

SESSION DESCRIPTION

ID: X11

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

Hosts:

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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 presentation, followed with panel discussion and questions from the audience.

Voluntary contributions accepted:

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

Related to ESP Working Group:

Other