

ESPA's Vision



The [ESPA Directorate](#) provides scientific leadership to the United Kingdom's Ecosystem Services for Poverty Alleviation (ESPA) Programme. This document provides a vision for ESPA and how its research will improve the lives of poor people around the world. The Directorate has produced a series of vision statements of different lengths and detail that can be used by the ESPA community.

If any of these statements are reproduced in documents for the ESPA programme, they should be copied and quoted with a reference to ESPA's vision documents at www.espa.ac.uk/vision.

In addition to these vision statements, the ESPA Directorate has produced a view of how the world might view ESPA's research in the future, five years after the programme is scheduled to end. You can read how the Directorate hopes our research will be seen in 2022 at www.espa.ac.uk/2022.

Short Vision Statement

[ESPA](#)'s world-class research will provide new knowledge demonstrating how ecosystem services can reduce poverty and enhance well-being for the world's poor.

Single Paragraph

[ESPA](#) is an international research programme providing evidence of how ecosystem services can support well-being and sustainable poverty alleviation among poor people in low-income countries. Our [projects](#) are interdisciplinary, linking the social, natural and political sciences to address a series of focused research questions and evidence challenges. They are delivered through collaborative partnerships involving the world's best researchers from developing and developed countries. ***ESPA's success will be measured by the way that its research can be turned into results that benefit the poor.***

Multiple Paragraph

[ESPA](#) is an international research programme designed to provide evidence of how ecosystem services can reduce poverty and enhance well-being for poor people in developing countries around the world. ESPA's research is funded by the UK's Department for International Development ([DFID](#)), Economic and Social Research Council ([ESRC](#)), and Natural Environment Research Council ([NERC](#)), and is accredited as part of the Living with Environmental Change Programme ([LWEC](#)).

Projects will be collaborative and include the full and equitable participation of developing country scientists to address a set of critical research questions and evidence challenges. ESPA's research will adopt an interdisciplinary systems-based approach and will work at a range of spatial and temporal scales to provide a step-change in our understanding of the links between ecosystems, the services they provide and the values that can be derived from them by the poor.

ESPA's researchers will work closely with policy makers, Non-governmental Organisations, the private sector and community groups in developing countries to ensure that ESPA's excellent research is turned into impact that results in significant improvements to the lives of poor people.

The ESPA Directorate will support projects to deliver excellent research in ways that will change lives. The Directorate's Global Forum will support a number of events aimed at building capacity and strengthening the community of ESPA researchers. The Directorate will also provide scientific leadership for the programme by identifying gaps in knowledge, and bringing together results from individual projects and the wider literature to ensure that the programme provides the best possible evidence and advice to potential users of ESPA's research. There will be further support for projects to maximise impact through improved communication, evaluation and turning research into use.

Full Vision Statement

[ESPA](#) is committed to delivering science that improves the lives of poor people around the world. People are at the heart of all of our interdisciplinary research and we believe that our approach will deliver the evidence which is essential to ensure that the full value of ecosystem services is recognised both in policy and in practice in developed and developing countries around the world. When this is achieved, the full value of ecosystem services for poverty alleviation will be realised and captured to benefit millions of poor people in all regions of the world.

ESPA is an international research programme providing evidence of how ecosystem services can reduce poverty. ESPA will bring together some of the world's best researchers to address a set of critical research questions and evidence challenges. ESPA's researchers will work closely with policy makers, Non-governmental organisations (NGOs), the private sector and community groups in developing countries to ensure that research is turned into results that deliver significant improvements to the lives of the poor.

ESPA is funded by the UK's Department for International Development ([DFID](#)), Economic and Social Research Council ([ESRC](#)), and Natural Environment Research Council ([NERC](#)), and is accredited as part of the Living with Environmental Change ([LWEC](#)) Programme. ESPA researchers will work across traditional disciplinary boundaries to provide a step-change in our understanding of the crucial linkages between ecosystems, the services and benefits they provide and the value of these and associated benefits that can be derived by poor people.

All projects will be collaborative, based on strong partnerships and will require the full and equitable participation of developing country scientists. Where necessary, a range of capacity strengthening activities will be supported by the programme to ensure this. Research teams will be expected to demonstrate innovative new ways of conceptualising and implementing their research. Importantly, all projects will be required to consider the environmental impact of their work, including travel which will be restricted to what is necessary, reducing ESPA's global environmental impact as well as delivering enhanced value for money.

The [ESPA Directorate](#), led by Professor Paul van Gardingen at the University of Edinburgh, will support researchers and projects to deliver excellent research. The [Global Forum](#) will bring the ESPA community together in a series of events, such as workshops, seminars and conferences and a series of ESPA Impact Fellowships. The [Knowledge Team](#), led by Professor Georgina Mace at Imperial College London, will provide the scientific leadership for the programme, identifying gaps and opportunities for the programme to deliver the world-class research that will change lives. The Directorate's own researchers will help analyse research bringing together results from individual projects and the wider literature to ensure we deliver the best possible evidence and advice to potential users of ESPA's research. The ESPA International Programme Advisory Committee ([I-PAC](#)) is co-chaired by Dr Atiq Rahman from the Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies and Professor Kate Brown from the University of East Anglia. The I-PAC has representatives from each ESPA region and will provide advice to the ESPA programme on how best to deliver research excellence with impact.

ESPA is an inclusive programme that will deliver results through partnership. Our approach includes being open to work with all researchers, policy makers and practitioners that share our vision. ESPA events – both virtual and in real-time – will be open to people who have not been funded by ESPA and most events will be recorded on video to make them accessible to all. The ESPA Directorate will seek to develop strategic partnerships with research funders, policy makers, NGOs and the private sector from around the world to enhance the overall reach and impact of the programme.

This document has been produced by the Directorate of the Ecosystem Services for Poverty Alleviation ([ESPA](#)) Programme. ESPA is a programme funded by the Department for International Development ([DFID](#)), Economic and Social Research Council ([ESRC](#)) and Natural Environment Research Council ([NERC](#)), as part of the UK's Living with Environmental Change programme ([LWEC](#)). The ESPA Directorate is a partnership between the [University of Edinburgh](#), [Imperial College London](#), [The University of Oxford](#) and the International Institute for Environment and Development ([IIED](#)). The ESPA Directorate is hosted by [Research into Results](#), a wholly-owned subsidiary company of the University of Edinburgh, responsible for the delivery of research and project management services in the area of international development. The views expressed here are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of the ESPA programme, Research into Results, The University of Edinburgh, Partners in the ESPA Directorate, LWEC, NERC, ESRC or DFID.



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