ESMERALDA

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

Deliverable D6.4

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ESMERALDA

Enhancing ecosystem services mapping for policy and decision making

http://esmeralda-project.eu/

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Contents:

Preface

Mapping and assessment of ecosystems and their services (ES) are core to the EU Biodiversity (BD) Strategy. They are essential if we are to make informed decisions. Action 5 sets the requirement for an EU-wide knowledge base designed to be: a primary data source for developing Europe's green infrastructure; 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 ensure 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) 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 EMSERALDA.
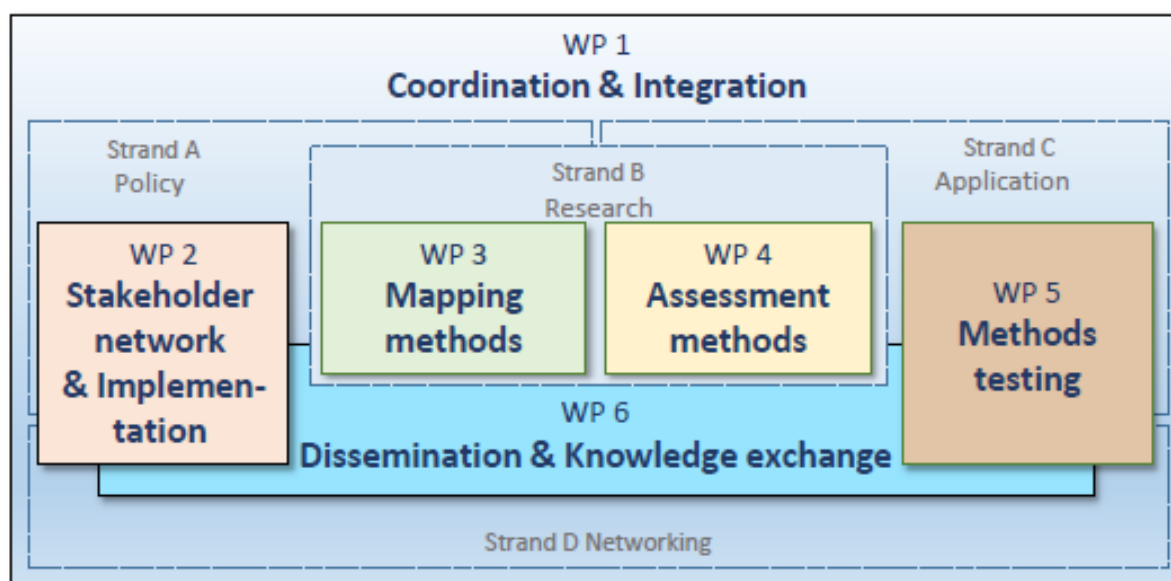

Figure 1: ESMERALDA components and their interrelations and integration within the four ESMERALDA strands.

The main objective of WP6 'Dissemination & Knowledge Exchange' is the effective dissemination and communication of ESMERALDA outcomes across stakeholders, researchers and the general public. During the whole period (1 August 2016 – 31 January 2018) all communication and dissemination

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activities were conducted in accordance with the principles defined in the Dissemination and Communication Strategy including the Implementation Plan. While in the initial project phase (February 2015 – July 2016) ESMERALDA ensured effective dissemination aimed mainly at wide outreach and awareness raising (more information available in Deliverable D6.3), the second project phase (1 August 2016 – 31 January 2018) clearly showed shift from dissemination activities towards effective communication, which has ensured increasing engagement between the project and its key stakeholders. To ensure the broadest impact and highest level of dissemination and communication, all ESMERALDA partners have been actively engaged in the process. The following report describes the communication and dissemination activities carried out to this point.

Summary

To ensure that the aims of the dissemination and communication activities within ESMERALDA are met professionally and effectively, multiple modes of dissemination based on traditional and innovative methods are used.

Up-to-date noteworthy information from ESMERALDA and on topics relevant to the project is delivered regularly through the news rubric on the project website 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 out in accordance with the project's specificities, as well as with the functionalities and requirements of each of the four social network accounts.

Project's e-newsletters providing information about the latest developments and the most important news generated by the project have been prepared and published. The newsletters were sent out to all newsletter subscribers and made public via the Media Center on the website.

The ESMERALDA Insider Rubric was complemented with six new additions, providing a great insight on the project's diverse team, bringing expertise form various fields and backgrounds.

A series of ESMERALDA Stakeholder Workshops planned to enhance the project collaboration with stakeholders took place during the reporting period.

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1. Dissemination and communication activities

1.1. ESMERALDA website

The ESMERALDA website platform (http://esmeralda-project.eu/) was created at the beginning of the project to serve as the main source of information on the project and to distribute relevant news. It continues to serve the external communication and dissemination objectives and host information on major results of the project, as well as to facilitate the communication within the consortium. The public website is regularly updated to keep the audience informed and ensure continued interest of already attracted visitors. The project online library provides access to all ESMERALDA deliverables, publications and other documents of interest. The restricted website area (ESMERALDA Internal Communication Platform, ICP) continues to support the exchange of information among project participants.

Since its creation, the project website is enjoying growing numbers of visitors. During the period 1 August 2016 – 31 January 2018 a total of 8,279 users have interacted with the ESMERALDA website, realizing more than 58,000 page views and 13,065 sessions. Out of the total visitor numbers, 37,3% are new and 62,7% are returning visitors, demonstrating that 2/3 of the website audience is engaging with project content on an on-going basis. The average page depth of the website scores 4.46 pages per session.

The geographic distribution of ESMERALDA website visits (Fig. 2) shows that the project has engaged audiences across the world. The website has been visited from a total of 146 countries, with most visitors coming from: Germany (1,807), Russia (1,068), Bulgaria (823), Italy (775), United States (681), Spain (592), United Kingdom (539), Netherlands (513), Belgium (415) and Poland (353).

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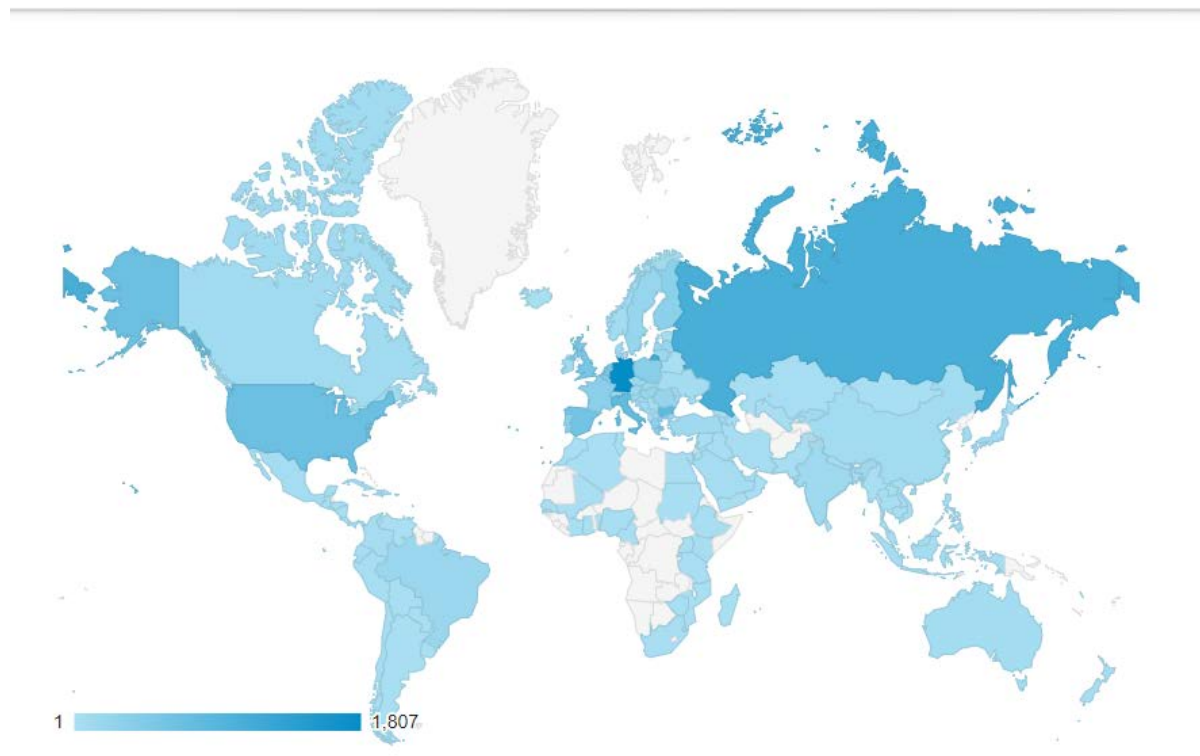
Figure 2: Map of the geographic distribution of ESMERALDA website audiences.

1.2. ESMERALDA's web-based interactive final guidance document

Following a dedicated session at the ESMERALDA Stakeholder workshop in Plovdiv (October 2017) a decision was taken to create a web-based tool to host the ESMERALDA Final Guidance document in a user-friendly and interactive environment. Instead of creating one large and heavy document, the web-tool will guide stakeholders on the basis of stages and aspects of the MAES process to allow them to easily find and access the exact information that they are looking for. The web tool will also allow for the download of the full report in a PDF format for those who would like to have it stored.

During the period between the workshop in Plovdiv and the following one in Trento (January 2018), the concept was further developed during regular online EB meetings. Preliminary design showing the functionalities and main structure of the planned tool was created (Figures 3, 4, 5) and were presented and further discussed in Trento. The final version will be documented in Deliverable D6.6 due in July 2018.
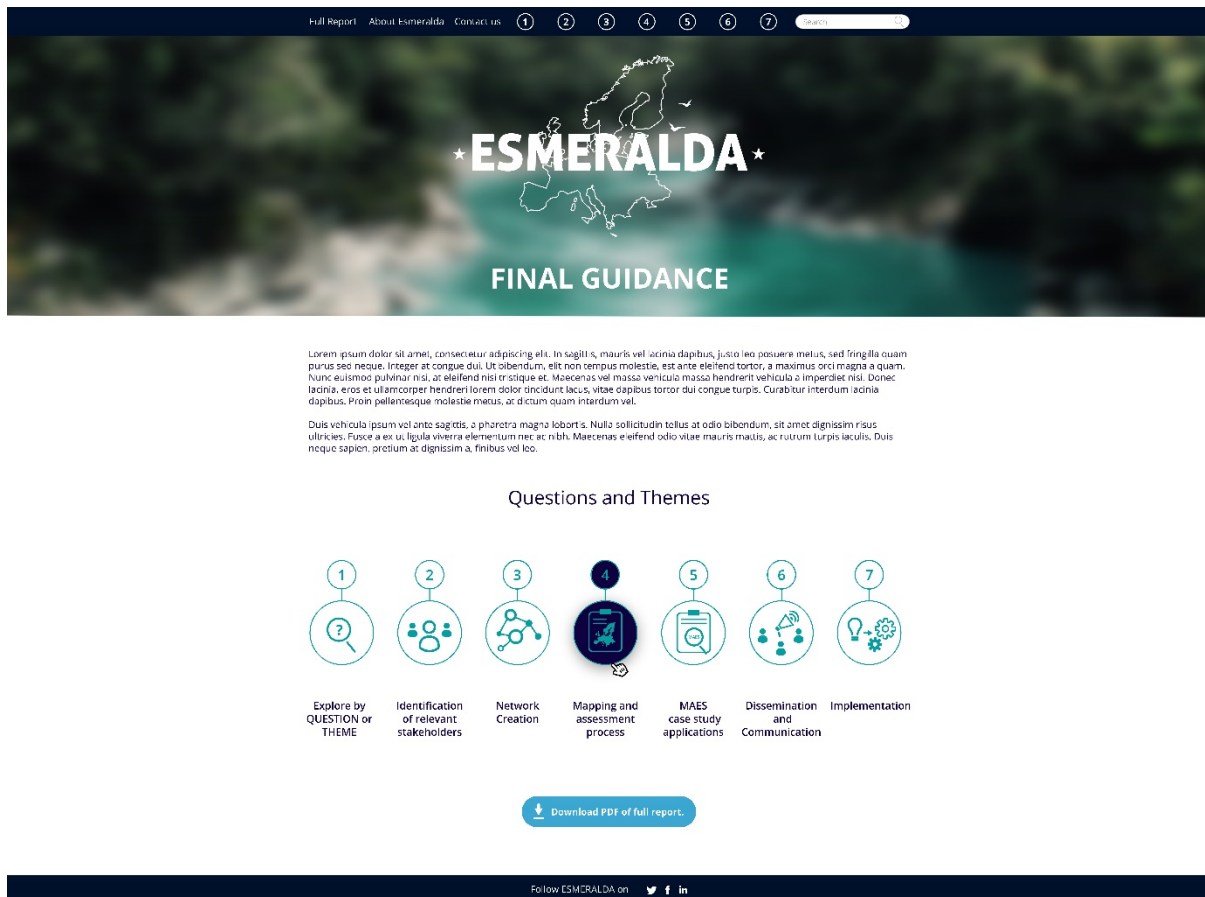
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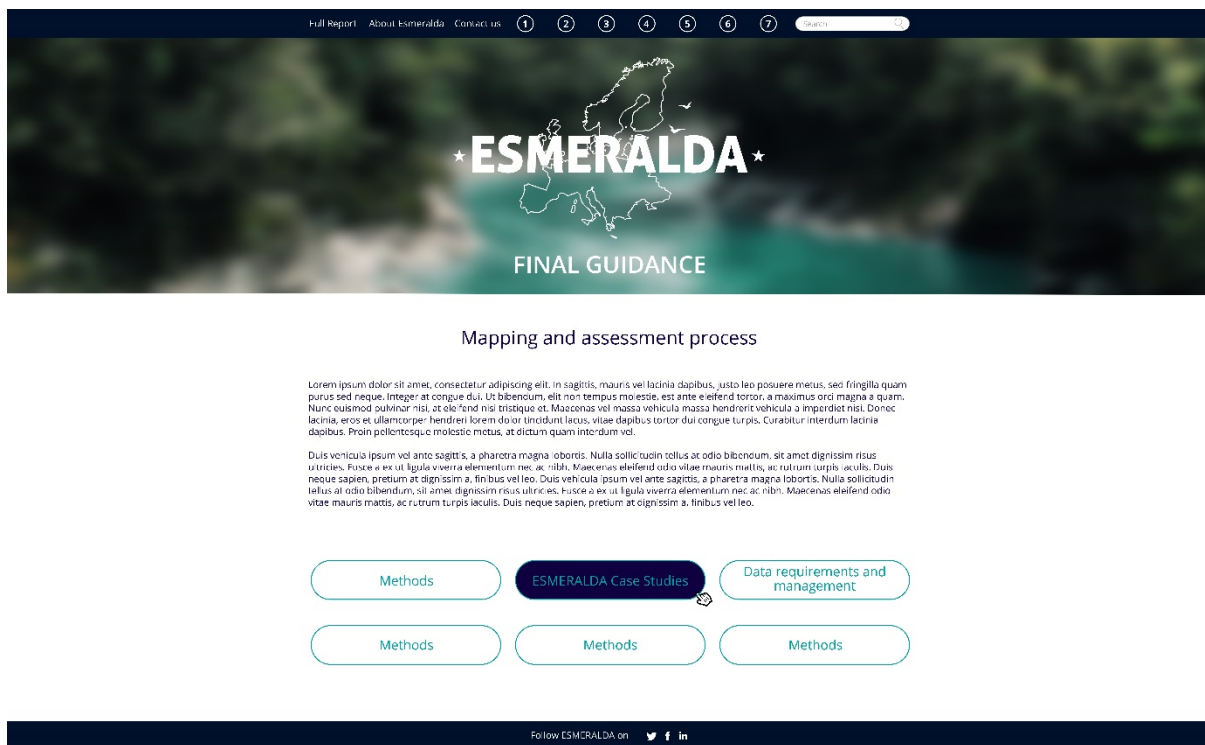Figure 3: A prototype of the ESMERALDA MAES Guidance tool homepage.

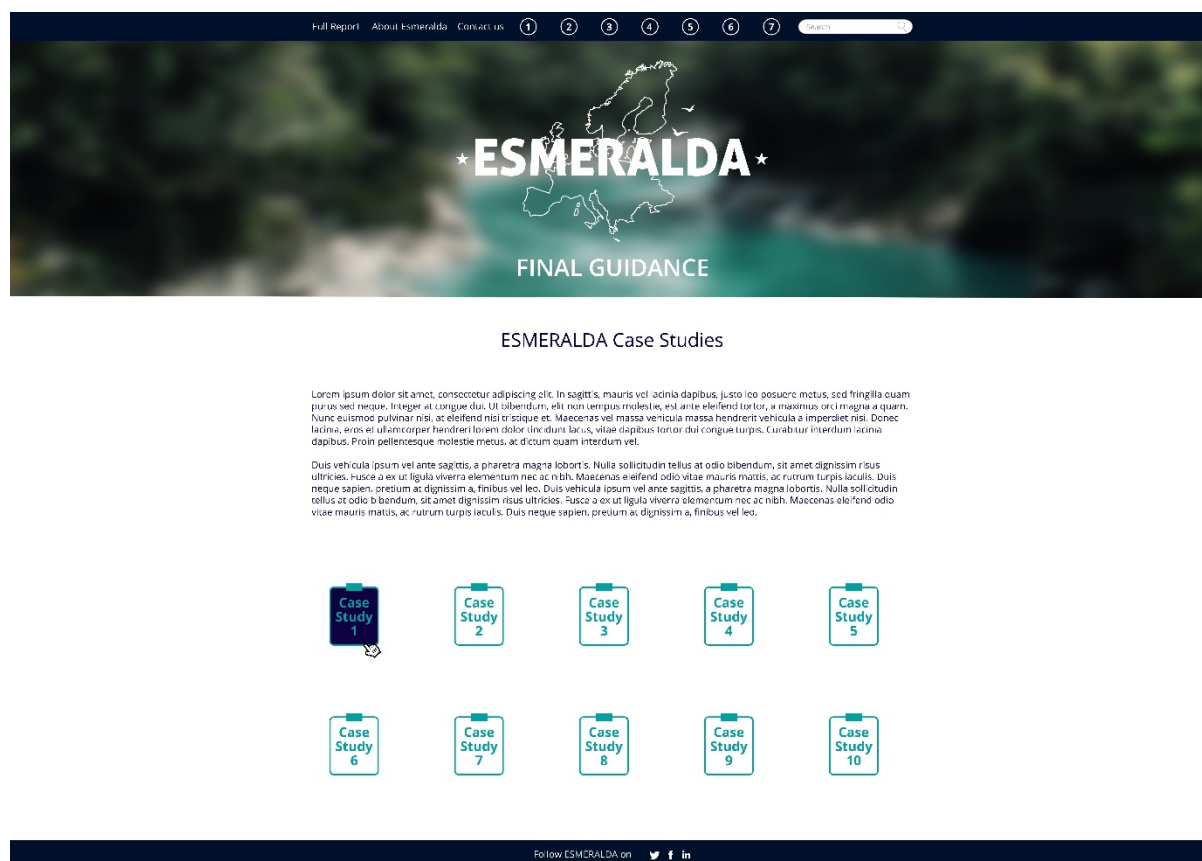Figure 4: A prototype of level two of the same tool.

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Figure 5: A prototype of level 3 of the tool where users can read a summary on the topic of choice and access specific documents and project products for further information.

1.3. ESMERALDA news and events announcements

Noteworthy ESMERALDA-relevant information was delivered to targeted audiences and the general public on a regular basis mainly through the project website. The website visitors were kept regularly informed through 22 news pieces on a number of topics (meetings outcomes, ESMERALDA-relevant articles, interviews and other news of interest). A total of 9 ESMERALDA relevant events were announced on the project website. In addition to the website, aspiring to reach out to an audience as large as possible, all news were also distributed via the ESMERALDA social media (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Google+) profiles.

1.4. ESMERALDA social media

The ESMERALDA social media accounts in Facebook, Twitter, Google +, YouTube and LinkedIn have been actively used for promotion of project results throughout the second project phase, with number of users steadily increasing. The ESMERALDA Facebook page got 67 new followers (thus a total of 131 followers). The ESMERALDA Twitter profile has had 178 tweets and has 476 followers (277 of them new). Google+ has 2 followers, while the LinkedIn account has 36 members. Twitter has been used at conferences with a dedicated hashtag (#MadridESM; #EUORsOCTs; #ESMPLOVDIV, etc.) to ensure

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that live updates are provided during project meetings and that participants can share their views and highlights.

1.5. ESMERALDA e-newsletter

During the period from August 2016 to January 2018, two issues (3 and 4) of the ESMERALDA e-newsletter have been published (November 2016 and December 2017). The newsletters contain news, details on project events, results and facts, publications and other activities, which are of interest to the project stakeholders and the general public and can help increase the project visibility. The newsletters are sent out to all newsletter subscribers, the ESMERALDA consortium and Advisory Board members. The newsletters were also made public via the Media Centre on the website.
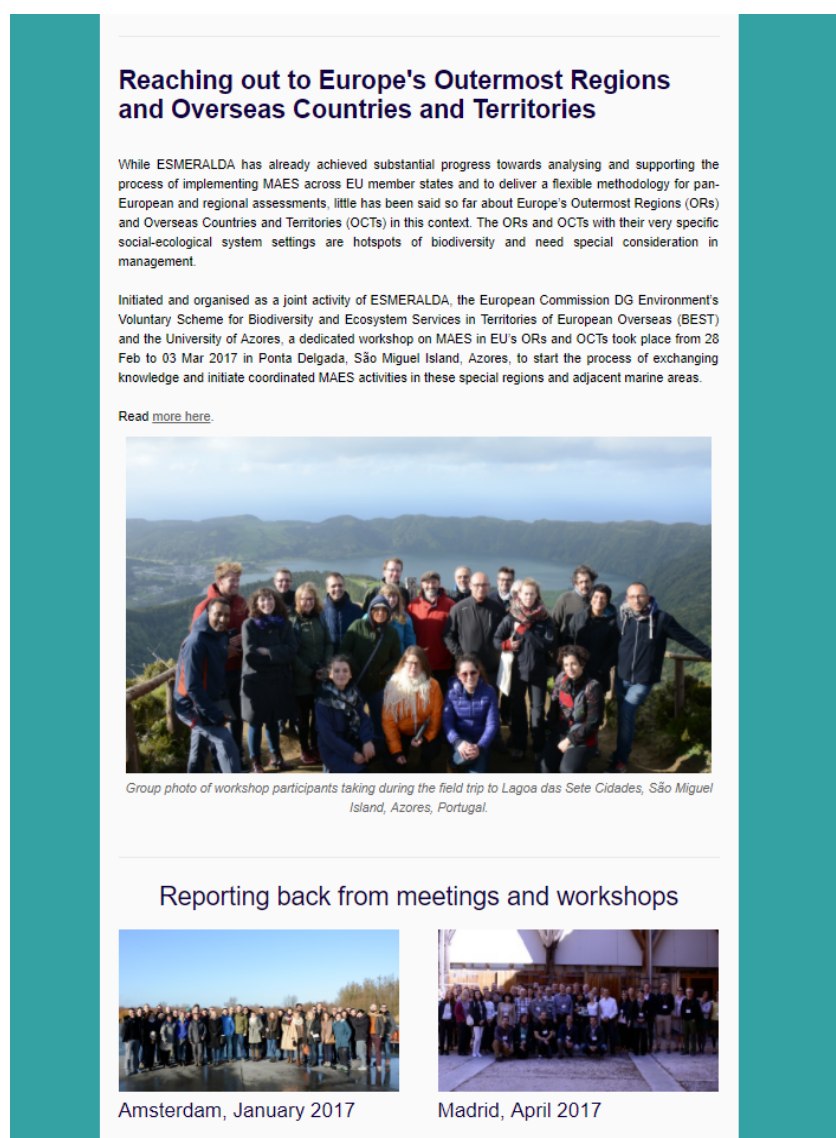

Figure 6: ESMERALDA e-newsletter.

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1.6. ESMERALDA interviews

New additions to the [Insider rubric](#) launched in May 2016 give you the opportunity to learn more about the life, interests and research of the ESMERALDA scientists. The last six additions to the rubric – Joachim Maes (project officer, Joint Research Center of the European Commission), Marion Potschin-Young (director of Fabis Consulting, WP4 leader), Davide Geneletti (Associate Professor of Spatial Planning at the University of Trento, WP5 leader), Pavel Stoev (Editorial Director at Pensoft Publishers, WP6 leader), Fernando S. Martín (Senior Researcher at the Autonomous University of Madrid, WP3 leader) and Leena Kopperoinen (Senior Researcher at the Finnish Environment Institute SYKE, WP2 leader) – shared their research interests in fields varying from speleology and supporting decision-making to communication and social impacts ecosystem services approaches as well as their research passions and their motivation to work within the project.
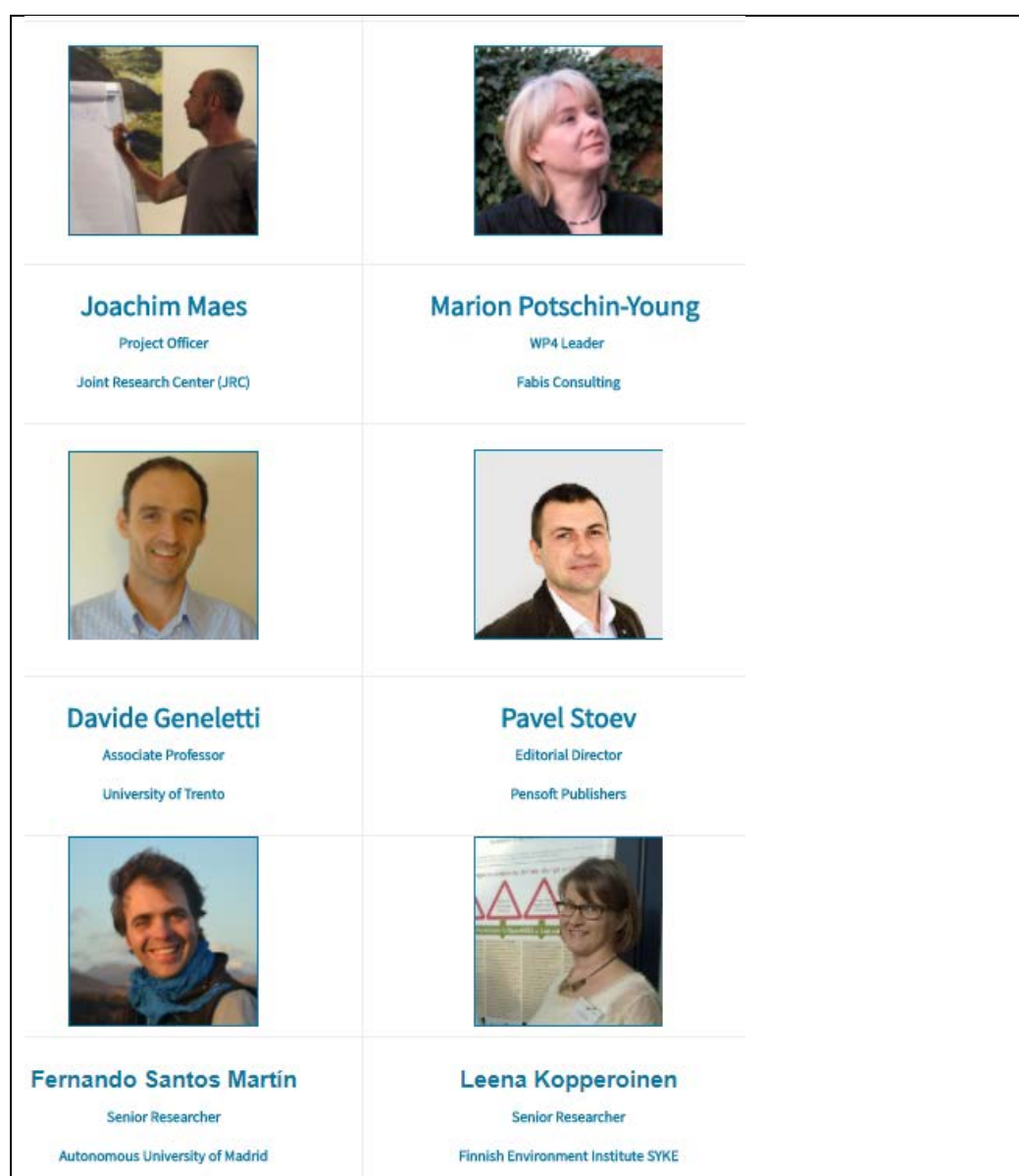

Joachim Maes	**Marion Potschin-Young**
Project Officer	WP4 Leader
Joint Research Center (JRC)	Fabis Consulting
Davide Geneletti	**Pavel Stoev**
Associate Professor	Editorial Director
University of Trento	Pensoft Publishers
Fernando Santos Martín	**Leena Kopperoinen**
Senior Researcher	Senior Researcher
Autonomous University of Madrid	Finnish Environment Institute SYKE

Figure 7: ESMERALDA insider rubric examples.

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1.7. ESMERALDA stakeholder engagement

One of the aims of ESMERALDA is to support national stakeholders in order to fulfil their tasks within the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2020. Target 2 Action 5 of the strategy asks all EU member states to map and assess ecosystems and the services they provide within their national territories. ESMERALDA aims to further develop a flexible methodology for mapping of ecosystems and ecosystem services to provide building blocks for pan-European, regional and local assessments as contributions to the EU Biodiversity Strategy.

ESMERALDA will provide:

- a set of practical policy recommendations, based on thematic case studies carried out in the project;
- a set of recommendations for the future development and implementation of related policies;
- practical guidance, data and tools for using biodiversity and ecosystem-related data in other policies.

Stakeholder engagement is therefore key for ESMERALDA in order to identify needs within the individual member states and to provide the right support and coordination for related activities, to fulfil requirements of policy making and to integrate them into the project research.

The **first ESMERALDA Stakeholder Workshop** took place from 13 to 16 October 2015 in Riga, Latvia, as the first of a series of events planned to enhance the project collaboration with stakeholders. The event brought together project partners and stakeholders to discuss the state and gaps of ecosystem service mapping and assessment activities in their countries, and the ways ESMERALDA outputs can feed into their work to achieve Action 5 of the EU Biodiversity Strategy. The event was attended by over 70 participants – policy and decision makers, as well as other professionals working in the field of ecosystem services, from across EU member states. More details about the workshop can be found in the workshop video report.

With the aim of supporting EU countries in the Mapping and Assessment of Ecosystems and their Services (MAES) process, ESMERALDA held a dedicated workshop to look at and discuss existing methods and how they could be used as part of an integrated assessment. The **ESMERALDA workshop "Flexible Methods for Ecosystem Service Mapping and Assessment"** took place from 14 to 16 April 2016 in Nottingham, UK and brought together 51 representatives from countries across Europe, including all ESMERALDA partners, together with potential new consortium members. Using results from existing and ongoing project reports, participants looked at developing a common understanding within ESMERALDA of methods for mapping and assessing ecosystems and their services, and how they could be used in the context of different ecosystem types, services, "tiers" and spatial scales, cross-referenced to the CICES framework. A video report gives more information about the workshop and its outcomes.

The next ESMERALDA Workshop was dedicated to testing methods for mapping and assessment of ecosystem services identified in the second project phase using real-world case studies. Taking place from 26 – 29 September 2016 in Prague, Czech Republic, **ESMERALDA Workshop "Testing the methods across Europe"** was attended by about 60 project partners and stakeholders, who have been

directly involved in the case studies, and who provided valuable feedback on the suitability of the methods to be used in different decision-making processes. Focused on understanding how the selected methods have been applied in three case studies from Latvia, Czech Republic, and Germany, the overall purpose of the Workshop was to start drafting ESMERALDA's flexible ecosystem services mapping and assessment methods data base, for which among others specific "method cards" were applied. The methods collection resulting from the various ESMERALDA Workshops, was gradually compiled and revised during the course of the project and integrated into a holistic flexible methodology for ES mapping and assessment.

From 9 to 12 January 2017, ESMERALDA held the next of a series of planned project workshops aimed at testing the flexible ecosystem services (ES) mapping and assessment methodology under development using real-world case studies. The **ESMERALDA Workshop** "Testing the methods across themes" **in Amsterdam,** Netherlands aimed to collect feedback on the suitability of the various methods to be used in different decision-making processes. During the workshop, the 60 participants, both project partners and stakeholders, received an update on the latest developments of the consortium and the flexible methodology developed within ESMERALDA, and had the opportunity to contribute to the methods classification, database generation and methodology development during different break-out sessions. The overall aim of the workshop was to explore whether the selected methods have the flexibility required to promote the integration of ecosystem services in a variety of policy themes relevant across the European Union.

The ESMERALDA workshop series continued in April (4 to 7) 2017 with the next **ESMERALDA Workshop in Madrid**, Spain, dedicated to specific European biomes and regions. ESMERALDA project partners and stakeholders met to discuss latest developments in the project, to test ecosystem services mapping and assessment methods across European biomes and regions and to plan future actions. During the first day, ESMERALDA partners had the opportunity to present latest project results. Special focus was placed on presenting the progress in developing ESMERALDA's Flexible Methodology for Mapping and Assessment of Ecosystem Services (MAES). Another hot topic was the development of a Europe-wide database to track the progress of MAES methods development and implementation across member states. The second Workshop day was used for a field visit of the Guadarrama National Park and its mountain range, containing some ecologically very valuable areas providing numerous ecosystem services. Case studies on different spatial scales and varying biomes from Spain, Bulgaria and the Azores and the methods tested within them were presented and discussed with Workshop participants on the third day, where also a dedicated session on marine ecosystem services mapping was organised. During a special stakeholder panel discussion organised during the last day, practitioners and policy makers had the opportunity to give their direct feedback about the presented results of ESMERALDA.

From 2 to 5 October 2017, in **Plovdiv, Bulgaria**, the ESMERALDA project met with key stakeholders from the EU member states, the European Commission and Science-Policy-Society Advisory Board members to present a final version of its ecosystem services mapping and assessment methodology, and collect feedback and ideas for improvements and implementation. Altogether 70 participants attended the **ESMERALDA Workshop "Flexible methods for ES mapping and assessing – final version"**. In a session dedicated to ESMERALDA support and coordination for MAES implementation and application, the participants split into four breakout groups to discuss four key areas of further developing the flexible methodology and tiered approach for mapping and assessment of ecosystems

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and their services, including: i) Ways in which ESMERALDA can support EU member states during the final year and beyond the project and ideas how the national support groups could activate themselves and build national actor networks that carry on the support actions and provide discussion for the long-run; ii) Useful methods and tools for mapping and assessment of ecosystems and their services; iii) Possible structure and content of guideline documents and tools to support the applications of ecosystem services mapping and assessment methods by policy, decision-makers from business and practice as well as science and the society; iv) Indicators to measure progress on phase 1 and phase 2 of Action 5 of the EU Biodiversity Strategy's Target 2. Coming back from this meeting, the participants from the 37 ESMERALDA partner organisations from across 31 different European countries were using the feedback to create a roadmap for integration of the recommendations for the last project phases and towards implementation in practise of policy and decision making.

The **ESMERALDA Workshop "Testing the final methods in policy- and decision-making"** took place from 22 to 25 January 2018 in Trento, Italy. Its main aim was to test the final version of the flexible methodology in policy- and decision-making in real-world case studies. This continued the work of testing the first version of the flexible methodology conducted during the Workshops held in Prague, Amsterdam and Madrid, building also on the revisions and feedback from stakeholders collected at the Plovdiv Workshop. The workshop participants included project partners and stakeholders directly involved in the case studies. The project members were actively involved in coordinating the activity towards achieving the final ESMERALDA Deliverables while the stakeholders shared their experience with the case study, and provided feedback on the different ESMERALDA products.

It is worth mentioning that ESMERALDA was represented at the **MAES Conference "Mapping and assessment of ecosystem services – Science in action"** held in Sofia, Bulgaria on 6 and 7 February 2017. The event brought together 133 experts from 21 countries. The conference focused on mapping and assessment of ecosystems and their services across the different countries represented at the event. MetEcoSMap presented their work on the development of a methodological framework and application results for mapping and assessment of ecosystem services in Bulgaria. ESMERALDA was represented at the event by several consortium partners who spoke on the integrated mapping and assessment of ecosystems and their services and shared ESMERALDA research in keynote speeches.

While ESMERALDA has already achieved substantial progress towards analysing and supporting the process of implementing MAES across EU member states and to deliver a flexible methodology for pan-European and regional assessments, little has been said so far about Europe's Outermost Regions (Ors) and Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs) in this context. The Ors and OCTs with their very specific social-ecological system settings are hotspots of biodiversity and need special consideration in management. Initiated and organised as a joint activity of ESMERALDA, the European Commission DG Environment's Voluntary Scheme for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services in Territories of European Overseas (BEST) and the University of Azores, **a dedicated workshop on MAES in EU's Outermost Regions and Overseas Countries and Territories** took place from 28 Feb to 03 Mar 2017 in Ponta Delgada, São Miguel Island, Azores, to start the process of exchanging knowledge and initiate coordinated MAES activities in these special regions and adjacent marine areas. During the 3 days workshop, the 26 participants, including representatives of Europe's Ors&OCTs, including the Azores, French Guiana, Canary Islands, Martinique, Bonaire and Reunion, presented their work on assessing biodiversity, ecosystems and their services. The BEST initiative also outlined its ongoing projects in the OR&OCTs, as well as plans for future developments. Partners from ESMERALDA presented the

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project's implementation strategy, results and progress towards creating a flexible MAES methodology. The project also hosted practical workshops on application of the ESTIMAP model on recreation and pollination ecosystem services, application of the RIOS model for watershed management for ecosystem services, a participatory GIS session and a session dedicated to marine ecosystems. This workshop was only a first step towards exchanging knowledge, creating mutual understanding and establishing respective supporting and coordination scheme for MAES implementation in EU's Ors&OCTs and marine areas. Further workshops, staff and student exchanges and common case studies were planned during the event on the Azores.

Finally, ESMERALDA was presented at the **9th Ecosystem Services Partnership (ESP) World Conference** which took place in Shenzhen, China, from December 11-15, 2017. This conference was under the theme "Ecosystem Services for Eco-civilization: Restoring connections between people and landscapes through nature-based solutions". ESMERALDA was well-represented among the about 400 delegates from 49 countries. Altogether 12 project collaborators from 8 partner institutions and 2 advisory board members were active organizing the conference, hosting thematic sessions and giving presentations. ESMERALDA was additionally represented with flyers and other promotional materials at the 2016 and 2017 editions of the BEES Xmas Market (taking place annually in December), a forum aiming to bring together people from academia, public administration and civil society, from Belgium and abroad, with one common interest: ecosystem services.

1.8. Other contributions to dissemination

Mapping Ecosystem Services – the book Mapping Ecosystem Services published in March 2017 provides a comprehensive collection of theories, methods and practical applications of ecosystem services (ES) mapping, for the first time bringing together valuable knowledge and techniques from leading international experts in the field. Published by Pensoft, the book is both available in an online open access version via the publisher's Advanced Books platform, and can be ordered in paperback and hardback format.

Targeting an audience broader than just the research community, the new Mapping Ecosystem Services book provides in eight chapters insights in ES and mapping theory, ES quantification and mapping methods and tools and related uncertainties, in combination with examples of application in practice.

Burkhard B, Maes J (Eds) (2017) Mapping Ecosystem Services. Advanced Books. https://doi.org/10.3897/ab.e12837

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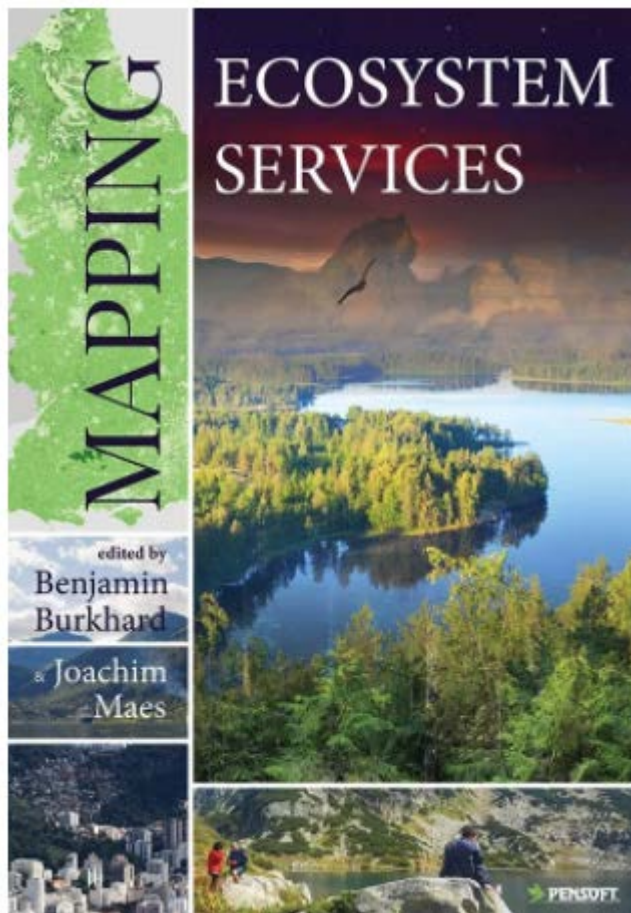
Figure 8: Mapping Ecosystem Services Book cover.

The Mapping Ecosystem Services Book has attracted great interest. It has almost 20 000 views in less than a year.
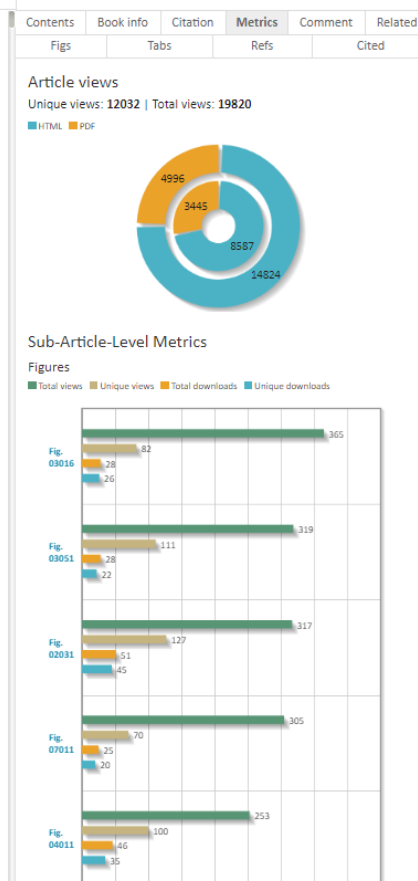
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Figure 9: Mapping Ecosystem Services Book views.

2. Future outlooks

The project dissemination and communication activities will be performed on a continuous basis throughout the project lifetime and in accordance with D6.2 General Communication and Dissemination Strategy and implementation plan.

Pensoft will develop **a website-based online tool** (Deliverable D6.6 due M42) to host the final ESMERALDA Guidance document in a concise and interactive manner, providing stakeholders and other future users with multiple entry points for easy access to a focused information.

A **Special Issue** covering various aspect of the project will be published in the innovative open access journal One Ecosystem.

A new newsletter strategy will ensure the posting of **newsletters 5, 6, 7 in the form of short and attractive bulletins** revolving around major project results and events - the final meeting in Brussels, the launch of the Esmeralda final guidance website and the special issue publication. The effect of these will be multiplied by reaching out to media and new publics via the publication of three press releases respectively. These will be issued via the biggest science newsroom Eurekalert and through the official European Commission news distributor CORDIS wire. Press releases will be also issued on

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demand by partners who would like to share their results or popularize research papers. PR campaigns will be enhanced through targeted posting via the project's social media accounts.

A **stand is planned to be booked for the ESP conference** in Jordan in April 2018 and in Spain in October 2018 to showcase major results and products.