



Millennium Ecosystem Assessment

www.millenniumassessment.org | Strengthening Capacity to Manage Ecosystems Sustainably for Human Well-Being

The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment Overview

The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA) is an international work program designed to meet the needs of decision makers and the public for scientific information concerning the consequences of ecosystem change for human well-being and options for responding to those changes. The MA was launched by U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan in June 2001 and was completed in March 2005. It will help to meet assessment needs of the Convention on Biological Diversity, Convention to Combat Desertification, the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, and the Convention on Migratory Species, as well as needs of other users in the private sector and civil society. If the MA proves to be useful to its stakeholders, it is anticipated that such integrated assessments will be repeated every 5–10 years and that ecosystem assessments will be regularly conducted at national or sub-national scales.

The MA focuses on ecosystem services (the benefits people obtain from ecosystems), how changes in ecosystem services have affected human well-being, how ecosystem changes may affect people in future decades, and response options that might be adopted at local, national, or global scales to improve ecosystem management and thereby contribute to human well-being and poverty alleviation. The specific issues being addressed by the assessment have been defined through consultation with the MA users.

The MA synthesizes information from the scientific literature, datasets, and scientific models, and includes knowledge held by the private sector, practitioners, local communities and indigenous peoples. All of the MA findings undergo rigorous peer review. More than 1,300 authors from 95 countries have been involved in four expert working groups preparing the global assessment, and hundreds more continue to undertake more than 20 sub-global assessments. The findings are contained in the fifteen reports listed in the box above.

The MA is an instrument to identify priorities for action. It provides tools for planning and management and foresight concerning the consequences of decisions affecting ecosystems. It helps identify response options to achieve human development and sustainability goals, and has helped build individual and institutional capacity to undertake integrated ecosystem assessments and to act on their findings.

Products of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment

Title	Date published
1. Ecosystems and Human Well-being: A Framework for Assessment	September 2003
3. Living Beyond Our Means: Natural Assets and Human Well-being (Statement from the MA Board of Directors)	May 9, 2005
4. Synthesis Report (general synthesis)	May 9, 2005
5. The Biodiversity Synthesis	May 9, 2005
6. The Desertification Synthesis	June 17, 2005
7. The Business and Industry Synthesis	June 17, 2005
8. The Wetlands Synthesis	June 17, 2005
9. The Health Synthesis	June 17, 2005
10. Our Human Planet (summary volume)	September, 2005
11. Current State and Trends	September 2005
12. Scenarios	September 2005
13. Policy Responses	September 2005
14. Multiscale Assessments	September 2005
15. Bridging Scales and Epistemologies: Linking Local Knowledge and Global Science in Multiscale Assessments	Early 2006

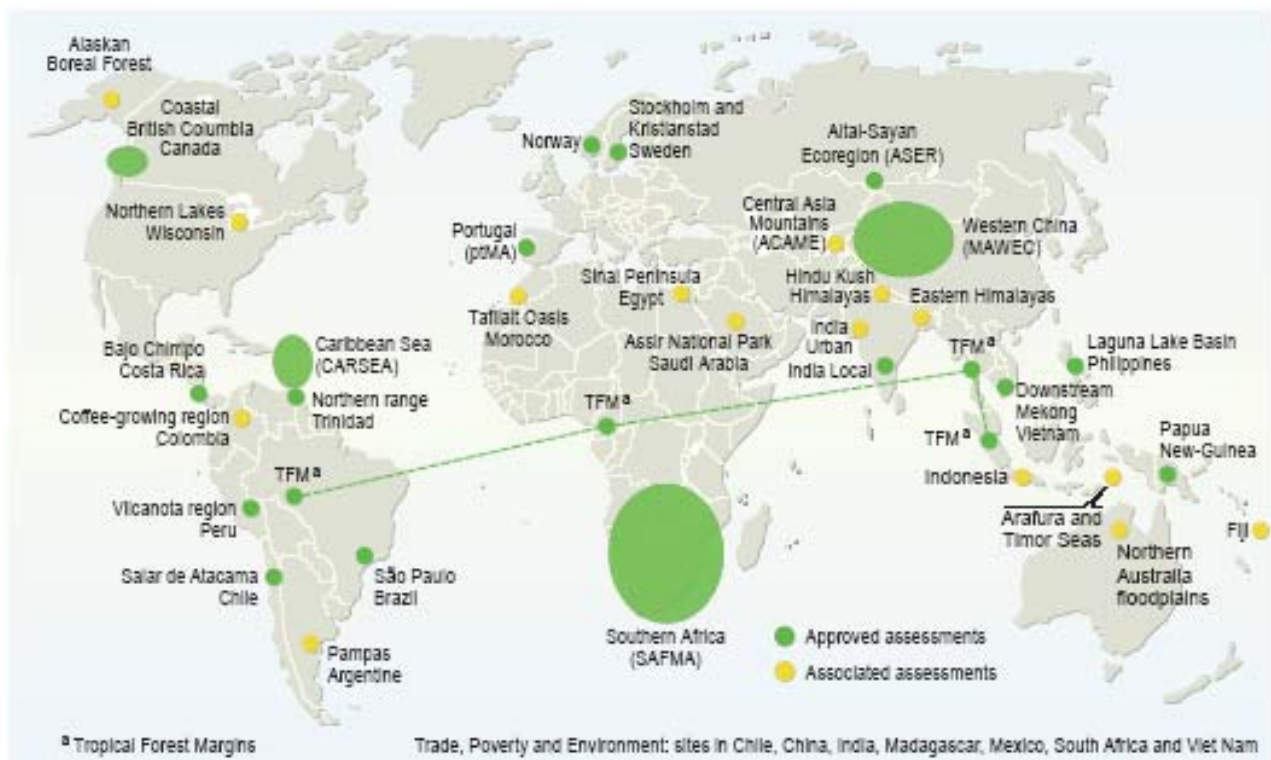


Assessment process

The MA was governed by a Board comprised of representatives of international conventions, UN agencies, scientific organizations and leaders from the private sector, civil society, and indigenous organizations. A 15-member Assessment Panel and a Review board, composed of leading social and natural scientists oversaw the technical work of the assessment supported by a secretariat with offices in Europe, North America, Asia, and Africa and coordinated by the United Nations Environment Programme.

The MA was conducted a “multiscale” assessment, consisting of interlinked assessments undertaken at local, watershed, national, regional and global scales. The MA sub-global assessments were designed to meet needs of decision-makers at the scale at which they are undertaken, strengthen the global findings with on-the-ground reality, and strengthen the local findings with global perspectives, data, and models. There are 18 MA-approved sub-global assessments, and an additional fifteen with an associated status.

Sub-Global Assessments



Budget and Sponsors

The four-year MA budget was approximately \$17 million, with more than \$7 million of additional support through in-kind contributions. Major financial support for the MA is being provided by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the United Nations Foundation, The David and Lucile Packard Foundation, The World Bank, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Government of Norway, and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. A complete list of donors is available on the MA Website.

www.MAweb.org