NETWORK ACTIVITIES

Seminars and meetings are central forums for exchange. The website should present not only the contributions of each expert, but also those of the discussants and the new insights emerging from the dialogue.

Recommended format for each seminar: PRESENTATION → COMMENTS / EXCHANGE → LESSONS FOR THE NETWORK

Seminar 1 — Ecosystem Services, Water and Territorial Governance

Date: 11 June 2026

Speaker: Prof. Riccardo Santolini

The presentation

The seminar explored the relationship between ecosystem services, natural capital, the water cycle, river basins, indicators and territorial governance. It highlighted how forests, soils, wetlands and other ecosystems form part of the ecological infrastructure that sustains water resources, production and human well-being.

Exchange with participants

The discussion went beyond identifying ecosystem services to consider their effective governance: who maintains these services, who benefits from them, who bears their costs, and how these relationships can be reflected in territorial decision-making. The need to work at river-basin scale and to recognise potential conflicts between different land uses was also emphasised.

Lesson for the Network: conserving ecosystems also requires building institutions and relationships among those who protect them, those who use their services and those who make decisions concerning them.

Related cases: Peru · Panama · Brazil · Bolivia

Seminar 2 — Sustainable Forest Management

Date: 7 July 2026

Speaker: Dr. Antonio Brunori

Discussants: Oriana Almeida · Shaji Thomas

The presentation

The seminar examined sustainable forest management, certification, traceability, chains of custody and different ways to generate economic value while maintaining the integrity of forest ecosystems.

Commentary by Oriana Almeida

The Amazonian perspective brought in family-based production, the expansion of economic activities, land-use conflicts and institutional constraints. The exchange showed that instruments such as certification and traceability can be useful, but must take into account the social, economic and institutional characteristics of the territories in which they are applied.

Commentary by Shaji Thomas

His contribution explored the role of Indigenous Peoples and traditional communities, and the need to recognise both their territorial rights and their contribution to forest conservation. It also opened a discussion on the difficulties that arise when international standards are applied in contexts characterised by limited institutional capacity or informal economies.

What emerged from the exchange

The discussion broadened the concept of forest value to include timber, non-timber products, biodiversity, water, employment, ecosystem services, the bioeconomy and local value chains.

Lesson for the Network: sustainability instruments work best when they take account of territorial rights, family-based producers, communities and local knowledge.

Particularly relevant case: Brazil — Rural family-based production and governance of the commons.

Seminar 3 — Territorial Management, Ecosystem Services and Risk Prevention

Date: 20 July 2026

Speaker: Dr. Luca Veltri

Discussant: Prof. David C. Smith — University of the West Indies

The presentation

The seminar addressed territorial management, risk prevention, civil protection, forests, slope stability, fires and ecosystem services. A central idea was to understand risk as the interaction between hazard, vulnerability and exposure.

Commentary by David C. Smith

The Caribbean perspective showed how these challenges take on specific characteristics in small island states. Hurricanes, floods, landslides, infrastructure loss and sea-level rise combine with limited land areas and financial and institutional constraints. Smith highlighted in particular the mountain–river basin–coast continuum and the role of ecosystems as natural protective infrastructure.

Outcomes of the Italy–Caribbean exchange

The discussion showed that a solution appropriate to one territory cannot necessarily be transferred directly to another. Technical and institutional capacities can be shared, but responses must be adapted to the territorial, cultural and social conditions of each community. The dialogue also reinforced the value of forests, mangroves, wetlands, soils and river basins as natural infrastructure for risk reduction.

Lesson for the Network: cooperation is more effective when it brings together different capacities and develops solutions adapted to each territory.

Related cases: Jamaica · Panama · Peru · Uruguay

Network Meetings

In addition to the seminars, Green Communities LAC holds regular meetings among the nodes in Bolivia, Brazil, Jamaica, Panama, Peru and Uruguay. These meetings provide opportunities to share progress and challenges, identify cooperation opportunities, prepare joint initiatives, propose new seminars and explore options for training, research and funding.