

SESSION DESCRIPTION

ID: B5

Mediterranean Islands' Ecosystem Services

Hosts:

	Title	Name	Organisation	E-mail
Host:		Ioannis Vogiatzakis	Open University of Cyprus	ioannis.vogiatzakis@ouc.ac.cy,
Co-host(s):		Mario Balzan	Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology	Mario.Balzan@mcast.edu.mt

Abstract:

Mediterranean islands are hotspots of biological and cultural diversity, which, compared to their mainland counterparts, are more vulnerable to climate change, intense human activities, uncontrolled land use changes and financial crises (Balzan et al. 2018; IPCC 2019). Despite their importance and vulnerability, the biodiversity and ecosystem services management in islands is challenging both for the administrators, usually a mainland state, and the islanders themselves (Mercer et al., 2012). The range of contributions delivered to human societies by nature so-called “ecosystem services” (ES) have received increased attention during the last 15 years (MEA 2005; TEEB 2007; Haines-Young & Potschin 2018; Maes et al. 2014; IPBES– Diaz et al. 2015). Worldwide islands greatly depend on ES supplied by their land (e.g. freshwater provisioning, pollination) or the surrounding marine and coastal areas (e.g. food provision through fisheries) and supply important services that benefit society beyond their boundaries (e.g. lifecycle maintenance, recreation and tourism) (MEA 2005). Their limited size and natural resources i.e. freshwater, relative isolation and openness of their economies (highly sensitive to external shocks), limit their capacity to supply the required goods and services and meet domestic and external needs, making islands strongly dependent on imports and exports. Space constraint and, in many cases, resource availability, limits the adaptation capacity of islands ecosystems to climate change, the agricultural production but also the capacity to provide housing, infrastructure, waste disposal, industrial development, ultimately often leading to trade-offs between human uses and biodiversity conservation. Therefore, it becomes increasingly important for islands to be aware of their natural capital but also its condition, as well as the trends in biodiversity conservation and ecosystem services flows, and how these may be threatened by changes due to internal or external biophysical and socio-economic drivers. For decision-makers and islanders alike, tourism is often seen as the core activity capable of reviving and sustaining local economies (Dorta Antequera et al., 2021; Singh et al. 2020). This also appears to be reflected in the scientific literature (Mazzola et al 2019) where most studies

on island ecosystems and their services have focused on the management of island tourism or the environmental impacts of mass tourism and other human activities (Balzan et al. 2018) with limited attention to other ecosystem services, and to the development of a more comprehensive understanding of the links between ecosystem condition and structure and ecosystem services flows to communities. There is also limited literature on who benefits from island ecosystem service flows, and if these are more likely to give rise to spatio-social injustices in terms of access and interactions with nature.

Goals and objectives of the session:

The overall goal of the session is to analyze the state of the art of Ecosystem Services assessment on Mediterranean islands. Its objectives are to:

- Bring together contributions from Mediterranean islands and beyond
- Demonstrate the importance of islands as ES providers
- Evaluate the applicability of existing ES methodologies for island ES assessment.
- Within the context of recent research on ecosystem services, highlight particularities and the challenges of Mapping and Assessing Ecosystem Services in an island setting

Planned output / Deliverables:

The symposium is organized with the support of the B5 Mediterranean Working Group and seeks to attract researchers and practitioners to present new ideas regarding the assessment, monitoring and mapping of ES on an island setting. Besides its initial focus on Mediterranean Islands, it welcomes studies on other island settings with shared management challenges. During the symposium, we will discuss the advantages and shortcomings of existing ES approaches for island environments. It is envisaged to compile the contributions to the session in a Special Issue of an SCI journal. The symposium will be followed by an informal meeting of members BWG5 Mediterranean working group. The meeting is open to anyone interested in joining the group or interested in ecosystem services and biodiversity in the Mediterranean context.

Session format:

Standard session (presentations)

Voluntary contributions accepted:

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

Related to ESP Working Group/National Network:

[Biome Working Groups: BWG 5 – Mediterranean systems](#)