

Managing the mismatches to provide ecosystem services for human well-being: a conceptual framework for understanding the New Commons

Anantha Kumar Duraiappah¹, Stanley Tanyi Asah², Eduardo S Brondizio³, Nicolas Kosoy⁴, Patrick J O'Farrell⁵, Anne-Helene Prieur-Richard⁶, Suneetha M Subramanian⁷ and Kazuhiko Takeuchi⁸

Abstract

Hardin in his seminal paper described the management of the commons as a tragedy. Three decades later, Ostrom and colleagues argued that the management of the commons was more of a drama than a tragedy. They identified that the management of common pool resources is dependent on the institutions at play at the specific scale and across scales and the various stakeholders involved in the access and use of these resources. In this paper we go one step further by arguing that the plurality of values within and across individuals coupled with the spatial scales at which different institutions are organized and at which ecosystem services are produced create mismatches in the management of the New Commons. We define the New Commons as the mosaic of land, water, and climate, and their underlying processes that regulate ecosystem structure and functions to maintain a sustainable supply of common pool resources for human well-being. A conceptual framework capturing these mis-matches and the multiple spatial scales at which ecosystems provide services is presented in this paper. This framework sheds new light on the key inter-linkages among nature and human well-being which the newly established Intergovernmental science-policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) is expected to address.