

Workshop Output WS 3.4.C

Title of workshop: Enhancing transformation of strategies for Mountain regions towards sustainable pathways.

Prepared by T. Dax/T. Streifeneder

Moderators	Thomas Dax and Thomas Streifeneder
Participants*	Buchecker Matthias, WSL Switzerland Thomas Dax and Thomas Streifeneder, AT and IT Alexey Gunya, Russian Academy of Sciences Bernat Claramunt-López, CREA, Barcelona Francesco Mantino, CREA-Policy and Bioeconomy, Rome, IT Matthias Schmidt, University of Augsburg, DE (Poster: John Hausdoerffer, Mountain Resilience Coalition) (Poster: Arnon Yodyadthai, Highland Research and Development Institute, Thailand)

* Workshop participants that have submitted contributions to the workshop

General questions to please be answered in the workshop reporting

- 1) What was the focus of the workshop? Methodological issues and advancements or thematic issues (systems knowledge, transformation knowledge, target knowledge). Please check and fill in the matrix in the output section.

Methodological issues and advancements	Thematic issues		
	System knowledge	Transformation knowledge	Target Knowledge
	x	xxx	x

- 1) Which key points were discussed in the workshop as a whole? (This should be more a synthesis and not simply a summary of the key points in each presentation)

We had six presentations in the session and two additional posters provided to the poster session which covered a wide range of policy development issues in various mountain ranges, including in particular the Alps, the Pyrenees, the Apennines, but also reference to Carpathians, ex-Soviet mountain ranges from European mountains to all Asian mountains of ex-Soviet times, and a general reference to transformation knowledge assessment across a global set of mountains.

The presentations addressed crucial policy aspects from quite different angles, and thus contributed to a complementary vision of the topic and led to a vivid discussion of main issues covered. Main highlights that were mentioned in various presentations are the need to understand and respond to development needs in mountains (instead of just improving policy design and implementation of existing policies), the divergent views within mountain areas on policy strategies, the requirement to work with policy mixes and appreciate coordination processes, the reflection of assets where these are not expected (e.g. ex-Soviet mountains) and the crucial role of knowledge transfer and participatory approaches throughout all mountains of the world.

The vivid discussion mentioned in particular the following aspects as crucial with regard to transforming our strategic policy approaches for mountain policies:

- Addressing the understanding of the real problems (at the local level)
- Integrating participation (both formally and informally) in policy structures
- With specificities of individual and group participation and address cultural backgrounds

- Respect the often diverse (and contradicting) views of participants and prepare for different future pathways
- Address the crucial roles of parties and politics (besides of confession for “integrated policy development”), and barriers for policy dialogue due to fundamental views (e.g. denial of Climate Change or imposition of neo-liberal extractive views, detrimental to mountain regions)
- Need to integrate different expertise/culture/people
- Focus on local initiatives (as drivers for change)
- Perception of exchange of expertise: rely on reciprocity instead of one-dimensional transfer views
- Include framework conditions on higher (geographical) levels as decisive external drivers vs. approaches (and initiatives) on local level
- Search for place-based pathways
- Reflect diversity of contexts/realities/cultures (at local level)
- And give more emphasis to development “around the world”, so include other mountain ranges, and avoid too much top-down views.

Another aspect which is less related to the topic itself but more to the panel structure is that discussion of policy strategies should not be left to a biased social setting, in our case, male, more than 50 year old researchers, European, white and experienced persons. Alternative persons could enhance and improve also dissemination and diffusion of interesting debates and experience much better than through reflection of a seemingly biased group of experts.

2) What is your opinion on the current state of knowledge concerning your topic(s) (focusing on mountain regions)? *Please check and fill in the matrix on the following page.*

In the discussion there was a direct reference to the issue what we learnt with regard to the topic, strategy development for mountain policies, particularly highlighting the period since the last Perth conference. The assessment was quite pessimistic that due to recent developments in global politics (above all USA, Brexit, political trends to deny climate change relevance and existence and further national policy trends across Europe and other regions etc.) no significant improvement in large-scale political support for integrative policy frameworks could be experienced, but rather a high tension of regressive policies must be seen. While the presentations were mainly focusing on “positive” aspects and driven by the wish to explore supportive elements for sustainable pathways, assessments of recent policy development would deliver a less gloomy picture. To address these current pressures and unfavourable trends one of the moderators (Th. Streifeneder) contributed a short input on a recent assessment of the current EU’s Common Agricultural Policy’s reform proposal, mainly impacting in a reduction of activities towards rural (and mountain) development support.

Nevertheless participants were supportive in mentioning that despite this difficult situation it is a positive sign that academics at the conference speak openly about this issue and address the science-policy gaps, respectively the neglect of science in political decisions (particularly visible in recent years). This high-level policy changes also impact on learning processes and issues of “transferability” of good practice and inspiring procedural findings from strategy development processes.

Overall assessment of the state of:

What is your personal opinion on the current state of knowledge concerning the topic(s) addressed in your workshop. Please tick the appropriate field. Brief explanations are appreciated.

State of knowledge	Very good	Good	Poor	Very poor	Not appropriate	Comments
Global			x			<i>Even if issues are discussed in various mountain regions, it seems difficult to increase exchange given the political barriers and “policy climate” currently at place.</i>
Regional		x				<i>European regions were present at the session, but it was mentioned in the discussion not to leave out Southern mountains, and not to impose a “Eurocentric” view, which was not our intention at all.</i>
Scattered case study-based knowledge		x	x			<i>Presentations related to local action and the need to work at this scale; however there was a clear need seen to link these activities to horizontal, more general policy goals (at various levels). However, procedures of multi-level governance and/or influence were only partially mentioned in this session.</i>
Knowledge about past states/trends		x				<i>Focus was on the recent past; indirectly assuming that there is a consensus for integrated approaches (in science), but limited ability to implement.</i>
Knowledge about current situation		x				<i>Strong concern on policy limitations; but diverse signs of hope for on-going commitment and efforts to overcome difficult decision-making situations.</i>
Knowledge about future states/trends/thresholds			x			<i>Implicitly linking to Climate Change targets, SDG goals and the difficulty to enhance the process towards achieving these targets. Directly mentioning foresight studies (e.g. Alps 2050) indicating the great requirement for change (and as seen more from the discussion the various aspects of change, in policy strategies, but particularly relevance of participation, linking different scales, referring to spatial specificity and cultural backgrounds, individual and groups’ actions etc.)</i>
Knowledge about the system		x				<i>Input on systemic approaches (in policy design and knowledge systems) were not questioned in the discussion but also not delivered further – it seems the other discussion aspects covered this important issue.</i>
Knowledge about shaping pathways to more sustainable development (transformation knowledge)			x			<i>This was crucial in all the presentations, and in the discussion, with a large set of issues raised. In particular “learning” would not be seen as one-dimensional but as a reciprocal process, and I would add requiring iterative phases to actually bring about desired “societal progress”.</i>
Knowledge about envisaged goals (target knowledge)		x	x			<i>Goals were addressed as stated above mainly indirectly, but e.g. CAP reform addresses to a substantial degree only 2 of the 17 SDGs while EU has subscribed officially to these global goals! This leaves an important gap for policy action (at various levels) with regard to respective policy goals.</i>

Ideas for questions to potentially be answered by the moderators after the workshop in the reporting (please delete what is not useful):

- 1) Were there any new insights and/or findings presented? If yes, which ones?

- 2) What was the main message/consensus of your workshop?

- 3) Were major uncertainty issues identified and discussed? If yes, which ones?

- 4) Was there any significant controversy (if so, what?) that requires new data (or further exploration of existing data) to resolve the issue? (explain)

- 5) Were new research questions raised? If yes, would working on these questions need to involve other disciplines (which ones)?

- 6) Did the workshop identify research topics (e.g. environmental drivers other than climate) that are, in your opinion, currently greatly underrepresented in mountain research, but should urgently be addressed?

Further Comments