

ESPA Science Conference 2012

19–20 November, 2012



[Charles Darwin House](#), 12 Roger Street, London, WC1N 2JU

Goals:

1. To bring the ESPA and ESPA-related research community up to date with developments in ESPA science, including new results, new projects, tools and approaches.
2. To engage plenary speakers, panellists and participants in a discussion of topics relevant to the achievement of poverty alleviation driven by ecosystem services.
3. To provide an opportunity for researchers working on ES- and/or PA-related work to meet and interact with others working on similar issues.

Day 1: Monday 19th November

11.00 Interactive demonstrations of tools, models, games relevant to ESPA research

A number of researchers demonstrated models and tools used for their projects.

12.00 Introduction from Paul van Gardingen

The ESPA Director welcomed the participants and outlined the ESPA programme so far.

12.10 Ben Ramalingam – [Complex systems and international aid](#)

The assumptions and practices that exist in the system of international aid often rely on simplified problems that can be directly tackled. In reality, development is a complex process, depending on iterative learning and social networks. A number of ESPA projects were highlighted as demonstrating complexity in their theories and tools.

14.00 Professor Ian Bateman – [Economics and ecosystem management](#)

Economics is often misunderstood as being equivalent to accountancy, but valuation is a critical tool to support decision-making. Financial valuations are not necessarily the ideal metric, but are often the 'least-worst' choice.

15.00 ESPA Deltas Project: [Assessing health, Livelihoods, ecosystem services in populous deltas](#), PI Robert Nicholls

Overview of the ESPA consortia project which is looking at ecosystems and wellbeing in the deltas of Bangladesh under many drivers.

15.30 ESPA ASSETS Project: [Attaining Sustainable Services from Ecosystems through Trade-off Scenarios](#), PI Guy Poppy. Presentation by Carlos Torres Vitolas and Simon Willcock

The ASSETS project will explore the links and tradeoffs between ecosystem services and food security for communities living at the forest-agriculture interface, in Malawi and Colombia

16.30 ESPA Project: [Dynamic drivers of disease](#), PI Melissa Leach

Studying ecosystem services and wellbeing, especially health. Case studies of four zoonotic diseases in Africa.

Day 2: Tuesday 20th November

09.00 ESPA Project Framework Grant poster session

The ESPA PFG projects were small projects lasting up to 2 years which explored the fundamental concepts of ESPA. During this session, groups of participants reviewed posters prepared by the projects and discussed the frameworks with the researchers.

12.00 Feedback from groups

Key points from the discussion groups were:

1. ESPA projects and the programme need a **strategy to implement** research findings.
2. Strengthen **communication** links between ESPA projects and users of ESPA research.
3. Increase the **articulation of development outcomes** before, during and after research periods.
4. Spatial dimensions are taken into account very well and projects have used technologically sophisticated techniques, but the **temporal scale was challenging** – how do we look forward and address the trade-offs between current and future generations?
5. Projects are doing well at highlighting that **ecosystem services are viewed differently by different users**, but bringing those viewpoints together (and getting them to talk to each other) is still a challenge.
6. Need to deal with the **dynamic and complex interactions between people and their environment** much more; people manipulate their environment due to culture and needs, they shape their environment and are shaped by it.
7. Interactions between livelihoods and ecosystem services are very complicated, developing the **appropriate tools** to study them is key.
8. Differentiate between **frameworks and concepts** and delivering impacts.
9. Need to identify **what is well-being** and need to go a step further to look at issues of equity etc.
10. Don't assume that influencing policy makers will change much, need to bring them and users of research on board. Need to ensure that the results of this research **reach users on the ground**.
11. There are traditional scientific findings of a very high quality and also equally strong ESPA process-based findings from the framework projects. How do we **publicise process-based findings**?
12. Some projects have created effective **capacity building** in-country, but success is varied, perhaps it should be an explicit goal that after participating in an ESPA project, partners should be able to lead a project themselves.
13. Enhance communication and collaborations with **in-country governmental funding**. Some country research frameworks struggle to fit to ESPA requirements and funding models. Co-funding might help with this, and may also aid with in-country training/degrees. Creative thinking with host country governments and their funding streams.
14. Need more explicit elaboration on **poverty disaggregation and dynamics**.
15. The programme should commission a dedicated **meta-analysis of projects** to find key results or areas of agreement, lessons learnt, key methods and approaches, theoretical and conceptual development. Systematic review and/or something to filter in to SDGs.
16. There is still a **lack of integration** between the social and natural sciences.
17. What sort of policy message comes out of this fragmented result set? How can we have impact that is in recognition of the **political ecology** in which we are working? Follow-on ESPA support funding scheme.

18. Need for schematic groups in order to provide **consolidation and communication**.
Bring projects together within country as well.
19. Mechanisms between **positive and negative outcomes** – how can we work towards resolving some of these tensions?

14.00 Professor Sir Partha Dasgupta – Measuring Inclusive Wealth: Is Poverty Reduction Compatible with Green Growth?

All valuation exercises are about dealing with externalities, which can be very difficult to quantify and generate resistance. But if they are as significant as they appear, then society will not lose out by accounting for them.

15.00 Panel discussion: Janet Ranganathan, Declan Conway and Katrina Brown

Three members of the ESPA International Programme Advisory Committee contributed comments to the panel discussion.