



TROPICAL BIOLOGY ASSOCIATION

MEASURING ECOSYSTEM SERVICES

a TBA short training course for conservation professionals



Growing interest in how the concept of ecosystem services can be applied in conservation and sustainable development has increased demand for training in this area.

The challenge is to understand and measure the many benefits of nature and to make them visible. It is also to build these values into decision-making at all levels.



The need for training

Many communities depend directly on services that natural ecosystems provide, including fresh water, climate regulation, harvested wild food, pollination and eco-tourism.

Yet, increasing demand and changes in land use can influence the ongoing provision of these services, leading to over-exploitation and degradation which ultimately threatens livelihoods and biodiversity.

Hence the growing need for conservation managers to be able to evaluate ecosystem services and the benefits they bring to people. They also need the skills to communicate these complex issues to stakeholders and decision makers, to influence policy and to encourage wider participation in sustainable management.

What the course provides

Tailored to meet the needs of participants, the TBA course provides a structured approach to understanding ecosystem services.

It offers practical training in the use of appropriate tools to evaluate benefits at a local and global scale, and covers how to use these assessments to influence management and policy decisions.

Participants learn how to consider a 'plausible alternative state' to assess how changes in land management and use affect ecosystem services.

“The combination of talks, practicals, case studies and exercises were perfectly balanced”

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We tailor each course to cover a range of related issues which surround the successful application of an ecosystem services approach to conservation projects:

- Understanding the concept of ecosystem services
- How to quantify ecosystem services – can we establish meaningful values (e.g for what) and when can these be used as a conservation approach?
- How to use appropriate tools – focusing on the TESSA toolkit, designed to assess services at the site scale and to predict the impact of changes in land management
- Communication and policy – understanding how different stakeholders perceive benefits that ecosystems provide and how to communicate to policy makers
- Site visits – direct contact with the impact of ecosystem modification over time.

Track record

“I can see how communities can benefit from services around them and how I can communicate this.”

The TBA has run training courses on ecosystem services in Southeast Asia and in biodiversity hotspots in Tanzania.

We were one of six partners who developed a toolkit for non-specialists, known as TESSA (Toolkit for Ecosystem Services for Site-based Assessments). The tool is for use on a site-wide scale because that is where local decisions are made. TESSA is now being used globally and is generating positive results.



Our training workshops in Africa were the first to introduce TESSA on the continent and showed how it can be used to influence practice and shape policy.

“This has been an exciting learning moment on something I knew very little about.”

Contact us: tba-africa@tropical-biology.org