

Berlengas Biosphere Reserve - Plan for the assessment of ecosystem services and functions

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The project Berlengas Biosphere Reserve - Plan for the Assessment of Ecosystem Services and Functions arises from the need to identify and assess ecosystem services, promoting sustainable uses of the services in the Reserve. The high degradation rate currently observed in the natural systems, thus reducing the level and quality of ecosystem services, is reflected in a negative effect on environmental quality, human well-being and in some economic activities. Thus, it becomes inevitable to promote the need to convey the importance of these services to society. It is also essential to contribute to the development of innovative and environmentally sustainable practices which will maintain the functioning of the local ecosystem and the sustainability of the services. Thus, the main goals of this project are i) to identify and analyse the impacts and dependencies on ecosystem services in the Reserve; ii) to analyse the trends of the priority services, iii) to identify the risks and opportunities associated with these services; iv) to evaluate their value and ultimately iv) to disseminate the results improving conservation and management. Based on the results to be obtained through the evaluation and maintenance of these services it is expected an improvement on the environment in the region and the development of efficient mechanisms for the management of resources. Started in February 2014, over the past 3 months much research has already been conducted, with emphasis for the identification of services and opportunities in the Reserve. Ecosystem services in Berlengas can range from simply providing essential goods or support (e.g. fish) to cultural services (e.g. field trips, diving). Work is also being done to develop, define and optimize the methods to assess ecosystems services trends and values.

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