

6th ESP Europe Conference

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SESSION DESCRIPTION

ID: T18b

**Assessment of ecosystem services governance and policies in dynamic political landscapes:
Needs, approaches and empirical evidence**

Hosts:

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Abstract:

Perspectives and questions we seek to cover in our session are:

- Debating needs and challenges for assessing the effectiveness, efficiency, and equity of ecosystem services governance and policy instruments/mixes
- Insights from assessment and evaluation studies into how well governance and policy design aligns with norms, beliefs and values of relevant stakeholder
- Innovations and performance of participatory assessment approaches for opening up policy design processes
- Ideas how ecosystem services governance and policy assessments can lead to more sustainable ES provision

Goals and objectives of the session:

- Various assessment approaches exist when it comes to determine if ecosystem services (ES) governance modes and policy instruments (mixes) are achieving intended goals for sustainable ES provision and provide pathways for improvement. For this session we are particularly interested in assessment approaches that take a systems approach and build on multi-stakeholder and multi-criteria assessments. The goal of the session is to provide insights and stimulate reflections on current learnings and future needs for assessing the sustainability of ES governance and policy. We aim to gather empirical findings on current approaches and practices in ES governance and policy assessments, focusing on their actionability, functionalities, outcomes, and potential.
- Building on this, we will initiate a debate on the strengths and limitations of qualitative and quantitative assessment approaches for ES governance and policy. The discussion will explore implications for their future conceptualization and use, particularly in dynamic political landscapes and for sustainable ES provision.
- Additionally, we seek to explore how these new policy assessments can support innovative approaches to policy co-design. For example, if integrating diverse knowledge systems (such as values and experiential knowledge) alongside an ES approach could enhance policy effectiveness and sustainability.

Planned output / Deliverables:

The outcome might be a Special Issue on perspectives and insights into ES governance and policy assessments and ways ahead based on the presentations and discussions

Session format:

This two-hour session is structured into two interlinked parts:

Part I: Empirical Insights into Current Assessment Approaches for ES Governance and Policy (90 min)

- In the first part, following an introductory presentation by the organizers, we invite contributions from the ES community to share empirical findings on current assessment approaches and their impact on ES governance, policy processes and outcomes. Key questions addressed in this part include (i) where and why ES governance and policy assessments are applied, (ii) how they perform in practice, and (iii) what role stakeholder participation (including their interests and motives) plays in these processes.

Part II: Debating Needs and Potentials for Future Assessments of ES Governance and Policy (30 min)

- The second part focuses on the underutilized potentials and opportunities of ES governance and policy assessments, adopting a prospective and/or experimental perspective. A moderated debate about the needs and potentials for the future design and use of assessment approaches for ES governance and policy will be initiated. The discussion will centre on perceptions of the practicability and relevance of assessments of ES governance and policy. Guiding questions will be: (i) how can assessments impact ES governance and policy, (ii) how can they account for dynamic political landscapes, and (iii) how to support stakeholder knowledge integration, as well as governance and policy co-design? Through this debate, we will distil implications for future design and use of ES governance and policy assessments and identify potential pathways towards more sustainable ES provision.

Voluntary contributions accepted:

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

Related to ESP Working Group:

[TWG 18 – Governance & Institutional aspects](#)