



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

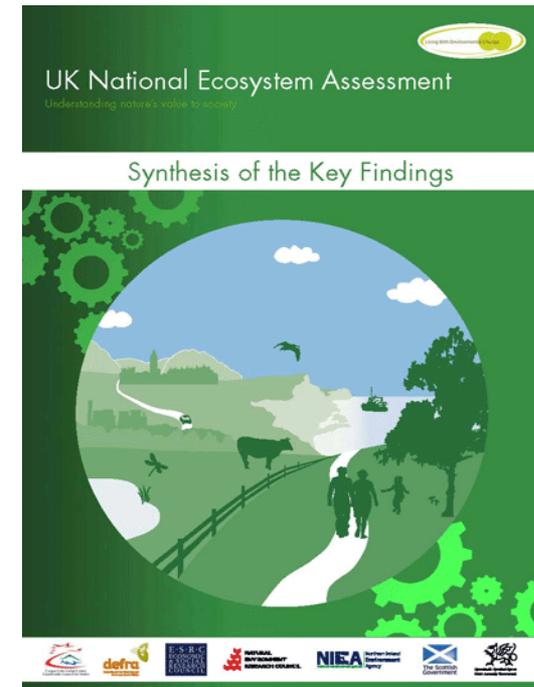
Natural capital and ecosystem services - from evidence to policy: the UK experience

Presentation to EEA Scientific Committee Seminar, EEA,
Copenhagen, 1 October 2014

Michele Pittini, Deputy Director, Evidence and Analysis

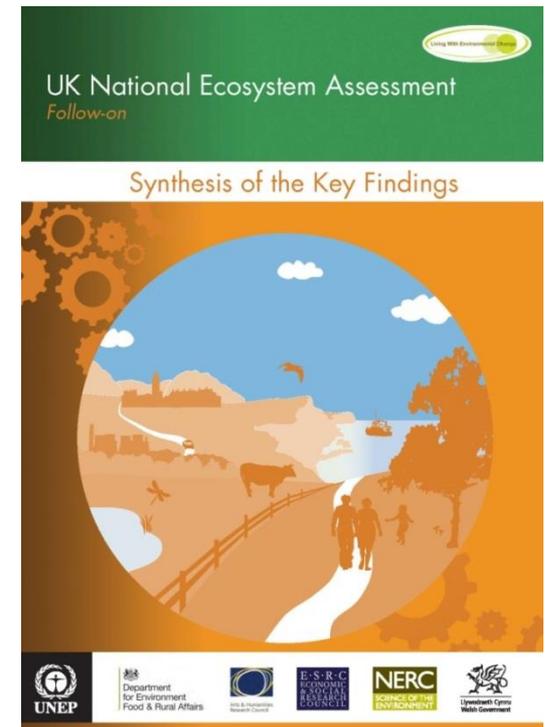
The National Ecosystem Assessment 2011 set out the evidence base on the condition, trends and value of UK's ecosystems and their services

- An **independent and peer-reviewed** National Ecosystem Assessment, structured around 8 UK broad habitats
- **Raised awareness** of the importance of the natural environment to human well-being and economic prosperity.
- Ensured full **stakeholder participation** and foster better **inter-disciplinary cooperation** between natural and social scientists, as well as economists.



A UK NEA Follow on Study was also published in June 2014

- 2 year follow-on study to the 2011 UK NEA
- provides greater understanding and improved quantification of the value of the natural environment, particularly cultural ecosystem services
- It also develops a number of accounting and decision support tools for government, business and the voluntary



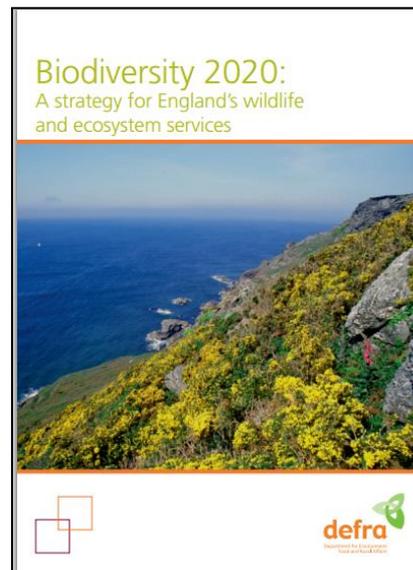
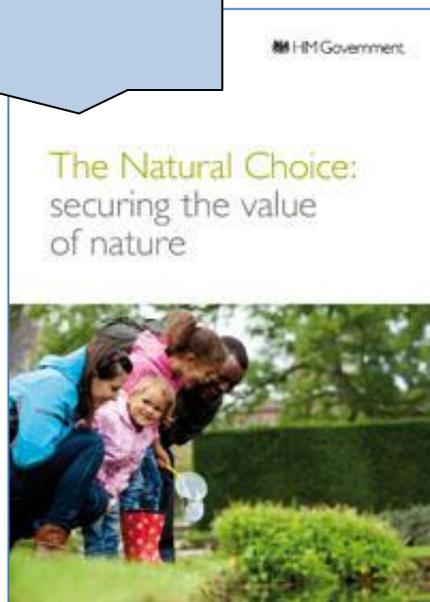
The Lawton review of England's Wildlife Sites and Ecological Network had also called for a new approach to conservation

“[...] we need a step-change in our approach to wildlife conservation, from trying to hang on to what we have, to one of large-scale habitat restoration and recreation, under-pinned by the re-establishment of ecological processes and ecosystem services, for the benefits of both people and wildlife.”

Professor Sir John Lawton, Foreword to Making Space for Nature, 2010

These reports have informed policy strategies so that they set the right framework for taking ecosystems and their services into account

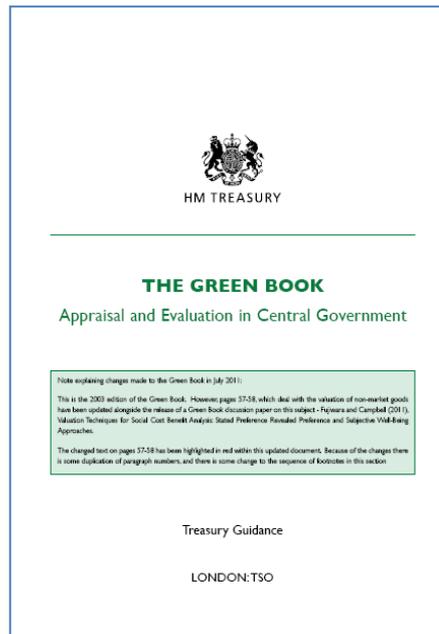
Natural Environment White Paper (June 2011) – key theme of natural value



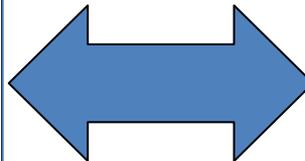
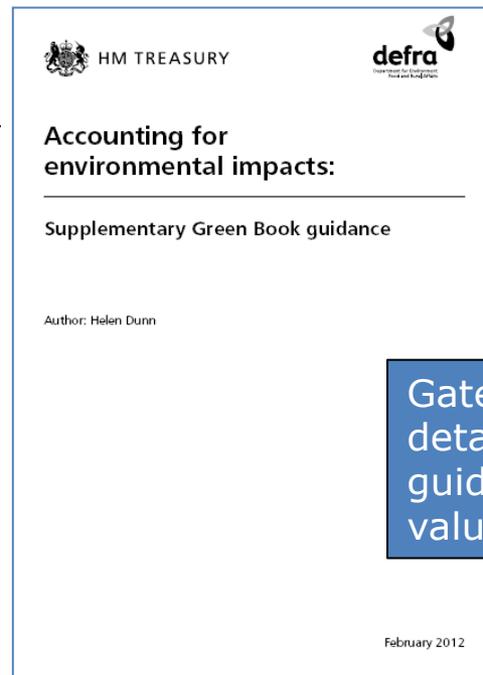
Biodiversity 2020 (July 2011) – **The biodiversity strategy for England.** A new approach to biodiversity conservation / focus on whole natural systems as well as individual species and sites, includes specific ecosystem approach outcome

New guidance on taking better account of the value of nature in government project/policy appraisal

UK Treasury 'Green Book (2003): Sets out basic principle of project and policy assessment and evaluation



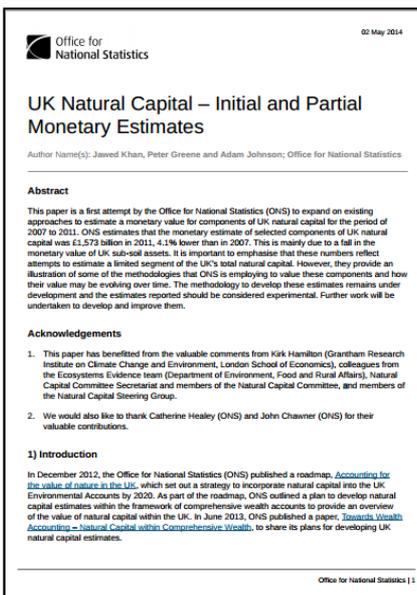
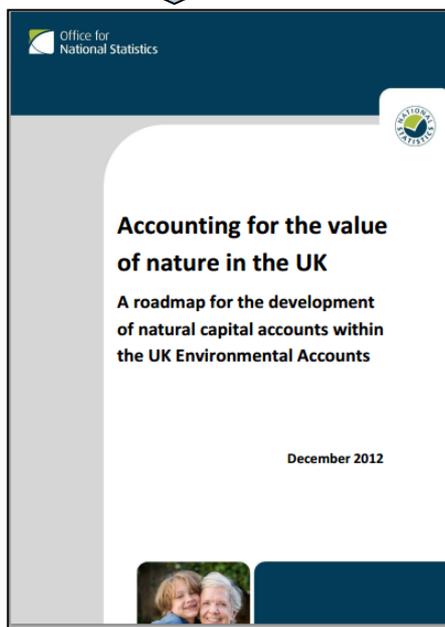
Supplementary guidance on accounting for environmental impacts (2012): High level guidance on identifying and valuing impacts



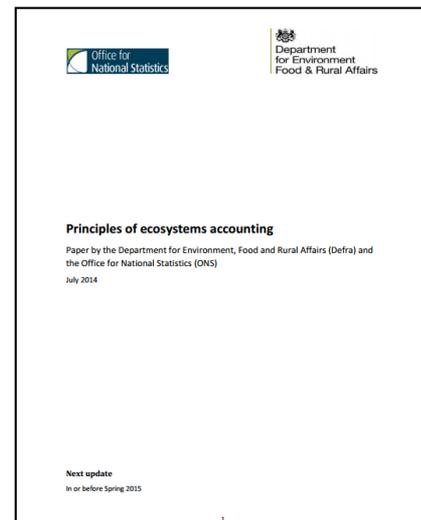
Gateway for more detailed technical guidance, e.g. On value transfer

A programme of work on incorporating the value of nature in the national accounts, led by the Office of National Statistics in collaboration with Defra

Roadmap to Natural Capital Accounting (Dec 2012): Sets out programme of work to 2020



First partial estimates of the value of UK Natural Capital (May 2014)



Principles of ecosystem accounting paper (August 2014)

The Natural Capital Committee - established to provide expert independent advice on England's natural capital

- Established in 2012 for the duration of the Parliament (until 2015), before being reviewed.
- 7 members, Chaired by Prof. Dieter Helm, Defra-based Secretariat.
- Reports to the Economic Affairs Committee, Chaired by the Chancellor of the Exchequer

- TORs:
 - 1) Advise on whether English natural assets are being used sustainably;
 - 2) Advise on how the Government should prioritise action to protect and improve natural capital; and
 - 3) Advise on research priorities in this field.

Research and development on Payments for Ecosystem Schemes (PES) which could help turn ecosystem value into cash incentives

- **Best Practice Guidance** on PES to help practitioners in developing schemes on the ground (May 2013).
- **PES Action Plan** highlighting areas of policy opportunity across water, flood risk management, agri-environment, forestry & peatland restoration, + actions for Government
- **PES R&D pilots** covering a diverse range of case studies (urban and rural, single benefit or multiple benefit, water-quality related and looking at other contexts including flood protection, visitor payback schemes and more).
- R&D on market-based options for making our money go further in **agri-environment payments** through auctioning mechanisms and by aligning agri-environment funds with private funding.

Establishment of 12 Nature Improvement Areas driving ecosystem restoration on a landscape scale

- NIAs: cross-sectoral partnerships (local authorities, NGOs, private land managers and local businesses)
- driving ecosystem restoration on a landscape scale in line with the Lawton principles
- NIAs are a flagship ecosystem approach initiative, taking the policy from headline messages into local application and delivery

Case study: North Devon (river Torridge catchment)

- 750 ha of culm grassland restored
- 100 ha of wetland/woodland creation
- 43 Km of hedgerow restored
- Advised 10% of the catchment's landowners (435 visits)
- Volunteer biodiversity surveys
- Over 50 community events



Thank you

Relevant links

UK National Ecosystem Assessment:

<http://uknea.unep-wcmc.org/>

Natural Environment White Paper:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/228842/8082.pdf

Natural Capital pages on the ONS website:

<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/user-guidance/natural-capital/index.html>

Natural Capital Committee:

<https://www.naturalcapitalcommittee.org/>

Ecosystem service pages on .gov.uk:

<https://www.gov.uk/ecosystems-services#valuing-ecosystem-services>