

S6.1: Essential Ecosystem Service Variables

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The exponential development of the ecosystem services field has led to a wide range of variables that have and can be measured. Yet, this wide array of information is often overwhelming: guidance is needed on which ecosystem service variables should be measured and monitored. To address this increasingly common challenge, over the last 2 years, the Ecosystem Services Working Group of Earth Observation-Biodiversity Observation Network (ES-GEOBON-WG6) has been developing a conceptual and methodological framework for identifying essential ecosystem service variables through several workshops and working groups. We have developed a pathway for identifying a viable set of ecosystem services that are essential, that practitioners should measure and track across space and time measure to gauge the state and changes in ES. In this presentation we propose a conceptual framework for the identification of ecosystem service variables as well as its application to a wide range of ecosystem services. While our approach builds from the experience of developing and using essential biodiversity variables (EBVs), it offers new insights into the challenges that emerge from the social-interactions that are at the core of ecosystem services.