

Abstract

The ecosystem services (ES) framework enables a better understanding of the benefits of nature to people and society. Thus it can help to inform decision-making and promote a more sustainable use of nature and landscape. Although the number of scientific publications on ES is steadily increasing, the actual application of ES knowledge in policy, decision-making and practice by actors is still very limited. The dissertation examines through several sub-studies whether and how the ES framework is already implemented in policies and in the real decision-making practice of various actors in the Czech Republic, and what the possibilities are of using this framework. The methods used include policy content analysis, semi-structured interviews, participatory workshops, focus groups, questionnaire survey with participatory mapping and a systematic literature review. The individual studies are then embedded in a conceptual framework of impact assessment for policy and decision-making. The results show that although the ES framework is relatively abundant in key national environmental policies, its application in decision-making is minimal. The identified gap between the existing level of implementation in policies and the very limited use in decision-making and practice can be explained by a number of identified barriers. The presented studies demonstrate selected ways in which the implementation of the ES framework can be facilitated through the participation of stakeholders in ES assessment or building of the science-policy interface. These options are summarised as three proposed ways to support the implementation of the ES framework in decision-making: 1) by involving stakeholders in ES research and assessment; 2) by gathering and using knowledge on the possibilities for ES implementation; 3) by building a science-policy interface through a national platform. The National Platform for Ecosystem Services (NPES) should enable the effective integration of scientific knowledge in the policy-making process in order to minimise the existing gap between science and policy and science and practice. This dissertation provides new insights by assessing the current level of the ES framework implementation in the Czech Republic, and also shows examples of participatory approaches and methods that can support different levels of impact on policy and decision-making. The applicability of the results is supported by: a) the ability to apply the proposed participatory approaches in different contexts; b) the already established involvement of different actors (NPES).