

Capacity of Ecosystems

Ecosystem service capacity is a reflection of the ecosystems potential to deliver services based on biophysical properties, social conditions and ecological functions (Villamagna et al. 2013) ¹⁾. It is “the ability of an ecosystem to generate a service under current ecosystem condition and uses, at the highest yield or use level that does not negatively affect the future supply of the same or other ecosystem services from that ecosystem” (Hein et al. 2016, p. 4) ²⁾. Within this definition, the term “current condition” refers to the capacity of an ecosystem under the conditions “as it is now” as well as the current uses. The use of ecosystems under the level or equal to the level of their capacity would mean that the supply of all services is sustainable.

This definition refers to the used term within [AlpES](#), however ES capacity in particular is not in focus of the project.

Remark: There is a difference between capacity and potential, as capacity considers the actual condition and use of the ecosystem whereas the potential refers to an “ideal” condition and use of the ecosystem and its service supply under a hypothetical scenario of condition and type of use.

[AlpES project](#)

¹⁾

Villamagna, A. M.; Angermeier, P. L. & Bennett, E. M. (2013): Capacity, pressure, demand, and flow. A conceptual framework for analyzing ecosystem service provision and delivery. In: Ecological Complexity 15, p. 114–121.

²⁾

Hein, L.; Bagstad, K.; Edens, B.; Obst, C.; Jong, R. de & Lesschen, J. P. (2016): Defining Ecosystem Assets for Natural Capital Accounting. In: PloS one 11 (11), p. e0164460.

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