

A person in dark clothing is walking up a steep, rocky mountain slope covered in patches of snow. The background shows more of the mountain range under a hazy sky.

“You just do what is right”:
Land manager views and use
of land use decision-making
tools

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About me

PhD candidate, UoE, School of Geosciences

Research areas: land use change, benefits/trade-offs, decision-making, communities, nature-based solutions

Head of Natural Capital at Savills

Trustee at Scotland: The Big Picture

Climate, nature, equitable land use

Fell runner and walker



Approaching storm or blue skies?



Research context: Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere



The carbon and biodiversity decision-making process

Values

Guiding principles - shape information, trust, decision-making
(e.g. IPBES, 2022; Pascual et al, 2023)

Intrinsic values of nature - 'bio/ecocentric' (e.g. O'Connor and Kenter, 2019)

Responsibility/custodianship

Temporal, spatial, social stimuli

Socially-led formation and acceptance of values

Instrumental values are insufficient (Kenter, 2018)



How are land use change decisions *currently* made?

Social capital

Peer learning (e.g. Eastwood et al, 2022)

Knowledge exchange in trusted social networks (e.g. King et al, 2019)

Greater acceptance/uptake

High barriers to entry (Waylen et al, 2015)

But risk of environmental governance rescaling (e.g. Sharma et al, 2023)



The carbon and biodiversity decision-making process

Limited engagement with tools

Lack of trust, inaccurate - 'blunt instruments' (e.g. Thomas et al, 2019)

Instrumental vs. intrinsic values

Focus on product not process (Mabon et al, 2022; Peskett et al, 2023)

Industry vs. infrastructure (e.g. Ainscough et al, 2019)

Dependence on quantification; who has control? (E.g. Wickberg et al, 2024)

Form of rescaling

Access, willingness to engage

Winners and losers?



What does this mean for natural capital decision-making tools?

Centralise values

Incorporate of peer learning with strong bonding social capital

Focus on infrastructure and process, above industry and product

Next steps: open access, community engagement, common data

