

## **Ecological Economics after the Millennium Assessment**

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### **Abstract**

*The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment has changed the way that we think about the interaction between social and ecological systems. By connecting ecological functioning, ecosystem processes, ecosystem services and the production of marketed goods and services it has identified ecological change as an economic problem. It has also drawn attention to a new dimension of the environmental sustainability of economic development. The Hartwick rule for the reinvestment of Hotelling rents on exhaustible and renewable natural resources provides one basis for evaluating the sustainability of extraction policies. The MA's focus on the regulating services provides another. The regulating services offered by ecosystems limit the variability of ecosystem functioning, processes and the production of marketed goods and services. They help to conserve the resilience and hence sustainability of ecosystems. This offers both a challenge and an opportunity to ecological economists. The challenge is to understand the linkages between such services and the capacity of economic systems to function over a range of environmental conditions. The opportunity stems from the fact that the field is uniquely placed to meet this challenge.*