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**Dissemination and communication
activities (press releases,
e-newsletter, social network
broadcasting, factsheets,
policy brief, report cards, final
brochure)**

Deliverable D6.5

Dissemination and communication activities (press releases, e-newsletter, social network broadcasting, factsheets, policy brief, report cards, final brochure)

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**Enhancing ecosystem services mapping for policy and
decision making**

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Preface

Mapping and the assessment of ecosystems and their services (ES) are core to the EU Biodiversity (BD) Strategy 2020. Specifically, Action 5 sets the requirement for an EU-wide knowledge base developed by EU Member States designed to be: a primary data source for developing Europe's green infrastructure; a resource to identify areas for ecosystem restoration; and, a baseline against which the goal of 'no net loss of BD and ES' can be evaluated.

In response to these requirements, ESMERALDA (Enhancing ecoSystem sERVICES mApping for poLicy and Decision mAKing) aims to deliver a flexible methodology to provide the building blocks for pan-European and regional assessments. The work will support the timely delivery of EU member states in relation to Action 5 of the BD Strategy, supporting the needs of assessments in relation to the requirements for planning, agriculture, climate, water and nature policy. This methodology will build on existing ES projects and databases (e.g. MAES, OpenNESS, OPERAs, national studies), the Millennium Assessment (MA), IPBES and TEEB. ESMERALDA will identify relevant stakeholders and take stock of their requirements at EU, national and regional levels.

The objective of ESMERALDA is to share experience through an active process of dialogue and knowledge co-creation that will enable participants to achieve the Action 5 aims. The mapping approach proposed will integrate biophysical, social and economic assessment techniques.

The six work packages of ESMERALDA are organised through four strands (see Figure 1), namely policy, research, application and networking, which reflect the main objectives of ESMERALDA.

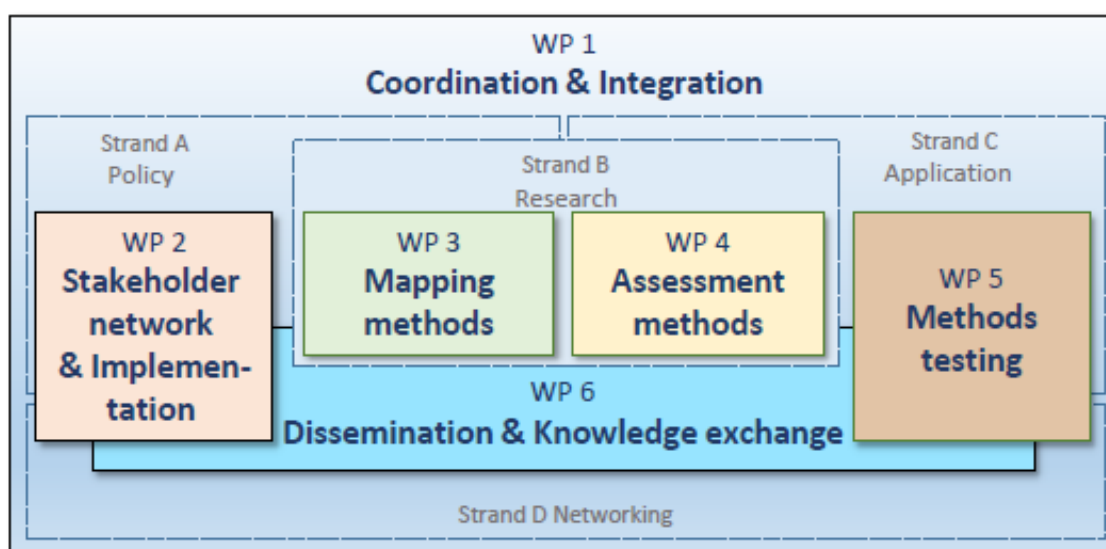


Figure 1: ESMERALDA components and their interrelations and integration within its four strands.

The main objective of WP 6 'Dissemination & Knowledge Exchange' is the effective communication and promotion of ESMERALDA research and results across stakeholders and the general public. To ensure continuous internal and external communication, Pensoft has produced a number of promotional materials as a part of the project branding and network development. The following report describes these tools and the process of their discussion with the consortium, as well as their previous and current implementation within the project communication strategy.

Summary

From the beginning of ESMERALDA up to the final month of the project, noteworthy information and topics relevant to the project is delivered on a regular basis through the news rubric on the project website, through media sources and relevant social networks.

The ESMERALDA accounts in the social media (Twitter, Facebook, Google +, and LinkedIn) are actively used to ensure the widest possible impact and outreach of project related results, news and events. The dissemination and communication activities are carried in accordance with the project's specificities, as well as with the functionalities and requirements of each of the four social networks.

Project's e-newsletters are produced every six months and contain a synthesis of the most important news and results achieved during each relevant period. Each issue is widely disseminated to the newsletter subscribers and to the ESMERALDA partners for further distribution to their institutional channels and personal contacts. All issues are also available for free download in the Media Centre on the ESMERALDA website.

Throughout the project and especially when significant results are achieved, press releases are issued to disseminate valuable results or announcements. ESMERALDA is using the channels of EurekAlert!, one of the world largest online distributors of science news that reaches out to more than 5000 mass media and independent science journalists.

ESMERALDA country fact sheets were prepared for each EU member state as part of Task 2.1: Stakeholder identification and initial analysis of activities. The initial analysis draws upon information collected by ESMERALDA project partners and previous relevant work on ecosystem mapping and assessment activities and policy and research activities in connection to that.

A new interview rubric gives possibility to project stakeholders and general public to receive better impression on the work and research interests of ESMERALDA project members.

Video reports from important ESMERALDA events provide deeper insights to all interested parties. An overview power point presentation helps partners to present the ESMERALDA project in a concise yet complete manner.

Communication outputs can be found on the project website, or viewed on the ESMERALDA social media accounts.

1. Dissemination and communication activities

1.1. ESMERALDA website

The ESMERALDA website was used throughout the project as a main distribution platform for general project information, relevant project news and events, as well as a communication platform within the consortium. Regular updates of the public website aim at sustaining the interest of the existing audience and presenting attractive content for potential visitors.

The project online library provides access to all ESMERALDA Deliverables, publications and other documents of interest. The ESMERALDA Media Centre contains all communication outputs, from press releases to promotional materials and presentations. The restricted website area (ESMERALDA Internal Communication Platform, ICP) continues to support the exchange of information among project participants. The ESMERALDA Insider Rubric was complemented with one new addition, completing the overview of the project’s diverse team, bringing expertise form various fields and backgrounds (Fig 2).

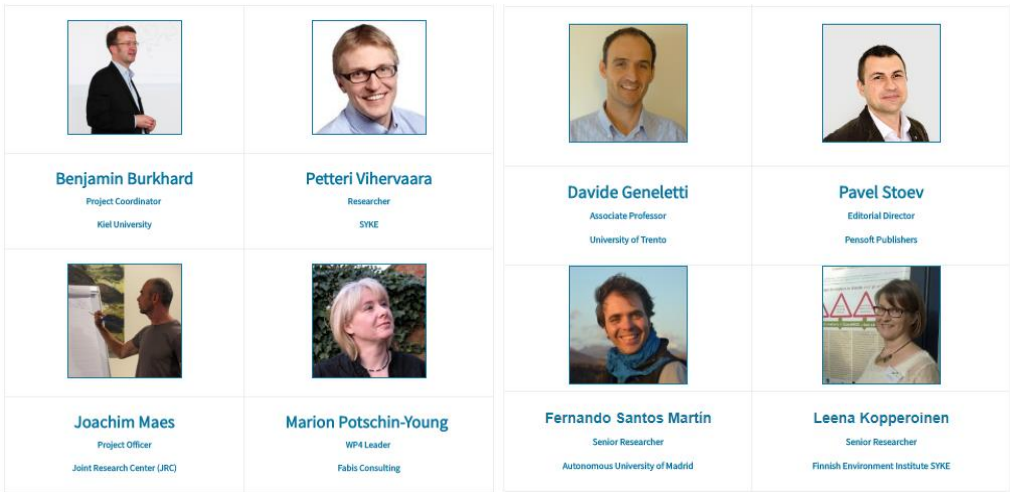


Figure 2. ESMERALDA Insider Rubric.

In the period 1 February 2018 – 10 July 2018, the website was visited by 2,090 users, 1, 961 of which were new users (Fig. 3). This speaks for an increasing interest in the published content in the final months of ESMERALDA, including project results, final project Conference etc.























Figure 3. Overview of the website audience in the last six months of ESMERALDA.

With 21,015 users, realising 127,839 page views and 33,175 sessions, the website has enjoyed great popularity since its launch and has created a good network for communication and dissemination purposes throughout the whole project.

Table 1 presents the geographical distribution of website visitors, showing that the project reached a variety of countries all over the world. Overall, the website has been visited from 167 countries, with most visitors from Germany (1,524), Russia (1,334) and the United States (920).

Table 1: Website visitors per country since the beginning of ESMERALDA.

Country	Users	% Users
1.  Germany	1,524	 11.92%
2.  Russia	1,334	 10.43%
3.  United States	920	 7.20%
4.  Italy	686	 5.37%
5.  United Kingdom	671	 5.25%
6.  France	535	 4.18%
7.  Spain	478	 3.74%
8.  Belgium	471	 3.68%
9.  Netherlands	411	 3.21%
10.  Bulgaria	321	 2.51%

1.2. ESMERALDA press releases

Newsworthy project information and announcements were communicated via press releases. In the period 1 February 2018 – 10 July 2018, a new press release regarding the ESMERALDA final project Conference was issued and distributed via EurekAlert!. The press release gathered 1,068 views within a month.

„Mapping and assessment of ecosystems and their services across Europe and beyond“

- EurekAlert! – https://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2018-06/pp-maa060818.php (08 Jun 2018)

Two more press release will be issued after the end of the project. The first one addresses the ESMERALDA Special Issue “Mapping and Assessing Ecosystem Services: Methods and Practical Applications” in the journal [One Ecosystem](#), covering various aspects of the project, and is due after the finalisation of the Special Issue in September. The second press release deals with the announcement of the ESMERALDA MAES Explorer, explaining the content, purpose and functionality of the guidance tool. The press release is produced and will be published in September in light of the low visibility during the summer months.

Throughout the whole project, three other press releases were issued and disseminated through the leading distributor of science news EurekAlert!, the official European Commission news distributor CORDIS wir and the Pensoft channels. With 8,625 total page views, the press releases reached a wide audience and got the ESMERALDA communication messages across.

1.3. ESMERALDA on social media

To increase the project visibility and to promote ESMERALDA related news and events, the 4 social media accounts of ESMERALDA (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Google+) were continuously

maintained. The ESMERALDA social media accounts presented the project in an engaging and interactive way to build and sustain a network.

The ESMERALDA social media accounts reached the general public as follows: the ESMERALDA Facebook page has a total of 143 followers; the Google + profile has 3 followers, the LinkedIn group has 39 members. The ESMERALDA Twitter profile gathered 584 followers and tweeted 464 times. Twitter has been used at conferences with a dedicated hashtag (e.g. #ESMERALDAfinal; #ESMPLOVDIV, etc.) to ensure that live updates are provided during project meetings and that participants can share their views on discussed topics.

Buttons linked directly to the ESMERALDA social media channels are displayed on the project homepage.

1.4. ESMERALDA at events and conferences

ESMERALDA participated at various events and conferences to exchange expertise with professionals with scientific background, to distribute promotional materials and demonstrate recent developments of the project. Within the final months of the project, ESMERALDA took part in a Fun fare on tools for Mapping and Assessment of Ecosystems and their Services (MAES) organised by the EU MAES Working Group in Brussels, distribution promotional materials and showcasing the ESMERALDA MAES Explorer, a web-tool set up to guide stakeholders on the different stages and aspects of the MAES process to allow them to easily find and access the exact information, as described in ESMERALDA Deliverable reports D6.4 and D1.7.

ESMERALDA will take part in the upcoming ESP (Ecosystem Services Partnership) European Conference in October 2018 in San Sebastian, Spain, to showcase major project results. During the whole project, ESMERALDA took part and organised booths and thematic sessions at the ESP Conferences in Stellenbosch (South Africa) 2015, Antwerp (Belgium) in 2016 and Shenzhen (China) in 2017, in the BEES Xmas Market in Brussels in 2016 and 2017, as well as the British Ecological Society (BES) annual meeting in 2017 and at several other occasions.

1.5. ESMERALDA stakeholder engagement

Stakeholder engagement is crucial for the identification of needs within the individual member states so that ESMERALDA can provide the right support and coordination for related activities, to fulfil requirements of policy-making and to integrate them into the project research.

Another **ESMERALDA stakeholder Workshop** in the final months of the project took place from 19 to 22 March 2018 in Eger, Hungary and focused on testing the final version of the flexible ecosystem services (ES) mapping and assessment methodology in policy- and decision-making through real-world case studies. The event was involved a large variety of policy- and decision-making processes and actors, including businesses and citizens, coming from a range of geographical contexts.

From 11 to 13 October, the **ESMERALDA final project Conference** took place in Brussels to demonstrate key scientific results and practical resources designed to assist and guide EU Member States in Mapping and Assessment of Ecosystems and their Services (MAES) in their respective local, national and pan-national contexts. Over 100 delegates from 27 EU Member states, 6 other European countries, EU outermost regions, and various European Commission's bodies and institutions attended the event. Presentations from the final project Conference were uploaded to the website's [media centre](#).

A **stakeholder Workshop** on possibilities for implementation of ESMEALDA results in Bulgaria took place on 3rd July in Sofia, Bulgaria. Project partners and stakeholders discussed how to continue with mapping and assessment of ecosystems and their services on a national level after an ambitious and dedicated participation in the project. Bulgarian policy makers attended the event.

Information about previous stakeholder meetings can be found in D6.4. News on all stakeholder meetings are published on the project website.

2. Promotional materials

2.1. ESMEALDA e-newsletter

Two electronic newsletters were produced in the final month of the project. The first one reflected on the stakeholder meetings during the last stage of the project, focusing on the ESMEALDA final Conference. The second e-newsletter informed about the ESMEALDA Special Issue publication and the launch of ESMEALDA MAES Explorer. Both are available as HTML files on the project website.

Within the whole project, four e-newsletters were issued, in order to distribute information about recent stakeholder meetings and workshops, as well as video reports and recent publications. The newsletter was distributed among project partners, stakeholders and interested parties.

2.2. ESMEALDA final brochure and poster

The final ESMEALDA brochure and poster were created to visualise the ESMEALDA MAES Explorer, an online stepwise guidance tool, launched to host the ESMEALDA Final Guidance tool in a user-friendly and interactive environment.

The ESMEALDA MAES Explorer brochure explains the rationale behind the platform - its content, features and targeted audience (Fig. 4). It is designed in an engaging and concise way to visualise the entry points that the user can find on the platform and raise awareness for the easily accessible project information.

What is the ESMERALDA MAES Explorer?

The ESMERALDA MAES Explorer is designed to direct and advice EU Member States and associated countries alike through the process of Mapping and Assessment of Ecosystems and their Services.

The tool is a product of ESMERALDA's close work with the European Commission and its working group MAES (Mapping and Assessment of Ecosystems and their Services).

Why?

EU Member States are required to map and assess the state of ecosystems and their services and to create a knowledge base to be used as a powerful resource in sustaining them.

Who?

This comprehensive knowledge hub will aid national level decision makers, local level spatial planners or entrepreneurs wanting to perform sustainable business in understanding the condition of ecosystems, their ability to provide services and the socio-cultural and economic values related to them.

How?

Starting from various questions arising from policy, business or society, to supporting stakeholder identification and related network creation, the MAES Explorer will provide ESMERALDA-derived practical guidance to mapping and assessment of ecosystems and their services all the way to dissemination of respective outcomes and the resulting implementation in policy and decision making.

When?

Final results from mapping and assessment of ecosystems and their services as well as their integration into national accounting systems across Europe are expected by 2020.

However, the MAES Explorer serves as a source of knowledge anytime ecosystem services mapping and assessment is topical before and after year 2020.

★ ESMERALDA ★

ESMERALDA (Enhancing ecosystem services mapping for policy and decision making) is an EU-wide Coordination and Support Action focused on assisting stakeholders in EU member states to achieve the aims of Action 5 of the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2020 in relation to mapping and assessment of ecosystems and their services.

Consortium
37 partners from 31 European countries

Duration
February 2015 – July 2018

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www.esmeralda-project.eu

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★ ESMERALDA ★

MAES Explorer

Guidance on Mapping and Assessment of Ecosystems and their Services

www.MAES-Explorer.eu

STEP 1

What questions do stakeholders have?

Are Europe's ecosystems healthy so that they can continue providing ecosystem services in a sustainable way in the future? A set of policy questions and anticipated needs of EU policy makers address a range of broad policy needs to guide you at this first step of the MAES process.

STEP 2

Identification of relevant stakeholders

The MAES Explorer will guide you through the identification of relevant stakeholders from policy, science and practice that are needed for a successful implementation of MAES. Stakeholders can be identified by their field of interests, media and document analysis, focus group discussions and key-informant interviews in EU member states.

STEP 3

Network creation/ involvement of stakeholders

You will learn how to create a network of stakeholders through the experience of the Ecosystem Services Partnership (ESP), which currently hosts eleven Regional Chapters, all containing various National Networks.

STEP 4

Mapping and assessment process

This step acquaints you with ESMERALDA's flexible methodology for ecosystem services mapping and assessment, which provides building blocks for regional, national and pan-European assessments. The MAES Explorer offers a comprehensive review of existing studies and detailed methods documentation of biophysical, economic and socio-cultural methods as well as possibilities for their integration.

STEP 5

Mapping and assessment case study applications

Find working examples where mapping and assessment of ecosystem services has been applied in specific policy and decision making processes. While a set of ESMERALDA Case Study Booklets describe the process of mapping and assessment of ecosystem services, their respective Method Application Cards synthesize the main characteristics of the applied methods.

STEP 6

Dissemination and communication

From getting your results known to the wider society, via sharing results with national and international media, to placing them across the right existing resources to make sure they reach practitioners and policy alike. Dissemination and communication has the power to create impact and make outcomes of scientific work applicable for evidence-based decision making.

STEP 7

Implementation

Learn from ESMERALDA's broad experience on how to implement the MAES process and its different components in all EU member states and associated countries. Based on that experience, recommendations on the MAES implementation are provided relatively to the various ESMERALDA products and other useful sources.

Figure 4. Final ESMERALDA brochure.

The final ESMERALDA poster resembles the design of the ESMERALDA MAES Guidance tool and represents its main features, similar to the final project brochure. The poster displayed in A0 format at conferences and events to capture the attention of the general public (Fig. 5).



Figure 5. Final ESMERALDA poster.

Throughout the project lifetime, various promotional materials were created and distributed. These are the project logo, ESMERALDA project brochure, project posters, stickers, folders, ESMERALDA cookies and chocolate, among others. All of these can be found in the Deliverable D6.1 report “Project branding and promotional materials”.

3. Conclusions and outlook

The project communication and dissemination was performed continuously throughout the whole lifetime of ESMERALDA in accordance with Deliverable D6.2 “General Communication and Dissemination Strategy and Implementation Plan”. Various communication outputs were created to ensure use of knowledge and dissemination of ESMERALDA research and findings. Both internal and external communication ensured seamless information transfer among project partners, as well as successful distribution of outputs to the general public. The number of people reached through the project website, news releases and social media are a significant verification of the broad communication and dissemination activity on ESMERALDA.

Within the next five years, the ESMERALDA website and guidance tool will be hosted and maintained by ESMERALDA partner Pensoft/WP6, in order to support the sustainable distribution of the project outcomes and to facilitate platforms for implementation of the ESMERALDA results. In order to safeguard the long-term availability and update of key ESMERALDA outcomes, the ESMERALDA MAES Explorer and the ESMERALDA MAES Methods Explorer will be hosted by the ESP (see ESMERALDA Deliverable D6.6 and Milestone 31 Part 4 reports) in future.