A knowledge, research and innovation programme on **Conflict and Cooperation over Natural Resources in Developing Countries**
Colophon

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Climate change and the degradation of natural resources are putting the lives of millions of people in developing countries at risk. Recurrent droughts in the Sahel cause tensions over water sources between pastoralists and farmers; increasing land scarcity has added to the deadly conflicts in the Great Lakes region; and in Southeast Asia the rising incidence of floods forces entire communities to leave their homes for good. The ‘Conflict and Cooperation over Natural Resources in Developing Countries’ (CoCooN) research projects are inspired by the belief that the future of our global commons is a shared responsibility – between rich and poor, between North and South.

The projects funded under the CoCooN programmes all have a dual objective: on the one hand, they contribute to evidence-based knowledge about the dynamics of conflict and cooperation in natural resources and climate change management. On the other hand, the research teams use this knowledge to support the design and implementation of more effective policies. They contribute to developing policies that, ultimately, will strengthen the resilience of individuals and communities to the challenges of their changing natural environments. Policies that will improve the circumstances of people who are confronted, for example with mining that results in dangerous pollution, with acute water shortages, or with conflicts revolving around the smuggling of gold or territorial expansionism.

The thirteen research projects are unique. Each one of them tackles a complexity of issues from different disciplinary vantage points. Sociologists work closely with biologists, hydrologists exchange their latest insights with economists. However, the greatest value of these integrated projects is, I believe, the fact that they are a collaborative effort between scientists, policy makers, practitioners and representatives from local communities. All these stakeholders, each with their own expertise and interests, work together to find the most durable and innovative solutions to the problems caused by climate change and unequal access to natural resources.

The CoCooN projects, all of which are currently reaching completion, are providing us with an abundance of experiences. Which strategies are required to achieve results? What characterises the balances of forces within which researchers operate? That is an area of intense deliberation as you can read in the article on research uptake. In another piece – a ‘trialogue’ – the value of cooperation is discussed from the differing perspectives of science, policymaking and NGOs. In extensive reports on two CoCooN phase one projects you can read about
how the partners have helped improve the situation of small-scale fishermen and the policy regarding scarce groundwater, respectively. In the end, each of the thirteen projects from CoCooN phase one and two is described briefly.

We are proud to present a world in which research and practice are moving forward together. Shaping that world has proved to be an arduous task to say the least. Too often, solutions are invented from behind university desks and then tested in ‘the field’. We need to start working the other way around as well. From all of us this requires two vital skills: the ability to listen to and the eagerness to learn from others who have an academic, professional or cultural background very different from ours.

I look forward with great interest to the opportunities for dialogue and learning that the CoCooN projects offer.

Jacqueline Cramer
Chair of the CoCooN Steering Committee
Introducing the CoCooN Research Programme

Our fast growing world population makes it ever more clear that we live in a limited space, relying on finite resources. The scarcity and degradation of natural resources such as land and water increasingly lead to tensions and conflict. The abundance of natural resources such as minerals and timber equally generate conflict within communities and between them and the state or the private sector. Climate change may function as an added catalyst in this potentially violent context. Recognising that natural resources under pressure and conflicts are interrelated, may be a first step towards cooperation in the management of these resources and may help to de-escalate or even prevent conflicts.

The Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO), together with the Dutch Directorate-General for International Cooperation (DGIS) and the Department for International Development (DFID) of the United Kingdom, fund a research and innovation programme that addresses the interrelated issues of conflict and collaboration over natural resources and climate change management. Under the CoCooN Research Programme two calls for research have been realised: CoCooN and CCMCC.
**Conflict and Cooperation over Natural Resources in Developing Countries (CoCooN)**

CoCooN aims to build up evidence-based knowledge about the causes and dynamics of conflicts over natural resources such as land, water, timber and minerals. The research projects that are funded under this programme are built up around a continuous, iterative process of generating knowledge, research and innovation. The projects aim to contribute to the development of policy and practice in the field of natural resources management that enhance conflict resolution and that promote opportunities for innovation and cooperation. CoCooN’s ultimate goal is to contribute to sustainable development and poverty reduction.

**Cooperation or Conflict in the Management of Climate Change (CCMCC)**

Climate change and the growing pressures on the environment that result from it, may undermine the stability of communities and societies, drive conflict and act as a threat multiplier of violent clashes. This reality is particularly acute in fragile states. Climate policies, and in particular finance mechanisms and institutions designed globally to support adaption or mitigation measures, introduce new power dynamics that may unintentionally also generate conflicts. CCMCC aims to strengthen the evidence on the impact of climate change and climate change policies on conflict or cooperation in developing countries. This knowledge will be used for developing conflict and gender-
sensitive climate change policies and financing mechanisms at the national and international levels. The ultimate objective is to contribute to the resilience of poor communities to the impacts of climate change and increasing climate variability.

**Research projects**

Since its start in 2009, CoCooN has awarded funds to research projects in over 25 countries in Africa, South America and Southeast Asia. The consortia that run these projects are composed of key stakeholders from academia and governmental, business and non-governmental organisations from both the South and the North. These multi-stakeholder and interdisciplinary partnerships help to strengthen the linkages between research, policy and practice. The consortia are responsible for achieving the specific programme objectives, which in all cases cover three areas: knowledge, research and innovation; capacity building; and development objectives.

Visit [www.nwo.nl/cocoon](http://www.nwo.nl/cocoon) for more information.
Trialogue

Bridging the gap between thinkers and doers

The benefits of cross-fertilisation seem so logical: policymakers and activists are both after a scientific underpinning of their work, while scientists seek to answer relevant questions. Still, that’s easier said than done. A ‘trialogue’ about concessions, bite-sized nuggets and scientific engagement.

Cartoon: Pluis-producties

The discussion took place over lunch on the eighth floor of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The sandwiches with smoked salmon sparked a brief exchange about just how sustainable they were. The host of the ‘trialogue’ was Dirk-Jan Koch. After having spent a period in Congo – where among other things he served as a diplomat at the embassy and taught at the University of Kinshasa – he returned to the Netherlands in 2014, where he succeeded Prince Jaime de Bourbon of the Netherlands as the special envoy for natural resources at the Ministry.

Precisely 20 years ago, Daniëlle Hirsch started out as a volunteer at Both ENDS, of which she is now the director. Under her leadership, Both ENDS has developed into one of the most high-profile organisations working at the interface between the environment and development. It is an organisation that takes firm positions, while at the same time investing in the search for concrete solutions in the area of sustainability. Hirsch has been connected with the CoCooN programme from the very start: as a member of the steering committee she helped shape the programme.

From 2007 to 2010, Jacqueline Cramer served as Minister of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment during the fourth Balkenende government. That ministership formed a brief interruption in an impressive academic career with professorships in Amsterdam, Tilburg, Rotterdam and Utrecht. Cramer has also held positions in industry and at civil society organisations. In the discussion she described herself as a ‘mission-driven’ scientist. As
hairperson of the CoCooN programme, as well as in her other roles, she passionately advocates having scientists help resolve social issues.

The challenge that NWO-WOTRO has taken on is a substantial one: having scientists and activists do research together to arrive at policy recommendations with regard to raw materials in conflict situations.

Hirsch concurs as to the importance of such cooperation: ‘NGOs have an enormous amount of knowledge, yet more and more often we find we need the science in order to be able to enter into dialogue with governments and companies. Scientists contribute their methodologies and a long-term perspective, which leads to evidence-based knowledge.’

‘Civil servants really ought to read more, but scientists need to deliver more bite-sized nuggets of information’

Koch admits that CoCooN projects regularly pop-up in his policy work in the area of natural resources. ‘That is because this research is relevant to policymaking. It has become very clear to the institutes that carry out the research that their reports will absolutely need to land on top of – rather than inside – the relevant desks.’

It is a trend that science needs to have a practical application. What has been done so far with the knowledge gained through the CoCooN projects?

Koch: ‘Thanks in part to the research on small-scale gold mining in Latin America, sustainable gold mining – the “fair gold standard” – is currently at the top of the political agenda there.’

Cramer: ‘But other projects have also been successful in putting their own particular natural resources on the political map. Now that drones are helping to demonstrate the presence of oil spills in tropical rain forests, for example, policymakers are less and less able to ignore them. Policy plans in Yemen are being adjusted with regard to groundwater and the small-scale fishermen in Sri Lanka now have a stronger voice and are receiving better protection against the large fishing cutters from India. Obviously not all of this can be attributed one-to-one to the activities within the CoCooN programme since so many different factors play a role. Nevertheless, each of the projects has made an important contribution in its own way: from sitting with others around the table or publishing opinion pieces in the local press, to the “naming and shaming” of parties involved.’
Nice results, but was such close collaboration between such different mindsets really feasible?

Hirsch: ‘One problem is that researchers and activists have different rhythms.’

Koch: ‘And that just shows how important it is to make concessions if you want to work together – not only in terms of the pace, but also with regard to the scope and depth of the analysis. The average scientific article is 20 pages long, yet the average policy advisor has only enough time to take in about two pages with conclusions and recommendations. Somehow you will need to find a compromise between the different interests.’

Cramer mentions a personal example that shows there are even differences within the tastes of participants: ‘When I first started out as a scientist, I used to be very concerned about environmental issues. It turned out that there was little room for that type of engagement within the scientific community. Fundamental science starts with a theory and then tests that theory on the basis of data. In contrast, applied science is much more about looking for solutions for practical problems (often directly for industry), much in the same way that activists often work. There was nothing bridging the two types of science. And that extremely important missing bridge is what I call “mission-driven science”. Fortunately the latter kind of science is getting more attention these days.’

So then how do you bridge the gap between science and policy?

Policymaker Koch explains: ‘Civil servants really ought to read more, but scientists also need to deliver more bite-sized nuggets of information. But then there’s also the issue of which questions are asked. The idea behind science is that new theories or methodologies are developed or metaconnections are discovered. In the kind of questions that a policymaker asks, there needs to be room to do that as well. There, too, the various parties need to make compromises. If you have a very practical question, why don’t you just knock on the door of an advisor?’

Hirsch: ‘Political engagement is another thorny issue. And then I don’t mean so much our own engagement, but particularly that of our civil society partners in the countries where we work. They nearly always take an unequivocal stance in political matters. A scientist needs to be able to accept that. And if not, that will make it difficult to work together. In the worst case scenario, you might even have to look for a different scientist.’

‘Southern scientists are more solution-oriented than we are anyway’
When it comes to deliberately attempting to influence policy, isn’t there always a risk that the researchers will themselves become ‘players’ and lose their independence?

Hirsch is vehement: ‘But scientists are always players! Even those who do fundamental science. Scientists actively partipate in the arena of political forces and social interests. Not all scientists are afraid to act more politically. One of the authors of Limits to Growth (the 1972 report by the Club van Rome, ed.) regrets not having done more to ensure that her message would hit home. If, as a scientist, you can see a impending drama in society, it’s only logical that you would sound the alarm!’

How do people in the scientific community feel about that?

Cramer: ‘To me it seems obvious that problems in society should serve as inspiration for new research. There’s no reason why problem-driven research should be any less sound than traditional, theory-based research. Nonetheless, there is a tension between the relevance of research to society and the degree to which that research contributes to the formation of theory. And it is true: the scientific community still has little esteem for mission-driven research.’

Hirsch adds: ‘That is also why it is difficult for us to find scientists who are willing to enter into a collaborative situation. The primary incentive in the academic world is evidently the need to publish. Another problem is that there is little funding for this type of action research. NWO-WOTRO is a positive exception in that regard.’

The discussion shifts once the topic of ‘co-creation’ is broached. In the CoCooN programme, research projects are jointly set up by researchers, activists and civil servants, both from the Netherlands and from the Global South. It is a ‘tripartite’ process, as Cramer calls it. Hirsch emphasises that when scientists keep in mind the idea of policy relevance from the very beginning, their final product is going to be actionable. ‘It’s exactly the link between theory and practice that leads to change.’ Koch would nevertheless like to see – entirely in line with his minister’s policy – more involvement by industry. Hirsch is less enthusiastic about that idea. For Both ENDS, the reality is that its local partners are quite often in conflict with companies when it comes to raw materials. That can form a real obstacle to cooperation.

‘To me it seems obvious that problems in society should serve as inspiration for new research’

These days, companies are well represented in NWO-WOTRO research programmes, for example within the knowledge platforms initiated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Yet cooperation with companies turns out to be more difficult in conflict situations. Can a CoCooN-like approach see to it that, also in such situations, companies will come to the table?

Koch: ‘That’s an interesting question. Dutch companies that are currently active abroad sometimes receive funding from the Netherlands, for example via investment and export subsidies and guarantees. Those companies are expected to abide by the highest standards in the area of corporate social responsibility. If it turns out that they have failed to keep their own
affairs in order, then as a partner in a public-driven research project, they will be more apt to take the research results to heart. Especially when, as in the case of CoCooN projects, they have been closely involved from the very beginning.’

Hirsch admits: ‘If you would involve the various parties already early on in the process and identify the problem, you might even be able to preempt the conflict.’

Cramer: ‘But it’s not about whether you should by definition work more or less with the private sector. Rather, it’s about looking at the issue that you want to resolve, and if that will require the participation of companies, then you are going to need to get those involved as soon as possible.’

In which direction should the cooperation between science, activism and policy be developed?

Cramer: ‘More attention needs to be given to co-creation together with policymakers. The newest phase of the CoCooN programme (CCMCC, ed.), which began two years ago, does just that. It is also crucial to put even more effort into making sure that the research is translated as clearly as possible into policy relevance. The scientists in the Global South are very enthusiastic about that. For that matter, the southern scientists strike me as being more solution-oriented than we are anyway.’

Koch: ‘With an eye to the future, I would like to propose that there should be more exchanges of personnel. Daniëlle will be coming here for two months to answer questions from members of parliament (questions that she fed them herself) – something that my colleagues invest considerable time in – and I will be spending a period of time working at Both ENDS.’

Hirsch: ‘Brilliant! There are still many bridges to build, but in any case the CoCooN approach has been innovative around the world. Thanks to CoCooN, this type of cooperation is now really starting to get off the ground – and leading to good results.’
The fishing dispute between Sri Lanka and India concerning Palk Bay seemed to have reached stalemate. Using a combination of action and research, the CoCooN team managed to force a breakthrough.

On early mornings in northern Sri Lanka, small groups of fishermen would look out over the waters of Palk Bay. In the distance they could see the cutters of the Indian fishing fleet. They couldn’t help but wonder how many of their own fishnets had been damaged by the cutters’ trawl nets during the night. Since 2009, when the civil war that had plagued the island for 25 years came to an end, Tamil fishermen had been returning to their villages in hopes of returning to their old line of work. After months of being displaced and dependent on others for support, they were eager to provide for themselves once again. Fish had once been an important export product for northern Sri Lanka, but that business was anything but flourishing by then.

Across Palk Bay – the narrow channel that separates Sri Lanka from the state of Tamil Nadu in the southeasternmost tip of India – the cutter fleet was docked in the port of Rameswaram. There, one could hear an entirely different version of the conflict. The Indians, likewise, saw themselves as victims. More and more often, the Sri Lankan coastguard had been confiscating their boats and

‘In ten years’ time, the conflict in Palk Bay will have been solved.’
detaining the fishermen. Newspapers published photos of Indian cutter fisherman being attacked by their angry Sri Lankan colleagues. ‘This is our fishing ground. You are emptying our waters of fish!’ the latter argued. ‘If you aren’t willing to listen, you’ll have to face the consequences.’

**Action research**
That was the situation at the start of the CoCooN project ‘Re-incorporating the excluded: Providing space for small-scale fishers in the sustainable development of fisheries of South Africa and South Asia’ (Reincorpfish) in 2010. Maarten Bavinck, a professor at the University of Amsterdam and the project’s leader, wrote the proposal together with colleagues at universities in Sri Lanka and India and with researchers from the University of Cape Town. Those, in turn, worked closely together with local action groups. In both regions, the research has had a two-pronged objective: not only to call attention to the problems that small-scale fishermen face but also to do something about them. In Sri Lanka it concerned indigenous refugees who were returning to their fishing villages; in South Africa it concerned black fishermen who – 20 years after the end of apartheid – had still not received fishing rights. The action research was meant to help make sure that these fishermen got a voice in the design of a new national framework for fisheries management: a fair and future-safe framework that will prevent the marine ecosystems in South Africa and southern Asia from being further exhausted.

**Politically sensitive**
In India, the project began with social-scientific research on the use of cutters for fishing (what is the composition of the fleet, how was it able to grow so quickly, who is holding the strings and who is earning their living with this?). Due to the continuing conflict with Sri Lanka, Indian researchers had avoided this politically sensitive topic until then. The project team reasoned that with more objective knowledge at their disposal, it would be easier for them to influence the debate in India, not only among civil servants and politicians, but also among the general public. At the same time, efforts were made to initiate a dialogue between fishermen from both countries.

While a platform for cutter fishermen was successfully set up in Tamil Nadu, it wasn’t possible to get a regional fisheries organisation off the ground in northern Sri Lanka. ‘The political context played a major role in that regard,’ says Bavinck. The civil war had only just ended and the ruling government in Colombo wanted to have nothing to do with NGOs – and certainly not in the Tamil area. ‘The tensions were palpable. The organisations we were working with became vilified; even the university in southern Sri Lanka was considered tainted because they had taken part in our project. Researchers were blacklisted; the secret service started questioning people.’

**At their own initiative**
Looking back, Bavinck has to admit that he had underestimated what it meant to be doing action research in a post-conflict situation. ‘We had deliberately chosen for a bottom-up approach: we began in the villages, among the fishermen. Perhaps it had been smarter simply to start with the Ministry. After that, we never managed to get a foot in the door there again.’ The Sri Lankan government was not pleased that the Tamil fishermen had begun organising themselves at their own initiative. The ruling

‘The importance of solid relationships based on trust should not be undervalued.’
government wanted to have a role in the dialogue with India. And not without reason, since fisheries interests are closely intertwined with political interests. In India, too, progress had essentially stalled. Following a meeting with Sri Lankan fishermen – organised by the project team with the help of Cordaid – the Indian cutter fishermen had pledged to phase out their fleet in the Sri Lankan waters. But with each passing month, the cutters off the coast only became more numerous.

In 2013, Bavinck and his team decided to try another tack. They got into contact with renowned journalists and began a media campaign in both countries. Both the Indian and the Sri Lankan press took the bait and published the opinion pieces that were based on well-substantiated findings from the research. The story took off. Policymakers began citing an article from an Indian scientific journal more and more often. ‘What also definitely contributed to the turnaround was the fact that the central Indian government in Delhi had become quite concerned about the conflict with Sri Lanka that was continuing to fester,’ Bavinck says. The UN Convention on the Law of the Sea leaves no room for doubt: the Indian cutters were fishing illegally in Sri Lankan waters. And that fact, as the ruling government is well aware, was bad for India’s political reputation, with potential repercussions for its international trade. After all, the EU boycotts countries that practice illegal fishing.

**Brushed aside**

In August 2015, a conference was held in Chennai, where Indian policymakers, scientists and fisheries people came together. Bavinck: ‘Everyone, even the highest-ranking civil servant at the Ministry of Fisheries of Tamil Nadu, agreed that “the cutter fleet needs to be phased out.” Not even two years earlier that would have been inconceivable: they would have simply brushed aside the entire issue.’

What were the keys to this success? Bavinck claims that it’s advisable to work together with people and organisations that you already know: the importance of solid relationships based on trust should not be undervalued. ‘Partnerships based on convenience are much more vulnerable,’ says Bavinck, who grew up in Sri Lanka and southern India in the 1960s and still has good connections there. ‘This CoCooN project was my most inspiring project ever! The combination of research with action – and then being able to do that with like-minded people – was fantastic.’ Yet despite the positive results so far, he is more cautious with regard to the impact. Considering the volatile political arena within which this fisheries conflict is taking place, it is difficult to look into the future. Nevertheless he is willing to make a prediction: in ten years’ time, the conflict in Palk Bay will have been solved, and India and Sri Lanka will determine by mutual agreement who will have access to which waters at which time.

‘Both the Indian and the Sri Lankan press took the bait and published the opinion pieces that were based on well-substantiated findings from the research.’
Knowledge in action

Science with social impact

A new concept in the scientific world is ‘research uptake’. Essentially it means making sure your research can be put to use by policymakers and activists.

Cartoon: Pluisproducties

Doing science purely for the sake of science is passé. At the very least, a researcher needs to indicate who could potentially benefit from the results and why. These days, research projects are also evaluated on the basis of questions like these: How will you ensure that your research lands in the appropriate policy circles of civil servants and politicians, at the relevant NGOs or even at companies? How do you make sure your research will actually help those parties develop better policies?

At NWO-WOTRO, prospective candidates for funding are expected to include an actual ‘research-uptake’ strategy in their research proposals. In essence, the term ‘research uptake’ has to do with the promotion of knowledge utilisation. That includes all activities that contribute to the use of research results by policymakers, professionals and other players in international cooperation. While the eloquence of the terms ‘research uptake’ and ‘knowledge utilisation’ can be disputed, the tenor of both is clear: the responsibility of researchers extends further than simply sending results into the wide world.

Knowledge utilisation

But while the importance of knowledge utilisation is no longer at issue, its link with policy turns out not to be so simple in practice. For that reason, NWO-WOTRO appointed a research uptake manager in 2014: Han van Dijk. It is her job to improve the funder’s toolbox in order to ensure that research can better facilitate the creation of policies that will help solve issues in society. That toolbox not only contains the conditions for funding but also offers additional means of support, such as extra (financial) resources and tools and methods to increase the impact of research activities. She claims: ‘It is not that we gave little thought to stimulating the relevance and use of research in the past, but these days we are much more closely involved in doing that. We targeted our use of various tools and then we analyse what works and what does not. It is an ongoing learning process: how do you pass the ball back and forth in the game of knowledge utilisation in such a way that it lands in the goal?’
To be able to score, it is absolutely essential to know how the policy game works and to understand the political and social context. That is especially the case within the CoCooN projects, where the context consists of areas of conflict and involves things like inequality, violence, poverty and environmental pollution. ‘It is no easy task for researchers to fathom the complex political power configurations in which they find themselves,’ Van Dijk says. ‘Before the start of a project we ask them to map out precisely who is pulling which strings and where, and to find out who to contact – and how – in order to draw attention to violations or to influence policy. That is often already hard to do in the Netherlands, so you can imagine how difficult it can be in the far less transparent countries where we fund research projects; at times the power play there can actually be dangerous.’ Van Dijk continues: ‘What helps is that the CoCooN research teams are not made up solely of scientists; the projects also include activists (or NGOs).’ As she sees it, that is only logical: ‘NGOs know the sort of people they are dealing with. They have amassed an enormous amount of knowledge, they offer access to local networks, and they are very good at spreading a message at the right moment.’

**Tangible contribution**

Even if you already know which civil servant or politician you need to address, you also need to be able to speak each other’s language. A major challenge is the wide range of skills that we expect researchers to have. They need to learn how to write and present material for a non-academic audience, to actively enter into policy discussions, and to network with civil servants, local chiefs and CEOs – just to mention a few examples. Han van Dijk: ‘I see that the researchers are really eager to acquire those skills. After all, they also believe it’s incredibly important that their work should deliver a tangible contribution. But I do wonder sometimes if we aren’t trying to load too much onto the researchers’ shoulders. We try to support them by offering training programmes and workshops, for example, or by facilitating the exchange of experiences.’
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**Intermediary**
NWO-WOTRO requires each project to organise a mid-term review meeting and to gather all the parties involved together at the end of the research. Not only the project members, but especially also the intended recipients are invited to the latter events. ‘Those are ideal occasions to consider which kinds of knowledge policymakers need and how to bring the research in line with that need.’ The idea of making knowledge relevant to policymakers is also a focus at the biennial CoCooN conference, where members of the various projects share with each other what has worked for them, and what has not. Another good way to ensure that the research results will end up in the appropriate policy circles is to involve an intermediary. More and more organisations are fulfilling the role of knowledge broker. Such people can help identify policy-relevant knowledge questions and encourage the public debate by drawing attention to research in an appealing way. For example, in connection with the CoCooN programme, an international debate was launched to get a better sense of the political and social forces involved in the area of raw materials. On the basis of the articles written by researchers in each of the projects, a knowledge brokerage firm (The Broker) initiated an online discussion and brought the results of that discussion to the attention of policymakers during a CoCooN conference (www.nwo.nl/coccoondebat).

**Well-founded**
But what happens if the boundary between science and activism begins to blur? In its handbook on research uptake, the British research funder DFID is quite straightforward: ‘We encourage programmes to foster evidence-informed discussions of research evidence […]’. However, research programmes should not be lobbying for particular policy changes based on their research results.’ Han van Dijk’s position is somewhat less categorical: ‘We don’t offer our researchers courses in political lobbying, but I would say that you can certainly take full advantage of the credibility that you bring to the table as a scientific researcher, as long as your message is well founded.’

NWO-WOTRO is hardly alone in its attempt to promote knowledge utilisation. The British Department for International Development (DFID) has been a valued partner since 2012. Together, WOTRO and DFID are funding CoCooN’s second call for proposals, which focuses on the relationship between conflict and cooperation in the management of climate change (CCMCC).

Andrew Clayton of the DFID: ‘Within DFID we appreciate very much the approach taken by the CoCooN research programme to produce robust, policy-relevant research. This approach is equally important to the DFID-funded CCMCC research programme, which is highly ambitious in seeking to provide evidence that will influence national and international policies on climate change. Combining rigorous scientific research and investing in engagement with policymakers at local, national, regional and global levels will be critical to the success of the programme.’
On the waterfront

It may not be the most prominent among Yemen’s many problems, but the groundwater level has been dropping for a long time already, resulting in a shortage of water. With videos explaining how to deal with this issue and demonstrating best practices, the largely illiterate farmer communities have been reached.

Water management is nothing new in Yemen. Already during the reign of the Queen of Sheba, a legendary character from the Bible and the Koran, there were sophisticated systems for conducting measured amounts of water to dry areas in Yemen. These days, Yemen is in the top ten of countries with acute water shortages, says Frank van Steenbergen, director of the Dutch research firm MetaMeta in ’s-Hertogenbosch and leader of the CoCooN project ‘Groundwater in the political domain’. As he puts it: ‘The strong population growth over the past decades has put increasing pressure on the water supply, as agriculture is requiring more and more of it.’

In Yemen, an escalating amount of bananas, grapes and mangos are being cultivated – all crops that require lots of water. Less ‘thirsty’ traditional crops such as grains are becoming less popular to grow there. As a consequence, the underground water supplies have been diminishing at an alarming rate – for decades.
already. ‘As this development is largely invisible, it has remained all but absent on the political agenda,’ says Van Steenbergen. ‘And yet the consequences are manifest: some areas are becoming depopulated simply because the lack of water makes them uninhabitable.’

Perverse incentives
The objective of this CoCooN project was to put the issue of groundwater scarcity – including fair access and sound management – on the political agenda in three regions: Ethiopia, the Palestinian Territories and Yemen. The CoCooN approach isparticularly well suited to that purpose. According to Van Steenbergen, it makes little sense to apply a traditional scientific approach to the water problem in these areas. ‘Ultimately it’s about dealing with a serious social problem. Pure science – in the sense of testing theories or developing methodologies – has little to offer in such a case.’ He even spoke of a ‘lack of ethics’ within science in this connection.

For NWO-WOTRO, Van Steenbergen’s appointment as the project leader of the research – not being employed by a university – was an experiment in the promotion of policy relevance. ‘It was very important that our research results would be made directly available to policymakers, and that the experiences of policymakers and water consumers would be immediately incorporated in the research. It’s constant, two-way traffic.’

Inspired move
The most important partners in the research in Yemen were the Water and Environment Centre at Sana’a University and the national Union of Water Users Associations. The leaders of these organisations were often energetic farmers with political standing at the local level. To start with, the Yemeni scientists systematically catalogued promising local initiatives for the fair and sustainable use of groundwater. ‘Yemen is wrongly considered to be a country where everything is going wrong,’ says Van Steenbergen. ‘These days, all the attention naturally focuses on the violent conflict, but that doesn’t alter the fact that in some areas people there work amazingly well together.’

One example of the strength of Yemen is how the local farmers and other water users make agreements together at their own initiative to prevent the excessive consumption of groundwater. They impose restrictions on themselves about the numbers of water wells, how deep they can be and how much distance there needs to be between them. To show that there is real attention for the water shortage at the local level, a video team documented prominent examples of local water management. The CoCooN researchers then organised a series of road shows, together with the Union, in various parts of the country. People were brought together to watch the videos and to discuss local initiatives for ending the careless use of groundwater. The discussions among farmers about measures that they can take themselves created more of a stir at the local level than any study ever could have, says Van Steenbergen. ‘Whereas a scientific article will be read by a handful of people at most, our videos (see www.thewaterchannel.tv, ed.) were viewed thousands of times. Since those were in Arabic, most of the viewers will have been local residents,’ says Van Steenbergen. The use of videos was an inspired move in a country where a large share of the population is hardly literate.
Political void
The cooperation between the unorthodox partners in the research project has really paid off. ‘It was an interesting cross-fertilisation between the rigorous scientific approach of Sana’a University and the influence that the farmers in the Union enjoyed within society,’ says Van Steenbergen. In various places that has led to new local agreements. The CoCooN project has organised workshops to reinforce the concept of political processes and effective methods of political lobbying. The Union of Water Users Associations in Yemen is now the main advocate for a sensible use of the scarce groundwater.

‘Farmers agree among themselves to reduce their consumption of groundwater’

It is a real challenge to get the issue on the national political agenda. Van Steenbergen speaks of a ‘political void’: groundwater supplies are disappearing due to overuse, but at the national level that still appears to be a non-issue. The topic isn’t receiving any political attention. In contrast to the situation in Ethiopia, for example, the central government in Yemen has hardly been capable of intervening at the local level. ‘We can’t simply wait for the current conflict and the violence to pass in order to start working again under normal conditions,’ Van Steenbergen believes. ‘More than anything else, groundwater needs to become an important local political issue in Yemen if a solution is to be found. Our initiatives have helped pave the way for that.’
Power dynamics and natural resources

The inhabitants of poor, rural areas in the Global South depend heavily on the natural resources in their immediate vicinity. Conflicts over the exploitation of these resources – whether it is groundwater, fish, biofuel, minerals, or land – severely affect their livelihoods. In 2014, a dossier was presented on the power dynamics in conflicts in the South. This dossier contains five case studies by researchers involved in CoCooN projects and a synthesis summary on the power dynamics underlying both ‘open’ and ‘hidden’ conflicts over natural resources. The dossier also constitutes an (online) debate with the aim to draw general conclusions and identify recommendations for policymakers, practitioners and experts working in conflict and natural resource management.

Resource-related conflicts occur when imbalances of power over access to, and use of, natural resources coincide with other structural inequalities, be they socioeconomic, ethnic, cultural or political. Interests in natural resources do not easily coincide and, when conflicts arise, the already deprived groups in society are usually left holding the short end of the stick.

Economic vigour

Imbalances in power manifest in several ways. For example, economic growth is often pursued at the expense of human rights. The economic strategy of
many resource-rich developing countries is based on the large-scale extraction and export of natural resources. Local communities pay the price, as parts of the land they inhabit and cultivate are deforested or simply ‘grabbed’ to make room for agribusiness, as is shown in the case study on biofuel stock cultivation in Ethiopia and Ghana and in the soy-related conflicts in the Amazon. CoCooN projects aim at putting the interests of deprived groups such as these on the political agenda and making these groups more resilient.

A related aspect is that short-term economic interests generally prevail over long-term interests. This stands in the way of investment in fundamental transition and diversification to a more inclusive economy. The development path of exporting raw materials and agricultural commodities chosen by many governments in the South follows from a market-based ‘logic’ that condones pursuing short-term economic gains at the expense of the long-term protection of human rights and the environment.

Another way power imbalances manifest is in the way economic interests generally override environmental improvements, which can directly affect local communities. Many developing countries lack the resources (money, expertise, capacity of the public sector) to fully implement environmental protection regulations, such as environmental impact assessments (EIAs), which have been adopted by many countries since they were introduced by the US in 1969. EIAs are designed to ensure that decision-makers consider environmental impacts – like impacts on water quality, possible deforestation, and social effects. But the requirement to conduct an EIA is frequently circumnavigated and the penalties for non-compliance...
often negligible. Moreover, corruption undermines the potential use of EIAs as an effective tool for avoiding negative environmental impacts.

**Constrained intentions**
Governments also have to deal with international pressure, which can prevent them from pursuing local and environmental interests. The dossier lists several ways in which national and local governments are constrained: by multinationals, global financial institutions, the international pressure to repay national debts, the global trade system and even interventions by NGOs. Sometimes governments are prevented from pursuing local and environmental interests by a lack of support from the international community. This is illustrated by the case study on the plan of President Correa of Ecuador to leave oil in the soil of Yasuní National Park in exchange for financial compensation from the international community. This case study also describes disputes with potential donors about the spending and control of this compensation.

**Local interests neglected**
Unfortunately, even if the pendulum in decision-making does swing towards the environmental side, local interests may still be neglected. One of the problems with environmental regulations is that they often ignore customary or local land rights. An example is given in the case study on the regulation of mining in Madre de Dios (Peru), which aimed at countering the environmental impact of mining, but threatened the household incomes of small-scale and artisanal miners.

**Policies**
But what does this all mean for policy-makers and practitioners who wish to take into account the interests of the potential victims of resource-related conflicts? The dossier describes several discourses and related policies. In the ‘governance discourse’ the focus is mainly on capacity building, regulation and public-private partnerships. In the ‘sustainable development discourse’ the focus is on a code of conduct for companies and regulations protecting resources (e.g., IAEs). The ‘legal discourse’ is concerned with rights, legal enactments and tribunals, among other things.

These are all relevant discourses. Weak governance structures and institutions often perpetuate conflict and environmental degradation harms indigenous communities. Furthermore, resource-related disputes clearly have legal underpinnings in terms of land tenure and lack of accountability. Yet, an exclusive framing of resource conflicts in these ways can mask the structural inequalities and conflicting interests that underlie these conflicts. Contributors to the debate largely agree that, without tackling the imbalances of power over access to, and use of, natural resources, developing countries will be drawn into continuous cycles of conflict, thereby hampering structural development. Challenging such inequalities implies breaking down perverse economic incentives – for companies and governments. This is surely a long-term exercise that requires international cooperation. Moreover, it requires a critical study of the powerful discourses that legitimise and steer current and past policies, practices and interventions.

Read the full dossier ‘Power dynamics and natural resources’ [http://www.thebrokeronline.eu/dossiers/power-dynamics-and-natural-resources](http://www.thebrokeronline.eu/dossiers/power-dynamics-and-natural-resources). This dossier is produced by The Broker in cooperation with NWO-WOTRO Science for global development programme CoCoon.
CoCooN project descriptions

Small scale Gold Mining in the Amazon (Gomiam)

Researces social conflicts around small-scale gold mining and transboundary issues, such as smuggling of gold and environmental pollution in the Amazon. Leading to a regional knowledge base on small-scale gold mining, policy development and dialogues between miners, NGOs and politicians.

Colombia:
- Small-scale gold miners produce about 70 per cent.
- Large companies produced the other 30 per cent.

Surinam:
- Mining activities pollute food and water of indigenous communities in the Greenstone Belt area.

Peru:
- Three large gold mining companies produce 55 per cent, small-scale miners only 15 per cent.

Brazil:
- 300 companies are accused of hiring 30,000 wood gatherers to regularize their cultivation of mining companies.

Gold

Nationalization of extractive industries (NEBE)

Researces tension and conflicts caused by an increasing influence of the state in the nationalization of mines in Bolivia and Ecuador.

Contributes to best practices for management of extrac-tive industries that will benefit the indigenous peoples during nationalizations in Bolivia and Ecuador.

Ethiopia:
- People move to the Raya valley in times of drought, because groundwater is available on the surface.

South Africa:
- A mobile information system supports the monitoring and protecting of the coastal area.

Sri Lanka:
- In Palk Bay, all stakeholders came together to share knowledge and identify long-term solutions.

Oil and mining

Contributes to reducing the number of conflicts and improving public policies and the rule of law with regard to extractive industries, land rights and water management, especially soy and palm oil.

Ghana:
- 17 jatropha companies jointly acquired 80,000 hectare farm land, they cultivated less than 10 per cent.

Fisheries

Re-incorporating the excluded (Reincorpfish)

Researces between small-scale fishers and large-scale fisheries in South Africa and South Asia.

Leading to development and assessment of responsible governance frameworks for fisheries that take into account environmental sustainability, social justice and human well-being.

Soy and palm oil

Lands and Rights in Troubled Water (LAR)

Researces the effects of land-use change in two river basins in Colombia and Brazil.

Contributes to reducing the number of conflicts and improving public policies and the rule of law with regard to extractive industries, land rights and water management, especially soy and palm oil.

Groundwater

Groundwater in the Political Domain

Researces access to and use of groundwater in times of scarcity, despite a lack of (central) coordination in Ethiopia, the Palestinian Territories and Yemen.

Leads to putting access to and management of groundwater on the political agenda.
CoCooN knowledge, research and innovation programme

Soy and palm oil
Lands and Rights in Troubled Water (LAR)

Researches the effects of land-use change in two river basins in Colombia and Brazil.

Contributes to reducing the number of conflicts and improving public policies and the rule of law with regard to extractive industries, land rights and water management, especially soy and palm oil.

www.landsandrights.blog.com

Groundwater
Groundwater in the Political Domain

Researches access to and use of groundwater in times of scarcity, despite a lack of (central) coordination in Ethiopia, the Palestinian Territories and Yemen.

Leads to putting access to and management of groundwater on the political agenda.

www.thewaterchannel.tv

Jatropha
Jatropha Curcas in rural land use (Jatropha)

Researches conflicts and cooperation around the production of biofuels in Ghana and Ethiopia.

Leading to policy development in order to ensure a fair and equitable use of biofuels that benefits local farmers and communities.

Fisheries
Re-incorporating the excluded (Reincorpfish)

Researches between small-scale fishers and large-scale fisheries in South Africa and South Asia.

Leading to development and assessment of responsible governance frameworks for fisheries that take into account environmental sustainability, social justice and human well-being.

www.reincorpfi.sh.info

South Africa: A mobile information system supports the monitoring and protecting of the coastal area.

Ethiopia: People move to the Raya valley in times of drought, because groundwater is available on the surface.

Sri Lanka: In Palk Bay, all stakeholders came together to share knowledge and identify long-term solutions.
Small-scale gold mining in the Amazon (GOMIAM)

Small-scale gold mining activities result in environmental problems and socio-political conflicts in the Amazon. The growth of the activity in the past few decades causes threats to the livelihoods of indigenous peoples and local communities. The scale of the problems is increasing as a result of the high during gold price and, more importantly, the expanding mechanisation of mining. National governments have generally responded haphazardly to these developments. Evidence-based policy responses are therefore urgently needed.

**Project goal**
Contribute to the reduction of conflicts concerning mineral resource extraction and have a positive impact on the development of small-scale gold mining policies and practices in the Amazon that are socially and environmentally responsible.

**Project progress**
GOMIAM is active in five Amazonian countries: Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Peru and Suriname. The project teams in each country have created partnerships with academics, professionals, politicians, local communities and small-scale miners, in order to achieve a comprehensive and integrated understanding of the issues at stake and possible solutions.

Research conducted during the first phase of the project (2011 - 2013) has resulted in a regional overview of the state of small-scale gold mining in the Amazon countries. It includes new insights in technological features, environmental aspects (e.g. impact on deforestation or watersheds), economic aspects (e.g. livelihoods and trade) as well as the legal and institutional context and existing policies (e.g. on mining concessions and land rights). The researchers identified distrust between governments and miners as an important obstacle to the development of better mining policies and practices. The fact that small-scale gold mining is a trans-border activity further complicates effective regulation by national authorities. During its second phase (2013-2016) the project focuses more on policy advocacy and awareness raising activities. The research findings indicate that socio-political conflicts can be reduced if local communities and miners participate in decision-making processes and policy formulation. This will also enhance the environmental, social and economic sustainability of the gold mining activities.

To encourage the process of change, the project team organises meetings to bring together small-scale miners and NGOs as well as policymakers and politicians in each of the five research countries. For example, GOMIAM organised a public meeting on “Responsible Small-scale Gold Mining in the Amazon” in Paramaribo, Suriname (November 2014) that attracted much attention from local media and was attended by authorities and government representatives, politicians, large and midscale mining companies, concession holders and small scale gold miners. GOMIAM published its first Policy Brief in March 2015 aimed at policy makers in Colombia and several others are in progress.
The project also continues to build a network of experts who are capable of influencing the public debate. They share their knowledge and provide policy recommendations to decision-makers in government institutions, including ministries but also local and regional administrations, and non-governmental organisations in the Amazon region. Since the start of the project several new partners have joined GOMIAM, such as the Núcleo de Apoio à Pequena Mineração Responsável (NAP-Mineração Responsável) of the University of São Paulo in Brazil and Punto Medio in Colombia.

The new GOMIAM website which was launched in 2014, provides access to the results of GOMIAM’s research to a large and heterogeneous target audience. For those who already know the small-scale gold sector and/or the GOMIAM project, the traditional search tools directly link to the desired information at the required level, in the appropriate language (Dutch, English, Spanish or Portuguese) and the geographical area they are looking for. For the curious visitor without much specific knowledge, it is possible to start looking in the Amazon forest. In different
places in this forest, small chunks of information are presented through text and image, all related to the main themes that GOMIAM deals with (Laws and Rules, Health and Environment, Techniques and Safety, Conflict and Solutions, Regions and Borders).
See the new website with all publicly available research results at www.gomiam.org.

Project coordinator
Dr Marjo de Theije (CEDLA, Amsterdam, Netherlands)

Consortium partners
WWF-Guianas (Paramaribo, Suriname); NAEA Federal University of Pará (Belém, Brazil); Solidaridad NL (Utrecht, Netherlands); Solidaridad Andes (Lima, Perú); Centro Bartolomé de las Casas (Cuzco, Perú); NAP-Mineração Responsável at University of São Paulo (São Paulo, Brazil); Punto Medio (Bogotá, Colombia); The University of Antioquia (Medellin, Colombia).

More information: www.gomiam.org
Groundwater in the political domain

Groundwater is the world’s most mined resource. Globally, it supports over forty percent of irrigated agriculture and more than half of drinking water supplies. With most surface water already committed or utilised, groundwater presents the last major water ‘frontier’. This vital resource, however, is invisible and largely unmanaged. This project investigated the use of and access to groundwater in Ethiopia, the Palestinian Territories and Yemen. In all three locations, access to groundwater is subject to power play while its management is weak. There is need to open up the political ‘black box’ in order to understand how to ensure sustainable and fair use of groundwater sources for the benefit of many.
**Project goal**
Putting access to and management of groundwater on the political agenda in Ethiopia, the Palestinian Territories and Yemen as well as globally.

**Project progress**
The project involved three main activities, of which the first is a comprehensive analysis of how conflicts and cooperation over groundwater are handled in the political and institutional domain. The research revealed that groundwater, unlike surface water, is a very local resource that allows for considerable local autonomy. This autonomy, however, goes against the grain of mainstream governance in all three localities: a one-sided focus on national regulation in Yemen, the promotion of overly ambitious national development plans in Ethiopia, and the struggle for local autonomy in the Palestinian Territories. The research also shows the political games that affect groundwater management. The autocratic regime in Yemen, for instance, had little interest in regulating groundwater use, while the developmental state in Ethiopia favours a prominent role for the state and leaves little space for local entrepreneurial initiatives in groundwater management.

The second activity was to build capacity in order to enhance the role that professionals and practitioners can play to sensitize and activate policymakers. Trainings were conducted about understanding and influencing politics. A large number of videos were produced that are very effective in getting across the urgency of the problem of groundwater management.

Building on this, the third activity was to develop action plans to increase political involvement in discussing groundwater governance. In Yemen, the project organised farmer to farmer exchange opportunities to devise proposals and actions plans for local groundwater management. The project team also initiated debate on the all-pervasive diesel subsidies that often took up 10-20% of government budget, whereas it facilitated indiscriminate groundwater use. In Ethiopia, local workshops highlighted the importance of access to groundwater for local farmers. This access is often compromised by external investors. In the Palestinian Territories, workshops were organised to discuss how agricultural opportunities could be maximised despite the reality of limited access to groundwater. The project team contributed to the Dutch government’s policy letter on water and development cooperation and to its plans for niche diplomacy on water. At the global level, the project team contributed to the development of a shared vision and Global Framework for Action on Groundwater Governance – which was co-owned by amongst others GEF and World Bank.

**Project coordinator**
**Dr Frank van Steenbergen** (MetaMeta)

**Consortium partners**
Delft University of Technology; Mekelle University Ethiopia; Sana’a University Yemen

**More information:** [www.thewaterchannel.tv](http://www.thewaterchannel.tv)
Jatropha curcas in rural land use in Ghana and Ethiopia (JATROPHA)

A lack of scientific insights played a role in both the emergence and the decline of jatropha as a biofuel. Some ten years ago, vast stretches of land in Ghana were purchased for the production of jatropha. At the time, the government was guided solely by its need for foreign investments and paid no attention to the available research-based knowledge, including findings about what it could mean for food security, rural development and sustainability.

Sometime around 2010 the bubble burst. Jatropha turned out to be a financial pipe dream: both the anticipated revenues and the scope of its application turned out to be grossly overestimated. The plantations were abandoned as quickly as they had been bought up. Small farmers ended up being the biggest losers in the process. Not only had they lost their land, but there was also no more economic activity in the region as well. Within the CoCooN project we did everything we could to get scientists and policymakers to communicate with each other: we organised informative events about land-grabbing and we provided individual training programmes. All that proved successful. When it comes to legislating and making new policy in the area of land use, policymakers and scientists in Ghana are now very good at finding each other.

**Project goal**
Contribute to evidence-based knowledge that will support policy development in order to mitigate conflicts and enhance cooperation in the production of biofuel feedstock, reflecting in local communities benefiting from biofuel production in Ghana and Ethiopia.

**Project progress**
The first phase of the project explored the socio-economic implications of industrial *Jatropha curcas* production for Ghanaian and Ethiopian people, focusing on their land rights, livelihoods, food production and participation in governance. In both countries most of the Jatropha companies had abandoned their plantations or diverted to other crops. Results show that communities consider the plantations a failure due to a lack of local benefits, misunderstandings or exaggerated promises about Jatropha and its benefits, bad farm management practices and inappropriate production models, poor yield, and a lack of immediate and attractive market. The second phase then explored the socio-economic implications of the abandonment and transformation of Jatropha plantations to new crops. Companies that have transformed in Ghana produce rice, maize and soybeans whilst those in Ethiopia produce maize, teff and cotton. Whereas the results in the second phase shows the transformation process caused increased competition over land, insecurity among local communities, continued mistrust, and inefficient use of rural land; a number of cases show that through the introduction of different business outgrower models, enhanced cooperation has been realised among the locals, investors and government.
The project has contributed information and expertise to international and national dialogues on biofuels in general, and Jatropha in particular. The knowledge gained is used to enhance the capacity of local institutions to reduce conflicts over biofuels and seize opportunities that maximise the benefits. Most of all, there is need for an institutional framework at the national level that guides large-scale (foreign) land acquisitions for commercial purposes, and for national land-use plans that acknowledge local land tenure practices.

The outputs of the project include peer-reviewed journal publications, policy briefs, newspaper articles and video documentaries that were broadcast on national television in Ghana and Ethiopia and on EU Media.

Project Coordinator
Mr. Richmond Antwi-Bediako (Rural Environmental Care Association, Ghana)

Consortium partners
HOAREC, Both ENDS, Addis Ababa University, University of British Columbia, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Utrecht University.
Richmond Antwi-Bediako, 
director of the Rural Environmental Care Association, Accra, Ghana

‘The gap between policymakers and scientists is big practically everywhere, and Africa forms no exception in that regard. There, civil servants rarely ever base their policies on scientific findings. That is primarily because the language, perspective and approach of science are not tailored to policymakers. Civil servants don’t take the time to read often highly complex scientific publications, nor can they be found at seminars where research results are presented. On the other hand, scientists feel little need to target their research to address acute policy issues, as that would entail being swept up in the issues of the day. The CoCooN programme is attempting to bring both camps closer to each other.

Bridge the gap

‘As a result of the CoCooN project, I personally have taken a deeper interest in science. I have begun a PhD research project at Utrecht University in order to gain a stronger scientific background and thus to be better able to take advantage of scientific insights. In that way, I want to help bridge the gap between science and policy.’
Lands and Rights in Troubled Waters (LAR)

Natural Resources questions over land-use change and water in Brazil (Tapajos Valley, Lower Amazon) and Colombia (Upper Cauca Valley, between West and Central Andes).

Brazil and Colombia are rich and diverse in terms of landscapes, biodiversity, human populations, and natural resources. Their richness in natural resources have attracted private actors such as large land holders and businesses interested in the land, the water (ways), and the minerals in land and water. Stimulated by neoliberal policies, this has led to large-scale agricultural expansions and multinationals arriving in the two geographical areas under study in Brazil and Colombia. This pressure on land and water has created conflicts with traditional populations, who are using the same natural resources, albeit in a more sustainable way than the more recently arrived private actors.

Project goal
How can human rights violations, as well as environmental destruction and degradation, be stopped or at least be mitigated? Criminological literature shows that state-corporate crimes and harms are often not so visible and internationally known, because they are concentrated on marginalised populations who lack the political and economic power to resist those harms. A continuing strategy and result from the project LAR is therefore capacity building. The academics and especially the NGOs of the LAR consortium have been supporting communities on the levels of organisation, (knowledge of) rights, and access to institutions and policy makers. Simultaneously, LAR collects, documents and publicises about the impacts of green harms and (human) rights violations on marginalised human populations and ecosystems (such as water sources that are polluted by herbicides for soy and sugar monocultures).

Project progress
Addressing problems and solutions with regard to conflicts over natural resource exploitation, LAR takes an interdisciplinary approach by combining different disciplines: law, social sciences (criminology, geography, sociology), biology, water engineering and toxicology. The LAR project interprets development as improving the rule of law and communities’ access to governmental institutions, in particularly to justice and law enforcement institutions. Having good institutions is usually the way forward to economic prosperity, but the large availability of natural resources entails the risks of a resource curse, which sometime is also a ‘crime curse’, namely when crimes like corruption and violence become prevalent.
In LAR’s top-up phase, the international dimension of conflicts over natural resources is explicitly addressed. As international human rights norms are becoming firmer, governments and businesses should become increasingly responsible. Conflicts over natural resource exploitation in the Global South cannot be stopped or mitigated without more transparent commodity chains and more responsible end markets such as in the EU.

Project Coordinator
Dr. T. Boekhout van Solinge

Consortium partners
CPT Santarem, FIAN, UFOPA, Centro de Estudios Sociales, Censat Agua Viva Amigos de la Tierra – Colombia.

More information: landsandrights.blog.com
Nationalisation and state activism in the extractive industries in Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru (NEBE)

Nationalisation policies, and a more active state in general, have had a profound effect on the oil, gas and mining industries in Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru. The sharp historical divides between the ruling classes and the remainder of the population, combined with misappropriation of revenues from resource extraction, have led to social tensions and conflict within these countries. The project explores what difference nationalisation in particular, and the rise of ‘left wing’ political movements in general, have made in this context. The project team collaborates with local (indigenous) communities and social organisations to develop a more informed and effective voice in the management of natural resources.
Project goal
Assess the effects of nationalisation and state activism to establish the best practices for management of extractive resources that will benefit the majority of the indigenous peoples in Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru.

Project progress
In Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru, developments within extractive industries make headlines on a daily basis. This adds to the relevance of the research and its findings, but also implies a highly politicised and conflictive research context. In this context, it is important to ensure maximum participation of all key stakeholders in the project. The team’s participatory approach has contributed significantly to interaction and learning between policymakers, activists and academics. Working cross-culturally and bridging traditional divisions between academic and civic partners have been challenging but enriching experiences for all project members.

Research on the sustainable use of natural resources and its political economy is combined with network building and capacity development activities. The project has connected with existing research and action networks on extractive industries, primarily through the existing networks of the Southern partners. This has provided key information and contacts, which has enriched project activities and enabled the sharing of initial research results. The first results include an analysis of new state strategies to expand the extraction frontiers through a mix of compensation, redistribution of revenues and co-optation. The research also delivered an appraisal of the challenges faced by innovative policy initiatives in Ecuador, such as the Yasuni-ITT initiative.

In addition to academic and professional publications, the project has resulted in various products that contribute to policy dialogue and capacity building. The NEBE project has succeeded in embedding its research in the local context and appears to be growing organically through unexpected but promising linkages with other initiatives. The upscaling of the project allowed the team to intensify its field activities in Bolivia and Ecuador and to start new activities in Northern Peru.

Project coordinator
Prof. Mansoob Murshed (Institute of Social Studies)

Consortium partner
Lidema; Universidad San Francisco de Quito; HIVOS

How to hack the rainforest

Already during one of its first test flights the drone proved its value: it unequivocally registered how a mining company was not just looking for gold on one particular site within the Peruvian Amarakaeri reserve but had also set up a dredging operation in a river for which it had no permit. The images were turned over to the Peruvian government, which immediately took legal action against the company. The judge has yet to make a decision, but the case has already received significant attention in the Peruvian media.

Protecting the rainforest

In one activity, referred to as ‘Hack the rainforest’, scientists from the CoCooN project ‘Nationalisation of extractive industries: Conflict and cooperation in Bolivia and Ecuador’ (NEBE) came together with hackers and local activists in February 2015 to exchange ideas about the possibilities of equipping indigenous communities with easy-to-use high-tech tools to help protect their lifeline: the rainforest. The use of small, unmanned aircraft was one of the ideas put forward during this ‘hackathon’.

Solid evidence

Within a couple months, two members of the Arakmbut tribe, Luchin and Jaime, released the Phantom 3 drone above the expansive rainforest. GPS software saw to it that the drone followed a carefully predetermined route before returning to the place from which it had departed: the village of Puerto Luz in the Amarakaeri reserve. The photographs taken from the drone offer a new perspective in connection with the deforestation and pollution of the Amazon region. The camera images are spectacular and leave nothing to the imagination. They provide hard evidence of what is taking place in the rainforest – and who is responsible for that.

www.hacktherainforest.com
Reincorporating small-scale fishers in governance in South Africa and South Asia (REINCORPFISH)

Conflicts over fishing rights, stocks and methods have a particularly negative effect upon small-scale fishers. In South Africa, apartheid resulted in the long-term exclusion of black and coloured fishers from fisheries. In South Asia, small-scale fishers in Sri Lanka who have returned to their coastal settlements since the end of the civil war find their waters occupied by Indian trawlers. The development of new fisheries policies that take the rights and needs of small-scale fishers into account needs to be promoted and informed by evidence-based research and bottom-up decision-making.

Project goal
Together with small-scale fishers and their organisations contribute to the development and assessment of responsible governance frameworks for fisheries in South Africa and South Asia that take into account environmental sustainability, social justice and human well-being.

Project progress
In South Africa, the project focuses on assessing progress on the development and implementation of a new fisheries policy that has far-reaching implications for tens of thousands of people living in settlements along South Africa’s coastline. Members of the REINCORPFISH team participated in the national task team that finalised the small-scale fisheries policy. The policy was gazetted in July 2012, however, it does not include an implementation plan. The current work of the project team, which includes fishers, NGOs and researchers, is therefore focused on developing mechanisms and contributing to the readiness within communities and among government departments to implement the new policy.

In the South Asian marine border area, the REINCORPFISH project works to support the development and implementation of a new governance framework that addresses the transboundary conflicts over fishing between India and Sri Lanka. However, contributing to ‘governance from below’ in this highly politicised context is not easy. Efforts in India have focused on building a co-management platform that contemplates and discusses long-term governance options, and helps to increase awareness of the problems caused by Indian trawlers in Sri Lanka. In Sri Lanka, the team strives to strengthen the capacity of small-scale fishers to raise their concerns in the national arena. For this purpose, it has mobilised Sri Lankan universities in north and south as well and implemented a successful media programme.
The team is organising exchange visits of fisher leaders between India and Sri Lanka, as well as between different coastlines of South Africa, with the aim of facilitating inter-regional learning and building capacities. It also contributes to capacity building at local universities through the training of six PhD students and a number of master students.

**Project coordinator**

**Prof. Maarten Bavinck** (University of Amsterdam)

**Consortium partners**

University of Cape Town; Masifundise Development Trust; University of Ruhuna; Madras Institute of Development Studies; University of Jaffna, Cordaid; National Fisheries Solidarity Sri Lanka.

**More information:** [www.reincorpfish.info](http://www.reincorpfish.info)

*Picture: Joeri Scholtens*
Land (farmers and pastoralists)  
Towards more Inclusive and Cooperative Climate change Interventions (TICCI)  
Researches the dynamics of inclusiveness, participation and conflict-sensitivity of climate change interventions.  
Contributes to interventions that strengthen adaptive capacity and that reduce the risk of conflicts.

Hydropower (water)  
Hydropower development in the context of climate change (HYDROPOWER)  
Researches the intersection of hydropower development and climate change in a culturally and ecologically diverse region.  
Contributes to better institutional, technological and financial modalities by dialogue, innovative knowledge and capacity building.

Land (forest and biofuels)  
Climate change mitigation policies, land grabbing and conflict in fragile states (MOSAIC)  
Researches land-based climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies from a human rights perspective.  
Contributes to developing interventions that promote socially just and inclusive and democratic land policies at the local level.

Land and water  
Climate finance mechanisms: investing in Land and Water (Investing in Land and Water)  
Researches delays and conflicts at the implementation of climate finance mechanisms.  
Contributes to improved climate finance mechanisms and lessons for the next generation of finance mechanisms.

Water in the city  
Peri-Urban Water Security in South Asia  
Researches local impacts of urbanisation and climate change on peri-urban communities.  
Contributes to enhanced water security in peri-urban areas and climate-smart water resource policies.

Ghana:  
Various climate change adaptation and mitigation interventions are successfully implemented.

Ethiopia:  
The Ethiopian government is showing keen interest in climate finance.

Indonesia:  
The fourth biggest GHG emitter in the world, receives substantive sums through climate funds.

Kenya:  
Characterised by climate change problems such as erratic rainfall, droughts, floods, desertification, soil degradation and deforestation.

Burkina Faso:  
Climate-smart villages are planned for the near future.

Mexico:  
Indigenous peoples at local and national level impose to REDD+.

Vietnam:  
NGOs lobby the central government to resolve conflicts over REDD+ between communities and state-owned companies.

Bangladesh:  
Salinity, sea level rise, more unreliable rainfall lead to conflicts over water in coastal areas.

Nepal:  
Changed patterns of pastoralism are linked with climate change.

Cambodia:  
Economic Land Concessions let investors lease more than two million hectares of land in the last decade.

Myanmar:  
Since the recent political transition, transnational land investments by state have increased dramatically.

Burkina Faso:  
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Cambodia: Economic Land Concessions let investors lease more than two million hectares of land in the last decade. Myanmar: Since the recent political transition, transnational land investments by state have increased dramatically.

Land and water Climate finance mechanisms: investing in Land and Water (Investing in Land and Water) Researches delays and conflicts at the implementation of climate finance mechanisms. Contributes to improved climate finance mechanisms and lessons for the next generation of finance mechanisms.

Water and Forests Community based Adaptive Learning in management of Conflicts and Natural Resources (CALCNR)

Researches community-based resource management, local adaptation strategies and national policies on climate change.

Contributes to improved natural resource and climate adaptation policies that promote cooperation between local and national stakeholders.

Forests Conflict and cooperation over REDD+ in Mexico, Nepal and Vietnam (CoCooR)

Researches the impacts of REDD+ on conflict and cooperation in developing countries.

Contributes to conflict-sensitive REDD+ implementation, for example with conflict prediction checklists and training tools.
Community based Adaptive Learning in management of Conflicts and Natural Resources (CALCNR)

Project goal
Generate evidence-based knowledge on the gaps and conflicts that exist between community management of natural resources, local adaptation strategies and national policies on climate change in Nepal and Bangladesh in order to improve policy and promote cooperation between local and national stakeholders.

About the project
Bangladesh and Nepal are located in the Ganges-Brahmaputra basin. Both countries have high levels of poverty and the effects of climate change further threaten people’s livelihoods. As a result, conflicts over access to and use of floodplain wetlands (Bangladesh) and forests and water (Nepal) are increasing. Both countries have considerable experience with community-based co-management of natural resources; however, this experience has hardly informed policymaking at the national level. Government policies for climate change adaptation remain blind to local conflicts over scarce natural resources and are inconsistent with local adaptation initiatives.
**Expected contributions**
The research team builds on its long-term collaboration with networks of community-based organisations in natural resource management in both countries.

CALCNR is generating evidence through participatory action research with existing community based organisations (CBOs) in seventy case study locations representing different natural resource conflicts impacted by climate change and/or related policies and strategies. The case studies investigate how climatic changes intensify conflicts (within communities and with private enterprises and governments) and affect the resilience of local co-management institutions. For example, in Bangladesh conflicts over water in coastal areas and inland (affected by salinity, sea level rise, more unreliable rainfall) and in Nepal pressures on community forestry linked with climate change (such as changed patterns of pastoralism) and water management innovations to reduce local water conflict.

Lessons and evidence are shared with other similar CBOs through adaptive learning networks, but policy engagement for CBOs is limited. CALCNR is strengthening the capacities of the CBO networks and facilitating regional and national platforms where they can share their knowledge with policymakers in environmental governance and how supportive application of policies can enable conflicts to be overcome. Donors are investing large amounts in national and local-level climate change adaptation planning in Bangladesh and Nepal. The knowledge generated by this project will help to make sure that these funds are used to reduce conflicts and improve the livelihoods of millions of people who depend on the vulnerable ecosystems of Ganges-Brahmaputra basin.

**Project coordinator**
**Dr Parvin Sultana** (Middlesex University)

**Consortium partners**
Nice Foundation; Forest Action Nepal; International Development Enterprises
Conflict and cooperation over REDD+ in Mexico, Nepal and Vietnam (CoCooR)

**Project goal**
Strengthen the evidence of the impact of REDD+ on conflict and cooperation in developing countries through innovative research in Mexico, Nepal and Vietnam.

**About the project**
CoCooR (2014-2018) is an interdisciplinary cross-country project with a focus on analysing of conflicts and co-operation over REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation) in Nepal, Mexico and Vietnam. The project starts from the premise that REDD+ may aggravate the protracted conflicts characterizing forestry in the Global South or cause new ones in the absence of a conflict-sensitive approach. Yet, the changes in cross-scale governance brought about by REDD+ may also provide unprecedented opportunities for transforming existing conflicts and promoting cooperation.

CoCooR explores the impact of REDD+ in developing countries through national and local level case studies in Mexico, Nepal and Vietnam. These three countries, who are at advanced stages of REDD+, offer excellent opportunities for generating insights relevant to other countries. The project draws on ethnography, discourse analysis, participatory research and applies an environmental justice lens to the study of conflict and cooperation with the ultimate goal of contributing to conflict-sensitive REDD+ policy and practice.

**Outputs and contributions**
The project formally started in February 2014 and held its inception workshop in Norwich (9-11 May 2014). The CoCooR team also led and organised a theoretical exchange event with participation of other CCMCC projects. It actively participated in the Second Norwich Think Tank on Environmental Justice in May 2014, which led to the Second Norwich Declaration on Forest People’s Rights and REDD+ Safeguards.

The CoCooR team has surveyed REDD+ conflicts in the three countries and worldwide and National partners are currently undertaking investigation of local-level dynamics in six REDD+ demonstration sites (including joint fieldworks and exchange visits) and analysis of REDD+ safeguards processes at the national level. The partners are also undertaking photovoice projects with local communities that provide a platform for them to tell their own stories in order to share their points of view.

CoCooR is also currently developing a conflict prediction checklist for REDD+ practitioners, producing recommendations on conflict-sensitive national safeguards processes for decision makers and will provide relevant training to local communities, grassroots organisations, NGOs, government and project developers. The project also seeks to strengthen the capacity of national partner institutions to address conflicts over forests through novel approaches.
to research, policy advice and stakeholder engagement in the three countries, South/Southeast Asia and worldwide. At the same time, it will deepen the integration of these partners in global networks of excellence on conflict, climate change, environmental justice and forests.

Project coordinator
**Prof. Thomas Sikor** and **Dr Poshendra Satyal** (University of East Anglia, UK).

Consortium partners
RECOFTC – The Centre for People and Forests (Thailand); INAH – Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia (Mexico); SIAS – Southasia Institute for Advanced Studies (Nepal); ICS – Institute of Cultural Studies (Vietnam); Winrock International (USA)

Climate finance mechanisms: investing in Land and Water

Project goal
Provide evidence-based lessons on conflicts and cooperation in CDM and REDD+ projects and suggest recommendations for ongoing and new climate finance mechanisms, such as negotiated by the Green Climate Fund.

About the project
Millions of poor people in developing countries are highly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change, such as floods and droughts. In theory, climate finance mechanisms, meant as an incentive to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions, free up international finances for investments in land and water resources that support poverty
reduction. In practice, however, implementation of projects under climate finance mechanisms seem to be lagging behind in reaching the expectations. Reported problems include conflicting interest related to tenure, benefit sharing, diverging information, complicated procedures on carbon accounting and monitoring. Through our multi-level approach we note differences in framing the objectives, benefits and priorities among stakeholders at local, national and international level. Unraveling these conflicting perceptions and understanding implementation problems in the case study areas will address the question why projects implemented under climate finance mechanisms are susceptible to delays and conflicts. These insights aim to improve local and international governance and policymaking.

**Expected contributions**

The multi-disciplinary team is conducting research in Ethiopia, Indonesia and the Netherlands, in order to address the strengths and flaws of climate finance mechanisms from a local, national and global perspective. The research contributes to a better understanding of obstacles by assessing the objectives, design, implementation and evaluation of finance mechanisms. It also includes an assessment of the perceptions, needs and expectations of local communities, civil society organisations, the private sector and policymakers. Social learning among consortium members and local stakeholders is central to all project activities, such as joint methodology development, participatory research and synthesis workshops. The project team aims to help improve the track record of existing climate finance mechanisms but also to provide important lessons for the next generation of finance mechanisms, notably the Green Climate Fund. Its ultimate ambition is to make climate finance mechanisms more effective.

**Project coordinator**

**Prof. Charlotte de Fraiture** (UNESCO-IHE)

**Consortium partners**

HoAREC; Wageningen University & ResearchCentre; Both ENDS; Aksi!
Peri-Urban Water Security in South Asia

Project goal
This project aims to improve the water security of communities in peri-urban areas in Bangladesh, India and Nepal by enhancing their resilience to the effects of urbanisation and climate change and by contributing to climate-smart water resource policies that take into account peri-urban areas.

About the project
Climate change and rapid urbanisation are creating growing problems of water insecurity in the peri-urban areas of the cities of Khulna (Bangladesh), Kathmandu (Nepal) and Hyderabad and Gurgaon (India). Urbanisation creates an increasing demand for natural resources, especially land and water. Expanding cities often extract these resources from peri-urban areas, for instance by pumping groundwater from outside the city and selling it to city residents. These and other developments, including climate change, threaten the livelihoods of peri-urban residents and also raise concerns about social differentiation and injustice. Earlier research shows an increasing incidence of conflicts over access to water, but evidence of new forms of cooperation devised to overcome water insecurity as well.
Project contributions and developments
Peri-urban areas receive very little academic and policy attention. Contributing to knowledge, development and capacity building, this project addresses this lack of attention. In the current stage of the project, teams in the three countries are intensively studying the local impacts of urbanisation and climate change as experienced by peri-urban communities, water and climate change policies at various levels, and water-related conflict and cooperation. Special attention is paid to the emergence and reproduction of forms of social differentiation along lines of caste, gender, class and others. Stakeholder meetings and workshops with participation from politicians and policy-makers, government agencies, NGOs, local communities and scientists have been held in all three countries to get input, discuss research priorities, and develop ideas for development and capacity building. Scoping studies have been finalised in all countries, at the base where choices for selection and location of further project activities in the domains of knowledge, development and capacity building are being made. As the project develops, knowledge on conflict and cooperation in the management of peri-urban water insecurity will be used to sensitize state and non-state actors, and networks among peri-urban scholars, development practitioners and policymakers will be strengthened.

First outputs
The first scientific article on conflict and cooperation emerging from this project is currently under review. The scoping studies for the three countries will form the basis for further publications.

Project coordinator
Dr Dik Roth (Wageningen University & Research Centre)

Consortium partners
Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET); International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD); Jagrata Juba Shangha (JJS); Meta Meta; SaciWATERs; Wageningen University & Research Centre (WUR).
Towards more Inclusive and Cooperative Climate change Interventions (TICCI)

**Project goal**
Improve the effectiveness and inclusiveness of adaptation interventions (in terms of strengthening adaptive capacity and reducing the risk of conflict) amongst small-scale farmers and pastoralists in the arid and semi-arid regions of Burkina Faso, Ghana and Kenya.

**About the project**
Increasing climate variability is affecting the livelihoods of many communities in developing countries. There is, in reaction, a role out of new adaptation policies and practices, with Community-Based Adaptation (CBA) a prominent
format. There is, as Terry Cannon notes, a ‘rush by climate change practitioners to be involved in CBA’ (Canon 2014). With special attention to CBA, this project evaluates and assesses the dynamics of inclusiveness, participation and conflict-sensitivity of climate change interventions that are directed at farmers and pastoralists. The role of groups that are marginalised based on gender, generation, livelihood, ethnicity, class and community will also receive special attention.

**Expected contributions**
Smart and effective adaptation policies and practices build on a thorough awareness of complex realities. This project brings together different scientific schools of thought to achieve a better understanding of the links between community participation in development, local power and conflict dynamics, climate change interventions and people’s adaptive capacity. As a second step, the project hopes to contribute to the formulation of community-smart, conflict sensitive climate change adaptation policies and develop applicable tools and outputs for both practitioners and policymakers. All this will be achieved in close connection with the communities, policymakers and practitioners that participate in the research. The ambition of the team is that, as a result of the research and its capacity building activities, adaptation interventions can be more sensitive to possible conflict and inequalities, for example based on gender.

**Project coordinator**
**Prof. Annelies Zoomers** (Utrecht University)

**Consortium partners**
CCAFS-CGIAR; Indigenous Livelihoods Enhancement Partners; CARE Ghana; SARI; INERA
Hydropower development in the context of climate change

Project goal
Develop more just and climate-resilient hydropower development trajectories in the Eastern Himalayas in order to support the livelihoods of affected mountain communities.
About the project

Often called the Water Towers of Asia, the Himalayan region represents the collision of two processes emblematic for the early 21st century. The first is the recognition of the region as highly vulnerable to the effects of global climate change. Second, is the recent surge in hydropower development. Policy discourses at national and international levels position the development of hydropower as synergistically positive: it combines the production of clean energy to fuel economic growth at regional and national levels with initiatives to lift poor mountain communities out of poverty. This project looks into how the effects of hydropower development intersect with the impacts of climate change in the culturally and ecologically diverse region of the Eastern Himalayas in Nepal and India. Indeed, hydropower is relatively clean and renewable, but negative socio-environmental repercussions of large hydropower dams are difficult to minimise. This project examines the current enthusiasm for hydropower development, identifying the strong alliances that support it, with a view to addressing the urgent need for a more just and even-handed hydropower development from the perspective of project-affected communities.

Expected contributions

The project ambition is to encourage hydropower development that is compatible with the long-term health of the riverine ecosystems that support people’s livelihoods. The project plans to make the tensions and contradictions between hydropower development and climate change in the Eastern Himalayas of India and Nepal through a comparative transdisciplinary research approach. Through a large network of researchers, scholars, journalists, activists, policymakers and energy and water professionals, the project aims to enable dialogue across these communities generating innovative knowledge and promoting capacity building it contributes to better institutional, technological and financial modalities of hydropower development.

Project coordinator

Dr Deepa Joshi (Wageningen University & Research Centre)

Consortium partners

University of East Anglia; International Rivers; Sikkim University; Nepal Engineering College; Nepal Water Conservation Foundation; IWMI, Nepal; Forum for Policy Dialogue on Water Conflicts in India; ACWADAM; North Bengal University.
Climate change mitigation policies, land grabbing and conflict in fragile states (MOSAIC)

Project goal
To build up evidence-based knowledge in how land-based climate change mitigation and adaptation policies, land grabbing and conflict intersect in the fragile states of Myanmar and Cambodia in order to contribute to climate change strategies that achieve socially inclusive outcomes.

About the project
Land-based climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies, such as biofuel production, forest conservation, REDD+, hydropower, some types of irrigation projects and land use re-zoning are meant to protect our global commons and to improve the livelihoods of people in developing countries. However, there is increasing evidence that such well-meant strategies create or exacerbate local conflicts over access to resources and land; or that pre-existing resource conflicts may undermine climate change mitigation and adaptation initiatives. Fragile states where a land rush is occurring are particularly vulnerable to increased conflict and potentially problematical land-based climate change mitigation and adaptation initiatives.

This project investigates the interplay of land-based climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies, land rush and conflict or cooperation from a human rights perspective. Its analysis is focused at the landscape level. The research will be conducted in two fragile states: Myanmar and Cambodia.

Expected (and emerging) contributions
The impact of climate change is felt at the local and global level – and both need to be addressed. This project will build capacity for development interventions that promote socially just and inclusive mitigation and adaptation strategies and democratic land policies at the local level. To achieve this, grassroots social movements, NGOs and academic partners will work together. At the same time, the team will analyse national and international governance instruments to identify how local initiatives can be effectively linked up with these. The project will contribute to theory on developing conditions under which inclusive, landscape-level strategies for preventing resource conflicts can be achieved. It is the ambition of the project members to contribute to an emerging international network of both knowledge and practice.
By the end of August 2015, 14 months into this 48-month long project, and after some what challenging kick-start during its first year, the research has started to gain ground – validating much of our initial assumptions about the increasing intertwining of climate and agrarian justice issues and mobilisations by local communities and grassroots organisations. The largely land-oriented partners in the consortium have started to integrate in their issue analysis and campaign framing the broader perspective and framework of climate change, and are in the beginning phase of mobilizing on land issues from this perspective, both at the local and national level.

Project coordinator

Prof. Jun Borras, International Institute of Social Studies

Consortium partners

Chiang Mai University; Autonomous University of Barcelona; Transnational Institute; Paung Ku; Metta, ICCO-South East Asia; CDPS/CPN; Equitable Cambodia, FIAN