

# Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition

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**Landscape  
Institute**  
Inspiring great places

**iema**  
Institute of Environmental  
Management & Assessment



# Outline

- LVIA
- GLVIA and changes from 2<sup>nd</sup> edition
- Key topics in GLVIA3:
  - Over-arching approach & structure
  - Landscape and Visual
  - Significance
  - Cumulative effects
  - EIA Co-ordinator



# What is LVIA?

- Tool to identify the effects of change resulting from development
- Most importantly to assess the significance of those effects
- Distinguishes between:
  - Effects on landscape as a resource in its own right
  - Effects on specific views & general visual amenity experienced by people



# When is it needed?

LVIA may be carried out

- either ***formally*** - as part of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)
- or ***Informally*** – as part of the ‘appraisal’ of a development proposal / planning application.

**Both are important**

and

**Broad principles / core approach are very similar**

# LVIA in UK EIA Practice

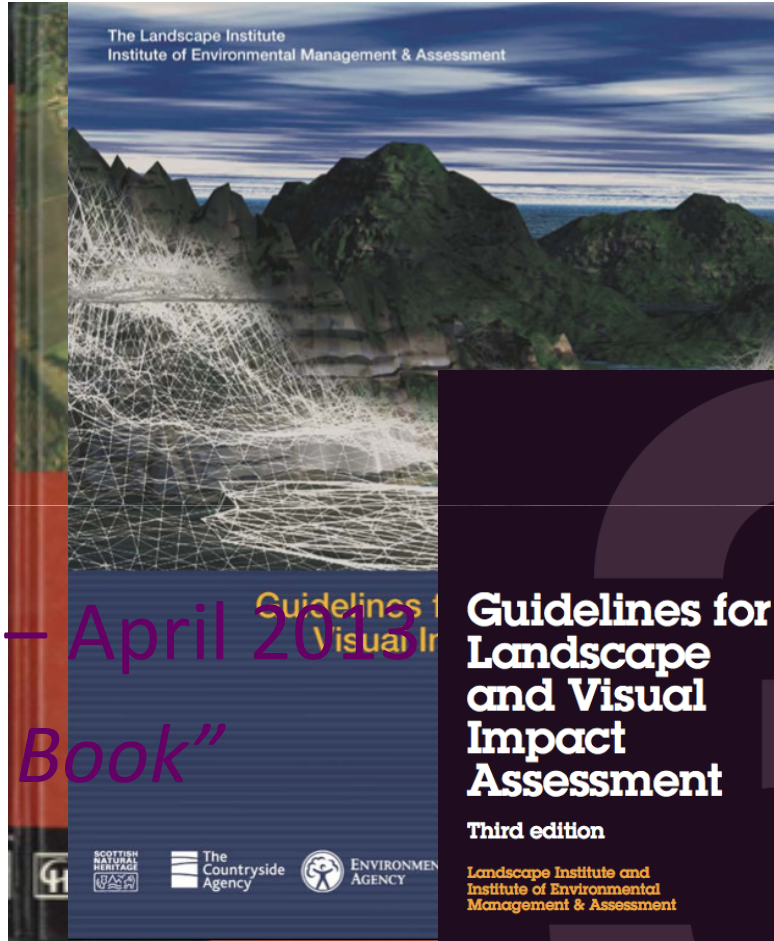
LVIA is 1 of EIA topics found to be in >85% of 100 ES reviewed by IEMA in 2010:

- Ecology (92%)
- Noise (92%)
- Water (90%)
- **Landscape** and visual (88%)
- Transport (88%)

Source: IEMA (2011, Box 5.2 [www.iema.net/eiareport](http://www.iema.net/eiareport))

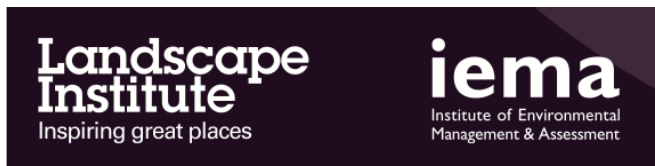
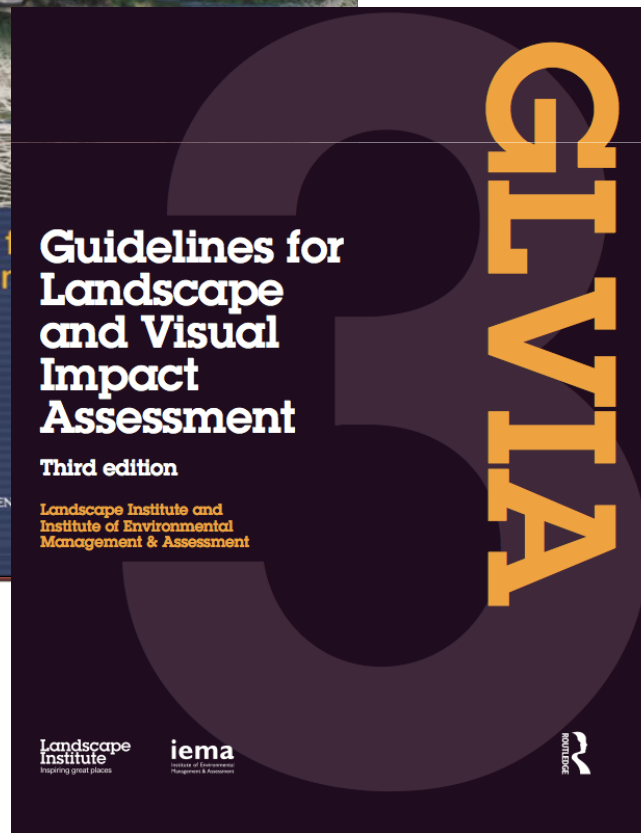
# GLVIA - evolving guidelines....

GLVIA1  
(1995)



GLVIA2  
(2002)  
*“Blue Book”*

GLVIA3 – April 2013  
*“Purple Book”*



# GLVIA3

- Collaboration IEMA & Landscape Institute
- Writer: Professor Carys Swanwick
- Advisory Panel:
  - Jeff Stevenson (Chair)
  - Julian Francis
  - Mary O'Connor
  - Mark Turnbull
  - Marc Van Grieken



# IEMA's role

- Active role throughout
- Julian Francis represented IEMA on AP, but all AP have both IEMA & LI Memberships
- Ensure GLVIA3 aligns with current practice and emerging thinking in mainstream EIA
- Stressed:
  - need to specifically refer to role of EIA coordinator
  - Importance of approach to significance
  - Update to guidelines on cumulative effects





# What changed?

GLVIA2 → GLVIA3



# The GLVIA3 Approach

- Context
- Philosophy
- Structure & Content
- Landscape and Visual
- Significance – Assessment & Evaluation
- Cumulative Effects



# GLVIA3: A changed context

- European Landscape Convention
- Growing emphasis – *Green Infrastructure*
- Developments:
  - Landscaped Character Assessment
  - Seascape character assessment  
(Note: unable to reference latest guidance on these topics as not published)
- Widespread use of Historic Landscape Characterisation and related tools
- New emphasis on *ecosystem services*



# GLVIA3's Philosophy

Emphasis on *principles* for all LVIA

- But, steers on specific approaches, where general consensus (methods / techniques) exist

Provides *framework* for any LVIA

- But, Not intended to be prescriptive, thus no detailed 'recipe' to be followed in every situation

LVIA *responsibility* = Landscape Professional

- But, must ensure approach and methods adopted are appropriate to specific circumstance via consultation, as appropriate



# Proportionality

Great stress on LVIA being proportional to scale & nature of development proposal\*

Therefore:

- Emphasis placed on role of scoping process in directing what is assessed and the detail of that assessment
- LVIA requires dialogue with consenting authority and other interested parties

\*(In EIA focus should be on effects that are both likely and significant)

# GLVIA3: Structure & Content

- Recognise potential different audiences
  1. LVIA Professionals and Specialists
  2. General interest in LVIA
- Focus is on professional, but structure aims to address wider needs
- GLVIA3 is in two parts
  - **Part 1:** Chapters 1 & 2 (Intro, Scope & Context) = More general interest
  - **Part 2:** Chapters 3-8 (Principles, Processes & Presentation) = Aimed at the practitioner



# Other points to note - Content

- Expands material on overall presentation of LVIA and attempts to be aligned with other guidance, particularly from SNH, on visualisation matters
- Includes *good practice bullets* at end of each chapter
- Does NOT include references to all relevant directives / regulations / guidance – aim:
  - Prolong GLVIA3's useful life and wide applicability
  - Emphasise Landscape Professionals role to remain up-to-date



# GLVIA3: Landscape and Visual

GLVIA3 places emphasis on the distinction between:

- *Landscape Effects* (Chpt5)  
and
- *Visual Effects* (Chpt6)

GLVIA3 structure includes separate chapters

However, Chapter 3 sets out overall principles of LVIA that are common to both processes





# Landscape.....

- European Landscape Convention 2000 defines landscape as :  
*“an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors”*
- Not only landscapes that are recognised as being special or valuable, but also about ordinary / everyday (landscapes where people live, work and spend leisure time)
- Includes: rural landscapes, townscapes & seascapes

# .....and its importance

- Shared resource - important in its own right as public good
- Environment for biodiversity, flora & fauna
- Setting for day to day lives
- Opportunity for aesthetic enjoyment
- Sense of place and history, contributes to identity (individual, local, national & European)
- Continuity with past through landscapes relative permanence and its role as a cultural record of past
- Contribute to wellbeing, from above and as source of memories / associations
- Inspiration for learning, art and other creativity

# Landscape effects

## Changes to landscape as a resource

Issues such as:

- Protected landscapes
- Contribution landscape character has on sense of place and quality of life
- The way change may affect:
  - individual components of the landscape
  - aesthetic or perceptual qualities
  - character of the landscape in different areas

# Visual effects

- How surroundings of individuals / groups people may be affected by change in landscape
- How people will be affected by changes in views and / or visual amenity at different places

# Visual effects relate to....

- Area in which development may be visible
- Different groups who may experience views of development
- The places where they will be affected
- The nature of the views and visual amenity at those points
- Changes in specific views



# GLVIA3: Significance

- Greater emphasis on the need for clear judgment and transparency in both assessments and evaluation of significance
- Re-states EIA Directives expectation (i.e. distinguishing significant effects...from not significant effects)

# Assessing Significance

- Don't necessarily have to have a scale of levels of significance
- Emphasis on giving priority to well argued narrative text which makes clear what are significant effects
- Tables / matrices can support this, rather than being relied upon in undertaking the assessment

# Two step approach: judging significance

## *Step 1: Assess against agreed criteria*

- consider each effect in terms firstly of the **sensitivity** of the receptor made up of judgments about:
  - the **susceptibility** of the receptor to the type of change arising from the specific proposal; and
  - the **value** attached to the receptor;
- and secondly its **magnitude**, made up of judgments about:
  - the size and scale of the effect - for example is there complete loss of a particular element of the landscape or a minor change;
  - geographical extent of the area that will be affected;
  - the duration of the effect and its reversibility.
- Consideration of all these criteria should feed into a comprehensive assessment of significance.



# Two step approach: judging significance

## *Step 2: Combining the judgments*

- combine the separate judgements on the individual criteria. The rationale for the overall judgment must be clear, demonstrating:
  - how susceptibility to change and value together contribute to the sensitivity of the receptor; and
  - how judgments about scale, extent and duration contribute to the magnitude of the effects; and
  - how the resulting judgments about sensitivity and magnitude are combined to inform judgments about overall significance of the effects.

# Evaluating Significance

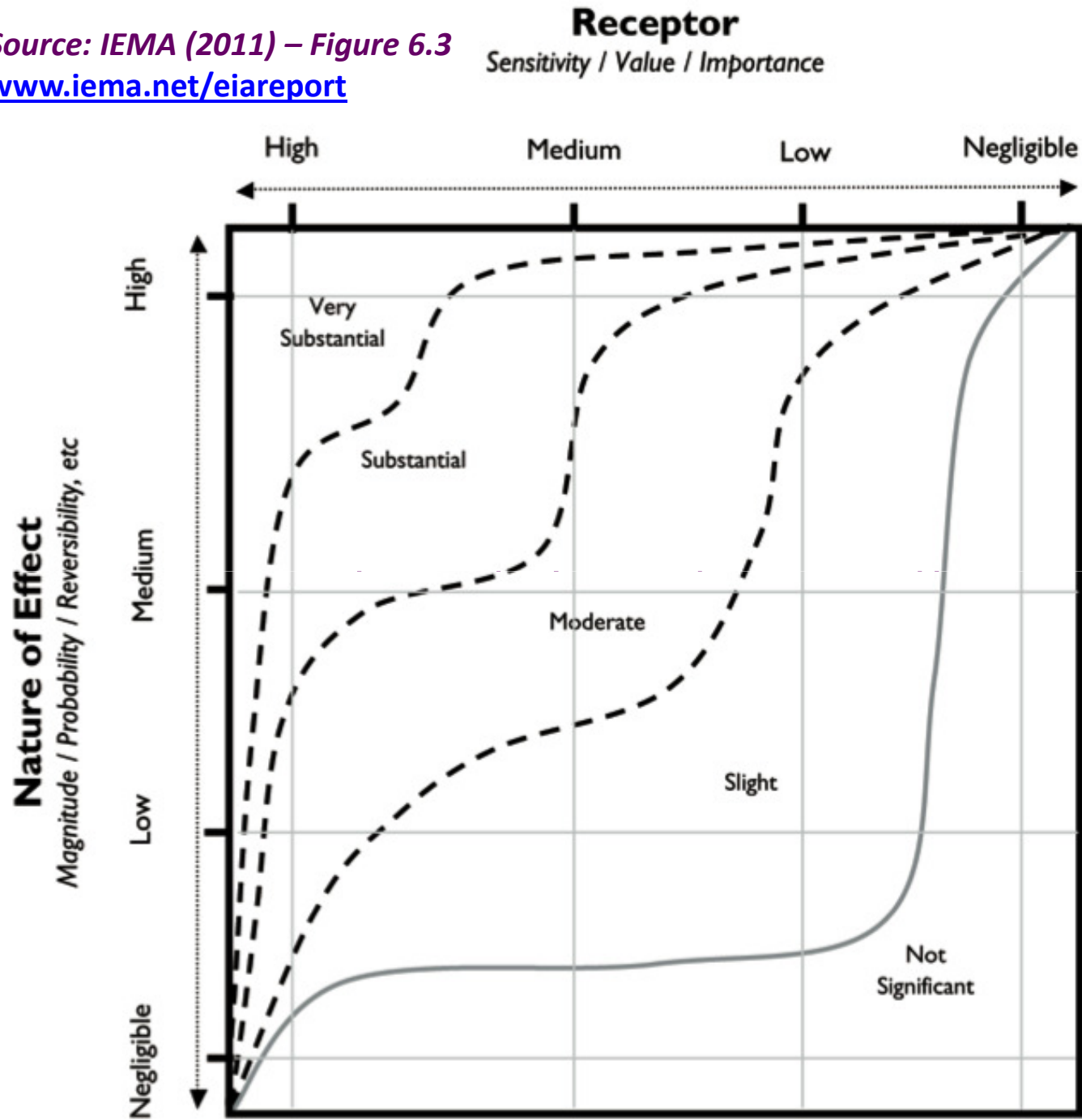
- Combined judgements should be as transparent as possible
- Approaches:
  - sequential combination, or
  - overall profile of judgments
- No hard & fast rules about what effects are deemed 'significant'
- **LVIA should always clearly distinguish between significant and non-significant effects**

# GLVIA3 indicates

- Overall significance judgment should be made as consistent and transparent as possible, but there are no standard categories
- Numerical scoring / weighting should be avoided (spurious level of precision)
- Verbal scales of 3-6 categories preferred
- Two way matrices / tables are useful to support, but should not dominate



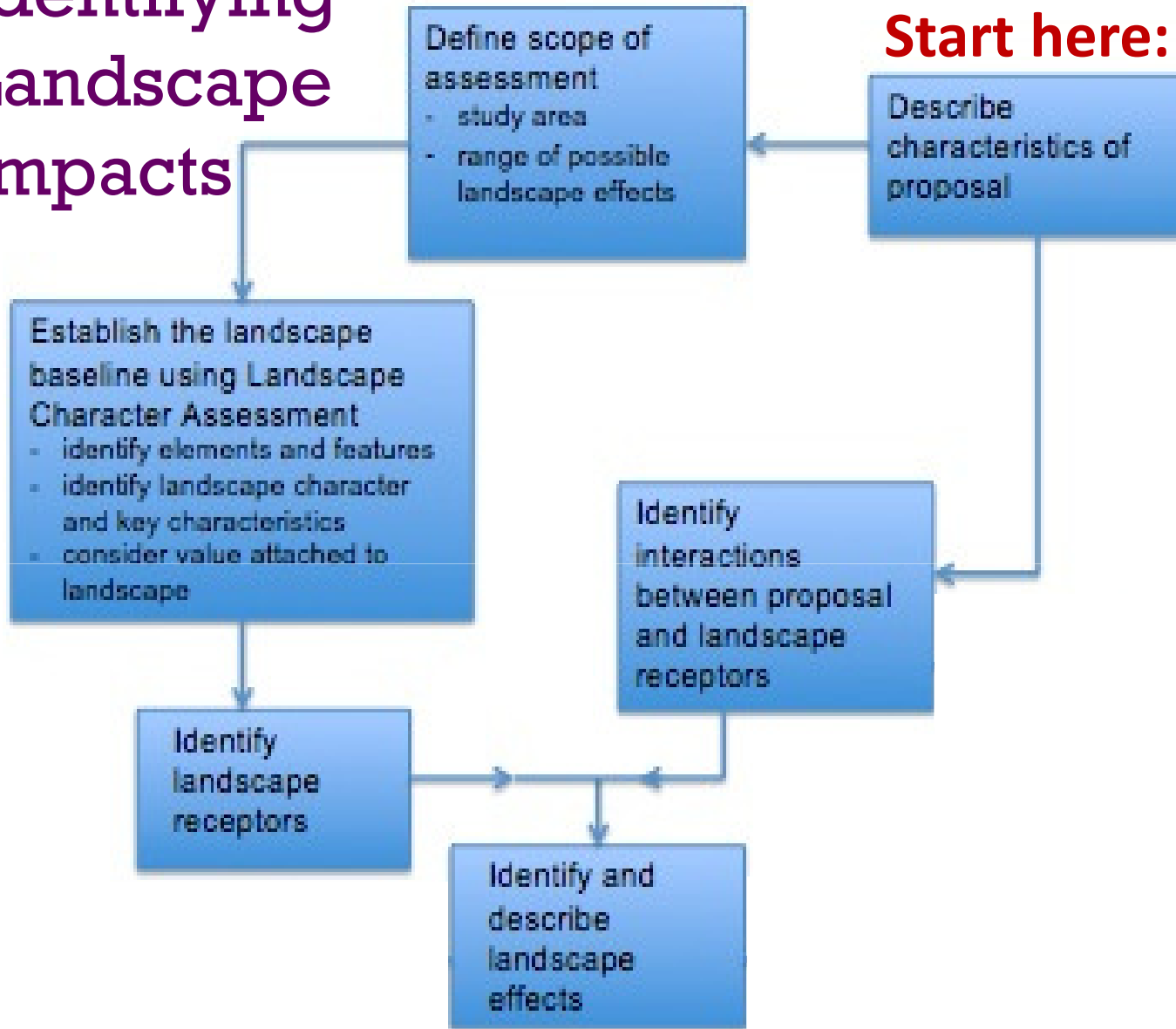
Source: IEMA (2011) – Figure 6.3  
[www.iema.net/eiareport](http://www.iema.net/eiareport)



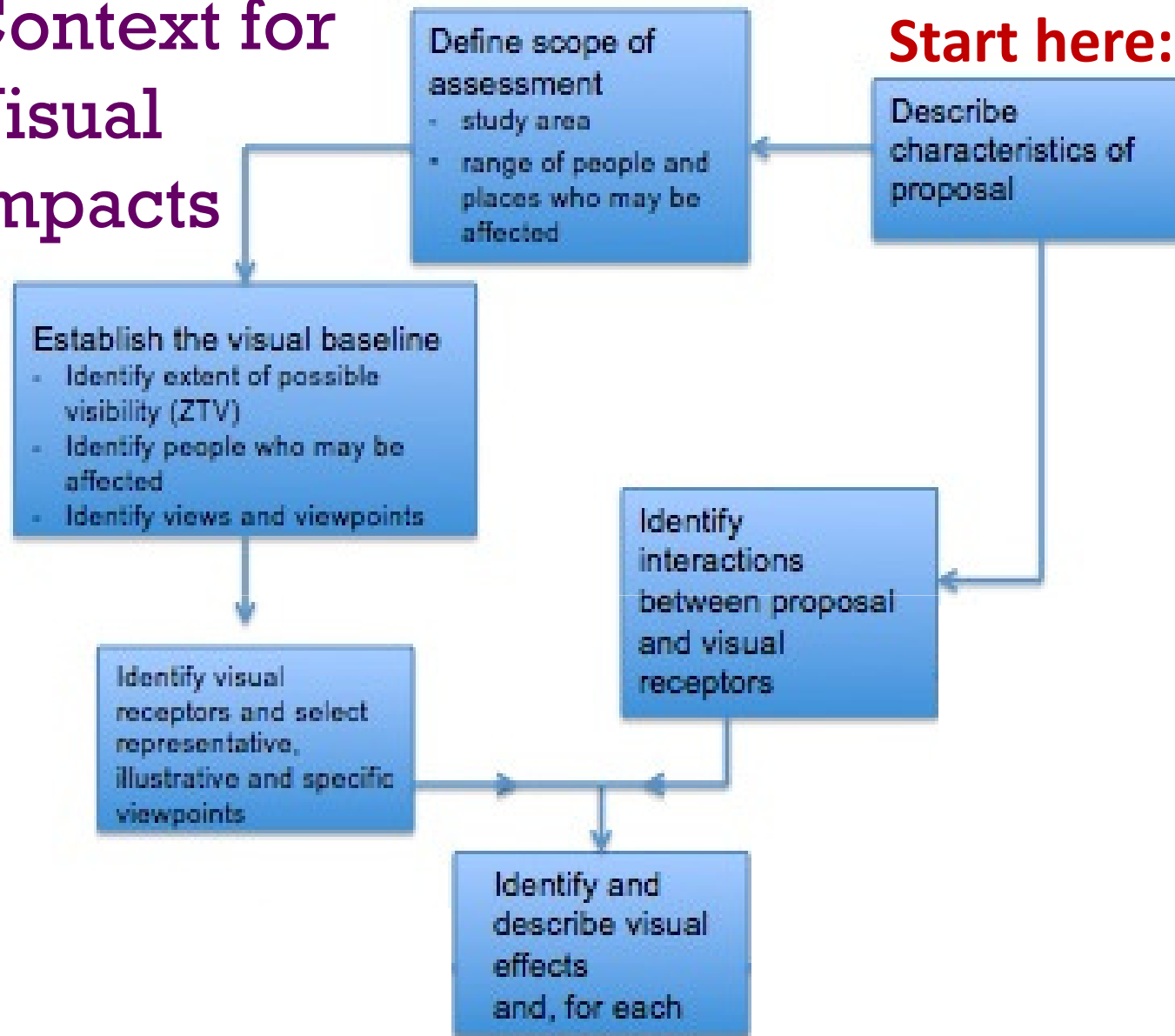
GILVIA

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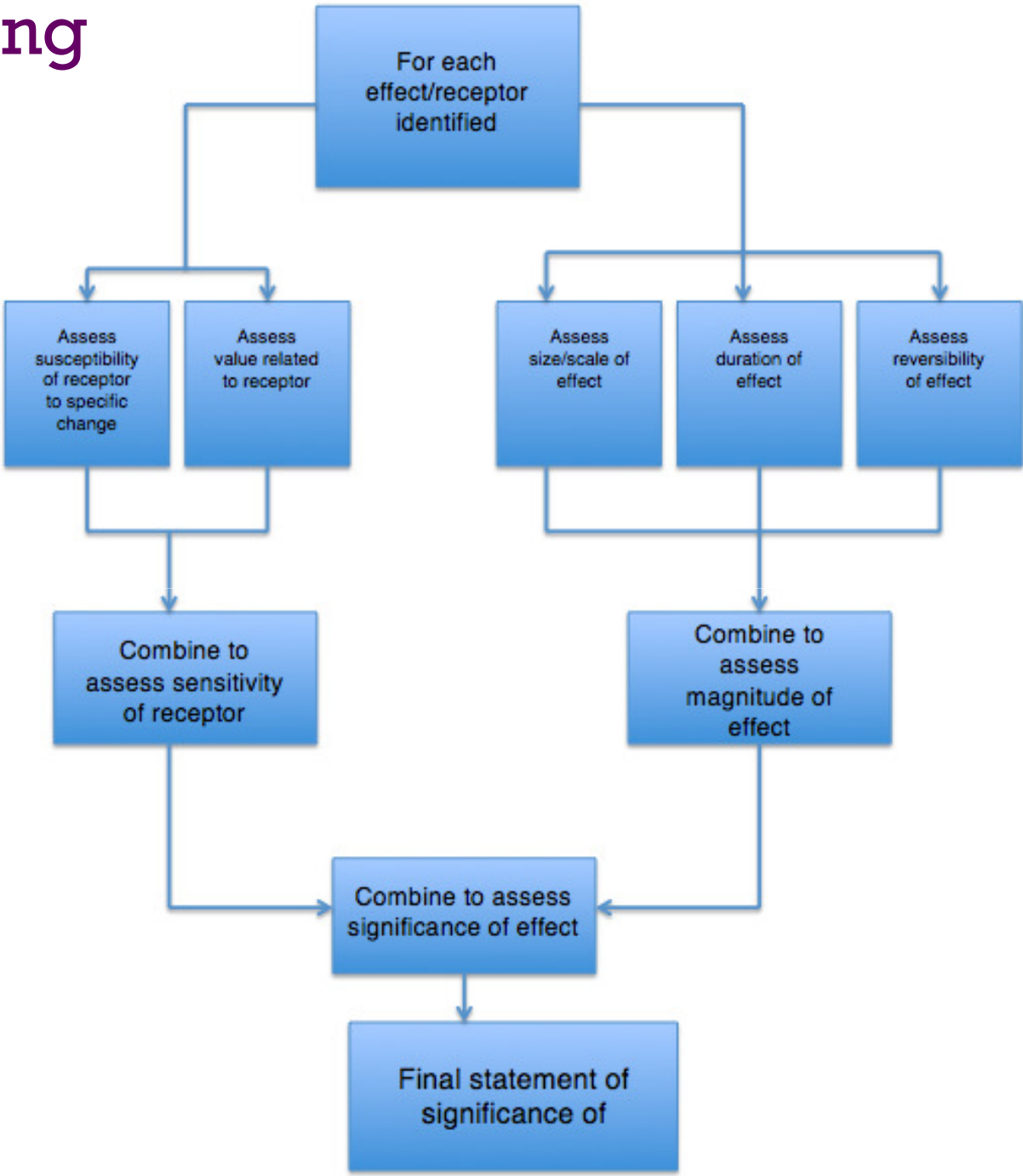
# Identifying Landscape Impacts



# Context for Visual Impacts



# Assessing L/VIA effects



# Chapter 7: Cumulative Effects

GILVIA  
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# Definitions

- Cumulative landscape and visual effects must be considered in LVIA when carried out in EIA
- GLVIA3 refers to numerous definitions, including SNH's 2012 guidance and that included in GLVIA2 - effects that:

*“result from changes to the landscape or visual amenity caused by the proposed development in conjunction with other developments (associated with or separate to it), or actions that occurred in the past, present or are likely to occur in the foreseeable future”*

# Proportionality in CLVIA

- Do keep the task reasonable and in proportion to the project and its **likely significant** effects
- Do not produce a comprehensive cataloguing of every conceivable effect that might occur
- Common sense has an important part to play in deciding scope (e.g. consult and negotiate)
- Landscape professionals are likely to have to exercise judgment about what is appropriate and proportionate - **be able to justify the approach taken**
- Emphasis should always remain on *your project* – whether it adds to / combines with others to create a significant cumulative effect

# CL&V effects: Common Issues

- As cumulative effects can:
  - introduce new types of change and / or
  - increase / extend effects of main project in isolation
- How to:
  - Define the study area?
  - Establishing the baseline?
  - Evaluate significance?

## Two key questions

- 1. What types of cumulative effect should be considered?**
  - Only projects of same type, or other types of development in vicinity?
- 2. Which past, present or future proposals should be considered?**

# 1. Types of development

Scoping should determine whether CEA considers:

- Just developments of the same type
- Or other types / forms of development in the study area (including those that may arise as indirect consequence of your project)
- And (in case of large complex projects) associated and ancillary development to your project, which may require its own consent

## 2. Timescale of proposals

Non-cumulative LVIA baseline = existing schemes and those under construction

Baseline for assessing cumulative LV effects should include the above **plus**:

- **any** potential schemes that are not yet present in the landscape **but are** at various stages in the development and consenting process including:
  - schemes with planning consent
  - schemes that are the subject of a valid planning application that has not yet been determined.

Schemes in pre-planning / ‘scoping stage’ are not generally considered in CEA, due to a lack of certainty, **but** there are occasions where such schemes should be considered (e.g. PINS NSIP Guidance E&W)

# Mitigating CLV effects

- **Mitigation needs to be considered**
- There *may be* scope for mitigation by changing the project you are assessing
- **But** usually need to think more widely:
  - Partnerships between developers?
  - Linked to community compensation/offset packages
  - Consenting authority action e.g. amending planning policies

# GLVIA3 & the EIA Co-ordinator





# GLVIA3: EIA Co-ordinator

- **GLVIA3 recognises and refers to the role of the EIA Co-ordinator**
- Referred to across Part 2 of the document, particularly in Chapter 3's Principles.
- **A key role in ensuring the LVIA is integrated with the rest of the EIA** not just in terms of approach, but also language and terminology.



# EIA Co-ordinator's role in LVIA

- LV practitioners should engage with their EIA Co-ordinator to ***aid integration*** on:
  - Project description, evolution & design freeze
  - Baseline (i.e. exchange info between topics)
  - Project & EIA consultation activities
  - Significance approach & terminology
  - Approach to cumulative effects
    - Intra-project - between environmental topics
    - Inter-project - *Rochdale envelope*, assumptions
  - Length of LVIA chapter in ES main text
  - Coverage of LV effects in NTS

# EIA Co-ordinator: Reviewing an LVIA chapter

- ✓ Is the scope & content of both L&V baselines appropriate?
- ✓ Does chpt set out the methods used in conducting LVIA?
- ✓ Is it clear that L&V effects :
  - ✓ Are complete & accurately identified?
  - ✓ Have influenced design?
  - ✓ That remain have appropriate secondary mitigation proposed?
- ✓ Is the approach to evaluating significance clear & transparent?
- ✓ Are cumulative L&V effects handled to the agreed scope?
- ✓ Is the approach to presenting the L&V findings (text, tables, illustrations & visulatisations) clear and effective?

# GLVIA3: Find out more

## Hear more

- IEMA webinar by *writer Carys Swanwick*:  
[vimeo.com/64382576](https://vimeo.com/64382576)

## Read more

- Buy a copy of GLVIA3 from the LI website @  
discounted £44.99

## Learn More

- Attend a paid LI GLVIA3 Master Class:  
[www.landscapeinstitute.org/knowledge/GLVIA3](http://www.landscapeinstitute.org/knowledge/GLVIA3)



# GLVIA3

## Q&A

