

UK National Ecosystem Assessment

Follow-on

Cultural Ecosystem Services and Natural Capital

Steve Albon

Natural Capital Summit - Valuing our Life Support Systems
London, 6 November 2014



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs



Arts & Humanities
Research Council



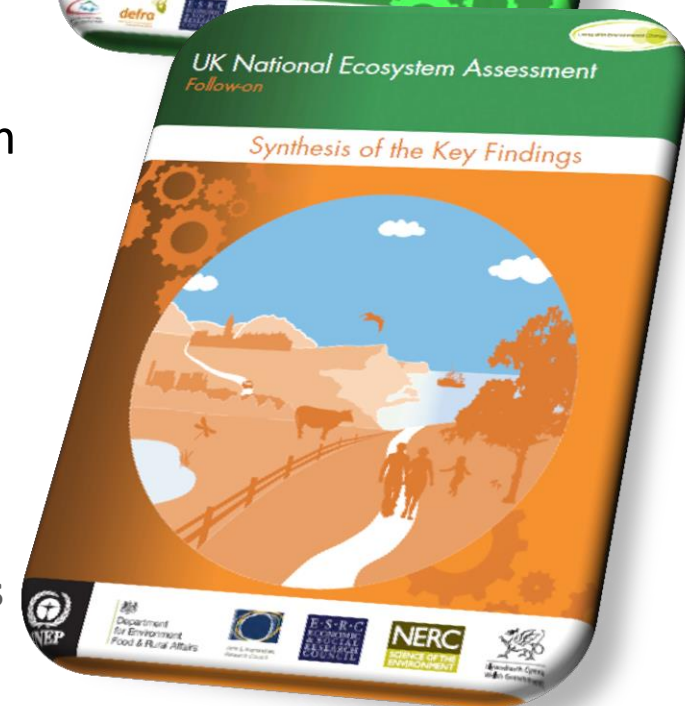
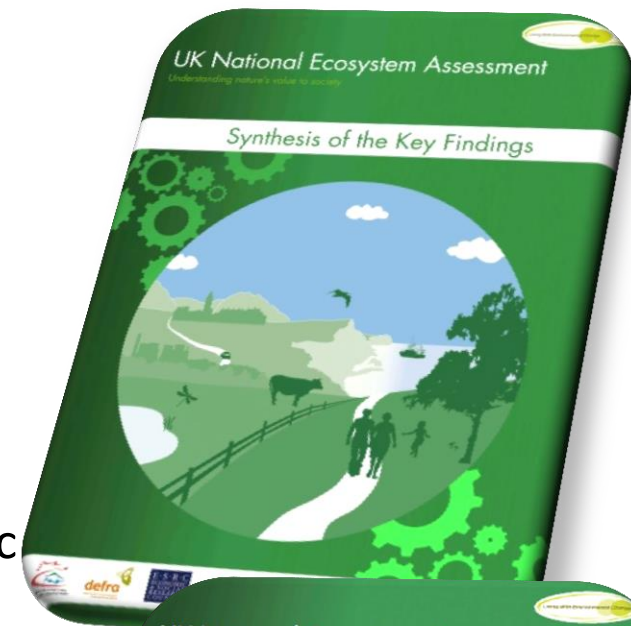
Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Context

In 2011 the UK National Ecosystem Assessment concluded that the natural world and its ecosystems are critically important to our well-being and economic prosperity. Yet they are consistently undervalued in conventional economic analyses and decision-making.

The UK NEA Follow-on aimed to make the Ecosystem Approach highly relevant to decision and policy making at a range of spatial scales across the UK.

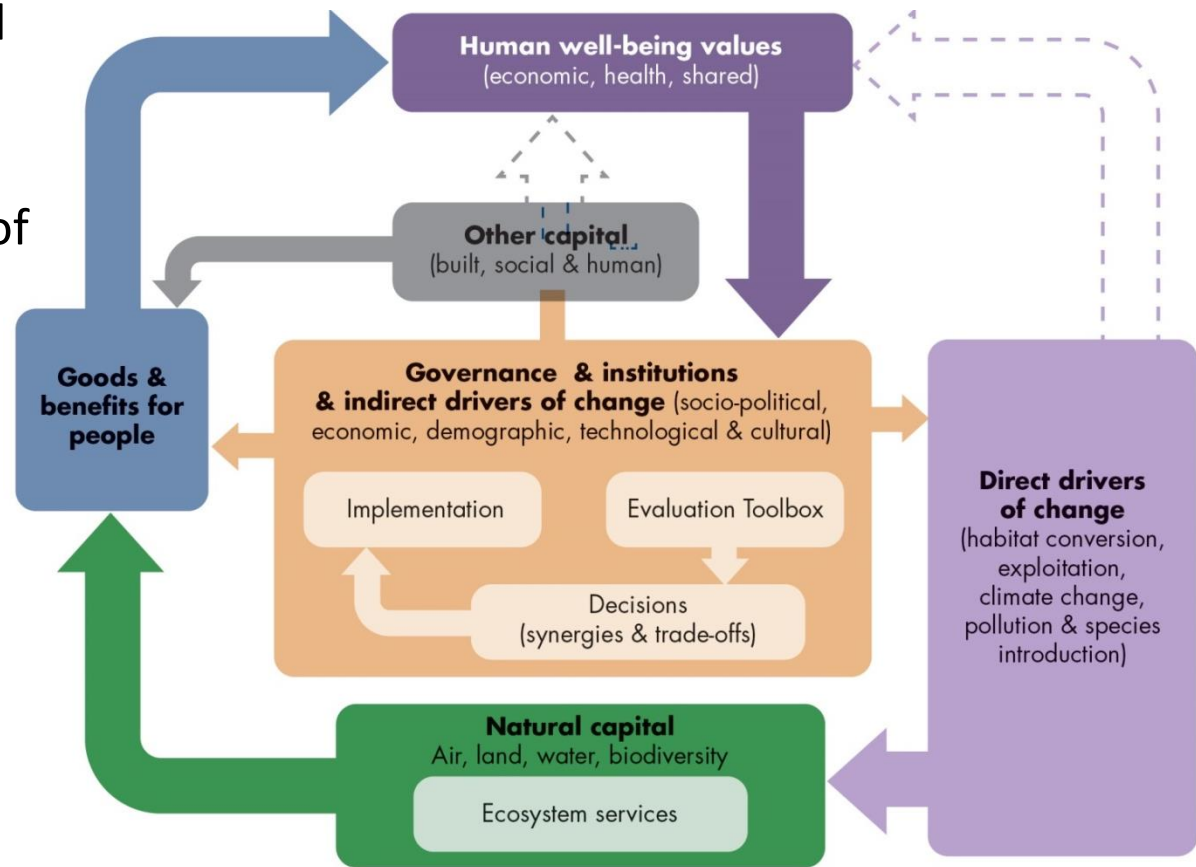
- Further our understanding of the economic and social value of nature
- Develop tools and products to operationalise the Ecosystem Approach
- Support the inclusion of natural capital in the UK's National Accounts



The UK NEAFO Ecosystem Services Framework

Evolved from the **UK NEA** and the **Valuing Nature Network**:

- Places Governance & Institutions at the centre of decision-making.
- Recognises explicitly the role of built, human and social capital.
- Transforms ecosystem services into goods and benefits for people.



UK NEAFO Guiding Principles: 3P's

- **Pluralism** - to recognise the prevailing and growing diversity in social and cultural values, ethics and norms in contemporary society. These changes make the value of nature a multidimensional concept, that is context-dependent, and also requires interdisciplinary knowledge.
- **Pragmatism** - to raise awareness of the Ecosystem Approach across a wide range of decision makers. The methodology used deliberately allows for the monetary and non-monetary valuation of ecosystem services. The aim is to maintain ecosystem resilience and the valuable flow of services they provide, rather than to maximise biodiversity conservation *per se*.
- **Precaution** - there is scientific uncertainty about how some ecosystems and their services may be adversely affected by human development. In the absence of complete information decisions should take place within a risk-based framework using Adaptive Management Principles, which emphasises flexibility and 'learning by doing'.

Principles of the 'Ecosystem Approach'

- The 12 principles of the Convention on Biological Diversity are inclusive and fall into four broad groups.

PEOPLE

Objectives are a societal choice (#1)
Use all relevant available knowledge (#11)
Emphasise inclusion (#12)

MANAGEMENT

Decentralise to lowest appropriate level (#2)
Consider "downstream" effects (#3)
Understand economic context (#4)

SCALE AND DYNAMICS

Identify space and time scales (#7)
Recognise that ecosystems are dynamic (#8)
Accept that change will happen (#9)

FUNCTION, GOODS AND SERVICES

Maintain ecosystem services (#5)
Recognise functional limits (#6)
Balance demands for use and conservation (#10)

- The full potential of the Ecosystem Approach is rarely realised, partly due to a failure to fully use all of its 12 principles, especially
 - decentralising to the lowest appropriate level (#2),
 - recognising thresholds and functional limits (#6),
 - taking a long-term view (#7),
 - accepting that change will happen and recognising lag effects (#9).