

## 7<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Ecosystem Services partnership

*Local action for the common good*

8-12 September 2014, Costa Rica

### SESSION DESCRIPTION

#### Title of session:

Information technology to support ecosystem services research and practice.

#### Hosts:

	Name	Organisation	E-mail
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#### Abstract:

There is a proliferation of tools developed and used by the ecosystem services (ES) community using open access software and following open data sharing principles in an effort to facilitate the flow of information to all involved parties, including other scientists, policy-makers and practitioners. Recent reviews have showed that these tools share commonalities, yet they contribute to the ES landscape in different ways addressing different user requirements. The existing tools are focusing: a) on providing users with models for ES quantification, mapping or economic valuation (e.g. InVest, ARIES, MIMES), b) on providing catalogues of existing ES assessments (e.g. IPBES catalogue of assessments, MESP library), or c) on specific thematic components of ES like a tool publishing carbon storage maps (e.g. Blue Carbon portal, Ecometrica Carbon tool).

Within the ESP TWG on mapping ES, we are developing a tool for visualisation and sharing of ES maps and relevant metadata under the [esp-mapping.net](http://esp-mapping.net) address. Going beyond the development of this tool we identified relevant initiatives and focused on establishing an interoperable system that will be able to exchange such information between the different tools. This on-going exercise revealed once again the inconsistency in terminologies and technologies used in the ES field justifying the need for a standardised ES "nomenclature". Many efforts have already been carried out towards this direction, but it seems that when this comes to practice, rare are the cases in which the existing tools share identical ES classification systems and ontological concepts.

The goal of this session is to open a dialogue among users and developers of ES-related tools, focusing on both technologies and ontological concepts used and whether these could (or should) be standardised to facilitate the dialogue both with the ES community and beyond.

We do not believe that there is a one-solution-fits-all in the concept of ES. However, if we want to make the existing systems sustainable, we need to make sure that sooner or later this community allows for interoperability among the existing systems, in order to facilitate the actual use of these tools by ES practitioners.

We mostly welcome participants with experience in developing or using ES related tools to share their experiences and participate in the upcoming discussions.