Business plan to sustain network beyond ESMERALDA

Deliverable D2.5

Business plan to sustain network beyond ESMERALDA

July 2018

Leading authors:
Joachim Maes, Sara Mulder, Iskra Konovska, Dolf de Groot, Leena Kopperoinen, Benjamin Burkhard

Enhancing ecosystem services mapping for policy and decision making

Prepared under contract from the European Commission

Grant agreement No. 642007
EU Horizon 2020 Coordination and support action

Project acronym:	**ESMERALDA**
Project full title:	**Enhancing ES mapping for policy and decision making**
Start of the project:	February 2015
Duration:	42 months
Project coordinator:	Dr. Benjamin Burkhard, Leibniz Universität Hannover
Website	www.esmeralda-project.eu

Deliverable title:	Business plan to sustain network beyond ESMERALDA
Deliverable n°:	D2.5
Nature of the deliverable:	Report
Dissemination level:	Restricted
WP responsible:	WP2
Lead beneficiary:	SYKE
Citation:	Maes, J., Mulder, S., Konovska, I., de Groot, D., Kopperoinen, L., Burkhard, B. (2018). Business plan to sustain network beyond ESMERALDA. Deliverable D2.5, EU Horizon 2020 ESMERALDA Project, Grant agreement No. 642007.
Due date of deliverable:	Month n°42
Actual submission date:	Month n°42

Deliverable status:

Version	Status	Date	Author(s)/Activity
1.0	Draft	28/06/2018	First draft circulated to the co-authors
1.1	Draft	02/07/2018	Benjamin Burkhard reviewed Draft version
1.2	Draft	16/07/2018	Marion Potschin-Young and Fernando Santos Martin reviewed
2.0	Final	23/07/2018	Final version

Table of contents

1. Preface

The ESMERALDA project has been set up to support EU member states in achieving Action 5 under Target 2 of the EU Biodiversity strategy to 2020. Action 5 calls on EU member states to map and assess the state of ecosystems and their services in their national territory (MAES), to assess the economic value of ecosystems and to report these values in an accounting system.

ESMERALDA organised the support to Member States according to four main strands of work (See Figure P1): policy, networking, research and communication. The policy strand maintained contact with the European Commission and the Member States through an active science policy interface. The networking strand inventoried existing networking activities in the countries on ecosystem services, took stock of the actors involved in MAES, and used the different occasions to meet during the project to set up and enhance different national MAES communities. The Research strand developed more definitive methodological guidance on how to map and assess ecosystem services at multiple scales using biophysical, social and economic methods. The Communication strand contributed to newsletters, articles, and a book on mapping ecosystem services to disseminate the knowledge and products which were collected or created during the project. Ultimately, the four strands delivered together a final guidance for member states which is made available through the ESMERALDA MAES Explorer[1] website.

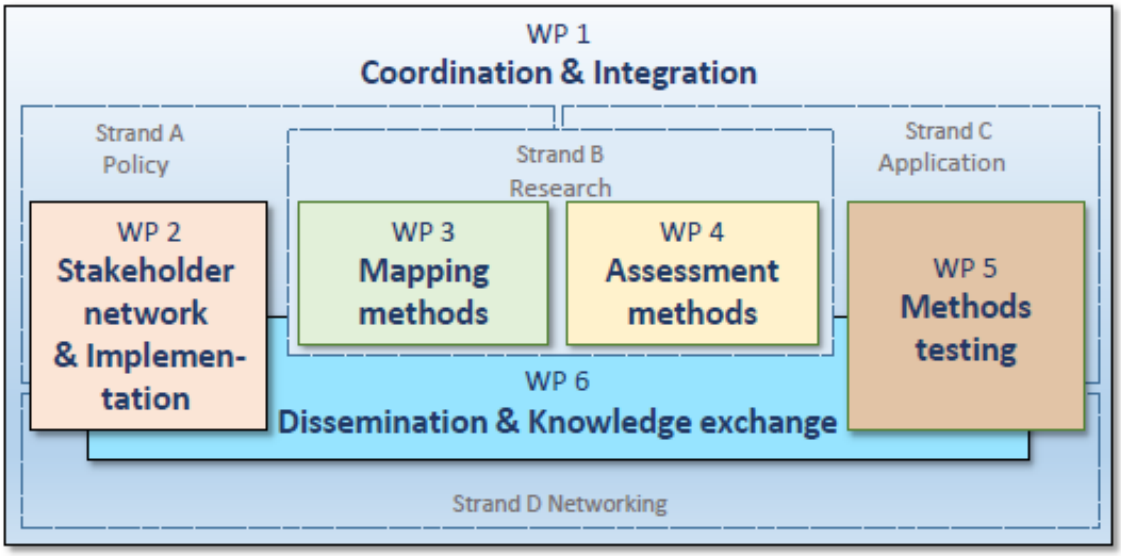

Figure P1: ESMERALDA components and their interrelations and integration within its four strands.

This report sits within WP2 “Stakeholder network and implementation plan” and overall objective of work package 2 of the project was to develop and facilitate stakeholder processes throughout the project and the creation of a European network to facilitate dialogues among relevant communities from science, policy, society and practice. To achieve this, the sub-objectives were: (i) To identify relevant stakeholders from the scientific and user communities as well as national and international funding bodies and to develop a stakeholder engagement plan; (ii) To identify and evaluate what is required in EU member states and in different sectors in order to achieve the EU 2020 targets; (iii) To

[1] http://www.maes-explorer.eu/

create a functional collaboration network for the support of project activities, processes of dialogue and knowledge co-creation; (iv) To develop both member state- and case study-specific profiles based on needs and opportunities to achieve Action 5; (v) To cluster all member states by level of readiness for implementation of mapping and assessment activities in terms of availability of data, tools and personnel with appropriate knowledge and expertise; (vi) To assess the practical means and provide guidelines to support EU member states in implementation; and, (vii) To provide continuous support to responsible authorities in EU member states and ensure the continuation of the network beyond ESMERALDA.

This ESMERALDA Deliverable 2.5 builds on the networking achievements of the project and makes a proposal to sustain the network in the future to ensure a continued exchange of knowledge and experiences on the implementation of MAES across the EU.

1.1. Summary

This report explores the options that are available for maintaining the pan-European ESMERALDA network.

Implementing MAES and Action 5 of the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 requires a community of practise at national and EU level which involves both policy and science.

The main ESMERALDA stakeholders are policymakers, researchers, and practitioners who have to implement MAES at European and national level.

Creating a network which brings these stakeholders regularly together at national or European level is instrumental for the uptake of MAES and more broadly for mainstreaming biodiversity and ecosystem services into all levels of decision-making (policies, plans, programmes and projects), as well as economic accounting or reporting.

A network analysis carried out for the purpose of this report made clear that the creation of networks in countries inside but also outside the EU to support MAES benefitted from having ESP as project partner on board of the ESMERALDA project. ESP has relevant and proven capacity to create and maintain national networks which can directly support MAES.

Therefore it is recommended that

- ESP continues to keep the ESMERALDA stakeholder networks active through the maintenance and creation of ESP National Networks.
- ESP provides an online platform to host ESMERALDA MAES Explorer and the ESMERALDA MAES Methods Explorer

Other networking opportunities remain available to maintain the ESMERALDA network for supporting MAES, including OPPLA, MAIA (a new support and coordination action on phase 2 of Action 5 on natural capital accounting) and a proposal for a COST action on Action 5.

2. Introduction

Action 5 of the EU Biodiversity Strategy creates the knowledge base to support policy on topics such as green infrastructure, ecosystem restoration and no net loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services at EU, EU member state and regional scales. The creation of such a knowledge base through the mapping and assessment of ecosystems and their services (MAES) is not a task for scientists only. Broad participation across different sectors and by different stakeholders is necessary to enhance the success and uptake of MAES: from policymakers who have formulated specific requests to different stakeholders who benefit from using the knowledge base to mainstream biodiversity and ecosystems in decisions and implementation of projects and sectoral policies such as agriculture and land management, river basin management or economic development. So one of the anticipated outcomes of Action 5 is to create a community of practise on MAES across the EU and its member countries.

ESMERALDA has been an incentive for stakeholders and scientists to create networks of co-operation to support mapping and assessment in their countries. Firstly, the project took stock of the different levels of implementation in the countries and has identified the stakeholders of ecosystem service mapping and assessment activities in EU member states (Kopperoinen et al. 2015, ESMERALDA Deliverable D2.1). These country updates and stakeholder support groups have been reported in the country fact sheets which can be consulted on a dedicated page for MAES on BISE[2], the biodiversity information system for Europe.

Subsequently the stakeholder support groups in the member states have been encouraged to initiate national networks of practice to motivate other policymakers, stakeholders and scientists to contribute to and share knowledge and experiences in ES mapping and assessment activities. During the lifetime of the ESMERALDA project, there has been considerable progress in the development of national networks. There are several main reasons to frame this progress: First of all, the various ESMERALDA project events involved both scientists and stakeholders and increased the learning opportunity and transfer of knowledge on how to set up a respective network. Secondly, ESMERALDA continued to involve and integrate additional EU countries in the consortium to end up with full coverage of all 28 EU member states as well as Norway, Switzerland and Israel. Thirdly, the Ecosystem Services Partnership (ESP[3]) acted as an umbrella network of national networks and facilitated nation-wide collaboration on MAES making use of its networking capacity.

Although ESMERALDA finishes in July 2018, the MAES initiative continues and enters indeed a crucial phase. Member states have made substantial progress in implementing MAES (see MAES barometer, Kopperoinen et al., 2018, ESMERALDA Deliverable D2.3), but gaps in implementation remain. Several member states have just set up or proposed projects which will run over the course of the next years (2018-2020). Furthermore, an important part of Action 5, valuation and accounting, is still to start in many countries. Both valuation and accounting are strongly based on the knowledge base which has been developed during EU wide and national projects on mapping and assessment of ecosystems and their services

All this means that networking at national and EU level remains important to warrant the successful implementation and finalization of the MAES initiative. At the final Conference of ESMERALDA in

[2] http://biodiversity.europa.eu/
[3] http://es-partnership.org/

Brussels from June 11 - 13, 2018, many participants from EU services and Member States have expressed the wish to continue the useful exchange of information, best practices and knowledge among different countries which was set up under ESMERALDA in order to keep the momentum.

2.1. Objectives of this report

The purpose of this report is thus to explore the options that are available for maintaining the pan-European ESMERALDA network.

First, we present a short description of the different actors that are or should be involved in ecosystem services mapping and assessment. This is important as it identifies the parties who should be ideally included in a national network or community of practise on mapping and assessment.

Next, a review of different national networks is provided so as to understand better the current state of the ESMERALDA MAES network. Special attention goes to the role of our networking partner, the Ecosystem Services Partnership. This chapter also describes the current challenges in networking activities across Europe.

Finally, this report provides options for maintaining and enhancing the network. Again, we build on the capacity of the Ecosystem Services Partnership to create and maintain networks and we provide suggestions for financing.

3. Which actors are or should be involved in a community of practise on Mapping and Assessment of Ecosystems and their Services?

Action 5 is carried out at the level of the EU member states and includes actors who are involved in its implementation as well as stakeholders who can or will use the outputs. **A network or community of practice on mapping and assessment should ideally include these actors.**

The following main actors are involved in the implementation of Action 5:

- The working group MAES on mapping and assessment of ecosystems and their services[4] officially oversees the implementation of Action 5. It consists of member state representatives, staff working at EU institutions and further experts. The working group updates the European Commission on the state of implementation in the different countries as well as at EU level and provides working guidance (see Figure 1).
- Several EU institutions implement MAES at EU level by mapping and assessing ecosystems and their services making use of pan-European data and models. The most important institutions are the European Environment Agency (EEA), the Joint Research Centre (JRC), and the Directorate Generals (DGs) of Environment (DG ENV) and Research and Innovation (DG RTD). DG RTD is not only supporting Action 5 through ESMERALDA, but will operationalise ecosystem services using the concept of nature-based solutions. Since 2015, also Eurostat has become engaged (through KIP INCA, an EU initiative on an Integrated system of National Capital and Ecosystem Services Accounts).
- Action 5 needs to be implemented at the national level, so EU Member States have started the implementation as required by the Strategy (see also ESMERALDA member state fact sheets[5]).

Different users will use results and outputs of Action 5:

- **At global level**: ESMERALDA (until 2018) and MAES (until 2020) coincide with the several global, regional as well as thematic and methodological IPBES[6] assessments. The Global assessment is currently under development and the European and Central Asia IPBES assessments have just been delivered in 2018. National networks on mapping and assessment can contribute to capacity building processes organised by IPBES (e.g. through BES-Net). Clearly, there are several synergies between ESMERALDA, MAES and IPBES.
- **At EU level**: There is interest from several European Commission services in using MAES outcomes. Above all, the knowledge base generated under MAES is used to provide input to Action 6 on the deployment of green infrastructure, the restoration of 15% of degraded ecosystems. In concert, these actions should warrant meeting Target 2 of the Strategy (maintaining or enhancing ecosystem services). Better information of ecosystem properties, functions, conditions and services is also expected to contribute to thematic environmental policy on nature (Natura 2000 with the Habitats and Birds Directives), air, water (Water Framework Directive), energy, or land. Also the new research programme on nature-based solutions (under Horizon 2020) will be a key user of the MAES knowledge base.

[4] http://biodiversity.europa.eu/maes
[5] https://biodiversity.europa.eu/maes/maes_countries
[6] https://www.ipbes.net/

- **At EU Member State level**: Through its case studies[7] (Adem Esmail et al. 2018, ESMERALDA Deliverable D5.4), ESMERALDA shows how mapping and assessment of ecosystem services deliver policy-relevant information for policy implementation processes at national scale.
- **At regional and local level**: Much of spatial planning takes place at regional or local scales, requiring detailed ES maps. Increasing interest in natural capital accounting by businesses, communities, and municipalities also drive the demand for MAES-type of information.
- **At thematic level**: MAES and ESMERALDA outputs and methodologies (e.g., Brander et al., 2018; Santos-Martín et al., 2018; Vihervaara et al., 2018) have been designed to support decisions which affect the use of natural resources (e.g., forestry, agriculture but also conservation).

Regardless scale or theme, EU policies which have an important impact on land use, climate and environment, including agricultural and regional policy, will be users of ecosystem data. A closer analysis of the different actors (who implement Action 5) and its users who apply the knowledge base shows that they can be grouped into three main roles (Figure 1): researchers (science), policy/decision makers, public policy officers or civil servants (policy), and practitioners (practice). Including all these stakeholders is instrumental for the uptake of MAES and more broadly for mainstreaming biodiversity and ecosystem services into all levels of decision-making (policies, plans, programmes and projects), as well as economic accounting or reporting.

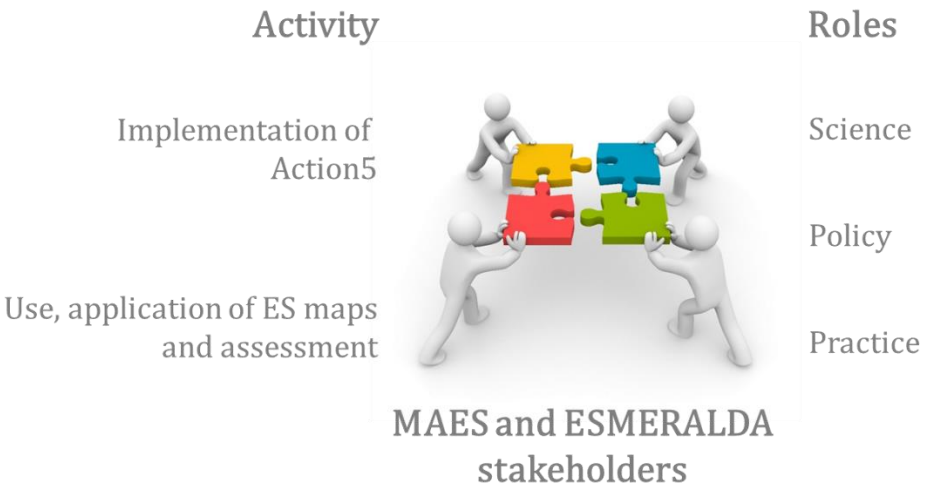

Figure 1. Stakeholder types of MAES and ESMERALDA. Stakeholders can be classified into six types depending on their role and activity.

[7] http://www.maes-explorer.eu/page/5

4. Current networks and communities of practise on mapping and assessment: status, level of activity, challenges and opportunities

This chapter describes the current networks and networking activities in Europe on ecosystem services. Focus goes to the networking activities of the Ecosystem Services Partnership but also a few other activities are highlighted. The role of ESMERALDA in network creation is mentioned.

4.1. The Ecosystem Services Partnership (ESP) networking capacity

The Ecosystem Services Partnership (ESP) has been one key member of ESMERALDA consortium from the very start of the project. ESP is a global network or researchers and practitioners who collaborate with each other on ecosystem services. The partnership aims to enhance communication, coordination and cooperation on ecosystem services research and practice, and to build a strong network of individuals and organisations. This is mainly achieved through different thematic and regional working groups, which enable the creation of platforms for researchers and practitioners to exchange information and ideas on ES assessments on specific topics (e.g. indicators, mapping, modelling, or valuation), specific biomes (e.g. forests) or specific places (e.g. Europe). ESP has a dedicated thematic working group on Mapping Ecosystem Services[8] which develops tools, guidelines and standards for improving spatial analyses of ES and their representation in mapping tools. This working group was the foundation for the ESMERALDA project and from this perspective; ESP has been a driving force to set up national and regional networks on ecosystem services during the course of ESMERALDA.

The tight connection between ESMERALDA as project and ESP as a network delivered an important synergy: the impact of ESMERALDA in the EU member states could be enhanced through the creation of national ESP networks.

4.1.1. National ESP networks: current status and the contribution of ESMERALDA

ESP is currently hosting twelve regional chapters[9]. They all contain various national networks. In Europe, there are regional chapters for West & Central Europe incl. Russia and South-East Europe. The following EU member states have a national ESP network: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, and Spain. In addition, also these countries host a national ESP network: Switzerland, Montenegro, Macedonia (FYROM), Serbia, and Turkey. Also Israel has created a national ESP network.

Several new national networks are planned: Finland, Georgia, Luxembourg, Lithuania, Slovenia, and Albania.

During ESMERALDA meetings and workshops, the ESP has actively motivated the project partners to use the ESP networks for setting up ESMERALDA stakeholder networks. ESP presented how those national networks work and how they could be useful for the ESMERALDA stakeholder networks. After those presentations, partners often showed interest. ESP representatives then took the time to clarify more

[8] https://www.es-partnership.org/community/workings-groups/thematic-working-groups/twg-4-mapping-es/
[9] https://www.es-partnership.org/community/regional-chapters/

and helped them through the procedure of setting up such a network. After the meetings communication and support continued via email.

The ESP national network in Greece (HESP) is an excellent example on how the implementation of this national network was very useful in the guidance and coordination of the ecosystem services assessment in Greece. HESP consists of experts from different disciplines (ecology, marine biology, socio-ecological system science) and aims to: i) coordinate ES assessment efforts under a shared framework; ii) promote the ES approach in Greece; iii) support the European implementation of ES at the national level (Mapping and Assessment of Ecosystem and their Services initiative), and iv) fulfil priority actions regarding the ES implementation and the obligations derived from the National Biodiversity Strategy (Dimopoulos et al., 2017).

4.1.2. Activity level

In June 2018, ESP did a survey to learn more about the current activities of ESP national networks in Europe and their participation in ESMERALDA. During the course of the ESMERALDA project, ESP suggested ESMERALDA partners to use the ESP national networks (NN) to complete some of their project tasks. The survey entailed 5 questions to collect information about activities the NNs organized in 2017 and 2018, how they participated in the ESMERALDA project, and which plans they have for the future. The survey was sent to the 44 lead team members of the 21 National Networks within the ESP Regional Chapters West & Central Europe incl. Russia and South-East Europe. 13 people from 13 NNs responded to the survey. Here a summary of the activity level of the NN is presented. Annex 1 of this report contains a complete analysis.

Most networks (11 of 13) report themselves as active over the course of the last 12 months. Nine of the 13 NNs (70%) keep a mailing list for exchanging information with each other; 4 NNs organised a national meeting; 6 NNs used the network as a basis for developing a research proposal on mapping and assessment; 2 NN did not organise any activities. Planning of activities for the next 12 months is in line with the previous activities: organisation of national events, developing research proposals, email based exchange of information or other activities.

ESP NNs have a high level of integration with ESMERALDA. Most NNs participated to ESMERALDA meetings or are involved in the tasks of the project.

The NNs also expressed their interest to continue being involved in MAES to help define the future science and policy agenda on ecosystem services.

In sum, the survey showed that most national networks are making active use of the network. NNs are motivated to organize physical meetings and to actively stimulate collaboration within their networks.

4.1.3. ESP networks and the implementation of MAES in Europe

During the final conference of ESMERALDA from June 11-13, 2018, there was an opportunity to take stock of possible problems that national networks face when developing a community of practice on MAES. At the conference, a World Café round table was organised to provide input into the final Deliverable 2.5 of work package 2 of ESMERALDA. Country representatives had the opportunity to reply to the following set of questions:

1. Who implements MAES in your country? In more detail, who are the key people or organizations which drive the MAES process? Is science the main driver, is policy the main driver, or are both parties involved in taking MAES forward. Or there is no driver at all and the MAES process is not implemented
2. Is there currently a national network which supports MAES related activities? If yes, who is the main engine behind the network and what is the role of the network? (e.g., create interest, create capacity, use the network as vehicle to propose projects). If no, would a network be helpful?

Participants were given 5 minutes to write down their answers on sticky notes and were next invited to hand over the notes and given the opportunity for additional clarifications. The results of this session are available in Annex 2 of this report. Here we highlight the main conclusions:

In total, representatives of 24 countries participated to the round table. Table 1 summarized the results by breaking down the total number of countries over the different possible answers on the two questions.

On the first question (Who is the main driver of MAES implementation in the country?), the answers are almost equally spread over both science and policy, only science or only policy. On the second question, 16 countries reported networking activities which supported MAES while 8 countries did not report a network (see Annex 2). 14 out of 16 networks are organised as ESP NN, stressing again the important capacity the partnership has to develop and sustain national networks.

Interestingly, countries are much more likely to have a functional network if both science and policy are equally involved in implementing the MAES process (7 out of 8 countries, first line of Table 1). If only science or only policy is the main driver behind MAES, the odds of having a network are more or less equal.

Table 1. Cross-tabulation of the number of countries broken down over two different questions.

		Is there a network in place which supports MAES?		
		Yes	No	Totals
Who is the main driver of MAES implementation in the country?	Science and Policy	7	1	8
	Science	4	3	7
	Policy	5	3	8
	No driver	0	1	1
	Totals	16	8	24

We also observed that in the Fenno-Scandinavian countries, ESP has not established a network. During the round table the establishment of an ESP national network for Finland was discussed. This idea was also discussed within the Finnish MAES group, but a final decision has not been made yet.

A common observation is that existing networks face problems in maintaining the network once financing through projects runs dry. Research projects provide a necessary stimulus to meet, exchange knowledge and experiences, and network.

Finally also the rotation of competent policy officers in ministries or agencies responsible for the implementation of MAES in countries as well as organisational changes in policy departments make it difficult to keep policymakers on board in the networking activities.

4.1.4. Opportunities for the Ecosystem Services Partnership

From the outcomes of the survey and the round table at the final ESMERALDA Conference, the conclusion emerges that ESP NNs are a useful vehicle to organize national activities in the context of international projects. However, this approach does not work in every country. Some countries have already a pre-existing network and do not see added value of having ESP NN which incurs a membership fee.

In order to help NNs to become active, ESP can provide more opportunities to let NNs join the organisation of meetings and conferences, and provide experiences about organizing meetings and conferences, which will enhance members' sense of participation and team work, also provide experience for their future work.

There can be more communication among different NNs. They can share their experiences, like how other NN keep their team active, and how other NNs work on joined research proposals together, which problems they face and how they deal with those. .

Furthermore it is not clear why not all NNs plan to participate in MAES. If it's because of technical reasons (like, people do not know how to use GIS), ESP can encourage them to connect to other NNs that have the technical skills they would need.

Based on this assessment of challenges and networking activities, ESP is committed to take the following actions:

- ESP will continue communicating with the national networks in progress and assist with successfully establishing and maintaining those networks.
- ESP will continue to promote setting up new national networks in countries that do not have one yet.
- ESP regional chapters and national networks will continue to report on their activities and share experiences during the upcoming regional and ESP World Conferences and the 'ESP regional chapters and national networks annual reports'.
- ESP will continue to stimulate online collaboration within regional chapters and national networks via the ESP website including the ESP member portal.
- ESP will facilitate keeping the ESMERALDA outcomes accessible and sustaining its network within its capabilities

4.2. Other networks and initiatives

Besides the networking activities organised by the Ecosystem Services Partnership, there are other initiatives which have networking capacity.

Evidently MAES has some networking capacity through bi-annual meetings of the working group and through the organisation of special events.

Another relevant network is OPPLA, an on-line community of practise (and market place) build on the OPERAs and OpenNESS projects, funded by the European Commission FP7 Programme.

There are also national initiatives such as ESCOM in Scotland, the natural capital forum in Ireland and BEES in Belgium (which is de facto the Belgian ESP NN).

IALE, the International Association for Landscape Ecology, and ALTER-Net, A Long-Term Biodiversity, Ecosystem and Awareness Research Network, are relevant networks to be mentioned in this context.

In particular ALTER-Net is a successful example of how a network, initially funded by the European Commission's program for research (FP6), continued its activities and found a business model to maintain the network. Funding is secured through resource and budget allocations from institutes which have participated in the activities.

5. Options for maintaining and enhancing the national networks to support MAES

This report shows that implementing MAES requires a community of practise at national and EU level which involves both policy and science (Chapter 3). Chapter 4 presented an analysis of national networks that support MAES activities in European countries. Special emphasis was given to the role of the Ecosystem Services Partnership (ESP). The network analysis made clear that the creation of networks in countries inside but also outside the EU to support MAES benefitted from having ESP as project partner on board of the ESMERALDA project. ESP has relevant and proven capacity to create and maintain national networks which can directly support MAES. Hence in this chapter 5 we present options for maintaining and enhancing the national networks to support MAES.

There has been a straight access to information on how to create a national network and a ready-to-use platform for network activities at the ESP website. Connecting with ESP connects also to the global network of ecosystem service researchers and gives access to state-of-the-art research knowledge in the field. Consequently we conclude that ESP can remain the main actor to maintain and enhance the ESMERALDA network and the MAES community of practise.

5.1. Future role of ESP in maintaining the ESMERALDA network and the MAES community of practise

ESP is a global network for ecosystem services professionals. Many ESMERALDA partners are ESP members already: for them it will be easy to stay in touch with the ESMERALDA colleagues. Others can become ESP members to stay in touch with the ESMERALDA colleagues and broaden their network with other ESP professionals from all over the world.

ESMERALDA partners can have follow up meetings at ESP European and World Conferences to continue collaboration, start new projects, and attract to new members to the ESMERALDA community.

Members of the ESP thematic working group on ecosystem services mapping had initiated the ESMERALDA project. ESMERALDA work can be continued via this working group. Members can use the ESP member portal for online discussions and data sharing. New professionals in the field of ecosystem services mapping and assessment can also easily join via this portal.

The ESMERALDA stakeholder networks can stay alive, keep collaborating and expand via ESP National Networks. This allows them to have public pages to promote their network; they can have online discussions and share data via the ESP member portal.

The ESMERALDA project information and outcomes, such as the ESMERALDA MAES Explorer and included reports and material, will be made open access via the ESP website, which is regularly visited by ecosystem services professionals.

The ESMERALDA MAES Methods Explorer (and the underlying database) will be integrated in the new ESP valuation database so that it will continue to be accessible and kept updated (see also MS 31)

5.2. How to create a network to support MAES and link with the ESMERALDA network and the MAES community of practise

ESP offers specific support on how to create a national network. This support is part of the guidance of the ESMERALDA MAES Explorer[10]. Annex 3 goes over the few steps to create a regional ESP chapter or a national ESP network and lists the benefits associated to a national network of ESP.

5.3. Additional opportunities for continuing the ESMERALDA network and the MAES community of practise

Several other ongoing initiatives can continue to deliver support to maintain the networking activities set up under ESMERALDA.

As already mentioned, the MAES working group schedules working group meetings twice per year. Usually there is also at least once per year a special event to which the ESMERALDA network can be invited.

In the framework of their contribution to KIP INCA, a joint initiative of the European Commission and the European Environment Agency, DG Research and Innovation is going to fund two support and coordination actions on the development and testing of ecosystem accounts at national and business level. It is suggested here that in particular the new MAIA (Mapping and Assessment for Integrated ecosystem Accounting) project, which just recently has been approved under the EU Call on "Valuing nature: developing and implementing natural capital and ecosystem accounts in EU Member States and Associated Countries" (SC5-18-2018), will use the ESMERALDA stakeholder support groups as stakeholders. As such MAIA can continue informing ESMERALDA partners and stakeholders about the progress of MAES, in particular what concerns the organisation of mapping and assessment outcomes on ecosystem condition and ecosystem services into natural capital accounts.

Whereas ESMERALDA has been supporting member states with the first phase of Action 5 on mapping and assessment of ecosystems and their services, the new support and coordination action will give dedicated support to the second phase (valuation and accounting). Another ESMERALDA spinoff project is MOVE (Facilitating MAES to support regional policy in OVerseas Europe: mobilizing stakeholders and pooling resources), has just started in April 2018 and will benefit from all experience from ESMERALDA network creation and MAES implementation with focus on the EU Overseas.

Finally, it is suggested that ESP, OPPLA and BISE keep each other informed about networking activities to avoid duplicating efforts.

5.4. Financing

Even if a national network is created, there needs to be a minimum of financing to keep a network going. Good will and engaged scientists or policymakers alone are required as well, but are usually not sufficient. In essence, a national network needs to be able to meet once or twice per year and needs to be able to cover the costs of staff needed to maintain contact lists, organise meetings or update information. The Belgian model is a good example for maintaining a network. BEES is the BElgian Ecosystems and Society community (BEES), an active informal network of Belgian ecosystem services

[10] http://www.maes-explorer.eu/page/3

experts. It contributes to improve ecosystem-society interactions by facilitating collaboration, coordination and communication among and between scientists, administrators, policy makers and practitioners in Belgium. BEES also helps connecting the Belgian regions and relevant international initiatives such as IPBES, MAES and TEEB and it overlaps with the Belgian ESP national network. BEES receives some financial support from the Belgian Science Policy. In fact, this is a possible financing model which is likely underused in many countries. National Science Policy is often organised by agencies which give grants for research projects with little attention for networking. However, a national science policy department of the government may be funding small scale networks which have a clear science policy interface task. So whereas networks (e.g., on environment including ecosystems and ecosystems services) almost by default look at research funding agencies or environmental policy departments (which are usually the main stakeholder), we suggest to explore possibilities offered by national or regional science policies to finance networking events. Most countries are parties of the Convention of Biological Diversity and IPBES, which means that usually funding is available to support initiatives and embed them in national networks.

At European scale, COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology[11]) is a likely mechanism to continue the ESMERALDA network and to create an EU wide community of practise on MAES. COST Actions are a flexible, fast, effective and efficient networking instrument for researchers, engineers and scholars to cooperate and coordinate nationally funded research activities. COST is supposed to enable interdisciplinary research networks in Europe and beyond. The EU funds are provided for organising conferences, meetings, training schools, short scientific exchanges or other networking activities. The next collection date is Thursday, 29th November, 2018 at 12:00 noon (CET).

6. References

Adem Esmail, B., et al. (2018). Guidelines and recommendations to support the application of the final methods. Deliverable D5.4, EU Horizon 2020 ESMERALDA Project, Grant agreement No. 642007.

Brander, L.M., van Beukering P., Balzan, M., Broekx, S., Liekens, I., Marta-Pedroso, C., Szkop, Z., Vause, J., Maes, J., Santos-Martin F. and Potschin-Young M. (2018). Report on economic mapping and assessment methods for ecosystem services. Deliverable D3.2 EU Horizon 2020 ESMERALDA Project, Grant agreement No. 642007.

Dimopoulos P, Drakou E, Kokkoris I, Katsanevakis S, Kallimanis A, Tsiafouli M, Bormpoudakis D, Kormas K, Arends J (2017). The need for the implementation of an Ecosystem Services assessment in Greece: drafting the national agenda. One Ecosystem 2: e13714. https://doi.org/10.3897/oneeco.2.e13714

Kopperoinen, L., Pitkänen, K., Maes, J., Hellgren, D. (2015). Clustering of EU Member States according to their prerequisites and needs to perform ES mapping and assessment. Deliverable 2.1. EU Horizon 2020 ESMERALDA Project, Grant agreement No. 642007.

Kopperoinen, L., Varumo, L. & Maes, J. (2018). Final stocktaking of EU member state needs. Deliverable 2.3 EU Horizon 2020 ESMERALDA Project, Grant agreement No. 642007.

[11] http://www.cost.eu/

Santos-Martín F. et al. (2018). Report on Social Mapping and Assessment methods Deliverable D3.1EU Horizon 2020 ESMERALDA Project, Grant agreement No. 642007.

Vihervaara, P., Mononen, L., Nedkov S., Viinikka, A., et al. (2018).Biophysical mapping and assessment methods for ecosystem services. Deliverable D3.3 EU Horizon 2020 ESMERALDA Project, Grant agreement No. 642007.

7. Annex 1 Report of a survey measuring the activity of ESP national networks

7.1. Introduction

In June 2018 ESP did a survey to learn more about the current activity of the ESP national networks in Europe and their participation in the EU HORIZON 2020 project ESMERALDA. During the course of the ESMERALDA project, ESP suggested ESMERALDA partners to use the ESP national networks (NN) to complete some of their project tasks. The survey entailed 5 questions to collect information about activities the NNs organized in 2017 and 2018, how they participated in the ESMERALDA project, and which plans they have for the future. The survey was sent to the 44 lead team members of the 21 National Networks within the ESP Regional Chapters West & Central Europe incl. Russia and South-East Europe. 13 people from 13 NNs responded to the survey, their answers will be analyzed in this report. Respondents were from the following countries: Greece, Italy, Turkey, Spain, Poland, Germany, Bulgaria, Slovenia, The Netherlands, Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia and Romania. Leads of the two European regional chapters also responded.

7.2. Past, present and future activities of European national networks

Figure 1 shows the activities NNs organized in 2017 and 2018. 69.2% of the respondents mentioned that their NN kept in touch with its members by a mailing list or the ESP member portal; 46.2% respondents think that their national network was instrumental in the development of a research proposal; 30.8% respondents present that they organized a national meeting or conference. Not all NNs were well organized: 15.4% of the respondents said their NN didn't organize any activities. Three respondents (23.1%) mentioned NN activities which are not included in the options:

- We organized workshops in Greece and I attended workshops in other countries for ES and ESP promotion purposes
- We organized a regional conference
- We organized meetings bringing together the experts. We also started to carry out an assessment, aiming at bringing together existing scientific work on ecosystem services in Turkey. The aim of the assessment is to map the existing work, identify gaps and identify priority topics for future work on ecosystem services at the national scale.

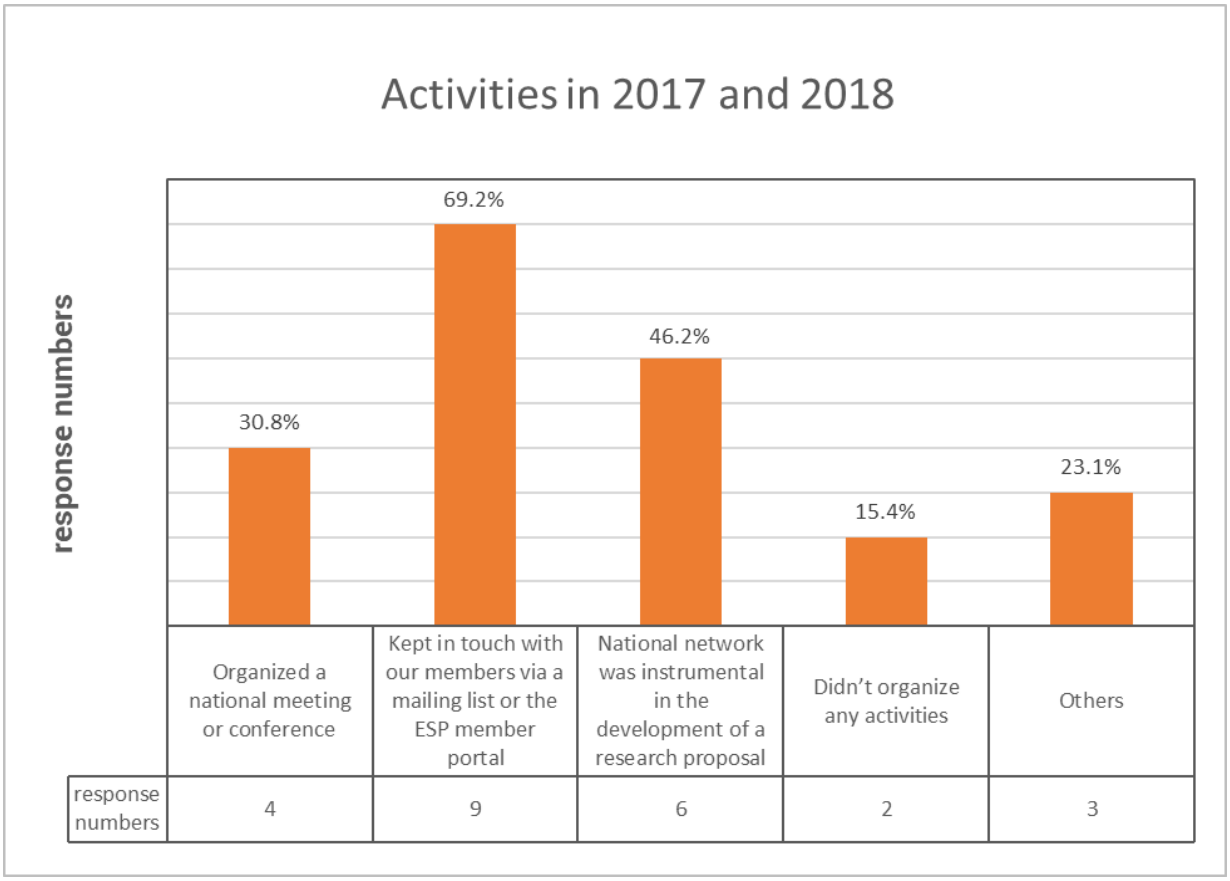

Figure 1. The activities that NNs organized in 2017 and 2018

Figure 2 shows the activities NNs plan to organize in 2018 and 2019. 61.5% of the respondents plan to use the national network to conduct a research for their NN, which can enhance the cooperation and collaboration by exchanging knowledge and working on a same project and make the national network closely work together. 'Organizing a national meeting or conference' is the second activity that respondents are willing to do with their NN in the future, (53.8% of the respondents); followed by 'setting up a mailing list or start using the ESP member portal to keep in touch with their members (30.8% of the respondents). 7.7% of the respondents didn't plan any activity for their NN yet. Two people give their own plans which are not included in the survey:

- We will continue our work on carrying a national assessment, we will establish the national network's website and continue inviting new members to the network
- Working more on developing project proposals and developing research

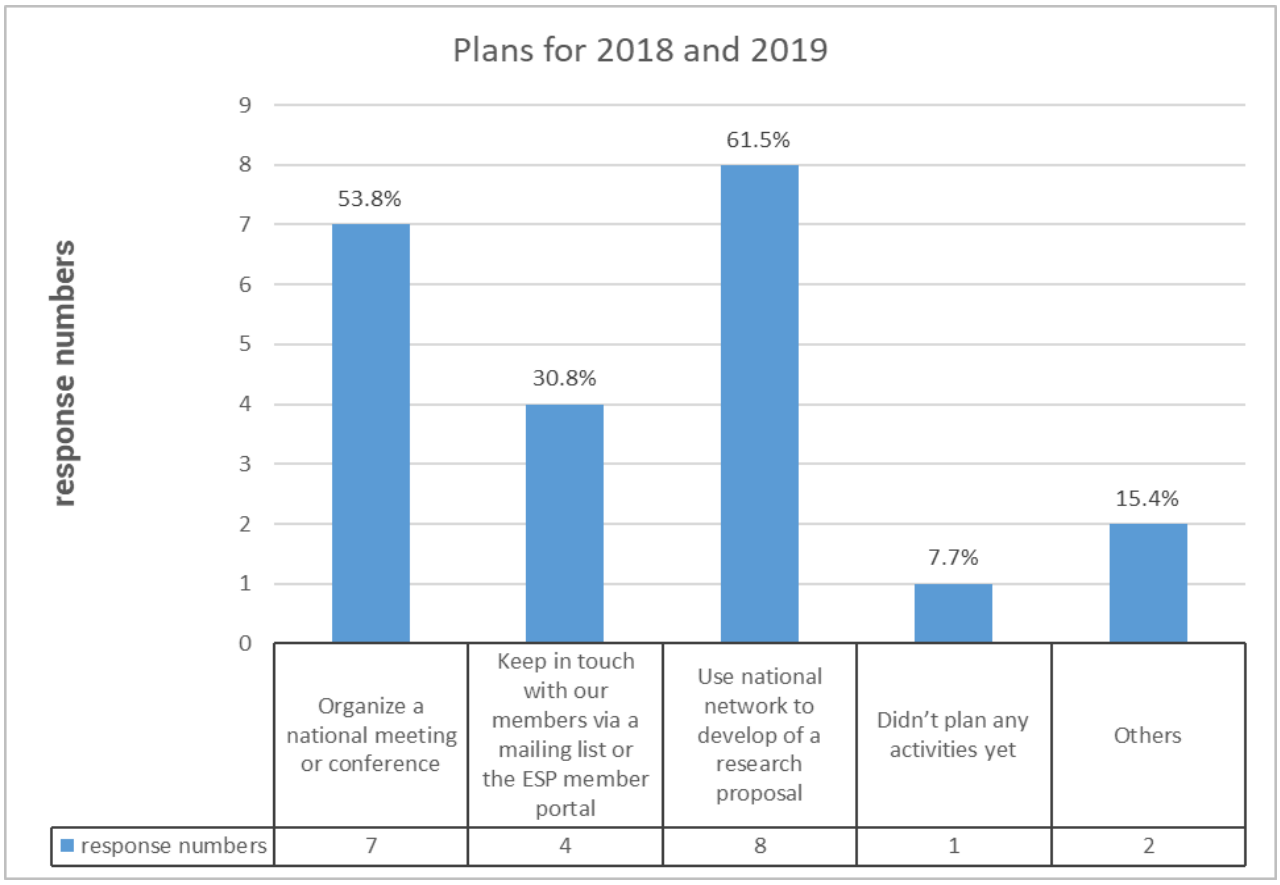

Figure 2. The activities that NNs plan to organize in 2018 and 2019

7.3. Participation national networks in the ESMERALDA

Figure 3 shows the involvement of NNs in the ESMERALDA project. 69.2% respondents mention that their NN worked with the project; 30.8% (5 respondents) of the NNs are not involved.

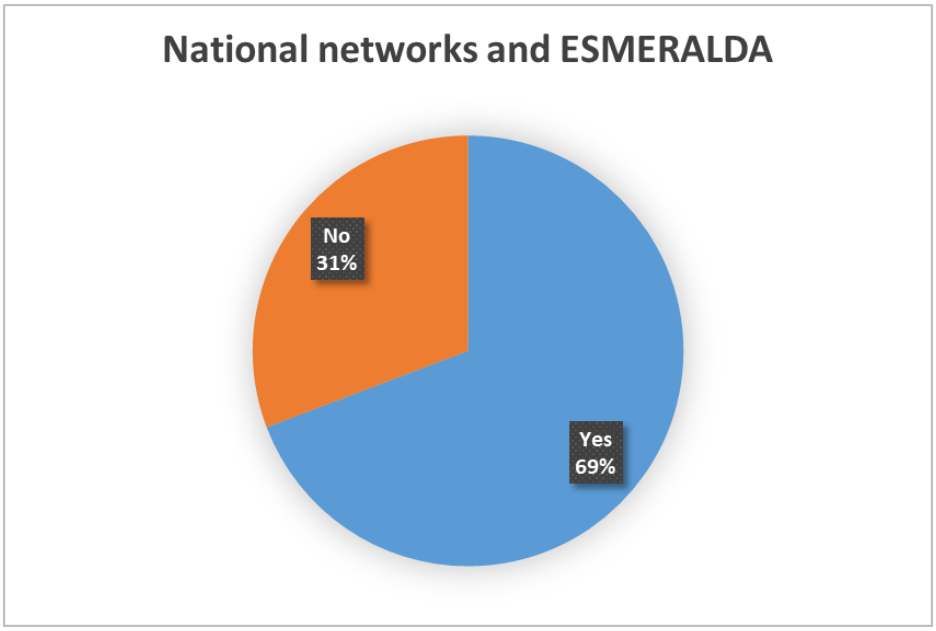

Figure 3. National network involvement in the ESMERALDA project

Figure 4 shows that 75% of the NNs contribute to ESMERALDA by participating in meetings, 63% of the NNs helped with the ESMERALDA project stakeholder network work, and 63% of the NNs worked on more specific ESMERALDA tasks or deliverables. Other 3 members give more specific answers, which are:

- To be specific member of the NN and not the NN as an entity
- Through Benjamin Burkhard (co lead)
- I am one of the chairs of ESP RC SEE

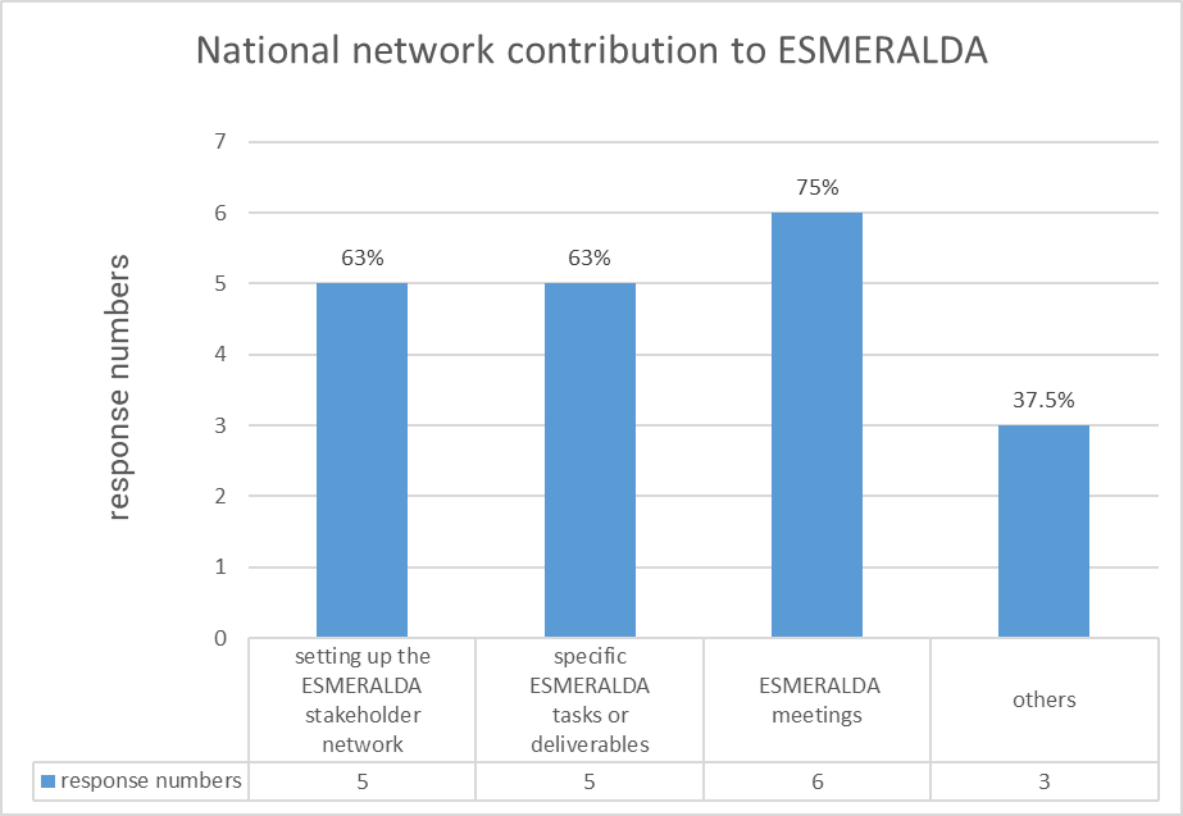

Figure 4. NN contribution to the ESMERALDA project

7.4. Future planning of the national network on (inter)national scale

For the future planning of the national network on (inter)national scale, a question was included to see which projects NNs prefer to implement in future. Figure 5 shows that NNs showed great interest in all three mentioned projects. The most popular one is the implementation of a reseach agenda on ecosystem services: 92.3% respondents showed their interest in work on this; followed by the implementation of a research agenda on ecosystem services: 76.9% respondents showed their preference on it; 69.2% of the respondents are willing to implement MAES in their country.

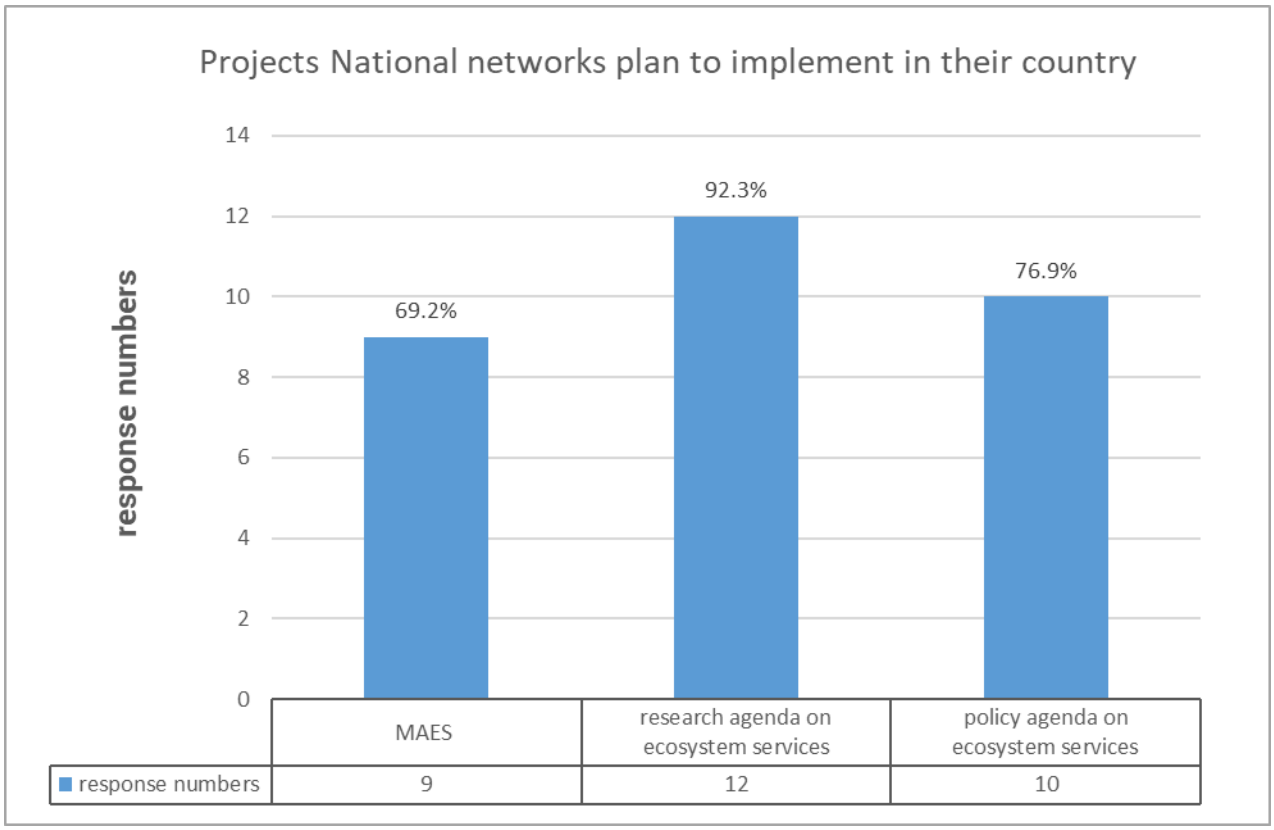

Figure 5. The plans of NNs to implement different national projects

7.5. Final remarks or comments about national network activity related to ESMERALDA

Four respondents sent us valuable comments about their National Network activities related to ESMERALDA:

- We would like to ensure bigger transparency with all members of our NN
- Related to the last questions of the 'NN taking part in the following' I can say that the Greek NN I am involved in, is going to do these activities.
- We don't have an official ESP NN, however in 2018 we established a national group dealing with ES and my answers above are related to this groupDo you have national contact points or general Esmeralda contact points and a brief intro on what you are exactly doing or trying to achieve?

7.6. Conclusions, discussion and recommendations

7.6.1. Activity ESP European national networks

This survey shows that most national networks that responded to this survey are using their network for at least 1 activity; only 2 didn't organize anything over the last two years. Figure 6 gives a comparison of the past and planned future activities. The graph indicates that for the coming years, NNs are more motivated to organize physical meetings to actively stimulate collaboration within their networks, for instance for developing research proposals, than to passively keep their members updated on their activities.

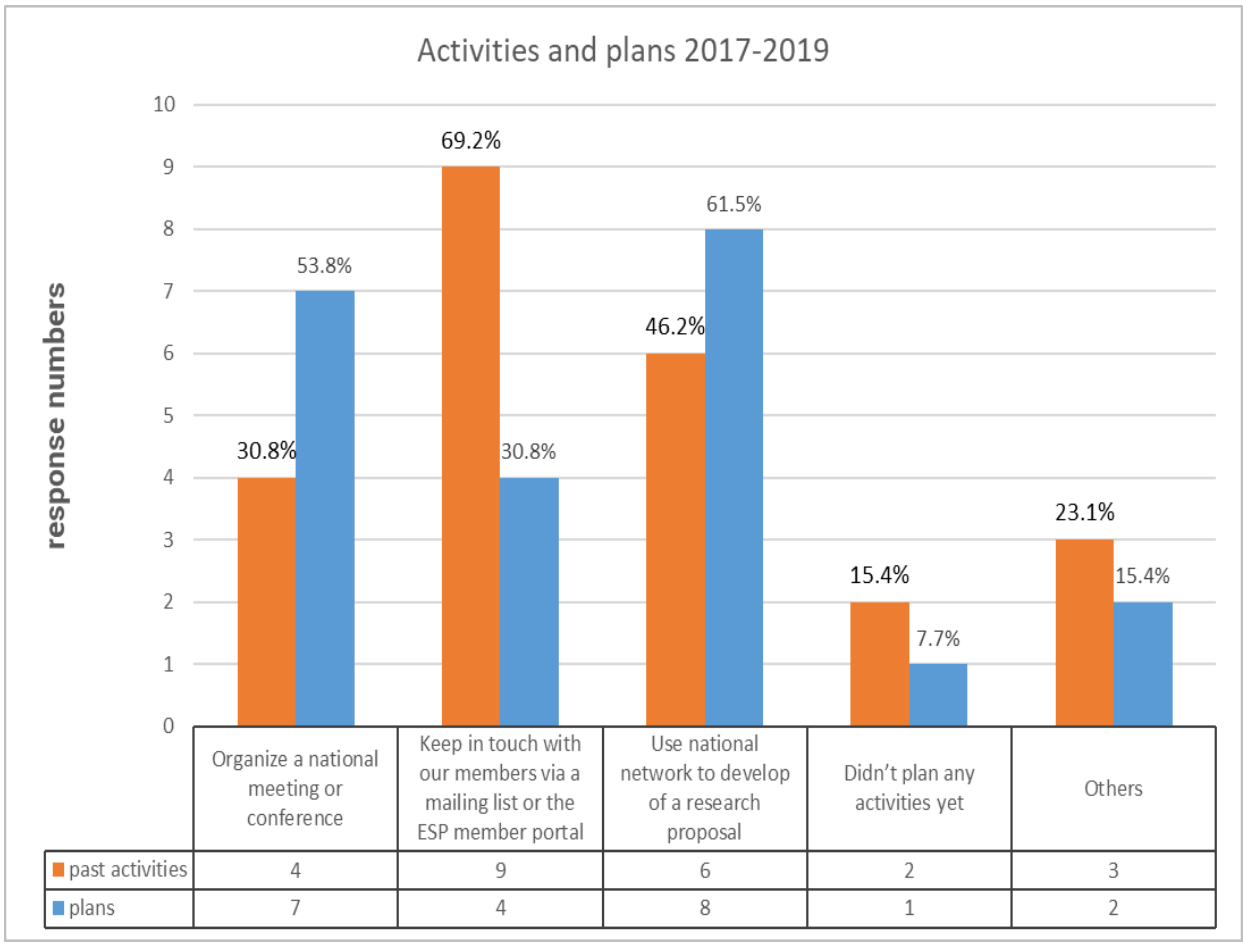

Figure 6. Comparison of the activities that NNs organized in 2017 and 2018, and their plans for 2018, 2019

7.6.2. National network participation in ESMERALDA

This survey shows that 69% of the national networks that responded to this survey is active in ESMERALDA. The most popular way for NNs to contribute to the ESMERALDA project is joining ESMERALDA meetings, followed by setting up the stakeholder network and doing more specific tasks and deliverables.

7.6.3. Future planning of the national network on (inter)national scale

This survey shows that most national networks that responded to this survey plan to implement projects on (inter)national scale via more ecosystem services research, conducting the policy agenda about ecosystem analysis or being active in MAES.

7.7. Recommendations

- From this survey one could conclude that ESP NNs can be useful to organize activities for international projects at national scale. However, this doesn't work in every country. It would be good to better investigate the reasons for this. Do they already have another good working

network in their country? Is the ESP membership fee a big hurdle? Is the advantage of having an ESP NN not clear?

- In order to help NNs to become active, ESP can provide more opportunities to let NNs join the conference organizing, and provide experiences about organizing meetings and conferences, which will enhance members' sense of participation and team work, also provide experience for their future work.
- There can be more communication among different NNs. They can share their experiences, like how other NN keep their team active, and how other NNs work on joined research proposals together, which problems they face and how they deal with those. .
- Find out why not all NNs plan to participate in MAES. If it's because of technical reasons (like, people don't know how to use GIS), we can encourage them to connect to other NNs that have the technical skills they would need.

7.8. Acknowledgements

Many thanks to all national networks leads who took the time to complete the survey.

7.9. Appendix 1: Complete survey

1. National Network activity
    a. Please indicate your realized activity in 2017 and 2018 below. More answers are possible
        i. We organized a national meeting or conference
        ii. We kept in touch with our members via a mailing list or the ESP member portal
        iii. Our national network was instrumental in the development of a research proposal
        iv. We didn't organize any activities
        v. Other
    b. Please indicate your plans for 2018 and 2019 below. More answers are possible
        i. We plan on organizing a national meeting or conference
        ii. We plan on setting up a mailing list or start using the ESP member portal to keep in touch with our members
        iii. We plan on using our national network to develop of a research proposal
        iv. We didn't plan any activities yet
        v. Other
2. Participation in the ESMERALDA project
    a. Is your national network involved in ESMERALDA?
        i. Yes/ no
    b. If yes, could you list how your national network contributed to ESMERALDA? More answers are possible.
        i. The national network contributed to setting up the ESMERALDA stakeholder network
        ii. The national network contributed to specific ESMERALDA tasks or deliverables
        iii. The national network contributed to ESMERALDA meetings
        iv. Other
3. Future planning of the national network
    a. Which of the below is applicable for your national network? Can the national network follow the (more answers are possible)
        i. Implementation of MAES in our country (MAES is the EU initiative on Mapping and Assessment of Ecosystems and their Services)
        ii. Implementation of a research agenda on ecosystem services in our country
        iii. Implementation of a policy agenda on ecosystem services in our country

8. Annex 2 Notes: Round table 3: A business plan for maintaining the network

This round table provided input into the final deliverable of work package 2 of ESMERALDA. Country representatives had the opportunity to reply to the following set of questions:

1. Who implements MAES in your country? In more detail, who are the key people or organizations which drive the MAES process? Is science the main driver, is policy the main driver, or are both parties involved in taking MAES forward. Or there is no driver at all and the MAES process is not implemented
2. Is there currently a national network which supports MAES related activities? If yes, who is the main engine behind the network and what is the role of the network? (e.g., create interest, create capacity, use the network as vehicle to propose projects). If no, would a network be helpful?

Participants were given 5 minutes to write down their answers on sticky notes and were next invited to hand over the notes with additional explanations.

The following table contains an overview of the answers organized per country.

	Who is behind the implementation of MAES in your country – science/research community OR policy/ministry OR both?	**Is there a network supporting MAES related activities? – If Yes – who/what drives the network? If No – why not?**	**Does the country have an ESP National Network?**
Austria	Both science and policy. There is an Austrian biodiversity strategy for which competence is with the ministry. There is a science driven part too. The Alpine Space is also a vehicle for implementation (e.g. ALPES project)	Austrian ESP NN Multinational InterReg project on Alps is also useful for networking	Yes
Azores (Portugal)	Science driven – mostly on marine topics. ESMERALDA was influential in pushing this forward.	There is no ESP NN but there is a recently approved project (MOVE) which can create such network, but this will start now	
Belgium	It differs for the two sides of the country – southern part is mainly science driven; northern part both science and policy	BEES – science/policy/society interface for knowledge exchange; different working groups on different topics; there are some meetings and also yearly events – BEES Christmas market. Organisational funding – rooms and catering provided by Belgian Science Policy	Yes
Bulgaria	Ministry of environment started the MAES process in collaboration with science community. Now main driver is the science community. A challenge is continuity at the	There is an ESP NN but it is still in an initiating phase. Researchers participate, mostly based on personal initiative. In July 2018 a meeting is planned to present ESMERALDA results and to develop the network further into a practical network. In	Yes

	level of the ministry; no permanent follow up due to organisational changes	the framework of another project they were asked to identify stakeholders, so they held meetings with agencies, staff from the ministry but at the end of the project the network stopped being active.	
Croatia	Started from the policy – the governmental agency for environment protection initiated MAES after receiving a mandate	Roundtable organised for the Eurostat grant under KIP INCA. During this meeting a mailing list was created with 39 people, but they don't know what to do with this group. First activity was to translate the CICES classification	Yes
Czech Republic	It's not really implemented now; the driving actor is science. Policy has a role also in coordinating a recent LIFE project, which includes national ecosystem assessment	NN doesn't exist. If a LIFE project will be granted, there will be a national network created	
Denmark	Policy has set up specific research based on predominantly local case studies. Project coordinator is working group MAES member.	There is a national network in place (no more details)	
Estonia	Ministry of Environment, Environment agency is coordinating the MAES, academia is involved	No formal NN but several members of the ministries and the environment agency are part of the MAES group. University of applied sciences will become part of ESP and form an ESP Baltic region/sub chapter	
Finland	At national level – the ministry; Regional & local level (practitioners) are active & interested in MAES. Consultants see a business opportunity but lack skills	Yes. There is a mailing list and meetings now and then but it's very passive. Mainly exchange information approach is top-down. A kind of a structure is in place. Establishing an ESP NN is a possibility. Why – Lack of national level political interest. There is need for the environmental ministry to be more involved	
Germany	Both science and policy	Yes there is an ESP network, the Germans are very involved in ESP conferences and activities; also related to IALE chapter; also a TEEB process, but that is finished.	Yes
Hungary	Mainly policy driven – ministry of agriculture initiated a project. Scientific contact: cooperation	There is a group of scientist but not really a network – project partners who run the national MAES project	
Israel	No obligation to do MAES; more scientific driven with a bit of help from key people from the policy side; no formal MAES activity	There is a network but that was set up for the national assessment; there is some ecosystem services research	
Italy	The main driver is science; the ministry (of Environment) plays	Network – yes and no – it's an internal network but not visible from outside. If a	Yes

	a role in coordinating and budget	citizen wonders who is implementing MAES in Italy, they will not be able to find out. There is an Italian NN in ESP but this faded out following the reorganisation of the ESP website.	
Latvia	Bottom up approach, little involvement from the ministry. It started with science and NGOs	There is a network (community of practice) organizing meetings involving experts interested in doing something in this field and performing experience exchange. Since they don't communicate in English it may be less recognised. Possible to afford through project budgets. There are some LIFE projects which always contain the requirement to do ecosystem assessment.	
Lithuania	A project from beginning 2018 focused on MAES; both policy and research are driving the process; Now we are working with the ministry in the mapping ES	No. There only two groups from different universities focused on this field or research. In October 2018 a workshop will try to engage more people in MAES	
Macedonia	Driven by both sides – policy launched a national strategy for biodiversity; case studies driven by research	A network doesn't exist, but one organization is going to become an ESP member. And the network might be helpful	Yes
Malta	The ministry is the official entity which works on ES assessment. Research is an enabling actor.	No network. Not much research being done in other institutions. One representative for ESP but it's a very small country so there is not much sense in creating a formal network	Yes
Netherlands	Both science and policy are drivers for MAES;	Important stakeholder engagement processes	Yes
Norway	Mainly science driven except for one initiative on assessment	There is an informal network based on projects or scientists management	
Poland	External driver is the EU working group of MAES and ESMERALDA; Science is the main internal driver	Yes – supported by NN of ESP in terms of organisational issues and spreading info EcoSERV evets are an important networking instrument	Yes
Romania	Both policy and science drive the process	Project at the national level; there is an ESP "network" but it contains only 1 organisation and 1 other person. More efforts are needed to enhance the network	Yes
Serbia	No official mandate to do MAES; environment is not a priority; there has been ES research done in the past by academia and development agencies (ca. 2000). GIZ is pushing ES cross sector policy formulation. Status unknown	GIZ has a project on biodiversity, part of it is ES. There is a network, small (two members now), used to be bigger, but then it became a membership platform	Yes

Slovakia	policy driven – core of the work done by the government agency; science community is very open to collaborate	National MAES working group – people from ministry, science, other expert institution. The driver of the group is the ministry. There is need to refresh and find a better way of cooperation. Group is a bit passive	
Slovenia	Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning is the main driver	Recently established group in Slovenia dealing with ES which organised two workshops, inviting stakeholders from Slovenia; also, recently became member of ESP.	In progress
Spain	Motivated and initiated by the research community, but the ministry is financing some activities		Yes
Sweden	Main driving force is National Agencies but supported by policy (government) contract	There is a network; the core group is the national agencies. Network border with participation by companies and other stakeholders. (Share information; communication public networking). No formal name of the network, but there are communication activities	
Switzerland	Science is a driving force for mapping, but it's out of EU so no formal MAES requirement. Most research networks have a single focus	No. there is no ES mapping network. Many research groups deal with one service only (e.g. hydrology, biodiversity…). Mainly ETH is mapping ES. The BAFU (Federal Office for the Environment) is not very active.	Yes
UK	National ecosystem assessment – by request of government; recent activities being undertaken by JNCC	no formal network; JNCC maintain a database; ESCOM in Scotland – very active	

The views expressed in this table are personal opinions and do not reflect the official position of the EU Member States or of other countries.

Final comments on options for financing a network

At European scale the maintenance of the ESMERALDA network could be organized as a COST action linked to the MAES working group. Also a new support and coordination action in the framework on the EU initiative on natural capital accounting (KIP INCA) could profit from the stakeholder support groups established in ESMERALDA and continue involving them in the project as main stakeholders.

At national level, it is considered worthwhile to find out if national research policy can finance a networking activities such the organization of science policy workshops on the implementation of MAES.

9. Annex 3: Create your network as an ESP National Network

ESP Regional Chapters and National Networks

The Ecosystem Services Partnership (ESP) hosts an international community of scientists, policymakers, practitioners, stakeholders, and end-users of ecosystem services at local, national, regional and global scale. The network aims to enhance communication, coordination and cooperation, and to build a strong network of individuals and organizations working in the field of ecosystem services. Herein, ESP enhances and encourages a diversity of approaches, while reducing unnecessary duplication of effort in the conceptualization and application of ecosystem services. By raising the profile of ecosystem services and promoting better practice, ESP will also increase opportunities for financial support and help focus the funding of individual organizations for more efficient utilization of existing funds.

ESP is a membership organization that fosters collaboration between its members, partners, associated organizations, related networks and society. ESP regularly organises World and Regional conferences and provides many services to further enhance the application of ecosystem services for nature conservation, ecosystem restoration and sustainable management. ESP members work together in more than forty Working Groups and a growing number of National Networks (NNs) on all continents.

The ESP NNs are divided over eleven Regional Chapters (RCs): RCs and NNs exchange information, discuss ideas and experiences on ecosystem services assessment and implementation at Regional and National levels. Three RCs have NNs in ESMERALDA member states and other involved countries: RC West & Central Europe, RC South-East Europe and RC MENA Middle East & North Africa. Together they host 21 NNs. Additionally, six NNs are in the progress of establishment.

ESP NNs aim to improve decision making on ecosystem services by providing a platform for researchers, government, non-government, business, industry and communities to exchange information and experiences on the theoretical and practical application of ecosystem services at local to national scales. They provide a focal point for ESP members at the national level, in their national language via:

- Organising meetings and conferences of interest to their members
- Collaborating with Regional ESP chairs to organise a regional conference in between the ESP World conferences.
- Support the implementation of ES science and practice at national and local levels (eg. by contributing to national assessments and policy evaluations)
- Feed bottom up information into regional and international activities
- Maintain a database of researcher and practitioner expertise, contacts and projects
- Promote educational opportunities to improve understanding of ES
- Maintain their NN webpage on the ESP website

Benefits of creating a network as an ESP National Network

Creating a network as an ESP NN enables you to use the ESP infrastructure and support for managing a group:

- Get support in managing your network from your RC leads, the other NNs in your RC and the ESP secretariat.

- Share experiences about managing your NN with other ESP NNs, for instance during ESP conferences
- Advertise your network and its activities via the ESP website and its monthly update
- Organize a NN meeting during the biennial ESP Regional Conference in your region
- Get public pages about your NN on the ESP website, which you can update yourself.
- Use all features of the ESP member portal such as:
  - Online communication and data sharing within your group
  - Easy online tool for ESP members to become a member of your group
  - Function to get notified of group activities
  - Function to invite ESP members to join your group
- Get free technical support from the ESP secretariat for managing your public group pages on the ESP website, and your collaboration platform on the ESP member portal
- Access to all ESP membership benefits such as
- Reduced fees for ESP conferences and training courses
- Discounts for several ES related journals
- Full access to all online ESP material including publications, funding opportunities & databases
- Opportunity to directly publish announcements (events, collaboration calls, publications, vacancies) on the ESP website
- Facilitation in developing collaborations and joint project proposals
- Right to organize activities such as discussion groups and workshops under the ESP banner
- Stay up to date on ES developments by being part of the global ESP community

How to establish a new ESP National Network?

The following steps need to be taken to start an ESP NN:

Write a short introduction on your NN, with some basic information and plans. This information will also be used for the webpage(s) of your NN on the ESP website. The NN lead team can update this text later. See the ESP website with the list of NNs for examples: for instance Poland and Italy have complete webpages. To help you preparing the introductory text and better understand your possible tasks as co-chair(s), please have a look at ESP's general page on Regional chapters and National networks, and the Section for RCNN Lead Teams where you can find our guidelines and past Annual Reports of NNs. We also suggest you have a quick look at the ESP By-Laws. Send this introduction together with your CV and that of potential co-chairs to the ESP secretariat at support@es-partnership.org.

According to the ESP By-Laws all NNs Co-Chairs must be 'ESP members in good standing', meaning among others that you and all other proposed Lead Team members should have a personal or institutional paid ESP membership. We also recommend other NN members to become ESP members but that is not obligatory.

Once ESP received the CVs and introductory text, we will conduct a quick review. Once everything is found in order and the ESP Steering Committee approved your application you can start managing and promoting your NN. Your NN will get pages on the ESP website and the ESP member portal for which the lead team gets editing rights. Your NN will then also be announced in the ESP Newsletter.

At any time in the process you are welcome to contact the ESP secretariat (support@es-partnership.org) with any questions or for any support.