



SEGUNDO EJERCICIO DE LA FASE DE OPOSICIÓN DEL PROCESO SELECTIVO PARA INGRESO EN EL CUERPO DE INGENIEROS DE MONTES DE LA HACIENDA PÚBLICA

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1. *Why the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment Is Important for Business and Industry*

Businesses interact with ecosystems and ecosystem services in two important ways: They use services and they contribute to ecosystem change. The MA discovered that two thirds of the ecosystem services it examined are being degraded or used unsustainably. This finding has serious ramifications for the world at large and will affect business and industry in three principal ways.

1. If current trends continue, ecosystem services that are freely available today will cease to be available or become more costly in the near future. Once internalized by primary industries, additional costs that result will be passed downstream to secondary and tertiary industries and will transform the operating environment of all businesses.
2. Loss of ecosystem services will also affect the framework conditions within which businesses operate, influencing customer preferences, stockholder expectations, regulatory regimes, governmental policies, employee well-being, and the availability of finance and insurance.
3. New business opportunities will emerge as demand grows for more efficient or different ways to use ecosystem services for mitigating impacts or to track or trade services.

Business cannot assume that there will be ample warning of a change in the availability of key services or that a company's past responses to changes will be successful in the future. Ecosystems often change in abrupt, unpredictable ways. Most ecosystems are being altered by human actions in unprecedented ways. Consequently, it is difficult to predict the future state of an ecosystem or the availability of an ecosystem service. In addition, these uncertainties mean that past successes in ecosystem management may not apply to current or future conditions.

The MA provides a benchmark for public policy, public awareness, and the private sector; it will influence investments, the regulatory climate, and public opinion at national and international levels over the next 10 years. Using the findings of the MA can help ensure that a company's ventures are informed by the best available scientific information. Factoring that information into plans will allow businesses to position themselves as innovators and market leaders. Failure to keep pace with these changes risks the loss of competitive advantage, brand reputation, and the license to operate, innovate, and grow.

Even though Earth's natural capital is being eroded at a rapid rate, there is still time to lessen the impact and preserve options by building on a growing number of examples of good practice. The MA is designed to help decision-makers factor information about changes in ecosystems into their strategic planning. It provides a framework for the integrated management of multiple, interacting ecosystem services. The MA is the most



comprehensive analysis to date of the many and complex ways in which people depend on and affect the natural environment.

2. *The Bottom Line*

People everywhere rely on ecosystems and the services they provide. So do businesses. Demand for these services is increasing. However, many of the world's ecosystems are in serious decline, and the continuing supply of critical ecosystem services is now in jeopardy.

The loss or degradation of ecosystem services will have impacts on human well-being. It will also profoundly affect businesses. Higher operating costs or reduced operating flexibility should be expected due to diminished or degraded resources (such as fresh water) or increased regulation.

Every threat creates opportunity. Innovation and technology to minimize the damage to ecosystems and to mitigate impacts already occurring are creating significant new business opportunities for those who are aware and prepared.

The impacts of ecosystem degradation will be felt over both the short term—the next 5 years—and the longer term—the next 50 years. But many businesses will experience an array of direct and indirect impacts immediately because ecosystem degradation is changing public policy, consumer preferences, supplier relationships, stockholder expectations, and competitor strategies, all of which vary by country and region of the world. Many governments, NGOs, and leading companies are already taking action.

Regardless of its focus, a business will be more competitive if it bases decisions about strategic direction, product offerings, production, transportation, and marketing on the best available information about the current and projected condition of ecosystems and ecosystem services. The MA provides a framework for understanding ecosystem services and provides scientifically credible information about the important linkages between those services and human well-being.

As demands for the services provided by ecosystems grow and the ability of these systems to meet these demands is eroded, increasingly difficult challenges must be confronted. For example:

- How do we meet the growing demand for food (projected to increase by 70–80% in 50 years) without further harming the environment or the integrity of the food supply chain?
- Given the unevenly distributed supply of fresh water, how do we meet agricultural, industrial, and consumptive needs around the world?
- Given the expected increase in demands for energy, what are the most efficient and effective strategies to produce energy while also minimizing impacts to air quality and climate?
- How do we balance conservation of biodiversity with opportunities for economic development associated with alteration or conversion of habitats?
- How do we balance increasing demand for seafood and expanding opportunities for aquaculture, while promoting the health of fresh and coastal waters and restoring depleted wild fisheries?