Report on Management Plan and Self-Assessment

Deliverable D1.6

Report on Management Plan and Self-Assessment

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Enhancing ecosystem services mapping for policy and

decision making

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Preface

ESMERALDA is a Supporting and Coordination Action aiming at helping EU member states to fulfil their obligations under the EU Biodiversity Strategy Target 2, Action 5. In order to fulfil these tasks, the project is organised around four strands i) Policy, ii) Research, iii) Application and iv) Networking. These four strands, their implementation, work and outcomes will be coordinated by the integration activities of Work Package (WP) 1. The four strands in ESMERALDA integrate the six WPs that work through four key activity phases 1) Networking and stakeholder involvement, 2) Developing flexible tools for mapping and assessment, 3) Testing of the methodology at multiple scales for multiple users, and 4) Guidance and methodologies to provide tailored solutions for policy implementation. All phases have successfully been started and carried out during the first 36 months of the project. This report gives a brief overview of the management and self-assessment of the project activities and the available resources. More detailed information about project outcomes can be found in the respective Work Package Deliverables.

Summary

All ESMERALDA project activities up to month 36 were implemented and have been going on during the subsequent project phases. The Networking and stakeholder involvement from Phase 1, for instance, goes on through the whole project duration (Figure 1).

1st phase: Identification of relevant **stakeholders** and stocktaking, collecting and linking **existing approaches** for ES mapping and assessment, creating links to existing **related projects** and **databases**;

2nd phase: Development of the **multi-tiered ES mapping and assessment methodology**;

3rd phase: Testing the developed methodology in representative thematic and biome-oriented **Workshops** and **Case studies** across EU member states;

4th phase: Feedbacks from ESMERALDA stakeholders and other relevant user groups, **methodology improvement**;

5th phase: Producing **tailored and flexible solutions** for ES mapping and assessment for policy and decision making;

6th phase: Safeguarding the **implementation** of project results in the context of the BD Strategy and Horizon 2020, including strategies for long-term implementation beyond ESMERALDA

Figure 1: ESMERALDA Project main phases.

This becomes very clear when looking at the ESMERALDA project as it stands after the consortium enlargement, now including 35 partners from altogether 26 EU member states, Switzerland and Norway. This amendment of the original ESMERALDA project facilitates a cross-European creation of ES mapping and assessment strategies in more EU MS than initially planned. The interest of these additional countries to join the consortium proves ESMERALDA's recognition and acceptance in Europe and can be seen as a significant success of the Action's implementation. Another amendment of the project's Grant Agreement is on its way in order to integrate the only two EU member states still absent in ESMERALDA, Croatia and Luxemburg.
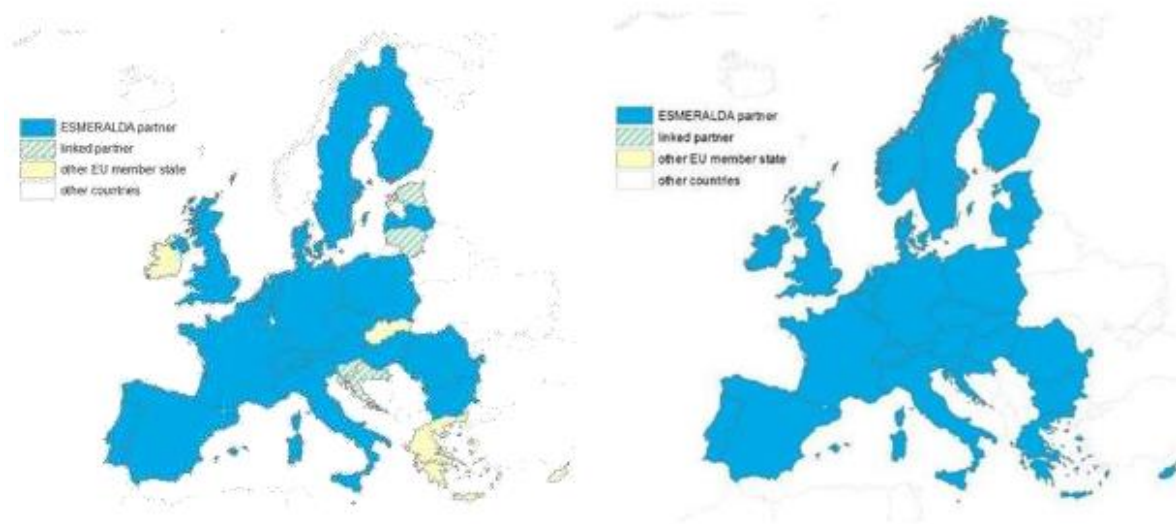
Figure 2: ESMERALDA consortium partner countries in Europe at beginning of the project 2015 (left) and at time of reporting (2018). Partners Israel and Malta are not shown in this map, Croatia's and Luxemburg's integration is currently still pending.

An efficient and strong coordination of project activities as well as a coherent and transparent administrative and financial management are mandatory for the success of such a large-scale and interdisciplinary project. It was ensured that ESMERALDA reaches its overall goals in time and all project partners were appropriately involved based on available resources. All project activities as well as the administrative and financial management were carried out according to the project's Description of Action (DoA) and did not show major derivations during the first 36 months of the project.

The main tasks of the project management and self-assessment (WP1) have been to ensure that the work of all now 35 consortium partners is carried out as planned and that the overall goals and objectives of the project are reached. The consortium management and self-assessment were carried out by the various consortium bodies, including the Management Support Team, Executive Board, Work Packages and their leaders and the General Assembly meetings.

1. Management structures

According to the project's DoA, the consortium established simple and straightforward management structures with clearly defined roles and responsibilities based on individual competencies for the respective role. The collaboration within the consortium can count on a high level of trust among partner organisations and project bodies. For the management of the different project components, Work Package Teams, the Project Executive Board and topic Panels were formed. The General Assembly and the International Advisory Board oversee project management-relevant activities and the general performance of the project, including the appropriate completion or termination of the project.

1.1. Creation of project governance

The project organisation has been established in accordance with the project's Description of Action (DoA) and consists of the Project Coordinator and the Management Support Team, the Executive Board, the Work Packages, Panels, the General Assembly and the Scientific Advisory Board. All

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projectrelevant actions are overseen by the Project Officer from the European Commission (see Figure 3).
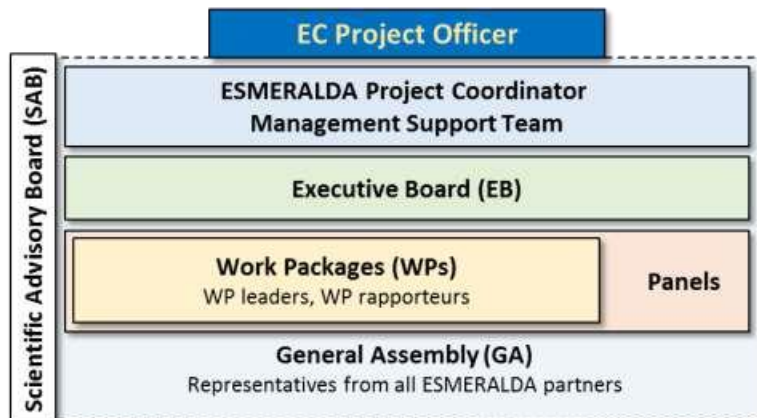

Figure 3: ESMERALDA Project Governance structure (from DoA, P. 38).

1.1.1. Project Coordinator and the Management Support Team

The **Project Management Office (PMO)** supports the coordination tasks of the project. Together with the Executive Board, it constitutes the management, assisted by the Science-Policy-Society Advisory Board (SPSAB). The PMO has initially been established at partner Kiel University (CAU). After the change of the scientific project Coordinator Benjamin Burkhard from CAU to the new ESMERALDA partner Leibniz Universität Hannover (LUH) in October 2016, the PMO was moved as well from CAU to LUH. The tasks of the part-time administrative-financial project manager Anja Uhlenbrok at CAU are carried out since then by Angie Faust at LUH. The PMO has been permanently approachable for all aspects of the day-to-day project management. The PMO is led by the Coordinator, a researcher with experience in project management, ecosystem service (ES) mapping and assessment and their implementation. It ensures that the work of the 35 consortium partners in the six work packages is carried out as planned and that the overall goals and objectives of the project are reached. The PMO also carries out daily coordination's administrative, legal and financial duties with the European Commission, the Project Officer and with all project partners. The scientific Coordinator also has support in form of two deputies, i.e. Joachim Maes (JRC) and Marion Potschin-Young (Fabis).

1.1.2. Executive Board

The Executive Board (EB) carries out the general steering of the project and takes decisions on direction and priorities of the project at the highest level. It was established in April 2015 and approved by telecommunication vote of the General Assembly. The EB has held 23 meetings until January 22nd, 2018 (see Table 1). The EB consists of the six WP leaders and a leading scientist from JRC. The EB thus includes and unites the expertise of coordination and integration (WP1, lead participant LUH), of stakeholder network and implementation (WP2, lead participant SYKE), mapping methods (WP3, lead participant UAM), assessment methods (WP4, lead participant Fabis), methods testing (WP5, lead participant UNITN), dissemination and knowledge exchange (WP6, lead participant Pensoft) and EU/MAES-relevant experience and contacts (lead participant JRC). The EB has constantly checked the finalised Deliverables and has provided support for their prompt submission. Face-to-face EB meetings took place at all project Workshops, usually one day before the Workshop started. The other meetings were held via teleconferencing (Skype). The EB is chaired by the project Coordinator and reported to the General Assembly meetings. In addition, minutes of the EB meetings are taken and communicated within the EB before they are published in the internal area of the project website.

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Table1: Overview of ESMERALDA Executive Board (EB) meetings until 31.02.2018.

EB meeting #	Date	Place (or skype)
01	25.02.2015	Skype teleconference
02	13.04.2015	Skype teleconference
03	04.05.2015	CAU Kiel
04	12.08.2015	Skype teleconference
05	15.09.2015	JRC Brussels
06	13.10.2015	Bellevue Hotel Riga
07	09.12.2015	Skype teleconference
08	05.02.2016	Skype teleconference
09	13.04.2016	Fabis
10	09.06.2016	Skype teleconference
11	19.08.2016	Skype teleconference
12	26.09.2016	CzechGlobe Prague
13	25.11.2016	Skype teleconference
14	09.01.2017	VU Amsterdam
15	14.03.2017	Skype teleconference
16	04.04.2017	UAM Madrid
17	29.05.2017	Skype teleconference
18	02.08.2017	Skype teleconference
19	20.09.2017	Skype teleconference
20	02.10.2017	Plovdiv Trimontium Hotel
21	17.11.2017	Skype teleconference
22	09.01.2018	Skype teleconference
23	22.01.2018	UNITN Trento

1.1.3. Work Packages

The six ESMERALDA Work Packages (WPs) are operating as coordinating groups for the major scientific areas of the project. Each work package has a respective leader that reports regularly (usually during the EB meetings or at ad-hoc meetings when necessary) to the EB about WP-related activities and progress. The WP leaders can delegate tasks to task leaders but are supervising the achievement of project Deliverables and Milestones as well as the timely delivery of respective reports.

1.1.4. Project Panels

One project panel has been established by the ESMERALDA EB in October 2015 dealing with "ecosystem mapping". The topic is, compared to ecosystem services mapping, slightly underrepresented in ESMERALDA. Therefore, Markus Erhard (EEA) is lead the project panel.

1.1.5. General Assembly

The General Assembly with representation of all partners was established according to the Consortium Agreement as the overall decision-making body of the project. The General Assembly is free to act on its own initiative to formulate proposals and take decisions in accordance with the procedures set out

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in the Consortium Agreement. In addition, proposals made by the Executive Board shall also be considered and decided upon by the General Assembly. Decisions like changes to the consortium plan, entry of new parties or other modifications of the Grant Agreement and its Annexes are expressly reserved to the General Assembly. It is chaired by the project Coordinator and has been constituted at the Kick-off meeting in May 2015. General Assembly meetings took place during the project Workshops in Nottingham in April 2016, in Madrid in April 2017 (see Table 2) and a final meeting is scheduled for the upcoming Workshop in Eger in March 2018.

Table 2: Overview of ESMERALDA General Assembly (GA) meetings.

GA meeting #	Date	Place	Main topics
1	06.05.2015	CAU Kiel	Project introduction and general structure
2	14.04.2016	UNOTT Nottingham	Grant Agreement amendments (EC-induced amendment, consortium enlargement amendment), finances, 1st reporting period, SPSAB recommendations
3	05.04.2017	UAM Madrid	Grant Agreement amendments, new ESMERALDA consortium members, recommendations from the SPSAB and the EC, 2nd reporting period

1.1.6. Science-Policy-Society-Advisory Board

The Science-Policy-Society-Advisory Board (SPSAB) was established based on personal invitations by the project Coordinator in the summer of 2015 and consists of individuals from either parties that are not directly involved in the project or other third parties having expertise in the fields of ESMERALDA. All three scheduled SPSAB meetings took place: on 16.09.2015 in Brussels, on 26.09.2016 prior to the ESMERALDA Workshop in Prague and on 02.10.2017 prior to the ESMERALDA Workshop in Plovdiv. The SPSAB provided very helpful and constructive support for the implementation of the project.

Table 3: Members of the ESMERALDA Science-Policy-Society-Advisory Board.

Name	Affiliation	Country	Specific expertise
Leon Braat	Alterra	The Netherlands	MAES AB, MESEU
Neville Crossman	University of Adelaide	Australia	Economic ES mapping
Markus Erhard	European Environmental Agency	Denmark/EU	MAES AB, ES mapping
Berta Martín-López	Lüneburg University	Germany	Social-ecological ES mapping
Anne Teller	DG Environment	EU	EU implementation

The SPSAB provided recommendations for the further development of ESMERALDA to the EB during the all meetings mentioned in Table 4. Meeting outcomes are document in related Milestone 5 reports. These recommendations included aspects of outreach, methods, policy impact and case studies. They became part of the project strategy and were presented to the consortium during the General Assembly meetings in Nottingham and Madrid.

Table 4: Overview of ESMERALDA SPSAB meetings.

SPAB meeting #	Place	Date	SPSAB members present	Main topics
1	JRC Brussels	16.09.2015	Berta MartinLopez, Leon Braat, Neville Crossman, Patrick Murphy for Anne Teller], Markus Erhard	Workshop Riga, ESMERALDA flexible mapping methodology, how to employ ES mapping in integrative assessment, ESMERALDA case study concept, ESMERALDA outreach activities, website
2	CzechGlobe Prague	26.09.2016	Berta MartinLopez, Markus Erhard, Neville Crossman	Updates on ESMERALDA progress and Deliverables, how to engage more countries in the MAES process, how to address the business sector and society
3	Trimontium Hotel Plovdiv	02.10.2017	Neville Crossman, Markus Erhard	Updates on ESMERALDA progress and Deliverables, Identifying flexible tools for ES mapping and assessment, testing of the tools at multiple scales for multiple users in case studies, linking ES mapping and assessment tools to relevant questions from science, policy, business, society and practice, developing guidance and tools to support ES mapping in EU member states

2. Communication

The Project Coordinator is responsible for the general communication flow between the Project Management Office, the Executive Board, all project partners, the Project Officer and the European Commission as well as relevant stakeholders. A web-based Internal Communication Platform (ICP) has been developed (Deliverable 1.2) and is frequently used for the exchange of information, datasets, results, coordination decisions, minutes of meetings, reports and other relevant information. E-mail, videoconferences and the internet are primary means of communication in the project, reducing travel costs and carbon emissions. A specific communication and dissemination strategy has been developed for ESMERALDA by WP6 (Deliverable 6.2).

2.1. Project internal communication

To ensure smooth information flow between project partners, related projects, networks and relevant stakeholders an external and internal communication platform has been created on the project website (see also ICP chapter in the more detailed Deliverable 6.1 report). The members of the EB maintain permanent communication about the implementation of the project tasks. In addition, all information relevant for the financial and legal administration of the partners is forwarded constantly by the project management office.

2.2. Exchange with the EC Project Officer

The exchange with the Project Officer is very important for the successful implementation and improves the quality of the project. A good working relationship and information in advance allows less administrative burden for the Consortium and the Project Officer. Therefore, the PMO communicates pro-actively with the Project Officer about relevant aspects of the project, such as necessary amendments of the project's Grant Agreement, the current state of work or expected deviations from the consortium progress and composition.

2.3. Exchange with other related projects and initiatives

ESMERALDA is embedded in a whole set of projects and initiatives dealing with Mapping and Assessment of Ecosystems and their Services (MAES). The co-operation with relevant projects and initiatives takes place a) on a more individual base by consortium members that are involved in various projects and initiatives, and b) a more formal way by exchanging project results (e.g. ESMERALDA MS31 about interoperability of results, i.e. BISE and OPPLA), participation and invitations to relevant events and further common initiatives. The EU-funded projects OpenNESS, Operas, MESEU and TRAIN were identified as being specifically relevant for ESMERALDA's and close co-operation and exchanges are established in order to create synergies.

On EU level, several ESMERALDA consortium partners (e.g. JRC, LUH, UAM, UPOZ, SYKE, MTA OK, UNEP WCMC, SEPA) are active members of the EU MAES Working Group and join their twice-per-year meetings in Brussels. The ESMERALDA final project Conference will be held in June 2018 in Brussels together with an extraordinary MAES Working Group meeting. ESMERALDA also actively links up with the EU outermost regions and the overseas territories. Contacts with the BEST (voluntary scheme for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services in Territories of European overseas) initiative of the EC have been established and a dedicated additional project Workshop dealing with these regions was organised in March 2017 on the Azores. Based on this, ideas and proposals for ESMERALDA spin-off projects were developed and submitted.

Table 5: Overview of identified relevant projects in the ESMERALDA context (Table as of 03/2018, still to be updated and refined).

Acronym	Project name	Web link	Duration	Relevance for ESMERALDA
Alpes	Alpine Ecosystem Services - mapping, maintenance, management	http://gecko-asemsweb.dns.boreus.de/projects/alpes/en/about/about/ecosystem-services	16/12/2015-15/12/2018	Mapping and assessment of ecosystem services for the Alpine Space area
Aquacross	Knowledge, Assessment, and Management for Aquatic Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services Across EU Policies	http://aquacross.eu	06/2015 --- 11/2018	Assessment framework on aquatic biodiversity and ecosystem services across EU policies

BESAFE	Motivations and arguments to act for biodiversity: Alternative ways to inspire innovative policy making.	http://www.besafeproject.net/	10-11/06/2017	This project produces knowledge on the interactions of policies and measures across scales, the 'translation' and 'filtering' of arguments and values from one scale to the other and from one policy phase to the next one and the influence of ecological, societal and economic context on these mechanisms
BEST	Voluntary scheme for **B**iodiversity and **E**cosystem **S**ervices in **T**erritories of European overseas	http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/biodiversity/best/index_en.htm	Ongoing	This project supports the conservation of biodiversity and sustainable use of ecosystem services including ecosystem-based approaches to climate change adaptation and mitigation in the EU Outermost Regions (ORs) and Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs)
BiodivErsA	Cooperation and shared strategies for biodiversity research programmes in Europe	http://www.biodiversa.org/2	2005-2016 ??	A great diversity of activities ranging from research mapping and programming, to stakeholder engagement, dissemination of projects' outputs and knowledge brokerage.
BIOMOT	Motivational strength of ecosystem services and alternative ways to express the value of biodiversity	http://www.biomotivation.eu	2011-2015	Economic-oriented. For biodiversity by means of a comprehensive rethinking of what value and motivation actually are for people.
BIOVEL	Biodiversity virtual elaboratory	https://www.biovel.eu	Ongoing	Integrate science & policy making; Integrate scientific domains
EKLIPSE	Knowledge & Learning Mechanism on Biodiversity & Ecosystem Services	http://www.eklipsemechanism.eu/	2016-2020	This project aims to facilitate linkages between science, policy and society, through different actions, such as knowledge synthesis, identifying research priorities, and building the Network of Networks
EU BON	Building the European Biodiversity Observation Network	http://www.eubon.eu/show/project_2731/	12/ 2012 – 05/2017	This project is collecting, managing, analyzing, and utilizing biodiversity observations and data; provide a platform for data analysis and interpretation.
ENROUTE	Enhancing Resilience Of Urban Ecosystems through Green Infrastructure	http://www.ufz.de/index.php?en=43196	12/2016-11/2018	This project aims at enhancing knowledge of structure and functions of urban Green Infrastructure (uGI) and how it can be used in policy.

ENVEUROPE	Environmental quality and pressures assessment across Europe: the LTER network as an integrated and shared system for ecosystem monitoring	http://www.enveurope.eu/	2010-2013	Ecosystem condition assessment via LTER (http://www.lter-europe.net)
EXPEER	Experimentation in Ecosystem Research	http://www.expeeronline.eu	Dec 2010 - May 2015	This project aims to bring together the major observational, experimental, analytical and modeling facilities in ecosystem science in Europe.
FUNDIVEUROPE	Functional significance of forest biodiversity	http://www.fundiveurope. eu / http://project.fundiveurope.eu	2011-2015	The platform supports communication and knowledge exchange among stakeholders, scientists, policy makers and the public regarding the understanding about the functional significance of biodiversity for the provision of forest ecosystem services in major European forest types.
GLOBAQUA	Managing the effects of multiple stressors on aquatic ecosystems under water scarcity	http://www.globaquaproject.eu/en/home/	02/2014—01/2019	Identifies the prevalence of, and interaction between, stressors under water scarcity in order to improve knowledge of relationships between multiple stressors and to improve water management practices and policies.
IMPRESSIONS	IMPACTS AND RISKS FROM HIGH-END SCENARIOS: STRATEGIES FOR INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS	http://www.impressionsproject.eu/	ongoing?	This project aims to understand of the implications of high-end climate change, involving temperature increases above 2°C, and to help decision-makers apply such knowledge within integrated adaptation and mitigation strategies
Inspiration	Towards a strategic research agenda on soil, land-use and land management in Europe.	http://www.inspirationh2020.eu/	3 years project (2015-2017).	Develops a Strategic Research Agenda (SRA) for Europe on soil, land use and land management
IPBES -EU regional assess	The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services	http://www.ipbes.net/abo ut-us	Ongoing	IPBES aims to strengthen the sciencepolicy interface for biodiversity and ecosystem services for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, long-term human wellbeing and sustainable development.

KNEU	Developing a Knowledge Network for EUropean expertise on biodiversity and ecosystem services to inform policy making economic sectors	http://www.biodiversityknowledge.eu	2012-2014	To develop a recommended design for a scientific biodiversity Network of Knowledge (NoK) to inform policymakers and other societal actors.
KNOWSEAS	The Knowledgebased Sustainable Management for Europe's Seas	http://www.knowseas.com / http://www.msfd.eu/index.html	2009- 2013	This project aims manage multiple uses of coastal and marine resources and space to help decision makers prepare spatial plans.
LIBERATION	Linking farmland Biodiversity to Ecosystem services for effective ecological intensification	http://www.fp7liberation.eu/TheLIBERATIONproject	Project ended in 2016	The LIBERATION project aims to provide the evidence-base for the potential of ecological intensification to sustainably enhance food security with minimal negative impacts on the environment.
MARS	Managing Aquatic ecosystems and water resources under multiple stress	http://www.marsproject.eu	01/02/2014-31/01/2018	This project has two groups: "water managers" assessing and restoring rivers and lakes; and policy makers drafting and implementing policies related to water
MESEU	Mapping of ecosystems and their services in the EU and its Member States	https://www.ecnc.org/projects/ecosystem-servicesand-biodiversityassessment/mapping-ofecosystems-and-theirservices/	2011-2014	This project aims to help mapping and assessment of the state of ecosystems and their services in their national territories, making best use of studies and work already undertaken at EU and Member State levels.
NEWFOREX	New Ways to Value and Market Forest Externalities	https://biobs.jrc.ec.europa.eu/new-ways-value-and-market-forest-externalities	01/12/2009 - 31/05/2014	The objectives of NEWFOREX are: 1: To provide methods for valuing forest externalities 2: To develop a methodology for assessing the cost of provision for externalities. 3: To assess several market-based methods for enhancing the provision of forest externalities
OpenNESS	Operationalisation of natural capital and ecosystem services	http://www.opennessproject.eu/	12/2012 - 5/2017	OpenNESS aimed to translate the concepts of Natural Capital (NC) and Ecosystem Services (ES) into operational frameworks that provide tested, practical and tailored solutions for integrating ES into land, water and urban management and decisionmaking.

OPERAs	Ecosystem science for policy and practice	http://www.operasproject.eu	2015-2017	OPERAs produced, refined and integrated cutting edge ecosystem service science into policy and practice.
PEGASO	People for Ecosystem-based Governance in Assessing Sustainable development of Ocean and coast	http://www.uab.cat/uabdivulga/img/PEGASO.pdf / http://www.vliz.be/projects/pegaso/	2010-2014	The main objective of PEGASO was to build on existing capacities and develop common novel approaches to support integrated policies for the coastal, marine and maritime realms of the Mediterranean and Black Sea Basins
POLIMIX	No information found		2008-2013	
QUESSA	Quantification of Ecological Services for Sustainable Agriculture	http://www.quessa.eu	2013-2017	This project aimed to quantify the ecosystem services derived from seminatural habitat that may contribute to the development of more sustainable agricultural systems for the main European cropping and farming systems
ROBIN	Role of biodiversity in climate change mitigation	http://robinproject.info/ho me/	2011-2015	This project mainly aims to maintaining ecosystem services, increasing resilience to climate change and conserving forest carbon stocks
SCALES	Securing the Conservation of biodiversity across Administrative Levels and spatial, temporal, and Ecological Scales	http://www.scalesproject.net	?	SCALES will seek ways to build the issue of scale into policy and decisionmaking and biodiversity management.
inSPIRAL	Interfacing biodiversity and policy	http://www.spiralproject.eu	?	This project aims to enhance the connectivity between biodiversity research and policy making in order to improve the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.
STEP	Status and trends in European pollinators	http://www.stepproject.net	2010-2015	Assess the current status and trends of pollinators in Europe
TRAIN	Trainbiodiverse	http://www.trainbiodiverse.com	Ongoing organization	The aim of TRAINBIODIVERSE is to monitor, evaluate and improve the quality of biodiversity in European soils and to provide critical information to political, administrative and regulative bodies to enhance policy making for European ecosystem services and agricultural production.

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TURAS	Transitioning towards Urban Resilience and Sustainability	http://www.turascities.org	2011-2016	Developing and using a geospatial information and communication technology
URBAN EEA	Experimental ecosystem accounting for urban ecosystems	www.ssb.no/en/forskning/ energi-ogmiljookonomi/baerekraftig -utvikling/experimentalurban-ecosystemsaccounting-urban-eeaimproving-the-decisionsupport-relevance-formunicipal-planning-andpolicy	2016 -201	This project aims to mapping and valuation methods will assessed in the Greater Oslo region aimed at identifying potential trade-offs and synergies in ecosystem services where green infrastructure is subject to urban development.
VOLANTE	Vision of land use transition in Europe	http://www.volanteproject.eu	2010-2014	This project aimed to understand the land use change in EU; To improve land system ASSESSMENT tools for a range of environmental and management regimes; To develop future VISIONS of the role of land management and policy decisions on the sustainability of European land systems

3. Workshop organisation

The Workshops are a key element of the Support and Coordination Action ESMERALDA. The Workshops, which take place 2-3 times per year and in different EU member states are successfully linking the project consortium members with relevant stakeholders and specific topics of ES mapping and assessment in Europe. The Workshops organised by ESMERALDA consider thematic questions, various case studies, policy themes so as to increase the potential impact of the project on mainstreaming of ES in policy and decision making (see Table 6).

The organisation of the altogether 8 thematic Workshops and the final Project Conference during the project lifetime is logistically challenging and resource-intensive. Therefore, various project partners were selected as hosts for the Workshops. Additionally, a list of recommendations and a check list for Workshop organisers were developed.

Table 6: List of ESMERALDA Workshops in the first 36 months of the project.

WS #	Place	Date	Title
1	Riga	13.10.-16.10.2015	ESMERALDA stakeholder workshop on ecosystem service mapping and assessment in EU member states at national level - Identified gaps and possible solutions-
2	Nottingham	13.04.-16.04.2016	Flexible Methods for Ecosystem Service Mapping and Assessment
3	Prague	26.09.-29.09.2016	Testing the methodology across Europe
4	Amsterdam	09.01.-12.01.2017	Testing the methodology across themes
5	Madrid	04.04.-07.04.2017	Testing the methods across biomes and regions
6	Plovdiv	02.10.-05.10.2017	Flexible methods for ES mapping and assessing
7	Trento	22.01.-25.01.2017	Testing the final methods in policy- and decision-making

3.1. ESMERALDA – Recommendations for Workshop preparations

- The Workshop preparations will start very early. Responsible task leaders, local organisers and the whole EB will commit themselves to engage in the preparations. ($\rightarrow$ Coordinator and EB support and control)
- Workshops will be prepared in good cooperation, not leaving the responsible institute(s) by themselves. ($\rightarrow$ EB, partners from respective WPs)
- Workshop agenda will be developed in a more interactive way by everybody feeding new suggestions and content to the detailed agenda rather than expecting the Workshop organiser only to provide more detail. A whole variety of expertise is needed in planning inter- and transdisciplinary workshops. ($\rightarrow$ EB, partners from respective WPs)
- Workshop organising partners together with relevant WPs (as identified in the DoA Table 1.1) are responsible for timely delivery but do not have to carry out all tasks of WS organisation themselves; instead they can delegate (especially to partners involved in Workshop-related Task(s)) but will oversee/coordinate the activities. ($\rightarrow$ Partners from respective WPs)
- Milestones and Deliverables (including reports) that are relevant for the Workshop will be ready in time, leaving sufficient time to integrate them into the Workshop programme.
- The structure and the presentations of each session will be elaborated in detail in good time to be discussed and approved by the EB. ($\rightarrow$ Coordinator will control and arrange EB meetings accordingly)
- Tasks and roles of each involved consortium member will be defined clearly and accepted beforehand by the respective persons. (Organising partner and partners from respective WPs)

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- Workshop documentation and PR work (before and after) will be organised. (→ Workshop host, EB)
- To help and support organisers of next workshops, a checklist will be prepared.

3.2. ESMERALDA Workshops – Checklist for organisers

Content-wise arrangements:

- Plan the structure of the workshop
- Plan and prepare the different sessions.
- Agree on facilitators (and vice facilitators) of sessions.
- Agree on presenters and guide them to prepare their presentations and inform them about deadlines.
- Agree on note-takers of the sessions.
- Develop needed material for the workshop work together with relevant partners.
- …

Practical arrangements:

- Plan and develop the invitations.
- Figure out who belong to the target group of the workshop in question.
- Send the invitations to expected participants.
- Agree on venue, in the venue agree on plenary rooms, smaller group work rooms, ICT rooms (if needed).
  - Take into account easy accessibility to the venue from the accommodation options.
  - Ensure the availability of enough electricity outlets for laptop use in workshop rooms.
- Agree on lunches, coffee breaks and dinners.
  - Ask for special diets in the registration. Agree on them with the catering agent.
- Arrange accommodation options with special prices.
- Arrange a conference get-together event.
- Arrange a conference dinner.
- Arrange a field trip.
  - Find an interesting place to visit.
  - Arrange bus transportation
  - Prepare detailed information of the place and the schedule.
- Arrange a photographer who will take photographs throughout the workshop.
  - Ask participants of the workshop their permission to be photographed and their picture(s) possibly posted in news items of the workshop.
- Prepare information material of the practical arrangements for the participants.
  - To be included in the advertisement of the workshop.
  - To be sent to registered people via email.
- Agree on the timetable of when the registrations
- Prepare a registration system which needs to include

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- o   Name, institute and contact information
- o   Which days the person is going to participate
- o   In which extra events the person is going to participate (get-together, conference dinner, field trip, etc.)
- o   When the person will arrive and leave
- o   Special dietary requirement
- Prepare nametags and participant lists for signatures for each workshop day.
- Arrange registration desk and agree who will be meeting the participants there.

  PR work:

- Agree on which medias will be used to disseminate o Press release
  - o   Advertisement on the project website
  - o   Advertisement on other relevant websites – discuss which they could be: other projects, institutes, networks
  - o   Social media: Facebook, Twitter
  - o   What else could it be?
- Agree on who writes a press release.
- In case of interviews, discuss who will be interviewed and agree on interviews with those people.

4. Project Reporting Strategy

A project reporting strategy has been developed in ESMERALDA for an efficient and smooth delivery of all Deliverable and Milestone reports. It explicitly describes the delivery chain from report production, report review to final upload to the European Commission's project management system (SyGMa).

The strategy contains the following 10 steps of a successful report production:

1. Task leader/Deliverable/Milestone lead author in charge for the Deliverable/Milestone prepares the report in time (see DoA when reports are due), involving project partners that are relevant/competent for the respective Task.
2. Leader of the Work Package in which the Deliverable/Milestone is located (see DoA) supervises the timely report writing.
3. In case the report is delayed, the Coordinator shall be informed and a new delivery timeline/date has to be given.
4. Work Package leader sends the report draft in good time (latest 14 days before the report is due according to the DoA) to the whole EB for review.
5. All EB members have the chance to review and comment on the report. Competent consortium partners (from outside the EB) shall also be involved in the review process, invited by the WP leader based on recommendations from report author(s) and/or the EB.

6. At least 2-3 EB members should volunteer or be appointed (based on their competence) to review the report and circulate the document (based on a review schedule, indicating dates and persons) and send it back to the WP leader, who forwards it to the Deliverable/Milestone lead author.

7. The Deliverable/Milestone lead author works in the comments and sends a final version to all EB members.

8. All EB members have the chance to check the report again and give further advice and/or recommend the coordinator approval/non approval of the report.

9. The coordinator finally approves the report and uploads it to the SyGMa online system.

10. The reports are made available via the project's ICP, the coordinator updates all consortium members on a regular base about available reports.

5. Consortium Agreement

The relationships between the 35 consortium partners and their obligations and rights with respect to each other and the project are regulated by the Consortium Agreement. The Consortium Agreement is based on the DESCA model agreement and has been concluded in January 2015. It has been signed by all consortium partners at the beginning of the project.

6. Amendments

The European Commission initiated several Grant Agreement amendments. The General Assembly was asked to vote by email and approved the amendments. During the General Assembly in Nottingham in April 2016, the following mandate was given to the Coordinator in order to facilitate future cases: "The General Assembly of ESMERALDA grants power of attorney to the Coordinator CAU to sign EC-induced amendments of the Grant Agreement. The Coordinator shall inform the partners about the amendment without delay".

The PMO was carrying out amendments of the project's Grant Agreement to include further EU member states and to apply for the respective amendment towards the European Commission. The ESMERALDA project was integrating additional partners from EU member states and associated countries (Norway and Israel, besides Switzerland which was a project partner since the beginning) that were not official partners of the consortium. Besides, due to the move of project Coordinator and PMO from partner CAU to Leibniz Universität Hannover (LUH), LUH was included as further project partner. Currently another amendment is in progress related to the integration of new partners from Croatia and Luxemburg and to handle some minor financial budget shifts.

7. Financial Management

The PMO has been acting as the direct intermediary between the partners and the European Commission. The partners have been informed about financial issues where appropriate and necessary. This especially covers the introduction of the general financial rules, continuous and periodic reporting mechanisms and the relevant project documents during project meetings and via the ESMERALDA email list. The support from the PMO includes also individual supervision of partners

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in day-to-day business where requested. Individual supervision mostly included information about eligibility criteria for financial resources. In general, the budget was spent according to the budget plan in the GA. With regards to the amendment described above, there was a need of budget redistribution from partner CAU to new consortium partners, including LUH as new coordinating partner and PMO, in order to enable them to carry out their tasks, to cover travel costs to project Workshops from the project budget.

The newest financial report will be submitted for the periodic reporting period that just ended. The PMO informed the partners about the current financial rules and the procedure of reporting. The first second periodic financial and technical report will be created after the submission of this Deliverable 1.6 report and will give an overview of the expenditures incurred.

8. Conclusions and self-assessment

ESMERALDA has been implemented successfully and has performed excellently during the first 36 months of the project's lifetime. No critical risks in general project management, objectives' achievements or financial management were identified (see Table 7).

Table 7: Critical risks for ESMERALDA implementation and first self-assessment (see project DoA Table 3.4e, p. 91).

Initial description of risk (from DoA)	Self-assessment after first 36 months of project duration
Loss of critical competencies or of key people in the project	Although there were some changes in staff (due to personnel leaving or maternity leaves at several partner organisations), key competencies could be replaced by recruiting new staff members or internally. (nomination of Deputies for respective positions). Especially the large size of the consortium, now including 35 partner organisations, helps to seek alternative internal partner.
Withdrawal of project partners	Due to the change of PI Marion Potschin-Young (WP4 lead), project partner UNOTT was terminated from the project and the tasks taken over by the new partner Fabis (with the same PI). No partners withdrew from the consortium. On the contrary, several new partners were integrated in ESMERALDA. 2 new partners are still to be integrated (amendment currently in progress).
Loss of internal communication and awareness	All partners participated regularly in project meetings and workshops. The EB meets very often and regularly and a Communication and Dissemination strategy has been developed (Deliverable 6.2).
Non-performance of partners	All partners have been very committed to the project.
Delays in critical components of the work	Almost all Milestones and Deliverables were achieved in time, some with slight delays, guaranteeing a smooth implementation of the ESMERALDA objectives. The project reporting strategy (see 4.) facilitates an efficient production, review and submission of reports. In case serious delays happen, respective management structures are in place to avoid this risk.

Low interaction with stakeholders and other related projects	ESMERALDA's interaction with stakeholders in EU member states and other related projects has been exemplary. The project has achieved a good standing in the member states, the EU MAES working group and in the scientific community. The regular Workshops held in various EU member states are helping to promote the project and its ideas across the entire EU.
Change in general direction of the coordination activities	No major activity changes have been necessary until now. The detailed consideration of the EU outermost regions and overseas territories helps to be more inclusive for these specific regions and to create spin-off projects and activities.
Economic difficulties, natural disasters	Not applicable until now.

Table 8: Overview of ESMERALDA main achievements during the first 36 months of the project including self-assessment.

Main achievements	Self-assessment after first 18 months of project duration
Management structures	All WPs were established in the first weeks of the project, task leaders and contributors were identified and integrated in ongoing tasks
	23 EB meetings (see Table 1) were held and WP leaders contributed substantially to the successful implementation of the project
	3 General Assembly meetings (Table 2) were held as scheduled, serving the communication and integration of all project partners
	3 Science-Policy-Society Advisory Board meetings (see Table 3) were held as scheduled. The SPSAB's advices were used to improve the project's performance and results' usability.
Communication	The project's website was up and running for the project kick-off meeting already and served as key communication tool with the public.
	The project's online internal communication platform (ICP) served as internal material and data repository, communication and exchange tool since the beginning of the project.
	Projects that are relevant for ESMERALDA topics (Table 5) have been identified and contacted for further co-operation.
Workshop organization	Altogether seven thematic project Workshops, the project kick-off meeting and midterm Conference were organised by different project partners and in across various EU member states. This high number of project meetings, where at usually least one representative per ESMERALDA partner organisation was participating, has been key to the successful implementation of the project.

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Project Reporting	Continuous reporting has been carried out during the whole lifetime of the project. Deliverable reports were uploaded and the achievement of Milestones was regularly documented by the Coordinator.
	Periodic reporting has been carried out in time with support of the PMO, WP leaders and administrative contacts of all partners.
Consortium Agreement Amendments	Several EC-initiated amendments took place especially in the beginning of the project.
	One major GA amendment was needed in order to integrate new partners a) caused by institutional moves of two PIs (from UNOTT to Fabis, from CAU to LUH) and b) to include EU member states, Israel and Norway which so far were not included in ESMERALDA. All amendment processes were supported by the Project Officer and the Technical helpdesk of the EC.
Financial Management	The financial reporting was carried out by all project partners with support of the PMO and, when needed, the EC help desk. Thus, an appropriate use of all resources took place.