



Regional Strategic Environmental Assessment

MVEIRB RSEA WORKSHOP
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What can or should an RSEA address?



Who or what processes are to be informed by RSEA?



What types of questions should we be asking in RSEA?

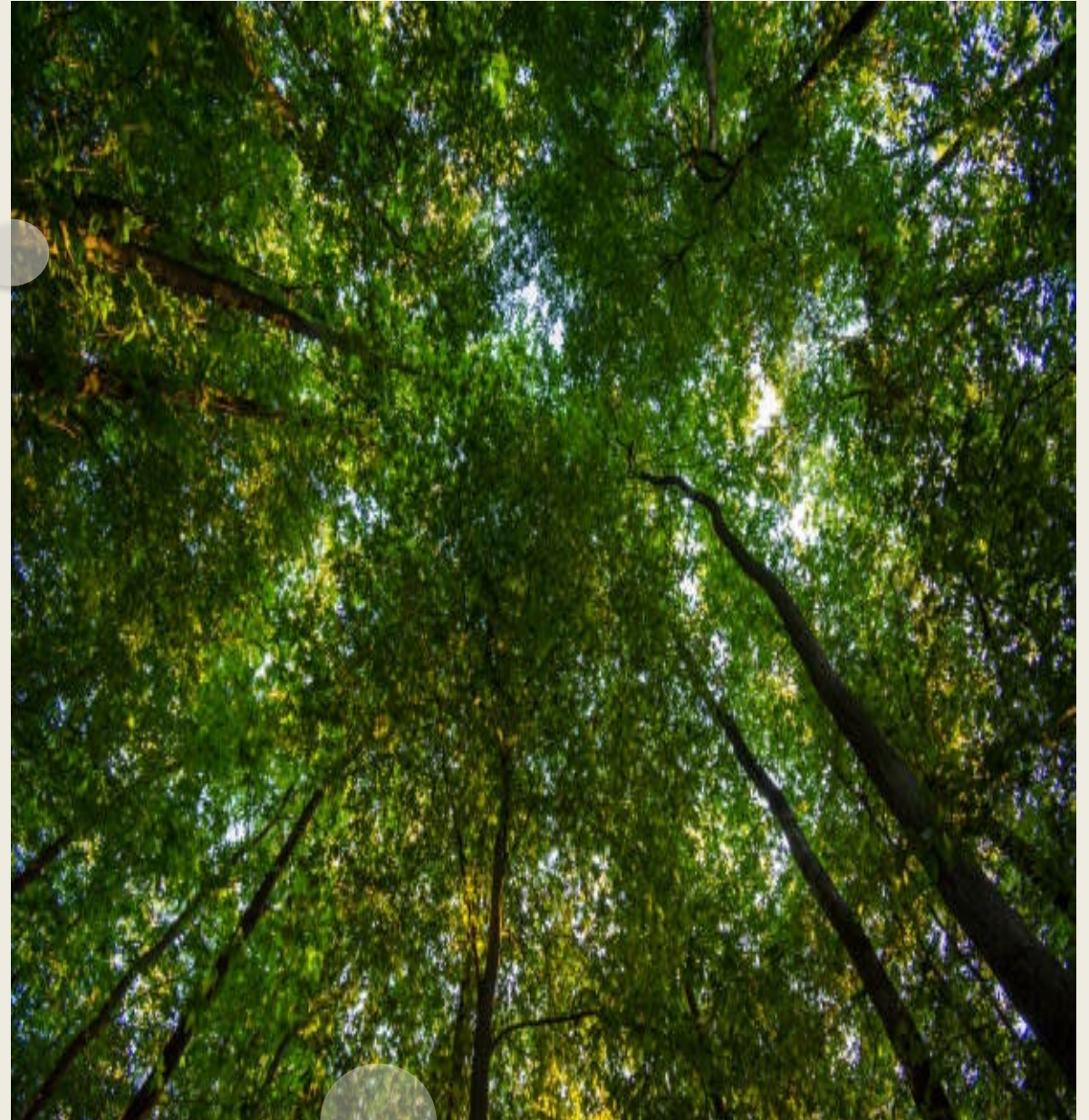


What are the enablers & inhibitors of successful RSEA?

Project by project by project...

Not seeing the forest for the trees

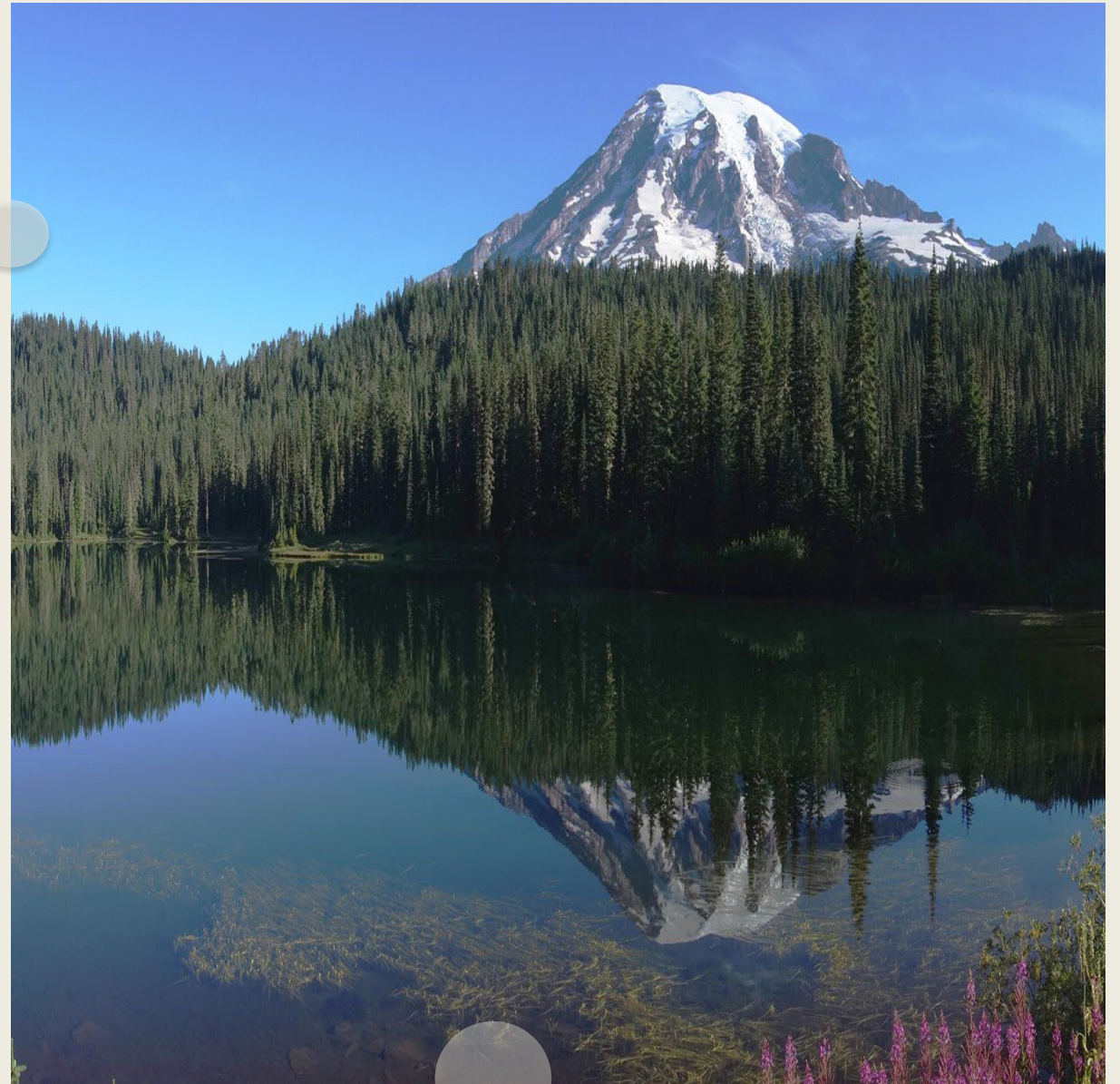
- Limited ability to control the nature and types of development on the table
- Accepting or reacting to the *most likely* outcomes



Reflections from the field

“you can’t change the direction when the decisions you make daily are about the docket of projects on the table”

“this is more than a project, it’s the path to a future that’s drastically different – we need to know what future we want, and we can’t do that by looking only at the projects in front of us”



REGIONAL STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT



A process designed to systematically assess the potential environmental effects, including cumulative effects, of alternative strategic initiatives or policies, plans & programs for a particular region.

An objectives-led approach to the identification & analysis of implications associated with different regional development futures to ensure decisions that lead to desirable outcomes.

An instrument of change to ensure more sustainable patterns of policy choices, planning, and development decisions



Ensuring that downstream planning and development occurs within the context of *desirable* outcomes by effectively managing the *sources* rather than only the *symptoms* of change

	Project environmental assessment	Regional strategic environmental assessment
Proponent	Single company, operator, or government agency	Public-private partnership; government-to-government partnership; regional planning authority; Aboriginal government
Trigger	Proposal to undertake a resource development project	Cumulative change; need for regional development plan or review for resource development strategy
Alternatives	Proceed with the project, not proceed, or proceed under conditions	Future resource development and conservation scenarios; alternative trajectories for growth and ownership
Regional scope	Individual project and the stress and opportunities generated in the project's local to regional environment	Development regions and entire resource sectors
Temporal bounds	Project lifecycle	Past, present, and long-term futures of regional environments and economies
Sources and pathways of change	Individual, project actions	Interacting activities of multiple resource sectors, as well as higher-level policies and plans
Engagement	Consultation about a project and its potential impacts – information provision	Participatory or collaborative process to shape development futures – empowerment

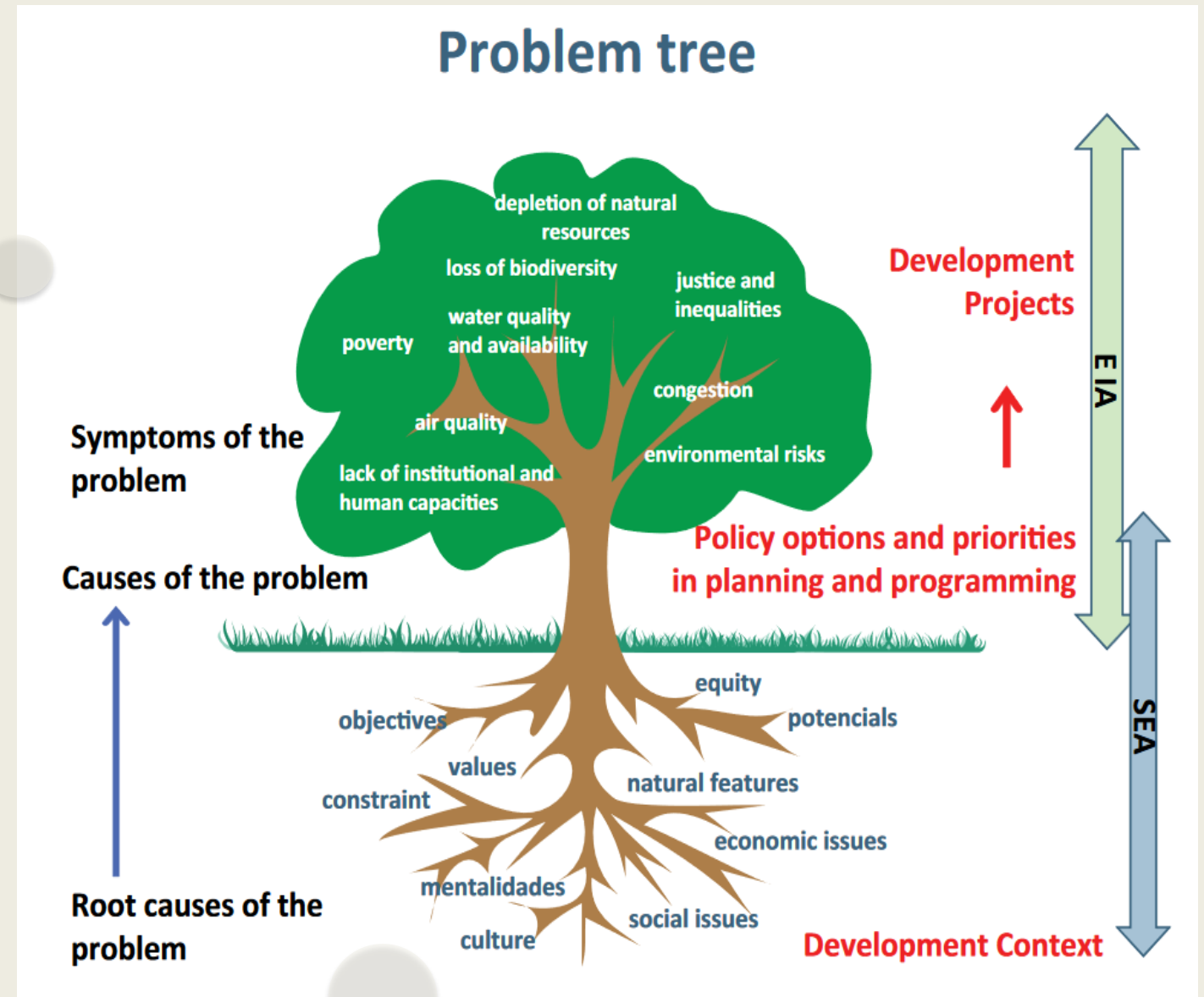


What can or
should RSEA
address?

*“creating images of the future state of development, natural change, and cumulative change in a region, asking ‘what if’ questions concerning alternative development options”
(CCME 2009)*

SOURCES VS SYMPTOMS

“we don’t even know what we don’t know, or what we need to know, to understand the cumulative impacts of future developments here”



What is “strategic”?

Strategic is “an attribute that qualifies ways of thinking.”

‘Strategic’ has little to do with the nature of *what* is being assessed (i.e. the object of assessment), or the spatial scale of assessment (i.e. how big the area) and everything to do with the *role* of strategy and the *purpose* and *approach* to assessment.

- ♦ *Strategic: Activities related to broader institutional, societal, economic and environmental objectives, long-term goal formulation, and the evaluation of strategic choices, futures and opportunities.*
- ♦ *Reflexive: Activities relate to monitoring, assessments and evaluation of ongoing strategies, operations and change (social, economic, cultural and biophysical).*
- ♦ *Tactical: Interest-driven directing activities that relate to the dominant structures of a system including rules and regulations, institutions, organizations and networks, infrastructure, and routines.*
- ♦ *Operational: The activities, tests and actions that have a short-term horizon and support implementation.*

Based on Loorbach (2010)

RSEA is more than technical analysis

Assessment Process

- Assessing the potential effects, including cumulative effects, of alternative futures, plans or development programs for a region.

Support for Planning

- Identifying where we want to go, the implications and tradeoffs of different options, and the governance, policies or other instruments needed to achieve objectives

Facilitating Strategic Thinking

- Facilitating decisions about what development or other actions is appropriate (or needed) when and where and under what conditions



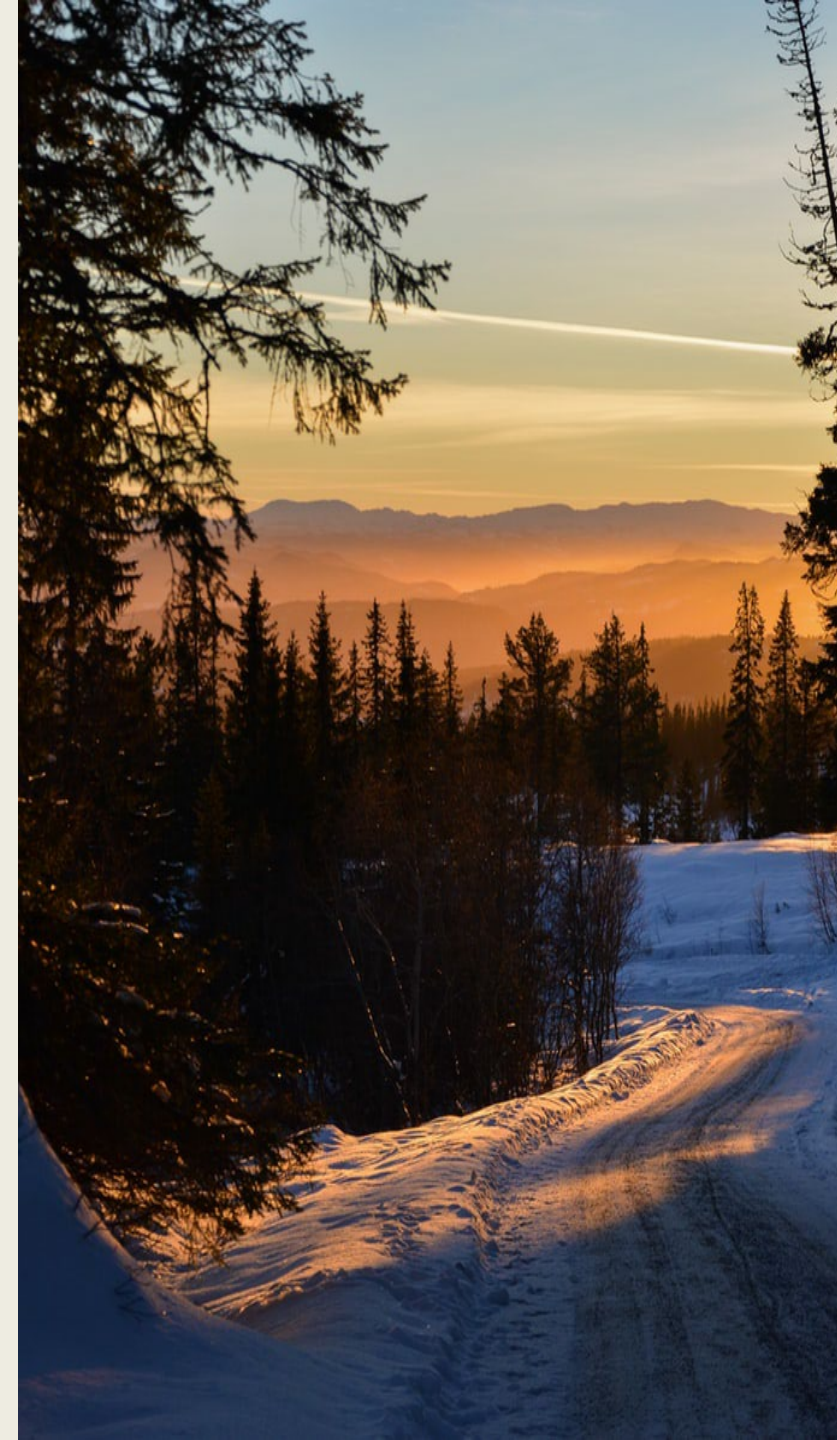
...foundational knowledge of past, present, and future baselines and nature, types, drivers, and patterns of condition change

...whether, when, and how (and under what conditions) different types of land uses might co-exist (and the potential value conflicts)

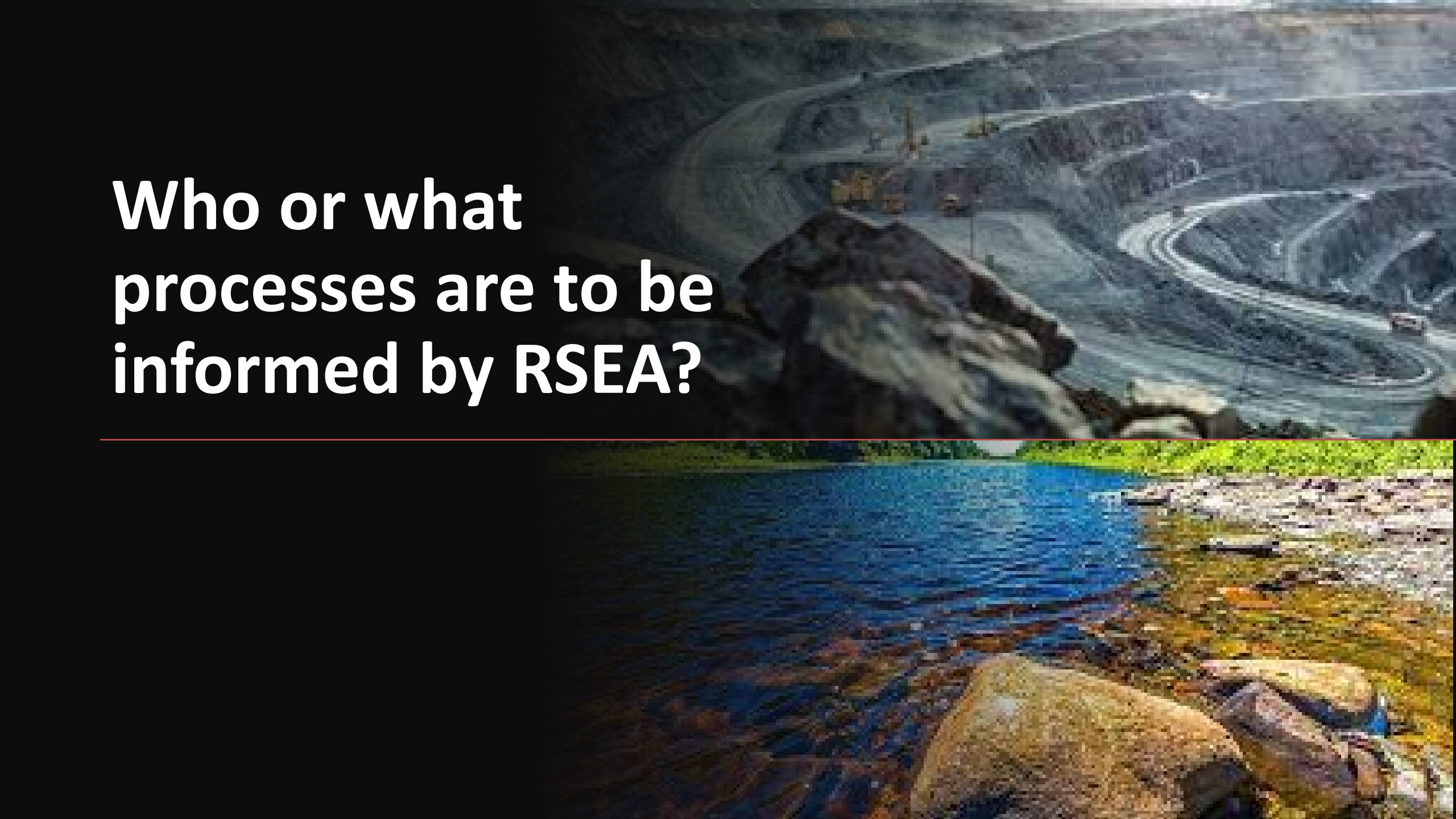
...implications & trade-offs of different trajectories or land uses (including project types, densities) and disturbances (climate change) based on longer-term (and immediate) objectives

...monitoring standards, targets, and management triggers (and responses) for authorities, land users, and developers

...institutional and governance capacity (collaborations, policies) needed to achieve intended outcomes



**Who or what
processes are to be
informed by RSEA?**



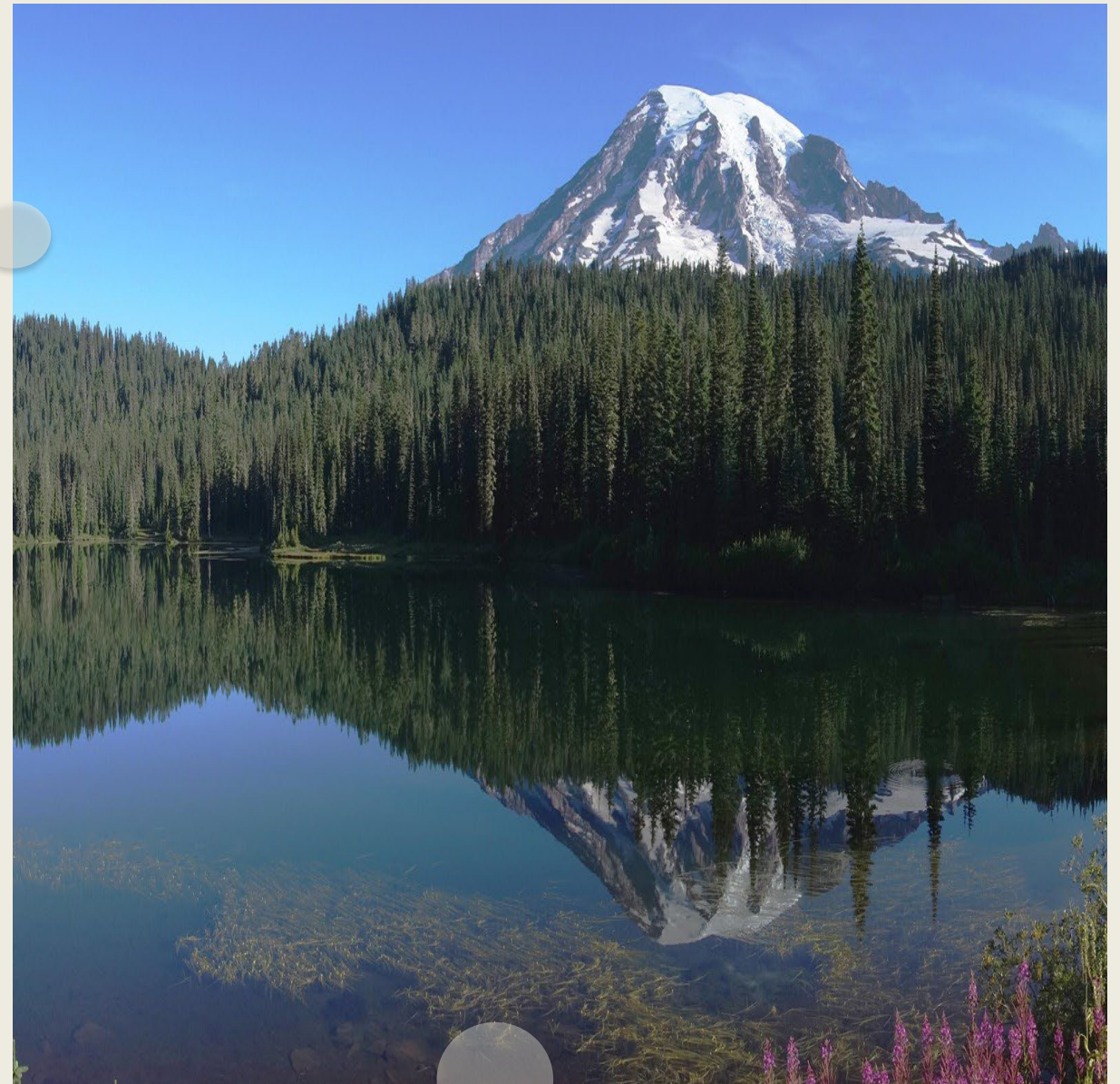
Reflections from the field

“industry would like to know if at some point [the regulators] are going to say ‘no more’...

“greater certainty... I would know what the issue of concern is that I need to be focused on...”

“..it’s very frustrating ...because you have one company coming in and they have to ask a series of questions...you have another company coming in and working in a similar area, and they have to ask the same questions again”

“bigger issues need to be taken care of...and not have to be dealt with in the project EA”



RSEA cannot function in isolation

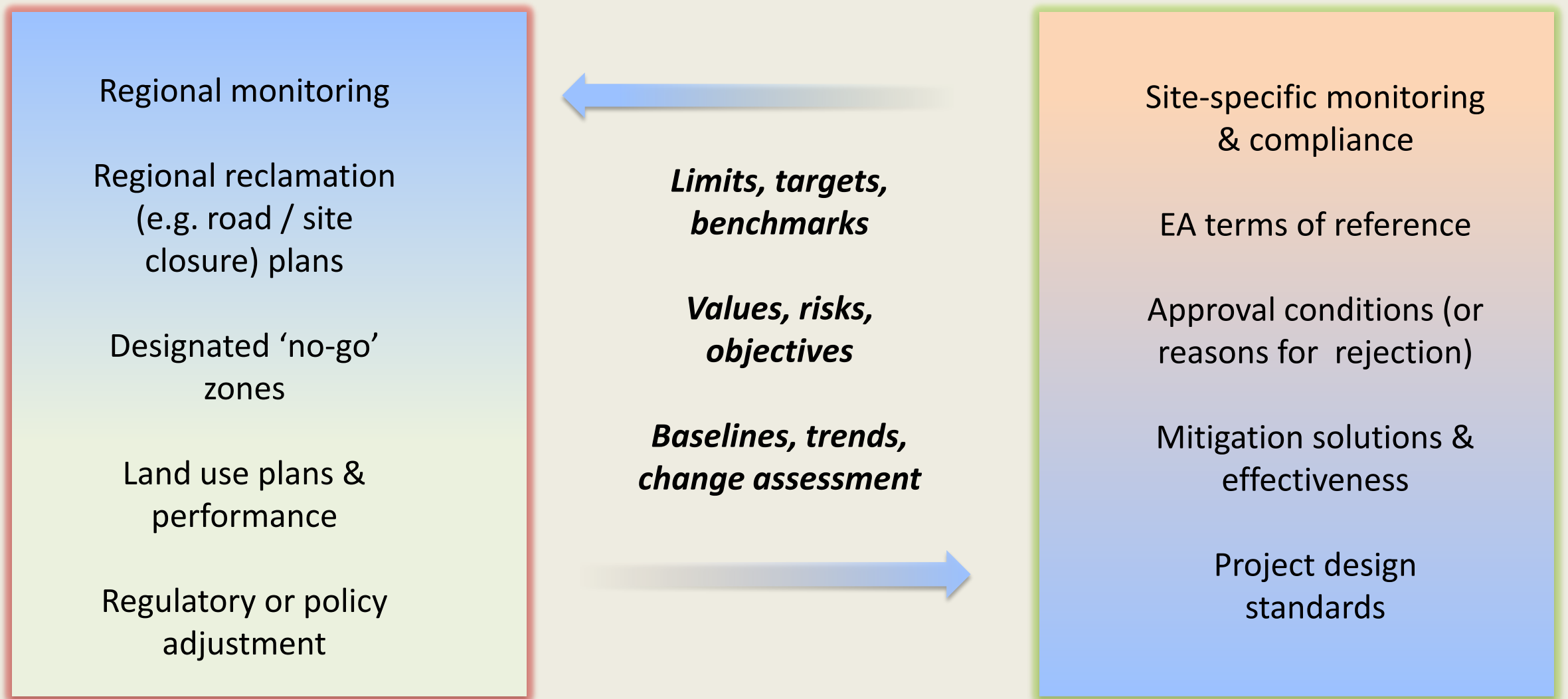
Key to effective RSEA is how it relates to planning and decision making & its ability to provide & consider guidance both from **higher to lower** and **lower to higher** tiers

- informing and improving decision-making culture

Key considerations in the planning of RSEA:

- Who are the intended knowledge users?
- What knowledge is needed and for what purposes?
- What are the needs & opportunities for linking-up with other policies, plans & programs and with project EA?



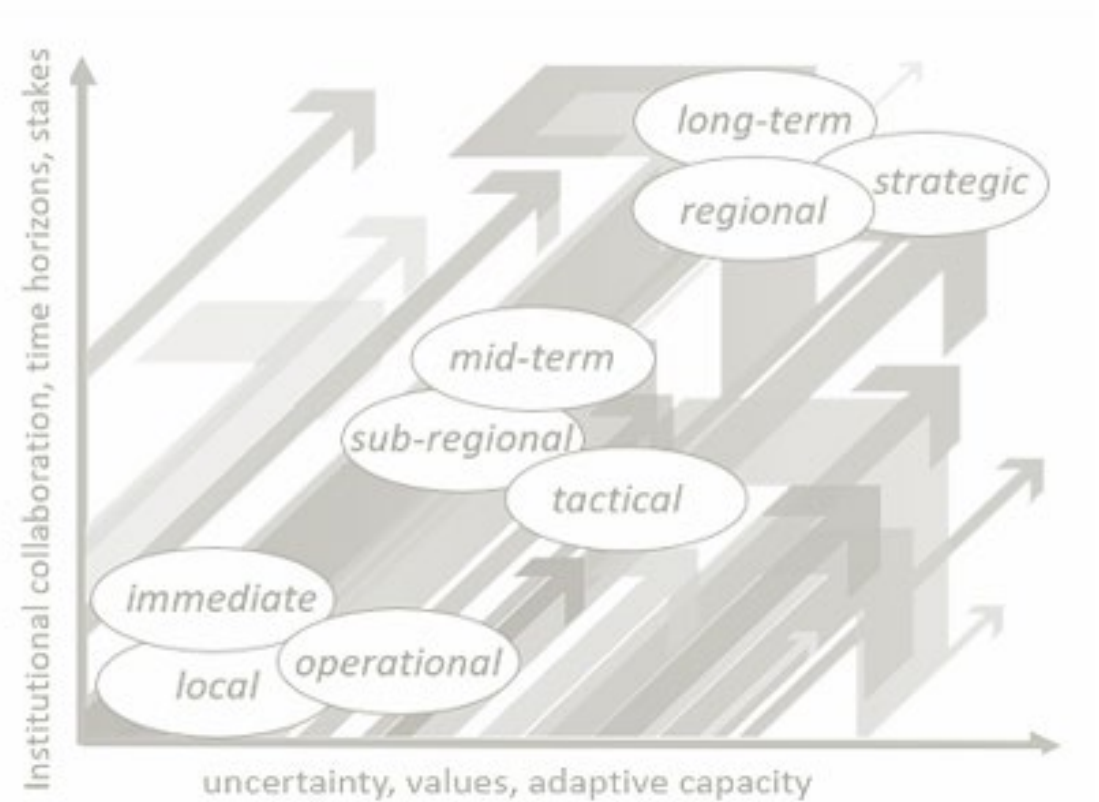


**What types of
questions
should we be
asking in RSEA?**

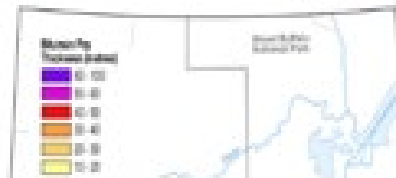
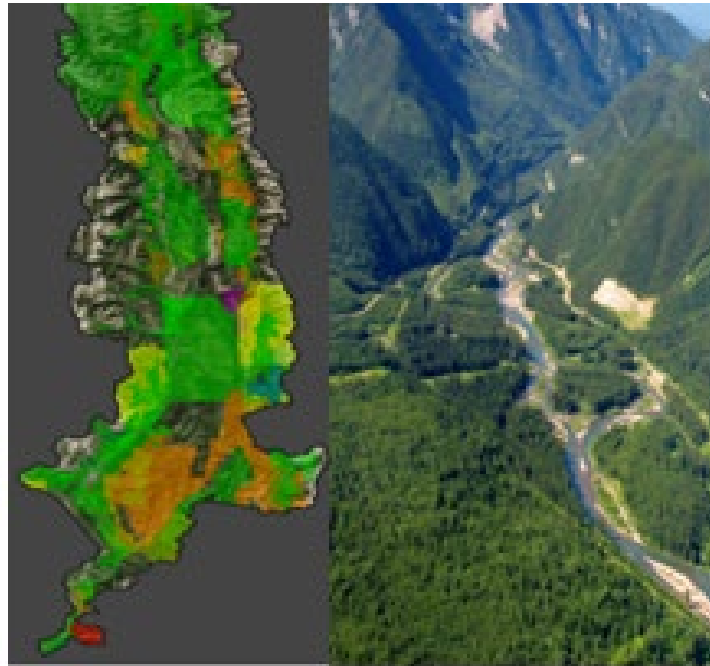


Where to start?

- Aspirational and objectives-driven vs. impact focused and process-oriented
 - *Questions about longer-term direction & guidance for land use & development*
 - *Questions about foundational baseline knowledge & understanding change*
 - *Questions about governance & capacities to achieve desired future*



...asking the strategic questions



- What trends/changes are occurring in the region?
- What are the key drivers – past, present, and into the future?
- What are the limits (acceptable, tolerable) of change?
- What are the values, objectives or goals for a region?
- What does 'business as usual' look like?

...asking the strategic questions



- What are the different scenarios of change & development?
- What are possible future conditions, trade-offs or win-wins?
- What development (type, nature, pace, location) is possible or preferable?
- What paths bring us closer to achieving our values, objectives or targets?
- What strategies (or policy or regulatory changes) are needed to achieve desired outcomes?

What are the enablers & inhibitors of successful RSEA?



“...our objectives are sometimes competing – even in government”

Informing vs reacting

**Initiated
'early'**

**Influence
development
trajectory**

Vs.

**Foreclosed
options for
land use**

Values-based approach

**Pre-planning
objectives
setting**

**Core values &
opportunities**

Vs.

**Driven by
available data
& models**

Nested process

**Part of a larger
process**

**Inform 'next
level' actions**

Vs.

**Stand-alone
'studies' or
reports**

Supportive mandates

**Responsibility
for action**

**Supportive
governance**

Vs.

**Competing or
conflicting
mandates**

Long-term commitment

**'Way of doing'
things**

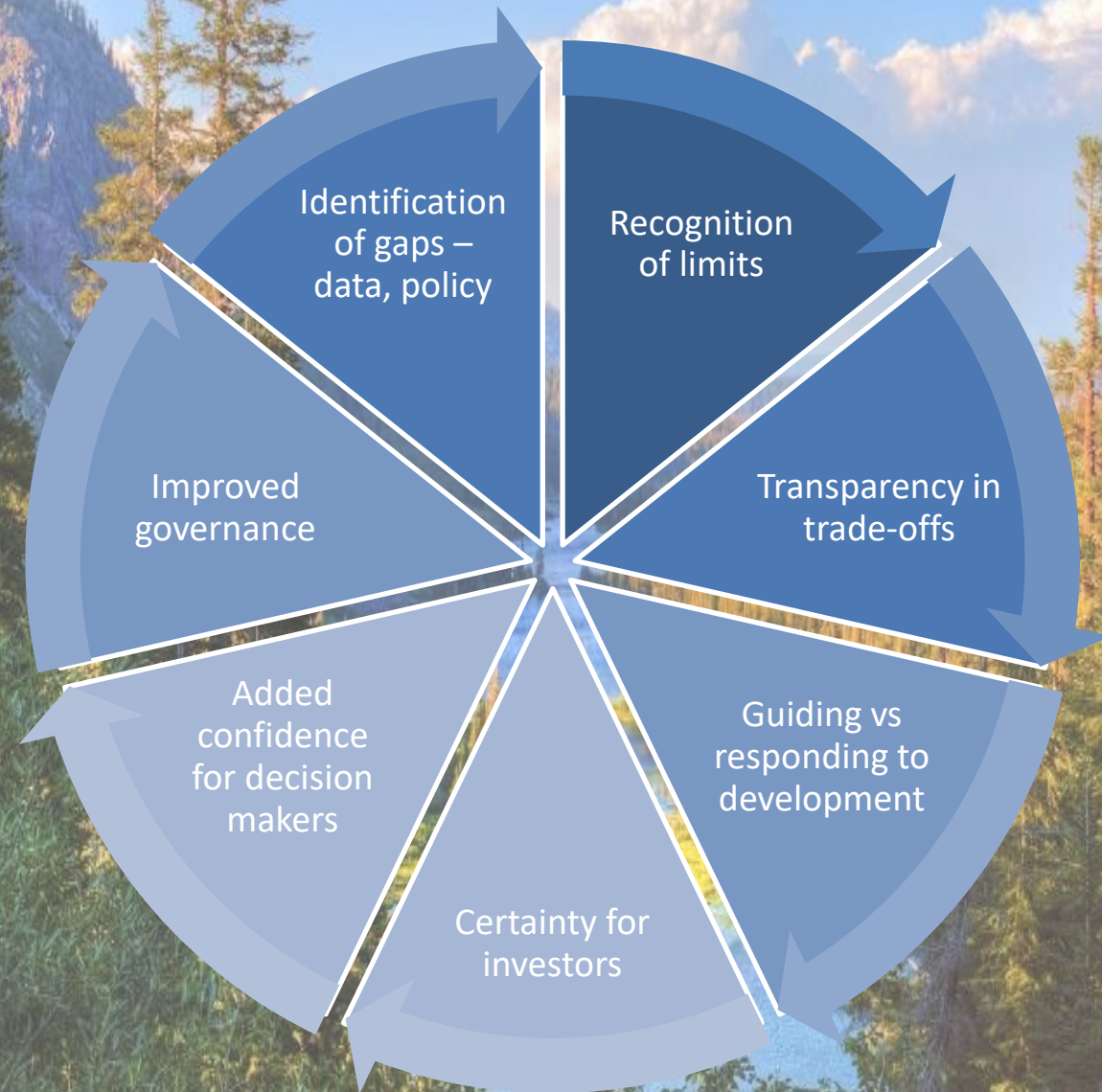
**Monitoring &
informing**

Vs.

**One-time
assessment or
decision**

Anticipated Benefits

- ✓ shaping initiatives
- ✓ informing strategic choices
- ✓ fostering transitions
- ✓ achieving objectives
- ✓ ensuring downstream decisions are focused on *desirable* outcomes
- ✓ avoiding and managing *sources* rather than mitigating *symptoms*





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