



**Tallinn Forum Open discussion: Ecosystem Services +
SEA – a strong enough partnership to protect
European biodiversity?**

Heikki Kalle - DGE Group, TF, Estonian Environment Institute

Paul van den Brink – Mid-Sweden University

Biodiversity in Europe

- Europe's biodiversity continues to be eroded resulting in ecosystem degradation. Recent data show that 60% of species assessments and 77% of habitat assessments continue to be in unfavourable conservation status. Constant habitat loss, diffuse pollution, over-exploitation of resources, and growing impacts of invasive alien species and climate change contribute cumulatively.
- The main EU target of 'halting the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of ecosystem services' by 2020 remains a serious challenge.

<https://www.eea.europa.eu/soer/2015/europe/biodiversity>

Ecosystem services

In summary, decades of research have shown that biodiversity plays a vital role in ecosystem functioning, and that processes such as capturing essential resources, producing biomass and recycling nutrients, are all impaired as biodiversity declines (Cardinale *et al.*, 2012).

Furthermore, biodiversity not only underpins ecosystem functioning, it also enables these processes to be resilient in the face of global change (Loreau & de Mazancourt, 2013).

https://ec.europa.eu/environment/integration/research/newsalert/pdf/ecosystem_services_biodiversity_IR11_en.pdf

Role of SEA

It has been widely accepted that ecosystems services approach should be integrated into decision-making and SEA is one of the primary tools of application

For example:

https://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/ecosystems/pdf/SWD_2019_305_F1_STAFF_WORKING_PAPER_EN_V2_P2_1042629.PDF

Numerous other national and international guidance documents have been prepared.

SEA practice

Practice is diverse, not everybody is convinced.

Within the nature conservation community the concept of ecosystem services is increasingly distrusted as it is considered part of the neo-liberal economic agenda. Biodiversity is commodified by attaching a monetary value to everything. Even though many conservationists recognise the value of the concept, they see that in reality often only marketable ecosystem services are valued. (Slootweg, 2016)

Diversifying governance

EEA points out that we need innovations in governance

- In EEA briefing Document - SEA in not mentioned
<https://www.eea.europa.eu/soer/2015/global/governance>

Questions

- If you have to describe ES with one word, what would it be?
- How familiar are you with ES concept (1-5)?
- Do you think ES can stop decline of biodiversity? (1-5)?
- Within SEA, is ES the best way to steer the most effective preservation of biodiversity values (1-5)?