6th ESP Europe Conference

18-22 May 2026 | Prague, Czechia

SESSION DESCRIPTION

ID: X9

Advancing the effective integration of ecosystem functioning and services into marine spatial planning, conservation, and restoration

Hosts:

	Name	Organisation	E-mail
Host (s):	Francisco R. Barboza	Estonian Marine Institute, University of Tartu	francisco.barboza@ut.ee
Co-host(s):	Carolyn Faithfull	Institution of Aquatic Resources, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences	carolyn.faithfull@slu.se
	Anda Ruskule	Baltic Environmental Forum-Latvia	Anda.Ruskule@bef.lv
	Miguel Inácio	Environmental Management Research Laboratory, Mykolas Romeris University	miguel.inacio@mruni.eu
	Kristīna Veidemane	Baltic Environmental Forum-Latvia	Kristina.Veidemane@bef.lv
	Lena Bergström	Institution of Aquatic Resources, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences	lena.bergstrom@slu.se

Abstract:

Although the concepts of ecosystem functioning and services are increasingly recognized in global and European sustainability and environmental agendas, their effective integration into regional and national marine policies and decision-making processes remains limited and fragmented. Progress is hindered by diverse and often incompatible assessment approaches, as well as by persistent gaps and inconsistencies in data availability and quality. To overcome these barriers, there is a pressing need for harmonized approaches, supported by digital tools, models, and improved data sharing, that can translate ecosystem functioning and services into actionable guidance for marine planning, conservation, and restoration. This session will explore emerging approaches and practical examples that demonstrate how ecosystem functioning and services can inform marine policy, with a special focus on maritime spatial planning and the effective design and optimization of conservation and restoration measures. By bringing together the perspectives of decision-makers, practitioners, and researchers, the session welcomes contributions from Europe and beyond that showcase advances in operational approaches, digital tools and models, and data sharing and integration.

Goals and objectives of the session:

1. Synthesize emerging approaches and digital innovations (tools, models, and data-sharing practices) that support the integration of ecosystem functioning and services into marine policy and governance.
2. Demonstrate practical applications in maritime spatial planning, conservation, and restoration that use ecosystem functioning and services to guide the design, optimization, and implementation of measures.

3. Foster dialogue among decision-makers, practitioners, and researchers to exchange experiences, identify barriers and enablers, and co-develop pathways for the more effective incorporation of ecosystem functioning and services into marine policy and governance.

Planned output / Deliverables:

Perspective paper providing a comprehensive overview of operational and innovative approaches for integrating ecosystem functioning and services into marine policy and governance, illustrated through promising examples that demonstrate methodological pathways for planning and management.

Session format:

The session will last two and a half hours, beginning with a 10-minute introduction to the state-of-the-art. The main part of the session will consist of a series of presentations in a 10+5 format. The session will conclude with a 30-minute roundtable discussion, providing space to reflect on cross-cutting themes, explore synergies across initiatives, and identify next steps.

Voluntary contributions accepted:

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

Related to ESP Working Group:

Other