

# 4th ESP LAC 2023

## International conference

La Serena, Chile, 6–10 November

### Session Description

**ID:** T16

From Science to Practice: A pragmatic guide to verifying and financing positive impacts on ecosystem services

**Format:** Hybrid

#### Hosts

	Name	Organisation	E-mail
<b>Host</b>	Wesley Snell	Senior project manager at Etifor   Valuing Nature	wesley.snell@etifor.com
<b>Co-Hosts</b>	Maria Alejandra Lizcano Solano	Ecosystem Services Specialist at Etifor   Valuing Nature	maria.lizcano@etifor.com

#### Abstract

With the recent advent of public and private commitments to mitigate the climate crisis and reverse nature loss - including the Paris Climate Accords, the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, the Global Goals for Nature, and a surge in private nature-related risk and opportunity management - land managers must understand how to demonstrate their positive impacts on ecosystem services to a level of quality that satisfies investment criteria by public and private investors. In addition, given the recent scrutiny over carbon markets and other private investments in PES schemes, there is a manifest need for high-integrity impact claims on ecosystem services projects. While biophysical measurement and economic valuation methods for ecosystem services have proliferated in recent years, there remain significant gaps in translating these advances into tangible impacts on the ground. Increasing demand combined with increasing complexity runs the risk of excluding many land managers - particularly smallholders - from expanding markets.

Given this context, it is crucial to strike a balance between the scientific rigor required by verification standards and the feasible, actionable data needed by land managers to create funding opportunities. In our hybrid session, we will illustrate the stepwise process of financing positive impacts, including how to build a theory of change, identify beneficiaries, select appropriate outcome indicators, and attract sponsorships for the maintenance or improvement of ecosystem services. Framed by the Forest Stewardship Council's Ecosystem Service Procedure, our session will provide practical guidance for verifying positive impacts in ways that meet the needs of potential investors and downstream stakeholders. It will include an overview of relevant policy and economic frameworks - including ESG disclosures - and how to align project outcome indicators with nature-positive commitments and corporate key performance indicators. We will bolster our presentation with several concrete case studies of public, private, and blended financing models.

#### Goals & Objectives

To present a scientifically robust and practical guide to building an investment-grade project for maintaining or improving ecosystem services

## Planned output

At the end of the session, attendees will be able to:

- Develop a theory of change that clearly and concisely links management activities to positive impacts on ecosystem services.
- Balance the needs of sponsors for robust, quantifiable, externally verifiable data with practical, feasible, and available data of land managers
- Understand the minimum requirements and safeguards to ensure high-integrity outcomes by adhering to social, environmental, and economic sustainability principles and criteria.
- Understand the needs of investors and downstream buyers to align project-level outcome indicators with the indicators used by the private and public sectors to measure prevailing pressures on nature loss

## Session format

The session format will include a frontal presentation (45 minutes – 1 hour) and a participatory workshop (30 – 45 minutes). Participants will be divided into two groups – project developers and potential sponsors – and provided with a case study scenario. The "project developers" will be asked to elaborate on a high-level project design, including a theory of change, how they will measure and report their progress, timeline, and potential risks. The "potential sponsors" will be asked to explain their motivations for sponsorship and formulate a series of questions to identify whether the project is ready for investment. The workshop's objective is for participants to understand better the dynamics between investors and project proponents and how to co-determine the scope and objectives of a project while balancing the needs and capacities of both actors.

Tentative schedule:

- Introduction (5 minutes)
- Presentation (40 minutes)
- Breakout groups and description of workshop activity (5 minutes)
- Workshop with scenarios (30 minutes)
- Discussion of results (10-15 minutes)

## Acceptance of voluntary contributions

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

## Relation to ESP Working Groups or National Networks

Thematic Working Groups: [TWG 16 – ES Financing mechanisms \(incl. PES\)](#)