



atlas

UNDERSTANDING DEEP ATLANTIC ECOSYSTEMS



Results of Q study on attitudes to valuation

ATLAS GA, 9 March 2020

Rob Tinch, Iodine sprl

www.eu-atlas.org



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 678760 (ATLAS). This output reflects only the author's view and the European Union cannot be held responsible for any use that may be made of the information contained therein.



Q study

- Based on review of wide range of published sources
 - As a review and to inform analysis
 - As the source of the 'concourse' of typical statements/views (several hundred)
- Combined and focused to a list of 34 statements
 - Simplified for clarity and to avoid ambiguity
 - Focus on key topics
 - Focus on more contentious issues
- Carried out via QSortWare site
 - Wide range of invitations via contacts, mail groups, etc
 - 61 completed sorts



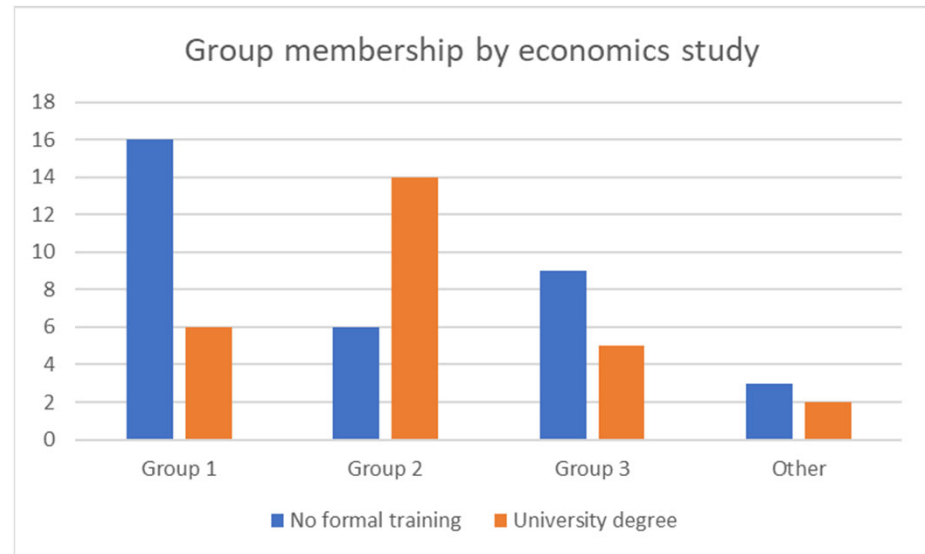
Headline results

- 1 group highly sceptical of ecosystem services language and use of economic appraisal and valuation tools
- 2 (arguably 3) groups broadly favourable towards the methods, but for different reasons
- No comment on proportions of people in groups because Q does not use representative samples



Relationship to economics background

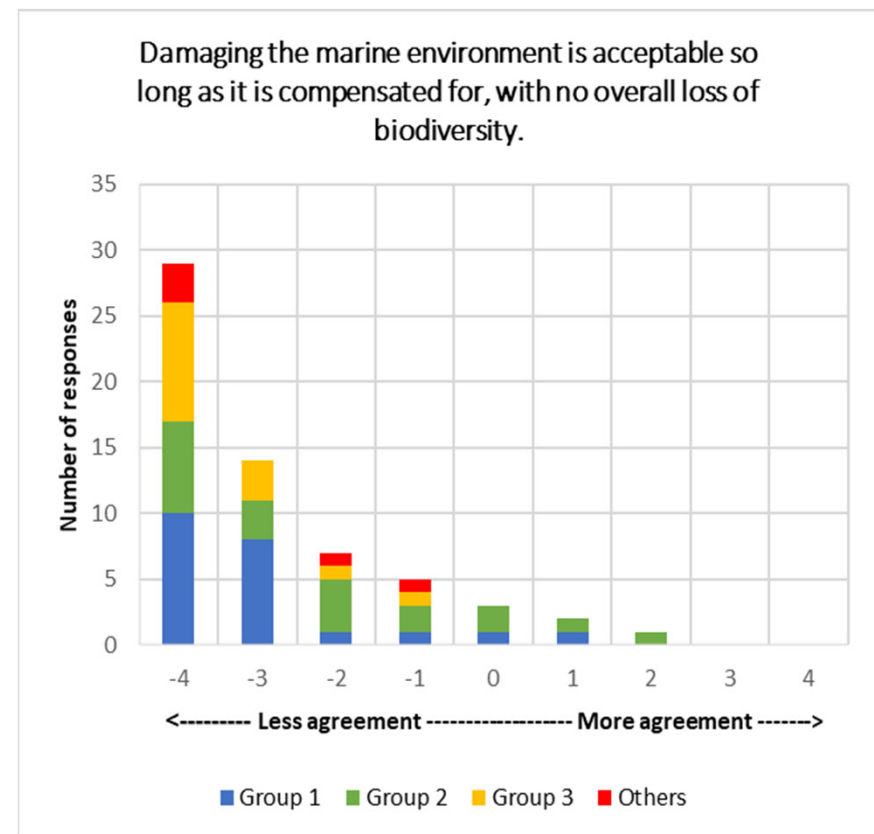
- Groups partly related to economics study...
- But some trained economists in the “anti” (group 1)
- And some “pro” valuation (groups 2 & 3) with no economics background.





Areas of consensus

- Damage to marine environment not acceptable, even if compensated for.
- Biodiversity should be protected for its intrinsic value.
- Individual preferences are relevant to social decisions
- Decisions should not be left solely to experts.





Areas of generalised uncertainty

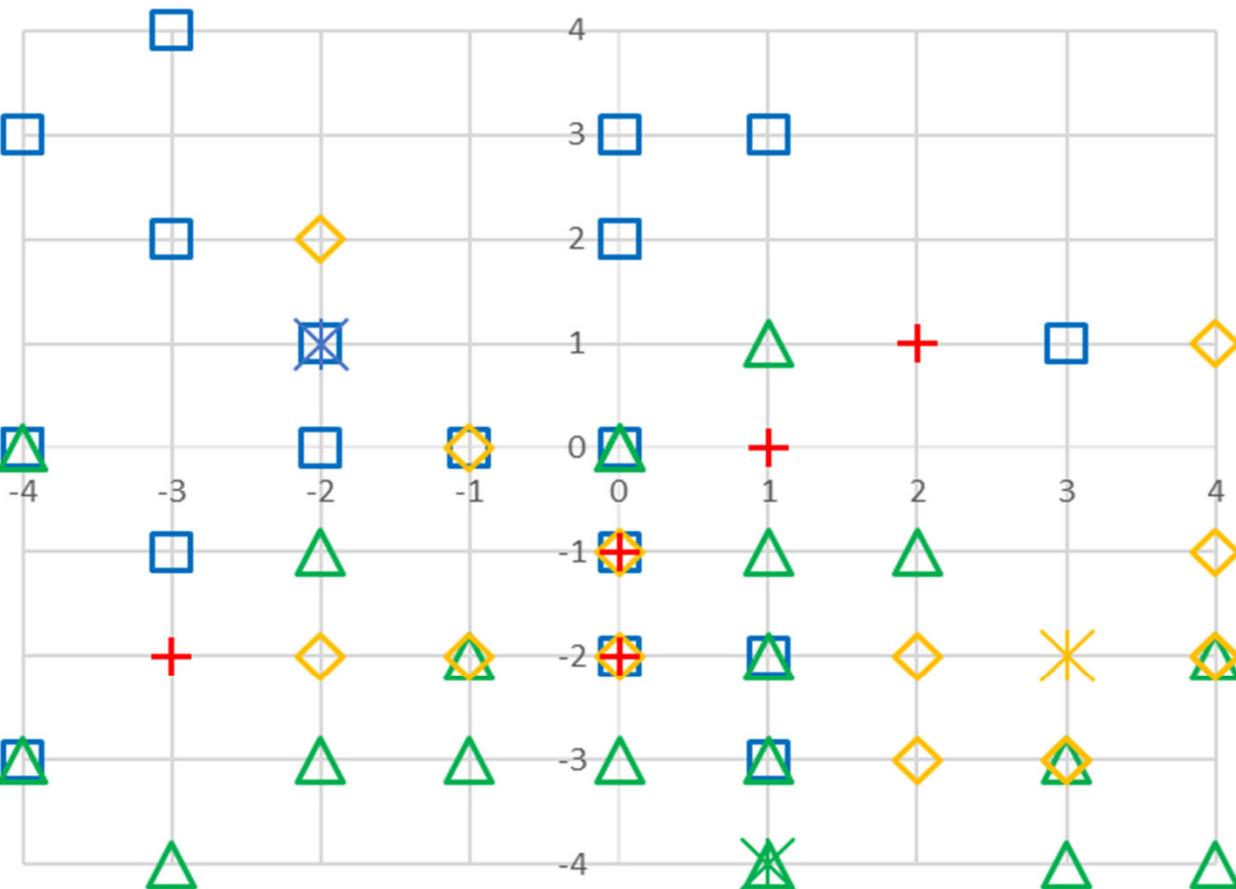
- Issues with a broad range of views across all groups
- Regarding the information decision-makers use:
 - whether they consider emotional, cultural and spiritual values
 - whether they actually use valuation evidence.
- Regarding the state of scientific knowledge:
 - whether we know enough about deep-sea ecosystems, and their supporting and regulatory services, to make sound judgements about sustainable management.



Areas of disagreement: Fundamental principles

- Should beneficiaries pay for ecosystem services?
- Is it immoral to put a price on natural entities, or to trade them off with other sources of value?
- Can complex human-environment relationships be expressed via simple indicators?
- Can human values be expressed in comparable monetary terms?

Many environmental entities belong to a moral category beyond monetary relations: to offer a price is an act of bribery, to accept a price is an act of betrayal.



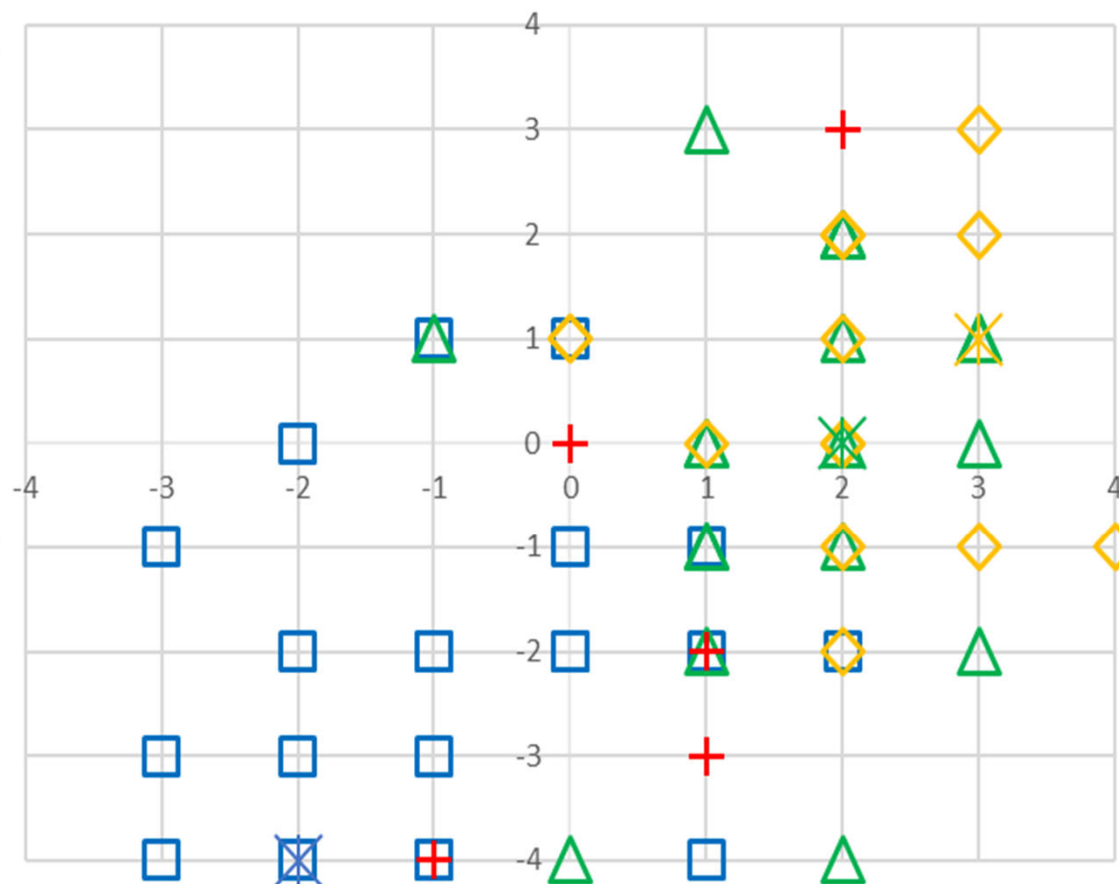
■ Group 1
 ▲ Group 2
 ◆ Group 3
 + Others
 ✕ Typical 1
 ✕ Typical 2
 ✕ Typical 3



Areas of disagreement: Practical impacts

- Are market systems broadly beneficial for humans?
- Will valuation encourage regressive policies?
- Will ecosystem services thinking promote understanding and learning?
- Will valuation “crowd out” other motives for conservation?
- Does lack of valuation evidence lead to ignoring environmental problems?
- Will valuing ecosystem services support conservation?

Failure to use valuation is a key cause of the observed degradation of ecosystems and the loss of biodiversity.



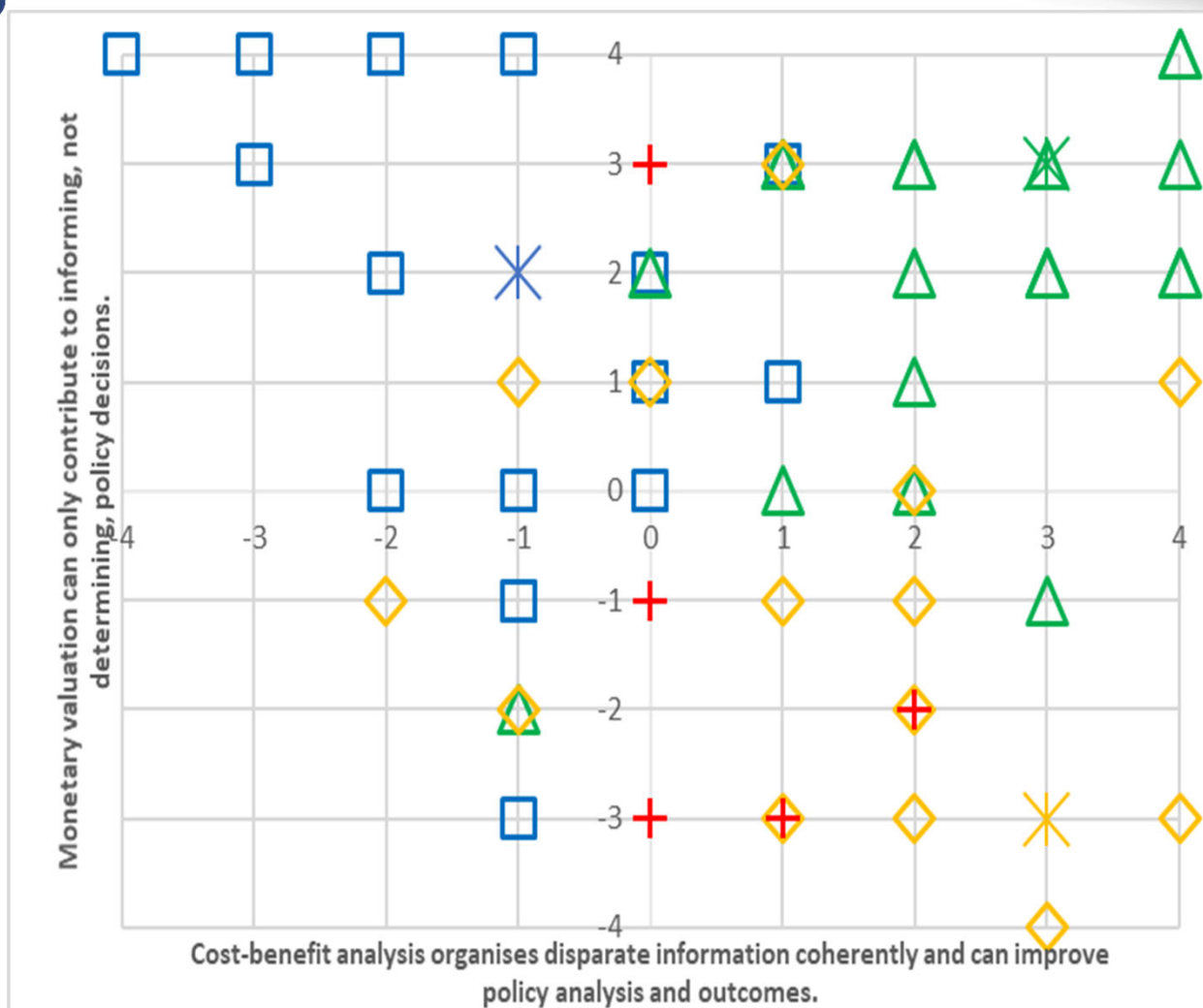
Estimating the total economic value of the goods and services provided by oceans would support their conservation.

■ Group 1
 ▲ Group 2
 ◆ Group 3
 + Others
 ✱ Typical 1
 ✱ Typical 2
 ✱ Typical 3



Areas of disagreement: Role of valuation

- Is CBA is a useful tool for organising complex information?
- Can decisions be based solely/primarily on CBA?
- Is it an unfortunate reality that valuation offers one of the best hopes of saving biodiversity?
- Is it very naïve to think valuation evidence alone could improve conservation decisions?



■ Group 1
 ▲ Group 2
 ◆ Group 3
 + Others
 ✕ Typical 1
 ✕ Typical 2
 ✕ Typical 3



Areas for constructive dialogue

- Build trust from the consensus areas
 - Disagreements about effectiveness of tools for the goal
 - Broad agreement on what the goal should be
- The more extreme perspectives are “straw men”
 - Groups 2 and even 3 do not take the “valuation can cover all values, appraisal can replace deliberation” view that Group 1 hates
 - Group 1 is not outright rejecting ideas of ecosystem service thinking or valuation, but expressing concerns about appropriate uses that are partly recognised by 2 & 3 too.



Improving dialogue

- Better communicating the ways in which economists recognise the limits of the tools
 - Stress importance of information-structuring role
 - Not possible to express all costs/benefits in monetary terms
 - Valuation does not replace precaution, “critical natural capital”, other inputs to deliberation.
- More research/evidence regarding the actual impacts of valuation and appraisal
- Transdisciplinary and collaborative research projects

Thank You!



Presenter details:
robtinch@gmail.com

Project Contact Details:

Coordination: Professor Murray Roberts
murray.roberts@ed.ac.uk

Project Management: Dr. Katherine Simpson
katherine.simpson@ed.ac.uk

Communication & Press: Dr. Claudia Junge
claudia@aquatt.ie

Follow us:  [@eu_atlas](https://twitter.com/eu_atlas)
 [@EuATLAS](https://www.facebook.com/EuATLAS)
www.eu-atlas.org

Template developed by AquaTT



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 678760 (ATLAS). This output reflects only the author's view and the European Union cannot be held responsible for any use that may be made of the information contained therein.

Image credit: BGS