SESSION DESCRIPTION

ID: T14e

Learning from implemented Nature-based Solutions: safeguarding ecosystem services with nature- and people- positive outcomes

Hosts:

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Abstract:

Nature-based Solutions (NbS) are increasingly implemented as strategies to address climate change, biodiversity loss, circularity challenges, and socio-economic pressures, while sustaining critical ecosystem services, and supporting a nature- and people-positive transition. Yet their effectiveness depends on the processes related to real-world conditions, including how they are designed, implemented, monitored, and maintained, especially in the long term, as well as on how co-benefits and trade-offs, both ecological, social, and economic, are assessed. Understanding successes and shortcomings in practice is essential for strengthening the implementation of NbS and ensuring its wider uptake.

This session invites contributions on NbS implementation across diverse ecosystems, with particular interest in lessons transferable to small and medium-sized islands (SMIs), highlighting how such practices can deliver nature-positive outcomes and people-positive benefits for sustainable, transformative changes; contributors are encouraged to indicate links to Ecosystem Services Partnership (ESP) Europe thematic streams (notably Streams 3, 1, and 5). We welcome case studies, comparative analyses, and methodological insights that:

- Evaluate cost-effectiveness and benefit aspects of NbS concerning their viability and adoption ;
- Investigate co-benefits and mutual trade-offs in the context of defining NbS taxonomy values;
- Identify barriers and enabling conditions and strategies for implementation in SMIs;
- Present monitoring frameworks based also on participatory approaches and innovative governance systems.

The session is organized in connection with the COST Action CA21158 SMILES on Enhancing Small-Medium Islands Resilience by Securing the Sustainability of Ecosystem Services (https://cost-smiles.eu/), which applies participatory methods, such as the Delphi process, to consolidate insights on NbS implementation in islands. By learning from implemented NbS in islands and beyond, the session aims to build a stronger evidence base and provide actionable recommendations that reinforce nature-positive ecosystems and people-positive outcomes from the perspective of sustainable, transformative scenarios.

Goals and objectives of the session:

This session will provide a platform for sharing insights and advancing knowledge into experiences from implemented NbS, with particular attention to how effective, feasible, and socially accepted they are in practice, and their effect on ecosystem services. The focus is on understanding how NbS can deliver both nature-positive and people-positive outcomes, especially in SMIs, while also drawing lessons from other regions. By connecting these insights to the ESP thematic streams (notably Streams 1, 3, and 5) and to the COST Action SMILES, the session seeks to consolidate evidence and advance practical knowledge for the wider NbS community.

The session will also serve as an interactive step in the third round of the SMILES Delphi process, engaging participants in refining consensus and validating earlier findings.

Planned output / Deliverables:

- A policy brief summarizing the session's findings, with recommendations for policymakers, planners, and practitioners on enabling conditions, barriers, and co-benefits and ecosystem services of NbS.
- A guidance note for practitioners, highlighting strategies for the design, monitoring, and governance of NbS, related to ecosystem services, relevant to both island and non-island applications.
- A conference post for social media to share the key outcomes through SMILES channels, extending outreach beyond the session.
- The finalization of the SMILES Delphi paper, integrating the third-round results and insights generated during the session (with acknowledgment for the ESP conference).

Session format:

We propose a 120-minute session that combines presentations and interactive discussions.

- Introduction (5 minutes) – Welcome, objectives, and link to the COST Action SMILES.
- Invited presentations (2 × 15 minutes + 5 minutes discussion) – 40 minutes.
- Contributed presentations from accepted abstracts (2–3 × 15 minutes + 5 minutes discussion) – 40–60 minutes.
- Interactive exercise (30 minutes) – A participatory activity linked to the third round of the SMILES Delphi process. Using live polling and moderated discussion, participants will refine and prioritise the most critical co-benefits, barriers, and enabling conditions for NbS implementation.
- Closing (5 minutes) – Synthesis of key take-home messages, highlighting how the session outcomes will feed into a policy brief and a cross-case synthesis paper.

Voluntary contributions accepted:

Yes, I allow any abstract to be submitted to my session for review

Related to ESP Working Group:

TWG 14 – Application of ES in Planning & Management