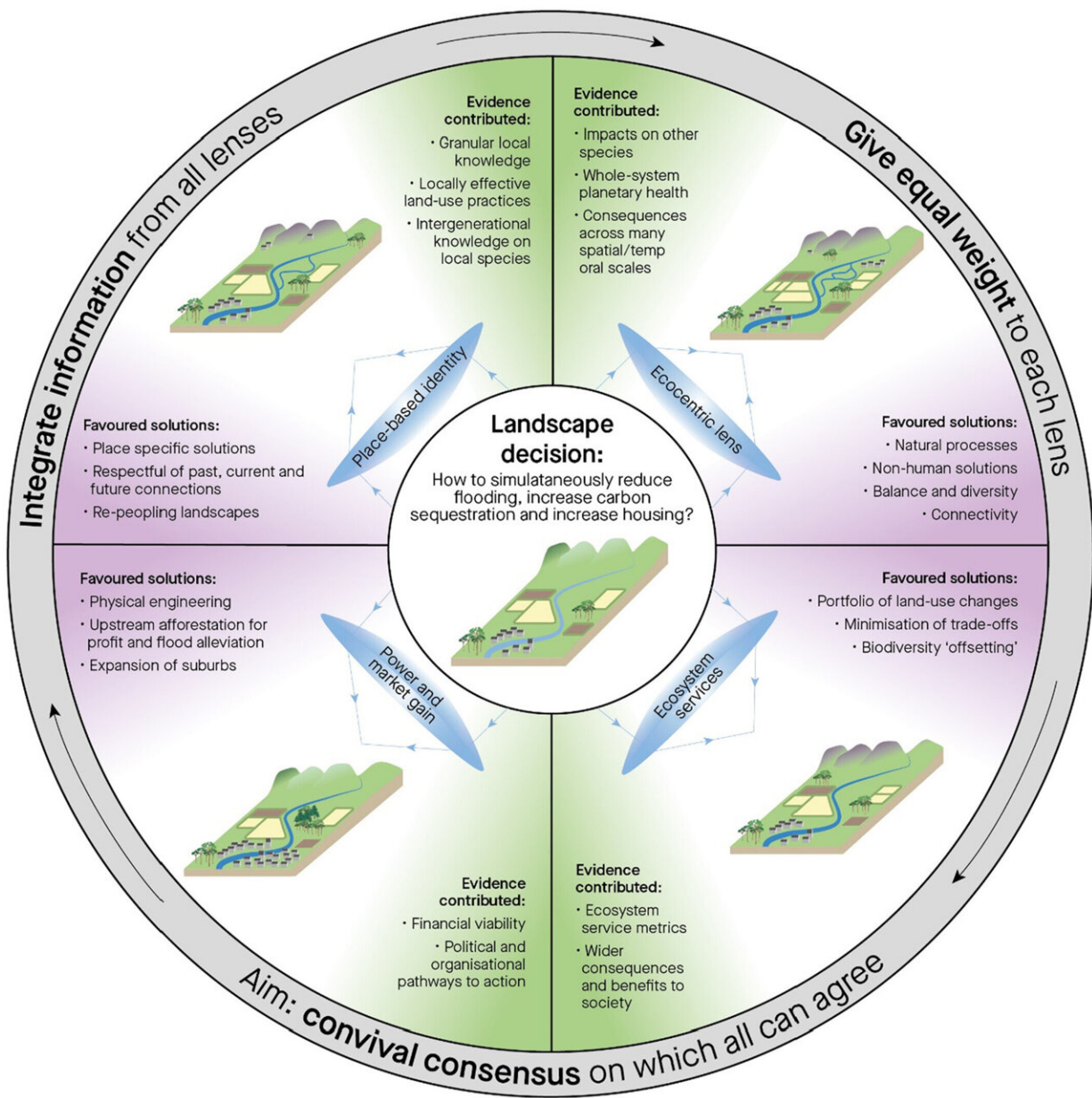


Using a multi-lens framework for landscape decisions

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Evidence and favored solutions provided by the four lenses—ecosystem services (ES), place-based identity (PI), power and market gain (PMG), ecocentric lens (EC)—to the problem of reducing flooding while simultaneously increasing housing and carbon sequestration. If the ES route alone prevails, many other evidence forms and potential solutions will be ignored. The outer circle describes the cycle required to integrate the perspectives provided by all the lenses into more holistic decision-making. Credit: *People and Nature* (2023). DOI: 10.1002/pan3.10474

A new framework for making better and more transparent decisions about the use of our land could help to balance society's demands upon it with protecting and enhancing the environment.

Researchers led by the University of Leicester have proposed a framework for decisions on [land use](#), from nationwide policymaking to building happening at street level, that would involve the most representative range of stakeholders, from those with financial interests in the land to the [local communities](#) who use it and more besides.

Now published in the journal *People and Nature*, it encourages decisionmakers to gather evidence to consider from four distinct viewpoints, or 'lenses':

- The Power and Market Gain lens is focused on the [financial interests](#) (profit) of organizations and people that have specific leverage over the decision area.
- The Ecosystem Services lens focuses on the value environmental goods and services provide to society, framing land resources as assets essential for the flow of ecosystem services.
- The Place-based Identity lens focuses on components of landscape character that are enshrined in the relationships between the local population and the landscapes and

environments with which they co-identify.

- The Ecocentric Lens offers a framework where, all species equally and the focus of decisions should rest on the health of ecosystems and biodiversity.

This framework aims to enable people to be transparent about the ways they've made a decision about a piece of land, be that policymakers, councils, government, land managers, communities or others. The researchers recommend that these four lenses should be embedded in any participatory decision-making around the governance of our landscapes.

Lead author Dr. Beth Cole, an honorary researcher at the University of Leicester, said, "The need for this in landscape decisions is in how we make the best choices about the use of our land. It's not just how we maximize the outputs from our land, it's bigger than that."

"For [decision makers](#), they need to ask if they are making sure that they are considering the community needs and the nuances within that, that they are thinking about things from the viewpoint of the whole ecological system, and thinking about how the outputs from processes in the environment will change depending upon what they do to that parcel of land?"

"It's enabling people to make sure that all viewpoints that might be relevant are considered in a way that is equal, but balanced and transparent, so people can see that those things have been considered."

The research is an output of the Landscape Decisions Programme, coordinated by the University of Leicester, which is examining how we better make use of our land, make decisions about natural assets and the land landscape of the UK.

The program brought together a wide range of experts, including scientists, modelers, [social scientists](#) and artists, for a series of discussions and workshops bringing together research capable of enabling landscape decisions.

Dr. Cole adds, "This work brings together multiple strands and viewpoints about how land is managed for the best output for everyone, be that people, be that species, be that ecosystems and biodiversity. It essentially says we need to consider everybody in society, and nature and the planet as well."

Professor Heiko Balzter from the University of Leicester, who is coordinating the Landscape Decisions Programme, said, "The author team of this paper has brought together the findings from across the Landscape Decisions Programme. By looking at different ways of understanding our landscapes, the proposed joined-up approach sheds light on the consequences of taking particular [landscape](#) decisions from different perspectives."

More information: Beth Cole et al, Using a multi-lens framework for landscape decisions, *People and Nature* (2023). [DOI: 10.1002/pan3.10474](#)

Provided by University of Leicester

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