

6th ESP Europe Conference

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SESSION DESCRIPTION

ID: T2d

Restoration with Nature and People: A Living Lab Approach

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Abstract:

Coastal and marine restoration requires both ecological action and the engagement of people whose lives and well-being depend on these ecosystems. The A-AAGORA project (Atlantic-Arctic Agora) develops living labs — real-world spaces for innovation and co-creation — to test and scale ecosystem-based solutions across European demo sites.

This half-day session combines a discussion forum and a training workshop using serious games. In the forum, researchers, practitioners, and community representatives will reflect on lessons learned from living lab applications in restoration, explore how ecosystem service knowledge can guide decision-making, and debate governance challenges to achieving equitable, people-positive outcomes. In the workshop, participants will engage in a serious game that simulates restoration trade-offs and stakeholder negotiations. This hands-on activity will provide practical insights into participatory decision-making, ecosystem service dynamics, and co-design of restoration options.

The session is directly aligned with the EU Mission: Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030. By integrating serious games and living labs, this session offers a concrete example of how Mission goals can be advanced: linking science, governance, and community knowledge in a participatory and scalable way.

The session links to several ESP Working Groups — Marine & Coastal Ecosystem Services, Participatory Approaches, Governance & Decision-Making, and Models/Tools & Scenarios — and to ESP Regional Chapters in the Atlantic and Arctic basins.

By combining knowledge exchange, experiential learning, and collaborative agenda-setting, this session advances ecosystem services science while contributing directly to Europe's ambition for a nature- and people-positive future

Goals and objectives of the session:

Showcase how living lab approaches (co-creation, experimentation, participatory innovation) can advance coastal and marine ecosystem restoration.

Demonstrate the use of serious games as tools for exploring trade-offs, fostering stakeholder dialogue, and embedding ecosystem service knowledge in decision-making.

Connect researchers, practitioners, communities, and policymakers to co-develop actionable insights for a nature- and people-positive Europe.

Planned output / Deliverables:

Session Synthesis Report on the role of living labs in linking restoration with people and ecosystems: a concise account for ESP proceedings, newsletters, and A-AAGORA dissemination channels.

Collaboration Network: participant contact list and interest groups for future joint activities, namely on governance, social learning, and participatory approaches for ecosystem services.

Serious Game Resource Package: supported by the practical experience on exploring restoration trade-offs, and refinement of the game based on feedback and potential open-access availability.

Session format:

Half-day session (~3.5h) combining:

Discussion Forum (panel & open debate)

Training Class / Workshop (hands-on serious game for restoration decision-making)

Voluntary contributions accepted:

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

Related to ESP Working Group:

[TWG 2 – Biodiversity & Ecosystem services](#)