

Increasing the effectiveness of transdisciplinary research for sustainable development

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In the face of increasingly severe problems of global change, science is requested to produce knowledge that can help to advance sustainable development. Accordingly, scholars have developed and applied transdisciplinary research approaches to enable sound collaboration between researchers and practitioners. Nonetheless, transdisciplinary research has remained a challenging endeavour.

Against this background, the overall goal of our project was to increase the effectiveness of transdisciplinary research for sustainable development by jointly developing a new research proposal which addresses key obstacles related to transdisciplinary research. For this purpose, we created a learning platform of participants from six transdisciplinary research projects, four funding schemes (NRP, r4d, SDC, Future Earth) and other experts of transdisciplinary research and development (td-net, KFPE) to jointly reflect on what needs to be investigated and changed to increase the effectiveness of transdisciplinary research for sustainable development.

Moreover, we conducted a pre-study to nurture the joint learning process.

While the process of joint problem and goal framing was very fruitful, finding a funding body to support the new transdisciplinary research proposal was not easy. We finally succeeded, but with a considerably smaller project than planned.