

Development and implementation of a Conflict-Prevention and Management-System (CPM-System) in the frame of the Trans-SEC project

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Trans-SEC at a glance

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Web	http://www.zalf.de
PTJ	Managing and funding Organization: Project Management Jülich (PTJ)
BMBF	Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF)
BMZ	Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
	Budget and Duration: 7.5 m Euro: 7.1 m Euro BMBF, 400.000 Euro BMZ 5 years from April 2013 to March 2018
ZALF	Partners: Leibniz-Centre for Agricultural Landscape Research
UHOH	University of Hohenheim
IUW	Leibniz University Hannover
HU	Humboldt-University Berlin
DIE	German Development Institute
PIK	Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research
DITSL	German Institute for Tropical and Subtropical Agriculture
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute (USA)
ICRAF	The International Centre for Research in Agroforestry (Kenya)
SUA	Sokoine University of Agriculture (Tanzania)
ARI	Agricultural Research Institutes (Tanzania)
TFC	Tanzania Federation of Cooperatives (Tanzania)
ACT	Agricultural Council of Tanzania (Tanzania)
MVI- WATA	Mtandao wa Vikundi Vya Wakulima (National Network of Small-Scale Farmers' Groups (Tanzania)
	Consortium: 60 researcher from Germany, Tanzania, Kenya, USA, Brazil from Research Institutes, NGOs, Ministries and local government organizations and approx. 40 external contributors from policy, media and NGOs

1 Introduction

This leaflet describes the objective of the Trans-SEC project to embed a Conflict-Prevention and Management-System (CPM-System) in a large-scale international research consortium. This is a unique attempt to combine a series of methods from conflict prevention such as teambuilding up to conflict resolution through mediation in order to optimise the quality of collaboration within Trans-SEC.

This new “model” aims at innovating the research management. While research projects usually emphasise output-related scientific research-contents, less focus is so far given on the process of generating results through human interaction. Hence, Trans-SEC focuses on shifting the emphasis towards improving the processes of interpersonal cooperation and thus to ensure success with regard to promised research objectives.

The aim to establish the CPM-System is to prevent and, if arose, to solve conflicts within the research consortium. Finally – in an overall view – intercultural, gender-specific and individual interests, appreciations and feelings will be balanced among all involved participants in the research community. This innovation intends to lower the transaction costs for communication through a high motivation of involved actors, to increase thus efficiency of developed outputs and to ensure finally the effectiveness of project outcomes.

One research task of Trans-SEC is to test the CPM-System itself during the project period. Therefore, the following research questions will have to be answered:

- How to develop a procedure of establishing a CPM-System using a set of specific measures, which is embedded into the management and coordination team of a large-scale international research project?

- Does the CPM-System contribute to lower conflict costs in large scientific communities above 50 participants in the context of international agricultural research?
- How can conflict costs and the impact of CPM-Systems be measured by which kind of indicators towards its positive contributions for an improved management and thus project success?
- Which bundle of tailor-made methods is most adequate to meet an “ideal” CPM-System within large research projects with special regard to intercultural perspectives?
- How to document a CPM-System to disseminate and up-scale this experience and new “model” as Good Practice for other research projects?

This first leaflet is part of a series of CPM-System documentations. It shall create awareness and inform the reader about the project Trans-SEC, the coordination methods and the framework of CMS itself.

2 The project Trans-SEC

The research project “Innovating Strategies to safeguard Food Security using Technology and Knowledge Transfer: A people-centred Approach” (Trans-SEC) of the funding initiative “Securing the Global Food Supply – Globe” is embedded in the framework program “National Research Strategy BioEconomy 2030” and financed by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF).

Objective

The specific objective of the collaborative research project Trans-SEC is to improve the food situation for the most-vulnerable rural poor population in Tanzania. This project is designed to identify successful food securing upgrading strategies and/or innovations along local and regional food value chains, test and adjust them to site-specific, sustainable settings and tailor these concepts to be disseminated for national outreach. After the

The research activities will be embedded into local and regional strategies to assess potential impacts and trade-offs and to be able to up-scale lessons learnt in a generic manner to regions with specific bio-physical, socio-cultural and economic conditions.

The GlobE program pursues the following four central aims, a) participatory design of German-African research networks which focus on the food system; b) identifying and solving central problems related to the overarching food system in Africa, involving researchers and institutions of the target region through collaborative research projects; c) developing regionally adapted research solutions based on a solid situation analysis of the target region in question; and d) supporting and further developing research capacities in Germany and in the African partner countries.

Food Security Topics

A wide range of factors influencing the food system must first be analysed before solutions can be found. Moreover, the food system boundaries and their related components must be well defined in advance. The boundaries of the food system targeted by the Trans-SEC project are illustrated in Table 1.

The food system depends on a) productivity as determined by the use of resources (soil, water, nutrients, energy, labour), b) the use of production inputs (technical devices, fertilizers, animal feed, seeds and plants, pest control), c) the safety and quality of food, d) the consumption and dietary patterns, e) site-adapted cropping and harvesting, f) animal husbandry, g) agro-forestry integration, h) food storage methods, and i) market access and prices. As food systems are imbedded in specific cultural, political, social, ecological and economic environments, site- and region-specific solutions will be targeted.

Table 1: Addressed themes of Trans-SEC

Topic	Addressed issues of the call			Additional issues
	High emphasis	Considered with medium emphasis	Considered, but lower emphasis	
Natural resources	soil, water	material flows and nutrient cycles		
Production	food production, food quality	human nutrition	health	markets
Value chain	post-harvest processing	reduction of food value chain losses		waste management
Region and gender	site- and region-specific solutions	gender-specific structures		participation, societal differences, policies, institutions
Plants			plants / plant breeding	
Biomass/energy		biomass / bioenergy		waste management
Livestock		animals in food system		waste management

Expected Impact

Based on the applied concept, directly 4000 households of the four focused villages in the case study regions will substantially benefit from proposed and tested up-grading strategies. These disseminated concepts will be up-taken to farmer school programmes of the farmer association MVIWATA and other involved NGOs. Trans-SEC expects a lower risk of yield losses, therefore an improved production planning for investments and through new market access a producer price, which is at least three times higher than the traditional local market price and might be add up to an yearly income increase of 30 % per household, if at least 10 % of total production will be sold on markets. The livelihoods will be stabilized within the next ten years, once the

upgrading strategies are implemented via extension services. Beyond this direct commercial success, indirect benefits will be achieved through direct up-scaling strategies through trickle down effects and regional spill-overs and programs of the involved Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Cooperatives and local governments.

4 Coordination

The coordinators have managed four projects in Tanzania over a period of 6 years with a funding of three million Euros and up to 30 involved researchers. The experience gained creates unique selling points on knowledge and experience (1) to create and maintain a sustainable GA-RDInet within the entire Tanzanian research landscape, (2) to efficiently manage large consortia and perpetuate communication flows, (3) to generate an intrinsic work atmosphere, (4) to accomplish operational feasibility of solving unforeseen problems by conflict management among the different cultural mentalities, (5) to ensure output-oriented research findings using a combination of central and subordinate organisation development, (6) to apply new innovative management, coordination and supervision/mediation tools to ensure success. Due to our comprehensive experience Trans-SEC will provide an “ideal model” in continuously enhancing food security research with highest possible efficiency/effectiveness to meet the Trans-SEC aims and impacts promised, (7) to apply exceptional means for dissemination and marketing (German TV DW, film documentary, video interview clips) beyond the traditional ones.

Project Management

The ZALF Project Management Team (PMT) consists of two experienced coordinators, who will integrate scientific questions related to the multi- and trans-disciplinary research setting, manage the internal coordination of the consortium as well as take care of all external representational duties

and responsibilities. Therefore, the PMT will establish tools and structures that ensure

- short-, mid- and long-term financial, administrative and scientific management: the daily management clarifies questions and guides partners. The mid-term perspective ensures milestone achievements and safeguards timely delivery of results and/or products. The long-term perspective defines the strategic goals.
- efficient information flow and systems (e.g. central knowledge centre on webpage): Two-way communication processes with input/output flows and tailor-made communication channels will be established.
- systematic responsibility assignments of processes and outputs as well as transparent measures of incentives, rewards and sanctions: The work package leader bears the sole responsibility for that particular package and is required to report problems to the coordination level, where solving actions will be initiated.
- continuous evaluation of the efficiency of work and communication processes by meta-analyses applying both internal analysis and external services through experts: An internal revision and analysis will be conducted and supported by external communication experts, who evaluate the organisation system. Coaching will be available if necessary.
- risk control by iterative, obligatory checklist surveys assessing the probability of on-time deliveries, which are binding: Critical pathways identified will be monitored and documented through in-depth interviews. Critical, agreed-upon deadlines will be made visible as binding agreements on the internal webpage.
- innovative methods for conflict prevention and conflict management to ensure good human relations, high-quality communication and thus enable low transaction costs, in particular with regard to, inter-cultural conflicts that, in our international project experience, can highly disturb the cooperation: Supervision for coordinators and

regional subordinate leaders will take place on an annual basis. Teambuilding-workshops and training for intercultural sensitization will take place at the beginning of the project. A conflict management system will be established to enable conflict resolution. In both cases, anonymous phone consultation (hot-line) and open conflict mediation on request by workshops in a face-to-face setting are envisaged. The lessons learnt will be summarized in a final report to BMBF for further use in other projects.

- dissemination of outreach strategies to tailor knowledge generated to target groups, institutions and the wider public: Reporting and marketing of Trans-SEC in the research landscape by policy briefs to Tanzanian institutions (e.g. involved farmers schools, capacity-building centres, ministries), and other existing networks gained through cooperation. Publication strategies will make use of progress-oriented open access journals (e.g. <http://www.livingreviews.org/>), other peer-reviewed journals, new media such as short video clips on interviews to be published on the webpage, documentaries by German TV Deutsche Welle (ZALF experience with IKI programme Global 3000), and newspaper articles (e.g. ZALF experience with ZEIT).
- safeguard of sustainable durability of the GA-RDInet, financing and scientific expertise during and beyond project lifetime: Trans-SEC will apply a two-fold strategy by a) extracting research components to apply supplementary funds in smaller entities (topping-up) and b) developing an overall long-term funding strategy for the entire GA-RDInet.

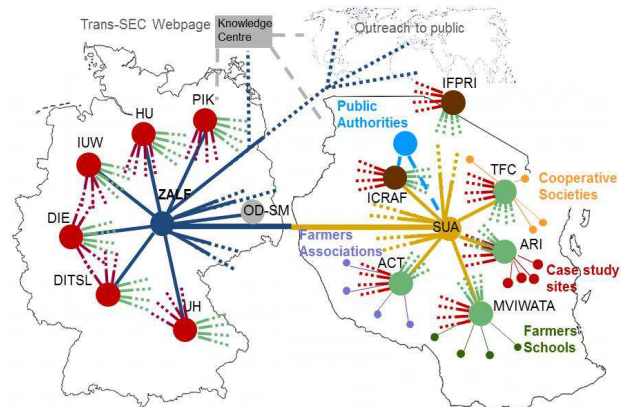


Figure 3: Mapping of the Trans-SEC Organisation Development

Trans-SEC developed a system of intra- and inter-organisational development (OD) among hierarchies, regions and all stakeholders. It aims to combine core information input/output flows among partners by a) a central coordination (ZALF) and b) a Tanzanian sub-coordination (SUA) for operational management and synthesis (Dietrich 2007). Standard information on administrative and risk management tasks such as checklist surveys will be managed using a “knowledge centre” on the internal webpage area. ZALF and SUA each coordinate their national partner cluster. SUA and ICRAF involve stakeholders at regional and national level of public authorities and ministries. The three NGOs TFC, MVIWATA and ACT will each disseminate Trans-SEC results to farmer associations and schools as well as cooperative societies. The WP leaders are responsible for on-time delivery of results. The two CGIARs operate on specific research tasks and will support the tasks with their excellent infrastructure. ZALF is responsible for further dissemination using additional communication channels of the CGIARs. External advisory board experts will analyse and support the Trans-SEC organisation and coordination. Progress and process control through supervision will ensure continuous improvement and maximise effectiveness and communication. Annual meetings and reporting to PTJ/BMBF/BMZ will be major means to ensure transparency and traceability of the project

progress. They also provide a platform for commonly agreed goal settings, OD enhancements as well as communication of changes of processes and objectives.

A Project Steering Committee (PSC) will be established that includes the leaders (and potential co-leaders) of all WPs to ensure representation, in-depth scientific knowledge and managing details/background within the whole project. The PSC will be the leading group and the decision-making body of the project. It will work closely with the PMT on all strategic decisions regarding the work. The PSC will meet at 12-month intervals during the five years of the project.

Quality control

Trans-Sec will provide the following comprehensive quality control instruments: (1) high applicability through a people-centred approach in demand-pull design. Stakeholders have strong decision rights on topic selection and prioritising goals. The stakeholder representatives of TFC, MVIWATA, ACT and the agriculture ministry build a stakeholder advisory board (SAB); (2) the applied OD evaluated by external experts will continuously improve all processes and related instruments to streamline the communication and coordination towards efficiency (e.g. low transaction costs) and effectiveness; (3) the applicability of upgrading strategies and/or innovations will be proved by at least one comprehensive good practice approach implemented as action research; (4) a project advisory board (PAB) that will consist of two international experts will advise the coordinators and partners. They will be present at the annual meetings and will meet the coordinators every six months for a counselling interview together with the PTJ; (5) sample templates (incl. instructions on formatting) provide a Trans-SEC design for corporate identity, and each delivery will be peer-reviewed by other partners and the coordinators before launching on the webpage; (6) scientific publication management of the processing and review (internal and/or external) of different kinds

of publications to ensure a high scientific quality of the Trans-SEC publications; (6) feedback from PTJ/BMBF/BMZ will be requested on the progress and results documented; (7) in the event of quality failure the coordinators may ask for postponement to a given point in time.

Risk Management

In order to ensure the project outcome, Trans-SEC will establish four instruments to minimise and manage risks: (1) A risk diagnosis will comprise a critical path analysis including a control mechanism of delivery. This risk control will be achieved by iterative (every six months), obligatory electronic checklist-surveys designed to indicate the probability of on-time deliveries on the webpage. Only the critical pathways identified will be followed up by in-depth interviews and documented on the webpage. (2) A consortium agreement will enable secure management of the project, and clear rules will be drawn up on responsibility for processes and outputs. This will be accompanied by transparent measures of incentives, rewards and also strategies for dealing with non-delivery partners and partner withdrawal to facilitate and ensure on-time deliveries. (3) Based on the new German mediation law, evident empiric efficiency losses due to conflicts averaged about 50 % (KPMG 2009). ZALF has experienced clashes of different intercultural perceptions and mentalities, always leading to efficiency losses. Therefore, processes and communication will be regularly reflected using supervision and tailor-made mediation by external services. To handle potential problems, innovative instruments such as (1) supervision of processes (conflict prevention) and (2) shuttle, anonymous and open mediation within workshops (conflict resolution) will be applied.

Furthermore, each partner will have the possibility to report any foreseen risk. A mitigation plan will be set up describing this particular risk and what, when, by who and how something will be done to avoid it or minimize its consequences. Risk management of Trans-SEC further includes that

delivery quality is ensured by partners with key responsibilities (WP leaders). Regular assessment and monitoring of progress will be made by the coordinator via monthly contacts with WP leaders. This should allow any problems to be identified at an early stage. This will be supplemented by in-between project meetings in the form of telephone or internet conferences if the need arises. Project meetings of all partners, the PSC, the PAB and the SAB will take place periodically every 12 months.

5 The CPM-System

The CPM-System is being developed and a first concept will be available in May 2013. The research activity will have following resources, which are available within the Trans-SEC research endeavour:

- External consultants to develop and apply the CPM-System as well as to guide with a team of mediators and supervisors conflict prevention and resolution processes. Furthermore, the consultants will supervise the doctoral and master students together with the Trans-SEC management.
- One doctoral student for a period of three years (minimum), who supports the externally involved consultants and publishes peer-reviewed scientific papers (cumulative doctoral thesis).
- One research assistant for the first year, who supports operational processes (part time).
- One master student in 2013, who analyses empirically intercultural perceptions and conflict cost in large-scale research projects.

To establish and apply the CPM-System following processes and components will be considered:

- To develop a procedure of establishing a CPM-System using a set of specific methods and measures.

- To analyse and define indicators methods on how to quantify conflict costs in large research projects.
- To analyse conflict costs in large projects as well as conflict reduction potentials when implementing a CPM-System.
- To analyse the adequate, balanced composition of a bundle of measures for CPM.
- To apply the measures during the project period as well as to control the effects of applied measures.
- To document a CPM-System to disseminate and up-scale as “model” and Good Practice.

6 The initial Trans-SEC consortium (1st phase)

The following photo documentation gives some impressions on team-building and scientific workshops of the initial project period, which aimed at writing the research proposal to respond to the GlobE call of the ministry BMBF. This consortium will be widened by up 30 persons to an overall number of above 50 scientists, consultants and policy makers.



Photo 1: Team-building in Morogoro, Tanzania



Photo 2: The initial Trans-SEC consortium



Photo 3: The first conference of Trans-SEC, 2011

7 Contact

The following persons will be in charge of this research task and can be contacted for further information:

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Glossary

Case study site (CSS) village with local market place and surrounding 2-3 villages

CPM-System Conflict-Prevention and Management-System

Impact assessment A set of logical steps which helps assess the potential economic, social and environmental impact of specific inputs, options, and changes. It provides evidence to involved stakeholders on their advantages and disadvantages.

Food security Defined according to WHO as existing “when all people at all times have access to sufficient, safe, nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life”. This includes both physical and economic access to food that meets people's dietary needs as well as their food preferences.

Food value chain (FVC) Defined as consisting of the following main components: natural resources for food production, primary production, food processing, marketing, consumption

Implementation feasibility The ability of research components to be successfully implemented for sustainable use by small-scale farmers

Most vulnerable rural poor Smallholders (small-scale famers) who do not exceed levels of self-sufficiency

Upgrading strategy This term is used for a food securing success story and/or good practice example