



# Political Economy Analysis (PEA): Your Key to Navigating Environmental Governance Challenges

Launch of the NaturaConnect Learning Platform PEA Module

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Online, 10 April 2025, 14.30-15.30 CEST





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# Mentimeter

## Results

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*Scale 1-5 of how much you know about Political Economy Analysis*



Join at menti.com | use code 31019060

*What's the first word that comes to mind when you hear "Political Economy Analysis?"*

15 responses

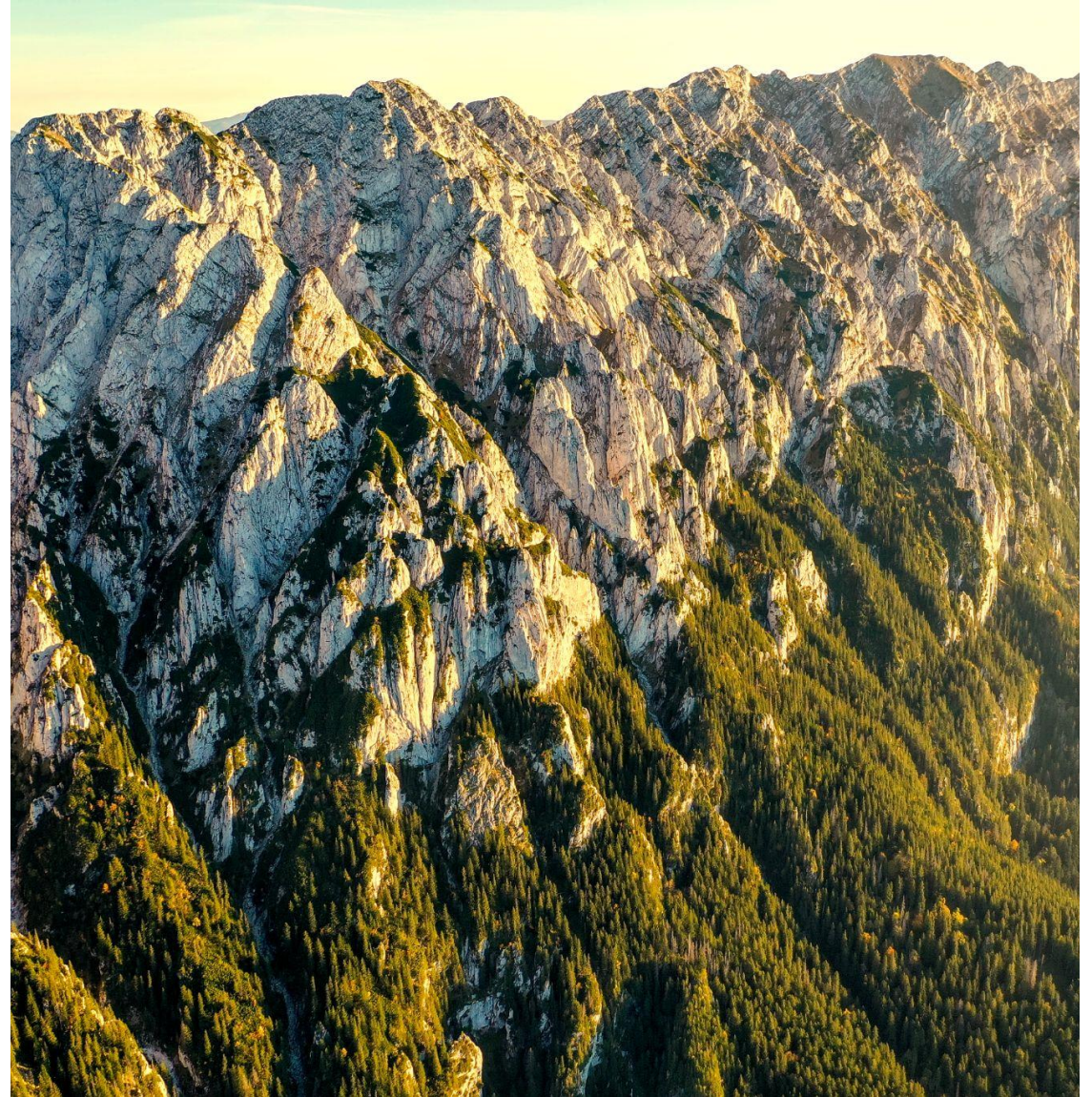
A word cloud of responses for Political Economy Analysis. The words are arranged in a circular pattern, with some words appearing more frequently than others. The words include: public policy, political bias, power dynamics, time taking, complex, stakeholders, policy-making, influence, strategy, power and politics, complexity, electorate, helpful, governance, and power.



# Content

## PEA - Political Economy Analysis

- What is PEA?
- What is PEA used for?
  - Main applications
  - PEA in conservation
- Examples and lessons learnt
  - WWF International
  - The Danube-Carpathian region
- Where can you find the module?



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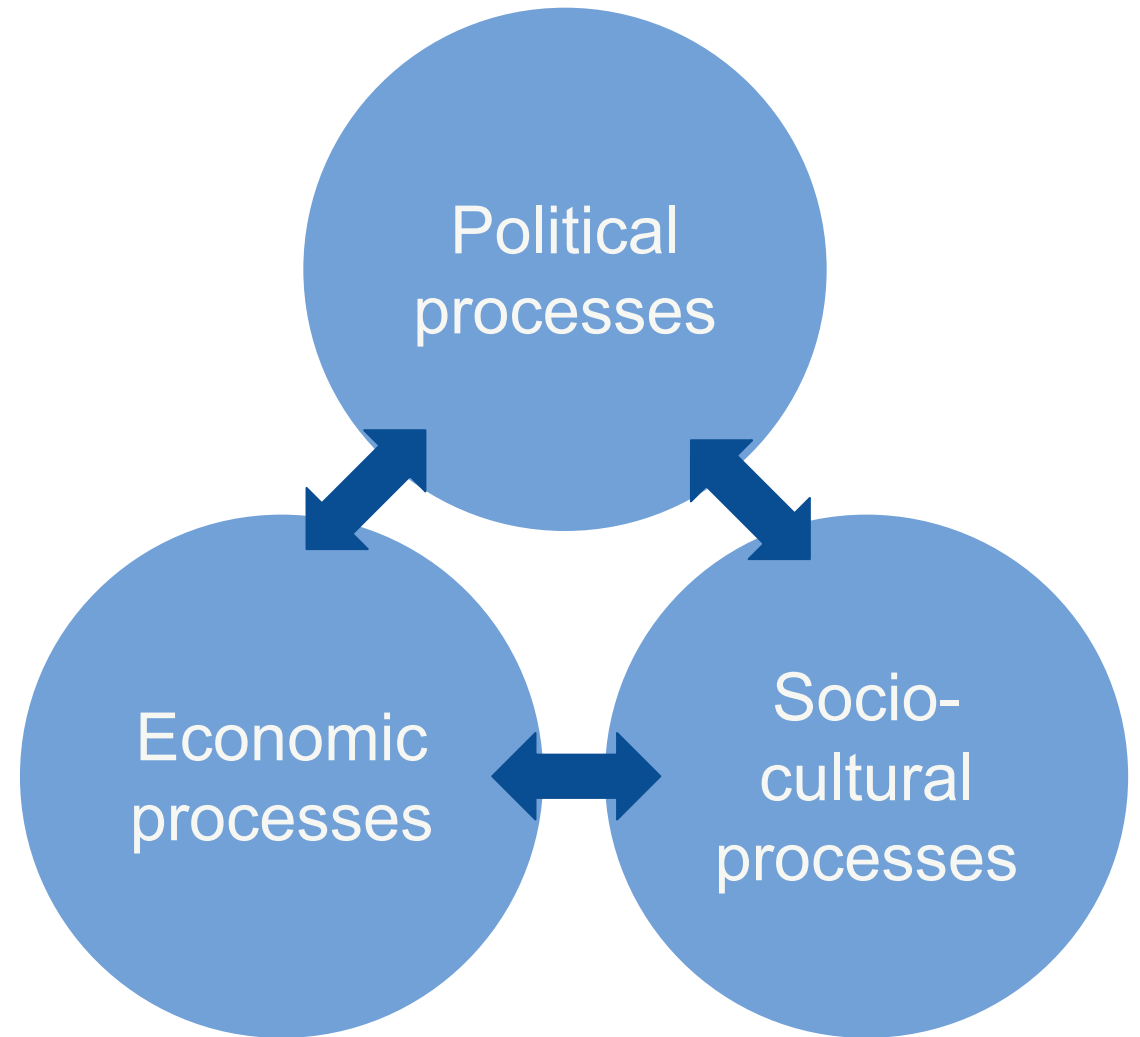


# What is PEA?

**Applied Political Economy Analysis (PEA)** is your go-to toolkit for making sense of the bigger picture.

Applied PEA dives into the **power dynamics** behind change.

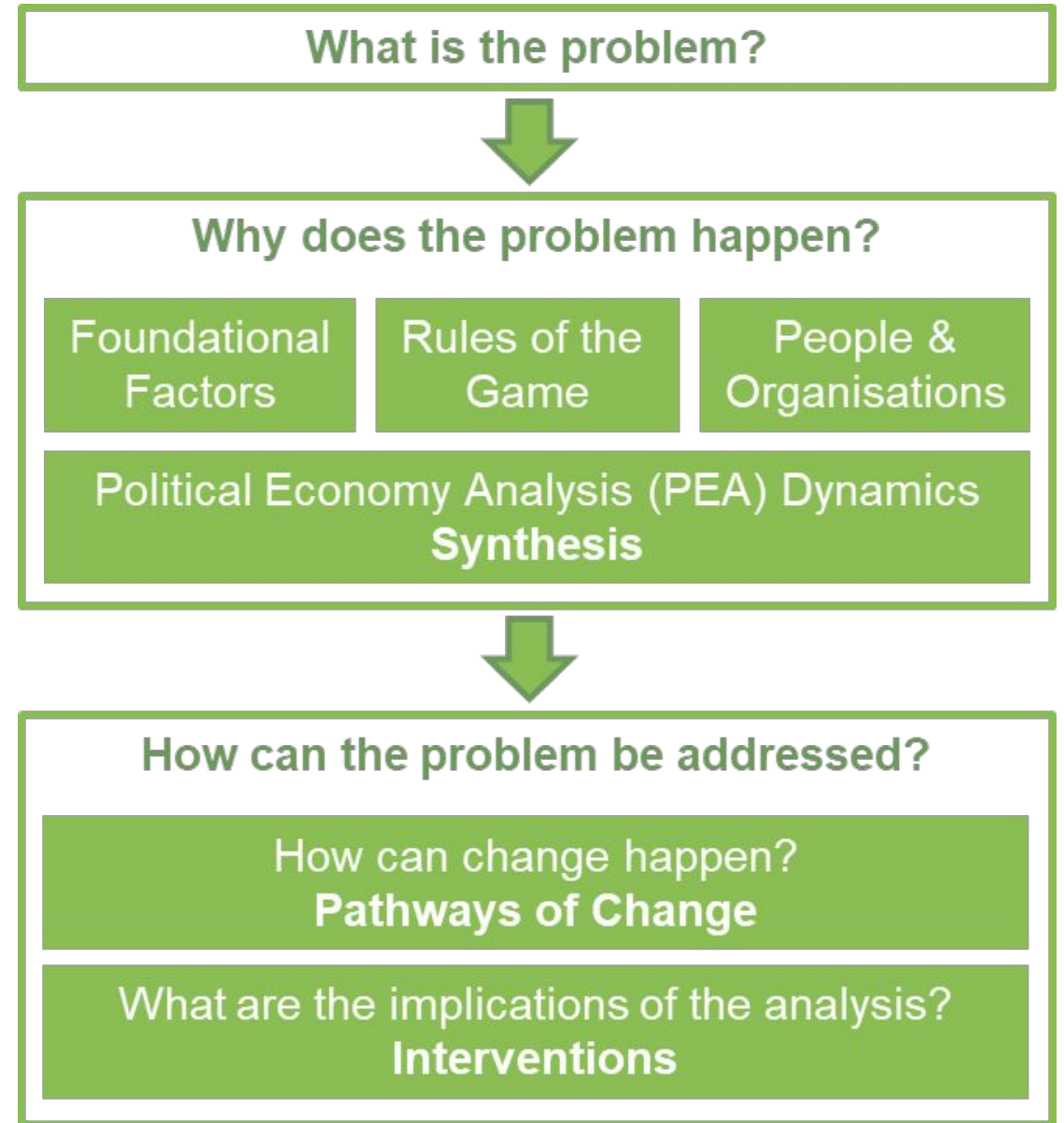
**It helps to explain how change processes happen and why they can become blocked.**



# The PEA framework - Seeing the System, Shaping the Change

Start with the challenge, dig into the deeper drivers, and map the forces at play —foundations, rules, and power dynamics.

Use those insights to chart smart, realistic pathways for change. It's about understanding the context so we can work *with* it—not against it.





# Football analogy

## Foundational Factors



## Rules of the Game



## People and Organisations



## Dynamics



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# PEA key principles

1. Getting under the surface of things
2. Starting with realities on the ground
3. Recognizing complexity and uncertainty



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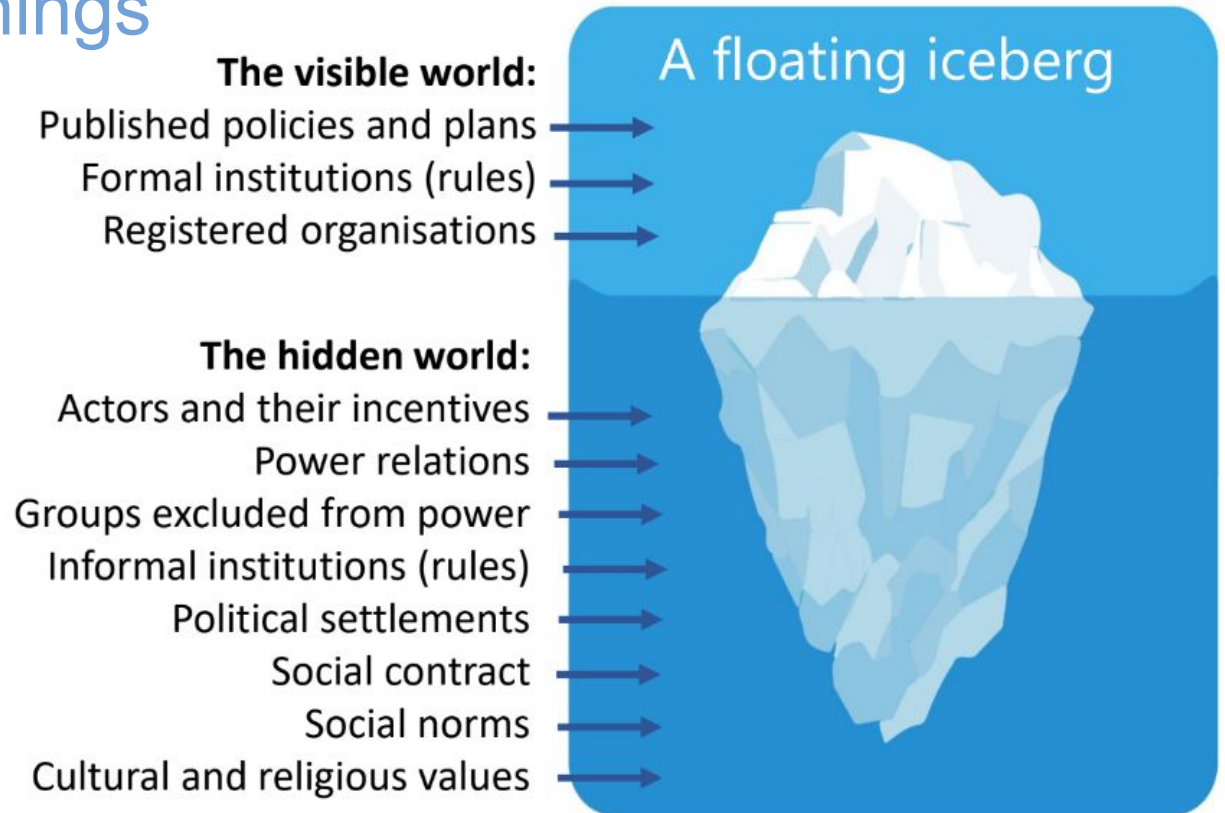


# PEA key principles

## 1. Getting under the surface of things

The most obvious factors often only scratch the surface of what's really going on.

**Political economy analysis** digs deeper, uncovering the hidden forces that show why change happens or why it gets stuck.



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# PEA key principles

## 2. Starting with realities on the ground

### A politically-smart approach

- **Current Reality:** How do things work right now?
- **Improvement Potential:** What's possible within the existing context?
- **Policy Fit:** What options align with the current incentives and dynamics?
- **Next Steps:** What actions can support change?
- **Supporting Locals:** How can we empower local actors to drive change?
- **Embracing Compromise:** Are we ready to accept trade-offs for progress?

### A normative approach

- **Ideal Vision:** How should things work in a perfect world?
- **Best Practices:** How can we apply proven solutions for optimal outcomes?
- **External Solutions:** What can outsiders bring to address local challenges?



# PEA key principles

## 3. Recognizing complexity and uncertainty

- **Complex Systems:** Political, economic, and social processes are interconnected and operate unpredictably.
- **Dynamic Context:** Rapid changes can occur due to trends and shocks (e.g., economic crises, natural disasters, conflict).
- **Uncertainty:** In these volatile systems, it's unclear which interventions will succeed.
- **Adaptability:** You must be prepared to experiment, learn, and adjust. Agility and responsiveness are critical to navigating change.



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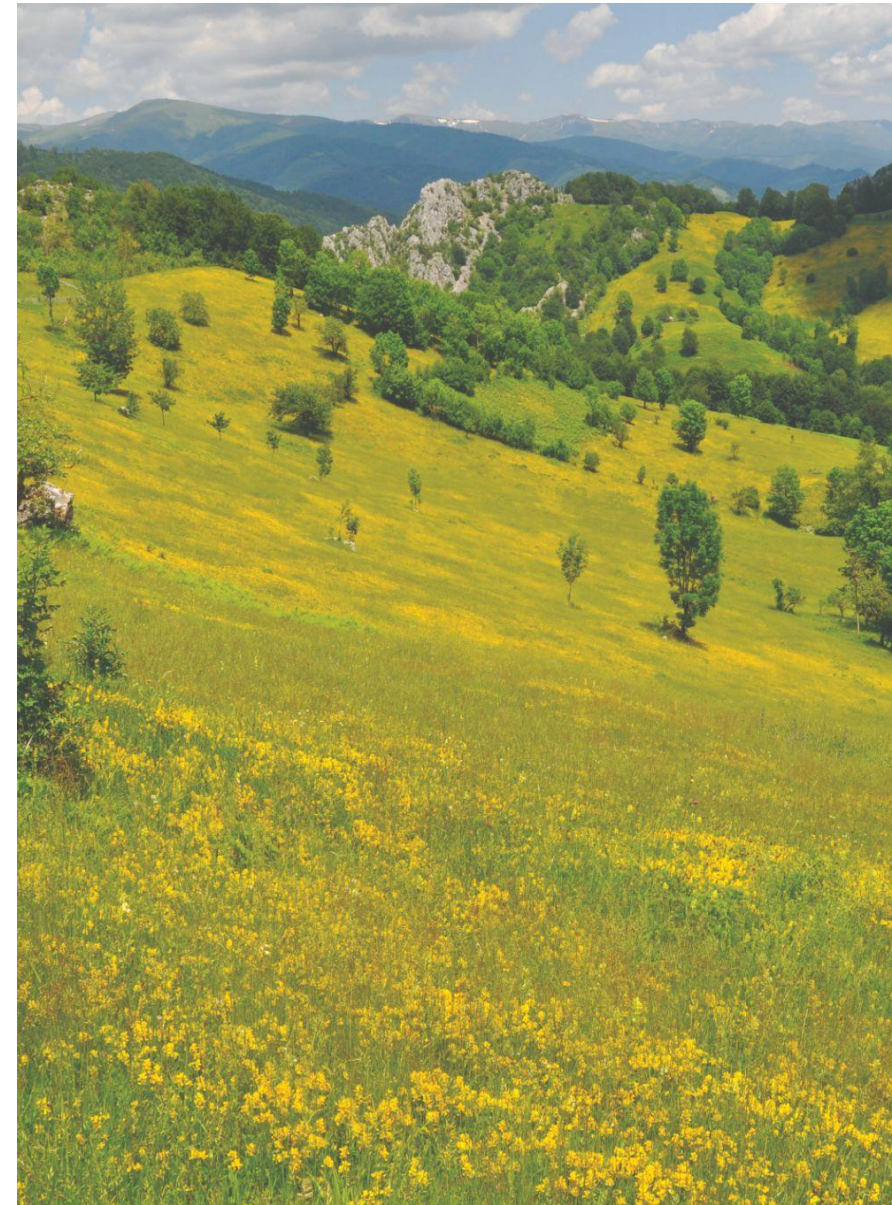
# Applications



# PEA application

Principles of PEA are relevant to 3 typical professional tasks:

1. **Analysis**: what is the context of the problems in the countries/regions where we work, understanding better the real situation
2. **Plan and strategy**: how we develop strategies for contributing to desirable change
3. **Interventions**: how we design and deliver interventions to implement strategies



# At what levels can PEA be applied?

- (Macro) International/regional/national-level analysis
- Sector/landscape-level analysis
- (Micro) Problem-driven analysis
- Can be detailed or part of daily routine

## (Macro) International/Regional/National-level analysis



to enhance general sensitivity to international, regional or country context and understanding of the broad political-economy environment.

## Sector/Landscape-level analysis



to identify specific barriers and opportunities within a particular sector and/or landscape.

## (Micro) Problem-driven analysis



to understand and resolve a particular problem at the project or local level.

# PEA for Conservation Impact - PEACI

## Objectives

- Conservationists can describe what needs to be changed to achieve conservation goals
- But WHY do things happen in a positive or negative way or not at all?
- PEACI helps identify power relationships

**Who has power?**



**What determines the level of power?**

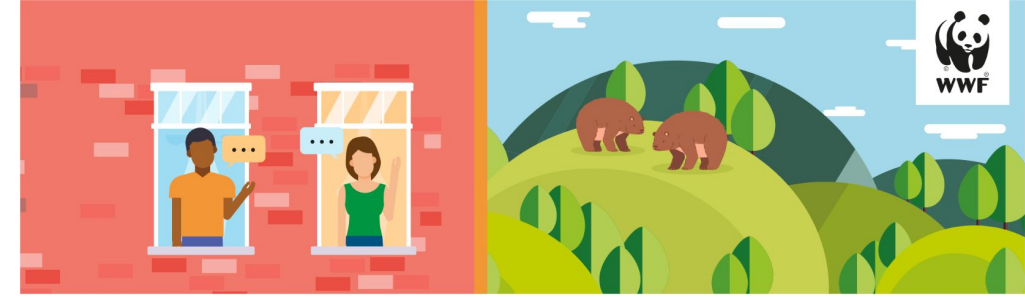


**How is power exercised?**





# What is PEACI helpful for?



- Looking deeper at the **causes of the problem**
- Understanding how things are done and **how change happens and what type of pathways of change is possible**
- Being realistic and setting **achievable goals**
- Designing clear **intervention** strategies based on the pathways and **adapting** strategies during implementation
- Assessing and managing **risks**, avoiding costly mistakes
- Understanding the **relative power of conservation** structure and organisations
- Causes and potential **consequences of government policies**
- Aspects and trends for **funding**
- **Engaging** more effectively **with partners**, understanding their interests and incentives

# PEA is about

**PEA is about best fit** not best practice. It is about programming to solve the problems presented in specific locations at specific times on particular issues.

**PEA is about** seeking to understand the perspectives, needs and interests of those without or less power and shape programming to ensure broad **social inclusion**.

**PEA is about** entry points, **opportunities** and the possible - not just risk.

**PEA is about** a **complex analysis**, not just political or economic analysis

**PEA is about** the **start** of a process **to change** the ways in which you work to achieve impact.

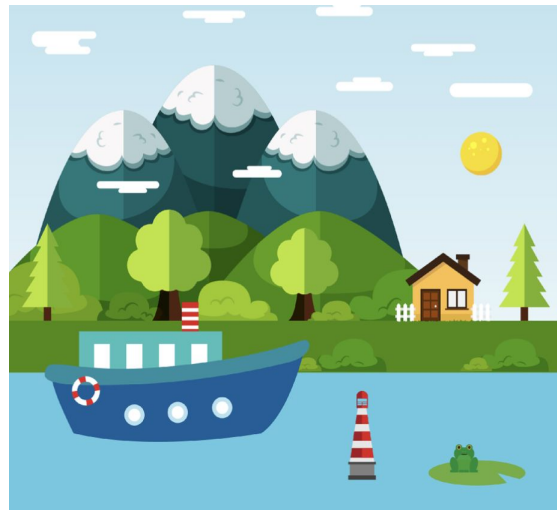


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# WWF PEACI

## Examples & tools



### 5 WHYS TECHNIQUE - EXAMPLE



#### CHALLENGE: River dolphin population is declining

##### 1. WHY?

- Mercury pollution is increasing in river dolphin habitats and affecting their health

##### 2. WHY?

- Catfish are an important food source for river dolphins and can store high levels of mercury

##### 3. WHY?

- Increased mercury in water as by-product of process of artisanal gold mining operations

##### 4. WHY?

- Artisanal gold mining is illegal/unregulated
- Governance structures in Protected Areas are weak

##### 5. WHY?

- Protected Areas are underfunded, and park guards are not equipped to address illegal gold mining.

#### POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

- Advocacy with Ministry of Environment to increase funding to protection measures in Protected Areas
- Work with local communities to raise awareness of the negative impact of gold mining on freshwater systems






## Triple A Change Space Tool


(Developed by Andrews, Pritchett, and Woolcock)

To assess how much room you have for change within your particular issue, this tool invites you to look at **Authority, Acceptance, and Ability**

Make the Angry Birds bigger or smaller according to the power the stakeholder has. To enlarge the Angry Birds click on the image and pull the blue dots in the corners

<p>Red bird: AGAINST</p> 	Stakeholder 1 (write here your stakeholder)	Stakeholder 2 (write here your stakeholder)
<p>Yellow bird: NEUTRAL</p> 	Stakeholder 3 (write here your stakeholder)	Stakeholder 4 (write here your stakeholder)
<p>Blue bird: FOR</p> 	Stakeholder 5 (write here your stakeholder)	

Write here the change you want to see.



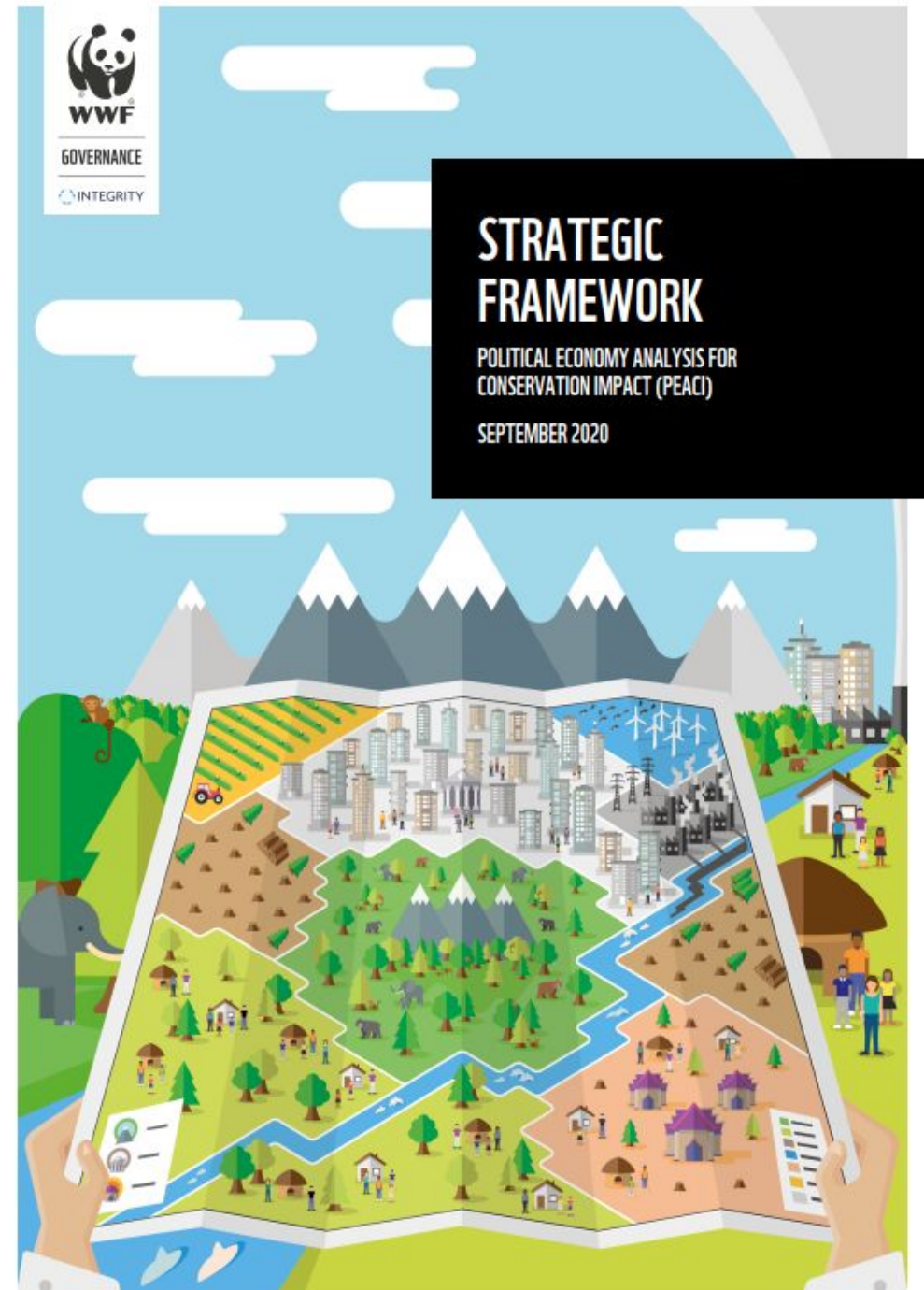


# Examples/experience from PEA applications

# How WWF International uses PEA

**Overview of the PEA application across WWF and its growing relevance in the current international context**

Recording, Micol Martini, WWF International



# The Danube-Carpathian case

## Review and synthesis of best practices in governance and land-use policies to implement the Trans-European Nature Network

Hildegard Meyer, WWF Central and Eastern Europe



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# Aim of the Political Economy Analysis

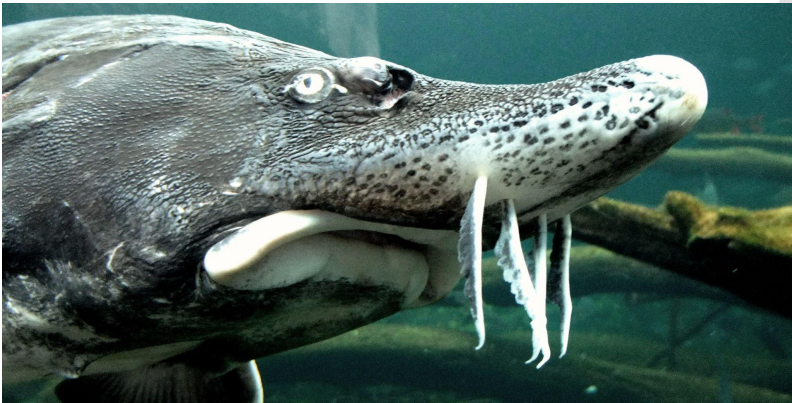
- To analyse the country-specific contexts on governance of protected area and ecological connectivity and financing
- To find possible pathways of change and formulate interventions to improve the implementation of a coherent ecological network, Trans-European Nature Network (EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030, Convention on Biological Diversity)



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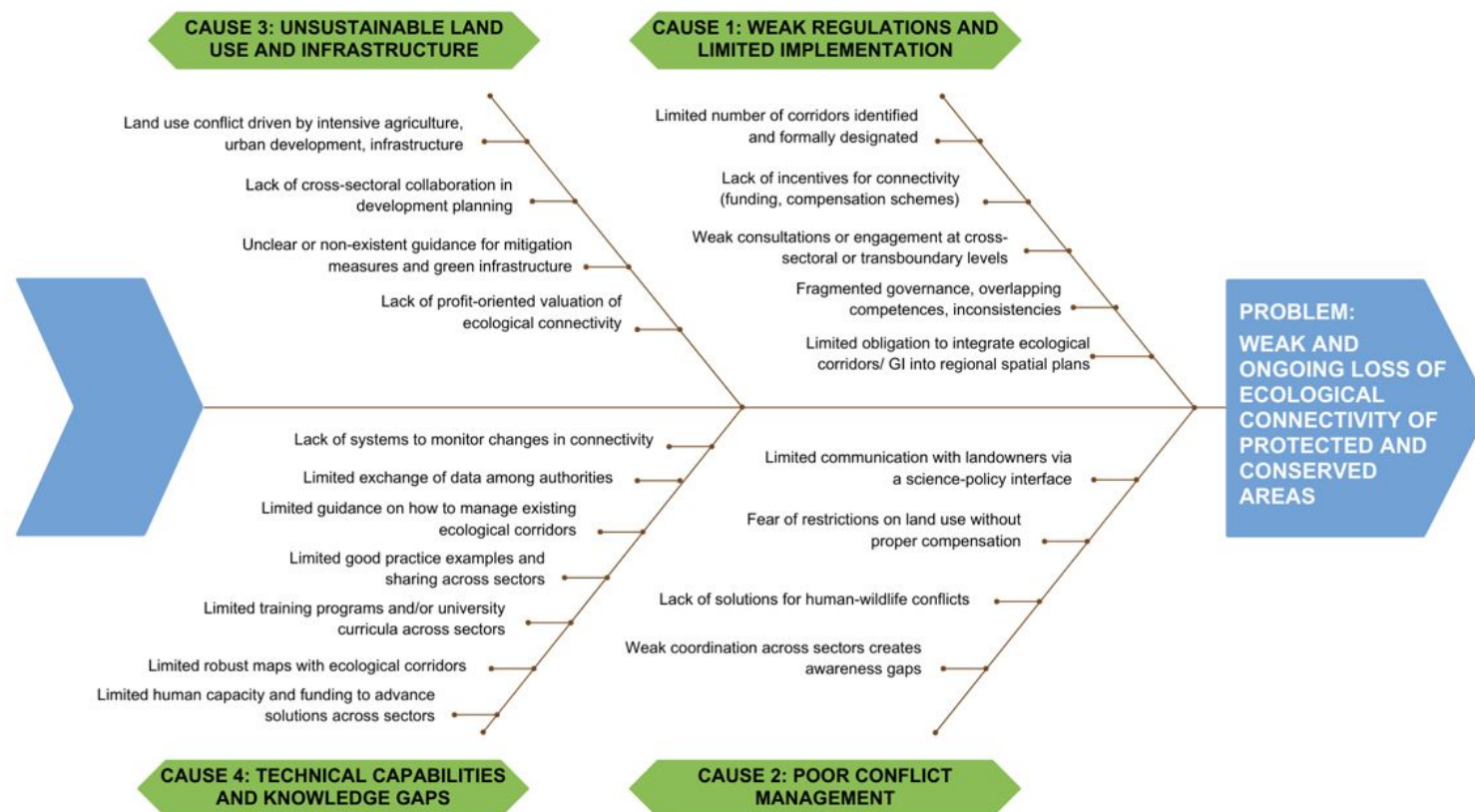
# The Danube-Carpathian region



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# Research effort



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**Literature review**  
250 publications

**Review of policies & tools**  
15 case study countries in the  
Danube-Carpathian Region

**Surveys**  
2 surveys, 47 from nature  
conservation experts, 27 from  
other sectors' experts

**Semi-structured interviews**  
47 across 15 countries in the  
Danube-Carpathian region

**Workshops**  
2 internal, 2 external workshops



# Key findings

## Historical legacies

- Collectivisation reduced connection to nature
- Land restitution after the fall of communism - unclear property rights
- Land abandonment
- New laws and protected areas implemented
- Weak stakeholder engagement processes



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# Key findings

## Regulatory frameworks

- Existing laws are weakly implemented
- Lack of laws and regulations for strategic planning in economic sectors
- Policies do not have required impact on spatial planning
- Mismatch between the scale of implementation and of action needed



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# Key findings

## Others

- Little awareness of ecological connectivity/green infrastructure benefits
- Technical capabilities and knowledge gaps on how to integrate ecological connectivity in economic projects
- Public funding lacks longer-term perspective & safeguards
- Poor conflict management on the ground



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# Conclusions

## We need to

- Tackle landowners and managers' fears of restrictions
- Raise awareness to make people understand why ecological connectivity/green infrastructure is important
- Overcome silo thinking
  - Establish mechanisms for collaboration across sectors
- Overcome the imbalance of power between business and nature conservation



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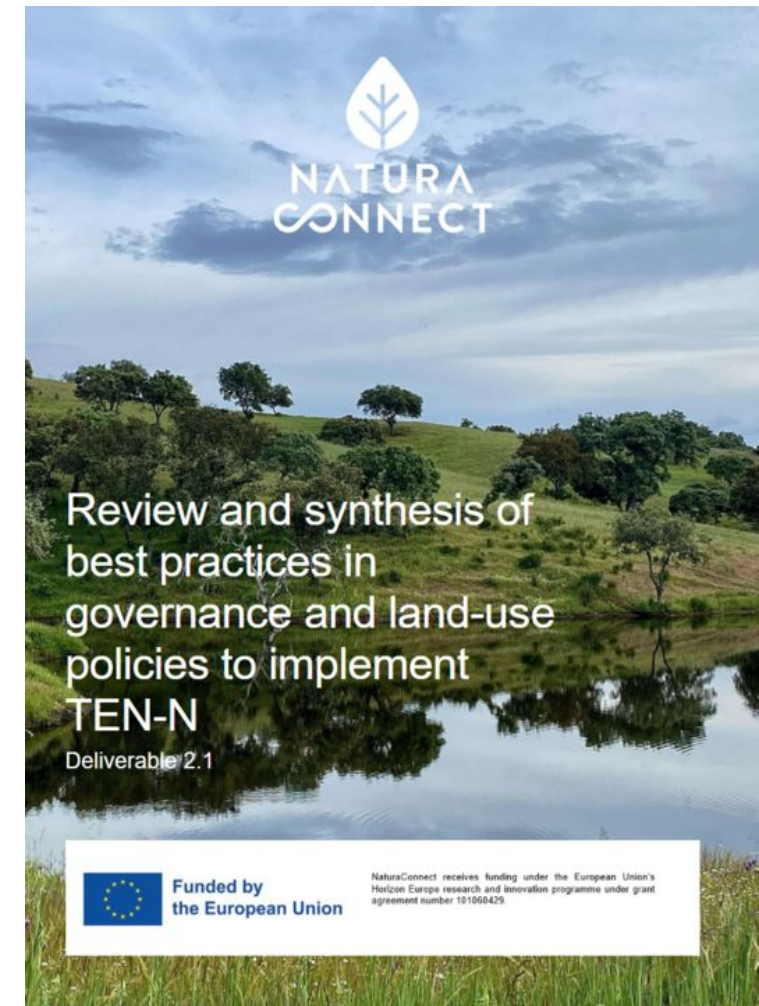
# Review and synthesis of best practices in governance and land-use policies to implement TEN-N

## D2.1 Review and synthesis of best practices in governance and land-use policies to implement TEN-N

This document reviews and synthesizes information on existing land-use planning and land management policy and guidance for GI management across countries and administrative levels. It compiles best practices which will be made available as a report in English and a selected number of languages for the 6 case studies.

Author(s): Joana Bores, Hildegard Meyer, Evelyn Underwood, Mila Sirychenko, Wouter Langhout, Peer von Döhren, Daniel Veríssimo, Balázs Horváth, Kenny Meganck, Alina Blaga, Måns Ingvarsson, Gabrielle Aubert, Barbara Herrero, Matea Osti, Anouk Puymartin

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3897/arphapreprints.e139236>



# The NaturaConnect Learning Platform



# NaturaConnect Learning Platform

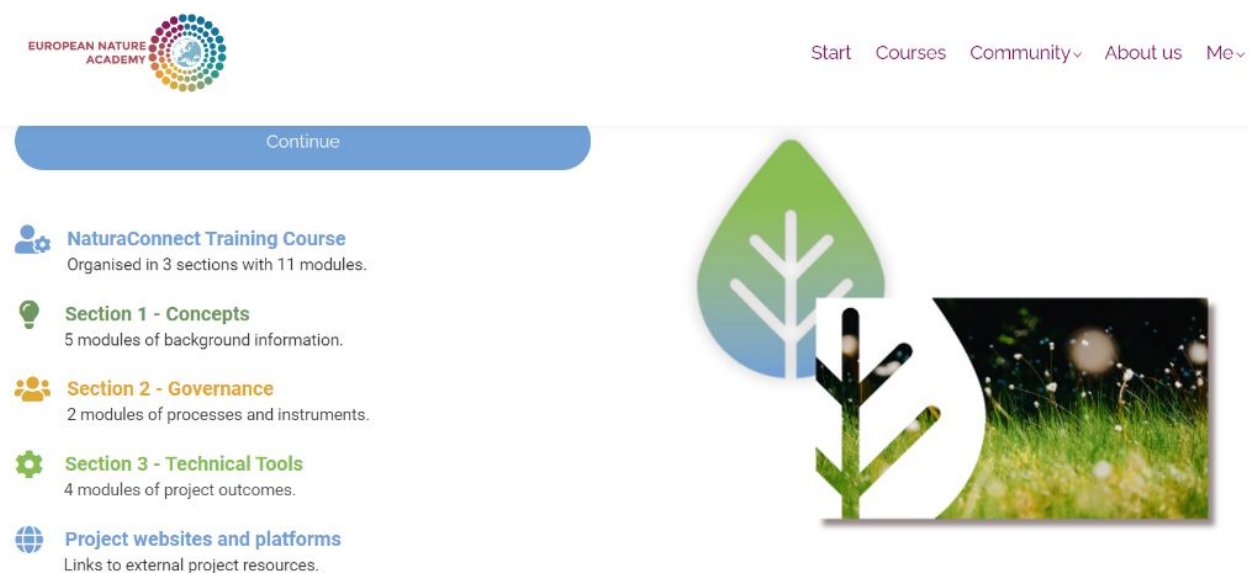
## Target audience

Biodiversity conservation managers, spatial planning technicians and data analysts

## Objectives

- Improve conservation planning
- Empower users to apply NaturaConnect outputs

Self-paced course with sequential and stand-alone modules, hosted by the [European Nature Academy](#)



Landing page of the NaturaConnect Learning Platform





# Q&A



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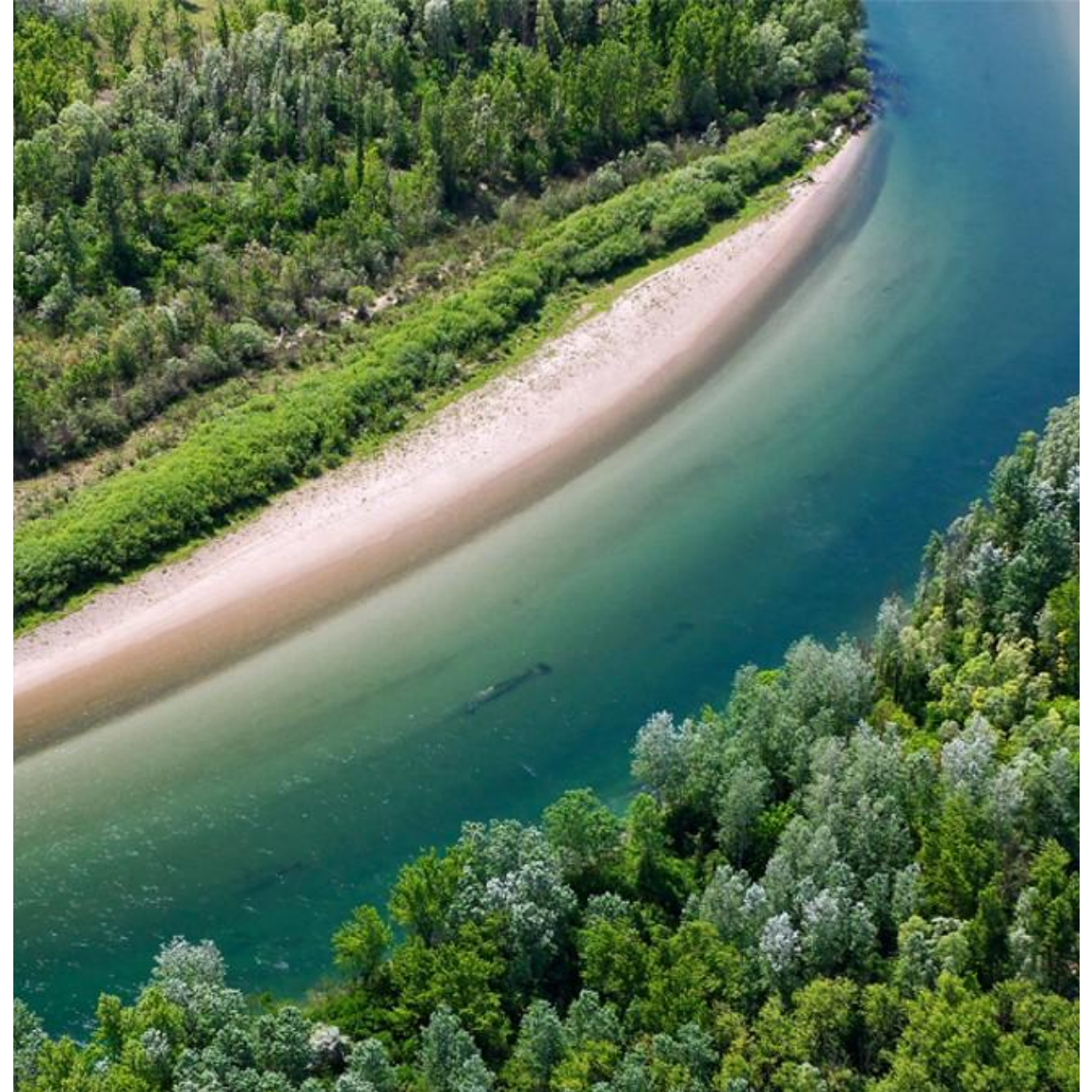
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# The End

# Rules

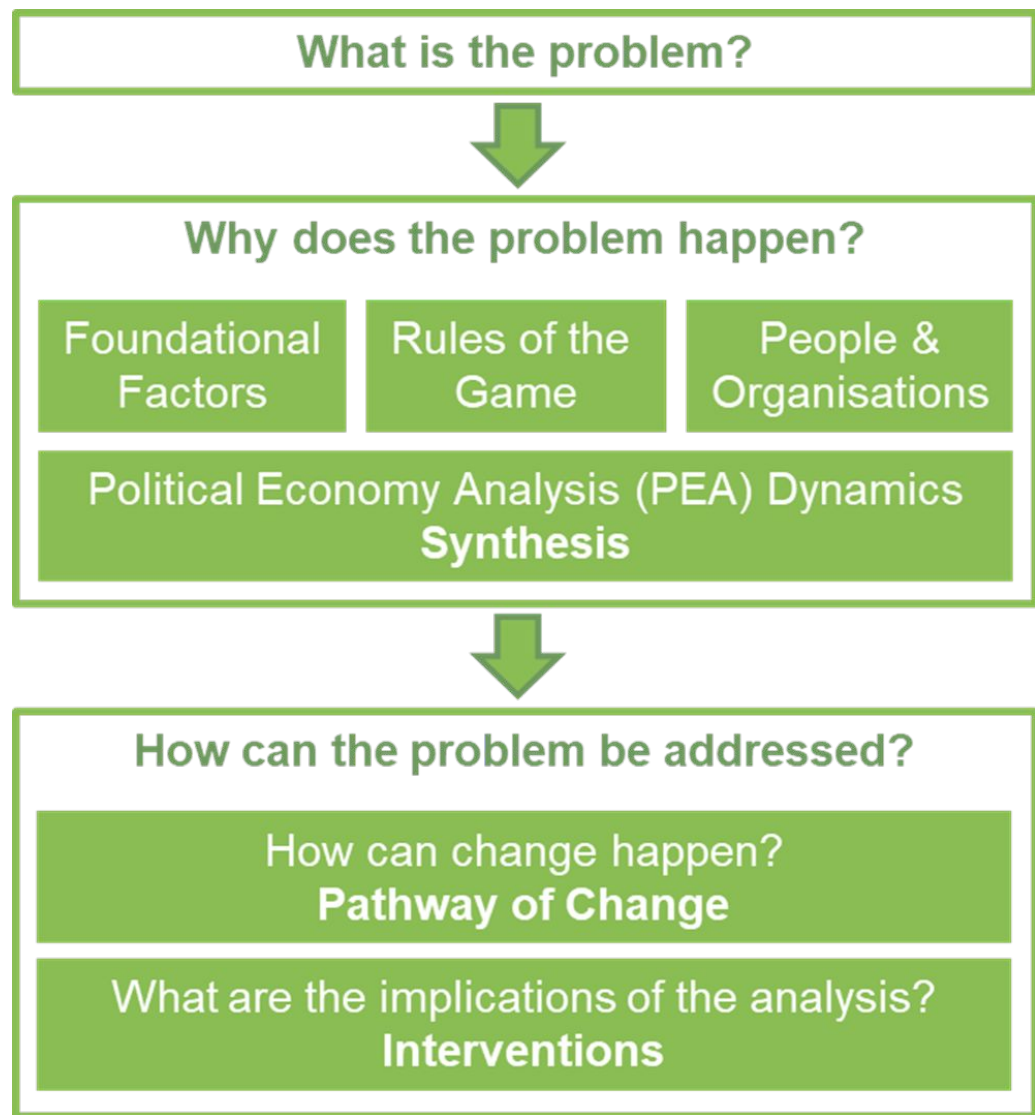
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- If you have any questions please type them into the chat box
- If a question cannot be answered during the webinar you will find the answers in the report
- The webinar will be recorded
- The recording will be shared



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# Research effort

The three main steps of the Political Economy Analysis framework (adapted by WWF-CEE after Copestake and Williams, 2014)



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250 publications

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15 case study countries in the Danube-Carpathian Region

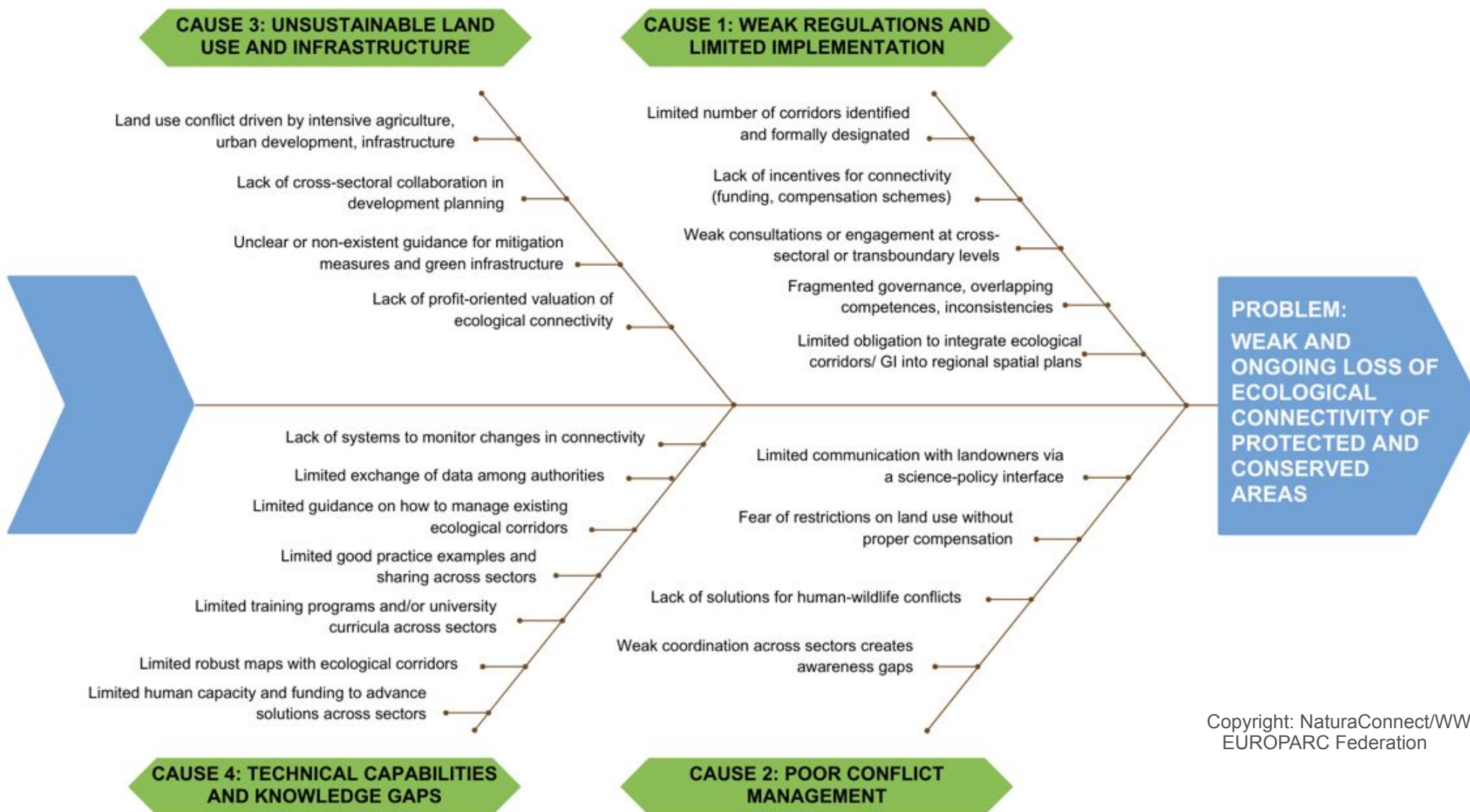
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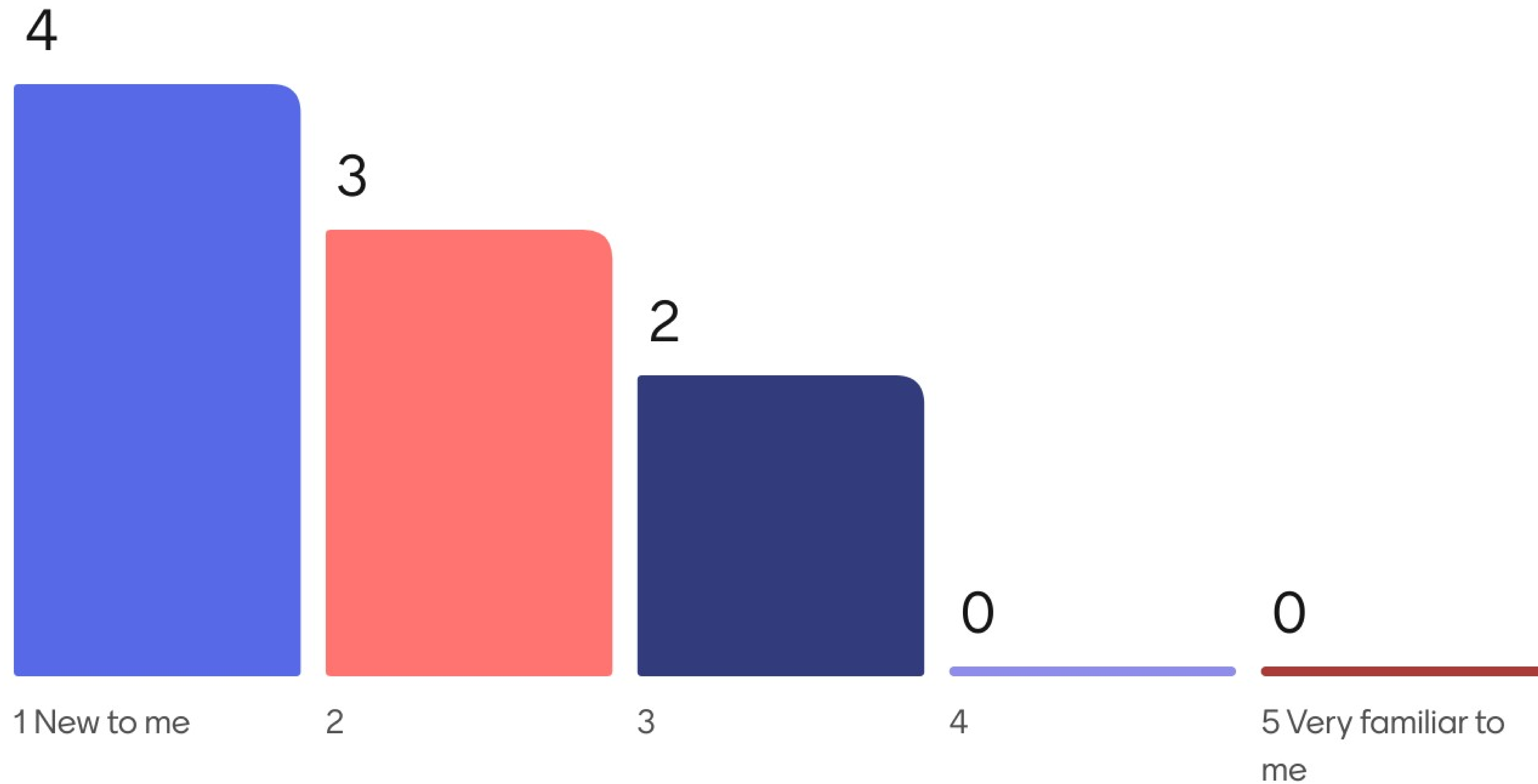
**Workshops**  
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# Fishbone diagram - DCR problem analysis



# Scale 1-5 of how much you know about Political Economy Analysis





*What's the first word that comes to mind when you hear "Political Economy Analysis?"*

15 responses

