



March 2019

2/2019

r4d SYNTHESIS NEWS

Ecosystems

The r4d programme supports research syntheses at programme level and at the level of the five thematic modules. The r4d synthesis news are an information service for the r4d research network to stay tuned for upcoming synthesis project calls and connected to ongoing synthesis activities.



R4D ECOSYSTEMS MODULE

In this news we share information about the progress achieved in the synthesis of the ecosystems module. As informed in the first news in January, the Review Panel of the Ecosystem Module approved three synthesis projects:

- Achieving SDG 15: co-benefits and trade-offs with other SDGs
- Successful utilisation of research knowledge in the r4d ecosystems module
- Dealing with complexity: Burden or opportunity for research on ecosystems?

Our synthesis activities cover four projects from the ecosystem module and four from the thematically open module. We have had two meetings with the coordinating lead authors before starting the implementation of the synthesis projects. The meetings were aimed at facilitating the use of synergies between the synthesis activities and minimizing potential burdens to the projects and researchers as a result of the synthesis.

We will soon organize a information meeting for the projects included in this synthesis. If you have questions or comments in the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact the synthesis coordinator or the CLAs. You find our contact addresses at the end of this news.

ACHIEVING SDG 15: CO-BENEFITS AND TRADE-OFFS WITH OTHER SDGs

Coordinating lead author: Albrecht Ehrensperger
Lead authors: Julie G. Zaehrer, Beatrice Adoyo, Dung Tri Ngo, Anne Giger Dray

The four projects of the r4d programme's Ecosystem Module and a number of projects from the Open Module are contributing to sustainability transformation by addressing targets of SDG 15 ("life on land"). The main objective of our synthesis sub-project is to assess the synergies and trade-offs between the projects' targets and other SDG targets, as experienced or anticipated by researchers in 14 project regions.

Using qualitative comparative analysis, we will examine whether these synergies and trade-offs appear in distinct combinations and patterns, and assess whether these combinations or patterns are linked to context specific variables. Investigating such synergies and trade-offs is highly relevant, because land is a nexus critical to the sustainability outcomes of multiple competing development priorities and claims. Hence, the way we use land will significantly determine whether we are able to solve the multiple challenges – embodied in the 17 SDGs – that are facing nature and people.

Based on the empirical insights, we will suggest promising alliances, among various governance sectors and stakeholders, towards more sustainable land governance in the 14 project regions. We will conduct network analyses to highlight governance sectors and stakeholders that would particularly benefit from collaborating in view of implementing the 2030 Agenda, owing to multiple synergies between their sectors.

We will also be able to point to potential governance deadlocks between different sectors that are concerned by complex mutual trade-offs. Additionally, our sub-project will help informing the planning of future development interventions in the 14 project regions.



Myanmar. Photo by Flurina Schneider

SUCCESSFUL UTILISATION OF RESEARCH KNOWLEDGE IN THE R4D ECOSYSTEMS MODULE

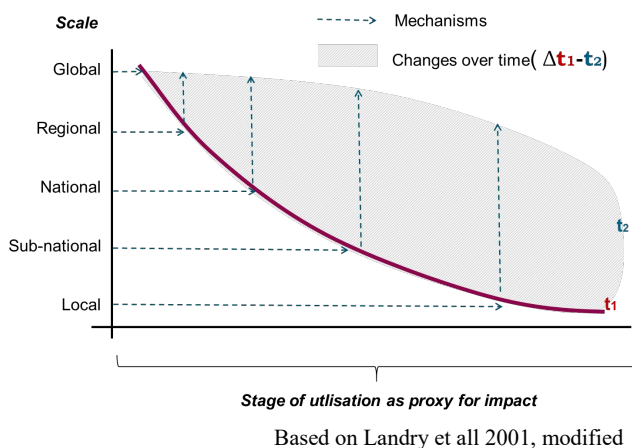
Coordinating lead author: René Eschen

Lead authors: Bruno Ramamonjisoa, Purity Rima

The projects of the r4d programme's Ecosystem and Thematically Open Modules will yield valuable insights into some aspects of utilisation of research knowledge in a wide variety of subject areas. It is valuable for the r4d programme, the projects and potential beneficiaries to be aware of barriers to the utilisation of this knowledge and of successful ways to overcome these barriers to ensure that the knowledge is applied to achieve the goals of the projects and the r4d programme. The Programme level synthesis will be limited in the amount of detail it can capture, for example due to the small number of informants per project. It is likely, however, that different participants in a project have different insights and perceptions, dependent on their location and role in the project.

This synthesis project will collect information from multiple participants in eight projects in the Ecosystems and Thematically Open Modules about the level of research knowledge on different spatial scales. The information will be collected using a combination of a questionnaire survey among all grantees and possibly other participants in eight projects and semi-structured interviews with selected participants in each of the studied projects. In addition, we aim to compare the perceptions of project participants with those of selected (potential) beneficiaries of research knowledge and to learn about ways to improve utilisation of research knowledge generated by these r4d projects.

The results will be presented in a publication aimed at practitioners, including researchers in r4d projects, scientists and other participants in knowledge-based development projects and researchers looking for funding, an infographic and a poster. The outcomes of this synthesis will provide guidance for development of projects that lead to successful utilisation of the generated knowledge.



DEALING WITH COMPLEXITY: BURDEN OR OPPORTUNITY FOR RESEARCH ON ECOSYSTEMS?

Coordinating lead author: Daniel Castillo

Lead authors: Anne Giger Dray, Patrick Waeber



Madagascar, Photo by Carmenza Robledo

The r4d projects related to ecosystems management span across countries, topics, disciplines and approaches. They are, in essence, like the issues they are tackling: complex. These projects do not simply deal with ecosystem; they explore socio-ecological systems whose complexity stem from the interaction of myriad physical and socio-economic factors. The main objective is to understand and capture their inherent complexity through the projects. This is particularly relevant if project findings are to influence and generate changes in systems management, a critical challenge in sustainability science.

Across the eight r4d projects under scrutiny, we anticipate common traits that will deserve specific attention: multiple stakeholders with oftentimes conflicting views, changing environment with pervasive uncertainty, integration across scales, multiple feedbacks, heterogeneity of social values, perceptions and behavior and different types of network connectivity, among others.

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Impressum:
r4d programme, 2019
<http://www.r4d.ch>