Emerging ecosystem services governance issues in the BElgium Ecosystem Services Community of Practice

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International Workshop on Governance of Ecosystem Services: Challenges for Sustainable Development

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Topics

1. What is governance?
2. Challenges
3. Communities of practice
1) What is governance?

- **What** is and what should be governed: e.g. the interplay between nature and society of course, but along which precise problem framing and with which policy options in sight and on top of which policy priorities.

- What is and what should be a relevant unit of governance: e.g. the stakes of actors and their distributed power relationships, but along which definitions of benefits and burdens, and against which understanding of equity.

- Who is and who should merit representation in governance arrangements: e.g. the socio-political groups of actors, but along which definitions to qualify as a stakeholder and against which expectations and voice principles.

- **When are and when** should actors interact with governance processes: e.g. the moments of issue- and problem framing are strategic as are moments of process design, policy interpretation, definition of policy options, prioritization and evaluation, but along which understanding of the rules of interaction and on the basis of which informational basis.
**Methodological decision making**

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<th><strong>Key issues</strong></th>
<th><strong>Traditional paradigms</strong></th>
<th><strong>Alternative paradigms</strong></th>
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<td><strong>Problem formulation</strong></td>
<td>A single objective, optimization; if multiple objectives, then trade-off on one scale</td>
<td>Alternative solutions on separate dimensions without trade-offs</td>
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<td><strong>Data demand</strong></td>
<td>Overwhelming importance</td>
<td>Reduced importance</td>
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<td><strong>Judgment of data</strong></td>
<td>Science &amp; consensus orientated</td>
<td>Simple and transparent, clarifying terms of conflict</td>
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<td><strong>Role of actors</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Decision making</strong></td>
<td>Top down, single decision maker</td>
<td>Bottom up, multiple decision makers</td>
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<td><strong>Uncertainty</strong></td>
<td>Try to abolish uncertainty</td>
<td>Accept uncertainty</td>
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The end of expertise?

“More and more patients are going to the Internet for medical advice. To keep my practice going, I changed my name to Dr. Google.”
How about air quality & quality of life?
Bring in the social cloud
2. Challenges

![Image of an elephant representing various viewpoints:]

- It’s a Fan!
- It’s a Wall!
- It’s a Rope!
- It’s a Spear!
- It’s a Snake!
- It’s a Tree!

BElgium Ecosystem Services (BEES)
Practice reflections from Belgium (1)

- **Usefulness of the ecosystem services concept:**
  - Useful for tackling major societal challenges: a systemic environmental sustainability crisis and the failure of governance to address this adequately.
  - System characteristics such as complexity.
  - Mutual society – nature dependency
  - Integrative capacity: actors, factors and sectors

- **How is the ecosystem services concept used in practice?**
  - A tension between calculation and social debate:
    - Strong tendency for proof of concept in the vocabulary of what politically seems to rule our world: economic discourse, money talks, and life in quantified format.
    - Strong tendency away from this culture of math and money: it is seen as part of the disease of unsustainability which we aim to cure. Alternative methods and practices, social debate and social relations between mankind and nature.
  - Perhaps a coalition of diversity, joining forces for similar aims?
Practice reflections from Belgium (2)

• **Risks of monetary ecosystem services valuation:**
  
  • “Price-tagging nature elements can create a perception of a “license to pollute” (or to destroy).”
  
  • “Quantification, especially economic quantification, of ecosystem services has the danger of trade-offs with biodiversity”

• **Governance challenges:**
  
  • To overcome failure of governance to protect ecosystems
  
  • Challenge for governance institutions to deal with limited and/or ambiguous scientific knowledge
  
  • Translation of complex conceptual terminology into understandable communication material
Practice reflections from Belgium (3)

- **Scientific and methodological challenges**: 
  - Balancing scientific quality - pragmatic application in practice.
  - Science – policy - practice interface and a transdisciplinary approach.
  - Inclusive approach: wider stakeholder values, needs and priorities.
  - Taking into account qualitative information: ecosystem services difficult to quantify.
  - The effects of (economic) quantification of ecosystem services on biodiversity.
  - Constructing baselines for comparative analysis + realizing the status of biodiversity and ecosystem functions / services = not static even in absence of human pressures.
  - Comparison ES against other integrated approaches.

- **The importance of a local Ecosystem Service Community of Practice**: 
  - Keeping track of international and local (Belgian) developments.
  - Enhance the link between science and practice, society, and policy
  - Neutral and interdisciplinary umbrella and reference network
3 Community of Practice

- A network made up of individuals and organizations
- That share common concerns or interest in a particular topic
- Aims, advantages, both tangible and intangible:
  - networking, capacity building, collaboration, debate, critical mass, interface, support, …
CoP for ecosystem services: EU perspective

Clearly, the activities around Action 5 will require continuous improvement on the road towards 2020:

• In general, the link between science and policy should be strengthened and more support provided to policy-relevant research.
• Data sharing capabilities need to be enhanced in Europe and in particular, data coming from long-term ecological research sites (cf. LTER) and research.
• The links between biodiversity and the delivery of ecosystem services warrant further research and evidence gathering. Whereas to some extent, there remains scientific uncertainty about the exact relationships between biodiversity, ecosystem functioning and ecosystem services, a better availability and usability of biodiversity datasets will provide new insights and will boost the mapping and
• There is a need for capacity-building in all Member States in order to create a community of practice in Europe that will contribute to improve the knowledge and evidence for EU environment policy in line with Priority Objective 5 of the General Union Environment Action Programme to 2020 ‘living well, within the limits of our planet’.33

Mapping and Assessment of Ecosystems and their Services

Indicators for ecosystem assessments under Action 5 of the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020

José Mañas - Euro, February 2014

BELgium Ecosystem Services
Welcome to the BEES Community website

The Belgium Ecosystem Services (BEES) Community is an open and flexible network that will interface between different societal actors.

The BEES community is open to all potentially interested organisations (policy, business, NGO's, science, consultancy, civil society,...).

The BEES Community has the following aims:

• Develop ecosystem services concepts, tools and practices that help to adapt human activity and clarify ecosystem thresholds in order to preserve the actual and potential well-being of present and future generations; and to stop ecosystem and biodiversity degradation, and improve their status.

• Develop mainstreaming & policy tools to promote the integration of ecosystem services concepts in policy and management, business and society.
About the BEES logo

The BEES logo represents the fusion of a human heart and a leaf, symbolising nature. Man and nature are intertwined, working together as one organ. No dominance, they are on equal level. The two parts can also represent both sides of ecosystem services science. When both parts (leaf + heart) of the BEES logo are flipped to the right, you obtain a ‘B’ the first letter of BEES (Belgium).

Design by Sophie Rollier - Zoap Design
The BEES Community is open to new members. Please contact Dr Hans Keune to take part in this initiative.

The following people are currently active within the BEES-community:

- Baiwir Renaud (Cabinet Mr. Di Antonio)
- Bauler Tom (ULB)
- Brosens Dimitri (Belgian Biodiversity Platform)
- Buffet Dominique (CRA-W)
- Cerulus Tanya (Flemish Government, Environment, Nature and Energy Department)
- Chemay Frederic (DG Environment)
- Chevalier Cedric (Cabinet Mr. Nollet)
- Cliquet An (UGent)
- De Bie Tom (VMM)
- Delvaux Lionel (Fédération Inter-Environnement Wallonie)
- DeMeester Luc (K.U.Leuven)
- Dendoncker Nicolas (FUNDP)
BEES book

- 81 contributors: science, policy, NGO’s, business, both Belgian and international

- Chapters on theoretical & methodological issues (monetization, public participation), on a diversity of societal issues (e.g. public health, global trade) or sectors (e.g. agriculture), and ES practice reflections from non-scientists

Belgian MAES Working Group

The EU Biodiversity Strategy sets a number of different targets, including target 2 that states: “By 2020, ecosystems and their services are maintained and enhanced by establishing green infrastructure and restoring at least 15% of degraded ecosystems”. In order to reach this goal, different actions are set up, one of which is Action 5: “Improve knowledge of ecosystems and their services in the EU”. Within this framework, each Member State is compelled to contribute to achieve this target by:

- Mapping and assessing the state of ecosystems and their services in its national territory (by 2014)
- Assessing the economic value of such services and promote the integration of these values into accounting and reporting systems at EU and national levels (by 2020).

To perform these activities, the European Commission created a new initiative called Mapping and Assessment of Ecosystems and their Services (MAES). The EU MAES Working Group was set up early this year, and on June 6th 2012 the Belgian representatives, Nicolas Dendoncker (FUNDP) and Hans Keune (Belgian Biodiversity Platform) initiated a Belgian MAES-working Group, open to Belgian biodiversity and ecosystem services experts and stakeholders. Everyone is invited to provide input to the MAES-project through the website: https://circabc.europa.eu (for more information on how to access the right section of this website, please contact Caroline Lebordais: Caroline.Lebordais@ec.europa.eu)

For more information on MAES, please contact Nicolas Dendoncker (nicolas.dendoncker@fundp.ac.be) or Hans Keune: (h.keune@biodiversity.be).
Belgian MAES WG: reflection on the 2nd MAES report

- The presented indicators (almost) exclusively focus on ES-supply mapping. How are member states to both distinguish and take into account ES-supply, ES-demand and ES-use in order to tackle the assessment questions raised in the 2013 MAES report?

- How are indicators for well-being and health to be taken into account?

- How will indicators be selected in a participatory manner as to raise local stakeholder support for their selection, application and outcomes?

- How are these diverse assessments to be performed and their results integrated?
BEES working groups: starting up

- BEES WG on integrated valuation
- BEES WG on reflection on practice
- BEES WG on agriculture
- BEES WG on business
- BEES WG on governance (20140314)
- BEES WG on judicial aspects (?)
BEES 9th of July group: policy representatives and scientists coproduce

- Policy representatives and scientists from Walloon, Flemish, Federal and EU context

- Spontaneous, very good, informal, collaborative atmosphere

- BEES brief with a vision on ecosystem services: mainstreaming ES and guidelines for ES approach

- BEES mission text (under construction)
BEES brief

BElgium Ecosystem Services

BEES-brief I
Nature...why care?

“What’s the largest multinational of Europe? There is no other that produces so many services and products, and offers so many jobs... It’s Nature of that magnitude would be politically canonized; in fact, it would be too big.

Gerben-Jan Gerbrandy, rapporteur of the parliamentary commission Health and Food Safety’ (20th April 2012, Strasbourg)

Natural Capital and Ecosystem services

Our society depends on a vast flow of goods and services from the ecosystems - communities of plants, animals and microorganisms which are essential for our well-being and our prosperity, our economy.

However, our natural capital is eroding faster than ever. Ecosystem functions have degenerated to the point where ecosystems can no longer provide the services our society depends upon: provision of food, clean air, clean water, protection against flooding and erosion, ...

Figure 1. non-exhaustive illustration of ecosystem services’ links to various policy issues: flood control; Drinking water; Spatial planning; Green infrastructure; Transport; Clean air; Obesity; Mental health; Medical research; Climate adaptation; Climate mitigation; Food feed, fuel, fiber; Raw materials supply; Biomass; Pest control; Soil quality; Pollination; Financing; Resource efficiency; Green economy; Bio-economy; Bio-based products; Jobs; Tourism/recreation; Energy; Culture; innovation/Biotechnology; Biodiversity policy.

BElgium Ecosystem Services
BEES brief: recommendations

yes we (also have) 10 😊

1. Acknowledge the significance of biodiversity and ecosystem services to society
2. Recognize the importance of ecosystem services in land use policies
3. Treat ecosystem resilience as paramount
4. Capture the value of ecosystems and their services
5. Support the mapping of ecosystems and their services
6. Acknowledge the existence of multiple values of biodiversity and ecosystem services
7. Promote transparency and equity in decision making processes
8. Always look at bundles of ecosystem services
9. Adopt a transdisciplinary approach
10. Measure better to manage better
First idea was to name it a **policy brief**

This *idea developed spontaneously* together with policy representatives whom we since some time collaborate with

The idea of **co-production and diversity of backgrounds** involved being an interesting feature

From an informal co-production, listing *(author/supporting)* names of contributors in a policy type of text appeared to *sensitive to the policy contexts’ hierarchies*: no formal decision making procedures were followed; and turning it into an informal text from an informal network did not solve it

**Tension informal qualities – formal hierarchies**…any suggestions?
Thank you!

Well, you've been a pretty good hoss, I guess. Hardworkin'. Not the fastest critter I ever come across, but...

No, stupid, not feedback. I said I wanted a feedbag.

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