

**Session:** Solving practical bottlenecks in ecosystem service mapping

**Title:** Grassland ecosystem service mapping at local and regional level: experience of the LIFE Viva Grass project

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**Abstract text:**

Grassland ecosystem service assessment and mapping at local and regional level was one of the tasks of the LIFE+ Project “Integrated planning tool to ensure viability of grasslands - LIFE Viva Grass” (project No. LIFE13 ENV/LT/000189). The project aims to support maintenance of biodiversity and ecosystem services provided by grasslands, through encouraging ecosystem based planning and economically viable grassland management. Mapping was performed at eight project case study areas in Estonia, Latvian and Lithuania, including one county, three local municipalities, two farms and two protected areas. The aim of the mapping was to provide information on the current status of grassland ecosystem services along with other biophysical and socioeconomic data to be used within the Integrated Planning Tool for assessment of different grassland management scenarios and their outputs in relation to ecosystem service trade-offs and related benefits for farmers and society. The outputs of the tool should help local municipalities in development planning of rural areas, farmers in deciding on appropriate management schemes for grasslands, protected areas administrations in planning of grassland management and restoration measures as well as potentially could contribute in development of agri-environmental support schemes based on ecosystem service calculations.

The main challenges of the project expert group were to identify the appropriate spatial data sets and indicators for grassland ecosystem service assessment and mapping at local and regional scale that would be comparable for the three Baltic countries. The data sets on current management practice in combination with the soil maps and topography was used to define the mapping and assessment units. The data from field inventories as well as expert knowledge was applied to assess the provisioning and regulating services within each unit, while relevant approach for mapping of cultural services in the project case study areas is still a remaining challenge.

**Keywords:** grasslands, ecosystem service mapping, planning tool, management practices