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## Transdisciplinary Research on Community-Based Environmental Management: Who Is In and Why?

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### Abstract

In community-based environmental management (CBEM), the role of communities is emphasised in bringing about change for an improved management of natural resources to support ecosystem services provision and secure local livelihoods. CBEM approaches are known to differ widely and understanding the composition of CBEM actors and their distinct roles in the governance of natural resources can offer valuable insight in what works best under which circumstances. In this study we investigated a transdisciplinary research project in which partners from research and practice collaborated closely to investigate different CBEM approaches in Latin America. Transdisciplinary research usually is understood as a research strategy that dissolves and spills over disciplinary boundaries to take a holistic view on a certain issue that requires integrating, and, more importantly, unifying scientific knowledge of several disciplines for problem-solving. Beyond, transdisciplinarity is also understood as a research strategy that transgresses scientific disciplines altogether to include the practical and everyday knowledge of stakeholders affected by the problem into the research process. In such a way, transdisciplinary research becomes capable of engaging with different ways of knowing the world, generating new and often more relevant knowledge for understanding a certain phenomenon. In our study we asked project partners, both from research and technological development (RTD) as well as from practice, in particular from civil society organisations (CSO), about their motives to get engaged into transdisciplinary research, and also about the perceived benefits but also possible drawbacks. The analysis was based on a survey conducted among all involved RTD and CSO partners with 27 individual survey participants. Results of the survey highlight their motivations for engagement and the specific contributions of different partners to the research process also in terms of the quality of the research outcomes.

**Keywords:** CBEM, civil society organisations, collaborative research, Latin America, research and technology development, transdisciplinarity