

Defra launches the Ecosystems Knowledge Network: a resource for anyone wanting to share knowledge or learn about the practical benefits of an ecosystems approach.

A healthy natural environment is the foundation of a sustainable future with prospering communities.

In the UK and elsewhere, pioneering projects are exploring new ways of managing land and sea environments and the benefits people derive from them. In particular, they are reflecting an 'ecosystems approach': a holistic and inclusive approach to promoting the sustainable use of natural resources and taking better account of the values people hold for the environment.

A new network has been sponsored by Defra with the aim of sharing experience from projects taking an ecosystems approach. Entitled the Ecosystems Knowledge Network, it will stimulate knowledge exchange and practical learning across the country. It will assist organisations and groups to understand how an ecosystems approach can help build sustainable communities.

The Ecosystems Knowledge Network is free to join and open to anyone with an interest in an ecosystems approach. The Network will support the practical use of an ecosystems approach by:

- Developing an active membership of people and organisations interested in benefiting from an ecosystems approach;
- Encouraging the sharing of information and experience between projects and between experts and newcomers to the approach; and

- Engaging with and involving people who might not otherwise be aware of how an ecosystems approach can benefit them.

The new Network is being developed by an independent partnership involving the NERC Centre for Ecology & Hydrology, the Natural Capital Initiative, Fabis Consulting, the University of Exeter (Centre for Rural Policy Research) and Countryside.

The Network website and other communications are currently being developed.

In the meantime, for further information about the Network or to register your interest in joining, please visit [naturalcapitalinitiative.org.uk/ekn](http://naturalcapitalinitiative.org.uk/ekn).

You can also contact the Network Co-ordinator by email at [ekn@naturalcapitalinitiative.org.uk](mailto:ekn@naturalcapitalinitiative.org.uk) or telephone 0333 240 6990.

