

Challenges of assessing actual impacts of policy action



Dr Hans Bruyninckx – 18 December 2017 – The 2017 EU agricultural outlook conference, Brussels

The EEA and its role in CAP implementation



The European Environment Agency (EEA)

- Knowledge hub for informed policy-making and the public.
- Advantage of EU-wide coherent data sets.
- Data compiled by the EEA is used for some indicators in the monitoring and evaluation process under the CAP.



Selected Context / Impact Indicators

C.40/I.11 Water quality (Nitrates in fresh water)



C.35/I.08 Farmland Bird Index



**CAP
interventions**



**Environmental
conditions**



Assessing actual results / impacts of CAP interventions



Challenges:

- distorting factors;
- timing;
- time lag between policy action and measurable impact;
- annual changes of framing conditions;
- counterfactual evaluation.

Bridging gaps with “proxy indicators”



Proxy indicators should ideally:

- reflect on the impacts of the CAP in relation to its objectives (i.e. sustainable management of natural resources);
- not be based on input/output- or sales records;
- not be modelled;
- reflect on real environmental conditions;
- allow for more timely and/or accurate assessments than existing indicators.

Proxy indicator I - to assess CAP's contribution to enhance water quality



Assessment of nitrates in soil:

- serves to overcome existing time lags in measuring impacts;
- soil samples are already taken by many farmers;
- supports targeted fertilisation, increases resource efficiency and decreases production costs.



Proxy indicator II - to assess CAP's contribution to maintain / improve biodiversity



Extended assessment of landscape elements and diversity:

- allows conclusions on the presence of habitats and species.
- land cover assessments are insufficient and need to be supplemented.
- significant amounts of relevant information is already collected under the CAP.
- however, aggregated numbers of landscape elements and hectares of crops per region are not sufficient.

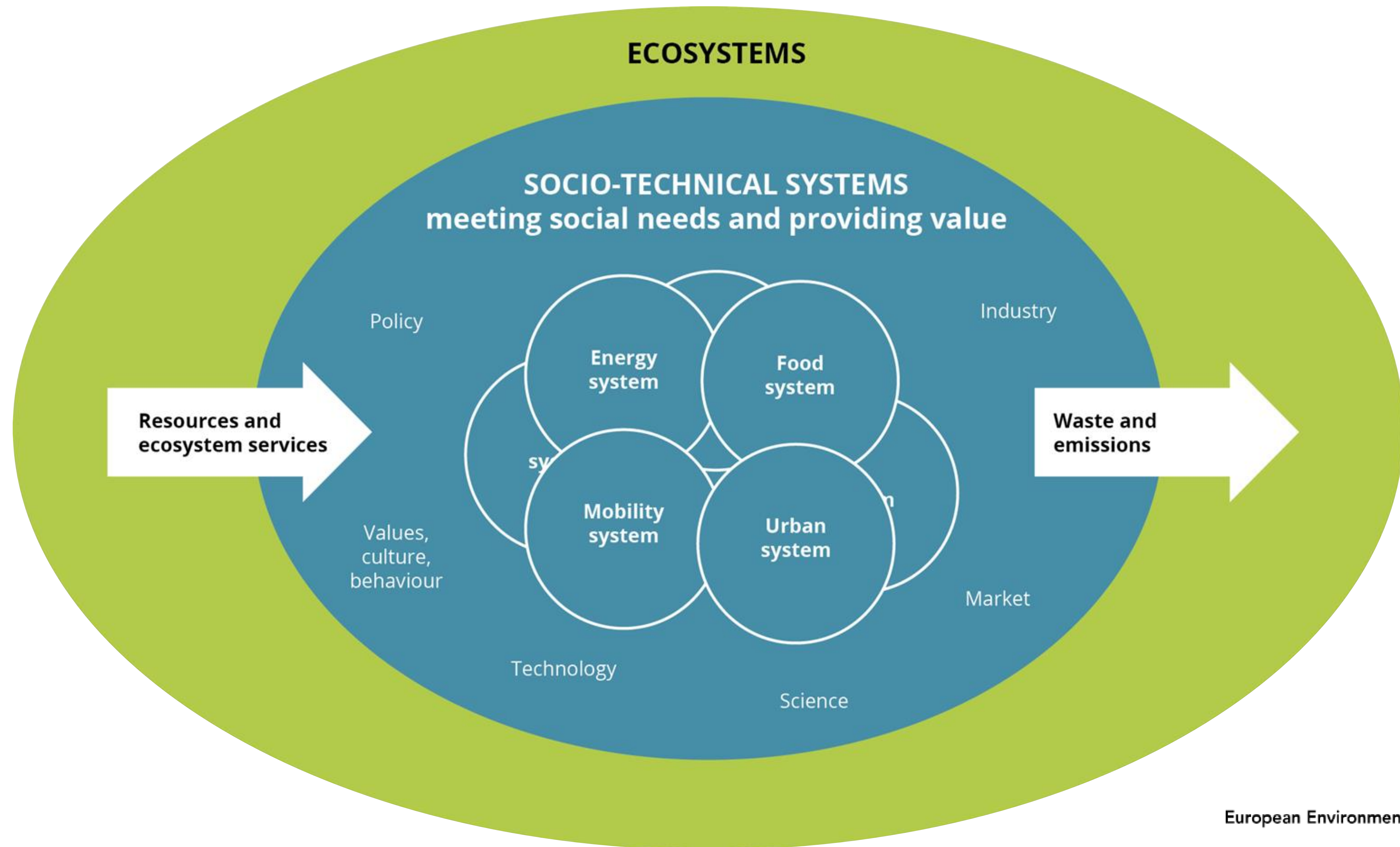


Concluding remarks



- Overcoming challenges of assessing impacts of the CAP is possible. Data needed for this are being collected but often not made available.
- **Geo-referenced data** in particular would facilitate the monitoring and evaluating impacts of the CAP.
- Active ongoing monitoring can contribute to improving resource efficiency and decreasing production costs.
- **Data provision** on land should be a precondition for area payments under the CAP.
- CAP implementation could **contribute to environmental monitoring**, achieving synergies in both policy fields.

Agriculture in a low carbon, resource efficient economy based on strong natural capital



Thank you

Hans.Bruyninckx@eea.europa.eu

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Question to the audience



An increase in urban sprawl has impacted negatively on agricultural land over the last decades. Such land use conflicts continue to pose problems.

In which of the following three countries, do you think the mean annual development of urban and other artificial land (expressed as % of 2006 artificial land) was highest in the period 2006 – 2012?

- a) The Netherlands
- b) Spain
- c) Germany



The correct answer is:

b) **Spain** with a mean annual growth of around 1.5 % of artificial area over the period 2006 to 2012, compared to the Netherlands with nearly 0.8 %, and Germany with around 0.2 %.

See corresponding [indicator factsheet on landtake](#)

Recommended further reading:

[“Landscapes in transition — An account of 25 years of land cover change in Europe”](#), EEA Report No 10/2017