

Research and analysis: Natural Capital and Ecosystem Service approaches to management

Requirement R031

Requirement detail

Ecosystem services are benefit flows to humans from natural ecosystems. Natural capital is the stock of natural ecosystems from which these benefits flow. Mismanagement of natural capital assets or unsustainable use of a service ultimately has negative impacts on benefits obtained.

Pathways linking natural capital assets to goods and services that benefit humans are complex and linked requiring ecosystem level consideration. To implement natural capital and ecosystem services approaches requires understanding of the:

- range of economic and social benefits provided by the natural assets and their associated ecosystem services
- way in which these benefits depend upon the various assets and services
- state/condition and location of natural assets in relation to the benefits derived from them

Opportunities for investing in other types of natural capital that are not currently present should also be explored.

Understanding the benefits obtained from natural capital; the assets that underpin them; and how investment, intervention or management might affect these benefits, is needed for long-term planning.