

Frequently Asked Questions on the Dissemination of Findings of National Ecosystem Assessments



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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ON THE DISSEMINATION OF FINDINGS OF NATIONAL ECOSYSTEM ASSESSMENTS

Why to disseminate?

The development and publication of a national ecosystem assessment poses the important challenge of ensuring that the findings and key messages are incorporated into decision-making processes at the national, regional and local level; and to achieve true appropriation of these calls to action by decision-makers, academia and communities of practice.

In this sense, the transfer of true and scientifically robust knowledge seeks to guarantee the targeting of public policies, projects and programs on the main problems facing the conservation and sustainable management of a country's biodiversity, based on current and reliable data.

What to disseminate?

The main goal of national ecosystem assessments is to inform society at large and particularly decision-makers, about the state and trends of biodiversity and ecosystem services. They provide models and prospective scenarios as tools for informed decision-making and policy formulation for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystem services. This understanding encompasses the relationship between humans and the environment through the various contributions that nature provides for societal and individual well-being.

These assessments typically consist of a series of chapters forming the technical document and a summary for policy makers. The technical document contains data, technical analyses, and the resulting conclusions, using scientific terminology and other knowledge systems when applicable. It serves as the basis for creating the summary for policy makers (SPM). The SPM is a document that synthesizes technical information into key messages, presented in a proactive and easily understandable language primarily for policy makers. Both documents are disseminated, but the key messages in the SPM are the primary input for widespread communication.

Who to inform?

A decision-maker includes any individual or collective, attached to the public sector; at the local, municipal, regional or national level, whose work involves the development, management, planning, execution, monitoring and evaluation of public policies. In the case of national ecosystem assessments, it is aimed to support professionals and policy makers, as well as the scientific community and funding agencies.

In the case of the Colombian ecosystem assessment, it was concluded that when speaking of decision-makers, reference is made not only to those state actors of the national order who establish the national political and legal framework, but also to local and regional actors, both from the public and private sector and organized communities, who make decisions that in one way or another have an impact on biodiversity and its contributions to people. This approach aims to influence as many decision-making processes as possible.

How to disseminate?

The technical report of a national ecosystem assessment is an extensive and robust document, so dissemination is a major challenge that may involve condensing the findings and key messages in a way that facilitates its understanding and use by different stakeholders. In order to answer the question “how to disseminate”, it is recommended to consider: (a) visual material that allows its physical and digital use and that contains the main findings in a summarized way, such as infographics; (b) the creation of a web portal and use of digital tools such as podcasts and video clips to have a greater reach to different audiences, that can also serve as a repository of the information; c) meetings with different groups of relevant stakeholders such as government, private sector, academia, Indigenous Peoples and local communities, among others; d) the role that the authors and other contributors to the assessment process can play in the dissemination, as they can use different thematic networks on biodiversity, environment and others.

When to disseminate?

Dissemination should take place both at the end of the assessment, to disseminate the findings, and at the beginning and development of the assessment in order to generate expectation and interest in its development. Disclosure should not only focus on the findings of the completed assessment, but it is important throughout the process to keep the attention of stakeholders on what is being worked on.

On the other hand, holding the launch event of the assessment findings is a key part of the dissemination process, as it finalizes the expectations campaign and makes the findings available for public consultation. It should be an open event to the public that involves different stakeholders who can use the findings for decision making.

Finally, to ensure that the assessment is not forgotten, it is important that participating entities maintain, through formal channels, active feedback and follow up with decision-makers to ensure that the assessment findings are implemented. For example, for post-launch follow-up of the results, it is recommended that the National Biodiversity Platform or an equivalent body in the country is involved to achieve an articulated follow-up.

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