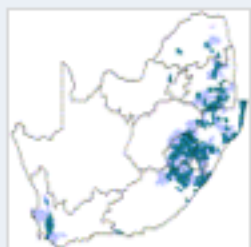


Abstract

Keywords

1. Introduction
2. Water as a key commodity for PES in South Africa
 - 2.1. Water scarcity



- 2.2. Threats to water supply
 - [Table 1](#)
- 2.3. The restoration process
3. The Working for Water Programme
 - 3.1. Background
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 - 3.2. Mandatory payments by water users
 - 3.3. Voluntary payments by water users
4. Characteristics of the WfW programme
5. Achievement of programme objectives
6. Expanding the Working for Water

- Non-printable

Abstract

A payments for ecosystem services (PES) system came about in South Africa with the establishment of the government-funded Working for Water (WfW) programme that clears mountain catchments and riparian zones of invasive alien plants to restore natural fire regimes, the productive potential of land, biodiversity, and hydrological functioning. The success of the programme is largely attributed to it being mainly funded as a poverty-relief initiative, although water users also contribute through their water fees. Nevertheless, as the hydrological benefits have become apparent, water utilities and municipalities have begun to contract WfW to restore catchments that affect their water supplies. This emerging PES system differs from others in that the service providers are previously unemployed individuals that tender for contracts to restore public or private lands, rather than the landowners themselves. The model has since expanded into other types of ecosystem restoration and these have the potential to merge into a general programme of ecosystem service provision within a broader public works programme. There is a strong case for concentrating on the most valuable services provided by ecosystems, such as water supply, carbon sequestration, and fire protection, and using these as 'umbrella services' to achieve a range of conservation goals. The future prospects for expansion of PES for hydrological services are further strengthened by the legal requirement that Catchment Management Agencies be established. These authorities will have an incentive to purchase hydrological services through organisations such as WfW so as to be able to supply more water to their users.

Keywords

Working for Water; Payment mechanisms; Ecosystem services; Water supply; Poverty relief

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