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ABOUT NATURAL CAPITAL

Country Fact Sheet  
**CYPRUS**

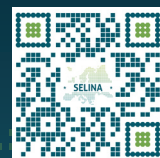


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## Country Fact Sheet: Cyprus (CY)

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The Cyprus Institute

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If you feel there are ongoing or upcoming research projects, policy initiatives or legislations, concerning the use of biodiversity, ecosystem condition and ecosystem services knowledge in decisions and policies, missing please contact [inge.liekens@vito.be](mailto:inge.liekens@vito.be) and we update the country fact sheet (until March 2027)

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# Update on projects concerning biodiversity, ecosystem condition and ecosystem services assessment and accounting since 2022

In Cyprus, a first set of indicators for the mapping and assessment of ecosystems and their services (MAES) in Cyprus was proposed in a study in 2020 (Vogiatzakis et al. 2020). The study was focusing on developing appropriate indicators for diverse ecosystems on the island.

After 2020 a few studies and projects on mapping and assessing ecosystem services took place or are ongoing:

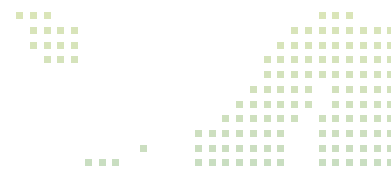
- **LIFE IP PHYSIS LIFE18 /IPE/CY/000006** (Pandoteira): A conceptual framework and development of the National Ecosystem Assessment (CY NEA) methodology were created, specifically adapted to local conditions such as ecosystem types, pressures, and impacts on ecosystems. Implementation of CY NEA on selected Natura 2000 sites is ongoing (Vogiatzakis & Manolaki, 2022). The goal is to harmonise Cyprus' obligations with European requirements for Natura 2000 management (work in progress).

Case-studies on Mapping and Assessment of Ecosystem Services with a focus on areas in Cyprus are:

- **Troodos National Forest Park** (Kounnamas and Andreou, 2022). This study maps and assesses ecosystem services within the Troodos National Forest Park using the Common International Classification of Ecosystem Services (CICES 5.1). It identifies 36 different ES and categorises them into provisioning, regulating, and cultural services.
- **Larnaca's Salt Lakes** (Bekri et al., 2023). This study examines the management implications of ecosystem services provided by Larnaca's Salt Lakes, a protected peri-urban area. It uses spatial analysis to map areas with the potential to support various ecosystem services, emphasising the need for sustainable management practices.
- **Rizoelia National Forest Park** (Manolaki and Vogiatzakis, 2017). A rapid appraisal of ecosystem services in the Rizoelia National Forest Park, focusing on both biodiversity and human well-being. The assessment categorises ES into provisioning, regulating, and cultural services.

- **Agricultural Dry-Stone Terraces in Troodos Mountains** (Schwilch et al., 2018). A study developing and applying a methodology to assess changes in ecosystem services (ES) based on measured or estimated soil property changes resulting from various soil management measures such as mulching, terracing, and no-till farming. The methodology was applied in 16 case study sites across Europe, representing a diverse range of soil threats and land use systems, including Cyprus (see Zoumides et al., 2017). The insights gained from these assessments can help inform soil conservation and management strategies, particularly in terms of improving soil health and enhancing ecosystem services.

- **Appraisal tools to mitigate soil threats** (Okpara et al., 2020). A study exploring the development, selection, and application of appraisal tools designed to help stakeholders mitigate soil threats, relevant for ES groups (Regulating: soil conservation, and Supporting: soil health and fertility). It highlights researchers' experiences across Europe, providing insights into the effectiveness, social acceptability, and economic feasibility of various soil improvement measures. The study includes a case study from Cyprus, specifically focusing on the maintenance and rehabilitation of dry-stone terraces in the upstream area of a selected watershed (Zoumides et al., 2017). The study emphasises the importance of systematic appraisal tools in supporting decision-making processes related to soil conservation and management; stakeholders involved include farmers, policymakers, environmental managers, researchers.



## 2

## Examples of uptake in decision processes, regulations and/or legislation

Ecosystem services are explicitly mentioned in the National Biodiversity Strategy, which identifies gaps in practical implementation, such as mapping, assessment, and valuation (Vogiatzakis & Manolaki, 2022). However, in terms of practical implementation (mapping/assessment/valuation) there are gaps, i.e., there

is no specific obligation. The LIFE IP Physis project (see above) aims to harmonise national obligations with European requirements, starting from Natura 2000 sites. However, there remains a lack of explicit legislative mandates for comprehensive ES mapping across Cyprus.

## 3

## Perceived barriers and needs to enhance uptake

### 3.1 Barriers

- Knowledge gaps:
  - No comprehensive mapping of ecosystem services (ES)
  - No agreed methodology for ES assessment
- Lack of capacity in the public sector:
  - No dedicated staff for ES
  - Limited understanding of the ES concept
- No legislative base for ES integration
- Unclear concepts among stakeholders
- Disagreement among conservationists about the value of an ES approach
- Insufficient funding
- Lack of data

### 3.2 Needs

- A comprehensive, nationwide mapping of ES across Cyprus, beyond just pilot areas, is required
- More implementation projects on a national scale are needed to apply ES assessment on demonstration sites that can influence policy.
- Intersectoral collaboration for integrating ES into decision-making processes.
- Increased funding for ES initiatives
- Development of guidelines on incorporating ES into spatial planning
- Legislative integration of ES into Natura 2000 management plans
- Integration of ES into the planning system
- Increased stakeholder awareness of the ES approach
- Demonstration of the value of ES through successful case studies from other EU countries





# 4

## On the way to transformative change

The overall conclusion of the IPBES global assessment (IPBES 2019) was that Goals for conserving and sustainably using nature and achieving sustainability cannot be met by current trajectories, and goals for 2030 and beyond, may only be achieved through transformative changes across economic, social, political and technological factors.

Transformative or transformational change refers to “a fundamental, system-wide reorganization across technological, economic and social factors, including paradigms, goals and values” (IPBES, 2019). Simply said, doing things really differently, rather than doing less or optimising the system.

A means to enhance uptake is bringing people of the quadruple helix together and exchange information and learn from each other. Another is to establish projects that can show that it works and lead to possible pathways of transformative change.

### 4.1 Community of practice

#### 1<sup>st</sup> CoP meeting held on 28 February 2024

Participants: representatives from governmental bodies, research institutions, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and educational institutions.

Defined Purpose: the primary aim of the CoP is to facilitate transformative change in environmental and agricultural practices in Cyprus. This involves:

- Enhancing communication and collaboration among stakeholders.
- Engaging a broader range of participants, including private sector entities, municipalities, citizen groups, and policymakers.
- Promoting initiatives that have a lasting impact on environmental conservation and public awareness.
- Prioritising ecosystem services and integrating them into decision-making processes.

#### Outcomes

- Communication and Stakeholder Engagement: Identified platforms for information sharing such as Viber, Microsoft Teams, and Email, with a preference for formal communication channels like email.
- Discussed the inclusion of private sector entities, municipalities, and citizen groups as potential stakeholders for broader engagement.

#### ■ Initiatives and Projects:

- **Tree Planting:** Recognised public interest but noted the need for sustained efforts and resources for long-term impact.
- **Active Citizenship:** Emphasised the necessity of systemic actions and long-term planning.
- **Environmental Education:** Advocated for introducing environmental education in schools to shift cultural perspectives.
- **Ecosystem Services:** Highlighted the importance of ecosystem services and awareness campaigns.
- **Policy Engagement:** Stressed the need for policymakers to be more involved and informed.

#### Considerations for Cyprus:

- Small and often repetitive participation in meetings, suggesting the expansion of the network.
- Identified cultural and capacity issues and the need to re-activate and link the SELINA CoP with ESP-Cyprus.
- Noted difficulties in integrating ecosystem services into decision-making processes, highlighting the need for better uptake and implementation.



## 4.2 Seeds of transformative change

2 projects were nominated:

### **Darwin Plus project “Akrotiri Marsh Restoration: a flagship wetland in the Cyprus SBAs” 2) Darwin Plus project “Habitat Restoration & Wise Use for Akrotiri & Cape Pyla” (2021-2024)**

Enhance the biodiversity richness of the wetland, by restoring Akrotiri marsh to a mosaic of habitats, similar to the state it was in some decades ago.

Promote the economic viability of conservation grazing, conserve important plant species, increase public awareness and ecotourism opportunities.

### **Thkio Mosfilies – Outdoor teaching area**

To set up a nature reserve and create a hub for environmental education in the Ammochostos District, with the hopes of changing hearts and minds in the area and influencing young children into becoming valuable members of society that love and protect nature.



## 5

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**Project duration:** 1 July 2022 – 30 June 2027

**Keywords:** biodiversity, ecosystems, ecosystem services, natural capital accounting, evidence-based decision-making, transformative change

**Project coordinator:** Prof. Dr. Benjamin Burkhard, Leibniz University Hannover (LUH), Institute of Physical Geography and Landscape Ecology

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## PROJECT PARTNERS

-  Leibniz University Hannover
-  Stichting Capitals Coalition
-  Ecostack Innovations Limited
-  University of Trento
-  Pensoft Publishers
-  Centre for Ecological Research
-  Mykolas Romeris University
-  Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts
-  University of Patras
-  space4environment
-  National Institute of Geophysics, Geodesy and Geography
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-  The Cyprus Institute
-  Wageningen University
-  The Finnish Environment Institute
-  Global Change Research Institute SarVision
-  Ministry of the Environment of the Slovak Republic
-  Gaspar Frutuoso Foundation
-  Flemish Agency for Nature and Forest
-  Municipality of Trento
-  Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Lithuania
-  Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development of the Republic of Latvia
-  Research Centre in Biodiversity and Genetic Resources
-  University of Haifa
-  COHAB Initiative Secretariat
-  KTH Royal Institute of Technology
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