



POLICY BRIEF

How to **INTEGRATE ECOSYSTEM SERVICES IN DECISION-MAKING** at local and regional level

**PB#2** shows how **clear and summarized information** can be provided and **integrated into policy and decision-making** on the possibilities and challenges of different governance approaches for ecosystem services

**Context and challenge**

Ecosystem services (ES) are the **goods and services provided by nature at no direct cost** upon which human welfare depends. Governance is a **process of interaction**, whereby public and private actors solve societal challenges. ES governance practice acknowledges that the sole provision of **scientific knowledge** about the status of ES is insufficient to reverse the trend of the deteriorating status of ecosystems. **Other sources of information** such as normative, traditional and transformative knowledge would be necessary to understand how ES **is governed to achieve sustained and positive change**.

*Governance of ecosystem services is a dynamic process that combines formal and informal decision-making*

The different services embedded in natural ecosystems must be effectively implanted in social and economic systems. ES are difficult both to establish in monetary terms and to include in the decision-making system. But policy makers, environment managers and engineers would like to make better decisions about environmental management. For that to be possible, this large body of data needs to be translated into user-friendly information that can be included and taken into consideration in the decision-making process.

**PROGRESS in practice – Exemplary Tools**

PROGRESS identified various [good practices](#) that provided direct solutions which allowed open access to knowledge on the value of ES:

[LabForestal](#) provides local to regional scale forestry and ES information in easy-to-understand formats (digital maps, graphics, summary tables) and user-friendly applications to visualize and download. The information is free and available online to be used by decision makers, researchers or conservation groups. It is fully replicable to other geographical contexts where similar baseline forest data is available.

**PRACTICE 1: CATALAN FOREST LABORATORY**

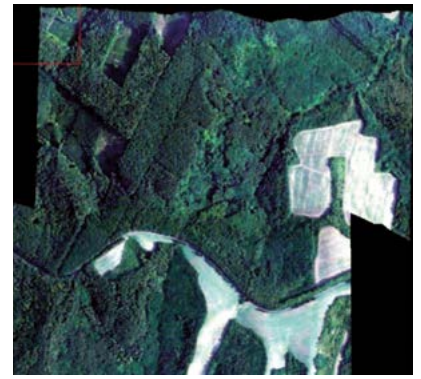
(CREAF, Catalonia-Spain)



Examples of some [LabForestal](#) tools available to decision-makers (visit website)

## GOOD PRACTICE 2: AIRBORNE TECHNOLOGIES FOR ECOSYSTEM SERVICES ([Red Faith](#), Hungary).

A good example of how to efficiently obtain relevant ES information is the use of airborne technologies (drones and high-resolution aerial and satellite images) to gather, evaluate and translate data which can be easily interpreted by experts and decision-makers. This information can be used for smarter landscape management, restoration and conservation.



Digital images.  
[Red Faith Project](#).

### PROGRESS “How to” recommendations on integrating ES in decision-making

- 1 Understand the data: design robust and easy-to-update databases and make all processes reproducible (data preparation, database construction...). Use open tools.
- 2 Use a wide range of channels to broadcast projects and actions, emphasising responsibility, urgency and “the right thing to do”.
- 3 Demonstrate transparency by explaining the action taken and its implications for ES users in creative ways to assist in the management of expectations about what will happen, where, when and how in the short-medium term.
- 4 Listen to other users in the decision-making process. Include experts, stakeholders and other users in the decision-making process who are engaged in the dynamics of the territory, in creating services or other effects upon it. It is important to identify stakeholders, rate them in terms of their power and interest in projects, and place them in a matrix to understand how to communicate with them. (see [Dublin Mountains Makeover at PROGRESS](#) website).
- 5 Support the horizontal integration of the ecosystem concerns into the sectoral policies and plans. Build trust, by communicating early and often, and developing a protocol to manage queries from the general public.



Visit [PROGRESS website](#) for further information and other good practices ([Handbook 2](#), [GP descriptions](#), [GP videos](#), [presentations](#), and [recordings of thematic workshops](#)).

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#### What is Interreg PROGRESS?

Interreg Europe PROGRESS - PROMoting the Governance of Regional Ecosystem Services aims to initiate a process of policy change towards the conservation of biodiversity and the maintenance of nature's capacity to deliver the goods and services that we all need.

**Project partners:** National Association of Italian Municipalities Tuscany (ANCI Toscana), Coordinator, Italy; CREAM (Ecology Research and Forestry Applications Centre), Catalonia-Spain; Eastern and Midlands Regional Assembly, Ireland; Riga Technical University, Latvia; Tolna County Development Agency, Hungary; University of Craiova, Romania.