

# 6th ESP Europe Conference 2026

18–22 May 2026

Prague, Czechia

Advancing Ecosystem Services Knowledge for Achieving a People and Nature Positive Europe

#esp26europe

## SESSION DESCRIPTION

**ID: T8b**

**Exploring cultural ecosystem services by Nature-based interventions from an equity perspective: integrated approaches to enhancing nature's contribution to wellbeing for all**

**Hosts:**

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>E-mail</b>
<b>Host (s):</b>	Eirini Gallou	University of Kent	<a href="mailto:e.gallou@kent.ac.uk">e.gallou@kent.ac.uk</a>
<b>Co-host(s):</b>	Richard Belcher	University of Kent	<a href="mailto:R.Belcher@kent.ac.uk">R.Belcher@kent.ac.uk</a>
	Silvio Caputo	University of Kent	<a href="mailto:Silvio.caputo@kent.ac.uk">Silvio.caputo@kent.ac.uk</a>
	Kathrin Specht	Institut für Landes- und Stadtentwicklungsforschung gGmbH	<a href="mailto:Kathrin.Specht@ils-forschung.de">Kathrin.Specht@ils-forschung.de</a>
	Noriko Otsuka	Institut für Landes- und Stadtentwicklungsforschung gGmbH	<a href="mailto:noriko.otsuka@ils-forschung.de">noriko.otsuka@ils-forschung.de</a>

### **Abstract:**

There is a need for integrated approaches that allow for a more nuanced understanding of multiple human health and well-being ecosystem service benefits provided by Nature-based interventions across urban and peri-urban landscapes, coupled with an understanding of who benefits from using those spaces in everyday life and as part of wellness or health-targeted nature-based activities. Some of those nature-based activities have also great capacity to improve nature qualities and conservation objectives, enabling a wider One Health approach in practice together with improving equity and access to nature (particularly in pressured urban settings). The session is inspired by the current work of GreenME Horizon project consortium seeking to understand the wellbeing benefits of engaging with nature (green and blue spaces) across 7 countries and focusing on the experiences of marginalised groups, while developing new tools for assessing qualities of green spaces in relation to equity and biodiversity features.

Existing work by IPBES (Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services) promotes a broad set of values for assessing the potential of nature to support human health and wellbeing. CICES classification identifies recreation services as 'nature enabling activities promoting health, recuperation or enjoyment', while recent research identifies diverse pathways through which wellbeing benefits can be harnessed and shared more equitably. This suggests that diverse groups may fulfil their needs in different ways by accessing and 'using' nature for their health benefits while respecting natural resources. Yet, as many studies focus on benefits for general public there is less evidence on the links between use of urban and peri-urban green and blues spaces for mental health and wider quality of life specifically for marginalised groups which may cover a wide range of minoritised or special characteristics groups. Those may include as people with disabilities, whose life may benefit more from engaging with nature, people facing financial strains, or ethnically diverse populations that may get less opportunities to engage with nature in urban and peri-urban places across the globe. The session invites papers that explore our understanding of the affordances of green and blue spaces in enabling equal access and use of nature, considering it of primary importance to enhance design and implementation of equitable nature-based solutions that take into account users' needs and voices across places.

**Goals and objectives of the session:**

Researchers are invited to present their research and findings on as well as novel approaches for integrating equity considerations in designing Nature Based health promotion and related interventions, and improving how ecosystem service benefits may be shared across users of urban and peri-urban landscapes/green and blue areas. This session aims to facilitate an interactive discussion where participants can exchange their diverse experiences about achieving equity, mapping inequalities in use of nature, integrated equity assessment approaches. It invites integration in existing theoretical frameworks and practical existing tools that capture wellbeing and health benefits of engaging with ecosystems in those contexts and include equity considerations.

**Planned output / Deliverables:**

Special issue on Ecosystem services (will be discussed with accepted participants)

**Session format:**

The proposal could accept up to 7-8 papers to enable dialogue and contextual evidence on equity from diverse contexts. We estimate 2-3 papers potentially coming from the Horizon GreenME consortium (to be evaluated with the rest of the papers for cohesion of the session), 10 min per speaker at least, ideally for presentations and discussion time in the end would be ideal.

**Voluntary contributions accepted:**

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

**Related to ESP Working Group:**

TWG 8 – Cultural services & Values