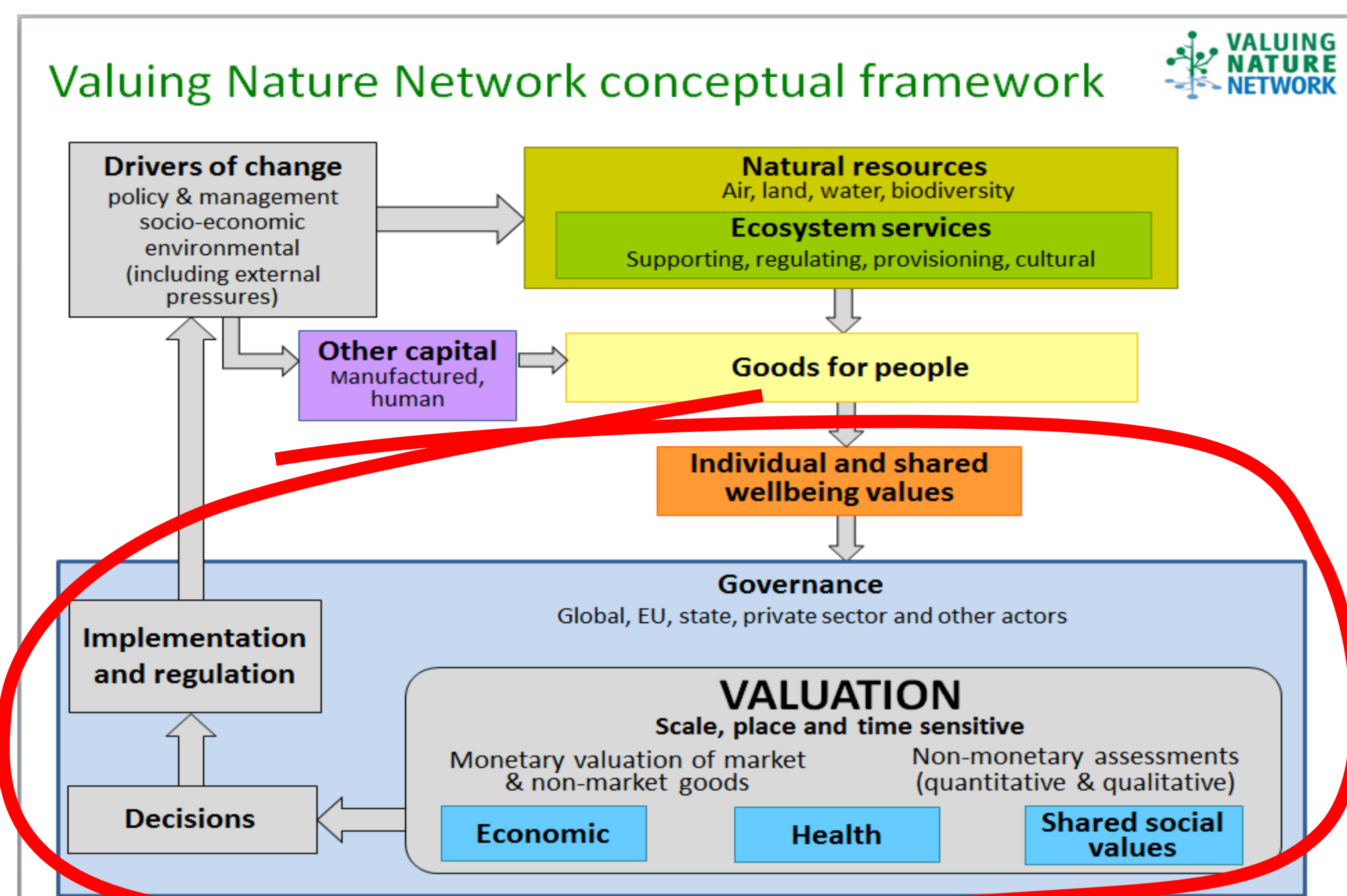


Bridging the Gap between Values and Decisions

Aim

To investigate how ecosystem service values obtained from natural, social and economic sciences can best be integrated into governance to improve decision-making and implementation.



Where BRIDGE fits into the VNN framework

Research

- Systematic integration of the value of nature into decision-making remains poor, as the growing supply of valuation evidence has seemingly not matched the demands of decision-makers.
- Current research suggests that this is in part due to (i) lack of effective dialogue between researchers and decision-makers on evidence needs and (ii) shortcomings in valuation to account for the complexities of social-ecological systems.
- The BRIDGE project aimed to address these challenges through a review of current understanding of these issues and then propose a future research agenda to fill knowledge gaps.
- To achieve this, BRIDGE ran a series of five workshops, which were attended by over 75 natural and social scientists and decision-makers.



Findings

Workshops identified 5 key themes that limit the uptake of value evidence by decision-makers and thus require further research:

1. **Broadening values:** Value evidence should go beyond economic criteria, and include shared social values and non-monetary well-being values.
2. **Adapting valuation:** We need to develop novel ways in which to capture people's values that better relate to the way in which stakeholders and the public wish to express them, and that are seen as legitimate by decision-makers.
3. **Dynamics of people's values:** We need to better understand and measure how people's beliefs, knowledge and perceptions of risk and uncertainty influence their valuations, thus generating data useful for decision-making.
4. **Making evidence accessible:** Value evidence generated by researchers is often not in a format that is useful to decision-makers. Research is required to identify what types and formats of evidence are needed in different decision-making venues.
5. **Institutional obstacles:** There is a need to explore how decision-making processes could be made more transparent across the range of decision-making venues and contexts, and explore how policy guidance might be modified to better integrate value evidence into decision-making.

Conclusions

- The BRIDGE project has been successful in terms of pulling together an interdisciplinary team of academics and decision-makers to explore how ecosystem knowledge and values can best be integrated into decision making.
- Our results will also be of significance to a wide range of decision-makers including policymakers and regulators, non-governmental organisations and businesses.
- In particular, our findings will help these decision-makers attain a better understanding of how valuation data is gathered, its strengths and limitations, and how it might be best used to aid and improve decision-making.

Next steps

- BRIDGE has identified a 'Top 10' list of research questions which, if pursued, will help to better integrate environmental values into decision-making.
- A series of nine research papers will be published throughout 2013-2014.