

The term “ecosystem services” has first been established by Ehrlich & Ehrlich (1981)¹⁾ as a metaphor to communicate the value of nature and its components for human societies. A later and much referred to definition of ecosystem services (ES) was set by the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MEA) as: “The benefits that people obtain from ecosystems” (Reid 2005)²⁾. The TEEB (2010)³⁾ Initiative defines them as the direct and indirect contributions of ecosystems to human well-being. The EU-wide Mapping and Assessment of Ecosystems and their Services, MAES, refers to these definitions (Maes et al. 2014)⁴⁾. Burkhard et al. (2014)⁵⁾ extended the definition to “the contributions of ecosystem structure and function – in combination with other inputs – to human well-being”. Harrington et al. (2010)⁶⁾ extended on the MEA definition: “Ecosystem services are benefits that humans recognise as obtained from ecosystems that can support, directly or indirectly, their survival and quality of life”.

In Italy, France as well as in Germany there are official national definitions of ES that are in line with the MAES approach. The [AlpES project](#) also refers to the MAES definition.

[AlpES project](#)

1)

Ehrlich, P. R. & Ehrlich, A. H. (1981): Extinction. The causes and consequences of the disappearance of species. New York, NY: Random House.

2)

Reid, W. V. (Ed.) (2005): Ecosystems and human well-being. Synthesis; a report of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, MEA - Millennium Ecosystem Assessment & WRI - World Resources Institute. Washington, DC.

3)

TEEB (The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity) (2010): Ecological and Economic Foundations. Chapter 5: The economics of valuing ecosystem services and biodiversity.

4)

Maes, J.; Teller, A.; Erhard, M.; Murphy, P.; Paracchini, M. L.; Barredo, J. I. et al. (2014): Mapping and assessment of ecosystems and their services. Indicators for ecosystem assessments under action 5 of the EU biodiversity strategy to 2020 : 2nd report - final, February 2014. Luxembourg: Publications Office (Technical Report, 2014-080).

5)

Burkhard, B.; Kandziora, M.; Hou, Y. & Müller, F. (2014): Ecosystem Service Potentials, Flows and Demands – Concepts for Spatial Localisation, Indication and Quantification. In: Landscape Online 34, p. 1–32.

6)

Harrington, R.; Anton, C.; Dawson, T. P.; Bello, F. de; Feld, C. K.; Haslett, J. R., et al. (2010): Ecosystem services and biodiversity conservation. Concepts and a glossary. In: Biodiversity and Conservation 19 (10), p. 2773–2790.

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