Targeting Natural Resource Corruption

Guide | August 2022

Corruption Risks and Anti-Corruption Responses in Sustainable Livelihood Interventions

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Key takeaways

- Sustainable livelihood projects can create significant opportunities for illicit private gains, along with the power and enabling conditions to pursue those gains. In other words, these projects are subject to corruption risks that may partially or completely sabotage the project or, in the worse cases, contribute to further social and environmental damage.
- Project designers and managers need to be cognizant of the corruption risks and build appropriate and feasible anti-corruption responses into their project theories of change.
- This guidance offers some results chains, tools, and other resources to help those practitioners do just that.

Sustainable livelihoods and corruption

From reefs to forests and from harvest to tourism, billions of people derive their livelihoods from nature (WWF 2020). Billions, if not trillions, of dollars, pesos, and rupees have been spent supporting, protecting, and increasing the environmental sustainability of those livelihoods (e.g., Kharas and MacArthur 2019). More should undoubtedly be spent (Dasgupta 2021), given the continued, dual needs of human benefit and natural conservation (WWF 2021).

Corruption, however, is a pervasive threat to those same reefs and forests and harvests and tours. It can divert money into the pockets of a few, eat away at efforts to protect resources, and harm the human rights and social capital that underpin collaborative efforts to conserve (Belecky et al. 2021; Klein et al. 2021; Korwin 2016; Outhwaite 2020; Pretty and Smith 2004; Sheill and Parry-Jones 2021).

This TNRC Guide shares practical knowledge for program designers and implementers to reduce corruption's impact on conservation.

Key definitions

- **Corruption**: This guidance follows Transparency International's definition of corruption as the abuse of entrusted power for private gain.
- **Duty bearer**: This guidance occasionally uses this term instead of "officials" to encompass anyone entrusted with authority or power, even if they are not officially part of the government or state.
- **Sustainable livelihood**: "a remunerative, satisfying and meaningful job that enables each member of the community to help nurture and regenerate the resource base" (IUCN 1999). A sustainable livelihood intervention therefore both increases the options for remunerative and satisfying work drawn from the environment, while managing or reducing the impact of that work on the environment (IMM 2008, Charles 2021).

In this sense, sustainable livelihoods work is like any development endeavor. It shares the "conditions" that give rise to corruption risk: incentive, opportunity, and enabling attitudes (UN Global Compact 2013). Or, in more elaborate terms (adapted from Wathne 2021), a sustainable livelihood project may create (or align with):

the **opportunity** for private gains;

the **power and discretion** for people (and institutions) to pursue those gains; and

systems (of incentives, behavior, norms) that **excuse, permit, and/or rationalize** that self-serving pursuit.

This guidance contains three modules exploring the corruption opportunities, power, and justifications that might manifest in three typical sustainable livelihood interventions:

- payments for ecosystem services (PES)
- carbon compensation co-benefits
- protected area and other effective area-based conservation (PA/OECM) benefit sharing

Each module identifies corruption risks in that activity type and anti-corruption responses that have been tried or can be considered to address those risks.

Anti-corruption response resources

Each section highlights a subset of key resources to help frame specific anti-corruption responses. However, many additional guides and tools exist, and these are hyperlinked throughout the text. If any link is broken, details to locate the source are available here: https://bit.ly/TNRCSLresources.

Miradi model results chains

Each module includes a high-level results chain illustrating where corruption risks might occur, adapted from the Conservation Action and Measures Library. Follow the links accompanying each figure, or find Miradi files here, for detailed versions that illustrate where anti-corruption activities can be integrated into sustainable livelihood programming.

Foundations: Framing, concepts, and caveats

First, **this guidance is intended for project designers and managers who are already familiar with these types of sustainable livelihood activities**. The three types of projects are stylized and simplified to be applicable in the widest possible range of cases, rather than detailed guidance for how to create a specific PES, carbon compensation, or PA/OECM benefit sharing project. Other types of sustainable livelihood projects also exist.

Second, and similarly, the **goal is to show illustrative examples of how entrusted power could be abused for private gain, along with broad approaches that could be tried in response**. The corruption risks described are illustrative and general, not exhaustive or specific. And both risks and responses are hypothetical, except where a specific study or case is cited.[1]

Third, therefore, **practitioners *must* adapt these risks and responses to their specific operating context**. Not all approaches will be appropriate or feasible for all projects. This guidance is only a starting point of reference that will, ideally, connect practitioners with resources they can use to take what actions they can—even if those actions are limited to partnering with or supporting the actions of other organizations.

Part of that adaptation to context involves reducing barriers for direct stakeholders to participate in, lead, and own activities. Indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLCs), and their lands, play a crucial role in conservation (WWF et al. 2021). Therefore, all of the recommendations and potential responses in this guidance should be interpreted through the lens of inclusive conservation. Furthermore, the shorthand of "inclusive" is for readability, not to imply that inclusion is a small or perfunctory concept; rather, readers should interpret "inclusive" as recognizing, valuing, lifting up, and accommodating the different ways different people experience and contribute to conservation.[2] Similarly, while the modules use "benefit sharing" as shorthand, "individuals and communities are holders of rights, responsibilities, knowledge, capacities, interests and concerns… never mere recipients or beneficiaries of initiatives conceived and carried out by others…" (ICCA 2018).

Nature-based Solutions (NbS): How does this guidance relate?

NbS seek to address societal challenges, like climate change and sustainable development, "hand in paw" with nature. They "protect, restore or proactively manage" places to "deliver both a net socioeconomic benefit at the local level…and a net biodiversity gain…" (Pérez-Cirera et al. 2021).

Each module addresses NbS in the way most relevant to that specific topic. For example, payments for ecosystem services are one way to link the producers and recipients of NbS. Carbon compensation is one financing mechanism for NbS activities. And many NbS rely on proper management of a protected or effectively conserved area (UNDRR 2021).

Thus, in the same way that corruption can undermine the three types of sustainable livelihood interventions included here, corruption can also undermine NbS efforts. The anti-corruption responses below, therefore, will also be useful for delivering "the highest quality [NbS] interventions – those that protect nature and support people's livelihoods, while also mitigating and adapting to climate change" (Hacking et al. 2021).

[1] For real-world cases of corruption, users are encouraged to explore Transparency International's Climate and Corruption Case Atlas.
[2] Those differences include gender; indigenous heritage, background, or affiliation; class and socioeconomic status; and many, many more.

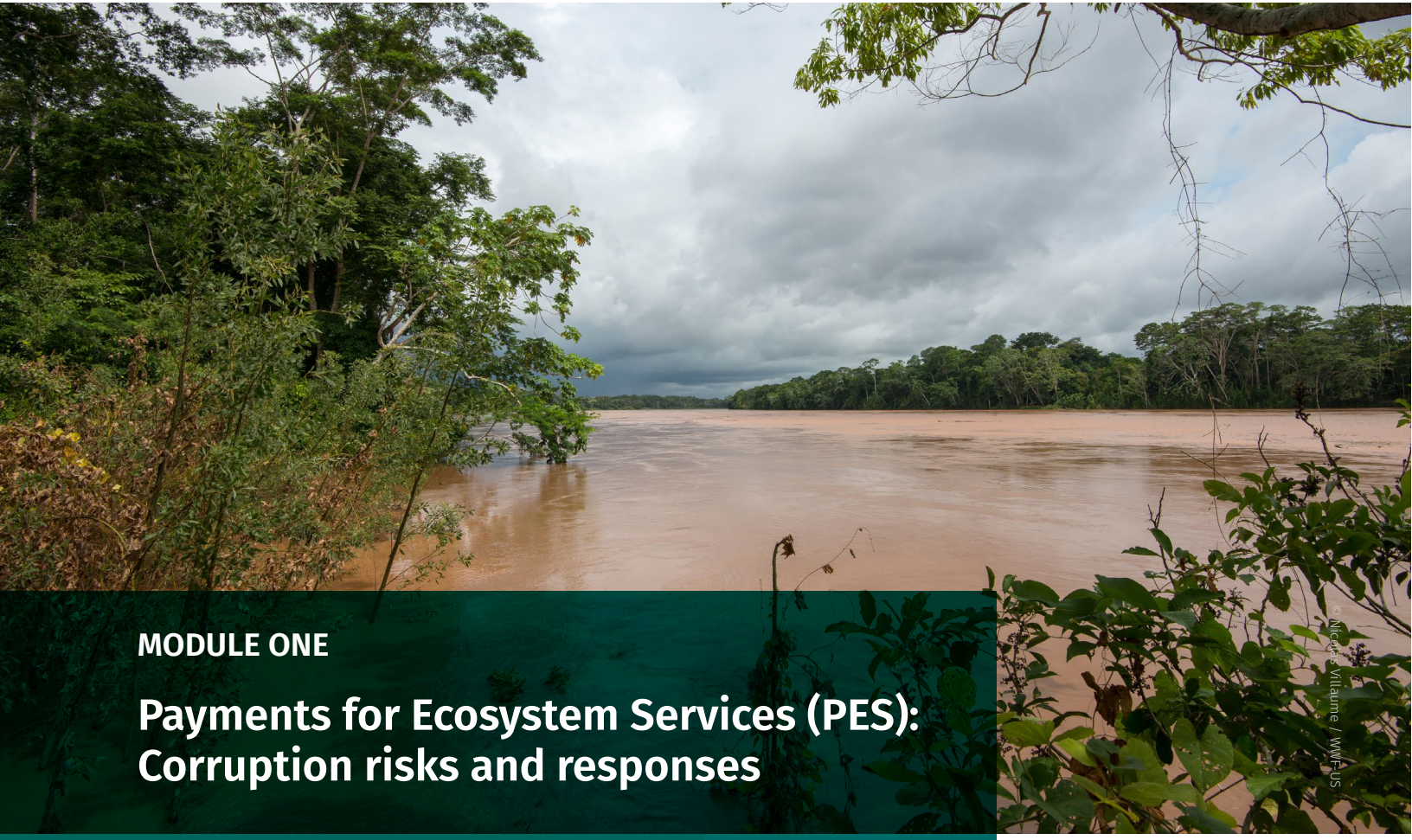
Finally, this guidance intentionally prioritizes practice over exploration of broad anti-corruption concepts. Users may find further investigation of certain anti-corruption concepts helpful:

- Anti-corruption responses are often categorized as "**Prevention**," "**Detection**," and/or "**Enforcement**." This may be a helpful way to organize anti-corruption response activities as part of project planning.
- Root causes, and therefore the appropriate response, may exist at or across a **variety of levels**, from interpersonal to local to national and beyond (Wathne 2021). Generally, the most successful and sustainable anti-corruption efforts are systemic and holistic, using multiple approaches from different angles, because corruption itself is usually systemic (Tacconi and Williams 2020; Wathne 2021).
- Even where large-scale, multi-pronged governance reform is infeasible in a single program of work, practitioners can still consider **political**, **collective action initiatives** to shift power equilibriums (Wathne 2021) or **social norms around corruption** (Williams and Dupuy 2019).
- At a minimum, practitioners and experts designing or implementing sustainable livelihood interventions should try to incorporate **context-specific corruption risk management** into their adaptive management procedures (e.g., Johnsøn 2015, UN Global Compact 2013).

Details on these concepts, and many others, can be found at the introductory TNRC eCourse, U4's overview of anti-corruption basics, and the Anti-Corruption Helpdesk run by Transparency International and U4.

Key crosscutting resources:

- Communities, Conservation, and Livelihoods (2021)
- A Guide for Anti-Corruption Risk Assessment (2013)
- Legal empowerment to promote legitimate tenure rights (2021)
- Women, Land and Corruption-- Resources for Practitioners and Policy-Makers (2018)
- Overcoming the pitfalls of engaging communities in anti-corruption programmes (2020)
- Supplemental Guidance: Grievance Redress Mechanisms (2017)
- Guiding Practice from the Policies of Independent Accountability Mechanisms (2021)
- Stakeholder Participation Guide: Supporting Stakeholder Participation in Design, Implementation and Assessment of Policies and Actions (2020)
- Strengthening social cohesion: Conceptual framing and programming implications (2020)
- Caja de herramientas para la gestión territorial indígena y el manejo de recursos naturales por comunidades (2021)



MODULE ONE

Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES): Corruption risks and responses

Defined here as any conditional scheme that leverages market-based mechanisms to promote conservation by quantifying the value of a "service" that an element of nature provides society; charging the beneficiaries of that service; and using the proceeds to pay the owners or rights holders of that element of nature to continue to maintain it (Wunder 2015). Common PES examples include city water fees to pay upstream landowners to maintain the wetland that filters the city's water; inland residents subsidizing coastal mangrove buffers to protect their property from storm damage; and farmers paying (or being paid) to protect easements for pollinators, in exchange for the increased agricultural yield and biodiversity benefits. Note that compensation to avoid deforestation is addressed in greater detail in the next section on carbon compensation, even though it could be considered a version of PES.

As the recent landmark Dasgupta Review noted, serious debates exist around PES, from its effectiveness (e.g., Gaworecki and Burivalova 2017) to its appropriateness (e.g., Van Hecken et al. 2015). Those rich debates are beyond the scope of this brief, but three of the points most often debated are relevant, corresponding to the corruption incentive, opportunity, and rationalization logic mentioned above.

Incentive: PES schemes require creating, assigning, managing, and transferring value via "payments" or other forms of compensation that can add up to significant, tempting amounts.

Opportunity: Such processes involve actors subject to, empowered by, and with discretion over rules and institutions.

Rationalization: Such institutions create and reinforce power structures, social norms and hierarchies, and community dynamics. (Van Hecken et al. 2015).

The following sections survey how these factors manifest at each step of the PES value chain. There are four steps in this (illustrative, highly stylized) PES.[3]

Step 1: Identifying and valuing the ecosystem service and its ownership.

Step 2: Intermediating, facilitating, and managing agreements between provider and customer.

Step 3: Making the payments and resource transfers.

Step 4: Verifying additionality, conditionality, permanence, and non-leakage.

Each step has a definition; possible corruption risks with examples; and anti-corruption responses that can be considered to reduce those risks.

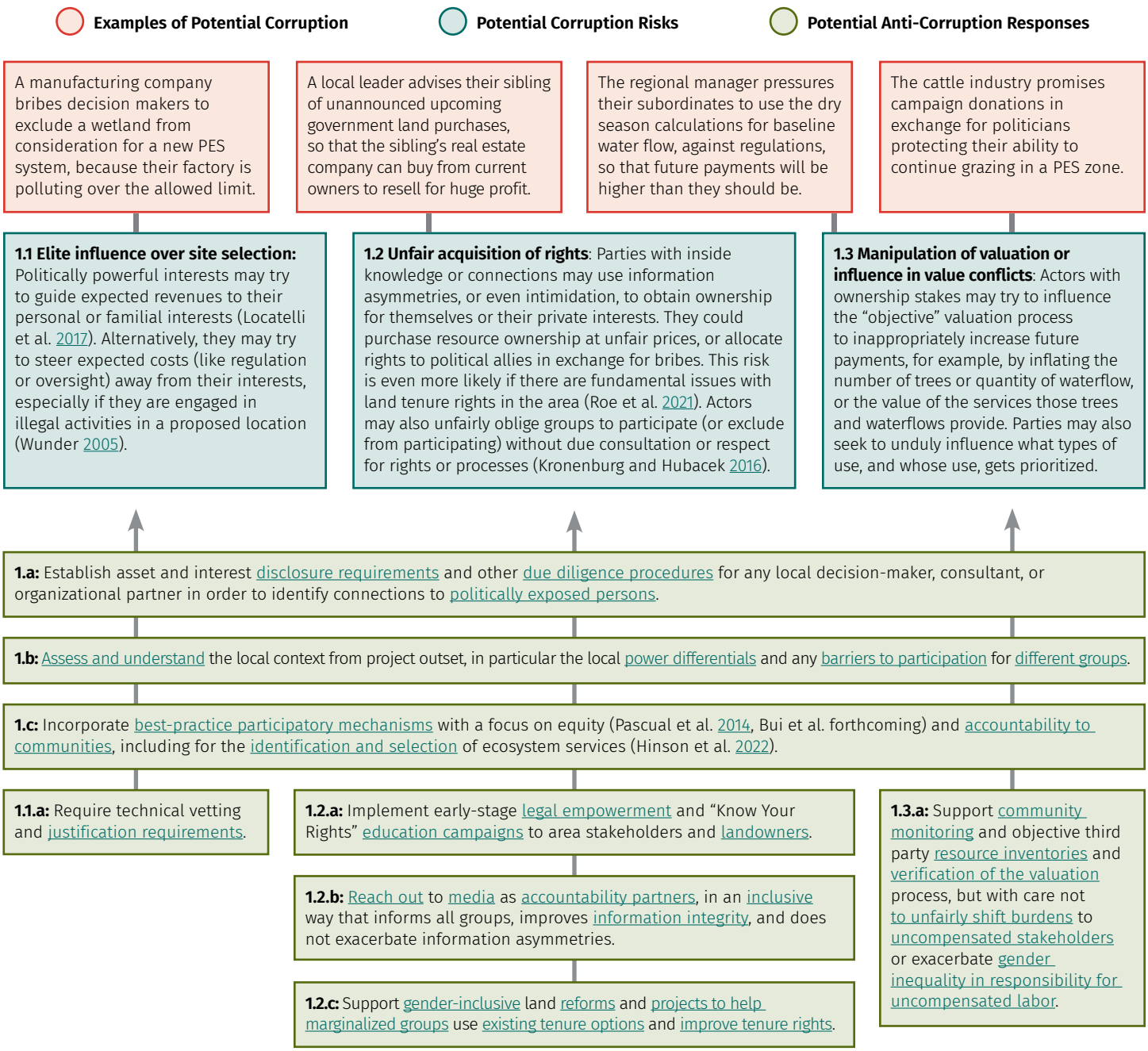
Key PES Resources

- The 11 practice-based recommendations for participatory identification and selection of ecosystem services in Boeraeve et al. (2018), the case study in Dessalegn et al. (2016), and the lessons from the WWF Living Amazon Initiative in Pacha (2015)
- The Capacity Building Project for Environmental Funds guidance booklet for PES (2010)
- The lessons on community-based payment for ecosystem service schemes in Dougill et al. (2012)
- The studies and overviews of PES implementation and experiments in Ezzine-de-Blas et al. (2016) and Loft et al. (2019)

[3] Adapted from Forest Trends et al. (2008), Fripp (2014), Smith et al. (2013), Wunder et al. (2008), and a variety of resources from the Natural Capital Project. Please see those resources for more technical guidance on designing a PES program.

Step one: Identifying and valuating the ecosystem service and its ownership context

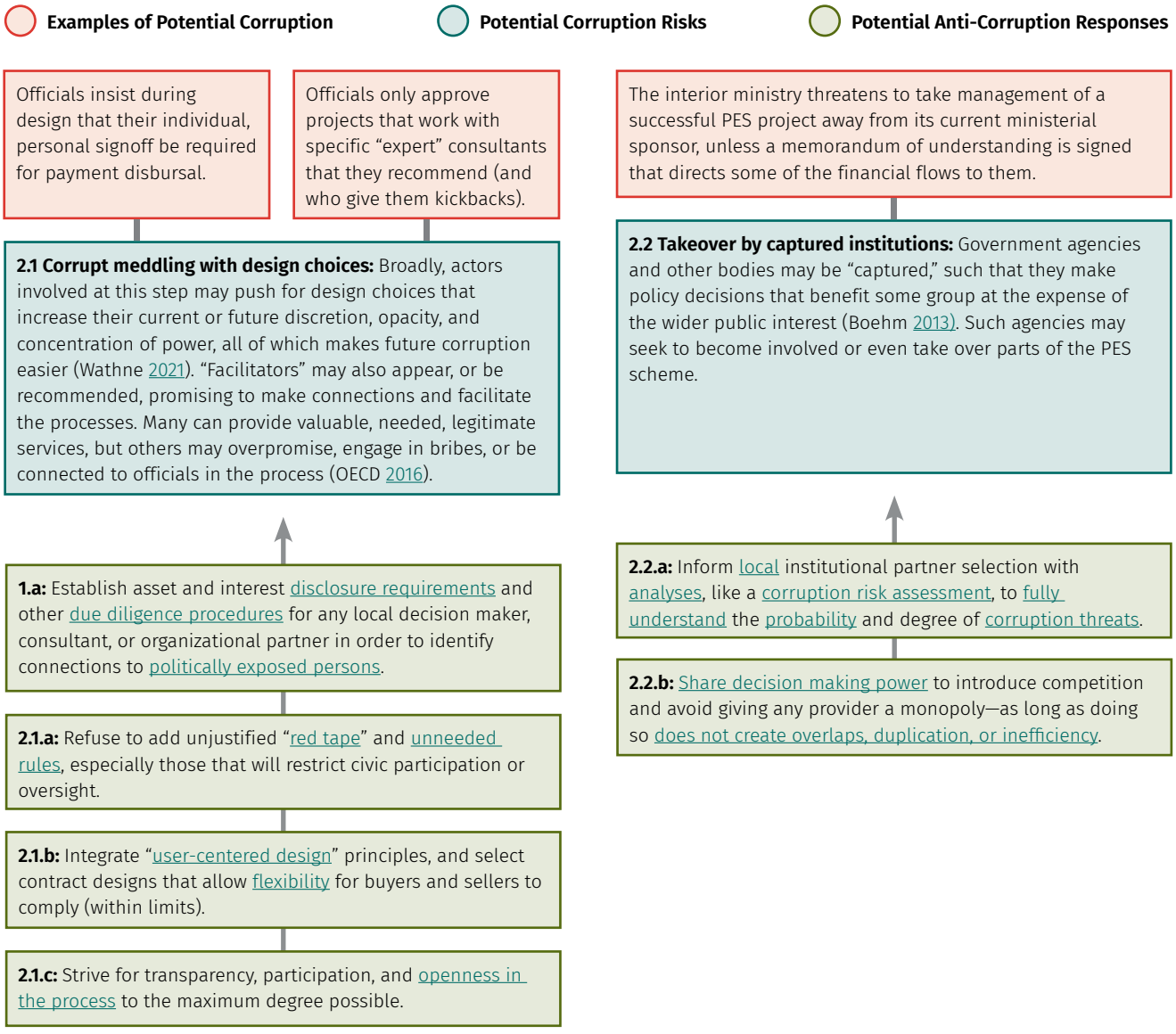
This first step involves defining and measuring the ecosystem services in a particular area; determining their marketable value; and establishing the local political and legal context for control over and ownership of the service-providing resource (Forest Trends et al. 2008). A vast array of valuation methodologies exists, and each involves some prioritization of different stakeholder groups' differing values. That prioritization occurs both at the stages of deciding on scale and scope (one section of a river versus the entire watershed, one forest versus an entire woodland region), up to the explicit negotiations between conflicting uses (local foraging communities versus agricultural interests versus the downstream city versus broader society) (Pascual et al. 2017). In addition, the PES scheme will have to accept (or try to change) the specific context of ownership for the resource in the specific area, with all of the variety (private, communal, customary, public) that could include (Flipp 2014).



Note: Risks and responses are numbered for ease of reference with the Miradi model results chains available at https://bit.ly/TNRCSLresources

Step two: Intermediating, facilitating, and managing agreements between provider and customer

The second step focuses on the contracts between those with rights over or ownership of the natural element providing the ecosystem service, and those who benefit from those services and pay for that benefit in some way. In addition, this step also involves identifying (or creating) the organization that will serve as go-between; verifying the legality of PES transactions and designing the additional rules that will govern them; setting a price that takes into account buyer willingness, seller needs, and transaction costs; and establishing what exactly that price will be based on (Forest Trends et al. 2008, Fripp 2014). This complexity provides fertile ground for corrupt actors (Locatelli et al. 2017). Finally, like the previous step, this step sets the foundation for the steps that follow, and so is key for closing loopholes actors may take advantage of later.



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Step three: Intermediating, facilitating, and managing agreements between provider and customer

The third step is the execution of the system; the flow of services from owners to beneficiaries, and the flow of compensation from beneficiaries to owners. Corruption risks at this stage involve manipulating those flows to benefit private interests. That manipulation could take place when the fee (or tax) is levied on beneficiaries, when the funds are deposited or transferred, or when compensation is calculated and reaches the resource owners.

Examples of Potential Corruption | **Potential Corruption Risks** | **Potential Anti-Corruption Responses**

Ministry officials submit inflated reimbursement claims for inspection trips they never took.

Local officials responsible for disbursing PES funds for a community-owned forest prioritize disbursal to households who voted for their party.

Intermediaries who deliver cash to outlying, unbanked communities steal a portion of each payment by making up "special fees."

The local fund management body uses some funds for luxury purchases for themselves, like automobiles or expensive parties, and reports the expense as "administrative costs."

3.1 Theft, capture, and other manipulation of compensation flows: The form of corruption that probably comes to mind most easily, there are innumerable ways this risk could manifest. Under or over-reporting transactions in accounts and abuse of per diems or travel expenses; the use of ghost employees (UNODC 2020); and self-dealing and laundering via shell companies are all possibilities. Especially where intermediaries are used, skimming off the top (and compensating service providers less) will be a temptation (Kronenburg and Hubacek 2016).

At a higher level, different interests may try to guide compensation (or investment flows from PES-funded development banks) to households or regions that benefit themselves (or their group, family, or political party). Especially if there is a local body tasked with disbursing or directing funds, elite capture may be an issue (Anton 2016; Dupuy 2017). That capture could also include intimidation, or the clientelistic expectation that local leaders will "get a cut" (Rodden and Wibbels 2019), which may not even be considered corrupt in that context (Burai 2020). Instead, it may be expected, or perceived as the only way to secure otherwise scarce resources for stakeholders (Khan et al. 2019, Marquette and Peiffer 2021).

3.1.a: Charge and compensate users directly according to a calculation/criterion that is understandable, stable, and not easily manipulable—as long as the system does not exclude unbanked or other groups (Bui et al. forthcoming).

3.1.b: Establish clear, culturally appropriate rules for open, transparent management of fund accounts at all levels (Dupuy 2017).

3.1.c: Consider collaboration with the financial sector's efforts to "de-risk" and fight money laundering, as well as with the country's anti-corruption agency and/or local watchdog civil society organizations.

3.1.d: Explore the use of "corruption functionality frameworks" and "positive recognition" of fund/system managers (and communities) who act with integrity, especially where corruption is an expected (or necessary) behavioral norm.

3.1.e: Insist on integrity pacts and other measures to create "honest brokers" of any intermediaries involved in the scheme (Forest Trends 2008; Kronenburg and Hubacek 2016; Leimona et al. 2015).

3.1.f: Include and/or support with well-designed, accessible, responsive grievance redress mechanisms, independent accountability mechanisms, social accountability, and whistleblower procedures.

3.1.g: Consider community-building approaches that build social trust and dialogue and empower marginalized groups.

3.1.h: Leverage partnerships, including with customary authorities if relevant, to build culturally appropriate local capacity in all stages of public financial management.

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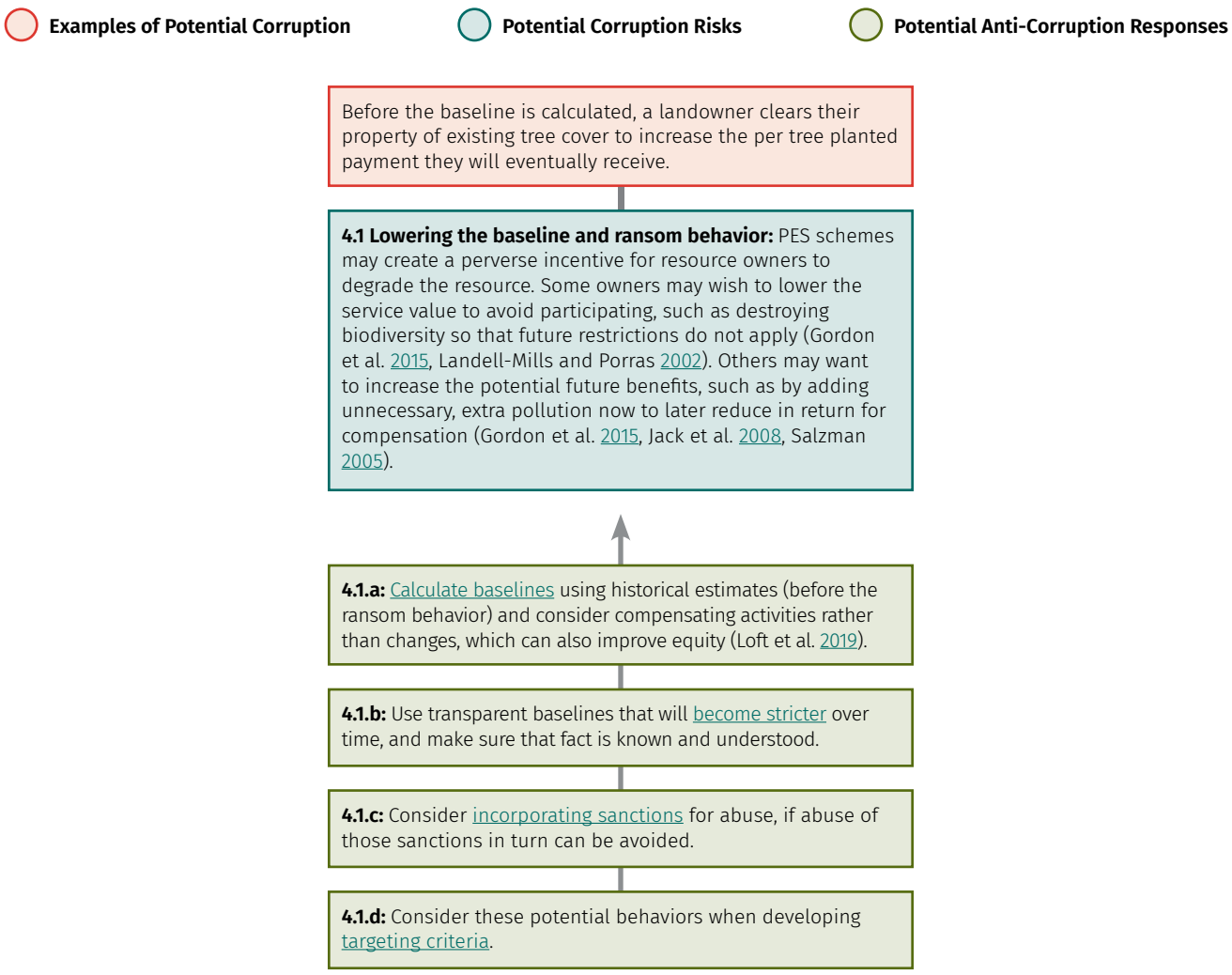
Step four: Verifying additionality, conditionality, permanence, and non-leakage

The final (yet continuous) step is to monitor and verify the PES system to ensure its proper functioning. Four aspects in particular are key to a PES scheme successfully supporting nature and benefiting participants.

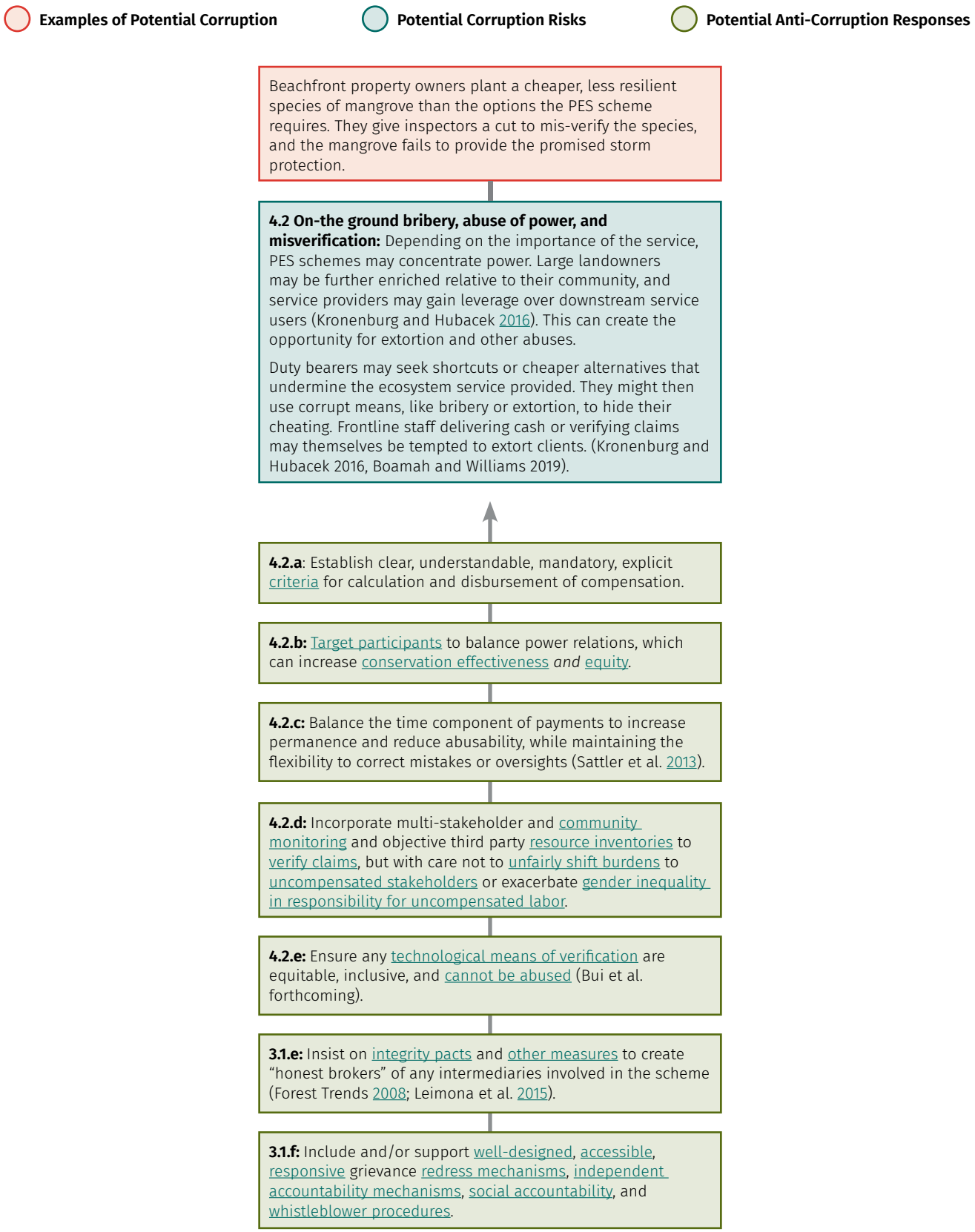
- Additionality: The payments must contribute to a better environmental situation than would otherwise occur, either through increasing the services provided or avoiding the deterioration of existing services.
- Conditionality: Only those actors who contribute some level of additionality should receive compensation.
- Permanence: The act that is compensated (e.g., planting a tree, using a farming practice, preserving a mangrove during hotel construction) should not be reversed after receiving payment.
- Non-leakage: The PES scheme should not just shift a discouraged or avoided behavior to another jurisdiction (Forest Trends et al. 2008; Fripp 2014; Landell-Mills and Porras 2002; Wunder et al. 2008).[4]

Corrupt behavior with these factors may involve both cheating and faking compliance and acts to avoid discovery or punishment for that cheating.



Note: Risks and responses are numbered for ease of reference with the Miradi model results chains available at https://bit.ly/TNRCSLresources

[4] Permanence and non-leakage are most relevant for carbon-related services and so are further elaborated in the next module. Technically, some PES systems could still be successful if they "leaked"—avoiding the destruction of a relatively more biodiverse area at the expense of another or protecting a forest that was more important for water quality at the expense of one less important.



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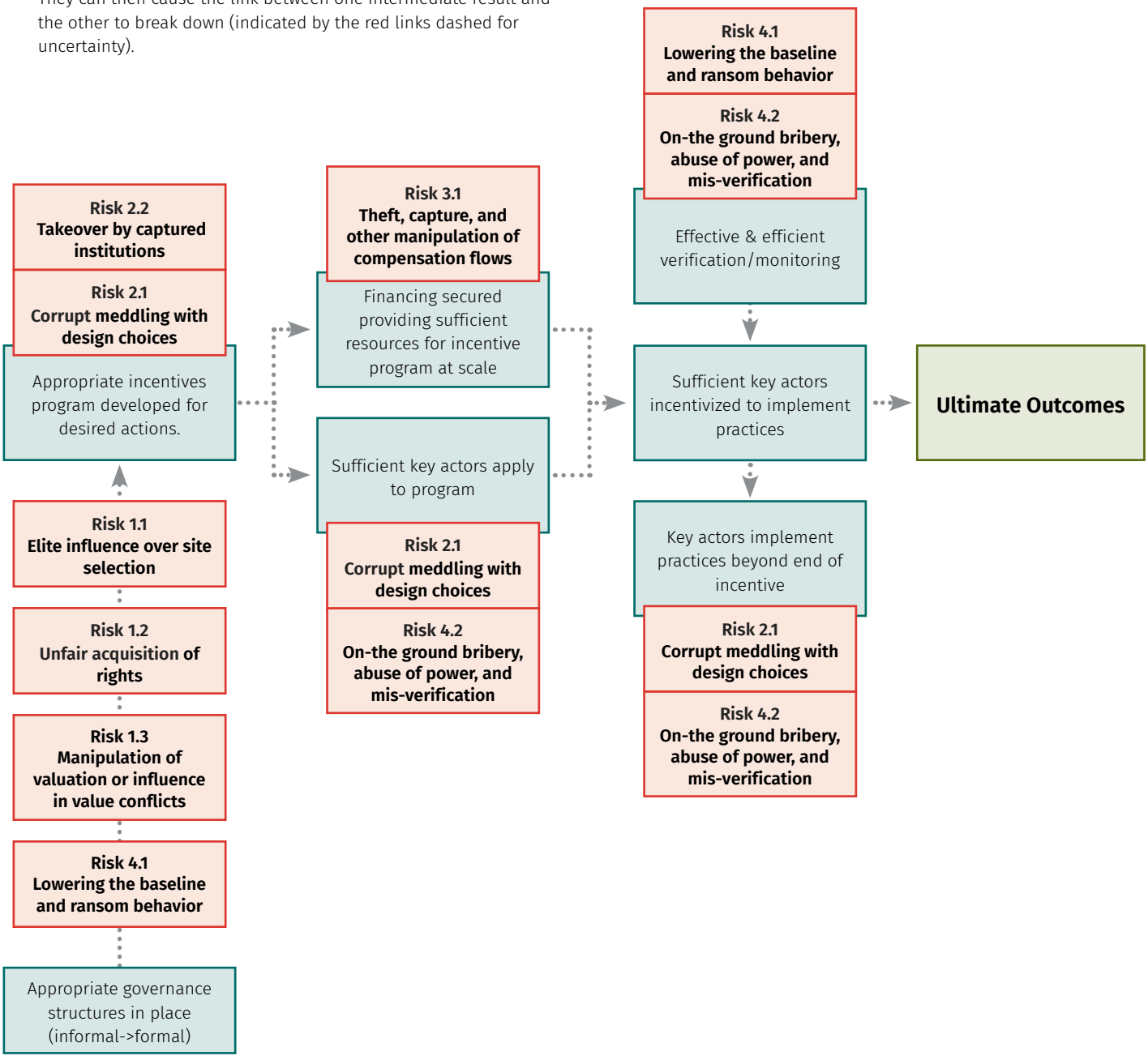
PES annex: Miradi model results chain

In the graphic below, the corruption risks discussed above are mapped onto the generic Direct Economic Incentives results chain from the Conservation Action & Measures Library. A more advanced results chain is available here and via Miradi Share that illustrates where each of the anti-corruption responses may be integrated into a typical PES initiative.

Payment for Ecosystem Services

Adapted from: 5.4 Direct Economic Incentives High-Level Generic TOC v August 2020 (Miradi Share)

Red boxes indicate corruption risks that might emerge at that stage. They can then cause the link between one intermediate result and the other to break down (indicated by the red links dashed for uncertainty).

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MODULE TWO

Carbon compensation co-benefits: Corruption risks and responses

Carbon offsetting is the reduction in emissions or increase in carbon storage in one location to make up for increased emissions (or reduced storage) in another. This guidance focuses on forestry and land use, including fisheries-relevant wetland restoration. Forestry and land use is the most common type of voluntary offset project as of 2021 (Ecosystem Marketplace 2021a), in addition to the predominant investments in Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+).

This guidance uses the term "carbon compensation" to more clearly include the sustainable livelihood effects of these projects. These "co-benefits" are the local socio-economic goods beyond the reduction in carbon, and can be understood as the broader "landscape needs" beyond the carbon credit transaction itself (Hacking et al. 2021). Co-benefits range from local employment, educational opportunities, and infrastructure to improved air and water quality, biodiversity preservation, and gender equality (Gold Standard Foundation 2014, Affendy and Woodside 2020).

Carbon compensation is not an obvious sustainable livelihood approach. Its primary point is reducing the global concentration of CO2 in the atmosphere. However, the founding negotiations of REDD+ recognized, and indeed debated, the importance of co-benefits beyond carbon (Angelson 2008). And within voluntary carbon markets (VCMs),

> the beyond-carbon impacts of forest carbon projects are often of equal or greater importance to buyers of emissions reductions – and project developers often say they could not deliver climate results without also addressing issues such as local economic development, poverty alleviation, and land tenure reform… Co-benefits, in particular biodiversity and community impacts, are often the "major" reason why buyers engage in forest carbon markets in the first place (Goldstein 2016).

As VCMs continue to boom (Gross 2020), especially in projects on forestry and land use (Ecosystem Marketplace 2021b), VCM stakeholders are increasingly concerned that demand is exceeding the supply of "high quality" offset projects (Donofrio et al. 2020). This concern is appropriate; if "interventions are poorly designed or governed, are overly constrained…to generating carbon credits…, or fail to deliver meaningful benefits and incentives to people, they risk not only negative outcomes on the ground, but missed opportunities that we can no longer afford" (Hacking et al. 2021). In a word, what is in question is the "integrity" of these projects, defined for the purposes of this guidance as the **verified assurance** of:

- **Additionality, permanence, non-leakage, and environmental soundness**, so that new projects will actually deliver co-benefits and permanently reduce the amount of CO2 emitted or already in the atmosphere below the status quo without the project;
- **Proper public financial management (PFM)**, such that any financial assets or flows that pass through public coffers are correctly accounted and effectively, appropriately, and accountably managed; and

Fair, rights-based stakeholder involvement, ensuring proper consultation, consent, compensation, and co-benefit of people affected by the project, such that projects do not exacerbate other social problems.[5]

Many of the challenges plaguing carbon compensation projects in these categories are standard administrative and capacity challenges, and not necessarily corruption. But incentives, opportunities, and rationalizations for corruption exist, on top of the vulnerabilities that already plague the forestry sector. Examples include:

the incentive to cut regulatory corners and lower costs,

the opportunities created by the necessary reliance on intermediaries to navigate complexity,

and the rationalizations arising from conflicts among and between local livelihood needs and the protection of the carbon sink.

The following sections explore how these incentives, opportunities, and rationalizations may manifest, organized by the three categories of integrity above. Each category has a definition; possible corruption risks with examples; and anti-corruption responses that can be considered to reduce those risks.

Before proceeding, however, there are two **important acknowledgments** for readers to bear in mind.

First, **where the tables below reference any particular standard or organization, they do so purely for representational purposes**. This guidance is not evaluating actual corruption risk in any actual standard, process, or entity (although such evaluations would be valuable).

Second, there are many stakeholders who will contend that integrity or "high quality" is not achievable in carbon compensation. They point out that such projects may damage other, more efficient CO2 reduction methods (e.g., Böhm 2013). They also question the ethics of shifting burdens and responsibility from emitters to communities who have usually contributed very little to the global CO2 problem (e.g., Hyams and Fawcett 2013). This guidance acknowledges this debate, with due respect to the good-faith proponents on both sides. However, **the guidance recognizes that carbon compensation initiatives are occurring, and so seeks to provide some tools to improve the integrity of such initiatives** to the degree possible.

Key carbon compensation resources

- The Transparency International case studies (Korwin 2016) and UN-REDD guidance (2017) on corruption risk assessment for REDD+.
- Williams et al.'s (2015) practical findings and checklist for integrity and anti-corruption in REDD+, on which this guidance draws and expands.
- Transparency International's guide on independent REDD+ governance monitoring (Sabogal 2018) and the process and methodology for environmental audits from Sustainable Agriculture in South Africa (SIZA 2021).
- The International Land Coalition's database of good practices and UN-REDD's lessons and recommendations on forest tenure in REDD+ (2021).
- CIFOR's guidance on adaptive collaborative management for forests (Pierce Colfer et al. 2021).
- The Assessment Tool from the Tenure and Global Climate Change project (Daviet and Landsberg 2015).

[5] Adapted from Angelson 2008; Beder 2014; Dobson 2015; Gold Standard 2019; Hacking et al. 2021; Irfan 2020; and Transparency International 2011. Please see those resources for more technical guidance on designing or selecting a carbon compensation program.

1. Additionality, permanence, non-leakage, and environmental soundness

Carbon compensation projects should permanently reduce CO2 beyond the business-as-usual scenario that would have happened without the compensation (World Bank 2016). Projects should also yield co-benefits, although requirements are still nascent. The Gold Standard piloted its SDG Impact tool in 2021, joining Verra's Sustainable Development Verified Impact Standard (SD VISta) as the second major carbon compensation player to encourage (but not require) co-benefit measurement.

Unfortunately, both buyers and sellers of offsets would benefit from over-representing the impacts of the projects, including additionality and co-benefits (Dobson 2015; Gillenwater 2012; Williams et al. 2015; World Bank 2016). Co-benefits may require extra effort, time, or resources, which can incentivize "SDG-washing" that overstates projects' development impacts (Myers 2021). In addition to these potential incentives for corruption, complexity in methods and data create the opportunities for it, in the form of collusion, payoffs to overlook fraud, and the like. As a result, corruption can heighten the risks of carbon compensation projects creating "disbenefits" through exacerbating or creating unintended environmental and social problems (Lin et al. 2013, Wittman and Caron 2009).

Examples of Potential Corruption

Property owners plant a cheaper mono-species of tree instead of the diverse native options the project requires. They give inspectors a bribe to mis-verify the species.

Potential Corruption Risks

High-level officials pressure civil servants to over-estimate deforestation rates to increase future compensation flows.

Potential Anti-Corruption Responses

As soon as carbon credit is purchased, a project cancels construction on the school they promised the community in exchange for consent.

1.1 Manipulation of data and other fraudulent co-benefit or environmental claims: Baselines can be calculated so that projects qualify for compensation without having to deliver any additional benefit (Chagas et al. 2020). Because "[the] more deforestation you anticipate, the more credits you generate, the more money you stand to make... It's easy to game the system by nudging the numbers toward the bleakest alternative reality" (Song 2019). Companies with operations across borders, like many multinational timber and agri-businesses, may also misrepresent how much of their activities they will simply move to other jurisdictions. This intentional leakage can allow someone to benefit from offset claims even if their total emissions do not change (Chagas et al. 2020).

Similarly, the importance carbon compensators place on co-benefits, and the fact that co-benefits are difficult to measure (Vanderklift et al. 2019) and usually not verified, may incentivize intentional misrepresentation of impacts or promises that fail to materialize (Compensate 2021). On the environmental side, species selection is critical to actually delivering conservation benefits (UNDRR 2021). But project beneficiaries may be tempted to use fast-growing or cheaper species rather than project-required species (WWF Uganda 2020). They may then use corruption to avoid detection.

Domestic quality assurance institutions or local monitors may find it difficult to navigate complex project rules (Böhm and Dabhi 2009, TSVCM 2021), or may approve claims without full due diligence (Schneider 2007). But because the stakes are high for any negative data (about emissions, development, forest cover, etc.), there is significant space for bribery, fraud, or political interference in results reporting (Frunza 2013, Williams et al. 2015, Williams and Dupuy 2019). Such interference may not even be direct; authoritarian and/or corrupt systems create strong social pressures for actors to report the data decisionmakers want (e.g., Carlitz and McLellan 2020). And while the gaps identified in reporting so far seem to be due to technical differences in estimation (e.g., Butler 2021), investigations have revealed "willful mistakes" as well (Mooney et al. 2021).

1.1.a: Follow best practices for conservatively calculating baselines and potential leakage that help prevent manipulation and cherry-picking.

1.1.b: Consider civil society monitoring and direct measurement via technology to avoid overestimation, but ensure any technological means of verification are equitable, inclusive, and cannot be abused (Bui et al. forthcoming).

1.1.c: Participate in, or at least leverage the experience of, multi-lateral carbon compensation quality assurance and integrity initiatives.

1.1.d: Ensure auditors and domestic quality assurance institutions are trained on, and internally follow, integrity practices.

1.1.e: Establish, resource, use, and support local stakeholders to use grievance redress, social accountability, and independent accountability mechanisms.

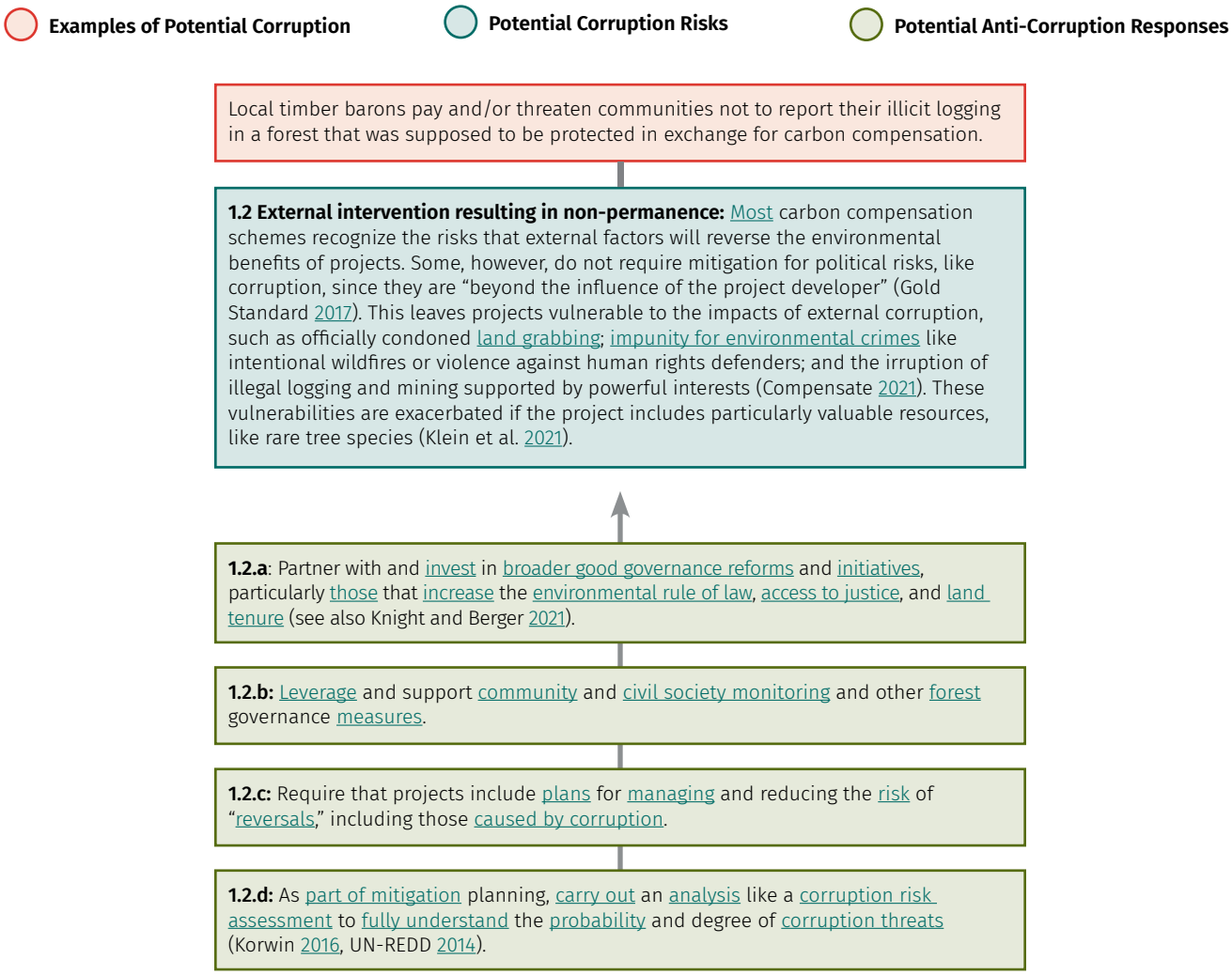
1.1.f: Make complaints and investigations transparent, while protecting whistleblowers.

1.1.g: Strengthen ex-ante and ex-post sustainability monitoring, and consider past failures to deliver in future decision making.

1.1.h: Ensure multi-stakeholder engagement in monitoring, reporting, and verification, but with care not to unfairly shift burdens to uncompensated stakeholders or exacerbate gender inequality in responsibility for uncompensated labor.

1.1.i: Consider ways to safely pursue more reliable data in contexts where official sources are unreliable (Glasius et al. 2018).

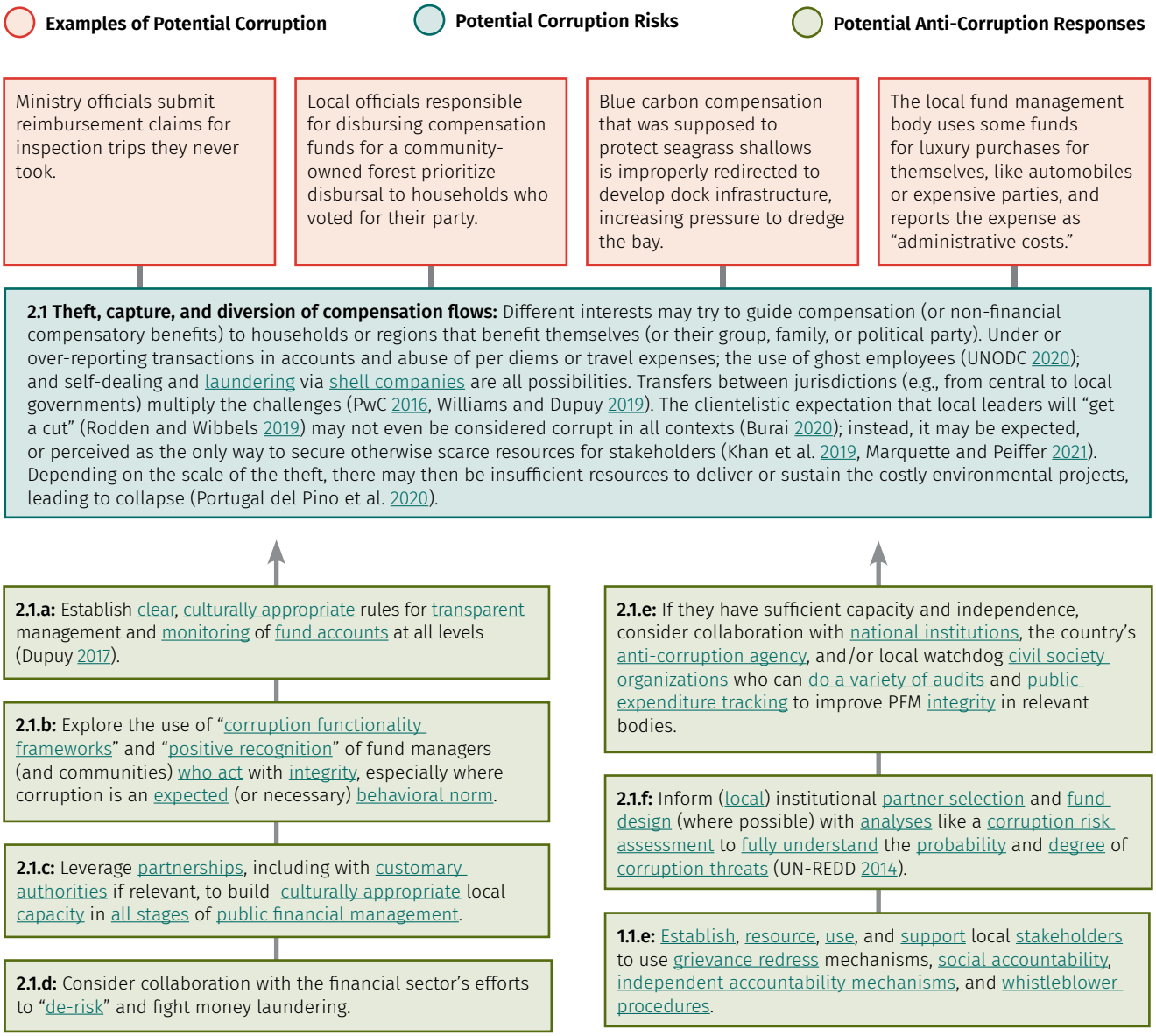
Note: Risks and responses are numbered for ease of reference with the Miradi model results chains available at https://bit.ly/TNRCSLresources



Note: Risks and responses are numbered for ease of reference with the Miradi model results chains available at https://bit.ly/TNRCSLresources

2. Proper public financial management

With at least US$ 1 billion in the VCM (Ecosystem Marketplace 2021b), and at least US$ 3 billion approved out of more than US$ 5 billion pledged in REDD+ (Watson and Shalatek 2021), carbon compensation is a major component of the global climate finance system. As with any financial system with so many actors engaging in so many transactions, with such amounts flowing through diverse institutional arrangements, "the carbon market also suffers from the common risks of corruption and fraud" (Dobson 2015, Nest et al. 2020). Some improvements in the system, for example by tracking carbon-based asset ownership and retirement, have helped reduce the most obvious of those risks (INTERPOL 2013). And more recently, promising new multi-lateral initiatives like the Voluntary Carbon Markets Integrity Initiative have emerged. But "the governance and oversight challenge is [still] vast," producing a "pressure to disburse" that "may create the wrong incentives for donors, undermine the effectiveness of projects and increase vulnerability to corruption" (Ardigó 2016).



Note: Risks and responses are numbered for ease of reference with the Miradi model results chains available at https://bit.ly/TNRCSLresources

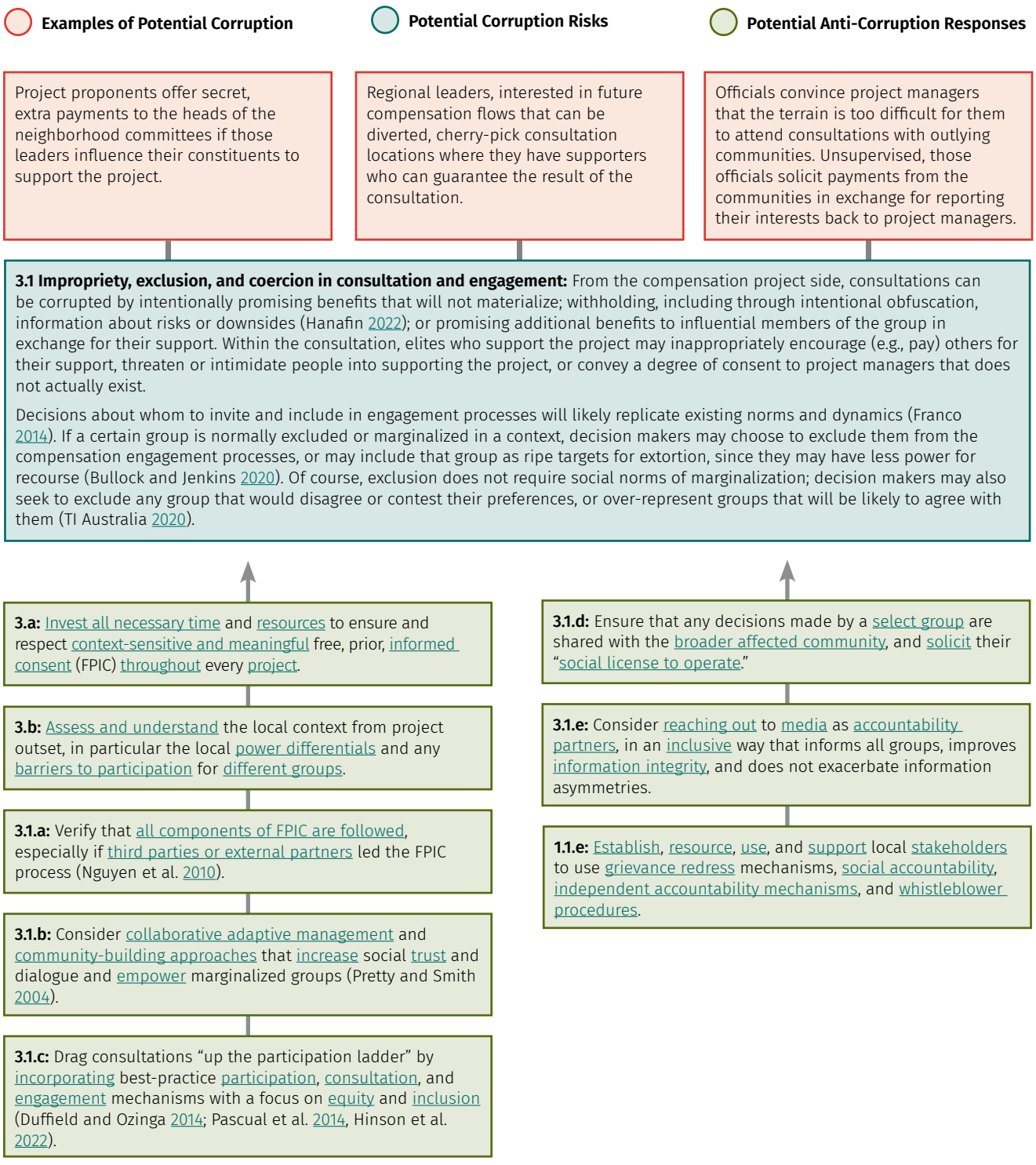
3. Fair, rights-based stakeholder involvement

Especially for forestry and land use-based carbon compensation, the local people affected by the project usually contributed very little of the emissions the project offsets. As a result, the idea of making changes (or preventing change) in one location to make up for broader, global changes should activate a concern with justice and equity. But there are also practical reasons to ensure proper consultation, consent, compensation, and co-benefit. The permanence of any compensation project depends in large part on the behaviors of local stakeholders. If those stakeholders are harmed or cheated in, through, or out of the benefits of the project by powerful interests, the effectiveness of the project will be severely jeopardized (Lofts et al. 2021).

Unfortunately, significant pressures against full, just stakeholder involvement often still exist. Projects may require collaboration or approval from governmental authorities who may be corrupt (Milne 2020). Communities may not agree with the scale or design of a project, which may be difficult for project proponents to accept. Even if they do agree, good consultation and stakeholder involvement takes time, which can conflict with the desires of project proponents (Campbell 2012). Part of that time requirement is due to the complexity of carbon compensation schemes, which also creates the opportunity for intermediaries and elites to rush, misrepresent, or take advantage of consultative processes (Peskett and Brodnig 2011). If there are financial or other benefits to be disbursed, the potential payoff from capturing or coopting the process only rises (Myers Madeira et al. 2013).

As a result, despite their positive intentions, carbon compensation programs run significant risks of creating "disbenefits" through exacerbating or creating unintended environmental and social problems (Lin et al. 2013, Wittman and Caron 2009). To the benefit of some but the detriment of others, a carbon compensation program can shift or cement power dynamics, create or remove rights, and (de)legitimize modes of resource use (e.g., Sarmiento Barletti and Larson 2017).

Any major development or land use change initiative would face similar challenges. Like the more ethical initiatives in those categories, major players in the carbon compensation space have created safeguards to prevent or at least mitigate such unintended consequences. However, corruption can undermine the effectiveness of those safeguards—even when those safeguards include prohibitions against corruption. Without intentional anti-corruption efforts that account for things like "embedded pro-corruption social norms... [certain] safeguards are likely to be at best partially effective against corruption..." (Williams and Dupuy 2019).



Note: Risks and responses are numbered for ease of reference with the Miradi model results chains available at https://bit.ly/TNRCSLresources

Examples of Potential Corruption

Area communities are promised that their fishing rights will not be affected by a blue carbon compensation agreement. But once the project is created, duty bearers begin extorting fishers for access.

Potential Corruption Risks

Responsibility for monitoring a forest set-aside in exchange for compensation is transferred to publicly employed rangers. Those rangers are threatened and pressured from their (paid off) superiors to "look the other way" so that illicit extraction can take place.

Potential Anti-Corruption Responses

Officials with connections to palm oil plantations have wanted to convert community forests to private holdings. They use a carbon compensation project as a guise to acquire rights over the land, then look the other way as it is deforested.

3.2 Undermining rights and empowering extortion, elite capture, and illicit extraction: If projects involve concrete co-benefits, like development activities or financial transfers, there is an obvious risk that elites or intermediaries capture a disproportionate amount of those benefits and/or pass on a disproportionate amount of the associated costs (e.g., Dupuy 2017; Roe et al. 2021). But additionally, any initiative that involves restrictions to resource use, and concentrates power for enforcing those restrictions, can create the opportunity for corruption and abuse (Herr et al. 2019, Khatun et al. 2015; Soliev et al. 2021).

Many projects require partnership with state authorities or business interests. Such projects risk contributing to "green grabbing" and "green extraction" if rights, including carbon rights, do not exist in law or are not protected in practice (Fairhead et al. 2012, Le Billon 2021). Without those protections, partnership may bolster the ability of malicious actors to repress, control, and exploit constituents and communities in pursuit of their acquisitive agendas (e.g., Milne 2020, Pérez-Cirera et al. 2021).

In particular, land with complex or non-standard tenure arrangements, like traditional and communal property rights, may not fit the incentives or processes of a particular project. This can lead to both exclusion from opportunities, and an increased opportunity for land grabbing by others (Denier et al. 2014, Gianella and Cárdenas forthcoming, Milne et al. 2019, Milne 2020, Vhugen et al. 2012). Concentrating power may also simultaneously reduce the ability of traditional custodians, rangers, or monitors to prevent or report those violations (Milne et al. 2019, Milne 2020, Williams and Dupuy 2019).

3.a: Invest all necessary time and resources to ensure context-sensitive and meaningful free, prior, informed consent (FPIC) throughout every project.

3.b: Assess and understand the local context from project outset, in particular the local power differentials and any barriers to participation for different groups.

3.2.a: Ensure that any power or discretion over access created by the project includes the highest degree of anti-corruption and social safeguards, and verify that such safeguards are consistently followed.

3.2.b: Assess whether existing tenure, carbon rights, community management capacity, and governance are sufficient and just, and work to improve them if needed (see also the tools in this annex, CIEL 2021, Knight 2021, RRI 2021, Silverman 2015, and UN-REDD 2021).

3.2.c: Fully analyze and design for the likely impacts of the project on social elements like cohesion, equity, power, and trust (see also Nayak 2021).

3.2.d: Select a system for sharing benefits based on what norms and preconditions for success exist (or don't).

3.2.e: Insist on integrity pacts and/or other measures to create "honest brokers" of any intermediaries (Kronenburg and Hubacek 2016).

1.1.e: Establish, resource, use, and support local stakeholders to use grievance redress mechanisms, social accountability, independent accountability mechanisms, and whistleblower procedures.

1.1.h: Ensure multi-stakeholder engagement in monitoring, reporting, and verification, but with care not to unfairly shift burdens to uncompensated stakeholders or exacerbate gender inequality in responsibility for uncompensated labor.

2.1.a: Establish clear, culturally appropriate rules for transparent management and monitoring of fund accounts at all levels (Dupuy 2017).

2.1.f: Inform (local) institutional partner selection and fund design (where possible) with analyses like a corruption risk assessment to fully understand the probability and degree of corruption threats (UN-REDD 2014).

Note: Risks and responses are numbered for ease of reference with the Miradi model results chains available at https://bit.ly/TNRCSLresources

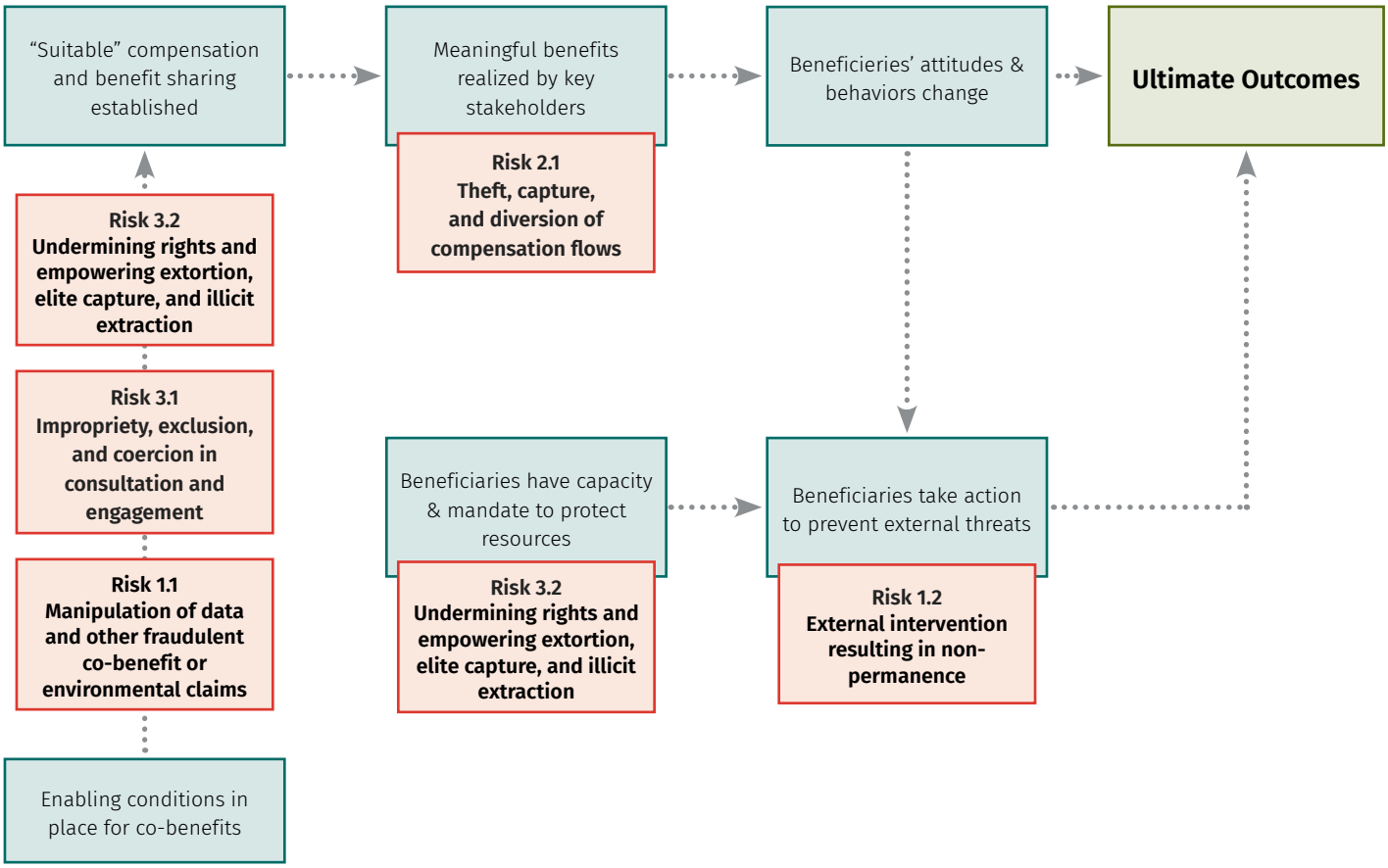
Carbon compensation annex: Miradi model results chain

In the graphic below, the corruption risks discussed above are mapped onto the generic Linked Enterprises and Alternative Livelihood results chain from the Conservation Action & Measures Library. A more advanced results chain is available here and via Miradi Share that illustrates where each of the anti-corruption responses may be integrated into a typical carbon compensation co-benefit initiative.

Carbon Compensation Co-Benefits

Adapted from: 5.1 Linked Enterprises & Alternative Livelihoods High-Level Generic TOC v April 2020 (Miradi Share)

Red boxes indicate corruption risks that might emerge at that stage. They can undermine needed enabling factors and cause the link between one intermediate result and the other to break down (indicated by the red links dashed for uncertainty).



MODULE THREE

Benefit sharing from protected areas and other effective conservation measures: Corruption risks and responses

Protected areas (PAs) and other effective conservation measures (OECMs), the latter by intention and design, can take myriad forms. This guidance is intended to apply to any designated geographical area on the land or sea that:

- Is governed by formal or informal rules;
- Has conservation as the primary goal or as a significant outcome; and
- Shares benefits with stakeholders or communities involved in or affected by the area's conservation (Alves-Pinto et al. 2021; Morgera and Tsioumani 2010).

This broad definition intends to include any types of benefits, be they tangible or intangible, financial or non-monetary.[6] Similarly, this guidance should be relevant to many types of governing arrangements, from government to private ownership, from co-ownership and co-management to community conservation enterprises (CCEs).

The terms PAs and OECMs are used interchangeably, often shortened in this document to simply "areas."

PAs and OECMs are fundamental to biodiversity. Often shortened to "30x30," the draft Global Biodiversity Framework's third target calls for at least 30 percent of land and seascapes to be conserved via PAs or OECMs. At the same time, the Framework also recognizes the importance of sustainable use of resources and sharing the benefits of conservation. Target 9 is to "Ensure benefits, including nutrition, food security, medicines, and livelihoods for people especially for the most vulnerable through sustainable management of wild terrestrial, freshwater and marine species and protecting customary sustainable use by indigenous peoples and local communities."

30x30 and sustainable use and benefit sharing should reinforce one another (WWF 2021a). But various factors can undermine one or the other or convert their mutually beneficial dependence to a competition of mutual exclusion. Corruption is one of those factors.

The benefits from conservation (or from "defecting" and trying to privately capture a public good) can incentivize the corruption.

The necessary formal or informal rules for conservation, and the discretion and power necessary to enforce them, create the opportunity to act corruptly.

And various dynamics, from historical patterns of exclusion and distrust to the potential for PA and OECM benefit sharing initiatives to replicate those patterns, can rationalize that corrupt action.

For manageability, this module focuses on the two high-level components that are likely relevant to any PA or OECM initiative:

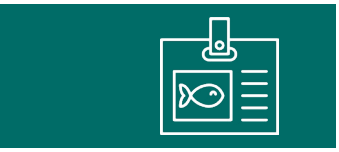
- the governance and management of the area;
- and the management and sharing of benefits, impacts, and costs resulting from that area.

Each component has a definition; possible corruption risks with examples; and anti-corruption responses that can be considered to reduce those risks.

[6] Note that while access to an area (for economic, social, or cultural reasons) is considered as a benefit, this guidance does not apply to the broader enjoyment of ecosystem services that a PA/OECM may provide (Snyman and Bricker 2019). The payment for ecosystem services module in this guidance covers that topic.

Key PA/OECM resources

- The guidelines for tourism partnerships and concessions for protected areas in Spenceley et al. (2017).
- The IUCN guide for governance of protected areas (Borrini-Feyerabend et al. 2013) and the recommendations on participation and engagement in PA / OECM management in Dovers et al. (2015).
- The frameworks and lessons on holistic human-wildlife conflict (HWC) mitigation in Gross et al. (2021) and on insurance and compensation in Leslie et al. (2019) and Wilson-Holt and Steele (2019).
- The tools, decision guidance, method manuals, and supplements for assessing social impacts, governance, and equity in conserved areas in Booker (n.d.), Franks et al. (2018), Franks and Pinto (2020), and Franks and Small (2021).
- The ICCA toolkit to support conservation by indigenous peoples and local communities (Corrigan and Hay-Edie 2013).
- These TNRC overviews of the broad corruption risks in the timber, fisheries, and wildlife sectors.
- The ICCA Consortium's "DOs and DON'Ts," which implementers considering any of the potential responses in this module should closely follow.



Area governance and management

To be effective, any area-based conservation measure requires some level of restriction. Access may be restricted to certain groups or certain times, harvesting may be limited to certain species or amounts, or particular activities on holdings may be prohibited or required. "Accordingly, the management of OECMs should include "effective means" of control of activities that could impact biodiversity, whether through legal measures or other effective means (such as customary laws or binding agreements with the landowners)" (Marnewick et al. 2020).

These restrictions create, and in many ways simply are, power; the power to design restrictions, the discretion to interpret them, and the authority to enforce them. Because someone has to be entrusted with that power, there is the opportunity for corruption (Tacconi and Williams 2020).

Examples of Potential Corruption

Officials push through a land purchase, in spite of local resident opposition, for the stated purpose of creating a nature reserve. At the last minute, they "discover" that the land is not as biodiverse as they claimed and sell the rights to a developer, as was intended all along.

Area communities are promised that their chamomile and other harvesting rights will not be affected by the establishment of a new OECM. But once the project is created, duty bearers begin extorting harvesters for access (Adapted from Herr et al. 2019 and Outhwaite 2020).

Potential Corruption Risks

1.1 Grand corruption, land grabbing, and undermining rights: Benefits generated by PAs and OECMs, or resources intended to create or maintain them, "can be diverted to enrich well-connected individuals, ensure the re-election of the ruling political party, or allow government agencies to fund other activities besides wildlife management…" (Packer and Polasky 2018). Areas may be gazetted (or degazetted) for political or private benefit, rather than for conservation, and at the expense of local communities and rights holders (Beevers 2015, Noe et al. 2017). Once a PA/OECM is established, corrupt individuals and agencies may be attracted to the resources it generates as a source of personal benefit, power, or leverage (Gardner et al. 2018, Packer and Polasky 2018).

Projects also risk contributing to "green grabbing" if located where rights, especially tenure and consent rights, do not exist in law or are not protected in practice (Fairhead et al. 2012). Without those protections, a benefit sharing program's "contribution to socio-economic development of local communities can be circumscribed by…misdirected interventions by state actors…duplicitous actions of multi-national corporations, and… opaque governance processes with limited accountability" (Hill et al. 2016).

In addition, land with complex or non-standard tenure arrangements, like traditional and communal property rights, may not fit the processes of a particular project. This can lead to both exclusion from opportunities, and an increased opportunity for land grabbing by others (Gianella and Cárdenas forthcoming, Milne 2020, Robinson et al. 2018). Concentrating power may also simultaneously reduce the ability of traditional custodians, rangers, or monitors to prevent or report those violations (Milne 2020, Williams and Dupuy 2019).

Potential Anti-Corruption Responses

1.1.a: Invest all necessary time and resources to ensure context-sensitive and meaningful free, prior, informed consent (FPIC) throughout every project.

1.a: Ensure sufficient community and participatory engagement in co-designing, assessing, monitoring, reporting, and verifying, but with care not to unfairly shift burdens to uncompensated stakeholders or exacerbate gender inequality in responsibility for uncompensated labor.

1.b: Build on "existing community organizations and structures" while preventing elite capture through community-building, monitoring, community protocols, power analysis, and other approaches.

1.c: Establish, resource, use, and support stakeholders to use mechanisms for grievance redress, independent accountability, social accountability, and whistleblowing.

1.d: Include measures to increase transparency, improve accountability, and reduce discretion in area access and management through, if appropriate, "corruption functionality frameworks" and "positive recognition" of area managers (and communities) who act with integrity, especially where corruption is an expected (or necessary) behavioral norm.

1.e: Ensure that any power or discretion over access created by the project includes the highest degree of rights-based anti-corruption and social safeguards, and verify that such safeguards are consistently followed.

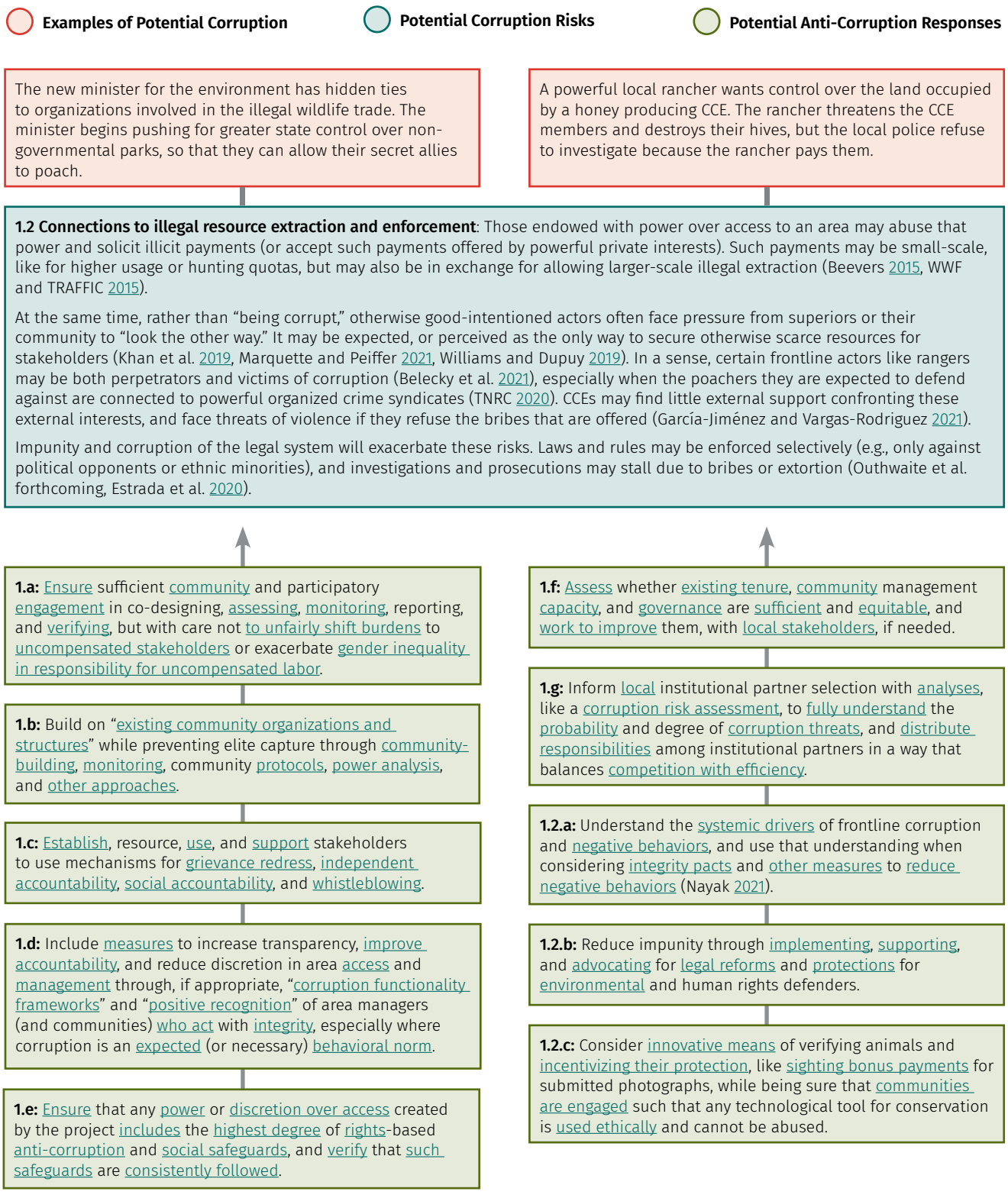
1.f: Assess whether existing tenure, community management capacity, and governance are sufficient and equitable, and work to improve them, with local stakeholders, if needed.

1.g: Inform local institutional partner selection with analyses, like a corruption risk assessment, to fully understand the probability and degree of corruption threats, and distribute responsibilities among institutional partners in a way that balances competition with efficiency.

1.1.b: Implement the most appropriate methodology for participatorily assessing and, if possible, improving social impacts, cohesion, governance, enforcement, and equity of PA/OECM benefit sharing initiatives and governance regimes.

1.1.c: Design holistic and integrated protected area management plans and benefit sharing agreements in a meaningful, participatory, representative, equitable, and inclusive manner (see also Borrini-Feyerabend et al. 2013, CANARI 2011, Omoding et al. 2020).

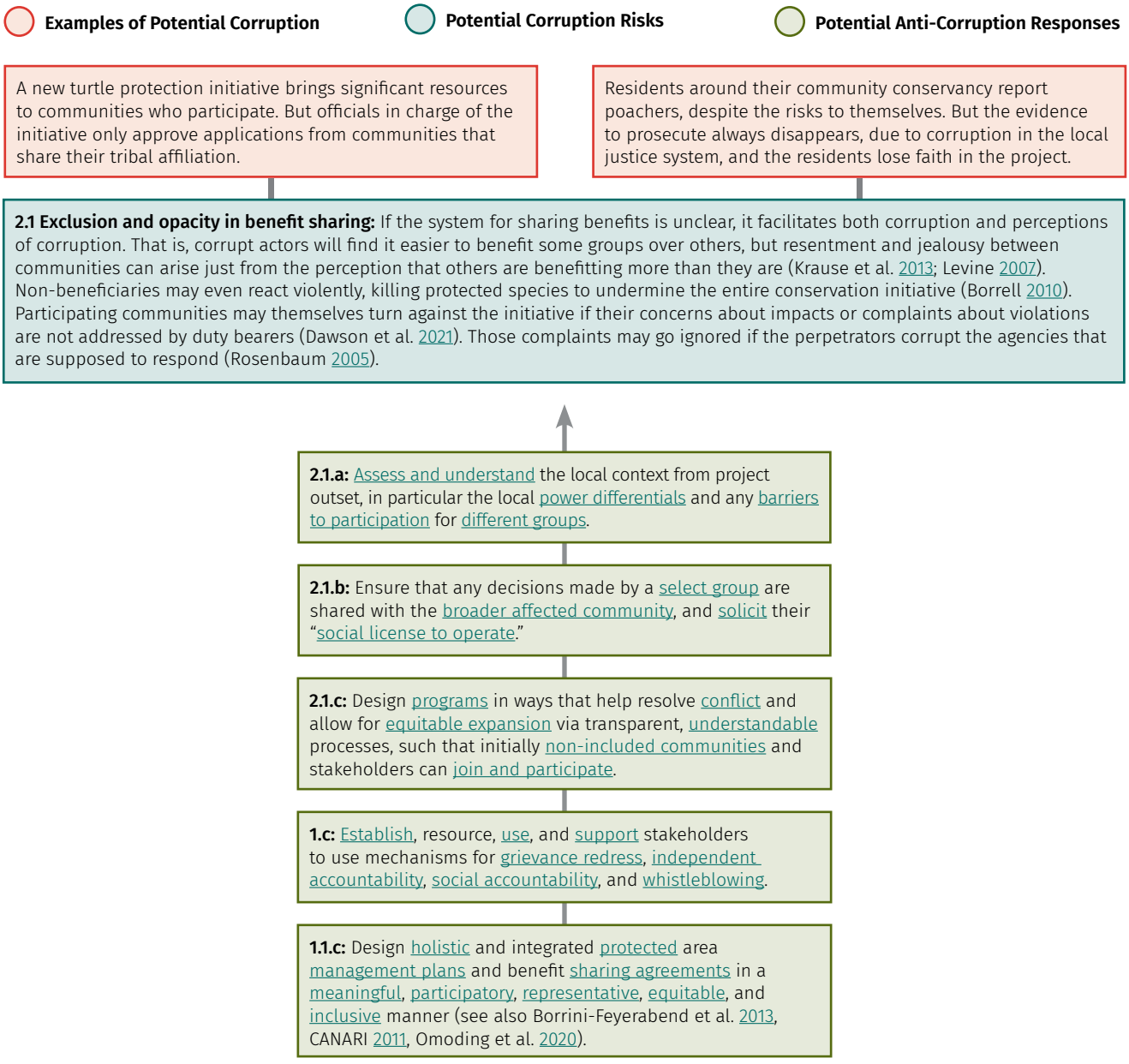
Note: Risks and responses are numbered for ease of reference with the Miradi model results chains available at https://bit.ly/TNRCSLresources



Note: Risks and responses are numbered for ease of reference with the Miradi model results chains available at https://bit.ly/TNRCSLresources

Benefit sharing and management of costs and impacts

Benefit sharing is a key component of equitable PA and OECM governance (Zafra-Calvo et al. 2017). Mechanisms must "be in place to assess the economic and socio-cultural costs, benefits and impacts arising from the establishment and management of protected areas, and to share those equitably, in particular with indigenous peoples and local communities" (Borrini-Feyerabend et al. 2013). Such costs, benefits, and impacts can be quite large, unevenly distributed, and complicated to control and understand. This size and complexity create an incentive and opportunity for corruption. This is especially likely to be true in contexts where trying to capture a disproportionate amount of benefits or foist costs onto others are accepted or expected behaviors, or where corrupt behaviors are a functional necessity within the system (Khan et al. 2019, Marquette and Peiffer 2021).



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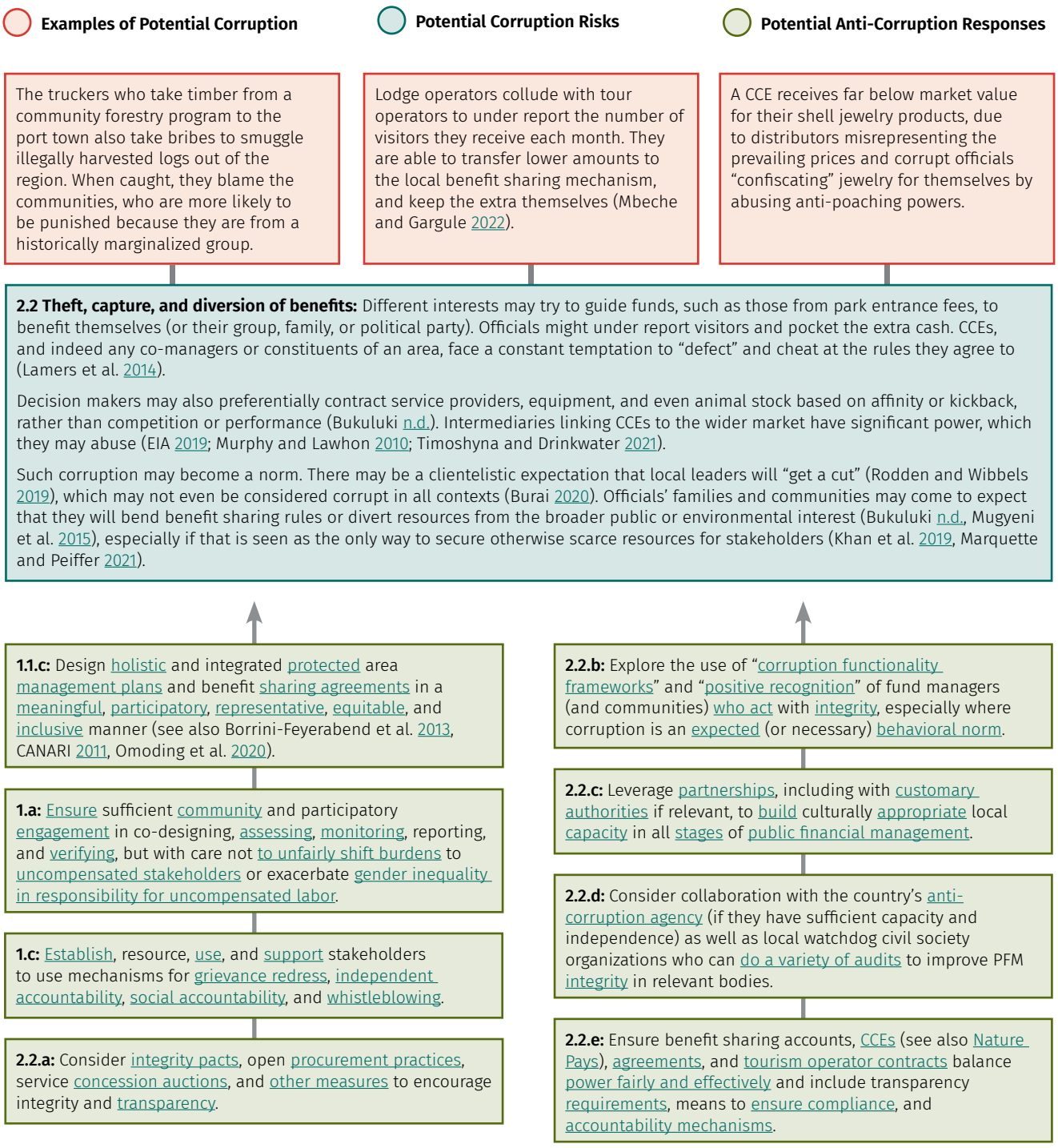

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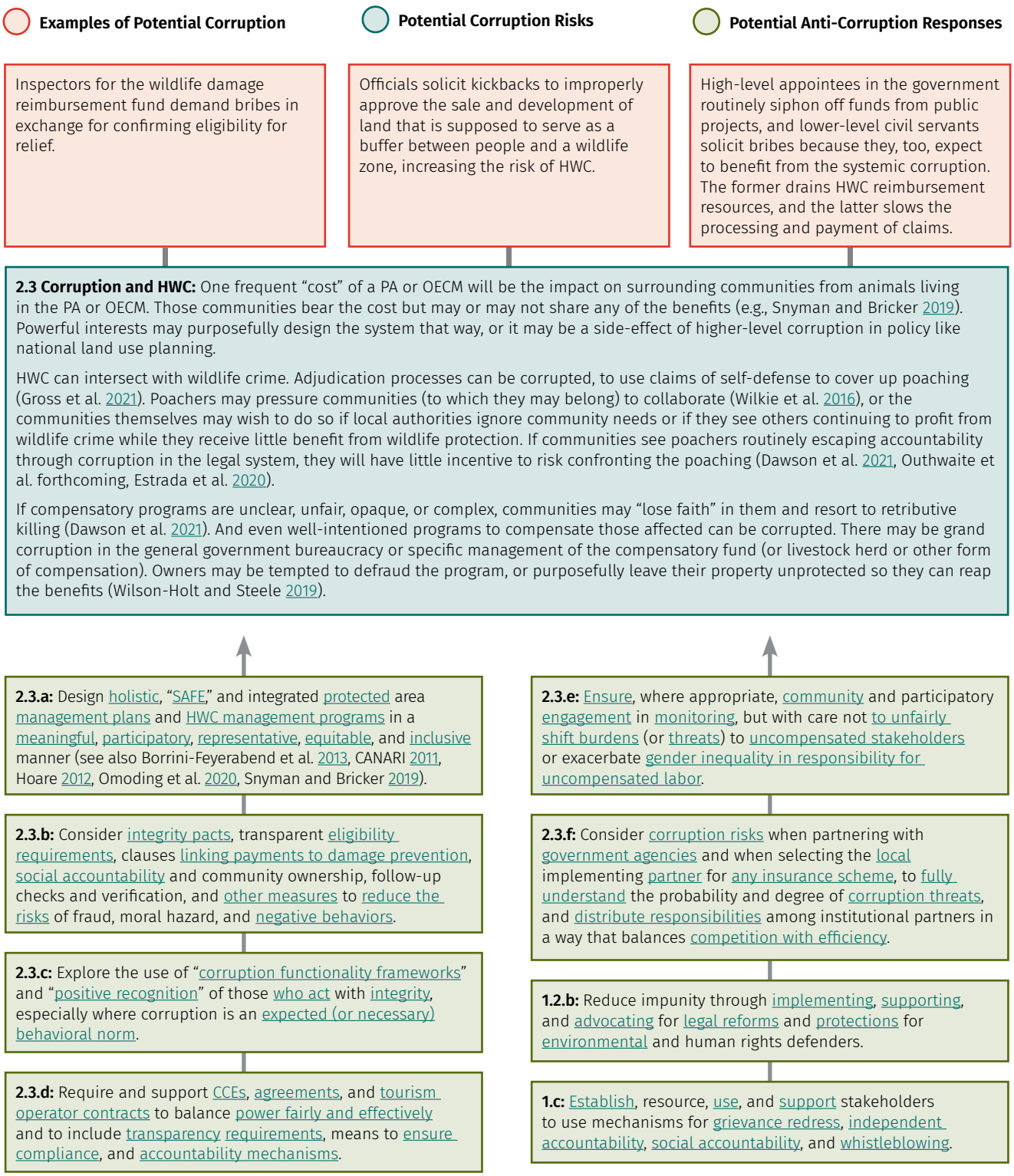

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PA and OECM annex: Miradi model results chain

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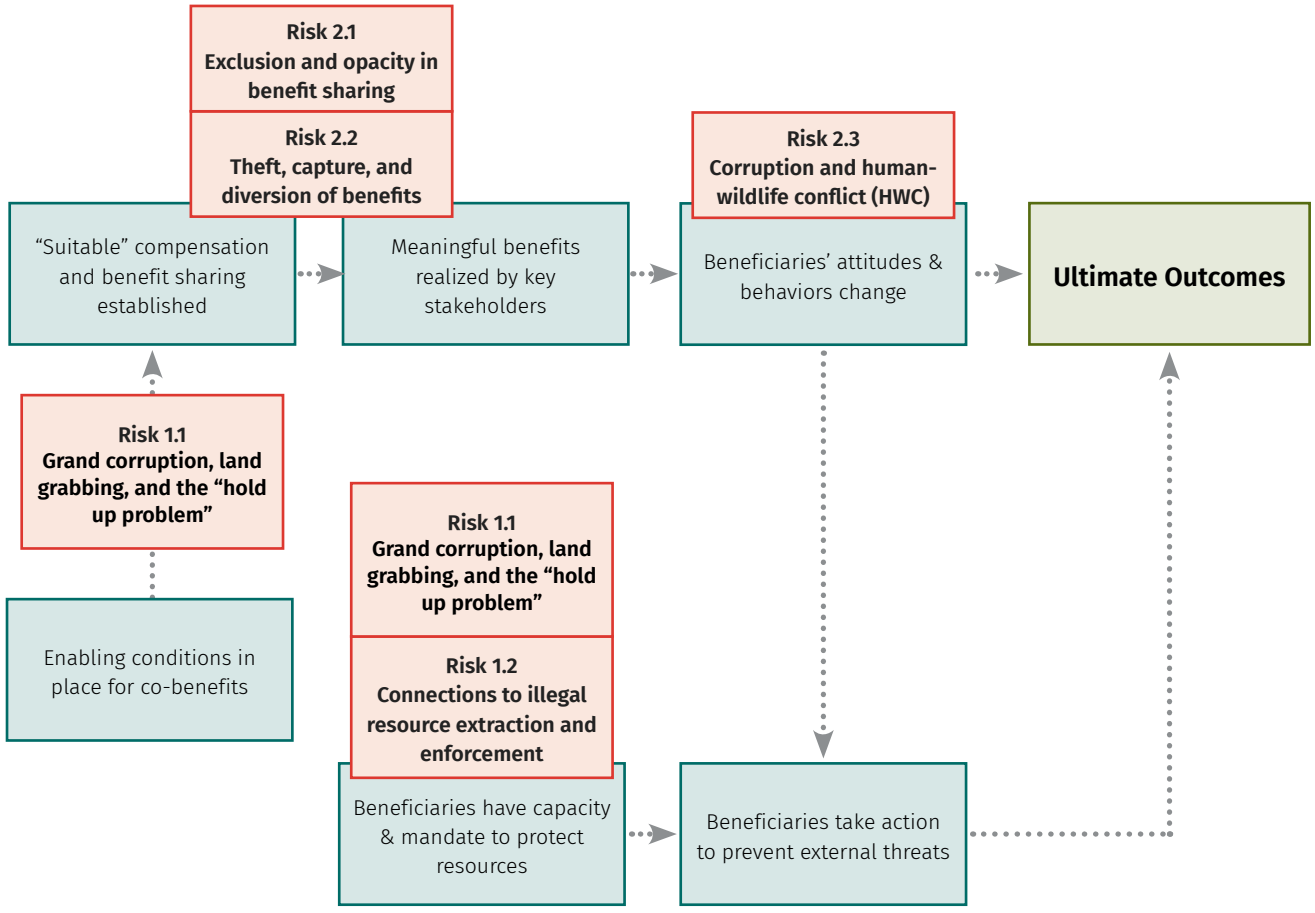
Sharing PA and OECM Benefits Plus Anti-Corruption

Adapted from: 5.1 Linked Enterprises & Alternative Livelihoods High-Level Generic TOC v April 2020 (Miradi Share)

Red boxes indicate corruption risks that might emerge at that stage. They can undermine needed enabling factors and cause the link between one intermediate result and the other to break down (indicated by the red links dashed for uncertainty).



Acknowledgments

The author wishes to thank all reviewers and validation workshop participants for their invaluable contributions to each module of this guidance.

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About Targeting Natural Resource Corruption

The Targeting Natural Resource Corruption (TNRC) project is working to improve biodiversity outcomes by helping practitioners to address the threats posed by corruption to wildlife, fisheries and forests. TNRC harnesses existing knowledge, generates new evidence, and supports innovative policy and practice for more effective anti-corruption programming. Learn more at tnrcproject.org.

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This publication is made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents are the responsibility of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID, the United States Government, or individual TNRC consortium members.

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