

Policy and Practice Note: Ecosystem Services and the Professions

Background

The delivery of environmental goods and services and the protection of natural capital and natural resources are key societal priorities. LWEC research is at the cutting edge of this agenda. Major agents for disseminating the results of this research are potentially the Land-based professions who are active in shaping the natural and built environments. A consultant is sought to prepare a 4 to 6 page Policy and Practice Note (modelled on the Relu series format – see <http://www.relu.ac.uk/news/policyandpracticenotes.htm>) that will highlight how the value of services that nature provides can be embedded in the decision-making and advisory processes of Land-based professionals. The consultant will also scope future themes for other policy and practice notes deriving from LWEC research.

The focus of the note is on understanding, identifying, using and evaluating the opportunities and barriers of an ecosystem services framework for practising professionals within the demands of professional roles and legal requirements. It will be published in a new Policy and Practice Note series of the LWEC partnership.

The Objectives of the Policy and Practice Note are to:

- Highlight completed LWEC research that has considered ecosystem services and to review what insights the findings can offer to current debates within the professions and to professional practice.
- Draw out lessons for professional practice based on these insights
- Showcase the evidence and expertise available in the relevant LWEC Programmes
- Draw out recommendations for policy that would support wider use of the ecosystems approach by the land based professions

Target audiences

- Land based professionals and their professional bodies (eg: Institute of Civil Engineers, Landscape Institute, Royal Institute of British Architects, Royal Town Planning Institute, Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, Countryside Management Association; Agricultural Industries Confederation, Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Institute of Land and Amenity Management; Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management, Central Association of Agricultural Valuers, Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment etc.)
- Research Councils: NERC, ESRC, AHRC, Living with Environmental Change Partnership

Detailed questions

- a) What can we learn from completed and existing research projects and programmes about using the ecosystems approach and its attendant ecosystem services framework in professional practice?
- b) What are the opportunities and what are the barriers that impede putting 'ecosystem approach' thinking into professional practice?
- c) What progress has been made to date and what are the opportunities and future needs for developing new approaches, tools and techniques to embed thinking more effectively into practice across the built and natural environment?
- d) What knowledge, tools and approaches are held within the professions that can inform future research in this area?
- e) What should be the priority themes that could feature in future Policy and Practice notes that link LWEC research and the professions.

Methodology

The work will primarily be based upon discussions and presentations held during a workshop on ecosystem services and the professions, to be held early in the summer, accompanied by a small number of interviews with research leaders from LWEC programmes and activities (see below). The consultant time required is estimated at 12 days. The work would need to be programmed for May-July with a draft PPN due mid-July (final revisions end of July). The timetable would be subject to discussion with the Landbridge Directorate.

Examples of LWEC programmes and activities

Biodiversity and Ecosystem Service Sustainability (BESS)

BESS is a five year (2011-2015) research programme, which aims to contribute to an understanding of the functional role of biodiversity in key ecosystem processes. It will undertake research and activities in an integrated way and take a holistic approach to exploring the functional role of biodiversity in UK ecosystems across a range of environmental gradients and scales

Ecosystems Knowledge Network (EKN)

The Ecosystems Knowledge Network is a resource for anyone wanting to share knowledge or learn about the practical benefits of an ecosystems approach. It draws together experience from the UK and elsewhere to assist organisations to understand how an ecosystems approach can help build sustainable communities.

Insect Pollinators Initiative (IPI)

The aim of this initiative is to promote innovative research aimed at understanding and mitigating the biological and environmental factors that adversely affect insect pollinators.

Valuing Nature Network (VNN)

The Valuing Nature Network's mission is to support interdisciplinary partnerships to scope, develop and promote research capacity in the valuation of biodiversity, ecosystem services and natural resources and facilitate the integration of such approaches in policy and practice in the public and private sectors.

Demonstration Test Catchments

Demonstration Test Catchments will find out if new farming practices, which aim to reduce diffuse pollution from agriculture, can also deliver sustainable food production and environmental benefits across whole river catchments.

Macronutrients Cycle

Macronutrient cycles - nitrogen, carbon and phosphorus - are pivotal in the stability of global biogeochemical cycles, in sustaining natural resources and in protecting human health and biodiversity. The goal of the programme is to quantify the scales (magnitude and spatial/temporal variation) of N and P fluxes and nature of transformations through the catchment under a changing climate and perturbed C cycle.

Agricultural Greenhouse Gas Inventory Research Platform

A partnership of universities, research institutes and private companies delivering one of the largest government funded research programmes in the UK on measuring and mitigating greenhouse gas emissions.

National Ecosystem Assessment Follow-on Phase

In 2011 the UK National Ecosystem Assessment (UK NEA) delivered information on the state, value (economic and social) and possible future of terrestrial, freshwater and marine ecosystems across the UK, but also identified a number of key uncertainties. The follow-on

phase of the UK NEA will further develop and promote the arguments that the UK NEA put forward and make them applicable to decision and policy making at a range of spatial scales across the UK to a wide range of stakeholders.

Submitting a quote

Quotations are invited from individuals engaged in or highly familiar with professional practice, and able to engage effectively with research programmes. Tenderers are asked to send a one page outline of their approach to the project, including statement of price (stating VAT if applicable), and attaching a CV. Please email this to Jeremy Phillipson at Centre for Rural Economy, School of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Newcastle University, Jeremy.phillipson@ncl.ac.uk. **The deadline is 3rd May 2013.** The project will be subject to the GENERAL CONDITIONS OF CONTRACT FOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES 2010.