

# OPERAs

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### Operational Potential of Ecosystems Research Applications



Ecosystems provide humankind with a range of beneficial resources, goods and services. Yet human use and exploitation of the biosphere is increasing at such a pace and scale that many of the major ecosystems are threatened, and may not be able to continue to function in ways that are vital to support the existence of humanity.

Re-framing environmental resource use has led to the emergence of the concepts of ecosystem services (ES) and natural capital (NC).

This discourse indicates not only a change in our understanding of functions at the ecosystem scale, but also a fundamental shift in how we perceive the relationship between people and the ecosystems on which they depend.


Although the ES and NC concepts have been adopted in high-level policy frameworks, e.g. the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the EU biodiversity strategy, a mismatch still exists between the wealth of conceptual understanding in science, the diversity of different academic approaches, and the practical application of this knowledge in policy and decision-making practice.

New research is required to explore whether, how and under what conditions these concepts and currently disparate lines of research can move beyond the academic domain towards practical implementation in support of sustainable ecosystem management.

OPERAs (Operational Potential of Ecosystems Research Applications) aims to improve understanding of how applying ES/NC concepts in managing ecosystems contributes to human well-being in different social-ecological systems in inland and coastal zones, in rural and urban areas, related to different ecosystems including forests and fresh water resources.

### Further Information

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