

Nature and society

Synergies, Conflicts, Trade-offs

● 2 – 4 May 2017 ● Ghent, Belgium



How can interdisciplinary socio-ecological research promote nature-society synergies, and help nature-society conflicts and trade-offs, to enhance both the environment and society?

● **Cost: 50€ for ALTER-Net partners / 100€ (others)**

Changing patterns of nature-society interactions create new challenges for humanity. Climate change, shifting demographics, biological invasions and overexploitation of natural resources are just some of the drivers of these patterns. Complex social-ecological systems create trade-offs between benefits and potential conflicts among stakeholders, yet also offer synergies and potential for innovative approaches and solutions. Significant contributions to understanding and addressing these challenges have come from natural and social sciences as well as interdisciplinary teams. Addressing nature-society interactions demands a fundamentally problem-oriented and stakeholder-driven perspective, and engaging non-scientist experts (citizens, practitioners and stakeholders) in research is becoming more common. Key questions that are in the forefront of transdisciplinary

socio-ecological research include the following: Where and why do synergies occur and how can they be obtained? How can trade-offs be made, moderated and managed in fair and equitable ways? How do human-nature or societal conflicts on nature arise? How can solutions be developed? How can the uptake of solutions by society and communities be realized?

The 2017 ALTER-Net conference will address these questions with a special emphasis on what interdisciplinary biodiversity research can add to this agenda. It will provide new perspectives on research and policy/practice, highlight information needs and develop partnerships in order to turn trade-offs into synergies. ALTER-Net builds bridges between disciplines, and connects science and policy with societal sustainability challenges.

Objectives of the Conference

1. Provide a forum for dialogue across fields and disciplines of research, policy and practice engaged in conflicts, trade-offs and synergies in the nature-society interface
2. Synthesize conditions for synergies and options for trade-offs to enhance conflict resolution in nature-society challenges
3. Explore pathways for the role of society in sustainable management of nature challenges

Why this conference?

Nature and society are inseparable, and the myriad interactions between nature and society include synergies, trade-offs and conflicts. In recent years, research has approached this issue in novel ways and increased the potential for cross-fertilization between ecological and social sciences. The more we know about trade-offs and conflicts in nature-society relations, the more easily we can address them and work towards better outcomes. The more we know about existing and potential synergies, the more effectively we can make use of them. To reach these goals, we need better knowledge and understanding of the interlinkages, overlaps and blind spots in social and ecological debates about the interactions of society and nature, be it in the form of synergies, trade-offs or conflicts. An interdisciplinary perspective and transdisciplinary approach will allow us to consider this complex topic comprehensively.



Societal impact on nature is diverse, and it often challenges nature's functions and survival. Increasingly, there is an awareness that societies and nature are inseparable. Human society will only have a (livable) future when it can use and manage nature sustainably. If achieved, society will benefit from services provided by nature and be able to make use of nature's potential for a sustainable transformation of human livelihoods, ways of life and resource use. A societal appreciation for nature with all its richness and values could also help to protect and (perhaps also) recover our planet's natural resources.

Outcome of the Conference

- Policy briefs
- One or more scientific papers
- Outcome fed into OPPLA
- Potential to include conference recommendations in the IPBES global assessment, chapter 6 (Governance issues)

Find out more

www.alter-net.info/outputs/conf-2017

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Workshops

The conference will have different workshops covering challenging themes. All workshops are focused on the contribution of interdisciplinary socio-ecological research to transforming conflicts and trade-offs in the relationship between nature and society into synergies, and will have a theoretical component combined with a practical component.

- Sustainable and fair multi-functional landscapes
- Sustainable management of wildlife conflict species
- Bio-cultural diversity as response to increased societal heterogeneity
- The nexus between environment and health in urban environments
- Exploring new ways of interdisciplinary socio-ecological research to institutional and governmental challenges
- Multiple dimensions of sustainability (ecological, economic, social)
- The contribution of valuing and accounting for Natural Capital to synergies, trade-offs and conflicts
- Citizen science approaches for synergies in nature-society interactions
- Understanding preferences, perception and valuation among stakeholders for synergies and trade-offs
- Ecosystem services bundles – operationalization of synergies and trade-offs
- Nature-society interactions and the response of policy-making and governance
- Nature-society interactions in cities: a specific challenge in the 'Urban age'
- **Open call for 2 additional workshops**