

## Undertaking an Assessment: Key Questions by Stage

### Scoping the assessment

What is the intended purpose of the assessment?  
Who else might find this information useful/have similar questions?  
What knowledge is already available? How was that understanding obtained and where does it sit?  
What is the current context of the site? Are there any existing relationships?  
Are introductions needed and should permission be sought (officially or as a courtesy)?

### Defining the approach

How rapid do you intend to be and why?  
How participatory or collaborative would you like to be and why?  
Are the time and other resources available to realise this approach?  
If not, what is the potential impact on the assessment of modifying the approach?

### Planning the methods

What new or additional knowledge do you need?  
What sort of phenomena are you seeking to understand?  
Which methods are likely to be effective in the given context?  
What 'work' do the proposed methods do, i.e. what types of knowledge are likely to be revealed?  
Are the proposed methods feasible in the time and with the resources available?

### Preparing for engagement

Who will be involved and how? What forms of expertise do they bring?  
What resources may be needed to support participation?  
Do you already know of communities interested in the site?  
If yes, how much scope is there to identify joint priorities or for the assessment to be linked to community-led activities?  
If no, is there evidence of activities (online or offline) that suggests interested communities?

### Preparing for the research context

How might existing relationships with and between communities influence the assessment?  
How are you personally positioned with regard to the communities and the site?  
What are your assumptions about the context and the anticipated values, practices and communities?  
How flexible is the process (including the timeline)?  
What are the anticipated challenges? How might you prepare for the unanticipated?  
What support might you require?

### Concluding an assessment

How will the findings be presented and shared?  
How will the findings be discussed with communities?  
Who will own the resulting knowledge? How can people access it for their own purposes?  
How might this process support longer term relationship building and future collaboration?