SHAPE-ID
Shaping interdisciplinary practices in Europe

Top Ten Tips for working in multi-stakeholder collaborations **from SHAPE-ID partner,** Dr Christian Pohl

1 In principle, try to assemble the stakeholders so that they include the full range of perspectives on the issue. Be aware, when doing so, that you will have to discuss the normative orientation of the project (what do we mean by, e.g. improved health, equality, sustainable development). However, this will not work if some stakeholders have immutable positions.

2 In principle, let each stakeholder group decide who they send to represent their group. Deviate from this principle if this form of representation is part of the problem or not possible.

3 Don't have all meetings at your own offices or institution. Ask stakeholders if they would like to host meetings too.

4 Inter- and transdisciplinary project have an evolving character, and the main topic can change over time. As a consequence, some stakeholders lose interest and others may be needed as the project evolves. If major shifts in the topic happen, address the question of who is no longer interested and wants to step out and who is missing and should be included.

5 Early in the project, collect the stakeholders' expectations (including yours) for the project. Sort these expectations into those that seem achievable and those that will be beyond the scope of the project. Share and discuss the sorted expectations with the stakeholders.

6 Don't assume that all stakeholders have to be involved all the time. Clarify the role and expertise of each stakeholder in the project and ask yourself: When in the project must they be involved and in what form?

7 Be aware that some stakeholders can't participate in inter- and transdisciplinary research in their worktime/as part of their job, and others can. Clarify what applies to whom. Think about compensations for those who need it. Also, small/symbolic compensations are usually much appreciated.

8 Be aware that some stakeholders do not join just because of your project, but also to network and discuss issues with the other stakeholders. Offer enough time for informal meetings and networking among the stakeholders.

9 Not all stakeholders participate in the academic culture of sharing results and open discussion. Some of them can't because of property rights and competition. Check early in the project whether this is the case and prepare an agreement clarifying property rights and confidentiality of interim results and discussions if need.

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10 Explore methods and tools to co-produce knowledge with the stakeholders. An explorative setting can help to challenge established routines and hierarchies.

Further Resources

❯ SHAPE-ID toolkit: **Co-create a research project**

About the Authors

Dr Christian Pohl is Co-Director of the Transdisciplinarity Lab of the Department of Environmental Systems Science (TdLab) at ETH Zurich with a habilitation at the University of Bern. He has been studying inter- and transdisciplinary research since the late 1990s and recently developed a toolbox for co-producing knowledge.

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