

ECOSYSTEM SERVICES IN LITHUANIA

Mapping, assessment and integration into decision-making

Prepared by Kristina Simonaityte
Part of Create Lithuania and
Lithuanian Ministry of Environment
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CURRENT SITUATION

- Ecosystem services (ES) – still a very new topic in Lithuania
- Little knowledge & experience across different sectors (government, academia, NGOs, private)
- At the moment, no systemic mapping, assessment and/or valuation of ES being done
- Some one-off attempts and pilot projects (e.g. VivaGrass project)
- Not high on political agenda, however, the **Lithuanian Government Programme 2016-2020** includes an action point to map and assess the 24 most important ES and to incorporate these valuations into national policy, with the aim to improve the quality of the ES, as well as avoid increasing costs of mitigating natural disasters and climate change.

Key problem: *lack of knowledge, interest and sense of urgency. Nature is valued, its importance recognised, but there is a lack of public awareness of environmental issues and understanding that they are a threat in Lithuania as well.*

PLANNING FOR NATIONAL ES MAPPING AND ASSESSMENT PROJECT

- Preparatory activities on-going at the Lithuanian Ministry of Environment, planning to start a two-year ES mapping and assessment project in 2019.
 - Analysis of current situation, ES theoretical background, best foreign practices
 - [CICES](#) translation into Lithuanian, creating and populating [a page on the ES](#) on the Ministry website
- One of the key activities of this stage has been to increase awareness about the topic: preparing visuals, one-pagers, and articles for general public, giving presentations, meeting with stakeholders, organising public consultation with experts of various related fields (e.g. Call for Interest on the topic attracted over 100 respondents).
- Concurrent scientific project on the ES mapping & assessment funded by the Research Council of Lithuania: issue on how to best combine the two initiatives



INTEGRATION OF ES VALUATION IN DECISION-MAKING

- Proposals for ES integration generated during the project, based on valuation results
- But also important to think in advance:
 - Integration into the recommendations of Environmental Impact Assessment
 - Deciding priorities for ecosystem restoration
 - Decision-making regarding environmental damage compensation, no net loss and offsetting: debates about public interest vs. nature interest



3rd in the EU

72 per cent of Lithuanians *totally agree* that their health & well-being are based upon nature & biodiversity*

52 per cent of Lithuanians consider the loss of the benefits that we get from nature as a very *serious issue**

22nd in the EU