

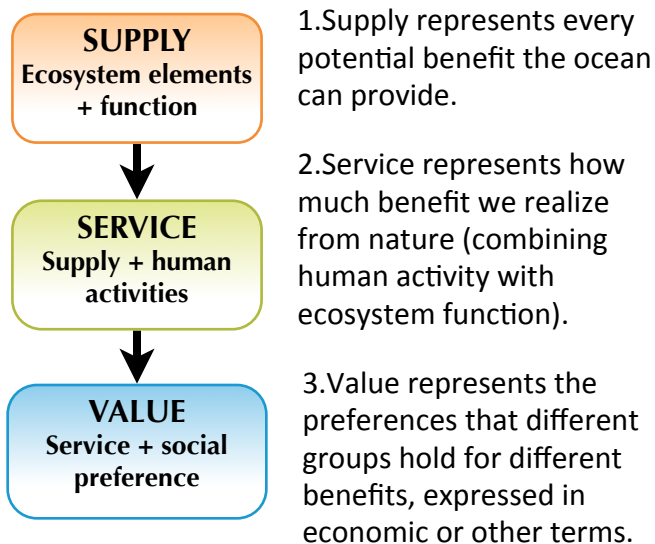
OPTIONS FOR THE OCEANS: SCIENTIFIC INSIGHTS FOR DECISION MAKERS

Defining Common Goals: A Place to Start for CMSP

Ecosystem services provide a framework and a common language to allow agencies to articulate their goals and better understand how their decisions interact with those of other agencies. In this way, ecosystem services can facilitate the interagency coordination necessary to implement coastal and marine spatial planning (CMSP). Using an ecosystem service framework, agencies can describe their objectives transparently using common terms. Ecosystem services are simply the full set of benefits people receive from nature, including food, protection from coastal storms and sea level rise, recreational opportunities, cultural experiences, and alternative energy sources. To date, however, both managers and academic scientists have used the term loosely, rendering the concept vague and hard to apply. We present a new 3-step approach that provides the tools to measure and track the a) condition of the system (supply), b) amount of resources actually used or enjoyed by people (service), and c) people's preference for a particular level of a service (value).

THE TOOLKIT

This three-step supply-chain model describes how ecosystem services flow to people.



Understanding the supply chain can help decision makers see where their actions come into play, and what other actors and actions are likely to affect their success.

MORE INFORMATION

This framework for describing and measuring ecosystem services is being implemented in a freely available software tool, InVEST, developed by the Natural Capital Project. This project is a collaboration among Stanford University, the University of Minnesota, The Nature Conservancy, and World Wildlife Fund. The framework is also being adopted in the design of a global biodiversity monitoring program, GEO BON.

Resources:

- Natural Capital Project
 - <http://www.naturalcapitalproject.org>
- InVEST
 - <http://invest.ecoinformatics.org>
- Group on Earth Observations (GEO BON)
 - <http://www.earthobservations.org/geobon.shtml>

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