

## BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

This Book of Abstracts provides a comprehensive overview of the session content and is structured into three main sections:

- I. Session Description** – an introduction to each session, including its objectives and expected outputs
- II. Session Program** – a detailed schedule for each session, including speakers and timing
- III. List of Abstracts** – a complete compilation of all accepted abstracts

### I. SESSION DESCRIPTION

ID: X11

#### From Commitment to Impact: How Standards Strengthen Nature Restoration and Unlock Ecosystem Service Finance

Hosts:

	Name	Organisation	E-mail
Host (s):	Ondrej Tarabus	FSC	<a href="mailto:o.tarabus@fsc.org">o.tarabus@fsc.org</a>

**Abstract:**

Nature restoration and conservation initiatives are increasingly recognized as essential for addressing climate change, biodiversity loss, and the provision of ecosystem services. However, many promising projects struggle to secure sufficient financing and long-term support. A key challenge is the lack of trusted mechanisms to demonstrate that restoration activities deliver real, measurable, and lasting impacts.

This session will explore how certification and verification standards can enhance the credibility of restoration efforts, help projects demonstrate tangible outcomes, and create stronger connections to funding opportunities. By providing recognized frameworks for monitoring, reporting, and verification, standards help bridge the gap between local implementation and global investment, giving funders and stakeholders confidence in the environmental and social integrity of restoration actions.

The session will showcase real-world use cases where standards have been applied in forest and other ecosystem restoration, demonstrating how they:

- Strengthened community and stakeholder trust by documenting cultural and ecological values,
- Enhanced monitoring of biodiversity, carbon, and water-related benefits,
- Enabled projects to access new sources of finance through ecosystem service claims and credits.

Through a combination of short case presentations and interactive group discussions, participants will reflect on the role of certification and verification in scaling up nature-based solutions. Together, we will identify how standards can support Europe's ambitions for nature-positive outcomes, foster innovation in restoration practice, and unlock private and public sector investment in ecosystem services.

By the end of the session, participants will have gained concrete insights into how standards can be applied to make restoration more credible, fundable, and impactful, helping to ensure that restoration commitments translate into long-term conservation success.

**Goals and objectives of the session:**

- Demonstrate how certification and verification standards can strengthen the credibility and effectiveness of nature restoration and conservation initiatives.
- Showcase real-world use cases where standards have been applied to forest and peatland restoration, highlighting measurable ecological and social outcomes.

- Explore mechanisms through which verified ecosystem service impacts can attract and unlock diverse funding sources for restoration activities.
- Foster dialogue among practitioners, researchers, and funders on how standards can bridge the gap between on-the-ground implementation and global financing.
- Identify actionable pathways for integrating standards into broader restoration strategies to scale up nature-positive outcomes across Europe and beyond.

#### Planned output / Deliverables:

- Session Summary Report capturing key discussion points, lessons from case studies, and recommendations for applying standards in restoration and conservation projects.
- Practical Insights Document outlining how certification and verification can enhance credibility, monitoring, and financing of ecosystem service initiatives.
- Collection of Case Examples (shared via slides or short briefs) demonstrating real-world application of standards in forest and peatland restoration.
- Recommendations for Practitioners and Funders on integrating certification into project design to improve access to ecosystem service finance.
- Networking & Collaboration Opportunities – fostering connections among standard-setting bodies, project developers, researchers, and funding organizations for future joint initiatives.

#### Session format:

The format would be 2 or 3 short presentations, followed with panel discussion and questions from the audience.

#### Related to ESP Working Group:

Other

## II. SESSION PROGRAM

**Room:** Lounge

**Date of session:** Wednesday 20, May 2026

**Time of session:** 16:45 – 18:15

#### Timetable speakers:

Time	First name	Surname	Organization	Title of presentation
16:45 – 17:10	Ondrej	Tarabus	FSC International	FSC Verified Impact: Unlocking ecosystem service finance
17:10 – 17:30	Michal	Rezek	Preferred by Nature	Ecosystem Restoration Standard and Verification examples: how do we verify best restoration practices
17:30 – 17:40	En	Xie	Jishou University	Biodiversity and Urban Tourism Economic Resilience: Evidence from Birdwatching Data in China
17:40 – 17:50	Oksana	Pelyukh	Ukrainian National Forestry University, Ukraine	Economic value of recreational ecosystem services of mountain forests of the Ukrainian Carpathians
17:50 – 18:00	Katerian	Macova	Charles University Environment Centre	Integrating Ecosystem Services into Czech Conservation Decision-Making: Newest Czech ES Assessment Methodology
18:00 – 18:15	Pannel discussion			

### III. LIST OF ABSTRACTS

*The first author is the presenting author unless indicated otherwise*

#### 1. Biodiversity and Urban Tourism Economic Resilience: Evidence from Birdwatching Data in China

**First author:** Juan Su

**Other author(s):** En Xie

**Presenting author:** Xie En

**Affiliation:** Jishou University College of Tourism and Urban-Rural Planning

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Biodiversity constitutes a critical foundation for the sustainable development of the tourism sector. Drawing on birdwatching data from China, this study empirically examines the impact of biodiversity on urban tourism economic resilience. The findings indicate that higher levels of biodiversity significantly enhance the urban tourism economies resilience. Biodiversity strengthens tourism economies resilience by diversifying tourism product supply, fostering tourism-related innovation, and heightening ecological awareness, thereby improving cities' capacity to withstand shocks and to recover from adverse disturbances. Further heterogeneity analyses indicate that, in cities featuring national parks, both the enhancing effects of biodiversity and its spatial spillover impacts are substantially more pronounced.

**Keywords:** biodiversity, tourism economic resilience, tourism product diversification, tourism innovation capacity, ecological awareness

#### 2. Economic value of recreational ecosystem services of mountain forests of the Ukrainian Carpathians

**First author:** Oksana Pelyukh

**Other author(s):** Yaroslav Kyrylenko, Taras Parpan, Victoria Gudyma, Ihor Kozak

**Affiliation:** Ukrainian National Forestry University, Ukraine

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Forest ecosystems play a crucial role in providing ecosystem services, including recreation, biodiversity conservation, and climate regulation. A study conducted in the Bolekhiv municipality of the Ivano-Frankivsk region (Ukrainian Carpathians) surveyed 198 respondents from various socio-demographic groups to assess the popularity of forests for recreational purposes, public attitudes toward forest management, and willingness to support the development of recreational infrastructure. The results indicate that 98 % of respondents visited the forest in the past year, with 71 % holding higher education degrees and 60 % residing in urban areas. The most common activities include berry, mushroom, and plant gathering, as well as walking and picnicking. Half of the respondents use existing recreational infrastructure, with men doing so more frequently (63.4 %). The infrastructure received an average rating of 3.7 out of 5, while 59 % of respondents consider its improvement necessary. Regarding financial support for infrastructure development, 26.3 % of respondents are willing to make annual contributions, with an average amount of 359 UAH per year. At the same time, 43.4 % are unwilling to pay. Correlation and regression analysis identified education level, presence of children in the family, and frequency of forest visits as key factors influencing willingness to pay. These factors collectively explain 52 % of the variation in willingness to pay ( $R^2=0.52$ ), whereas variables such as gender, age, marital status, and place of residence were not statistically significant. The study results highlight a strong public interest in using forested areas and their potential engagement in forest management processes. The findings can be utilized to develop sustainable forest management strategies, including mechanisms for financial support of recreational infrastructure and increased public participation in decision-making.

**Keywords:** forest ecosystem services, recreational forest use, public participation in management, recreational infrastructure, sustainable development

### 3. Integrating Ecosystem Services into Czech Conservation Decision-Making: Newest Czech ES Assessment Methodology

**First author:** Katerina Macova

**Other author(s):** Jan Melichar, Milan Damohorsky, Hana Skopkova, Jakub Jehlicka, Bronislav Farkac, Tereza Snopkova, Jakub Kanicky, Adam Novak, Eva Horvathova, Zuzana Harmackova, Zuzana Kozakova

**Affiliation:** Charles University Environment Centre

**Contact:** katerina.macova@czp.cuni.cz

Integrating ecosystem services (ES) into conservation practice requires robust science and clear pathways into policy and administration. This paper presents the newest Czech methodological framework and web-based ES assessment tool as a case study of operationalising ES for policy use. The framework is based on a dynamic bioeconomic model with a universal core and modular ecosystem-specific applications (illustrated by a forest module), providing both biophysical indicators and aggregated monetary indices.

The methodology was designed to interface directly with existing legal and planning instruments, linking ES assessment with environmental law theory and practice. It analyses how ES assessment connects to key Czech decision-making processes: forest management planning, land-use regulation, EIA/SEA procedures, and new provisions in the 2025 Czech Forest Act (as per Act no. 250/2025 Coll.) that explicitly recognise ES and enable pilot payments for ecosystem services (PES). It also examines communication of ES in conservation practice, particularly in explaining Natura 2000 measures to landowners and tenants.

Findings show that Czech actors - mirroring international trends - emphasise monetary ES estimates, yet these can currently be used only as non-binding guidance, with limited enforceability, and only when authorities understand ES concepts and limits as ES results accompany rather than direct administrative discretion. In contrast, some biophysical ES indicators or proxies reflecting ecosystem processes and intermediate services are already routinely used in administrative procedures.

These findings relate to global conceptual debates: the shift toward final ES (e.g., SEEA ecosystem accounting), the rise of pluralistic value elements (e.g., relational values in IPBES), and persistent mismatches between scientific ES definitions and legal categories. The limits of current science, models, and data still shape where ES assessments can genuinely support conservation - from policy design to administrative decisions and communication with land users. In this context, our results contribute to the wider discussion on whether ES narratives broaden the space for conservation or risk narrowing it to primarily human-centred benefits.

**Keywords:** Ecosystem services assessment, Science-policy interface, Guidelines for evaluation, Environmental value concepts, Mainstreaming of ecosystem services