

A Comprehensive Approach to Ecosystem Services Management: From Alarm to Action

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Abstract

This paper examines how to develop a reasonable contractual proposition for a society to coop-erate fairly in the interest of a common ecosystem. It recognises that no society is entirely free from political realities or the costs involved in maintaining social order. As a result, ideal propo-sitions of social cooperation, such as John Rawls's The Law of Peoples, remain incomplete when considering practical application. We introduce the Commonwealth Cost of Carbon, as a new Ecosystem Performance Observation that measures how much societies spend to maintain order relative to their total activity. This ratio provides a transparent and replicable way to assess global ecosystem performance without relying on expert computing resources or privileged infor-mation. Over just twenty years, this cost increased from ~2000\$65 to ~2020\$140 per tonne of CO₂e, suggesting both a decline in ecosystem performance and a rising social value for emission reduction. Building on this indicator, we propose the Commonwealth of Peoples as a new trade association, that translates moral duty into service performance. Here, a complementary Service Rating is introduced, serving as a cost–benefit ratio that benchmarks how industrialised is a habitat. Together, these tools provide a performance-based foundation of ecosystem governance that provides an assured approach to move a society from alarm to action.

Keywords: Ecosystem Performance; Ecological Economics; Social Contract; Trade Associa-tion; Service Performance Marketing