

International symposium May 24-26, 2016 in Tours (France)

Ecosystem services: Their contributions and relevance in urban environments

Call for proposals

The European Commission has launched the program “Mapping and Assessment of Ecosystems and Their Services”. In France, its application is the EFESE program (French Assessment of Ecosystem and their Services), which is led by the Ministry of Ecology, Sustainable Development and Energy. In this framework, working groups were set up in 2013, in order to identify and evaluate the services, which are provided by each ecosystem, including in urban environments.

First vaguely mentioned in the 1970 MIT report, the concept of ecosystem services was popularized by the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA, 2005), at the instigation of Kofi Annan in 2000. Thus, like the concept of "sustainable development", it's now used and claimed by many researchers: the concept became in fashion. Four main categories were identified by the MA (2005):

- provisioning services, which include the goods usable by man (food, construction materials...);
- regulating services, which contribute to ensuring a pleasant environment (water cycle, air change...);
- cultural services, which concern all non-material benefits from ecosystems (amenity, leisure...);
- supporting services, which allow to maintain the three previous ones (genetic diversity, habitat for species...)

These categories can be studied in non-urban or urban environments. But the research conducted on cultural services in cities are more lacking (Konijnendijk *et al.*, 2013) and numerous questions are still without answer.

What kinds of services are provided by urban ecosystems, according to the typology proposed by the MA? How to identify and assess them? Basing on which criteria? Are these ones satisfactory?

What is the relevance of the concept of ecosystem services, especially cultural services? What are its contributions? Why apply this concept to urban green spaces?

For whom and why assessing the ecosystem services, which are provided by urban nature? How can decision-makers appropriate this concept? Can the assessment of these services allow populations and municipalities to comprehend the advantages/disadvantages of urban nature? What is the interest of this concept for urban planning? Can it promote other forms of planning? What are the implications in the economic and legal fields?

How are ecosystem services treated by researchers? Which disciplines take over them? Is it possible to study cultural ecosystem services without considering the three other services, which are proposed in the MA (2005) typology? In other words, can we identify and assess the first ones without integrating the three others? Does this concept change collaborative research (pluridisciplinary approach, partnership between researcher and non-researcher, between private and public sectors, etc.)?

Far from being exhaustive, these interrogations emerged following two research programs (CESAT¹ and SERVEUR²), conducted by CITERES research laboratory. They refer to the way of studying the services, which are provided by the ecosystems to the societies in urban context. They emphasize the fact that the thought about the ecosystem services concept needs a disciplinary, methodological and epistemological mixing, from ecology to anthropology and from basic research to its territorial application. This mixing will be at the heart of the symposium.

The objective of this meeting is **to question the ecosystem services concept in urban environments**, with a particular emphasis on its cultural input. The thought about the other services will concentrate on the contribution for man, users and decision-makers.

Three themes are envisaged:

- **Epistemology**: Which contributions? This will imply to think about ecosystem services in cities.
- **Methodology**: Which methods to study cultural ecosystem services in urban green spaces? Which results?
- **Relevance**: Which operability for such an approach? Which relationship with the actors/decision-makers/users?

Studies can concern all kinds of nature in cities (from urban to suburban spaces), as much ornamental parks as forest and semi-natural spaces and allotment (community) gardens, even vertical green spaces. Examples may be taken as much in France as in Europe or everywhere else in the world.

This symposium is aimed at researchers of all disciplines.

Following this event, a book will be published. It will synthesize all the papers, which will be presented at the symposium.

¹ CESAT: Towards a sustainable management of soil supporting green spaces: Maintenance and development of functions and services. Example of Tours urban area. GESSOL research program. Source of funding: ADEME and Ministry of Ecology, Sustainable Development and Energy.

² SERVEUR: Ecosystem services from urban green spaces. Source of funding: French Centre-Val de Loire region. <http://serveur.msh-vdl.fr/>

References:

Konijnendijk, C. C., M. Annerstedt, A. B. Nielsen et S. Maruthaveeran, 2013, *Benefits of urban parks. A systematic review. A Report for IFPRA*, International Federation of Parks and Recreation Administration, Copenhagen and Alnarp.

MIT. 1970, *Report of the Study of Critical Environmental Problems SCEP: Man's Impact on the Global Environment. Assessment and Recommendations for Action*.

Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, 2005, *Ecosystems and Human Well-being: Synthesis*, Island Press, Washington DC.

Scientific committee:

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Jean Louis Yengué	Tours University (France)

Organising committee:

Amélie Robert and Jean Louis Yengué

Registration fees:

(Provisional: these amounts might be changed; they will include snacks and lunches)

Teachers, Researchers, Professionals: 150 euros

Students, Unemployed: 100 euros

Time schedule and guidelines submission:

Friday, November 6, 2015: deadline for sending paper proposals

Proposals should be sent to Amélie Robert (amelie.robert@univ-tours.fr). They will consist in abstracts of 3.000-4.000 signs (including spaces). Authors must specify their name, first name, function, attachment structure and email address.

Thursday, January 7, 2016: answer from the evaluation of symposium paper proposals by the scientific committee

Friday, April 8, 2016: deadline for sending long papers (guidelines on their format will be provided at the time of proposals selection)

Tuesday to Thursday, May 24-26, 2016: Symposium proceedings