RUBICODE is a pan-European project that is reviewing and developing concepts of dynamic ecosystems and the services they provide. These services include the provision of food, fibre and fuel, regulation of air and water quality, flood protection, erosion control, pollination, pest control, recreation, ecotourism and many others. Those components of biodiversity which provide specific services to society are being defined and evaluated in order to increase our understanding of their value and, consequently, of the cost of losing them. This will give decision-makers a more rational base for halting biodiversity loss by shaping adequate conservation policies.

Nature is fundamentally dynamic, as are the pressures of human activities on biodiversity, yet most conservation strategies focus on protected areas and are still developed around a static view of nature. RUBICODE is developing innovative concepts for conservation strategies that concentrate on managing dynamic ecosystems for maintaining their capacity to undergo disturbance, while retaining their functions, services and control mechanisms (ecological resilience).

The project will include the following elements:

- Development and testing of concepts of dynamic ecosystems and the services they provide for both terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems.
- Socio-economic and environmental drivers of biodiversity change.
- A framework for linking ecosystem service provision to biological traits.
- Indicators that provide rapid assessment methods for monitoring ecosystem and habitat ecological quality.
- Strategies for conserving and managing biodiversity and the services it provides that take account of drivers of biodiversity change.
- Identification of current gaps in knowledge and future research needs.
RUBICODE is a €2m Coordination Action Project funded by the EU. Coordination Action projects aim to achieve improved integration and coordination of European research. Thus, RUBICODE focuses on reviews of relevant concepts, methods and results from previous and ongoing projects, the literature, databases, experts and policy documents. Five workshops will also be organised throughout the lifetime of RUBICODE to evaluate the concepts and methods developed within the project and identify gaps in knowledge:

**Workshop 1:** Assessing and monitoring ecosystems – concepts, policies and indicators; 27 February to 1 March 2007; Germany.

**Workshop 2:** Linking threats to biodiversity with action in the policy-making process; 15-16 May 2007; Belgium.

**Workshop 3:** Ecosystem services and drivers of biodiversity change; 25-29 February 2008; Sweden.

**Workshop 4:** Habitat management and conservation policy - strategies for a new dynamic approach focussed on ecosystem service provision; May 2008.

**Workshop 5:** Future research needs for developing innovative conservation strategies for terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems; September/October 2008.

RUBICODE is coordinated by the Environmental Change Institute at the University of Oxford and involves 22 partners:

- Environmental Change Institute, University of Oxford, UK
- ALTERRA Wageningen UR, The Netherlands
- Median SCP, Spain
- Prospex bvba, Belgium
- University of Lund, Sweden
- University of Aegean, Greece
- University of Edinburgh, UK
- Slovak Academy of Sciences, Institute for Forecasting, Slovakia
- University of Duisburg-Essen, Germany
- Universidade de Coimbra, Portugal
- Rothamsted Research, UK
- Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, France
- University of Salzburg, Austria
- University of Tartu, Estonia
- Institute of Environmental and Landscape Management, St. Istvan University, Hungary
- NERC Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, UK
- Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research - UFZ
- Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Sweden
- University of Stellenbosch, South Africa
- Instituto Multidisciplinario de Biologia Vegetal, Universidad Nacional de Córdoba, Argentina
- Charles Sturt University, Australia
- Lincoln University, New Zealand

Further information can be obtained from the project’s website ([www.rubicode.net](http://www.rubicode.net)) or by contacting the Project Coordinator: Dr. Paula Harrison ([paharriso@aol.com](mailto:paharriso@aol.com)).