

Report of the National Symposium
***“Nature Valuation and Financing – Making the
priceless valuable”***

Venue: De Reehorst, Ede, the Netherlands

Date: 8 December 2005



This symposium was jointly organised by:

Wageningen University (WUR)



The Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality –
Department of Knowledge



Tropenbos International



International Agriculture Centre (WUR)



Edited by

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1. Introduction

Purpose of the day: Present and discuss possibilities and constraints of developed innovative instruments and to translate information on ecosystem values into financing mechanisms for conservation and sustainable use of ecosystems.

More specifically the symposium aimed to:

- Facilitate the development of (innovative) instruments to broaden and diversify the financial basis for sustainable ecosystem management;
- Create policy support for the development and implementation of instruments for payment for environmental services;
- Create a better link between “providers” (e.g. researchers) and “users” (policy makers, business community, managers, etc.) of information on ecosystem valuation and financing;
- Strengthen and mobilize existing knowledge and expertise networks through an interactive Platform for Nature Valuation and Financing.

The symposium was jointly organized by the Min. of Agriculture, Nature & Food Quality – Department of Knowledge (LNV – DK), Wageningen University – Environmental Systems Analysis Group (WUR – ESA), Wageningen University – International Agricultural Centre (WUR – IAC), Tropenbos International (TBI) and the Foundation for Sustainable Development (FSD).

The symposium was attended by around 100 participants bringing together a broad audience of persons from government, NGOs, knowledge centres and the business community who are interested in, or working on, ecosystem valuation and financing. The participants represented different stakeholder groups from policy, science, education, and business community and consultants, which led to a lively debate. The symposium programme (see table) consisted of a series of general presentations, thematic brainstorms in breakout groups and a concluding panel discussion.

Programme		
		12.15 Plenary discussion with speakers
9.00	Registration and coffee	12.30 Lunch and information market
9.30	Welcome (dr. Dolf de Groot, WUR)	13.30 Opening afternoon sessions (by the chair, dr Dolf de Groot)
9.35	Opening statement (Janneke Hoekstra, Min LNV-DK)	13.35 <i>Perspectives from the business community</i> (Luuk Hans, Rabo Green Fund, Rabobank)
9.40	Keynote “ <i>Making the priceless valuable</i> ” (Dolf de Groot, WUR)	14.0 <i>Perspectives from NGO’s</i> (Michael Jenkins, Forest Trends)
10.00	<i>Valuation of Ecosystem Services</i> (Pieter van Beukering, IVM)	14.25 <i>The role of the government</i> (Lilian van den Aarsen, Min. LNV-East)
10.30	Break	<i>Perspectives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs</i> (Hans Wessels Min Foreign Affairs)
11.00	<i>Paying for ecosystem services; overview of mechanisms and examples</i> (Pita Verweij, Copernicus Institute)	15.00 Break-out Groups
11.25	<i>Investing in Nature: The Twickel experience</i> (Raymond Schrijver, Alterra – WUR)	16.00 Break
11.50	<i>Conditions for successful financing strategies</i> (Henk Lette, IAC – WUR)	16.15 Panel session and findings break-out groups
		17.00 Presentation action plan and launch Platform NV&F
		17.15 Closure and drinks

The main highlights of the symposium presentations and discussions are summarized in the following sections. **All background material, the PowerPoint presentations, List of participants and summary reports can be found at the Nature Valuation and Financing Network’s website** (please click [here](#)).

2. Background

In recent years the question how to broaden and diversify the financial basis for the sustainable management of natural and semi-natural ecosystems and biodiversity has received increasing attention in policy making, research agendas and in the field of implementation. Both at the global policy level and in the policy agenda of the Netherlands (especially in international development cooperation and National Nature Development Plans), the notion of Ecosystem Services and their multiple benefits has become a prominent theme.

It is increasingly acknowledged that ecosystem management is too often based on a limited number of goods and services (e.g. wood or other commodities). Many ecosystem services however, like regulation of water flows, climate amelioration, maintenance of soil quality, and cultural services - although very valuable - generate little or no direct revenues. Most of these services are therefore not accounted for in the market, or

in decision making in general and the “producers” of these services (farmers, landholders, etc) are not compensated for generating and managing these services.

The recent publication of the findings of the “*Millennium Ecosystem Assessment*” (www.maweb.org) clearly illustrates the importance of ecosystem services for human well-being and economic development. At the same time, the report describes that over-exploitation, degradation and conversion are still widespread and accelerating in many areas, resulting in a decrease of the ability of ecosystems to deliver their goods and services.

It is therefore essential that we begin to fully recognise the values of ecosystem services and create adequate payment mechanisms so that management of these ecosystem services is financially competitive to other forms of land use.

Experience from quite a number of cases has demonstrated that under the present conditions and given some recent developments (for example the Kyoto protocol) the potential of marketing ecosystem goods and services can be better utilized than is done at present. To generate additional financial resources for sustainable ecosystem management calls for development of mechanisms and strategies that capture the economic value of ecosystem services and that ensure an adequate sharing of costs and benefits among the stakeholders (producers and consumers). There is a need to develop, design and implement payment systems for sustainable management of those ecosystem services that are currently difficult to market, but are important for sustainable development. This should not only involve measures to generate new money sources; it must also include the adaptation of existing sources and government policies that are now impacting negatively on ecosystem management. What is needed is a system of financial mechanisms, including the policy and institutional conditions, to broaden and diversify the financial basis for ecosystem management. At the same time it is emphasized that it is illusive – and undesirable – trying to value all ecosystem services in monetary terms or trying to ensure their management only through financial markets. Many services are difficult to market, and their conservation and responsible use can, if desirable, be regulated for example through policy, legislation and control.

Around the world many interesting initiatives have emerged that provide valuable experiences and lessons for their broader application. In the Netherlands several organizations are actively involved in such initiatives, often in cooperation with counterpart organizations in other parts of the world.

The symposium aimed to strengthen the exchange of information among scientists, practitioners and policy makers in the Netherlands on a more structural basis, among others, through the development of a National Platform to continue the dialogue and stimulate implementation of nature valuation tools and financing mechanisms.

3. Highlights from the plenary presentations¹

Opening Statement

Dr. ir Janneke Hoekstra: Director of the Department of Knowledge, Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality

In her opening statement dr. Hoekstra emphasized that in recent years the theme of nature valuation and financing has gained enormous interest, both in policy, research and the private sector. The importance of the subject needs no further discussion but at the level of implementation many questions arise. Are we properly valuating and internalising the functions of nature in our policies and our economic activities? Do we have the proper financial mechanisms and strategies at hand so that we can capture the less tangible ecosystem goods and services in our economic system?

There is already a wealth of knowledge and expertise generated and there is a clear need to share this information with policy makers and find ways to put it into practice. She stressed the importance of knowledge networks. Improved exchange between research organizations, speeding up of knowledge interaction and good interaction with policy makers to put “the right” research questions on the agenda need to be realized. She underlined that that the symposium and action plan are “just” a start. To make things really happen we need continued cooperation, supported by adequate infrastructure. The Department of Knowledge plays a role in supporting and strengthening this field.

¹ The PowerPoint presentations from the speakers can be [downloaded directly](#) by following the hyperlinks in the titles

Keynote “Making the priceless valuable”

Dr. Dolf de Groot (Environmental Systems Analysis group, Wageningen UR)

In his key-note presentation dr. de Groot stressed, amongst others, that loss of environmental services represents a significant economic loss to society of at least \$250 billion per year and posed the question why we continue to subsidise non-sustainable development with tax-money and reduced well-being? Three reasons were given for the continued degradation and loss of our natural environment:

1. The value of our natural environment (often quantified in terms of ecosystem goods and services) is not properly accounted for in our current economic accounting system
2. The private economic benefits are often greater for the converted ecosystems than sustainable use (e.g. converting mangroves into shrimp-farms)
3. People and companies who benefit from natural resource depletion are often not the ones who bear the costs of ecosystem degradation

Dr. de Groot ended his presentation by stating that scientific proof is mounting that investing in nature pays and stressed the need for deliberate decision making processes to take better account of ecosystem values and to develop financial instruments that foster more sustainable use of environmental services.

Session 1: The science behind the valuation and financing of environmental services

The valuation of ecosystem services

Dr. Pieter van Beukering (Institute for Environmental Studies)

Dr. van Beukering introduced the concept of valuation of environmental services. He covered basic topics of economic valuation:

- What is economic valuation and how does it work;
- Why do we need economic valuation;
- Current issues in economic valuation and
- Valuation and financing.

Describing a number of case studies on the total (economic) value of ecosystems, he showed that:

- The most valuable resource in economic terms are not necessarily the most valuable natural resources in terms of biodiversity;
- The large variation of values in meta-analysis of natural resources imply that easy and simple transfer of benefits for valuation purposes is not yet feasible;
- Economic valuation plays a crucial role in identifying potential beneficiaries of environmental services by estimating the size of various potential markets.

Paying for ecosystem services; Overview of financial mechanisms and examples

Dr. Pita Verweij: Copernicus Institute (Utrecht University)

Dr. Verweij noted that over the past decade, a growing number of beneficiaries have started to pay land owners for the services provided by the natural ecosystems they manage. This resulted in a wide range of institutional arrangements at different scale levels, involving different combinations of stakeholders from the government, civil society and private enterprises. Services frequently being paid for are water services, biodiversity conservation and carbon sequestration. She provided an overview of the most important payment mechanisms. What is their potential and what are important limitations? What can be learnt from these experiences? The following categories were distinguished:

- State budget (e.g. fiscal incentives, taxes and user fees)
- Overseas Development Assistance – ODA (e.g. the Global Environment Facility – GEF)
- Contribution from civil society (e.g. conservation NGOs, philanthropy)
- Private sector contributions (e.g. eco-tourism, trade in Non-Timber Forest Products, bioprospecting, contributions to carbon mitigation projects and green funds)
- Multi-actor arrangements

Other issues addressed were the importance of accompanying legislation, adequate policies, recognition of land rights, land use planning, contributions to poverty alleviation, and the role of intermediary organizations and donor agencies. Although the volume of payments for environmental services is increasing, this development does not keep pace with the rapid destruction and degradation of ecosystems. She concluded

by stating that additional sources of money of a larger magnitude should be invested into the Earth's life support systems in order to maintain them.

Investing in nature: The Twickel experience

Ir. Raymond Schrijver (Alterra – Wageningen UR)

Ir. Schrijver of Alterra presented a pilot case study whereby farmers in Twickel, situated in the east of the Netherlands, are being compensated for carrying out nature conservation activities. Farmers in the Twickel area have increasing difficulties to make a living through farming alone due to decreasing economic profits in the agricultural sector. The concept of Farming for Nature, is based on zoning, whereby farmers, surrounding a nature area, are financially compensated in exchange for a more nature-oriented type of farming (e.g. reduced use of fertilizer and pesticides, leaving edges of pastures fallow).

In exchange for a more environmentally friendly way of farming, which will likely enhance the (ground) water quality, increase biodiversity and conserve the cultural and historical value of the area, farmers are being compensated for the loss of income. Financial resources will initially come from the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality and the EU. In the future however, financial contributions are also being expected from both private- and public beneficiaries in the Twickel region. This project is currently still in the pilot phase.

Conditions for successful financing strategies

Ir. Henk Lette (IAC – Wageningen UR)

Within the context of the experiences gained in capacity building activities on this subject Mr Lette stressed the importance of the stakeholder-centered approach to relate the functions of ecosystems to their values. The full economic values integrate all costs and benefits of all relevant stakeholders and their interests can thus be made transparent. One step further from knowing who is gaining (benefits) and who is paying (costs) by maintaining or changing a specific use of the natural resources is to translate these interests into financial mechanisms.

He presented the results of the study 'Broadening and diversifying the financial basis for sustainable forest management and nature conservation' ([Lette and Rozemeijer](#)). This study analysed the different groups and types of Financing Mechanisms and presents conclusions and recommendations on the conditions and key factors for successful financing strategies. He concluded by listing some conclusions from a workshop that was organised in Sao Paulo in the last week of November 2005 within the context of a Netherlands funded project on Strategies and Mechanisms for Financing Sustainable Forest Management in Latin America

Session 2: Perspectives from stakeholders

The afternoon session concentrated on the views and ideas of different stakeholders in the field of ecosystem service valuation and financing. The session was opened by a representative of the business community; Mr. Hans, director of the Rabo Green Bank BV (Rabobank).

Ecosystems; highly praised or rightly priced

Mr. Luuk Hans (Director Rabo Green Bank B.V.)

Mr. Hans presented the views of the Rabobank towards ecosystems, thereby highlighting that the Rabobank has undertaken a number of internal activities and policies that positively contribute to a better environment, such as using green energy (wind energy), reducing paper use, buying organically produced food. Furthermore, Social Responsible Initiative (SRI) criteria are being applied in their credit processes. Mr Hans also stressed that finance and sustainability can go hand in hand through Public Private Partnerships (PPP) and Green Financing, especially when the government provides tax or fiscal incentives. This can increase investments in organic farming, renewable energy and (agricultural) nature conservation. Furthermore, by using smart marketing strategies, stressing the environmental friendly or *green* aspect of a product, corporations can develop highly profitable products. Examples include V-Power by Shell, Rabo Green Bonds by the Rabobank and Conservation Grade Bananas by Chiquita.

The role of NGOs in ecosystem service payments & markets

Dr. Michael Jenkins: President, Forest Trends

Mr. Jenkins, president of Forest Trends, explained the role NGO's have to play in developing markets for ecosystem services. Three activities that he highlighted concerned:

1. *Setting the agenda.* For example estimating the market for ecosystem services by the Conservation Finance Alliance
2. *Setting the standard.* Interesting initiatives are the Forest Stewardship Council and more recently the Business and Biodiversity Offset Project of Forest Trends.
3. *Making markets intelligent by building capacity.* The Katoomba Group was mentioned as a promising initiative to promote PES, create new coalitions and leveling the playing field of information (e.g. by the Katoomba Group's Ecosystem Marketplace)

Perspectives from the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality

Dr.ir. Lilian van den Aarsen: Director East, Department of Regional Affairs of the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality

A key point that came forward in dr. ir. van den Aarsen's presentation is that the Dutch government *cannot* and *does not* want to be the only one responsible for the quality of the natural environment. The government is at present moving from "taking care of" towards playing a more facilitating role of "making possible that". The government policy document for nature, forest and landscape published in 2000 was named "*Nature for People, People for Nature*". It captures the notion that nature should meet the demands of the society and that natural areas should be of good quality and size, within easy reach of urban areas and accessible and usable for people. Strengthening public involvement plays a major role. It is seen as the challenge to shape the economic dimension of nature.

There are many initiatives (public private partnerships, self organized private deals etc.) that prove that the value of nature can be used in new financing mechanisms. By moving from only providing subsidies to providing co-finance, the government sees two major challenges:

1. Facilitate partnerships (new financing constructions, PPP, incorporate nature in cost benefit analysis)
2. Stimulate knowledge development and sharing (short links between policy, practice and science and translation of nature values into practise).

Perspectives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Dr. Hans Wessels: Department of Environment & Water of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Dr. Wessels presented how the Netherlands' Ministry of Foreign Affairs (including Development Cooperation) is supporting the integration of environmental values in its "core business" of poverty reduction. He discussed the role official development assistance (ODA) can play in creating markets for environmental services, and what it takes to trigger additional money and new players to the maintenance and restoration of ecosystems. Regarding Overseas Development Assistance dr. Wessels saw the following roles for his ministry and the Dutch government in general:

1. Facilitate partnerships between sellers and buyers
2. The Ministry of Foreign affairs will not act as a buyer itself, but can take account of transaction costs,
3. The ministry will increasingly look at *additionality* (new money) and *conditionality* (new rules).

Dr. Wessels ended his presentation by stressing that we need to move beyond talking about PES towards really getting it implemented in practice. A new project, supported by the Ministry, looks specifically at the business case for different PES sites of WWF, CARE and the IIED.

Session 3: Break-out groups & panel discussion

In the breakout groups, participants discussed a theme of their interest, where they could choose from one of the following topics:

- Group 1*: Investing in Nature and Nature Compensation
- Group 2: How to get ecosystem values included in actual economic decisions?
- Group 3: New money for contract-based development assistance
- Group 4: the European Biodiversity Investment Fund

- Group 5*: How to involve the private sector and consumers in financial mechanisms?
- Group 6: How to generate public support for ecosystem valuation?

* Break-out group 1 was merged with break-out group 5.

Each breakout group looked at: (1) main bottlenecks; (2) opportunities; and (3) actions points. The findings of the breakout groups were plenary presented and discussed. The results of the breakout groups and subsequent plenary discussion have been synthesized in the group reports. The main highlights of these reports are summarized below.

Break-out group 2: How to get ecosystem values included in actual economic decisions?

In this break-out group the participants of the symposium discussed the main opportunities on how to get ecosystems values included in actual decision making. Two crucial factors in the discussion were the availability of (inter)national guidelines and of authorized values. Bottlenecks, opportunities and possible actions were the main focus during this meeting.

The following action points were addressed:

- Universities can offer practical guidelines and share knowledge
- NGO's can contribute to improve legislation
- Governments have to work on a global level and design concrete legislation/mechanisms
- Private companies can make use of market "green labeled" products
- Cooperation among all actors is essential in order to benefit from each other expertise (i.e. networking)

Break-out group 3: New money for contract-based development assistance

The aim of this group was to discuss what it would take to attract new money for more business-like international cooperation – i.e. money not already available as Official Development Assistance (ODA). The discussion was hence on how to trigger additional money, not how to repack existing ODA money. The brainstorm session focussed on how payments for environmental services can be included.

Major bottlenecks identified included the lack of a regulatory framework, too little experiences with, and too high expectations from the private sector and high transaction costs; as opportunities were mentioned: increased corporate interest and consumer consciousness and willingness to pay and the possibilities that are offered by international obligations.

The group identified the following actions, which need to be followed up on:

1. Creation of a favourable investment framework: prices, security and regulatory framework,
2. Build on and breed successful partnerships, with buyers in particular,
3. Raise awareness on dependencies and opportunities of society on environmental services,
4. Incorporate more commercial thinking using aid money more to trigger responsible private investment; ODA to evolve gradually from not only a money transfer from rich to poor countries towards a payment for ecosystems goods and services based on contracts or deals on an equal footing.

Break-out group 4: the European Biodiversity Investment Fund

This group discussed Biodiversity Investment Funds, highlighting a number of recent developments in the field such as the creation of a European Taskforce for Banking, Business and Biodiversity. The aim of this taskforce was to generate market-based mechanisms for biodiversity financing. There is an investment market for biodiversity programmes and projects. Identifying bankable biodiversity projects is now amongst the main challenges.

The group identified the following bottlenecks: (a) The biodiversity marketplace is not clearly visible and operational, (b) traditional/separate mindsets of especially bankers and conservationists, (c) lack of information and awareness and (d) perceived lack of feasibility of the investment market. There are, however, also opportunities, the most important one being that the momentum in Europe is present. Another opportunity is the upcoming phenomenon of learning partnerships where different stakeholders work together. Besides, investing in nature has spin off; it creates jobs, it is good for the reputation of companies, and it creates a feeling of well-being for consumers.

Action points include:

1. Establishment of a good practice database
2. Creative think-tank (learning and capacity building)
3. Develop sound investment strategies, at all levels, but in particular at the entrepreneurs level
4. Create governmental incentives, appropriate institutional setting and networks.

Break-out group 1&5*: How to involve the private sector and consumers in financial mechanisms?

The discussion in the group concentrated more on the bottlenecks due to time constraints. The benefits for the private sector to get engaged into financial mechanisms that incorporate environmental (or social) concerns are insufficiently obvious for these stakeholders. There is resistance to pay for previously free ecosystem services and there is strong resistance to price increases. Maintaining or improving positions in competitive markets are important and short term interests are dominant over the longer term. However, one of the bottlenecks, identified, is the lack of awareness and information. This problem has not been sufficiently acknowledged yet by the private sector.

Opportunities and possible actions have been identified as well. The Public-Private Partnership concept is important in this respect where new markets and investment possibilities can be combined with creating a positive Corporate Social Responsibility image of the private sector (partners). NGOs may bring these partners together. Society demands more transparency with regard to resource use and labelling schemes may provide the required information on efficiency. By capturing demand of ecosystem services the private sector will be interested to get involved into investments in biodiversity (like the Merck's case in Costa Rica). Most of all, sharing and improving communication and information flows to create awareness on constraints but certainly also on opportunities is vital. Improved environmental marketing and the development of clear private sector investment opportunities combined with a favourable enabling environment (regulations, tax, compensation payments, etc) should be taken up seriously.

Break-out group 6: How to generate public support for ecosystem valuation?

It became clear that the participants thought that the most important bottlenecks concerning improving public support were the lack of information, lack of exchange of information and lack of a (interdisciplinary) knowledge synthesis. Also cultural aspects were seen as very important specifically, the difference in perceptions and the 'language' barrier (e.g. each sector has its own 'language'/terminology, which is not always understood by other sectors). The fact that people like nature, that people are interested in their environment, *and* the fact that people like money and other personal benefits can be seen as great opportunities in creating public support for Ecosystem Valuation. This can result in a willingness to cooperate by sharing information and investing in sustainability. The most important actions to undertake according to this group are the development and maintenance of a knowledge base (KB). Knowledge Base related capacity building for scenario learning was seen as a good supporting action.

4. Synthesis of main findings

The organisation committee identified the following main bottlenecks, opportunities and key issues to follow up on, based on the symposium discussions, the results of the break-out groups and the issues and actions points raised by the participants prior to the symposium:

Main bottlenecks:

- *Communication* differences between the various actors. Different types of actors (e.g. bankers and conservationists) use different languages and have different mind sets.
- Lack of a *regulatory framework*, at national (Netherlands, other developed countries, developing countries) and international levels. (Lack of) property rights play an important role in developing countries.
- *Market failure*: the biodiversity marketplace is not clearly visible and operational. Imperfect markets; nature is a common good.
- The *complexity* of payment for environmental services, causing *high transaction costs* and a perceived lack of feasibility of the investment market.
- High *risk*; environmental values are unclear; lack of experience and too high expectations.
- Lack of *appropriate information*. Lack of a central information point, lack of consumer connection to the global environment ("what is the problem? why me?")

- Lack of *willingness to pay*.

Opportunities:

- There is a certain *momentum in society* and awareness is increasing within the private sector.
- *People like nature and people like money*. Valuation and financing are a combination of both and can lead to payments for environmental services (willingness to pay).
- *Learning partnerships* are promising: combining bank and public investment for biodiversity, working together in programs and projects and mobilisation of NGOs and private companies.
- Ecosystem valuation and financing can create *new markets* and market *incentives* for investment. Investment in nature has spin-off; it creates jobs; it is good for the reputation of companies (brand management) and; it creates the feeling of well-being for consumers.

Key issues for follow up:

- An **investment regulatory framework by governments** implies to work on:
 - The *enabling environment*: pricing policies, tax, incentives, security and regulatory framework and international (European) agreements (e.g. WTO).
 - Lower *transaction costs*.
 - Foster institutional (inter-sectoral) *change processes* by information flows and feed back mechanisms; include all government agencies (not only nature).
 - Design and implement new *mechanisms* (and taking the risks) and pilot experiences. Scientific accuracy versus pragmatism; quick and dirty versus correct.
 - Include environmental services in *National/Regional Accounting*; from Development Aid to Payments for Environmental Services (PES).
- **Develop sound investment strategies**, at all levels, but particularly at the entrepreneur's level.
 - Definition of *conditions for successful financing*; fair division of costs and benefits in the production chain.
 - *Reconcile* economic expert *views* with stakeholder views.
 - More transparent *labelling and certification schemes*.
 - Better *environmental marketing*, developing clear private sector investment opportunities (e.g. Merck and biodiversity in Costa Rica); Local payment for global values.
- **Sharing and improving communication and information**
 - *Practical guidelines* and shared knowledge (universities); good presentation to decision makers; common understanding of procedures/protocols to integrate valuation in cost/benefit analysis.
 - Promote creative thinking. *Raise awareness* on dependencies and opportunities.
 - A data base of ideas, examples of successful investments, a "*good practice database*": Insight in the real profits (long-term and short-term) also in terms of quality of life. Capacity building – based on lessons learned from the knowledge base.
 - *Network building* for e.g. the creation of platforms for exchange of knowledge and communication.
- Build and breed **successful partnerships** with buyers in particular.
 - Provide *technical assistance to stakeholders* involved in biodiversity investment.
 - Breed on *successful cases* (of voluntary partnerships) and advertise these to potential partners (knowledge sharing).
 - *Identification of the main beneficiaries and providers* of the environmental goods and services.

5. Presentation of Platform and Action Plan NV&F

Dr. Dolf de Groot closed the symposium by presenting the NV&F action plan (see box 1 below). He also officially launched the Dutch Platform of the NV&F network. This platform is part of the international NV&F network (www.naturevaluation.org), which has the following objectives:

1. Development of Guidelines and Instruments
2. Stimulate Case Studies & Collaboration
3. Provide Databases & Certification
4. Clearing House Function
5. Support National Platforms

All participants were encouraged to have a look at the website and to contribute literature, websites, project opportunities etc. to this network so as to increase its use and value to people working in this field (business, science, policy).

Box I: Action Points	
What:	Who:
➤ Better information, case studies, guidelines, certification, knowledge agenda	➤ Universities, research organizations and government support
➤ Internalise externalities, investing in nature pays (no free lunch)	➤ Business community & government (conditions)
➤ Financial incentives (taxes, subsidies) and regulation (Socio-economic Cost-Benefit Analysis)	➤ Government
➤ Awareness/education & communication	➤ Non-governmental organizations and media
➤ Collaboration & information exchange & access	➤ Network

6. Closure

The chairman ended the symposium by thanking everybody for their active participation and concluded that it was a very fruitful day that will hopefully have a follow-up next year and invited everyone to the reception area for a drink.