

## International Transdisciplinarity Conference 2019

### Abstract for a Session (discussion format)

related to the conference topic “Methodological Innovations”, key question “How can different types of transdisciplinary pedagogies, research methods and processes of co-production be developed to more effectively contribute to societal transformations?”

### Quality of transdisciplinary research processes for fostering transformations? More than evaluation criteria!

#### Contributors

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#### Keywords

quality criteria; societal relevance; shared responsibility

#### Abstract

Transdisciplinarity is a challenging mode of research: it seeks both to address societal problems and to contribute towards possible solutions by means of integrative processes and to add to the body of scientific knowledge. Thus, transdisciplinary research aims at generating effects - in society and in science. For years, this has raised the question of how the quality of transdisciplinary research processes and their results should be described and assessed.

Recent debates have shown that the key actor groups in transdisciplinary research approach the quality discourse from different angles: societal actors, researchers and funders emphasize different kinds of quality and thus - often implicitly - apply different criteria or benchmarks in assessing quality. However, the starting point is a shared responsibility for dealing successfully with the ambitious research mode. Usually they share the overall aim to foster transformations for alleviating complex problems - albeit perhaps for different reasons and in different framings. Furthermore, all three actor groups are ambassadors of the process and are responsible to promote the key messages of a project and the usability of its results. But it has to be recognized that the actor groups have different roles in the integrative research process. The debate about quality must therefore take at least these three perspectives into account and bring them together.

We would like to invite ITD participants to join this discussion session. The session’s aim is to capture the ambiguity of the quality discourse in transdisciplinary research: There are good reasons why quality criteria for processes and results are needed, good arguments why it is so difficult to define them, and good reasons why the debate should not focus exclusively on criteria.

The key questions for the discussion are:

- How can the different quality requirements of the different actor groups regarding processes result in a shared responsibility for effective research?
- How can self-reflection efforts be combined with an external assessment of high-quality and effective research processes and outputs?
- What are the limitations and risks involved in defining quality under a perspective of shared responsibility in transdisciplinary research?

### **Session Design**

The 90-min session will start with a max. 30 min-input by the organizers containing short statements on their perspectives and perceptions of the quality discourse in transdisciplinary research. Based on this, the participants will develop a common understanding resp. a notion of differences in understandings regarding the three above questions using interactive formats.