

Stakeholders' perspectives on the practical relevance of the ecosystem services concept in Austrian river landscape management



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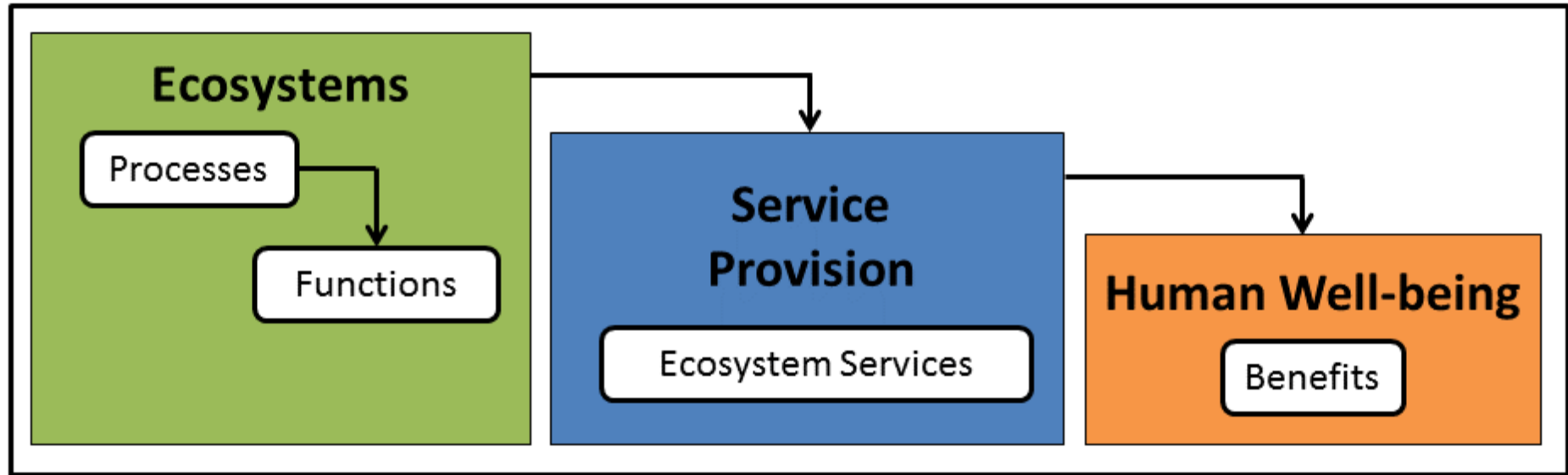
Overview

- Background
- Research questions
- Methods
- Results
- Conclusion & Recommendations



BACKGROUND

The Ecosystem Services Concept



Böck et al. in review, based on Haines-Young and Potschin 2010 and Van Oudenhoven et al. 2012

- academic/scientific construct
- in literature already addressed as mainstream
- limited engagement in its practical application

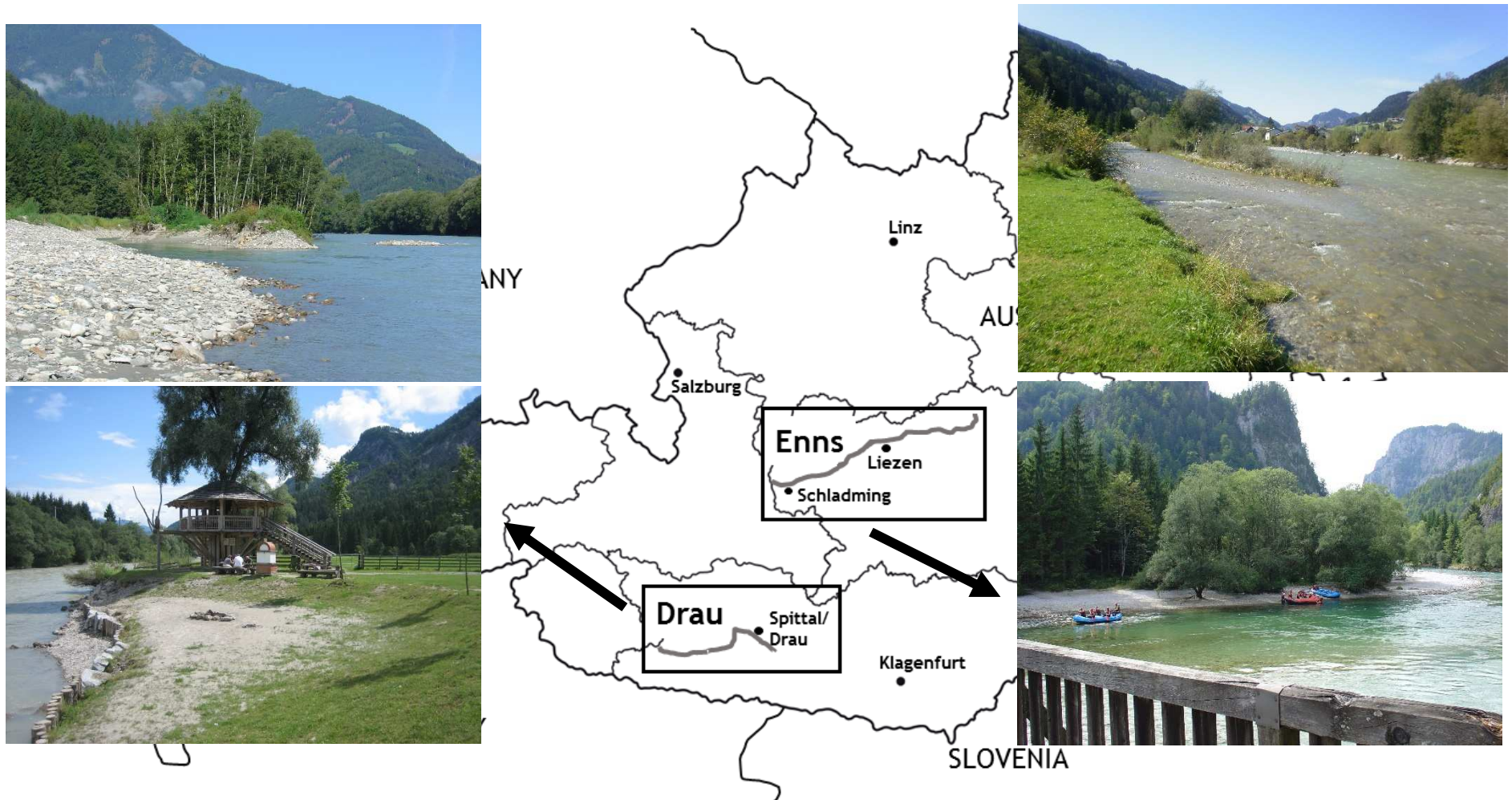
RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Research questions

- Do different actors in river landscape management know the ES concept and are they aware of its various possible applications?
- Do they apply the concept in their working environment?
- Do they see it as practicable?
- Which concerns are there regarding the concept's implementation?

METHODS

Case selection

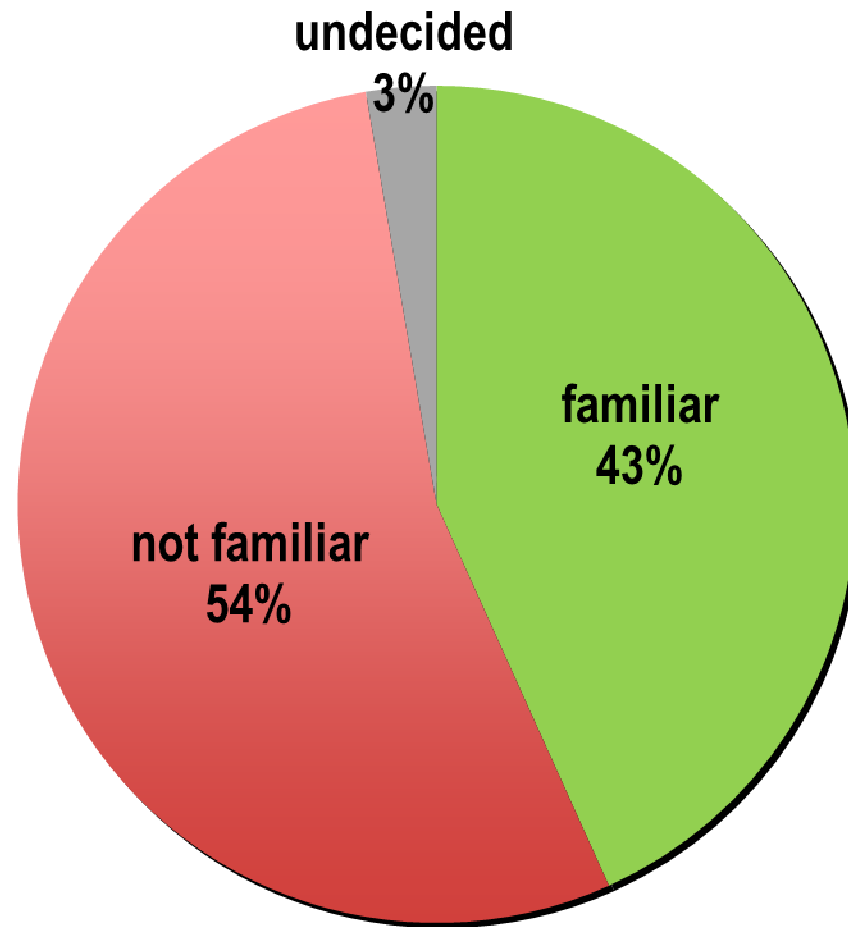


Methods

- 110 qualitative interviews to determine...
 - (1) ...stakeholders' knowledge regarding the ES concept
 - (2) ...its role in practice
 - (3) ...stakeholders' awareness of its possible practical applications
 - (4) ...its perceived practicability
- Content analysis in Atlas.ti
- For visualization purposes certain aspects of the interviews were analyzed quantitatively

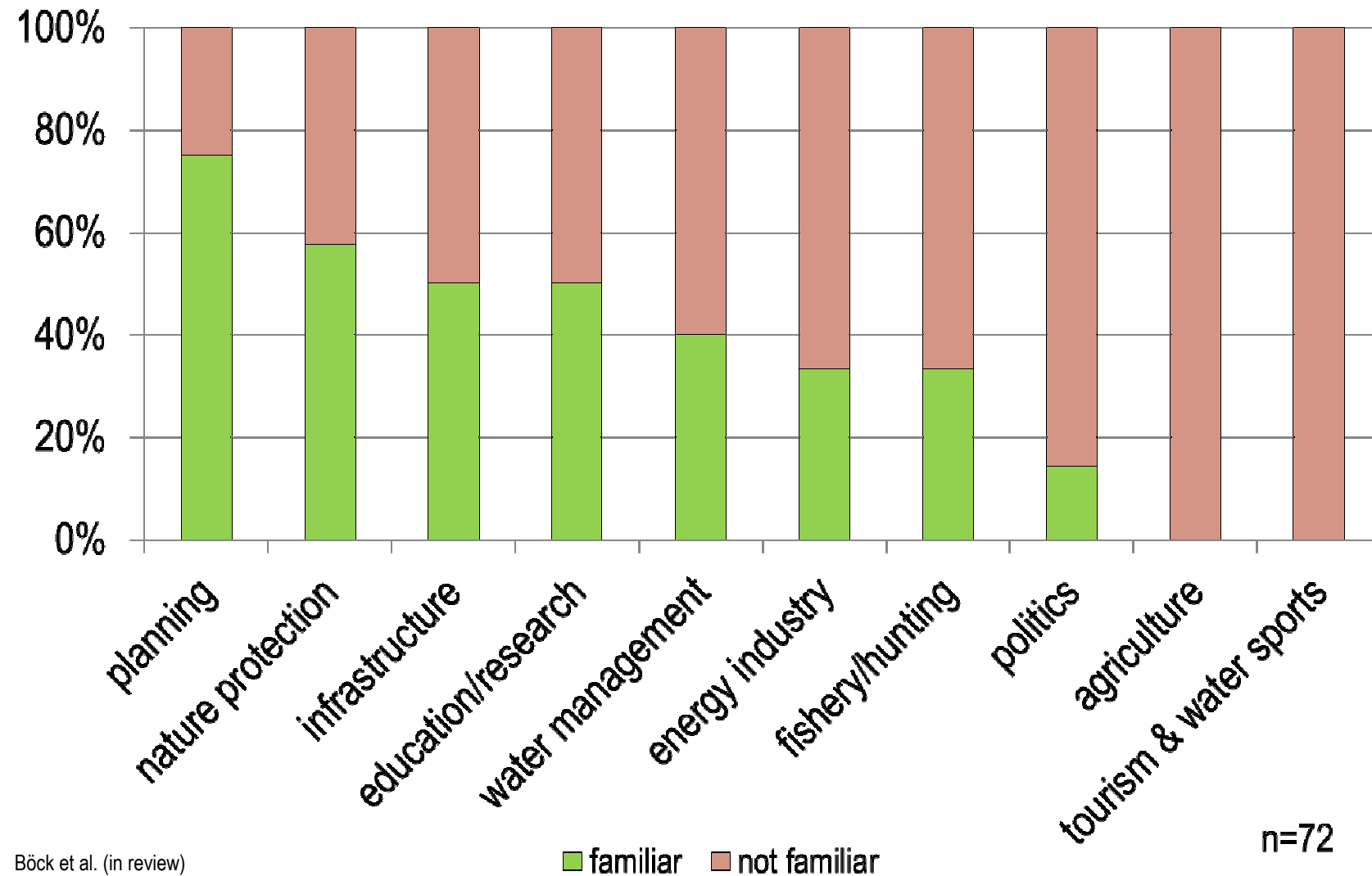
RESULTS

Knowledge and awareness regarding the ES concept



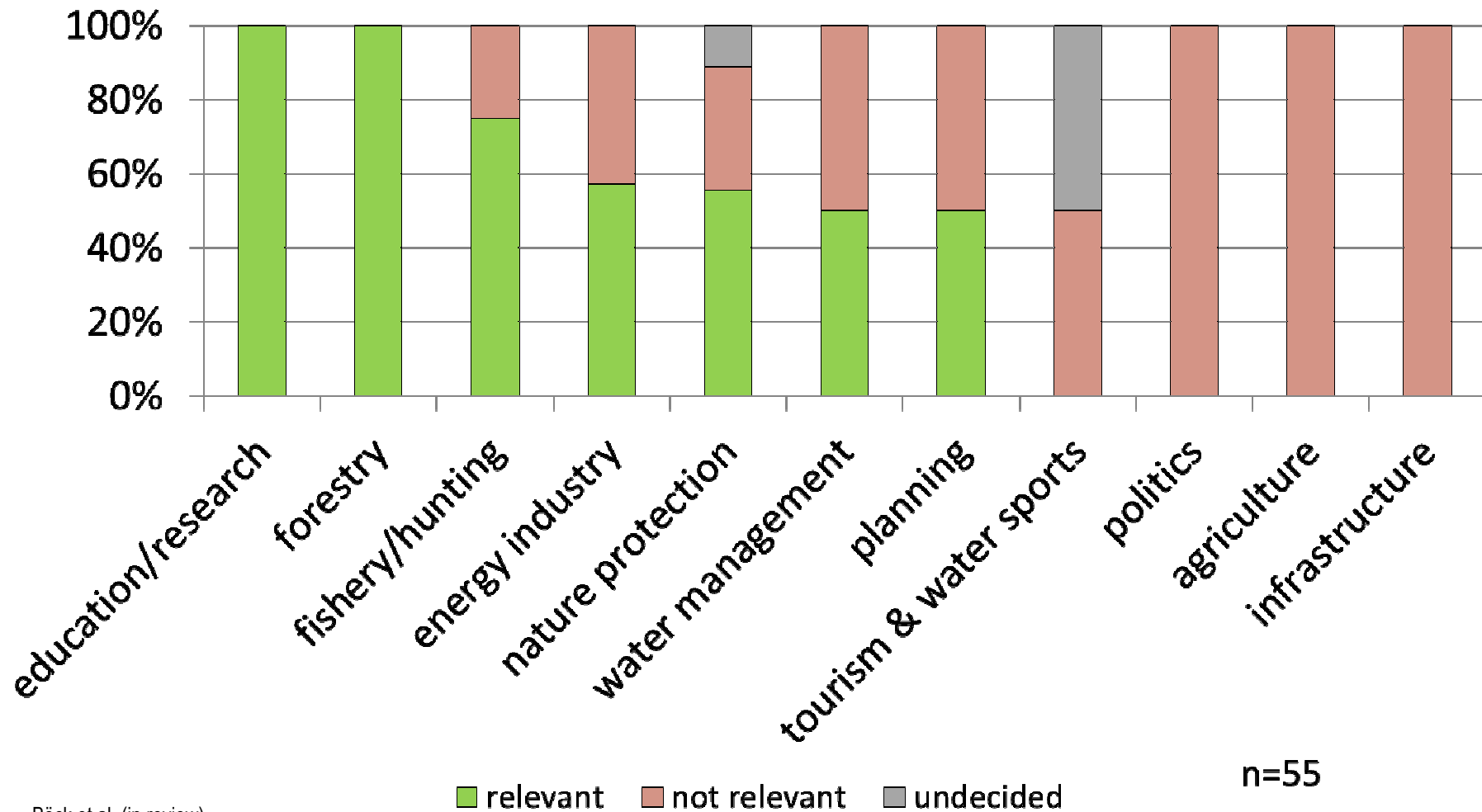
n=74

Knowledge and awareness regarding the ES concept



Böck et al. (in review)

Relevance of the ES concept in the interviewees' working environments



Böck et al. (in review)

Perceived possible practical applications

The ES concept as support for planning and decision making

- For approaching politicians or the economy
- For raising acceptance in society

The ES concept as communication & education tool

- Fostering understanding for the connectedness of society with nature
- Increasing societal interest for protecting nature

Concerns regarding the implementation of the ES concept

- Questioned comprehensibility
- Questioned objectivity
- Assessment bias
- Redundancies with other concepts
- Lack of time and resources in administration

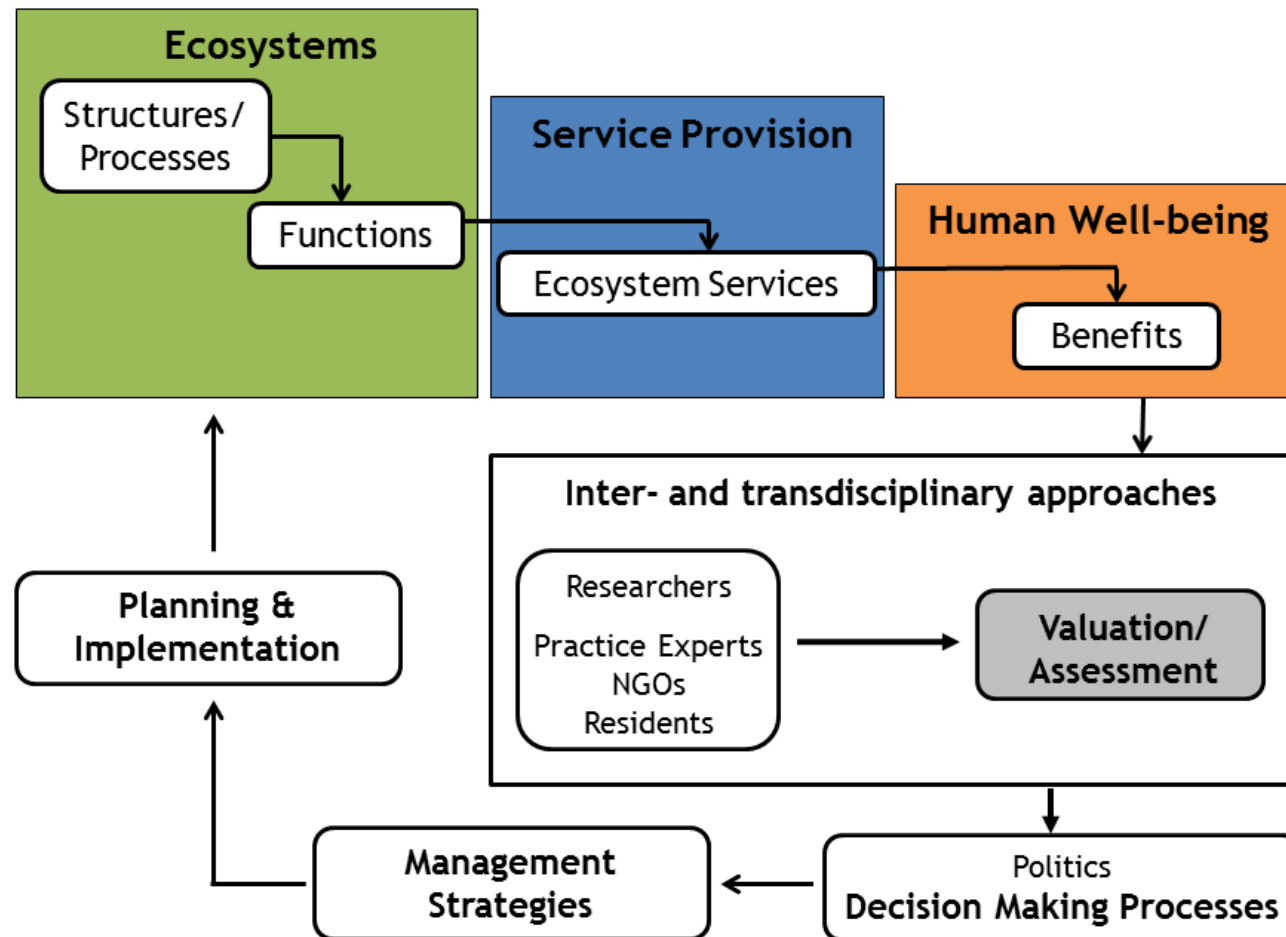
CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

- study aimed at identifying the practical relevance of the ES concept
- revealed that the concept has not yet arrived in the working environment of the practice actors in Austrian river landscape management
 - limited awareness of the ES concept
 - concerns with regard to a practical application

Recommendations (1)

- **awareness raising** among the relevant stakeholder groups
- expansion of **inter- and transdisciplinary approaches**



Recommendations (2)

- **providing guidance** for the practical application of the ES concept
 - Clear steps to be followed in integrating the ES concept into policies and decision making processes
 - Building on experiences gained in the implementation of other concepts
- Developing **alternative** valuation **methods**
 - Including non-monetary values
 - Mixture of different approaches



Thank you for your attention!



Photos: HG (S. Chiani, J. Kneiff)

References

- Böck, K., S. Muhar, A. Muhar, R. Polt. in review. The Ecosystem Services Concept: Gaps between science and practice in river landscape management
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