

Local Environment and Economic Development Toolkit Review

Valuation Tools

TABLES Project 2012: Mini reviews	
Guidance	<i>Using your experience and expertise, consider the following tasks in relation to the tool. It may not be possible to complete all tasks for each tool due to a lack of available information, the task not applying to the tool, etc. Please note where this is the case by writing in the reason in the space provided. Please use a maximum of 6 pages of A4 (excluding diagrams and appendices). Your responses are required in the white spaces.</i>
Task 1: Basic information	
Name of the tool	Local Environment and Economic Development Toolkit
Type of tool (list all that apply) <i>Learning and skills (pedagogic); participatory; regulatory; collaborative; mapping; valuation; modelling; decision; futures; financial; ecosystem services</i>	ecosystem services; financial; futures; participatory (but only at organisational not public level);
Group members <i>(minimum size 3 members, must include a BCU rep)</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tim Sunderland (principal author) 2. Ruth Waters 3. Mike Grace 4. Joanne Russell/Andy Canning-Trigg corresponding 5. Claudia Carter

Please provide a brief synopsis of the tool

This may include: background context, development (and ownership if appropriate), current use and applications etc.

Please also note any desired outcomes of the tool so that you can make reference back to these in Task 7: SWOT analysis

The Local Environment and Economic Development (LEED) toolkit is designed to support strategic economic planning through effective consideration of the economy's relationship with the environment. The toolkit was developed by Natural England, the Environment Agency, Defra and the Forestry Commission working with *New Anglia, Staffordshire, Worcestershire and Cornwall and Isles of Scilly* Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs). The final product has been thoroughly tested by the LEPs and they recommend its use by other LEPs and Local Authorities. Since its launch in the Summer of 2013 it has been used by four LEPs with another ten expressing interest. It is available through the Natural England website <http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/planningdevelopment/LEP-citydeals/leedtoolkit.aspx>

The final product is a toolkit which systematically considers environment/economy relationships. Positive and negative impacts in both directions will be considered in order to assess opportunities and threats for consideration in strategic planning. Researchers start with standard economic development planning, move on to consider the physical basis of the economy. This consideration of the inputs and outputs from the economy will produce opportunities and threats. It also provides background for a consideration of the relationship with local environment using the Ecosystem Services Framework. This process will produce a prioritised list of opportunities and threats for consideration in strategic planning. These will be offered in non-specialist language.



The project is an entirely *optional* research approach. Although the information produced may be relevant, it is not designed to contribute towards statutory environmental impact assessment. The project makes a contribution to planning for Sustainable Development by improving the way in which environmental factors are considered in economic planning. However, Sustainable Development is a much broader concept, and planning for Sustainable Development will require a wider range of tools and indicators.

The core audience is LEPs and the economic development department of Local Authorities. Local Nature Partnerships also have an interest in environment/economy relationships and may wish to be a partner to a consortium using the toolkit. The areas covered are important to business success, health and wellbeing, and environmental goals. It is therefore possible that additional organisations may wish to take part from the governmental, private and third sectors.

Level 1

- **One day workshop focussed on identifying opportunities threats and potential solutions**
- 2.5 days (1 to set up, 1 to run, 0.5 to write up)

Level 2

- **Initial consideration of environmental relationships for opportunities and threats**
- Meeting with key experts and representatives for each environmental relationship (0.5 days per relationship)
- Final workshop (2.5 days - 1 to set up, 1 to run, 0.5 to write up)
- Another 25 days work - approx £10K if using consultants

Level 3

- **Detailed consideration of environmental relationships for opportunities and threats**
- Detailed data collection and analysis on environmental relationships (3 days per relationship)
- Ranking of opportunities and threats
- Final workshop (2.5 days - 1 to set up, 1 to run, 0.5 to write up)
- Up to another 50 days work - up to another £20K if using consultants

Due to varying levels of interest and capacity the LEED toolkit is split into three sequential levels, which allows LEPs to start at Level 1 with a relatively small commitment, and then consider whether to move through to Levels 2 and then 3. Level 1 will start to build the relationships between economy and environment staff in the same area and allow the formation of an initial assessment of economy/environment relationships and emerging threats and opportunities. Level 2 tests these findings and also develops new ones based on structured dialogue with stakeholders. Level 3 provides a thorough evidence assessment and evidence base.



The work for levels 2 and 3 can be done either by staff with relevant expertise from within local organisations or by consultants. Estimates of costs in time or resources are in the 'levels' table above.

Task 2: Use of the tool

Position / Use	Stage	Currently used in pilots	Could be used
<i>If you can, please indicate which stage(s) of the decision / policy making process your tool is / could be used in (these stages were identified in the specification document)</i>	Ideas	Y	Y
	Survey	N	N
	Assess	Y	Y
	Policy / decision	Y	Y
	Implement	N	N
	Evaluate	N	With further development

Please add any further comments here:

Task 3: Existing literature about the tool

Are you aware of any KEY policy and / or academic literature evaluating your tool? <i>(e.g. reports, journal articles, books)</i>	Author & Date	Title Vol pages	Web link (if available)

Task 4: Your experience of working on the tool

<p>Have you done any research/consultancy work on this tool in terms of its development, testing and/or evaluation? <i>If so, please provide an outline.</i></p>	<p>The lead author of this note, Tim Sunderland, is the architect of the tool.</p>
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Guidance	For Tasks 5-7, please also try to consider the future development and application of this tool in the TABLES project in your answers.
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Task 5: Incorporating the ecosystem approach (EA) and ecosystem services (ES)

Please refer to the summary text about ES for concept clarification at the end of this template (appendix)

<p>Using examples (from practice, research or consultancy), explain how EA and/or ES are currently incorporated in/by the tool <i>If neither approach is currently incorporated, please move to the next question</i></p>	<p>The tool explicitly uses the Ecosystem Services Framework to consider the economy's relationship with the environment in order to support strategic economic planning.</p> <p>It can't really be said to be an Ecosystem Approach tool in the true sense however because the tool is built around the Local Enterprise Partnerships Gross Value Added (GVA) targets. Therefore the desirable outcome is not up for discussion; just the best way to get there. The tool is participatory in terms of encouraging discussion between different elements of government and the voluntary sectors, but not in the sense of engaging the public.</p> <p>Piloting shows that this is an effective and systematic method of considering the environment/ economy relationship – relating well to natural science and the economy. However, the distinction between some ecosystem services, i.e. freshwater supply vs quality, is not always intuitive to people. Researchers sometimes object to the ES list if it includes things that they don't see as relevant to their area. More deeply concerning is that people sometimes need help to see the relationship between the ES and the economy.</p> <p>Another issue is that although you can explain Ecosystem Services to researchers at the beginning of the project, if they don't have any history with it they tend to drift back to their previous understanding of the environment/economy relationship. This creates a</p>
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risk that it is formally using the Ecosystem Services Framework research, but that the outputs don't look like it. Along with this risk goes the risk of confirmation bias – people perceive the main threats and opportunities to be the ones the first thought of!

Another challenge it that the tool requires explicit consideration of the physical nature of the local economy. Not only is data difficult to find on this, but additionally there seems to be some reluctance to think about the economy in this way.

How could the ecosystem approach and/or ecosystem services be (further) incorporated within the existing tool?

The tool is explicitly designed using the Ecosystem Services Framework approach. There is no room to incorporate more Ecosystem Approach principles because it is built around the LEPs targets. Changes to these targets would be required first.

Task 6: Situating the tool within priority questions/criteria arising from the scoping interviews

Explain how the tool can be situated within the priority questions/criteria that arose in the scoping interviews

Complete as many boxes as required

Priority question/criteria	Does your tool address/implement this question/criteria? <i>If yes, please explain how.</i>
Language and communication	
1. Contribution to aiding the development of shared vocabulary within which principles of EA and ES can be shared with multiple stakeholders across built and/or natural environment	Ecosystem Services language used as part of the technical language of the tool, but not used for communication where we revert to the more familiar threats and opportunities language.
2. Capacity of the tool to develop shared understandings of the many identities and values of places from the perspectives of multiple visitors, residents and businesses	Consortium approach should help to develop a shared understanding of evidence base, but the tool is built around GVA (gross value added) targets, hence – market values dominate.
3. Capacity of the tool to improve or enable engagement across different publics so avoiding the usual suspect problem	It's aimed at strategic economic planning and so will help here only in broadening this from the usual suspects in include perspectives from the environmental and (maybe) health sectors.
Learning from experience/pedagogy	
4. Capacity of the tool to help reveal and value 'hidden' assets that are not recognised by communities or publics that use them	High. Not so much hidden assets but hidden economic dependencies.
5. Extent to which tool is building on other tools or EA/ES progress	Consciously building on Ecosystem Services theory, also my MEBIE review. See: <i>Microeconomic Evidence for the Benefits of Investment in the Environment - review</i> (NERR033) http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/32031
6. Extent to which tool is locally derived or grounded or can be adjusted to closely reflect 'local' context. Is the tool suitable for an open source approach?	Developed by national government in collaboration by local partners – but results highly locally tailored. The tool is not suitable for an open source approach.

7. Extent to which the tool is open to interpretation and application in a variety of forms (that reflect 'cultural' differences)	Not really – natural science and GVA are the selected frames.
Developing and selecting tools	
8. Is the tool dependent on a specific funding source? How onerous is the application procedure? What are the chances of success?	Funding to support consultants needs to come from somewhere. Procedure is time and expertise intensive. Chances of useful results very high if worked through properly.
9. Does skills development (essential or optional?) and support exist for the tool or is there a body to ensure the optimal and correct use of it?	Skills development may not be required depending on researchers involved. No body of literature yet.
10. Extent to which current statutory hooks can be exploited by the tool or will benefit the quality or application of the tool (e.g. NNPF's duty to cooperate, SUDS, ecol. networks)	Designed to be optional.
Informing resultant policies effectively	
11. Extent to which the tool informs or improves policies/decisions. What does the tool cover? (full range of positive and negative economic, social and environment impacts / tradeoffs?)	Focussed on improved strategic economic planning.
12. How does the tool link into the planning system (applications and processes). At what cost / extra burden?	Planning is closely involved and assumed to follow from strategic economic vision. Only strategic level of planning.
Delivering management objectives	
13. Suitability or capacity of the tool to assist with managing visitor needs and pressures within protected areas / the considered area? How?	Could be considered as part of strategic economic plan.
Local ownership/new governance	
14. To what extent can the tool assist in developing statutory plans (local and management plans) and improve ownership and use by publics?	Operates at higher strategic level.
15. To what extent does/could the tool contribute to a new form of community governance in management of the environment?	Not really – see note on collaboration above

Improved tools: understanding flows, interconnections and spatial issues	
16. Capacity to improve spatial understandings of the flows and interactions of various ecosystem services between sectors and at different scales	Very high – at strategic level.
17. Capacity of the tool to reconcile assessments of options and benefits across different scales (and sectors)	Works at one scale.
18. Extent to which the tools is capable or can be manipulated to work across sectoral and administrative boundaries	Designed to work at functional economic area scale
19. Extent to which the tool can handle data shortages and gaps (or is effectiveness considerably compromised?)	Explicit about gaps and uncertainty – treats them as normal – still a problem however.
20. To what extent has/could the tool put landscape/nature conservation and designated species/sites on the radar (positively or resulting in resentment?)	Not designed to.

Please add any further comments here:

Task 7: A SWOT analysis of the tool

Referring back to the relevant policy and academic literature (listed in Task 3), plus your own expertise (listed in Task 4) and the way in which the tool is situated within the priority questions/criteria (listed in Task 6), please complete a summary SWOT analysis ensuring that each point is well justified

Where possible, this analysis should reflect the tool's past and current application, as well as its effectiveness in policy and decision making processes

Strengths –

- The tool is designed around the targets and needs of a group of influential organisations, which helps to ensure demand and take-up
- It is split into different levels allowing different levels of engagement
- The work involved is proportionate to the decisions being taken, and does not involve seeking disproportionate certainty
- The approach is rigorous, transparent and fits with scientific best practice.

Weaknesses

- The nature of decisions and the evidence base mean that subjectivity cannot be eliminated from the results, but the transparency of the process does allow challenge leading to improved inter-subjective decision making.

Opportunities

- The tool provides an opportunity to frame the environment positively with regard to economic growth and open up a constructive dialogue where there wasn't one before.

Threats

- The success of each local output of the tool is heavily dependent on those using it fully understanding it and holding the appropriate expertise to interpret the key relationships
- There is a danger that it is used but that the results are not integrated into planning, i.e. that doing the work acts as 'greenwash'.
- There is significant potential for the tool be to misunderstood as part of or relevant to environmental regulations and designations, or a broader wellbeing or sustainable development tool