

A Recipe for Engagement in Nature-based Solutions and Nature Recovery

Launch webinar - 20th February 2024

#RecipeForEngagement @CaitlinHafferty



Dr. Caitlin Hafferty
Environmental Change Institute
School of Geography & the Environment
University of Oxford



Caitlin Hafferty

*Postdoctoral Researcher in
Environmental Social Science*

About me

- Background in Human Geography and Environmental Planning
- PhD in Environmental Planning, CCRI
- Postdoc Uni of Oxford - participation and democracy in nature recovery and NbS
- **Theoretically-informed research with real-world impact - transdisciplinary, applied social science research**
- Collaborating with organisations across UK environment sector - NE, Defra, Highlands Rewilding, Nattergal, etc.



Leverhulme Centre
for Nature Recovery

Introduce yourself in the chat!

1. Your name and organisation / role
2. Why you're interested in engagement
3. What you're hoping to get out of this webinar



This webinar aims to...

1

Introduce the Recipe for Engagement (RfE) and the *what, why, who, how, and when* of engagement

2

'Engagement in action' case studies

3

9 key ingredients, how to implement in practice, Q&A (via questions function in Zoom)



Leverhulme Centre
for Nature Recovery

Agile Initiative & LCNR



How do we scale up Nature-based Solutions?
The Challenges Nature-based Solutions (NbS) have huge potential to support climate mitigation, adaptation, nature recovery, food security, rural economy and human wellbeing, but implementation is slow and...

www.agile-initiative.ox.ac.uk

<https://www.naturebasedsolutionsinitiative.org/>



Leverhulme Centre
for Nature Recovery



Society

RESEARCH THEME

Encompassing the governance and socio-cultural dimensions of nature recovery.

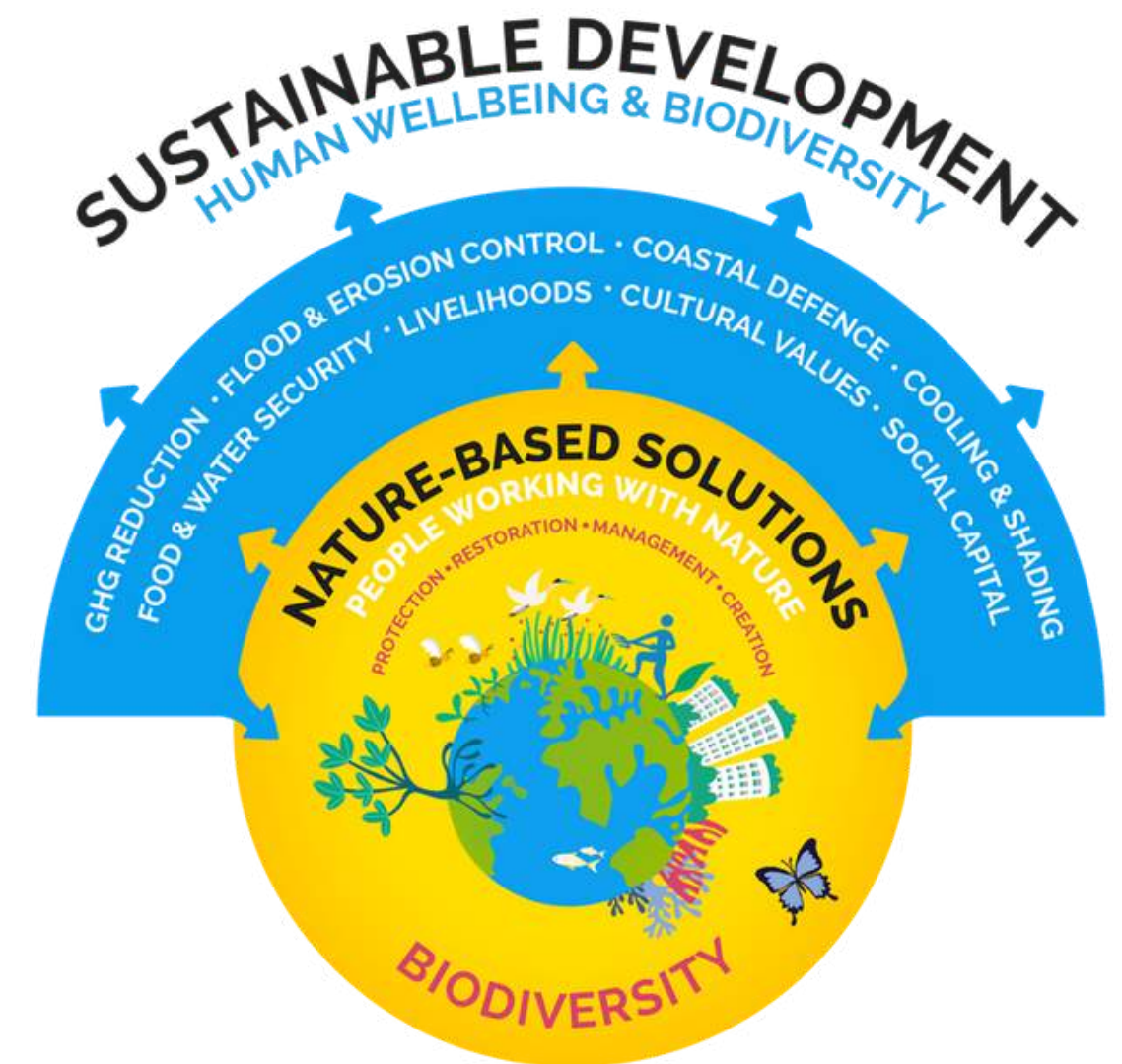


www.naturerecovery.ox.ac.uk

The power of engagement in nature recovery and Nature-based Solutions



- Engagement offers a pathway to delivering diverse benefits for people, nature, and climate.
- Central to a holistic and integrated approach to meet multiple sustainability goals.
- Benefits include trust, transparency, empowerment.
- **The RfE is a flexible guide for practitioners and policy-makers.**
- It caters to diverse stakeholders with key questions and components that can be adapted to capacity.
- Encourages innovation, reflexivity, and long-term improvement.



Seddon et al. 2021

<https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

Who is the RfE aimed at and how to implement it?



- Targets individuals and groups involved in nature recovery or NbS efforts.
- Regardless of experience level - beginners and those seeking to enhance existing processes.
- Practitioners, policymakers, landowners, charities, government bodies, NGOs, scientists, community groups, consultants..
- Offers adaptable guidelines tailored to specific organisational or project needs, considering capacity and capability.
- Implementation requires understanding the *what, why, who how, and when* of engagement, then considering the 9 key ingredients.
- Includes ‘**engagement in action**’ case studies and aims to build a **community of engagement practice** for NR and NbS.



I found [the RfE] **refreshingly supportive instead of overwhelming**. There were reminders of how to act when there are limitations on an organisation's ability to deliver all ingredients and how to commit to continuous improvement. Thank you for sharing this and helping non-experts like me understand the engagement process much better. I've already changed the way that I've been thinking about and preparing for engagement after reading this.

Nature Recovey Project Manager



It was really useful to learn from these flexible ingredients for our own engagement work. The guidance helped to form the foundation of our engagement strategy, our 'Engagement Roadmap', ensuring that it aligned with our mission and vision for rewilding and re peopling. It is great to see this **practical yet comprehensive guidance** now available to support others' work, helping more organisations to effectively navigate and harness engagement to benefit nature and human well-being.

Calum Brown, Chief Scientist, Highlands Rewilding





The *what, why, who, how, and when* of engagement

Embrace engagement as a flexible and adaptable approach to achieving multiple goals through nature recovery and nature-based solutions, guided by the Recipe for Engagement.


What is engagement?

- Engagement = people choose to participate in decisions which affect them.
- Encompasses various participatory, democratic, collaborative, co-designed processes.
- Ranges from informing and educating, to co-designing and empowering.
- Covers a spectrum from on-way communication to two-way deliberation and dialogue, from top-down to bottom-up.
- Effective engagement requires a clear understanding of key terms and definitions (the RfE includes a list).

IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation



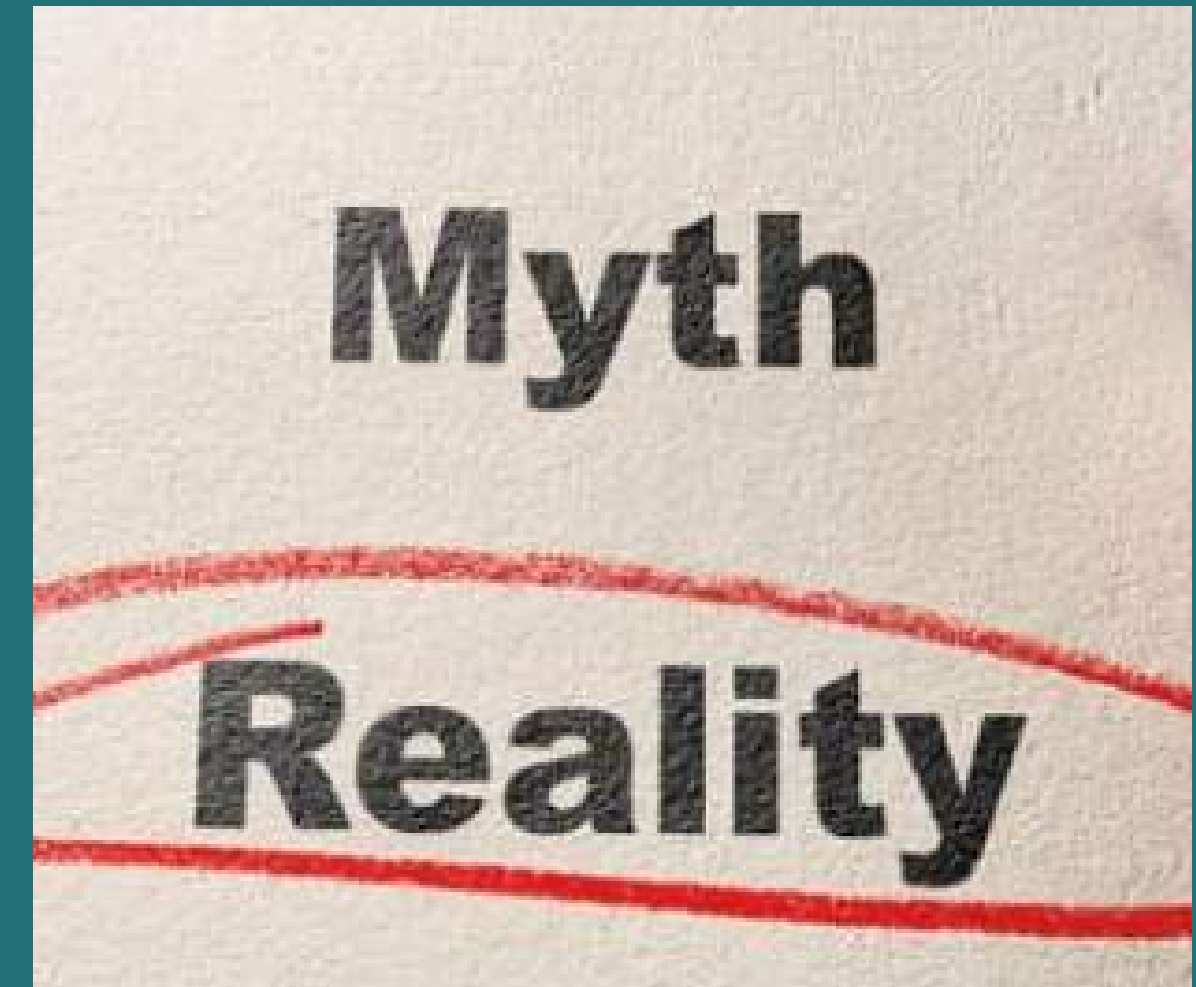
IAP2's Spectrum of Public Participation was designed to assist with the selection of the level of participation that defines the public's role in any public participation process. The Spectrum is used internationally, and it is found in public participation plans around the world.

		INCREASING IMPACT ON THE DECISION 				
		INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL		To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC		We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

© IAP2 International Federation 2018. All rights reserved. 20181112_v1

10 myths about engagement

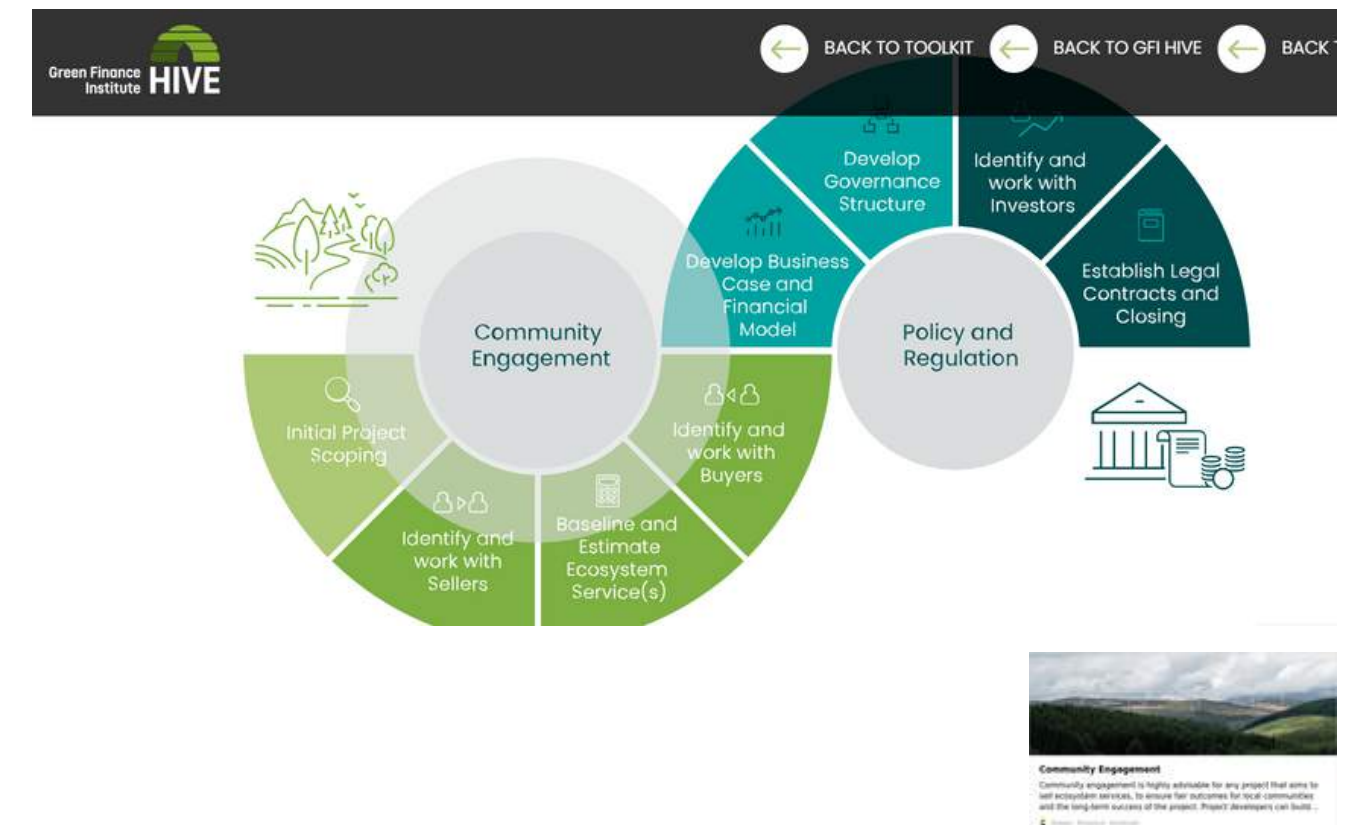
1. Engagement is irrelevant.
2. Engagement lack direct benefits.
3. Engagement is for the end of a project.
4. It is often better to not engage at all.
5. Engagement is all about buy-in and support.
6. Engagement is about comms, education, access.
7. Anyone can do it.
8. Engagement is unscientific.
9. Engagement is going to slow things down.
10. Limited capacity prevents engagement.



Is democracy a luxury we cannot afford, or a fundamental part of sustainability?

Why is it important to engage well?

- Essential for collaborative, integrated approaches to tackle environmental challenges.
- Important legally and in policy, aligning with global agreements like the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and COP15 goals.
- Upholds rights, knowledge, and contributions of local and Indigenous communities for equitable outcomes.
- UK - Aarhus Convention grants public rights to access information, participation, and justice in environment.
- Gunning Principles, 25 Year Environment Plan, land use policy e.g. ELM and LNRS.
- Endorsed by green finance certification and standards ensuring ethical and high-integrity finance.





Potential benefits

- Improves environmental governance outcomes
- Integrates various knowledge types for better decisions
- Facilitates holistic monitoring and evaluation
- Fosters collective action for nature's recovery
- Builds trust and credibility of decisions and organisations
- Resolves conflicts and negotiates tensions and trade-offs
- Promoting social learning and pro-environmental behaviour
- Empowers communities and promotes direct local benefits



Risks (and how to mitigate them)

- Lack of / or poor design and delivery can increase conflict, opposition, legal issues, reputation damage
- Eroding trust, hindering social responsibility efforts and limiting multiple goals
- Undermines efforts for collaboration, knowledge sharing, behaviour change
- Non-compliance with laws and regulations - missed opportunities, delays, resource issues
- Neglecting diverse viewpoints and marginalising affected communities
- Reinforcing centralised decision-making structures undermines community empowerment
- Complex, unrewarding, tokenistic engagement can lead to fatigue, disinterest, (further) disengagement

Who to engage with?

- Engage with interested or affected parties, including local residents, the public, community groups, farmers and landowners, government bodies, NGOs, businesses, investors, scientists, etc.
- Relevance of parties varies based on context and purpose; avoid being prescriptive.
- Consider organisational role and how perspectives shape nature's value, decision-making, legitimacy of knowledge, and representation.
- Recognise potential reluctance or inability to engage, offering support when needed.



How to engage?

- Consider both models and methods
- Models = tell us about different types of engagement (e.g., Arnstein's ladder, IAP2 spectrum)
- Methods = various tools, techniques, technologies
- The RfE includes a comprehensive list, links to external resources and case study examples



Involve

We believe that people should be at the heart of decision-making

involve.org.uk



Public Engagement Observatory

The Observatory for Public Engagement with Energy and Climate Change is a core capability of UKERC. A key element of...

[UKERC](https://www.ukerc.ac.uk)



OECD Guidelines for Citizen Participation Processes | en

The OECD Guidelines for Citizen Participation Processes are intended for any public official or public institution interested in carrying out a citizen participation process. The guidelines describe ten steps for designing...

[oecd.org](https://www.oecd.org)



Observatory of Public Sector Innovation

OPSI champions wholesale change and helps governments find ways to turn the 'new' into the...

[Observatory of Public Sector Innovation /](https://www.opsi.gov.uk)



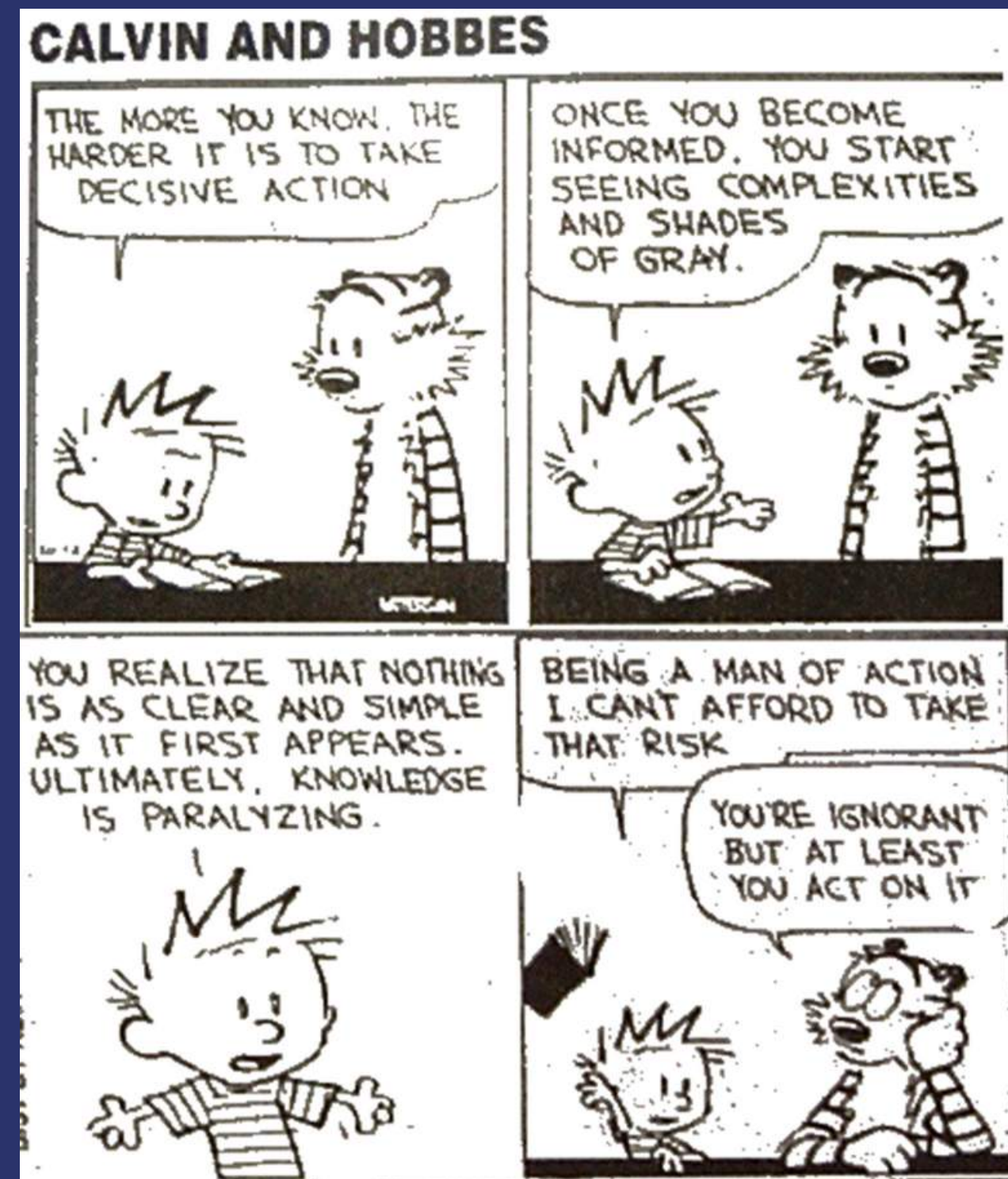
Participedia

A global crowdsourcing platform for researchers, activists, practitioners, and anyone interested in public participation and democratic innovations.

participedia.net

When to engage?

- As early as possible and persisting throughout
- **Not** as a late-stage, one-off, or 'end of pipe' effort
- Amplifies risks, creates new ones
- **Proactive** rather than **reactive**
- Engagement that is **locally sensitive** while aligning with broader frameworks, standards, incentives.
- **Local engagement is always vital**, especially when acting to address **urgent issues in times of crisis**.



Highlands
Rewilding,
Scotland >



Boothby Wildland,
Lincolnshire v

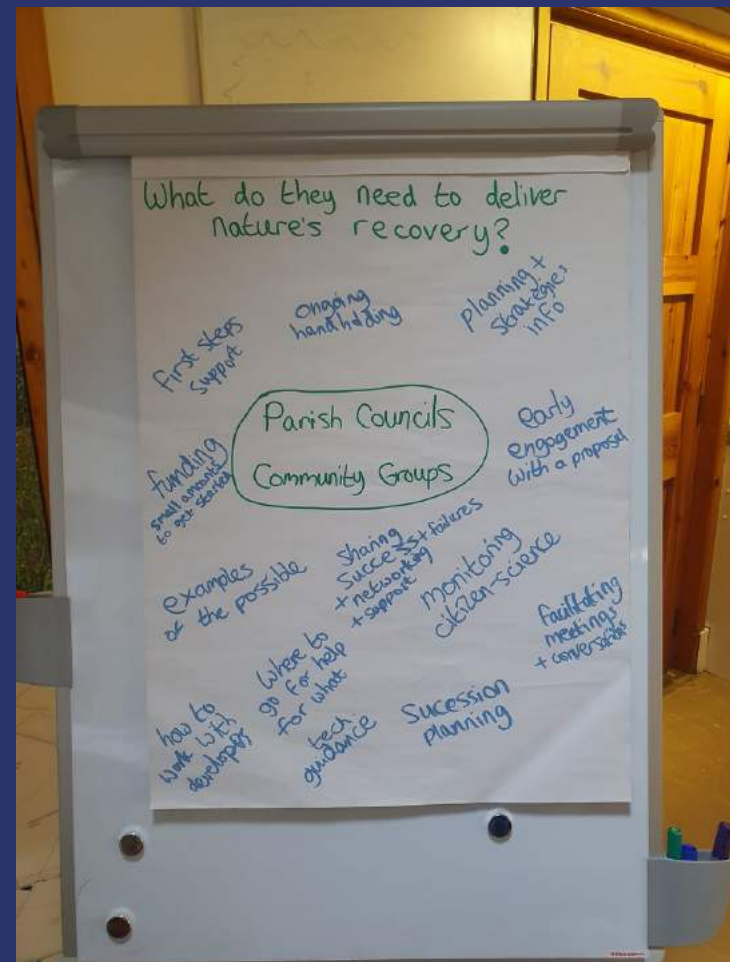


Hogacre Common,
Oxford ^

Natural Grid
& Community
Forest, v
Plymouth



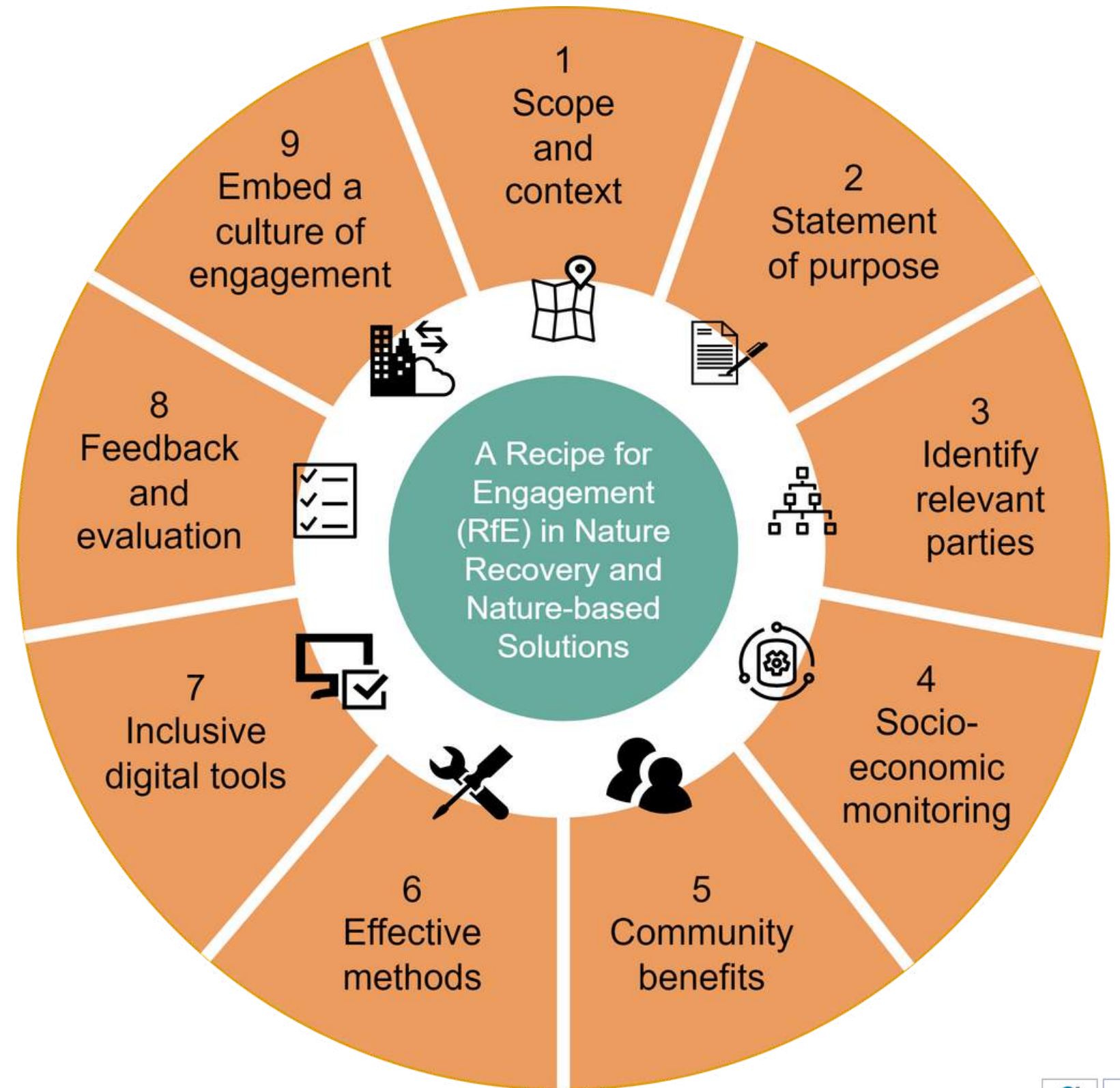
North Harris Trust,
Scotland v



<
WILD Oxfordshire

*Links on final slide

The Recipe for Engagement: 9 key ingredients



Ingredient 1: Understand the scope and context

- Engagement is context dependent.
- Purpose and context influence the entire process.
- Context includes socio-economic conditions, cultural values, power dynamics, etc.
- Conduct baseline research to help understand the existing context.
- Avoid an extractive, 'helicopter' approach.
- Build relationships, trust, and integrate local and scientific knowledge from the start.
- Remain open and reflexive to new perspectives, complexity, and conflicts.
- **Context-first approach rather than pre-determined 'one size fits all'**

Ingredient 2: Statement of purpose

- Identify the purpose of engagement, aligning with organisational and project goals, community priorities.
- Develop clear statements describing the purpose and scope of engagement for various contexts.
- Acknowledge potential changes in purpose through continuous co-design.
- Be realistic, transparent, and manage expectations to avoid overpromising and under-delivering.

Ingredient 3: Identify relevant parties

- Apply a method for determining who to engage with and at what scale.
- Recognise the need for different approaches for different groups, and consider 'harder to reach'.
- Assess feasibility of representation.
- **Use 3 i's stakeholder analysis framework (Interest, Influence, Impact) to identify and analyse relevant parties.**

Ingredient 4: Link to socio-economic monitoring

- Engagement supports **integrated** monitoring and evaluation, attracting investment / social responsibility.
- **Seek specialist advice wherever possible (evidence-backed indicators)** and aim to co-design.
- The RfE includes a list of potential socio-economic indicators, and methods to measure them.

Ingredient 5: Plan for community benefits

- **Crucial for monitoring and evaluating social impact** (and an indicator in its own right).
- Place-based approach is vital for understanding local issues and how they align with and enrich broader frameworks, **beyond** existing socio-economic indicators.
- Community benefits are **direct and locked into the local area**. They are distinct from broader public benefits or ecosystem services that occur beyond the local area (e.g., national, global).
- Identify community benefits early on. Community baseline can compliment natural capital baseline etc.

Ingredient 6: Choose the most effective methods

- Adapt method selection to local context, purpose, community needs, etc.
- Various in-person, digital, and hybrid methods for engagement will be more/less suitable for different levels.
- Methods arguably over-rated and do not guarantee 'good' outcomes - much more about the **context**.
- Choice of methods should be flexible and adaptable, improving based on participants' feedback.

Ingredient 7: Promote inclusive digital approaches

- Digital technology plays a huge role in innovation for engagement and democracy (e.g., 'digital first').
- Offers new opportunities, but also comes with ethical risks compared to in-person approaches.
- E.g., exacerbating digital divides, access and exclusion, biases, impacting the quality of social interactions and knowledge production, trust building, etc.
- **Adopt a context-first approach which considers a flexible mix of in-person, digital remote, and hybrid tools.**

Ingredient 8: Feedback and evaluation

- **Continuous (integrated) monitoring and evaluation is essential (with feedback loop).**
- Evaluation fosters organisational learning, continuous improvement and **learning from failures.**
- Evaluation process should assess multiple benefits and outcomes, co-designed with affected parties.
- Links to resources in RfE (e.g., understanding **impacts, causes of impact, lessons and actions**).
- Remember - extent of social evaluation will depend on available time and resource capacity.

Ingredient 9: Embed a culture of engagement

- Institutionalising a culture of engagement - integrating participatory values into governance structures to make them standard procedures (e.g., KPIs) sometimes requiring a **culture shift.**
- Dedicating resources to build staff **capacity, capability, and confidence**, considering engagement as a project milestone or performance indicator.
- Key considerations = resource availability, skills and expertise, top-down support, **long-term planning and organisational strategy.**

Top tip #1: Avoid “democracy washing”

- Occurs when organisations or individuals superficially appear participatory.
- Risks participation becoming contradictory not genuine.
- Emphasises need to move beyond rhetoric and reorient participation towards genuine inclusivity, equity, and justice for transformative pathways to sustainability goals.

Top tip #2: Embed *participatory values* as well as *processes*

- Engagement isn't bound by rules; it is an evolving process of collective action for common goals.
- It reflects personal values and extends beyond professional realms and responsibilities.
- Viewing participation as ongoing and co-created, rather than fixed and procedural, can drive transformational change.

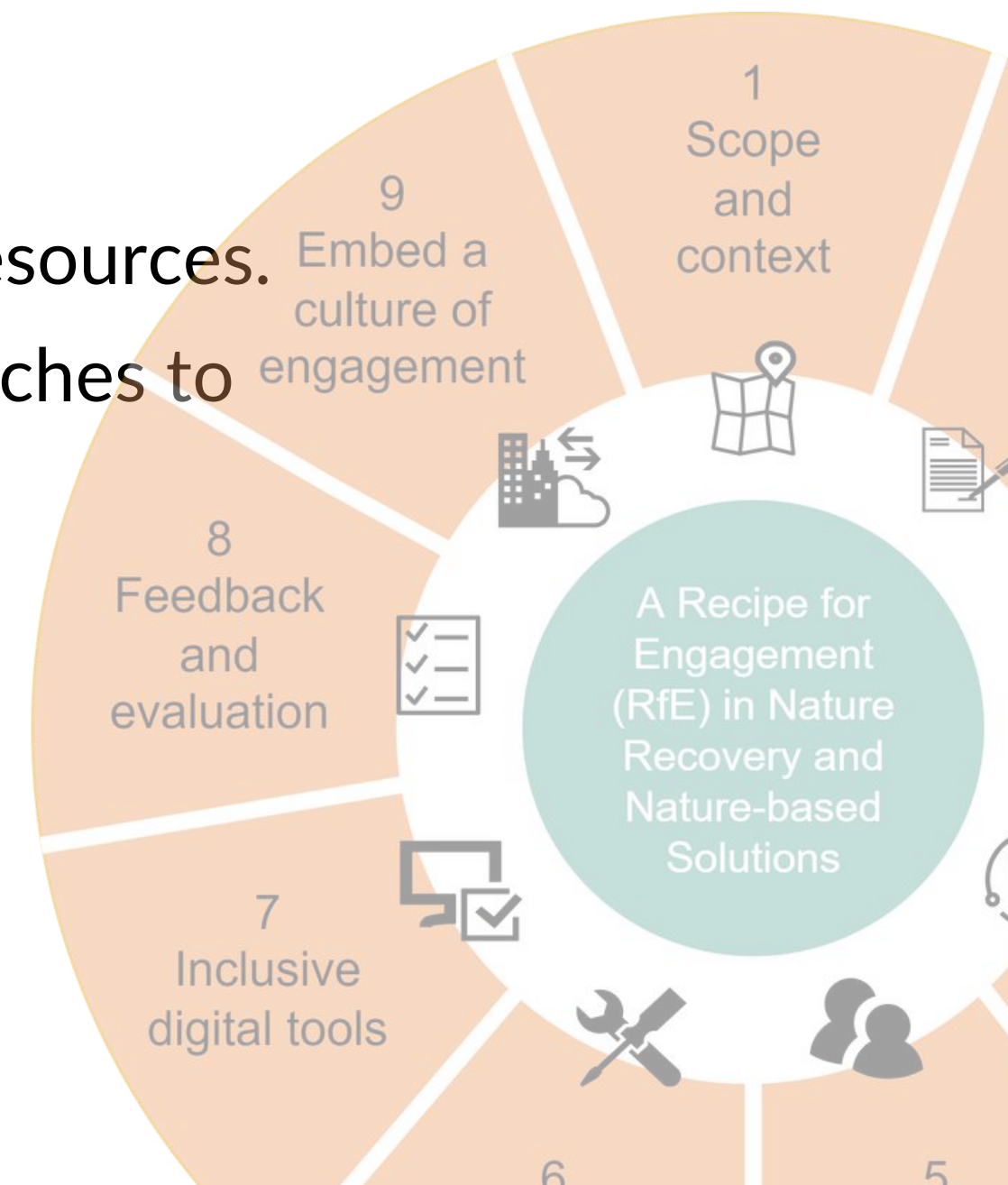
Top tip #3: The **social sciences** are key to success

- Societal shifts are crucial for climate and biodiversity goals.
- Social sciences (plural!!) are key for understanding and changing humans.
- The RfE draws on social science evidence.
- Qualified social scientists are essential for engaging and social impact.
- Engagement is a core outcome, not an add-on task.

So... what's next?

How to implement the RfE:

- Consider the *What, Why, Who, How, and When* of engagement
- Follow the **nine key ingredients**, adaptable to project needs and resources.
- Leverage engagement for holistic, integrated, and inclusive approaches to meeting multiple sustainability goals.
- Use the RfE to complement existing guidance and efforts.
- Be transparent and realistic about engagement scope.
- **Join the Recipe for Engagement community!**





Thank You!



#RecipeForEngagement
@CaitlinHafferty
caitlin.hafferty@ouce.ox.ac.uk
www.caitlinhafferty.co.uk

@naturerecovery
www.naturerecovery.ox.ac.uk

www.agile-initiative.ox.ac.uk
www.naturebasedsolutionsinitiative.org

The work of the Leverhulme Centre for Nature Recovery is funded by the Leverhulme Trust

The Agile Initiative is supported by the Natural Environment Research Council as part of the Changing the Environment Programme – NERC grant reference number NE/W004976/1



LEVERHULME
TRUST _____

References

All references are listed in the relevant sections in the Recipe for Engagement guidance:

<https://www.naturerecovery.ox.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Recipe-for-Engagement-compressed.pdf>

Links to 'engagement in action' case studies:



Rewilding Scotland

Natural capital laboratories in the Scottish Highlands that are working to fight the biodiversity and climate crisis. We focus on nature recovery and community prosperity through rewilding, using innovative research and...

Highlands Rewilding



Boothby Wildland

Nattergal's first site is Boothby Wildland in Lincolnshire, a 617 hectare arable farm with variable grade 3 soil types. It was purchased in December 2021.

Nattergal

<https://www.communitylandscotland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Case-study-2023-NorthHarris-biodiversity.pdf>



Wild Oxfordshire - Home

We are a charity seeking to create a more natural, resilient, and biodiverse Oxfordshire for the benefit of all. Discover who we are and what we're...

wildoxfordshire.org.uk

<https://www.hogacrecommon.org.uk>



PLYMOUTH
CITY COUNCIL

Plymouth Natural Grid project

Plymouth Natural Grid is a partnership project between Plymouth City Council, The National Trust and Real Ideas

Plymouth City Council