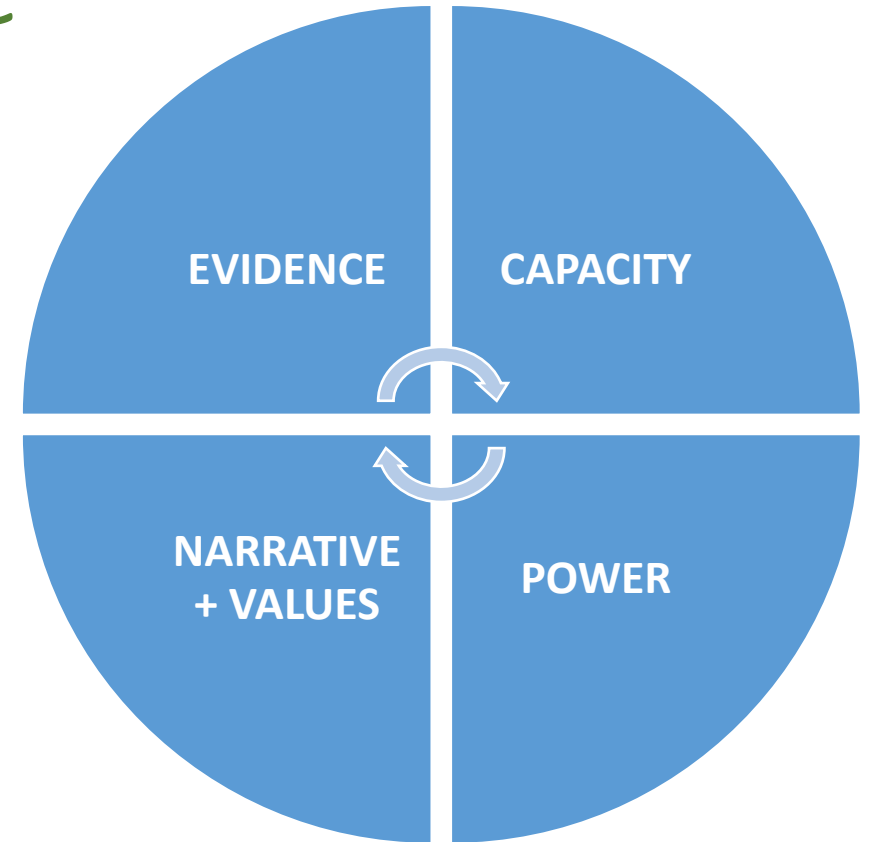


# Ecosystem services for poverty alleviation: the challenges of institutional change

Steve Bass, IIED

ESPA Annual Science Meeting

New Delhi 27 November 2014



# First reflections on early ESPA publications

- Timely to think about ESPA's synthesis and legacy
- Already 100+ ESPA publications – tip of the 'ESPAberg'
- Suspect some ESPA ground-breakers in science are coming up
- Papers point to significant institutional transformation being needed
- What potential for ESPA to influence institutional transformation?

# A. ESPA in-country findings

- Beginning to get clarity on the potential for good ES-PA outcomes
  - ES poverty prevention/safety nets – sound evidence of strategies that work
  - ES routes out of poverty – less clear – too many poverty traps
- Detailed in-country information on ES/wellbeing dynamics has lasting value
  - Caveats: 1-off studies can't handle all definitional, capacity, evidence, policy needs
  - **More, please: link in-country ESPA projects; routine in-country assessment**
- Beginning to get clarity on conditions under which ESs contribute to PA
  - Outcomes: clearer if we ask people (as ESPA does)
  - Governance: access, entitlements, preferences and agency are critical – as are alternatives to ESs
  - Trade-offs: much focus on extreme trade-offs or win-wins, cf optimum mix
  - Policy context: decentralisation, privatisation, and greening policies affect ES-PA

## B. ESPA evolving conceptual frameworks

- ✓ Evolving since MA: elaborating ecosystem-wellbeing chain, disciplines developing new purposes for ES concept, entering new policy spaces
- ✓ People at the centre: their poverty and wellbeing; importance of entitlements, endowments and access; disaggregating winners and losers
- ✓ Dynamics: temporal/spatial difference (source/benefit-sheds)
- ✗ Complexity: may help science/management, but inhibits policy take-up
- ✗ Barriers to system-wide change: multiple terms/definitions at x-purposes

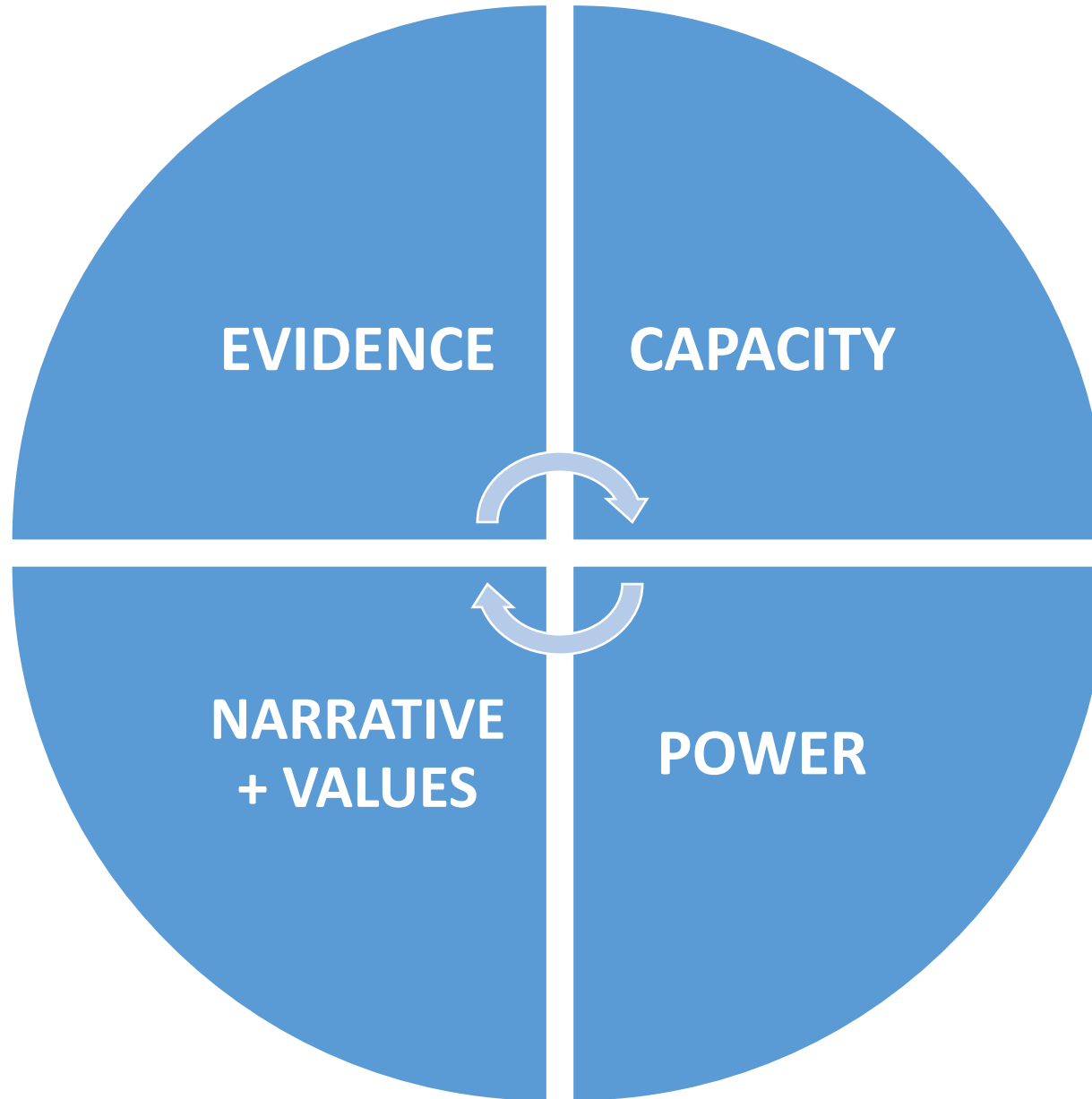
# ES-PA integration is a long institutional process!

Level 1	<b>No integration</b> of env and soc	Env and soc issues are in extreme silos Conflict
Level 2	<b>Safeguards</b>	‘Do no env or soc harm’ procedures Compromise
Level 3	<b>Synergies</b>	Env/soc win-wins Where allowed by current paradigm/rules
Level 4	<b>Transformation</b>	Fit, interdisciplinary institutional system Improved paradigm/rules

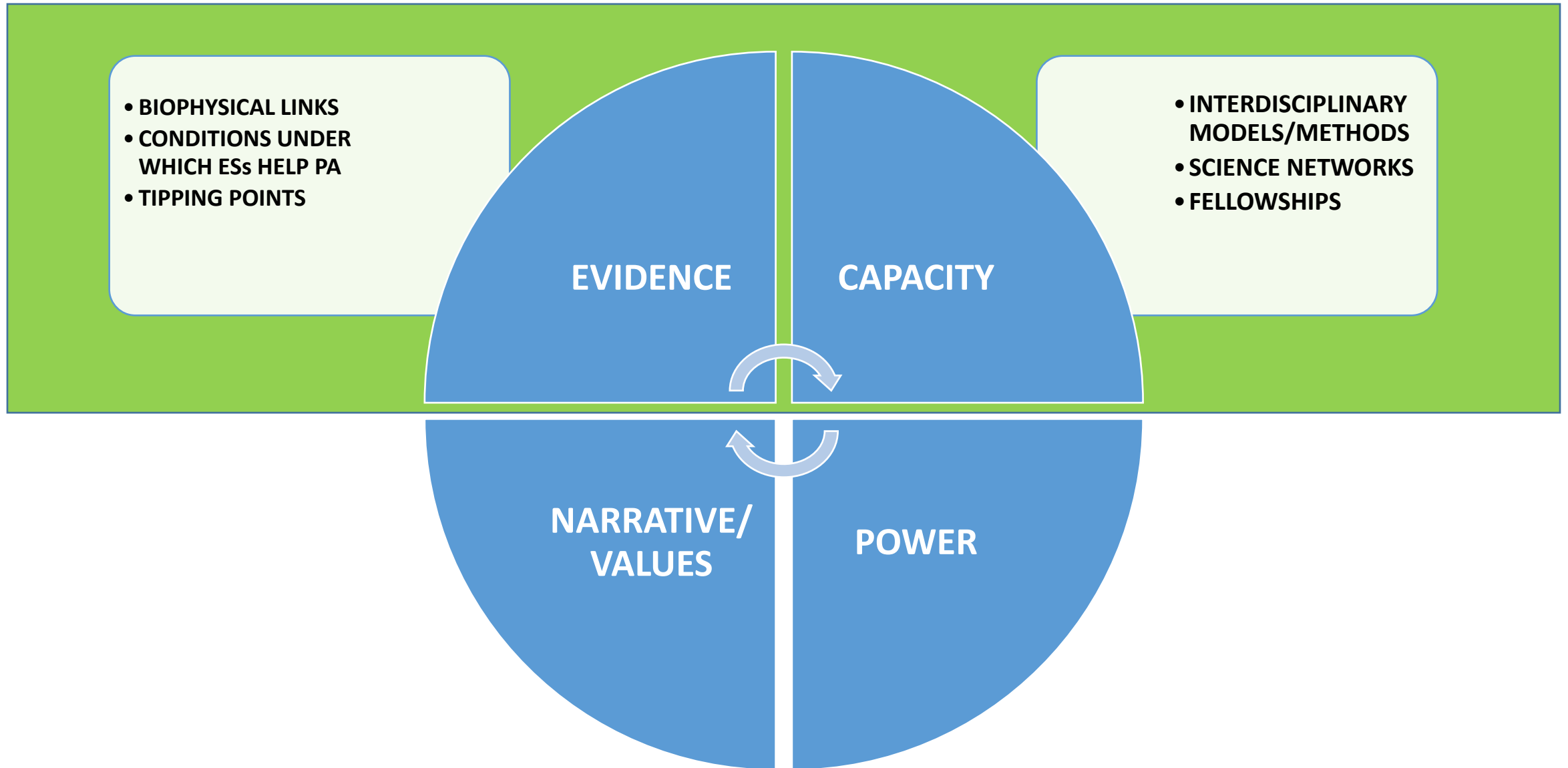


ESPA IS AIMING  
AT A MOVING  
TARGET!

# ESPA entry points for institutional transformation?

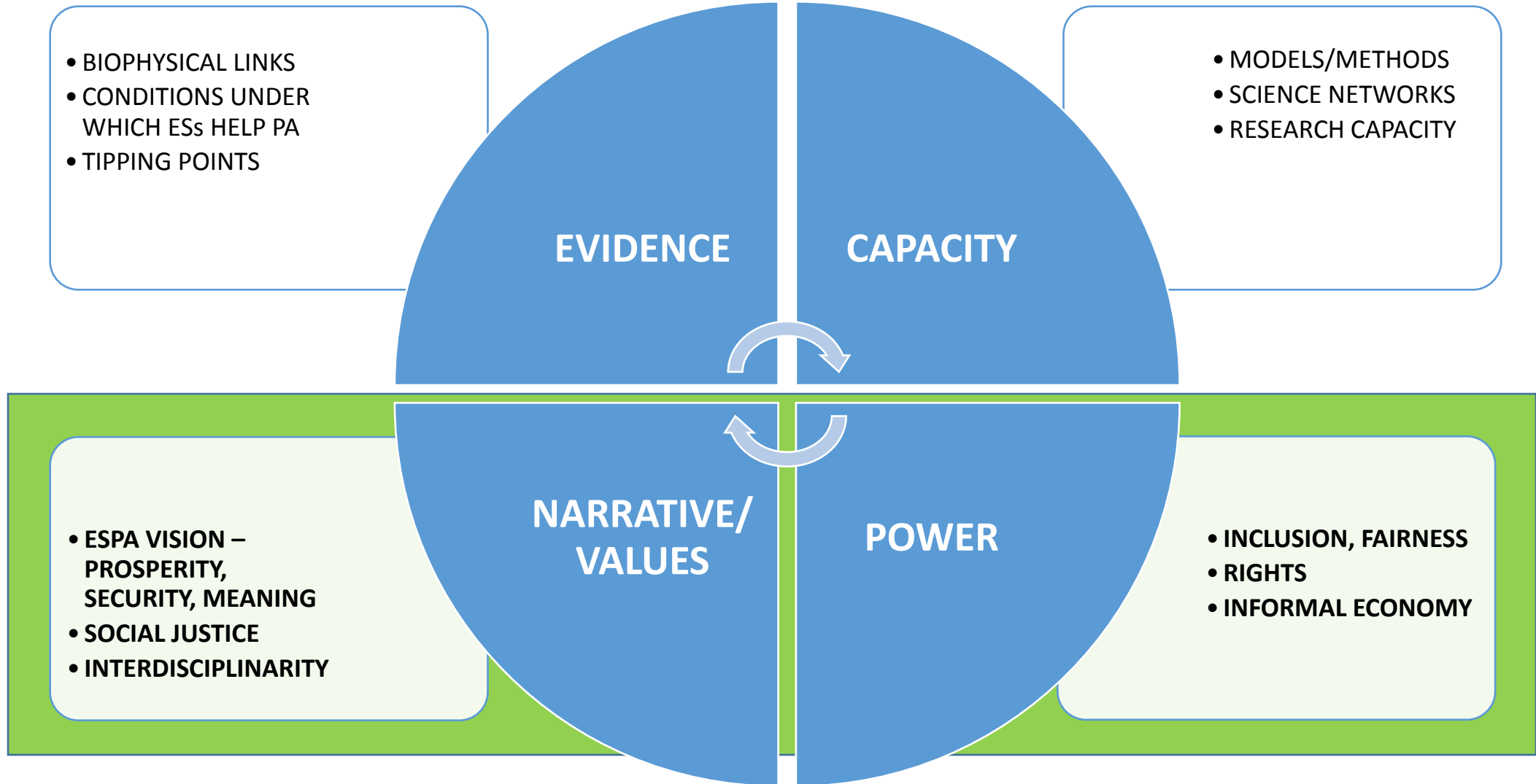


# Where has ESPA focused to date?





# Where else should ESPA focus?



# Focus ESPA on catalysts of change?

Focus ESPA on initiatives with potential to influence narrative and power

## 1. 'Hot topic' policy initiatives

- Green economy/green growth
- SDGs
- Natural capital accounting
- Climate change mainstreaming

## 2. Existing integrated institutions

- National land use planning, NRM, development and SD umbrella institutions...
- Community and local institutions enabling local control of ESs for wellbeing
- Science/academic institutions

# Green economy/green growth



# Green economy/green growth – progress

- ✓ High-level attention – finance ministers, CEOs, UN.
- ✓ New international initiatives – UN Partnership, a new IGO – the GGGI, and a new platform – the GE Coalition

## Limitations and biases of GE/GG current initiatives:

- ✗ Economic growth emphasised – not wellbeing or PA
- ✗ Carbon focus – not other ESs that matter for wellbeing
- ✗ Big formal players lead – not poor groups, SMMEs or informal
- ✗ Risk of social/ecological system failures?

# Idea: ESPA dialogue/evidence on inclusive green economy

Research/synthesise evidence from poor countries and groups:

- How poor countries/groups value ESs and what they want from them
- The diversity of things they can do with ESs
  - e.g. PES and green enterprises that work
- The distributional impacts of different GE models
  - especially (for donors!) impact on income poverty
- The structural barriers to inclusive green economies
  - e.g. where informal economies need to be formalised, on whose terms
- Safeguards and incentives for keeping within ecological limits

Scientists promote/engage in national GE dialogues

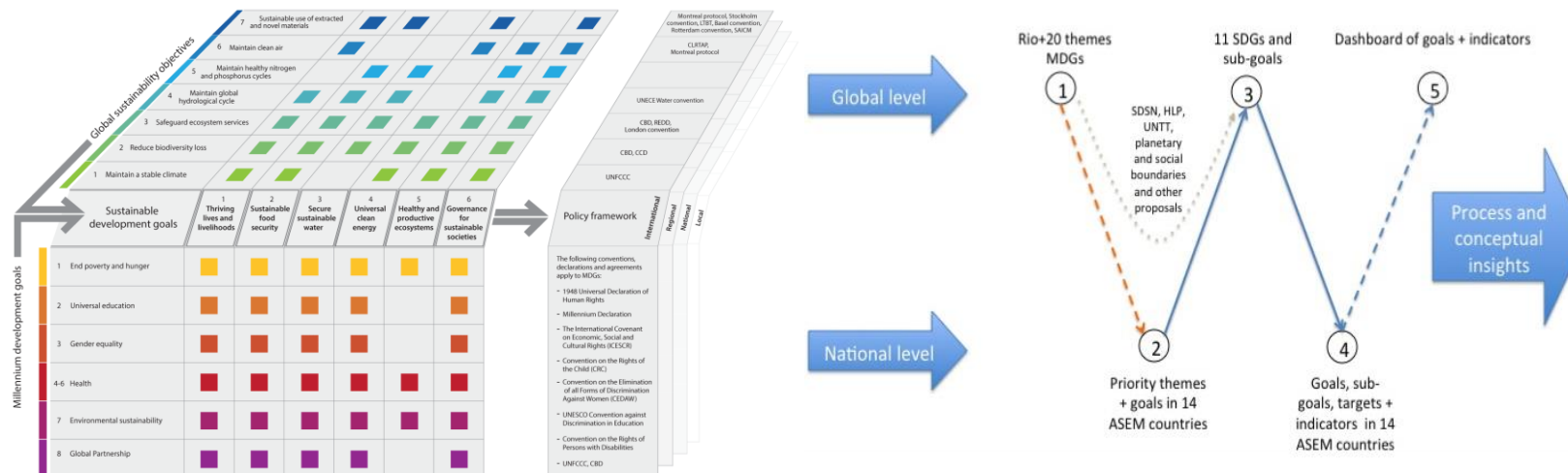
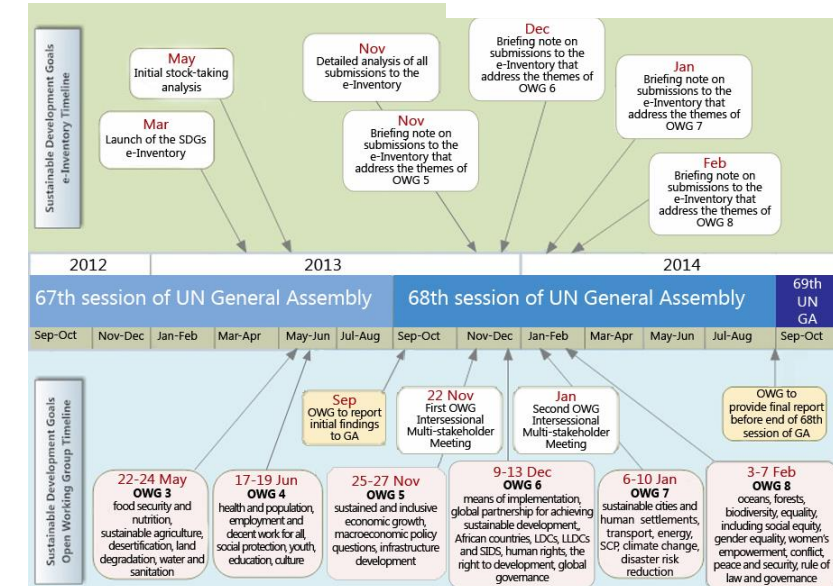


# Sustainable Development Goals



## List of Proposed Sustainable Development Goals to be attained by 2030

1. End poverty everywhere
2. End hunger, improve nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture
3. Attain healthy lives for all
4. Provide quality education and life-long learning opportunities for all
5. Attain gender equality, empower women and girls everywhere
6. Ensure availability and sustainable use of water and sanitation for all
7. Ensure sustainable energy for all
8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
9. Promote sustainable infrastructure and industrialization and foster innovation
10. Reduce inequality within and between countries
11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe and sustainable
12. Promote sustainable consumption and production patterns
13. Tackle climate change and its impacts
14. Conserve and promote sustainable use of oceans, seas and marine resources
15. Protect and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, halt desertification, land degradation and biodiversity loss
16. Achieve peaceful and inclusive societies, access to justice for all, and effective and capable institutions
17. Strengthen the means of implementation and the global partnership for sustainable development



# Sustainable Development Goals – progress

- ✓ Political ambition – an agenda beyond MDGs; multi-dimensional poverty, sustainability, universality, governance change...
- ✓ Ecosystems inclusion – 2 of 17 goals, 2020 targets; CBD reflected
- ✓ Integration – general call for integrated planning and accounting

## Limitations and biases of SDGs so far:

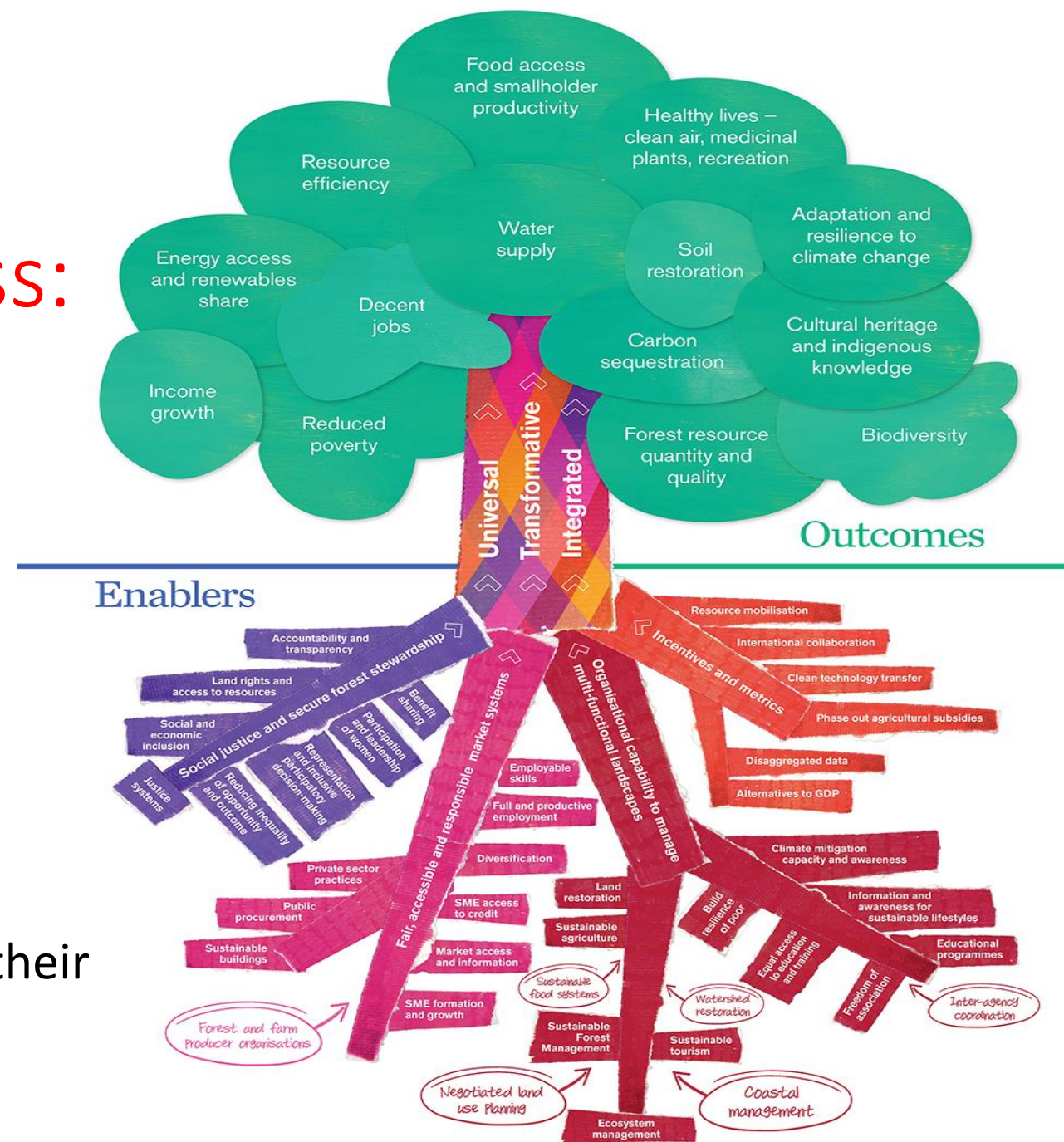
- ✗ Data needs – how to assess 169 targets
- ✗ Framework – no clear people-nature construct linking goals/targets
- ✗ Ecosystems covered, not ESs – sets up conservation vs development; little on cultural ESs, IPs or LTK

Idea: analyse draft  
SDGs/targets to express:

- ES-PA outcomes
- enabling conditions

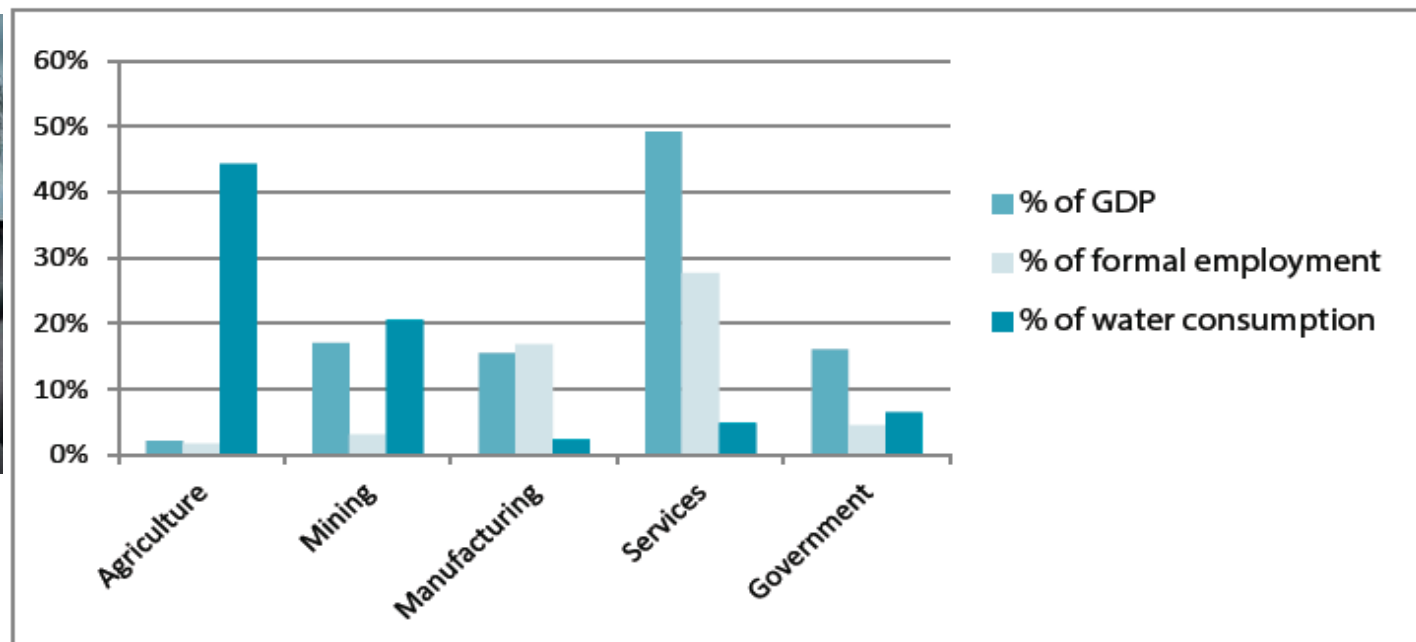
e.g. *SD Goals from forest perspective*  
Milledge et al 2014, IIED

Join in science engagement in SDGs and their  
implementation (IRF, SDSN, ICSU ...)





# Natural Capital Accounting



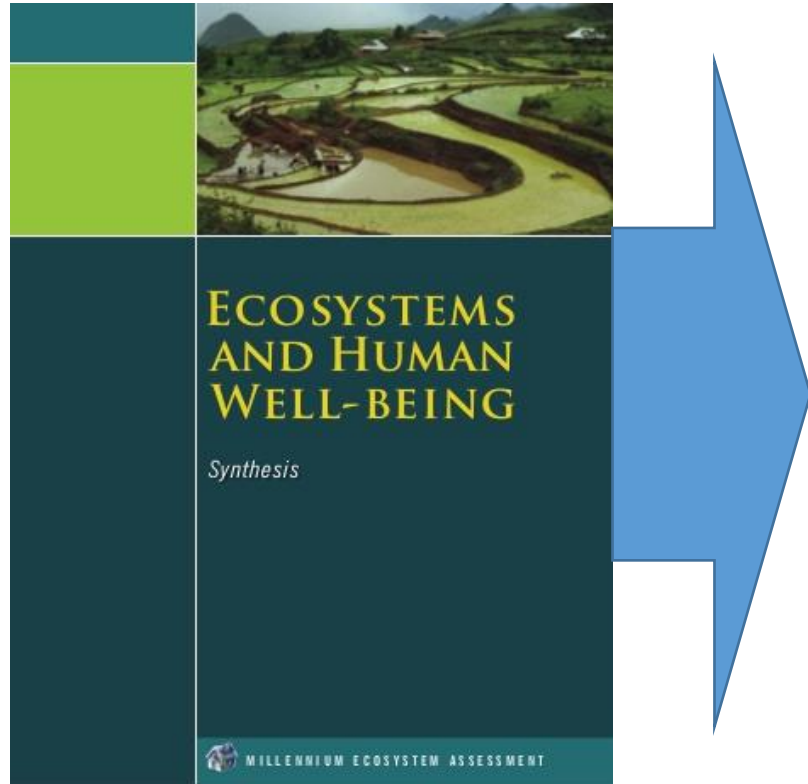
# Natural Capital Accounting – progress

- ✓ **Growing interest** – 70 countries and 90 companies signed 50-50 campaign
- ✓ **Agreed UN methodology** – with UNSD and WAVES support
- ✓ **Experimental ecosystem accounting** – adds spatial and ES dimensions
- ✓ **NCA influencing policy in OECD countries** – esp NSDSs. Cultural ESs high value!
- ✓ **NCA in some MICs/LICs** – focusing on 1-2 NRs key for growth, and sometimes PA

## Limitations of NCA:

- ✗ **Focus is on provisioning ESs**
- ✗ **Little disaggregation** spatially or by user – distorts national-focused policy conclusions
- ✗ **Definitional confusion.**
- ✗ **Valuation is contentious** – market vs non-market; producer vs consumer surplus; absolute vs marginal values; intrinsic vs cultural; double-counting...
- ✗ **Decision-makers are attracted to NCA but unguided**

# Idea: definition coherence – an independent MA+10?



Why? MA a common heritage, UN endorsed

Review: 10 years uptake/evolution

Debate: definitions, utility, progress, barriers

Result:

- ✓ operationally-useful definitions
- ✓ page-by-page guide
- ✓ agenda for next 10 years
- ✓ 'MA2' scope
- ✓ +/- ethical valuation charter?



**ESPA role?** facilitate literature review, interviews, 2 Bellagio brainstorm



# Existing integrated institutions



C B N R M

# Existing integrated institutions – progress?

ESPA primary target? Institutions with enduring integration mandates :

- **NRM** – standards and entitlements have policy leverage
- **Land use/spatial planning** – high potential, but moribund
- **Development planning** – very powerful mandates
- **SD committees/platforms** – coordination and coherence
- **Local institutions e.g. CBNRM** – potential for local control of ESs for wellbeing

ESPA revealing some characteristics of effectiveness:

- ✓ Rich connectivity, participation, emergent strategy, ‘searchlights’ – more tbc...

Limitations of integrating institutions:

- ✗ Policy inflation, capacity collapse – big agenda, few resources, discontinuous interdisciplinarity
- ✗ Lack of clear conceptual framework – and inadequate information to make decisions using it

# Idea: synthesis research on the characteristics of effective integrated institutions

On structures:

- How integrated institutions are constructed, mandated, evolve, 4Rs

On the time dimension:

- Integration a generational challenge – what confers longevity?
- Moving targets – how to define/revisit optimum ES/PA mixes?
- Tipping points – how to anticipate, not just ‘act after disasters’

On ways of working:

- Interdisciplinarity that works
- Effective engagement with poor groups, their values and needs



# CONCLUSION

ESPA is already making a step-change in interdisciplinary science

ESPA also has potential to support institutional change

Idea 1: ESPA dialogue/evidence on inclusive green economy

Idea 2: analyse SDGs/targets for ES-PA outcomes and enabling conditions

Idea 3: independent MA+10 review/forward-look during 2015

Idea 4: research the characteristics of effective integrated institutions

Bridge diverse communities of practice – via WAVES, GEC, ITUC, IRF, ICSU...

Think 20 years – invest in our Fellows!