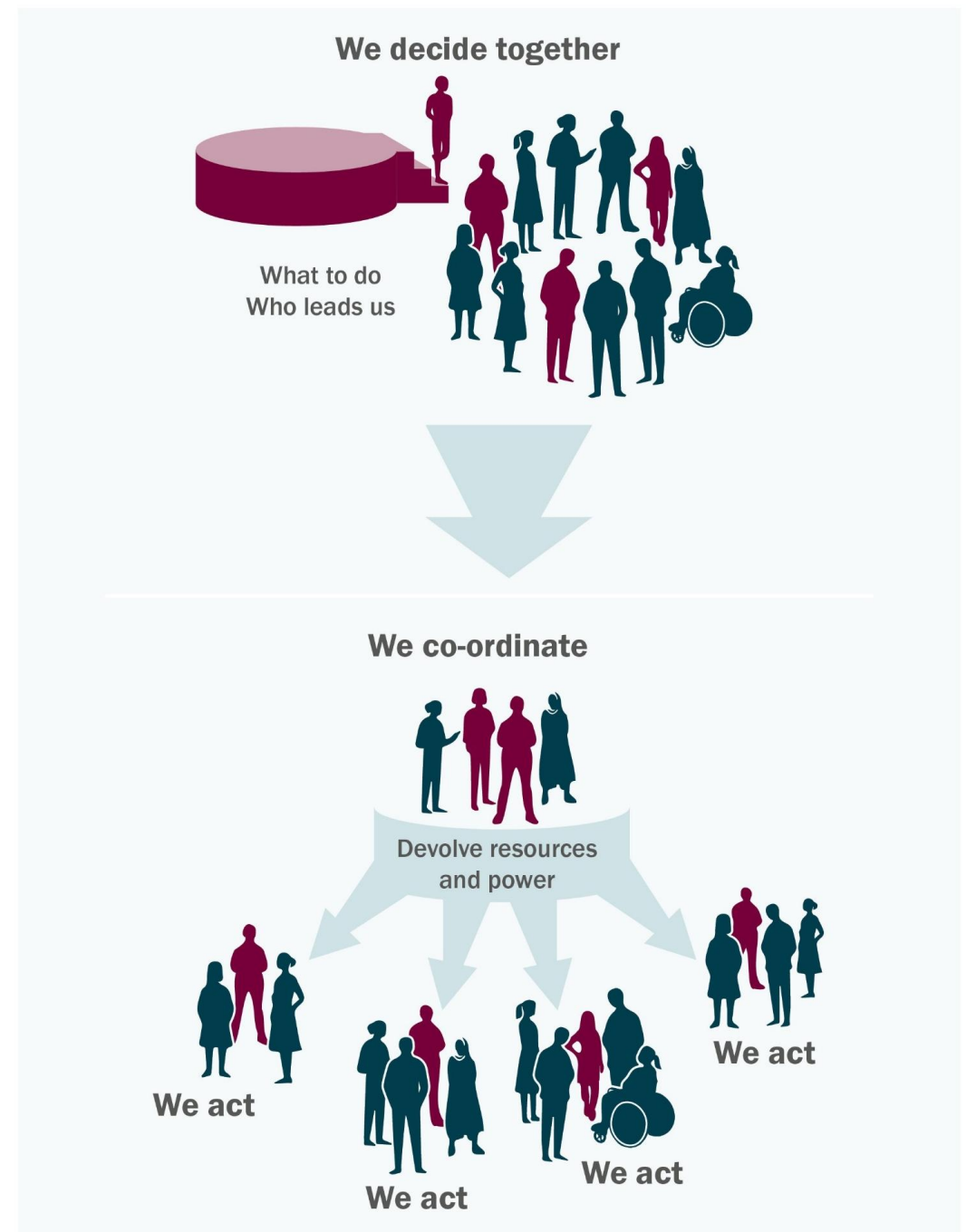
- A:** Environmentalists make all the decisions on their own
- B:** Environmentalists carry out engagement to gather input and opinions to inform their own decisions
- C:** Environmentalists involve a few other perspectives in the decision making.



Shift to making decisions *with* others

Work as equals with a rich mix of people with different values, ways of knowing, concerns, hopes, and aspirations.

This reaps dividends in better environmental outputs and outcomes.



Why does making decisions with others make a difference?

Wise decisions result from diverse knowledges

Hannah Critchlow (2022) *Joined up thinking – the science of collective intelligence*

People are more open-minded to other peoples' points of views when they believe they will need to explain themselves to diverse others

Samuelson D. & Church I. (2015)
and Mercier et al. (2017)

People are more willing to accept outcomes that are not their own first preference if they think the process has been legitimate

National Research Council (2008) *Public Participation in Environmental Assessment and Decision Making*

People are more creative in a diverse setting (provided they feel it is safe to communicate)

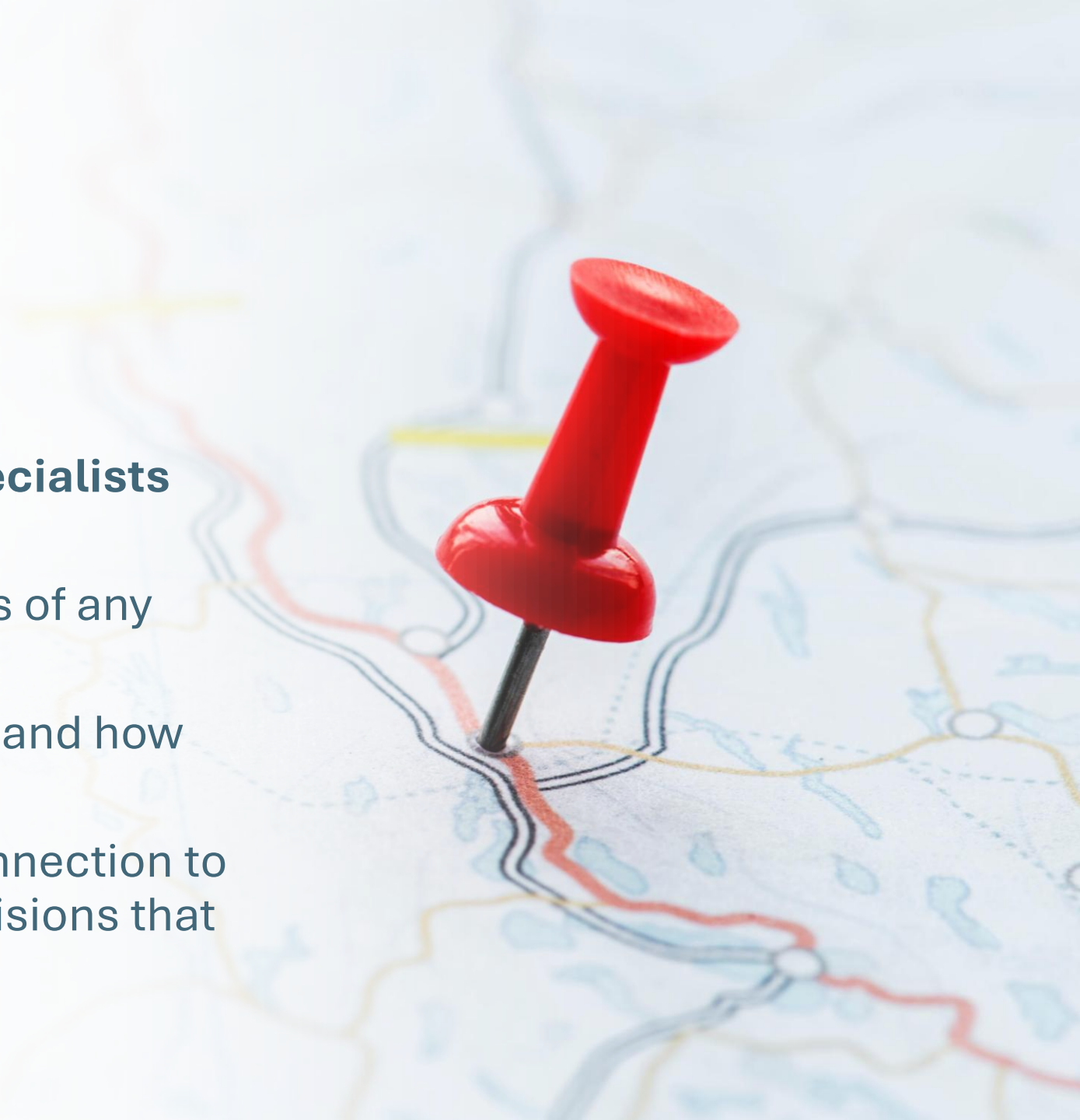
David Robson (2020) *The Intelligence Trap*



Also...

Distance between environmental specialists and a particular place brings²:

- Different views of the risk and rewards of any change
- Less detailed knowledge of the place and how people use and experience it
- Less emotional, spiritual, cultural connection to place so at greater risk of making decisions that bring insensitive change



Who to involve in the process of deciding landscape change


Once the process is designed to be 'procedurally just', who takes part matters...

Broaden out the decision group to be inclusive and balanced

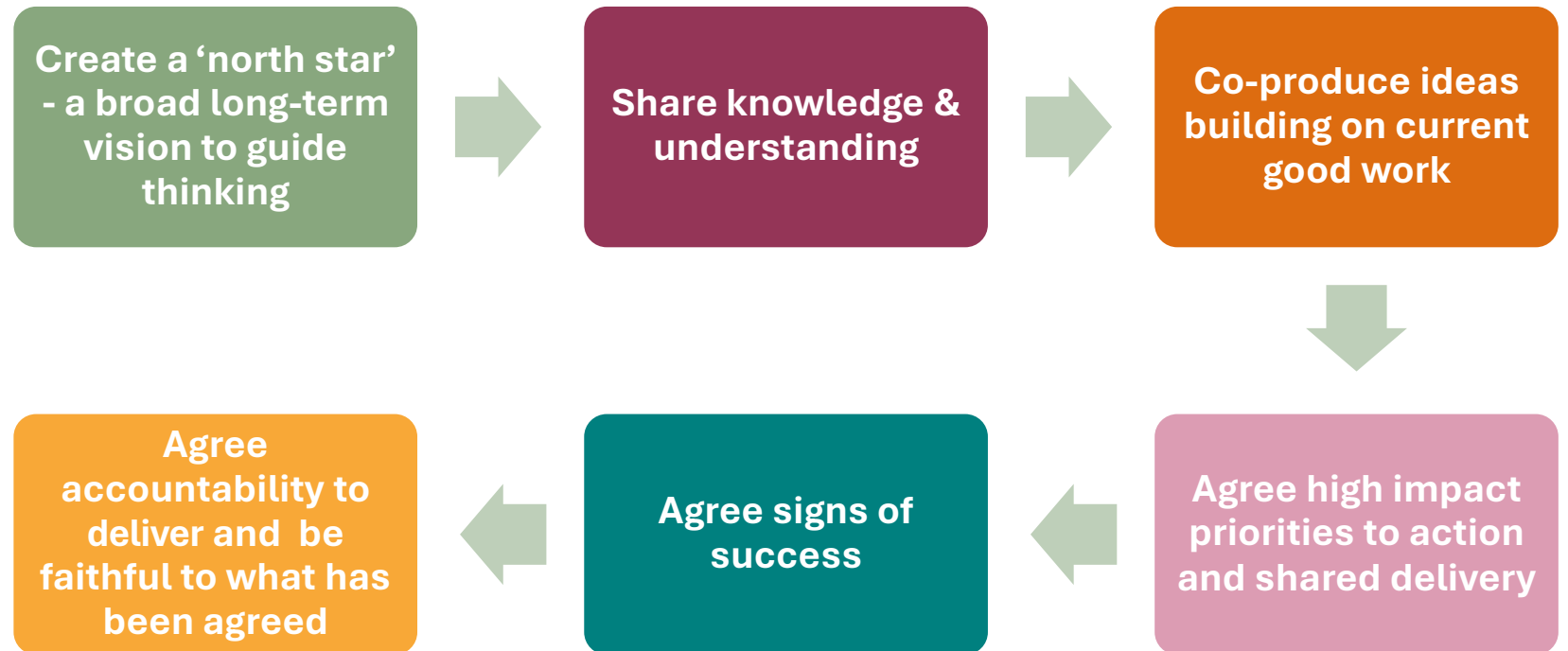
40 to 60 people are typically needed to deliberate and decide holistic landscape change

This requires specialist process designers and facilitators who know how to help people build agreement

Process of deliberative decision making

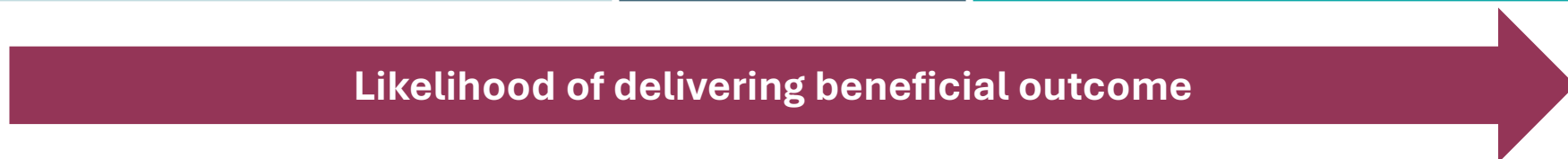



Best practice is to enable a group with diverse perspectives (about 40 to 60 people) to **broaden out the discussion and narrow down to action** using interactive techniques to share ideas and deliberate. This broaden-narrow pattern is achieved in a sequence of 2-4 workshops, depending on the topic complexity



Conditions for success

Challenging	Context	Conducive
Ad hoc procedures and process	Design	Designed
Ad hoc representation	Participants	Systematic representation
Top down	Power	Power sharing
Poorly matched to spatial scales	Scalar Fit	Well matched to spatial scales
Late involvement	Temporal fit	Early-stage involvement when options are open
Hierarchical	Underpinning governance	Regenerative governance





4. Systems Thinking



Systems Thinking woven in

1

Focus on the holistic system, not only the individual parts

2

Look at how the system behaves and functions over time

3

Look for causal links and how they function:

- Vicious (things get worse and worse)
- Virtuous (things get better and better)
- Stabilising (stops things from getting worse)
- Stagnating (stops things from getting better)

Systems Thinking



Understanding the system connections, patterns, and functions so that intervention points are smarter and cause positive ripple effects



5. Reflective Learning



Reflective learning to stay aligned to values and ethos

A process of continual reflection and learning about what is being done:



Is it aligned with agreed ethics, principles and practices?



What can be learned and improved?

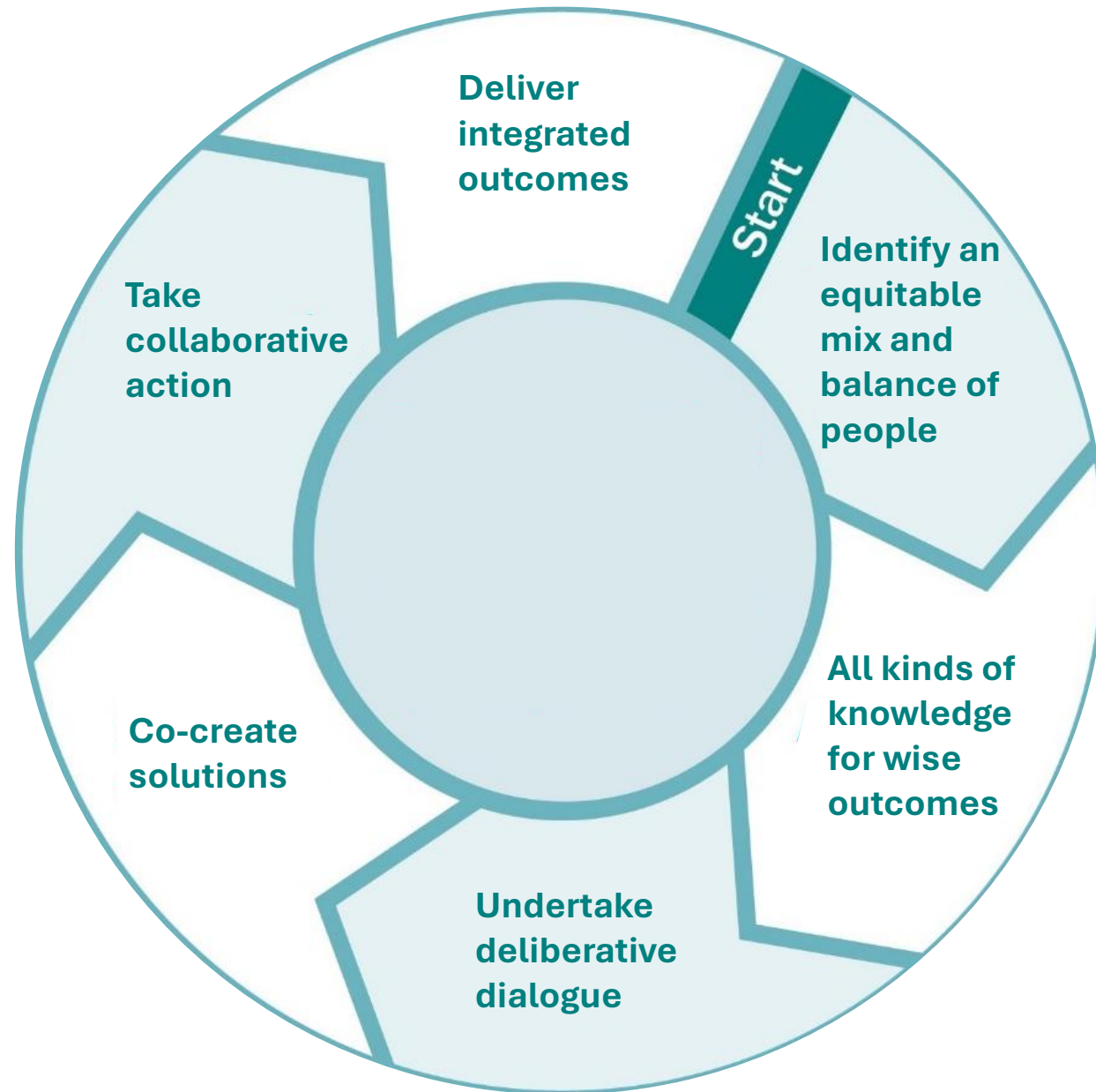


Pathway





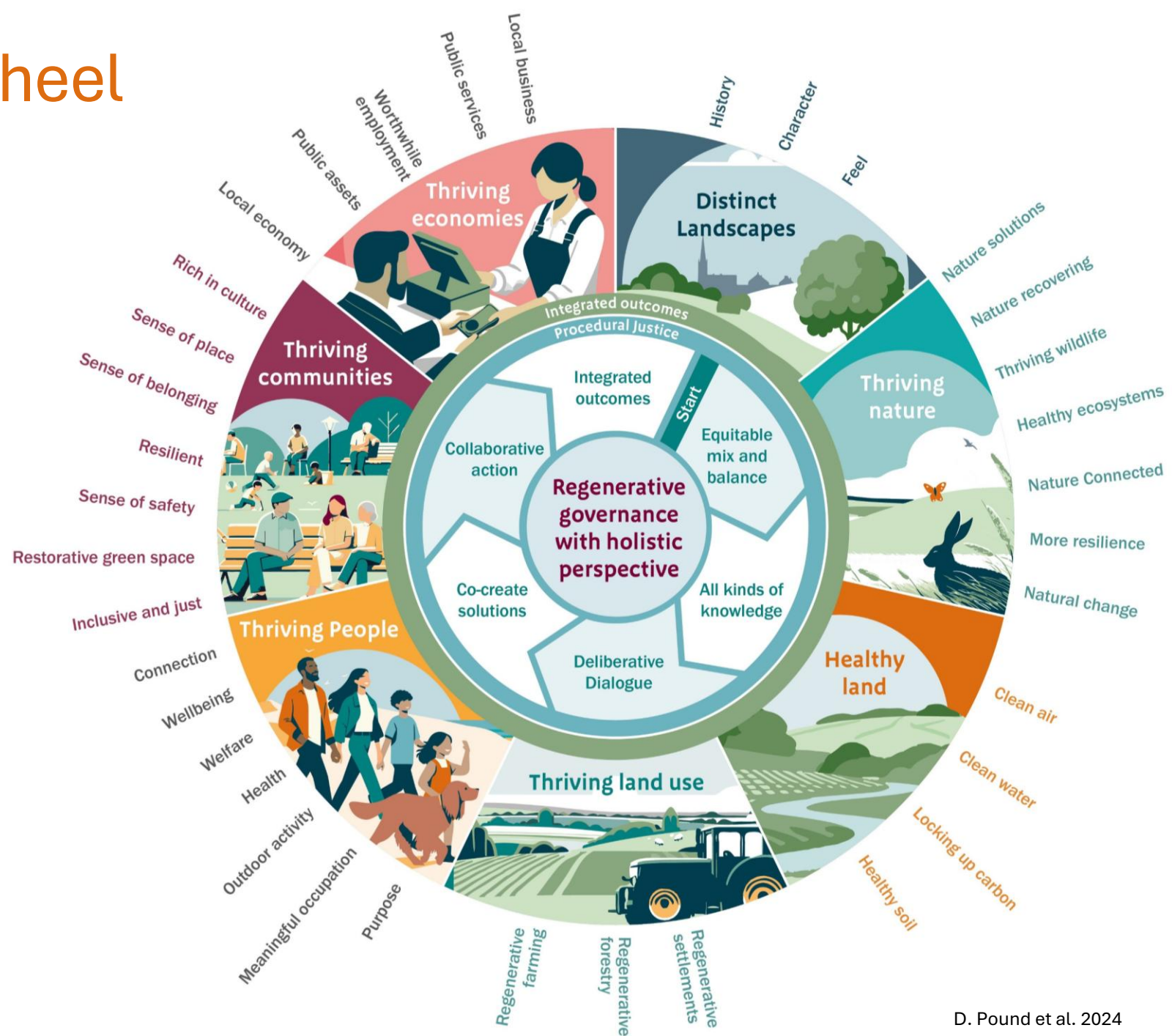
The pathway to positive, just, resilient Landscape Futures



Landscape Futures Wheel – tying it all together

Positive, just, resilient Landscape Futures

- Regenerative governance at the heart
- Procedurally just approach to change
- Follows Best Practice principles
- Multiple integrated outcomes enjoyed by all



An aerial photograph of a rural landscape. On the left, a steep, forested hillside slopes down towards a valley. The valley floor is dominated by large, rectangular green agricultural fields, some with visible furrows. A narrow, winding road or path cuts through the fields. In the background, more rolling hills and a small bridge over a stream are visible under a clear, bright sky. The overall scene is peaceful and scenic.

Evidence

Evidence



The research involved:

- 33 case studies
- 13 landscape specialists at a workshop
- Systematic literature review of 30 papers (by CCRI)
- Academic and practitioner literature

Case Studies



- 21 took a sectoral approach
- 4 had full co-design and co-delivery
- 5 took a mixed approach (started with co-design, but responsibility for implementation reverted to environmental professionals)
- Many cases made claims of co-creation but there was not always evidence of this in practice
- Some cases sought to deliver multi-benefit outcomes, but most did not