Economic Valuation of Soil Ecosystem Functions - Scoping Study

In the context of this study, a literature review is carried out in order to assess the status of research on the economic value of soil. Based on this analysis, the potential for an all-encompassing assessment of the economic value of soil on the national level will be determined.

Background

As an integral part of the natural functions of an ecosystem, soil provides several services that are also of significant importance for mankind. These services include the provision of food, animal feed, and clean drinking water, protection against diseases, protection against flooding, and climate regulation.

Methodology

The literature review will serve to identify studies relevant to an assessment of the economic value of soil, and to analyse these studies with regard to specific criteria. The research will be structured around the following ecosystem services:

- provision of habitat for plants;
- filtering, buffering and retaining of water;
- biodiversity protection;
- carbon storage and climate regulation.

Although the focus of the research is on Germany, relevant studies will also be examined at the European and global level.

Objectives

In conclusion, it will be determined whether and under which conditions a broad economic valuation of the ecosystem services of soil can be made based on the results of the literature analysis.
Using the data collected from individual studies, a methodology will be developed to estimate the economic value of soil on the national level.

This project is part of the Ecologic Institute’s contribution to the International Year of Biodiversity 2010 [1].

**Related Articles**

- Guidelines for Scaling-up Ecosystem Service Values
- Economic Assessment of Soil Deterioration
- Evaluation of Soil Protection Measures (EUSOIL)

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