

Assessing knowledge needed to take ecosystem services into account in different contexts

Esther Carmen, Juliette Young and Allan Watt – NERC Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, UK

ESCOM Conference, Edinburgh, May 7th 2015



www.openness-project.eu



Background

The ecosystem services concept is becoming influential in **some** policy and practice-based communities.

Attention is turning to improving this. For example, the EU OpenNESS project.

A key part of this is 27 case studies across Europe and beyond.

My role in this project has been to examine **knowledge needed to take ES into account in legal, political and administrative contexts.**



From concepts to real-world applications
www.openness-project.eu

Aim

- To examine knowledge needs from the perspective of stakeholders (including researchers).
- To take an open, inductive approach to 'knowledge' which is led by stakeholders views of knowledge and not a predefined typology (grounded theory).
- To provide useful information to project researchers and other stakeholders.
- To provide useful information to ecosystem services researchers, practitioners and policy makers.



What was included?

		Case study								
		1	2	4	8	9	14	15	16	24
Context	Legal	✓	✓		✓				✓	
	Administrative	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓		
	Political	✓			✓					
	Planning	✓				✓	✓			
Governance level	EU				✓		✓	✓	✓	
	National				✓		✓	✓	✓	
	Regional		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
	Local	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓
Policy sector	Agriculture		✓		✓	✓	✓			✓
	Forestry		✓		✓	✓	✓			✓
	Freshwater						✓	✓	✓	
	Urban	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓		
	Protected area					✓	✓		✓	✓
	Wildlife					✓			✓	✓
	Coastal									
	Bio-energy				✓					
Policy cycle stage	Formulation			✓			✓			
	Design	✓	✓	✓			✓			
	Implementation	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Monitoring								✓	
	Evaluation								✓	
	Reporting								✓	
Conditions	Socio-economic	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Biophysical	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓

Table 2: Data collection context and methods used to examine knowledge needs

How did we do this?

Data collection methods involved a combination of focus group discussions directly with project stakeholders and/ or interviews with case study researchers.

Data collection context	Data collection methods	Date
EU Level stakeholders from different EC Directorates Generals (DG), EU agencies and NGO's	Two parallel focus groups	January 2014
9 participating case studies		
Finland	Focus groups and interview	February 2015
Slovakia	Interview	February 2015
Spain	Interview	February 2015
Germany	Interview	February 2015
Scotland	Focus group	October 2014
Netherlands, Belgium and UK	Interview	January 2015
Italy	Focus group report and interview	January 2015
Scotland	Focus group	September 2014
Kenya	Focus group and interview	March 2015

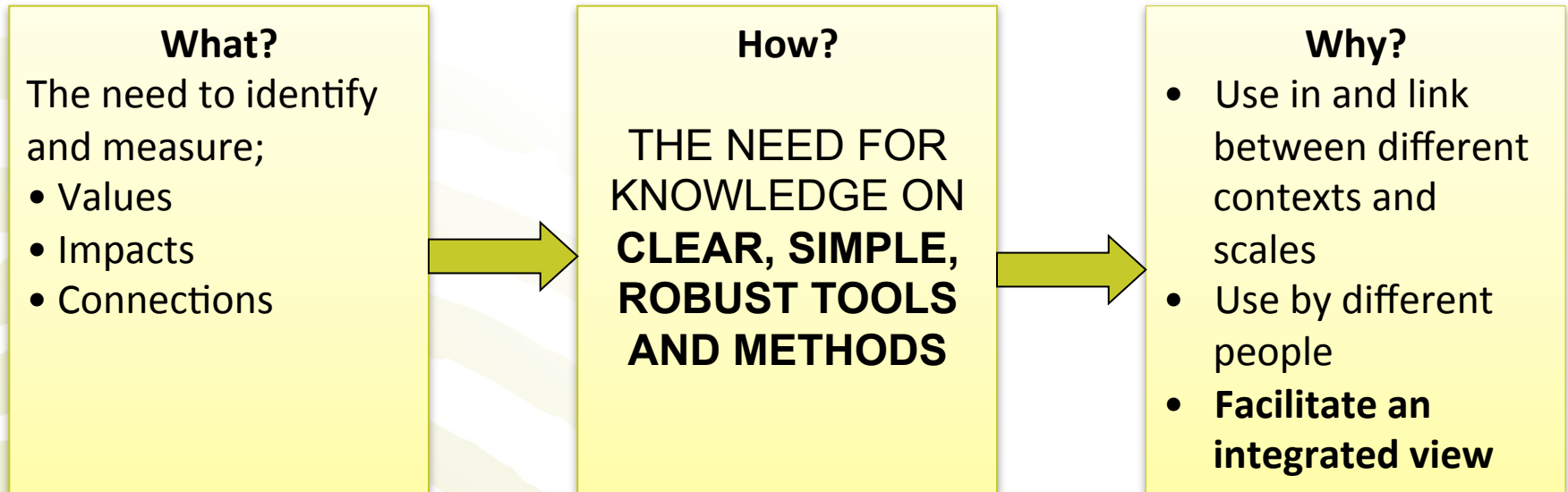
What did we find out?

1. Knowledge needs relating to tools, methods and outputs.
2. Knowledge needs to bring knowledge and action closer together.
3. Knowledge needs to develop a common understanding and communicating effectively.
4. Knowledge needs relating to structuring and organising.



From concepts to real-world applications
www.openness-project.eu

1. Knowledge needs relating to tools, methods and outputs



“if the fish quality is becoming greater then you know the ecological systems are starting to work again so the monitoring in that is really important” (focus group CS08).

non monetary valuation methods are seen as “not robust enough to be scaled up [and] there is lots of science going on [...] how to value ecosystems but there are no [...practical] approaches” (EU02).

2. Knowledge needs to bring knowledge and action closer together



“we were starting from the assumption that maize production [was] probably bad for landscape aesthetics, but the stakeholders said it is probably not the case, it could also be beneficial” (interview CS04).

“societal knowledge or local knowledge, [... is] also important knowledge to take into account if you want to make the concepts useful” (focus group EU01).

“I think that is complete and utter irrelevance, I wouldn’t trust [an absolute monetary value] further than I could throw it [.....], it doesn’t mean anything for people on the ground” (focus group CS08).

3. Knowledge needs to develop a common understanding and communicating

A COMMON UNDERSTANDING

Maintain key principles of ES concept
(integrated view, multiple benefits,
across scales)



ADAPTED COMMUNICATION

Align with existing language in use

“the only thing is to be sure that everybody is talking about the same issue because if not our whole methodology could collapse [...] it is not a language problem, it is conceptual” (interview CS03).

“the framing we find is dependent on the stakeholders you talk to” (interview CS06)

“for example in the forestry sector [...ecosystem services may be] a very powerful concept to use in [as...] it fits very well in their language (EU02)

4. Knowledge needs relating to structuring and organising

Thinking and doing - PRACTICES

- Who -Professional groups/ Organisations/Researchers
- What – Learning and sharing from bottom up initiatives



POLICY FRAMEWORKS

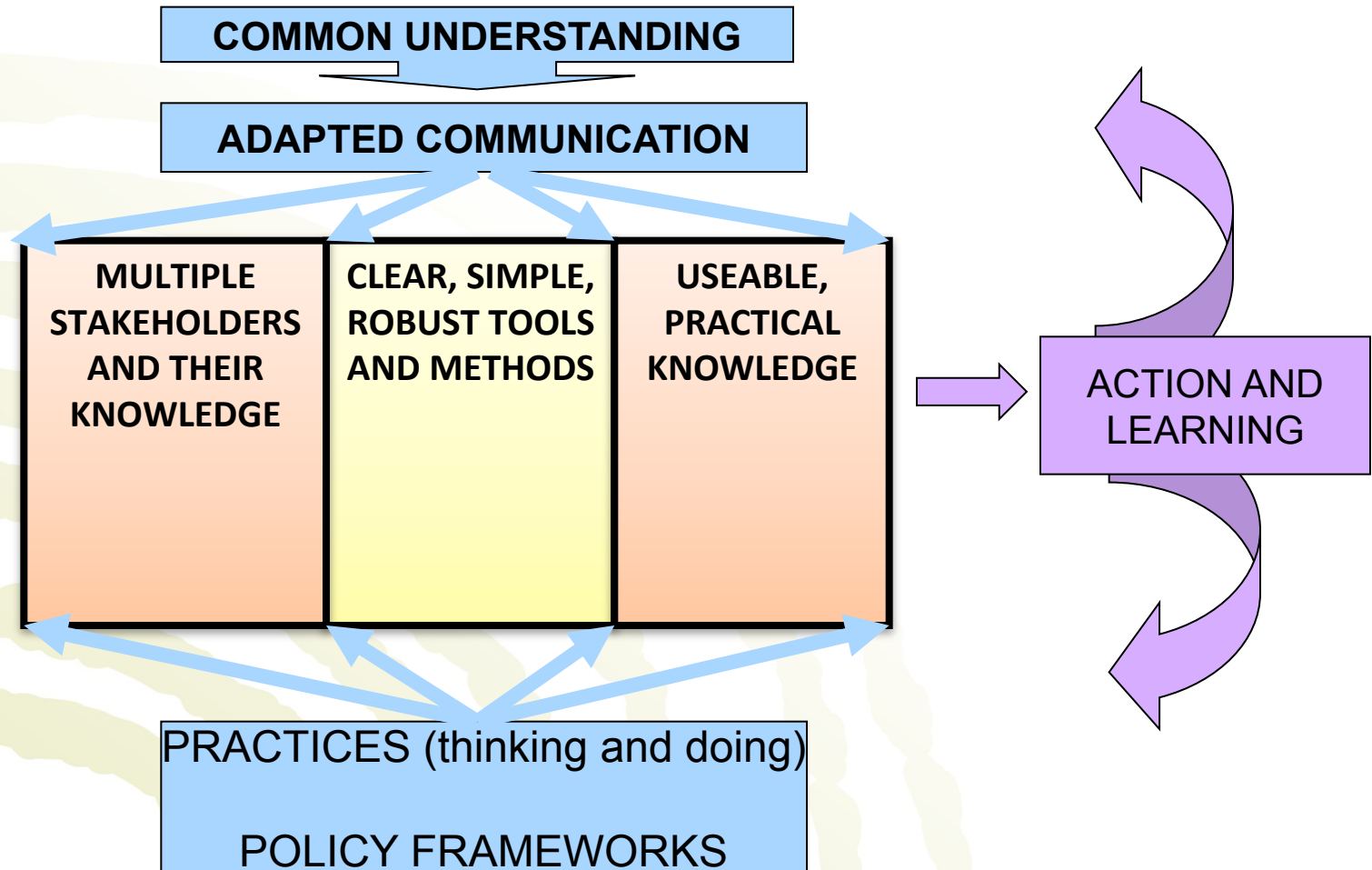
- EU/ National/Regional/Local

The local planners “are very suspicious about [using local] peoples’ experiential knowledge, they are very suspicious about if you can get relevant data that you can trust” (interview CS01).

“in some cases it is more difficult to get these [stakeholder] sessions underway and that is due to the type of organisation [...] and the way they are used to do things” (interview CS06).

“you can get full benefit of services by creating policy [...] that takes natural capital as a starting point and if you do that you get a completely different plan than if you start with for example [with] economic or demographic demands in an area” (focus group EU01).

Summary: The need for knowledge exchange and co-production processes



Conclusion

This study highlighted **knowledge products** (*known unknowns*). This is a narrow view of knowledge needs and highlights those needs **which are identified and can be articulated**.

Stakeholders perceived the need for **knowledge as a processes** to develop usable, practical knowledge through multi-stakeholder coproduction processes.

A focus on knowledge processes;

- Can be useful to a wide range of contexts.
- More open to *unknown unknowns*.

This highlights there is a need to view **knowledge and decision making as interconnected**.



From concepts to real-world applications
www.openness-project.eu