

Deliberative approach to impact significance assessment

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IMPERIA project

Improving environmental assessment by adopting good practices and tools of multi-criteria decision analysis

- Aims to improve the quality and effectiveness of EIA and SEA projects
- Partners
 - ✓ SYKE, universities (Thule, Jyväskylä), consultant companies
- Budget 1,3 million euros
 - ✓ 50 % from EU Life+ programme
- Realization 1.8.2012-31.12.2015
- Web pages: *imperija.jyu.fi/english*

Multi-Criteria Decision Analysis (MCDA) and EIA

Potential areas of MCDA support identified
in **IMPERIA**

1. Initial scoping of the impacts
2. Stakeholder and citizen participation
- 3. Impact significance assessment**
4. Evaluation of alternatives

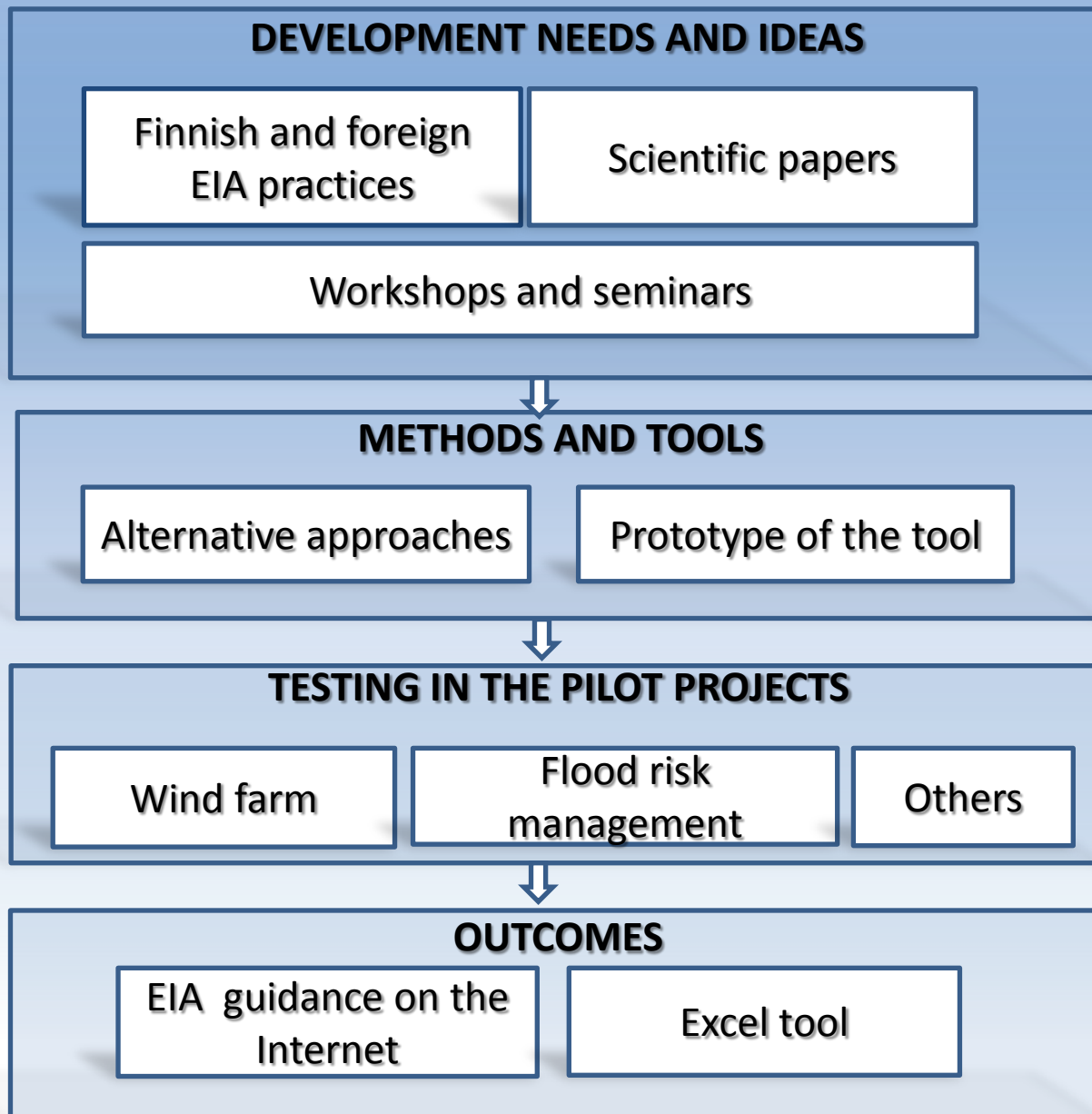
Impact significance assessment

- Essential and complex phase in EIA
- The quality of current practices lower than the best practices
- Consists of “objective” (facts) and “subjective” (values) components

- **IMPERIA focuses both on the process and tools**



Phases of developing impact significance assessment in IMPERIA

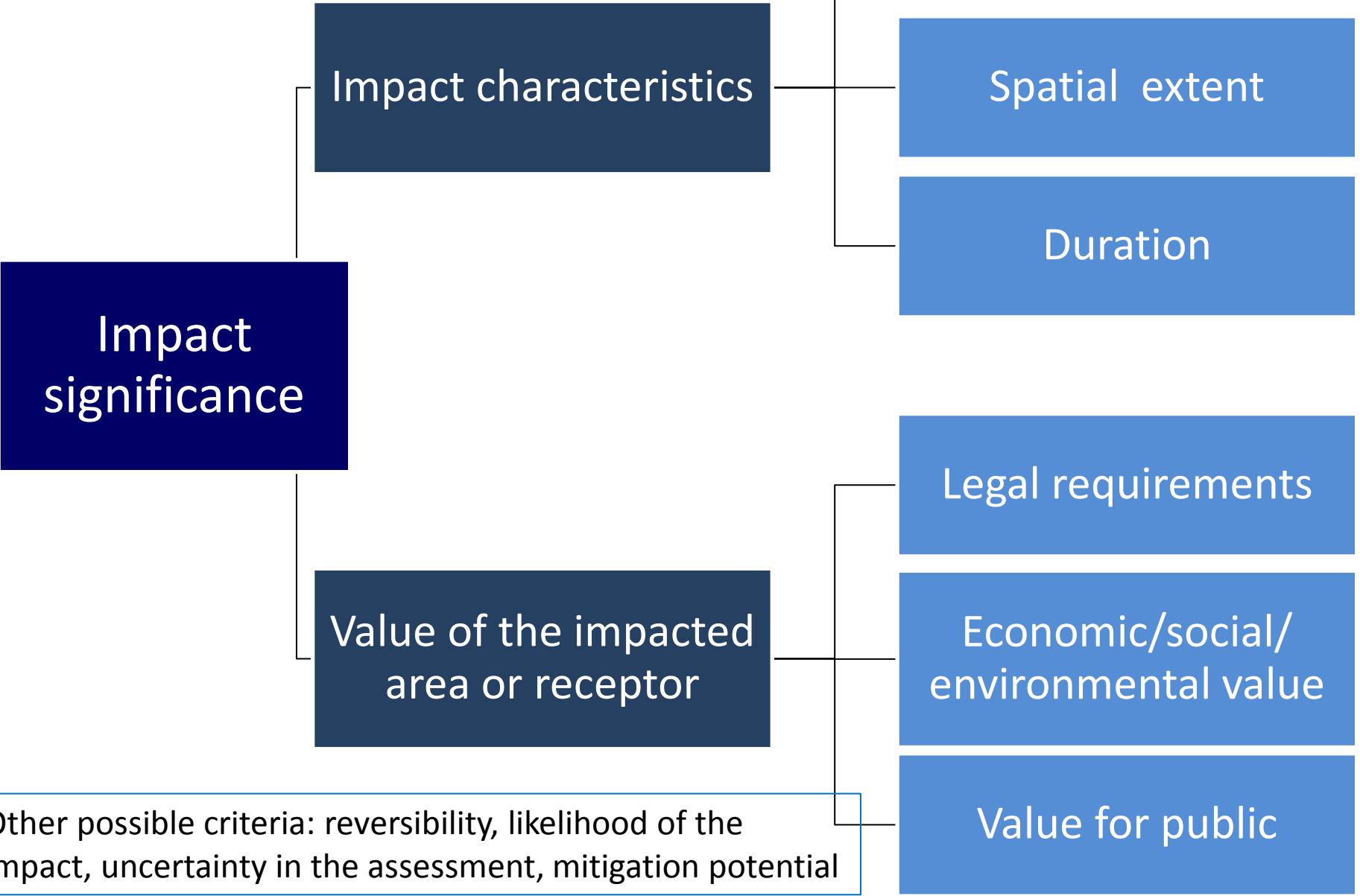


Lessons learned from MCDA projects

- MCDA methods typically assume people to answer in a certain way but in practice people do not necessarily follow the theory
 - **Forget too complex theories and design simple approaches**
- People's opinions easily reflect their general attitudes and do not enough take into account the impact ranges
 - **Disaggregate impact significance into elements and present impact ranges clearly**
- Improved quality and enhanced learning in the processes where interaction between stakeholders and the analyst has been intense
 - **Structured and facilitated process recommended**



Major criteria for the impact significance assessment



Impact significance

Impact characteristics

Magnitude

Spatial extent

Duration

Value of the impacted area or receptor

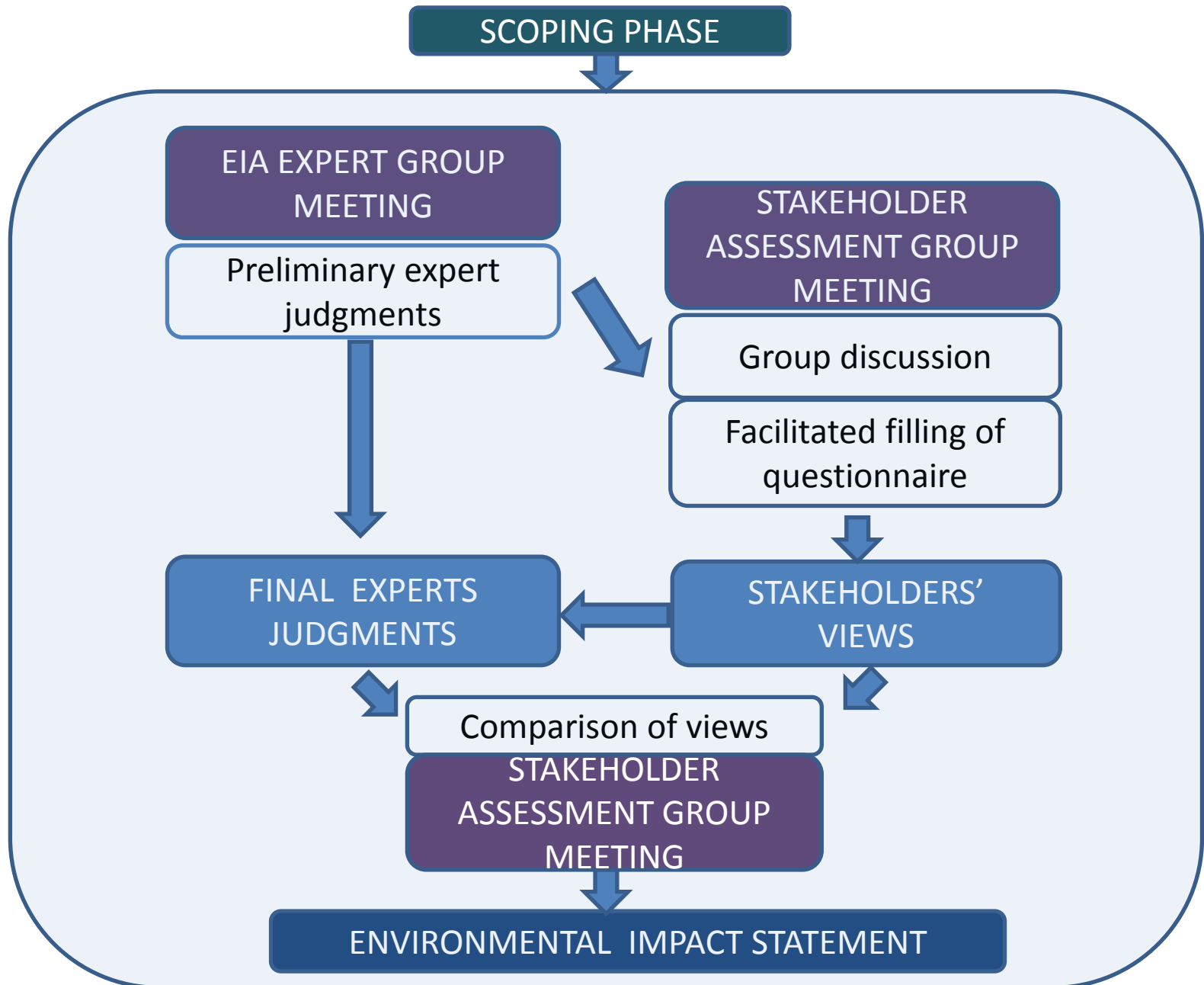
Legal requirements

Economic/social/environmental value

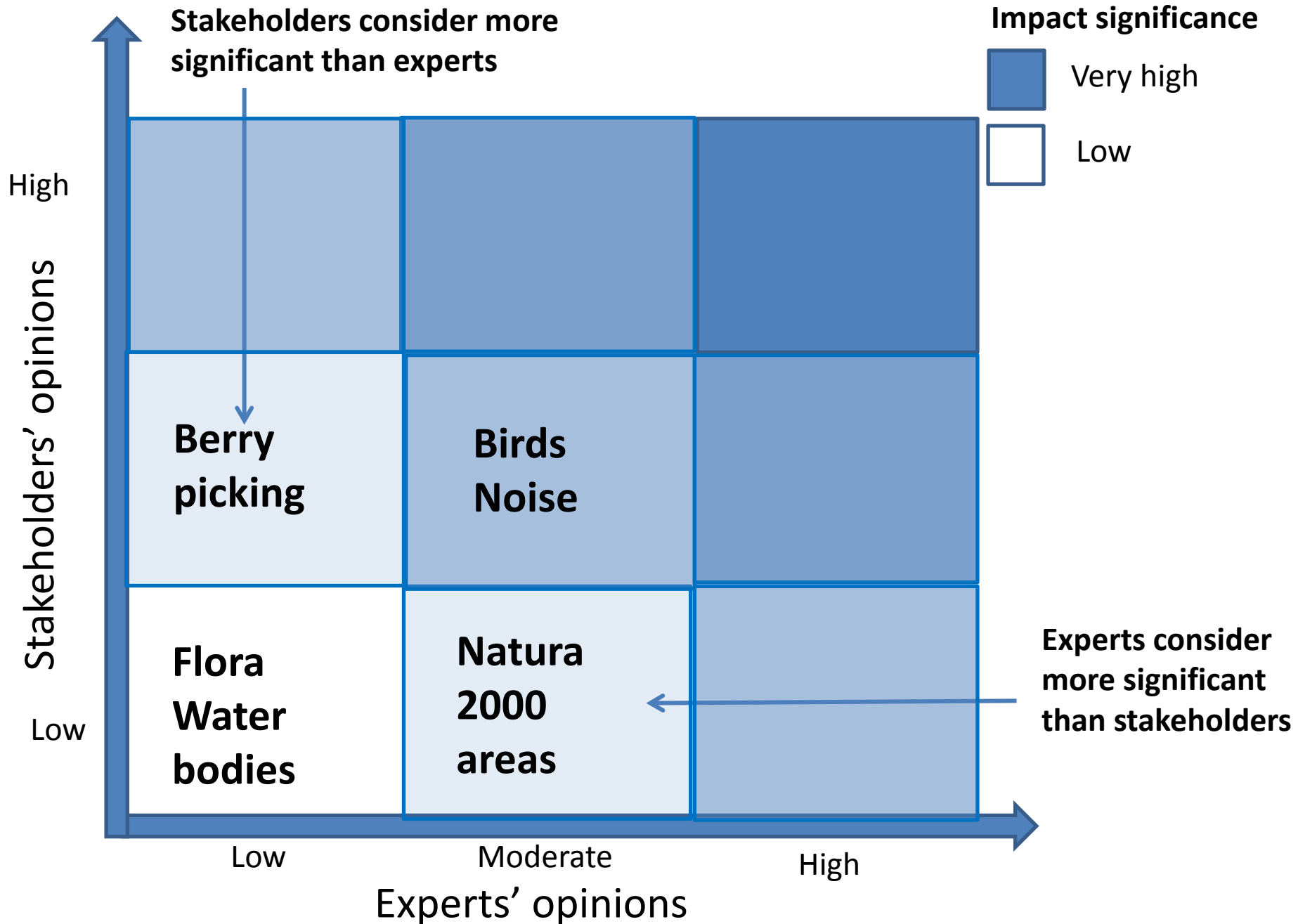
Value for public

Other possible criteria: reversibility, likelihood of the impact, uncertainty in the assessment, mitigation potential

Proposal for deliberative approach



Comparison of experts' judgments and stakeholders' views?



Systematic deliberative approach

Challenges, e.g.

- Generic evaluation framework
- Understandable realization of the procedure in a given time frame
- Laboriousness
- Illustrative and compact presentation of results

Benefits, e.g.

- Transparency
- Promotes consistent judgments
- Appreciates local knowledge
- Improves legitimacy of the EIA process

Conclusions

- Systematic approach can be applied in screening, scoping and assessment phases
- If used in scoping phase, it may improve the effectiveness of the EIA
 - Focus on the most important impacts
- Approach should be practicable and flexible
 - Otherwise it will not be widely applied



Story continues
in Chile in 2014?

Thank you!