

1. Nome: Rita Catarina Gomes

2.Ligação ao CEG-IST: PhD student at SENSU (Supervisor: Professora Maria do Rosário Partidário)

3.Título da apresentação:

Ecosystem Services as an Asset and an Opportunity to Local Development

4.Resumo:

The Communication will present the research work conducted between 2009 and 2013 as part of a PhD in Environmental Engineering at IST. The PhD research was conducted under the supervision of Professor Maria do Rosário Partidário and was funded by the Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT).

5.Conteúdo:

Nature and human activities are responsible for generating drivers of change that affect ecosystems direct or indirectly, and, consequently, their capacity to provide services. Population growth and land use changes account for the most relevant direct drivers of change.

While there is a growing recognition of the importance of ecosystem services for human well-being and a need to protect them, governments all over the world have not been able to mainstream ecosystem services into decision-making, especially at the planning level, - fundamental for stopping ecosystem services unsustainable use - mostly because they are still taken for granted and for free.

The influence of humans over ecosystems is most obvious when considering the local level, but, if on one hand decision-makers at local level can directly influence the choice of technology, land use changes and external inputs, on the other hand they have little control over prices and markets, property rights, technology development and on local climate.

Exploring and assessing territorial development options on ecosystems, and consequently their capacity to provide services, therefore becomes an important issue for local decision-making, safeguarding their maintenance and consequent local communities' well-being. However the conservation is still perceived in many cases as a cost and a constraint to local socioeconomic development. There is a need for decision-makers to find more creative and systematic financing solutions, so that instead of conservation and investments on natural capital being seen as an obstacle or a cost, they start being seen as an opportunity for capital gains.

The purpose of this communication is to share advances on the potential of municipal ecosystem services conservation schemes to generate economic revenues, and the potential application of these revenues to ensure the sustainability of local communities. Specifically, those mechanisms enabled by the mainstreaming of ecosystem services into Municipal Master Plans. A developed framework will be presented for discussion.

6.CV

Born in Lisbon, Portugal in 1981. Graduated in environmental engineer and with a master's degree in territorial and environmental planning at Faculdade de Ciências e Tecnologia (Science and Technology faculty, New University of Lisbon). Will complete a Ph.D in Environmental Engineer until the end of 2013 at Instituto Superior Técnico, Lisbon Technical University. The PhD aim is to develop a mechanism for financing the ecosystem services conservation, enabled by the mainstreaming of ecosystem services into Municipal Master Plans.

In parallel with the PhD, worked as an expert volunteer at an NGO (QUERCUS), in the project 'Enterprises&Biodiversity', and as an invited researcher at a business and management research center (ISG/CIGEST), in topics such as green economy and mainstreaming ecosystems services and biodiversity conservation in territorial policies and action. Since 2006, is involved in research and training activities in

local sustainability strategies, environmental and territorial planning and ecosystem services and biodiversity conservation subjects at the research group 'Strategic Approaches to Environment and Sustainability' (SENSU - Technical University of Lisbon, Instituto Superior Técnico), coordinated by Professor Maria do Rosário Partidário.