

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

I. SESSION DESCRIPTION

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Session title: Grant proposal, research writing, and networking toolbox for ecosystem service researchers: where, what, and how.

	Name	Affiliation	E-mail
Host	Opeyemi Adeyemi	Federal University of Technology Akure, Nigeria	oaadeyemi@futa.edu.ng
Co-host	Sining Zhang	Landscape Architecture Department, Southwest Jiaotong University, Chengdu, China	zsning@swjtu.edu.cn nina02xx@outlook.com
	Shipra Singh	International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA), Austria	singhs@iiasa.ac.at
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Abstract

Nature-based solutions (NbS), which involve natural processes and ecosystems, have emerged as essential strategies for addressing global environmental challenges, including biodiversity loss, climate change, and sustainable development. Early career researchers (ECRs) often bring innovative ideas and fresh perspectives to advance NbS research but face significant challenges, particularly in accessing competitive research funding. Many funding organizations increasingly recognize the importance of supporting ECRs, acknowledging their potential to drive innovation and contribute to long-term sustainability goals. However, challenges such as limited track records, lack of established networks, and competition from more experienced researchers continue to hinder their success. Hence, understanding the landscape of grants and funding opportunities tailored to NbS is critical for effectively empowering ECRs to contribute to the field.

This session explores the "where, what, and how" of obtaining grants for NbS research, providing ECRs with the practical tools and knowledge to identify funding opportunities, craft compelling research proposals, and successfully navigate the complex application processes. Participants will gain valuable insights into strategies for aligning their research objectives

with funding bodies' priorities, effectively communicating their work's potential impact, and overcoming challenges associated with NbS research funding.

The session invites contributions on key academic skills such as research writing, communication, networking, and professional networking skills, which are essential for navigating academia and building future career opportunities, both within and beyond academic settings. This session seeks to create a platform where experienced researchers can share practical advice, proven strategies, and personal insights and also encourage ECRs who have successfully navigated challenges or developed effective strategies to share their stories and guide their peers.

By participating as a speaker, you hold the opportunity to inspire and guide the next generation of researchers. Whether by offering insights into securing grants, managing time efficiently, or building meaningful professional connections, your expertise can have a lasting impact. Join us in fostering a collaborative and supportive environment that helps early career researchers thrive in their professional journeys!

Goals and objectives of the session

The objectives of this session are to:

- Map funding opportunities for NbS research, particularly those accessible to ECRs.
- Facilitate knowledge sharing by creating a platform for experienced researchers to share practical insights and promote mutual learning and collaboration.
- Discuss proposal alignment with funding priorities and evaluation criteria to enhance success rates.
- Offer professional skill development in proposal writing, communication, and networking through success stories, challenges, and lessons learned from experienced researchers and grant reviewers.
- Strengthen networks through mentorship, collaboration, and a sense of belonging within the ecosystem service research community.

Planned output/deliverables

1. Increased awareness of NbS funding opportunities for ECRs.
2. Real-world insights from successful researchers and grant reviewers.
3. Practical guidance on crafting competitive research proposals, including research design and impact communication.
4. Strengthened networks among ECRs, funders, and mentors in the NbS research community.
5. Support for future YESS activities to foster mentorship and collaboration among ES research members.

Session format:

The presentation time allows researchers and scientists to communicate their well-formed ideas within 20 minutes. Depending on the progress and depth of the results, the presentation and discussion time can be adjusted to accommodate speakers' needs.

Related to ESP Working Group/National Network

[Young Ecosystem Services Specialists Network](#)

II. SESSION PROGRAM

Room: Betbiyan 3

Date of session: 25 June 2025

Time of session: 16:00 – 18:00

Timetable speakers:

Time	Speaker	Organization	Title of presentation
16:00 – 16:10	Dr. Shipra Singh Dr. Zhang Sining	IIASA, Austria Southwest Jiaotong University, Chengdu	Welcoming speech
16:10 – 16:30	Dr. Luis Inostroza	Mendel University in Brno	Trying and failing: My idiosyncratic journey in academia with some insights I wish I knew
16:30 – 16:50	Dr. Simone Maynard	Griffith University Simone Maynard Consulting	It's not just what you know: the importance of networking to advance your career
16:50 – 17:10	Prof. Paulo Alexandre da Silva Pereira	Mykolas Romeris University	How to write a good paper
17:10 – 17:30	Prof. Kamaljit Sangha	Charles Darwin University	Survival in academic research, both from trans- national and gender perspectives
17:30 – 17:50	Prof. Benjamin Burkhard	Leibniz University Hannover	How to create and maintain your own network and harness it for successful research
17:50 – 18:00	Session host		Concluding remarks

III. LIST OF ABSTRACT

The first author is the presenting author unless indicated otherwise.

1. Trying and failing: My idiosyncratic journey in academia with some insights I wish I knew

Author (s): Dr. Luis Inostroza

Author affiliation: Mendel University in Brno

Contact: luis.inostroza@mendelu.cz

I have an unorthodox path in academia. I am a latecomer, as I spent several years working in consultancy and public administration before deciding to pursue a PhD. While I always realise the advantages that such experience has given to my scientific approach, I am also aware of the drawbacks it introduces, in an environment that has been set and shaped to succeed in a format that prefers fast-track scholars. I have countless failures that are worth sharing, and that's what I intend to do with all of you in this opportunity. I hope you could learn from them the lessons that I have unfortunately learned too late to get some gain from the experience. I will also share positive aspects, probably not real success stories, as I don't have many, but at least the ground for the good decisions I have taken. Mostly, the lessons I learned from those episodes in my life, some of which I have transformed into messages that I like to spread with my students. I am a scientist, an academic, and a professor, but today I don't want to speak to you from authority but from experience. Just share a bit of my journey in science, hoping that you could get some consolation for the bitter moments, and mostly some inspiration to become the great researcher that you all can potentially be.

2. Survival in academic research, both from trans-national and gender perspectives

Author (s): Prof. Dr. Kamaljit Sangha,

Author affiliation: Charles Darwin University

Contact: Kamaljit.Sangha@cdu.edu.au

Assoc Prof. Kamaljit K. Sangha has gained skills and knowledge in a trans-disciplinary field of Ecological Economics over the last 20 years since her degree for Master of Science (MSc) from Panjab University, Chandigarh, India. Initially, she started her journey in 1995 working on assessing the Economic value of exotic, *Eucalyptus tereticornis* and indigenous *Dalbergia sissoo*, plantations for rural communities in NE India. Over the past 15-20 years, she has been extensively working with Indigenous communities in northern Australia and India, especially on linking ecosystem services from the rainforests and savannas with the well-being of remote Indigenous communities. This work led her to develop an Indigenous ecosystem services framework while applying the Capability Approach. In this talk, she will share her personal

story of working in the field of Ecological Economics and of survival in academic research, both from trans-national and gender perspectives.

3. How to create and maintain your own network and harness it for successful research

Author (s): Prof. Dr. Benjamin Burkhard,

Author affiliation: Leibniz University Hannover

Contact: burkhard@phygeo.uni-hannover.de

Research is a fascinating endeavour, while at the same time, it is also very demanding. Researchers need to balance their limited time and resources, among others, across the four key objectives of successful performance: a) grant acquisition, b) publishing high-quality and citeable research articles, c) (in many cases) high-level teaching and graduate supervision, and d) being socially relevant. A key pillar for successful research is a functioning network of peers, stakeholders, potential funders, and – last but not least – users of your research outcomes. But how to reconcile these time-consuming aspects efficiently without completely sacrificing your own quality of life? Drawing mainly from their own experience, the talk will give insights into the life of an ecosystem services researcher and provide hints and examples for successful network creation, maintenance, and usage.