



Independent
Evaluation Office
GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY



UNEG
United Nations Evaluation Group

The Environmental Dimension of Sustainability

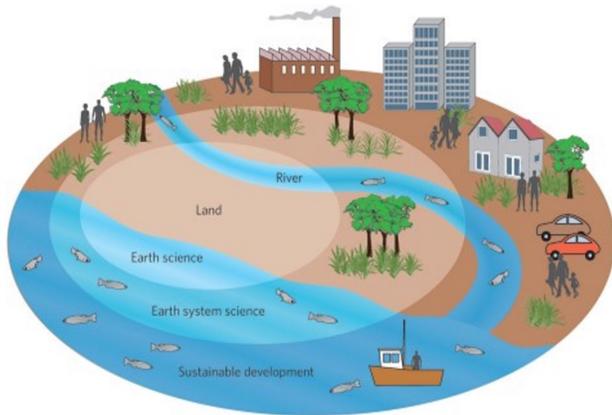
Juha Uitto
January 24, 2023



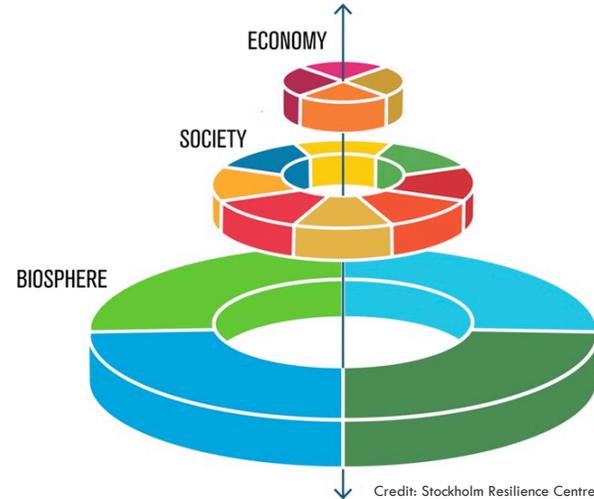
Why is it important for evaluation?

Human and natural systems are **interlinked**

All human actions have environmental consequences



Schlösser & Pfirman, *Nature Geosciences*, 2012



Natural environment is **the foundation** of sustainable development

Natural environment is the **missing piece** in evaluating sustainable development.



Designed by Wannapik

Assessments tell that evaluators are missing the boat

UNEG: Few evaluations look at environmental impacts

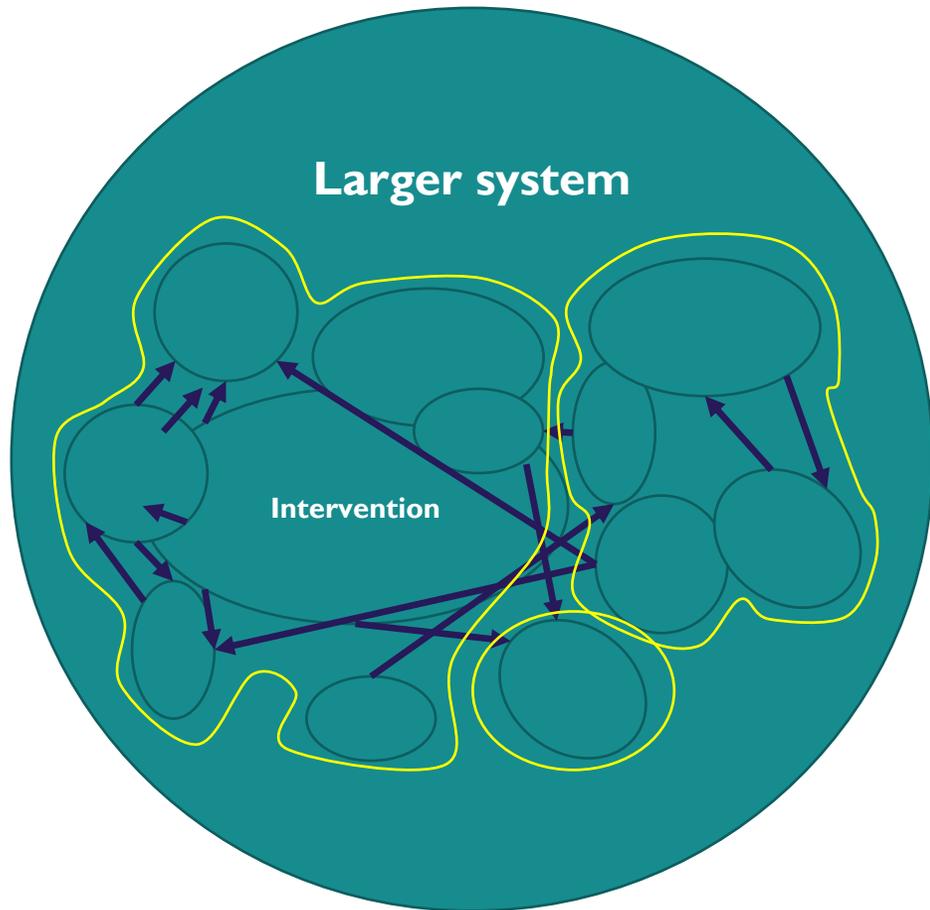
Canadian Evaluation Society: Evaluations rarely consider environmental sustainability and natural systems; capacity is very limited

Footprint Evaluation (Global Evaluation Initiative) aims to embed environmental considerations in all evaluations



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Challenges: Interventions are part of a larger system



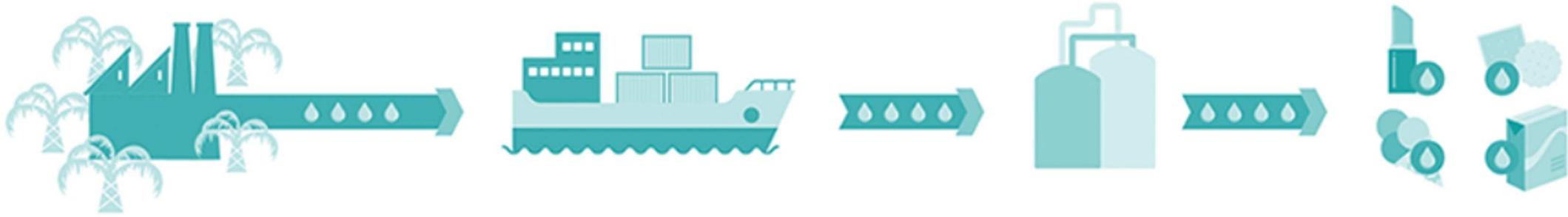
Many interventions are place-bound; context matters; geographical approaches

Others are vertically integrated

Evaluation must ascertain whether the intervention is positioned correctly to address root causes of the problem being targeted

Challenges: Teleconnections and vertical scale

Commodity chains - from local to global

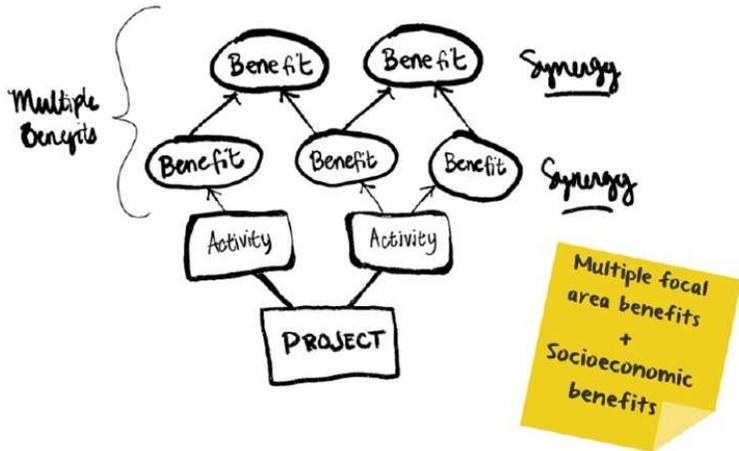


Wildlife trade – need to deal with supply and demand



Deforestation – happens locally, but causes are global

Challenge: Capturing Multiple Benefits



TRADE-OFF

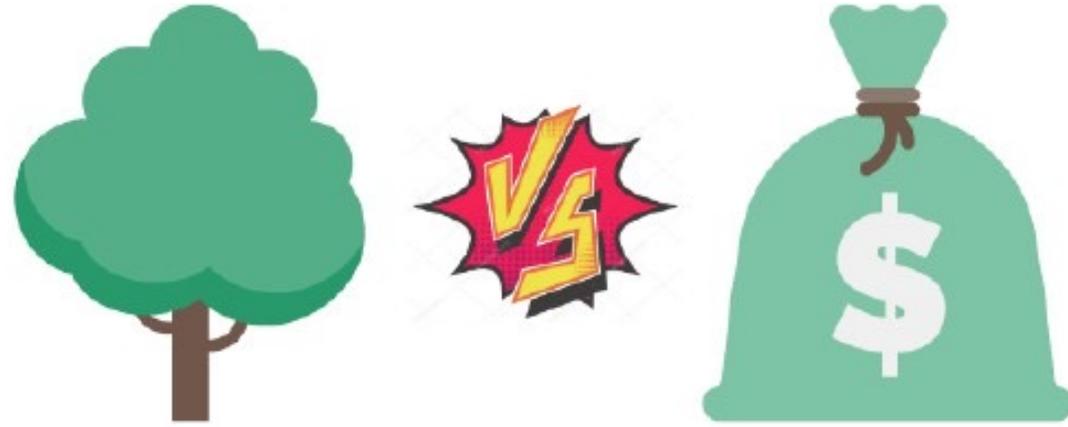
A reduction in one benefit in the process of maximizing or increasing another benefit

Goal is to seek **win-win situations**, for people and the planet

Synergies and trade-offs can exist simultaneously in the **same intervention**

Evaluation must understand conditions for synergies and trade-offs; for this, it **needs to look at both human and natural systems**

Challenge: Addressing Common types of trade-offs



📍 Environmental vs Socioeconomic Objectives



📍 Short term vs Long term

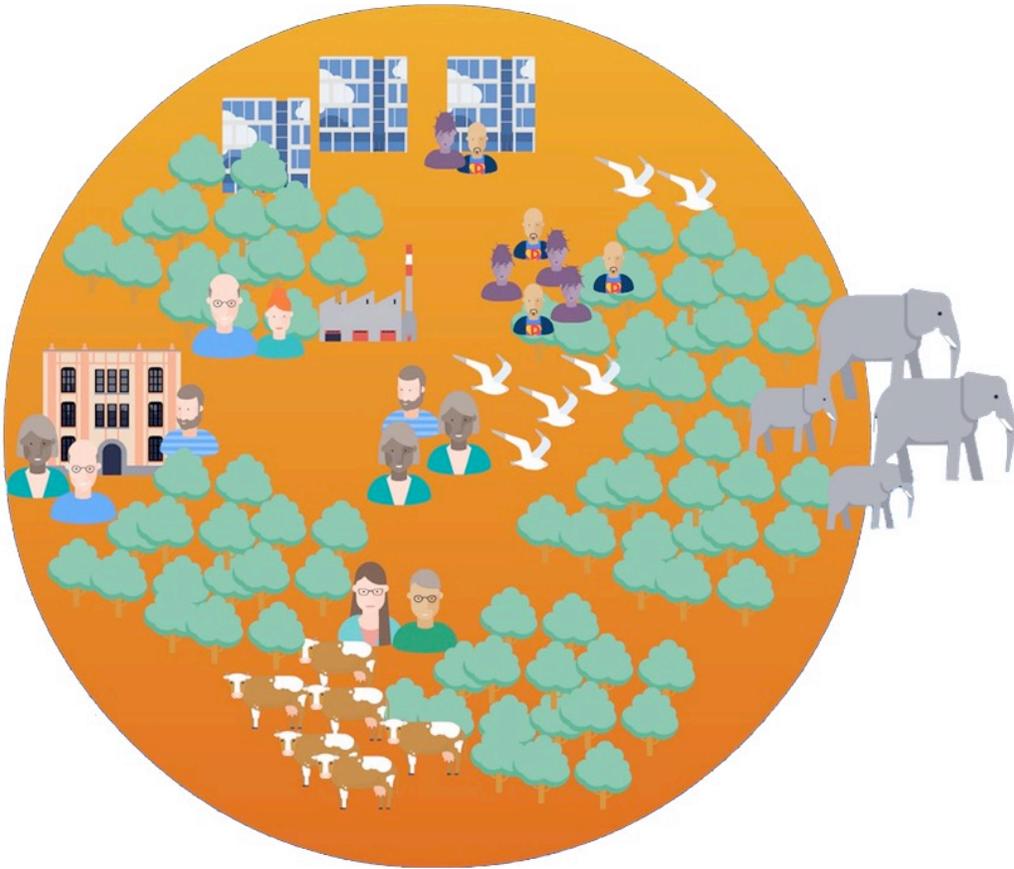


📍 Across Focal Areas



📍 Between Scales

Implications for evaluation



Traditional logic models are linear and miss big pieces;
need an open theory of change

Focus on drivers of transformation

Context matters!

Pay close attention to unintended consequences

Systems perspective to evaluation - intervention in
the broader human and natural context

If evaluation is to contribute to sustainability
transition, it can't ignore the natural environment