



Co-creation: Inclusive Processes for Collaborative Actions

ALFAwetlands training course March 2026

Maria Tengö, Stockholm University/Wageningen University

Erik Andersson, Stockholm University/University of Helsinki

Iryna Shchoka, European Wilderness Society

Marie Lorenz & Sophie Hirschelmann, Michael Succow Foundation

ALFAwetlands co-creation training course



ALFAwetlands Co-creation Training course:
Inclusive processes for collaborative actions

Three 3-hour training sessions
Trainers: Erik Andersson (University of Helsinki), Maria Tengö (Stockholm University)

March 2026

Restoration for the future
WETLANDS
www.alfawetlands.eu

Funded by the European Union

Basic session rules

- Session is being recorded **ONLY** for internal organisers' use
- *Start/stop your camera at your convenience*
- Rename yourself for Certification tracking
- Keep your microphones muted unless invited to speak
- Only trainer/host/group leader is sharing screen
- Stay on topic - keep chat messages relevant to the session
- Contribute orally to the Miroboard during Practice session in Breakout room
- Write your questions or comments in the chat – we will address them according to the Agenda



Thank you!

Training overview

Three sessions:

1: Setting up a living lab	March 12 th	09.00 – 12.00
2: Bringing plural actors together	March 18 th	13.00 – 16.00
3: Inclusive integrated strategies for action	March 26 th	13.00 – 16.00

Key resource:

The ALFAwetlands co-creation workbook:



Session ' s structure



Introduction	09.00-09.20
Presentations	09.20-10.00
Some theory with Q&A	10.00-10.30
Break	10.30-10.45
Practice – intro	10.45-11.00
Practice – groups discussions	11.00-11.40
Introduce homework	11.40-11.55
Wrap up and reflection exercise	11.55-12.00

ALFAwetlands overview

- Coordinator: The Natural Resources Institute Finland (Luke), Finland
- Funding from EU: 8 M€
- Project timeline: 01.06.2022-30.11.2026
- Project duration: 54 months
- 14 partners +1 affiliated entity
- Call: *Horizon-CL5-2021-DI-01-08: Restoration of natural wetlands, peatlands and floodplains as a strategy for fast mitigation benefits: pathways, trade-offs and co-benefits*
- Final conference is planned for 17.09.2026 in Brussels



Introductions!

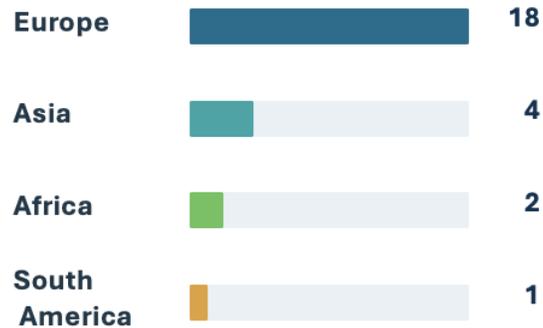
- 1 minute!
- Name, affiliation
- Share a photo – “why I care about wetland or nature restoration”



“Wetlands are sacred sites in the landscape, with a lot of meaning to many kinds of organisms, including people”

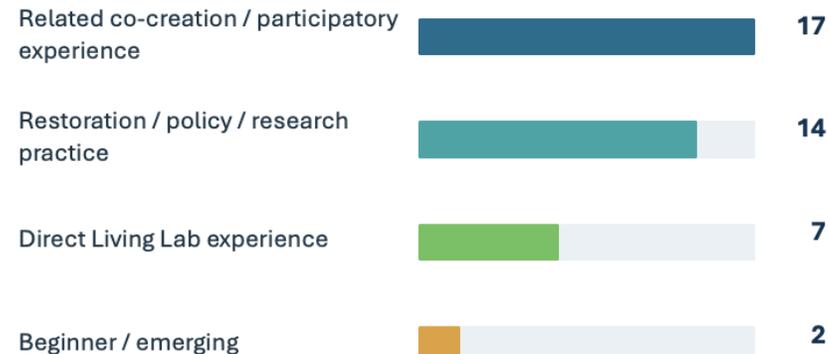
Who we are?

Continents represented



40 registered participants

Participants experience profile



Main motivation to join:

- Build practical skills and deepen understanding of co-creation and Living Lab methods
- Apply the approach in ongoing restoration projects, proposals and stakeholder processes
- Learn from peers, exchange experience and join a community of practice

Context of training



- ALFAwetlands – generating tools, new knowledge → wetland restoration
- Nature Restoration Regulation (NRR): What kinds of processes are required for long term successful restoration?
- Collaborative platforms, 'Living Labs' as a way forward – a practice under development
 - Guidance for the strategic use of active and inclusive participation for restoration
 - Share approach for knowledge co-creation

Co-creation: Inclusive Processes for Collaborative Actions

Session 1: Setting up a Living Lab

ALFAwetlands training session 1

Structure of session



Introduction	09.00-09.20
Presentations	09.20-10.00
Some theory with q and a	10.00-10.30
Break	10.30-10.45
Practice – intro	10.45-11.00
Practice – groups discussions	11.00-11.40
Introduce homework	11.40-11.55
Wrap up and reflection exercise	11.55-12.00

Goal of today



- Get to know each other
- Introduction to co-creation for restoration
- Context of a “living lab” or participatory initiative
- How to set up knowledge co-creation – practice

Conditions for dialogue

- Equity and the absence of coercive influences
- Listening with empathy
- Bring assumptions into the open

- Equal space to speak
- Be open – suspend judgement
- Tensions and disagreements are important part of the process

→ Constructive conversations

Code of conduct



- Freedom to express personal views – rather than from position
- Listen actively
- Follow the flow and focus in discussions
- Contribute to mutual trust
- Respect different opinions – comment on the issue, not person
- Respect the plan for the session

Theory

- What is co-creation?
- Social-ecological systems thinking – landscape approach
- Plural perspectives of key issues and key action
- Weaving – articulating, mobilizing, connecting plural knowledge and perspectives

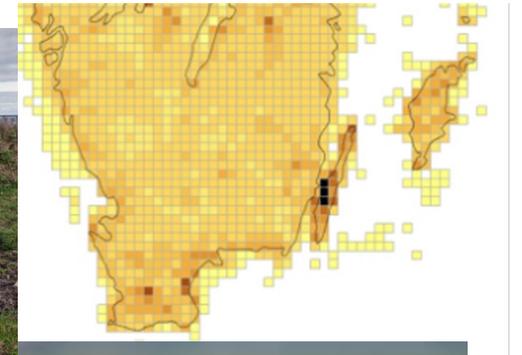
Introduction: Wetland restoration on Öland, Sweden

Biodiversity values

Climate adaptation

Challenges:

- rehabilitating a drained landscape
- many land owners
- bureaucracy



What is co-creation?

A way of working – approach for stakeholder engagement and partnership

- Inclusive participation, collaboration – partnership
- Usefulness for all involved
- Planning, **knowledge**, implementation, learning, evaluation
- Practice and/or research
- Living Lab – as a forum

Knowledge co-production:
“iterative and collaborative processes involving diverse types of expertise, knowledge and actors to produce context-specific knowledge and pathways towards a sustainable future”
(Norström et al., 2020, p. 183)

Situated restoration: A landscape approach

- Restoration needs to be embedded in ongoing landscape governance
- Landscapes are layered with history, meanings, uses and flows
- Sites are interconnected *places*
- Land uses can (and need) to synergise (IPBES Nexus 2024)

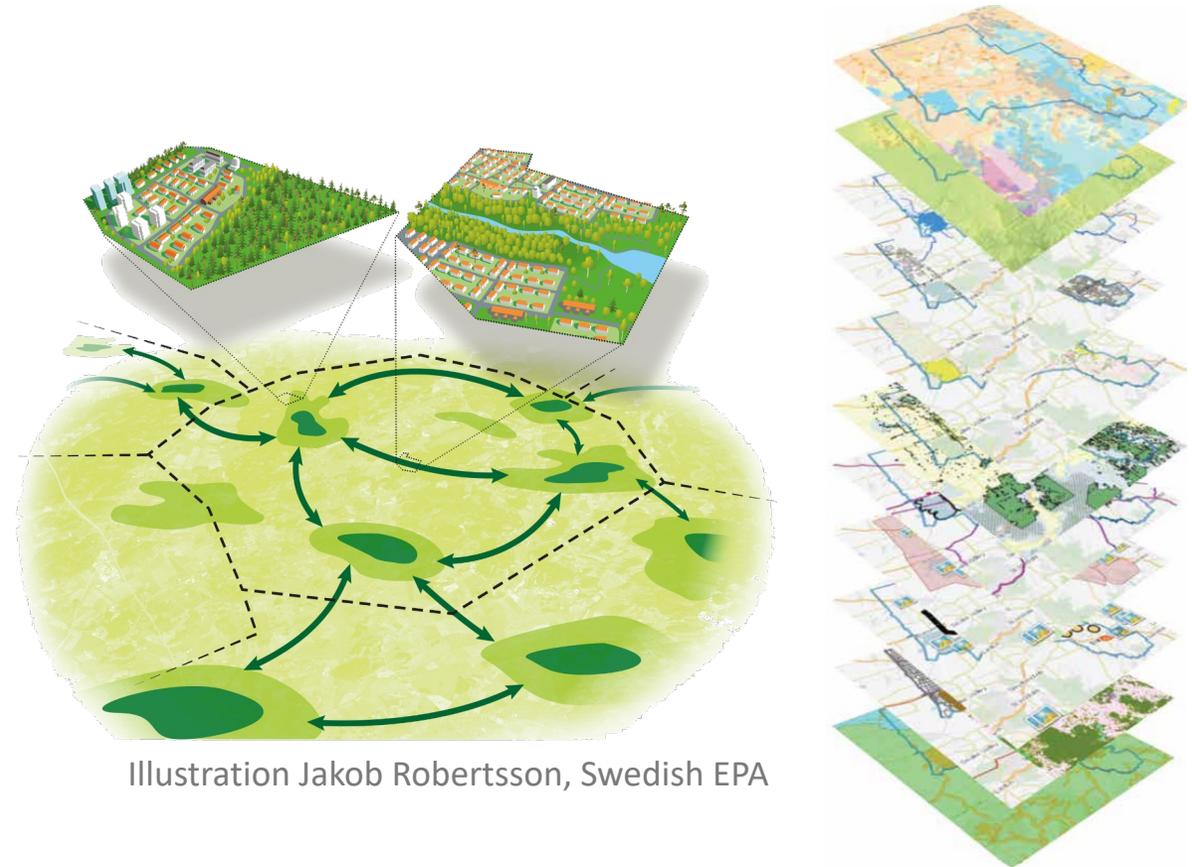


Illustration Jakob Robertsson, Swedish EPA

Multifunctionality takes diverse actors

- Land owners, authorities, residents, recreationists, consultancies, heritage and other interest groups
- People can be an asset for restoration and conservation – under the right conditions

→ Collective action, inclusive governance



Illustration Kjell Ström, Swedish EPA



Illustration Kjell Ström, Swedish EPA

Weaving plural knowledge.... and values

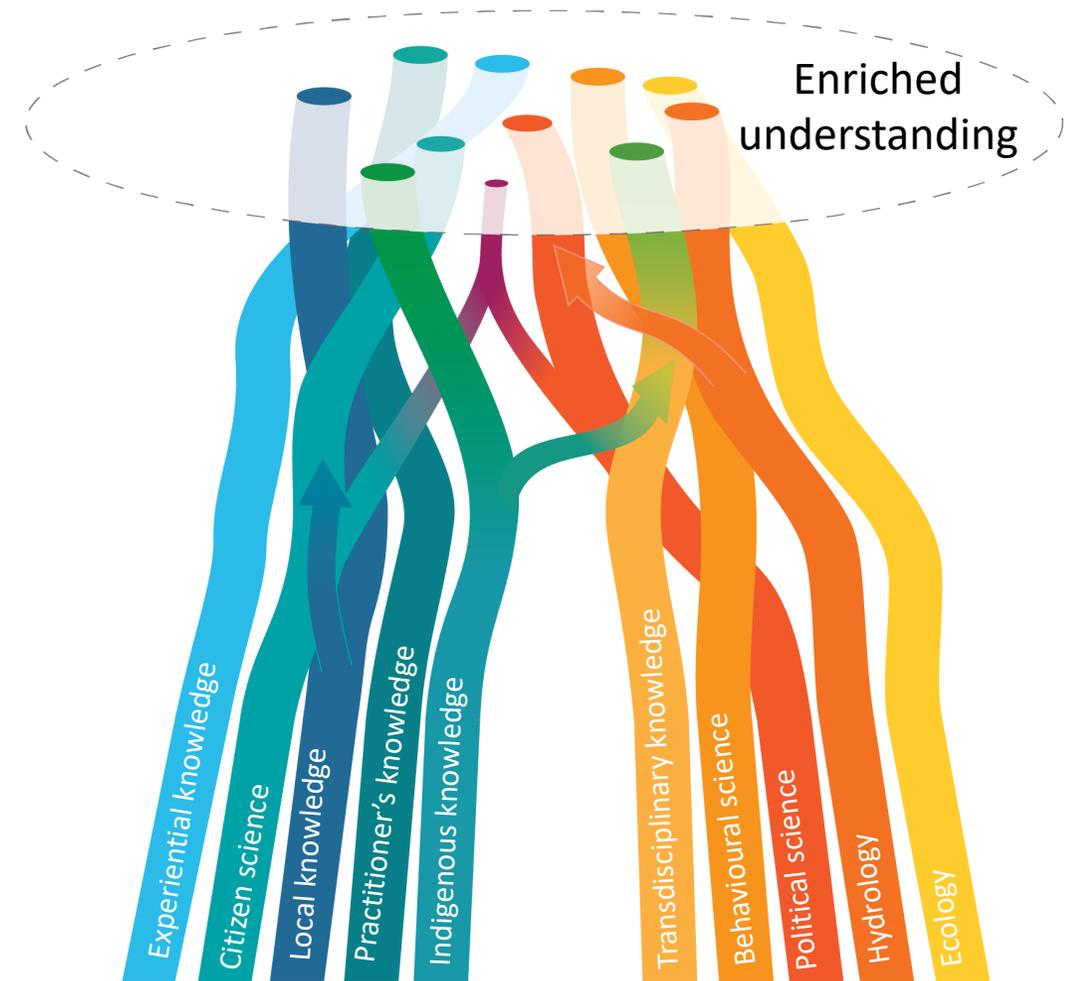
Plural knowledge systems contributes
insights and understanding

Complementarity

View of actors as knowledge holders

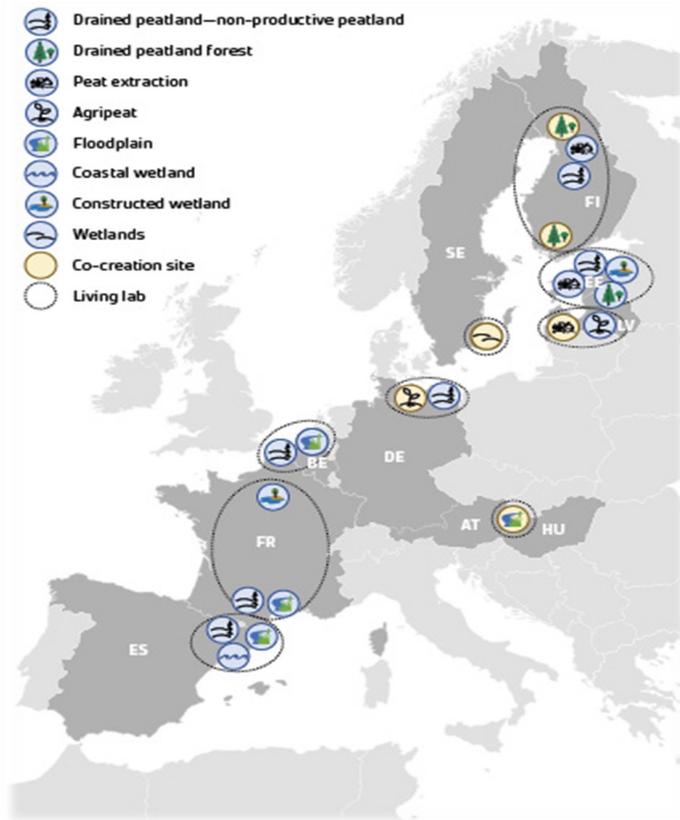
→ inform and motivate action!

(Tengö et al. 2014, 2017, Hill et al. 2020,
see also swe.bio/MEB)



Plural knowledge systems

ALFAwetlands Living Labs



- Öland, Sweden
- Sanginjoki, Finland
- Upper Peene Valley, Germany
- Kaigu, Latvia

<https://alfawetlands.eu/living-labs/>

Research question

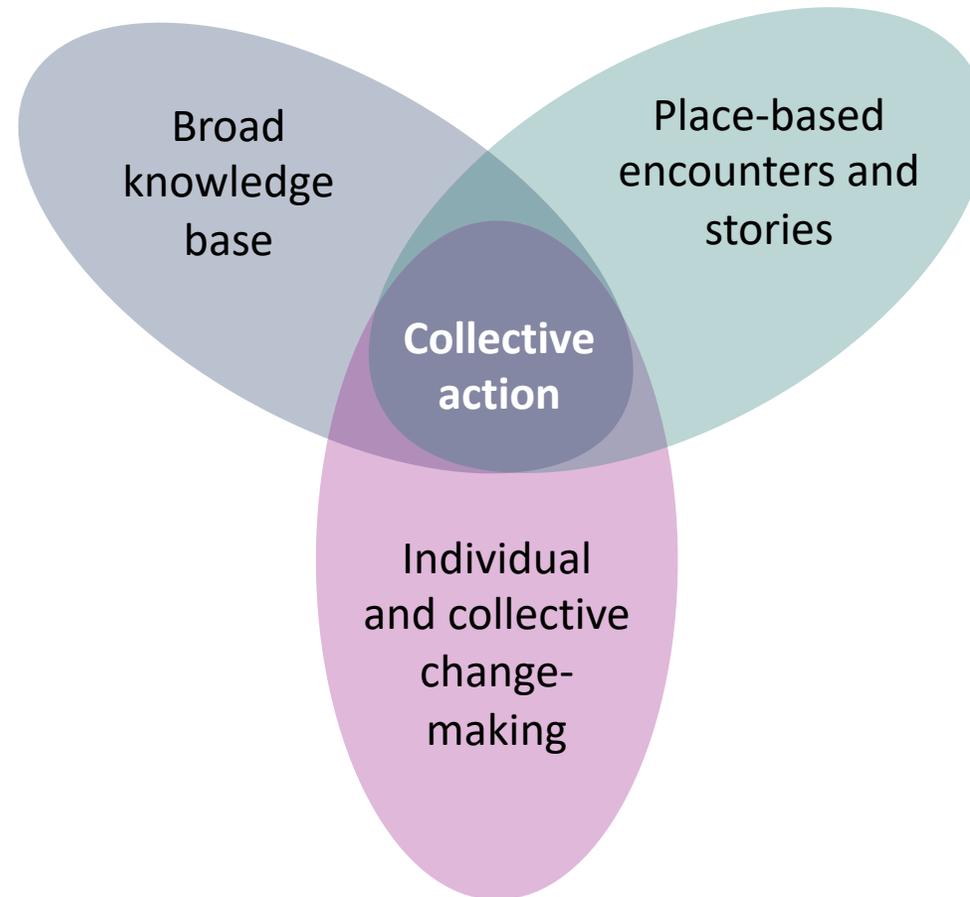


How can a guided process of knowledge co-creation strengthen the collective capacity to understand integrated challenges (biodiversity, climate, water use etc.) and to identify and implement novel solutions?

- Landscape approach
- Focus on synergies between plural knowledge and values



Process design: background assumptions



Seiferth et al. 2024

15 min break!

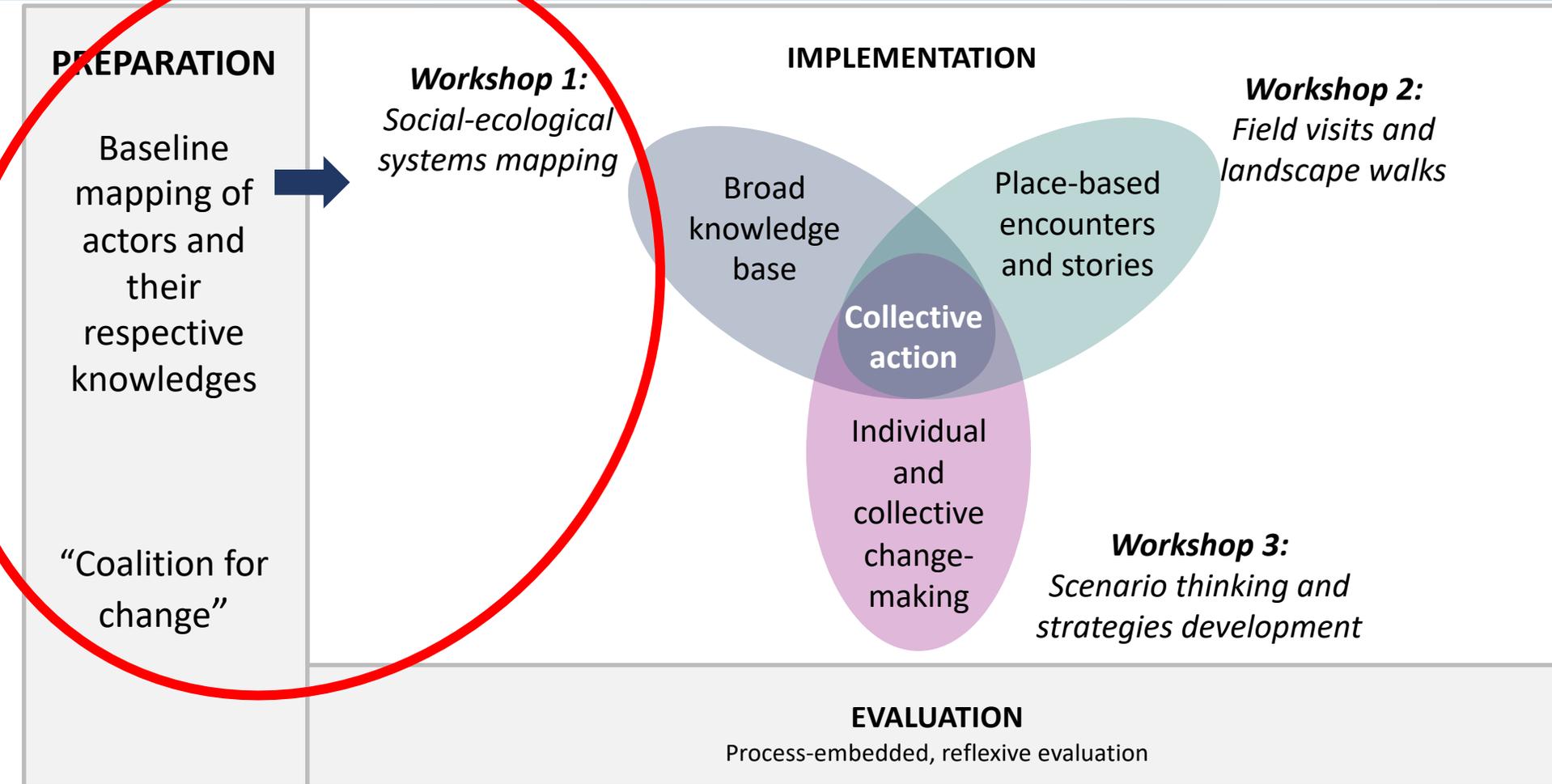


Practice



- Process design for connecting plural actors and knowledges
- Outline of three workshops – focus on Workshop 1
- Preparation – mapping actors
- Explain exercise for systems mapping

Process design for connecting plural actors and knowledge



Seiferth et al. 2024

Practice: Preparation

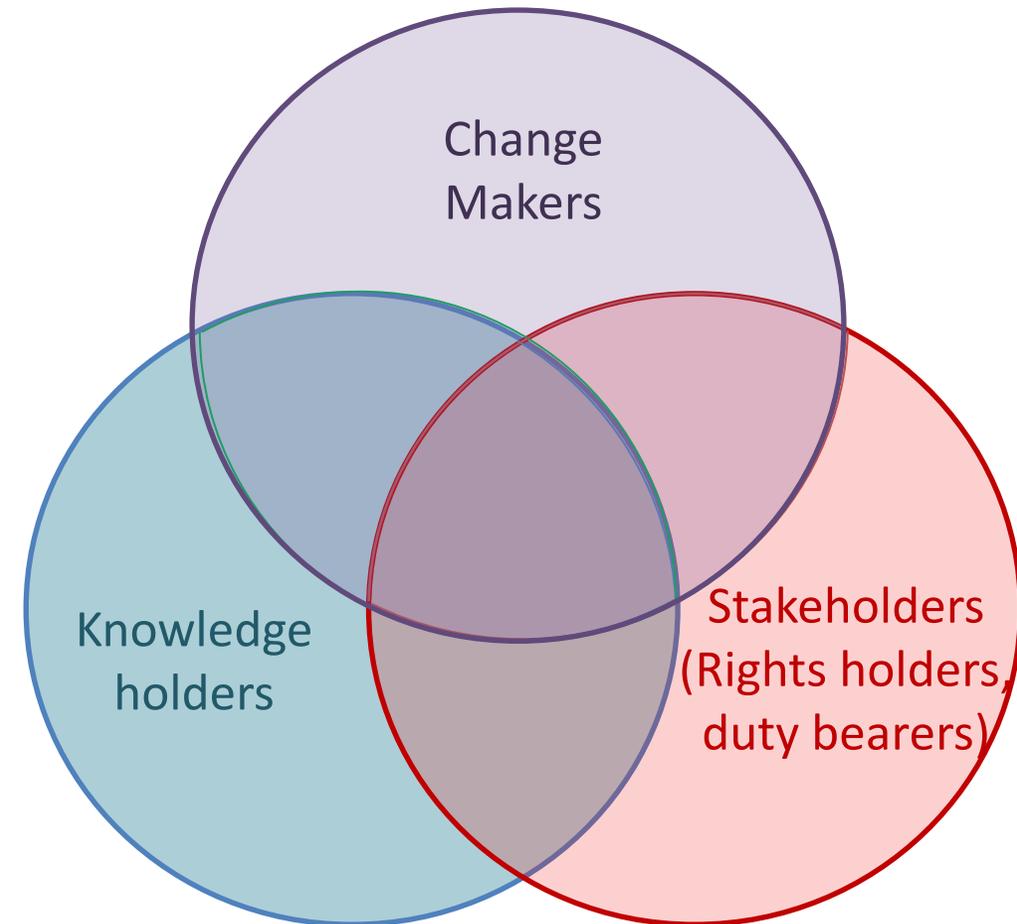
Baseline mapping:

Who has knowledge about the system and the issues?

Who is motivated and engaged already?

Who needs to be involved to make things happen?

→ identify a “coalition for change”



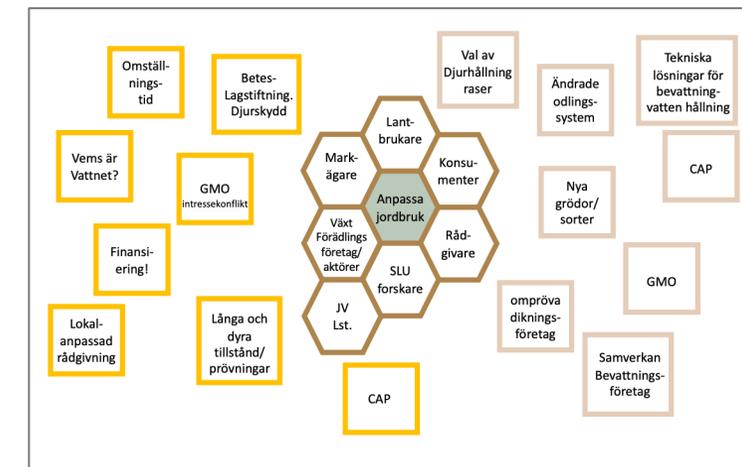
Process design: Workshop 1

Workshop 1: Social-ecological systems mapping

Goals:

- (1) get to know each other and lay the foundation
- (2) establish a shared problem understanding
- (3) probe and nurture systems thinking.

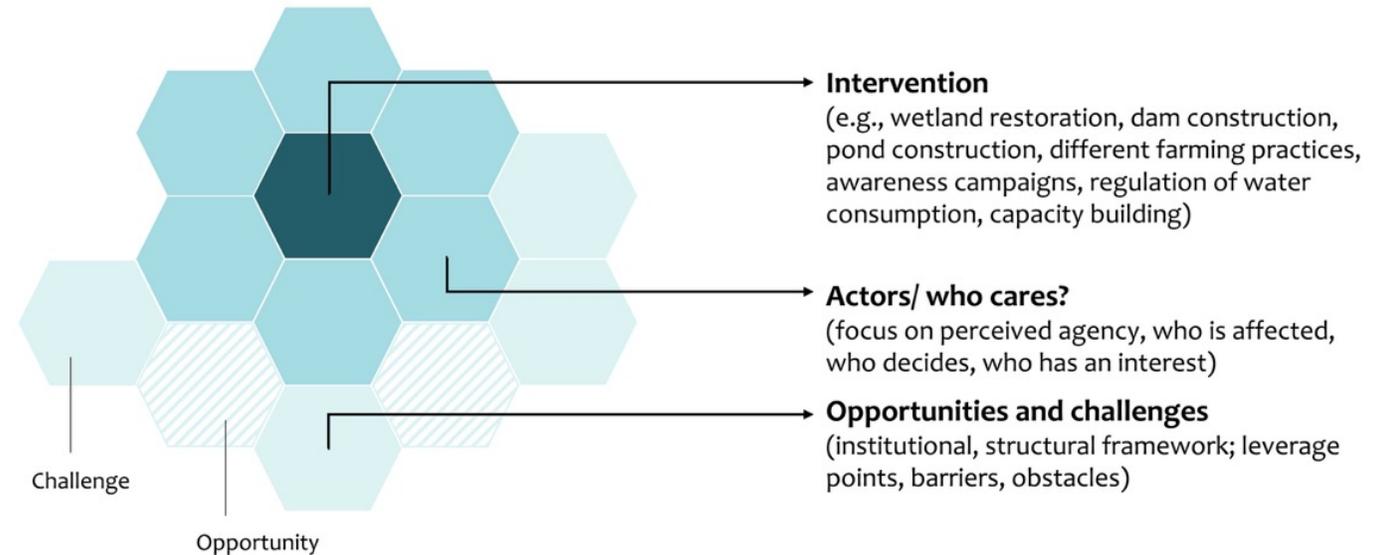
Seiferth et al. 2024, 2025



Systems thinking exercise: flowers

- Brainstorm interventions (that are already practiced or well known)
- Let participants vote which are most pertinent
- Identify 3-4 most relevant and discuss in groups

Visualization of system understanding



Practice: try out systems exercise

Break-out rooms (5-6 in each room, group leader assigned)

Choose one of the interventions for wetland restoration (2 min)

Discuss:

- Who are **affected by** or **care about** this intervention? 10 min
- What are opportunities and challenges for implementing? 10 min

Pop corn sharing in plenary 10 min

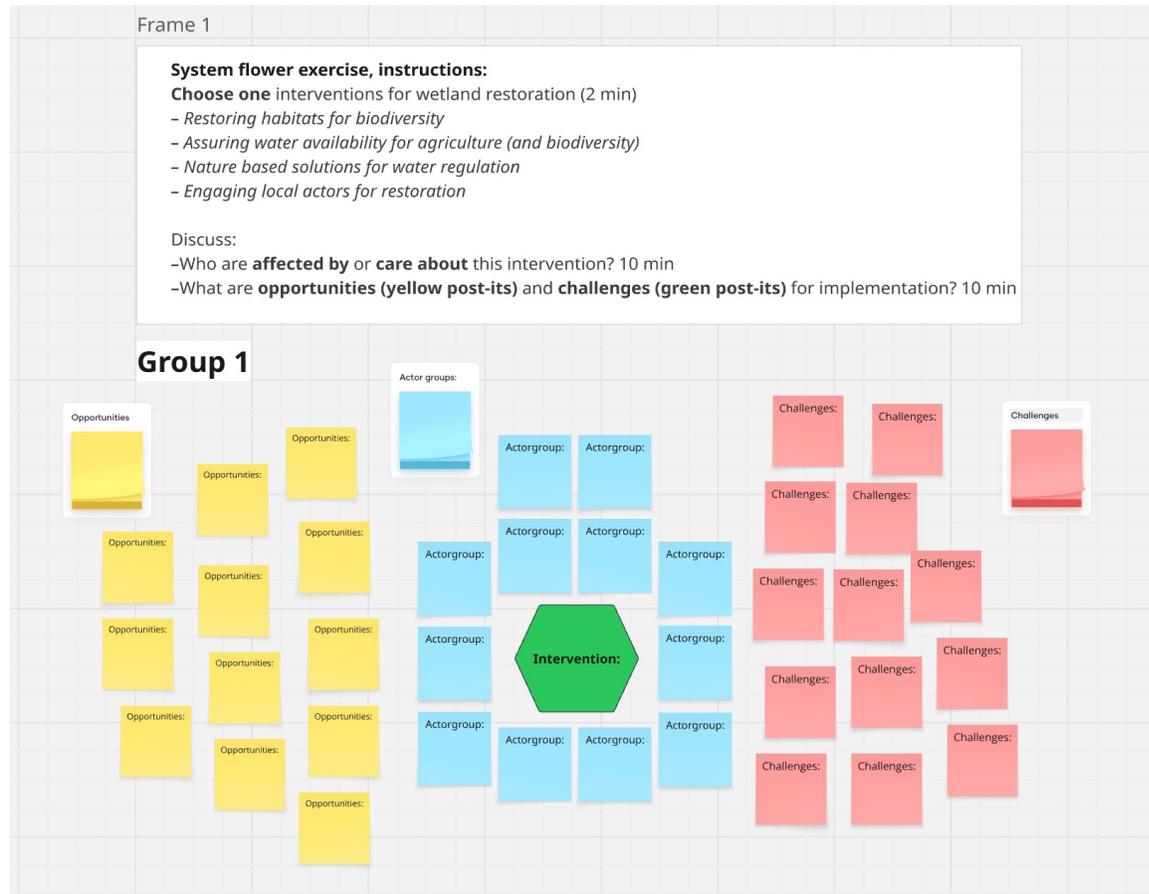
Practice with Miro in Breakout rooms

Frame 1

System flower exercise, instructions:
Choose one interventions for wetland restoration (2 min)
– Restoring habitats for biodiversity
– Assuring water availability for agriculture (and biodiversity)
– Nature based solutions for water regulation
– Engaging local actors for restoration

Discuss:
– Who are **affected by** or **care about** this intervention? 10 min
– What are **opportunities (yellow post-its)** and **challenges (green post-its)** for implementation? 10 min

Group 1



Opportunities: Actorgroup: Challenges:

Pop corn sharing

How does the intervention matter for people?

What are the key issues?

Any tensions?

Reflections on the exercise?

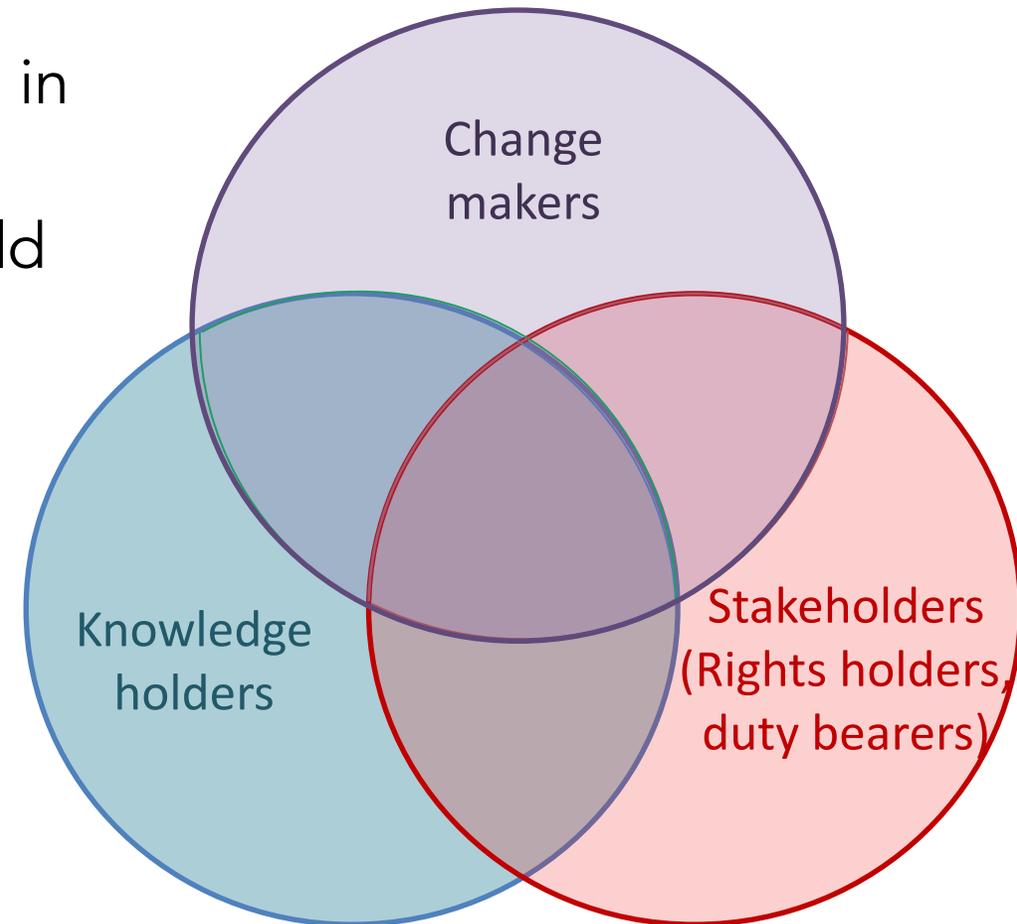
Homework:

Identifying a “coalition for change” of key actors in “your” case

- who has relevant knowledge for what you would like to achieve?
- who are key stakeholders (can affect or will be affected by)
- who are change makers (motivation, agency)

Not more than 20 persons!

Prepare a brief presentation of key actor groups



Wrap up:

Session 1: Setting up a Living Lab

- How to frame “the issue” – make it inclusive!
- How can you connect or embed with ongoing activities
- Doing it together.... Share your reflections!

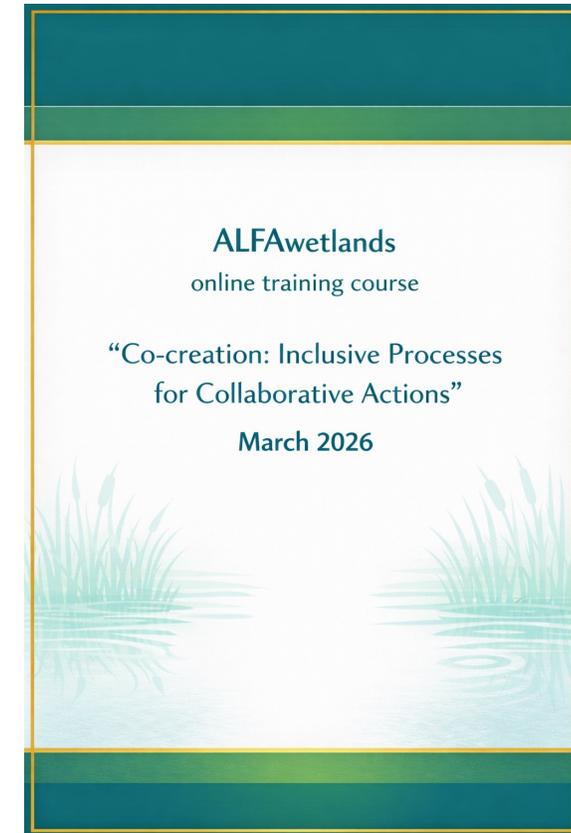
Reflection



- Write a “postcard to yourself”
- This is what I take with me from today’s session

Certificate of Attendance

- Participants who attend all three sessions and
- Complete the required homework



Thank you for today!

See you next week: March 18th at 13.00 – 16.00 !

Find more resources at our Google doc

Join ALFAwetlands



info@alfawetlands.eu



<https://alfawetlands.eu>



<https://www.facebook.com/ALFAwetland>



<https://www.linkedin.com/company/alfawetlands/>



<https://alfawetlands.eu/alfawetland/newsletter/>



[@alfawetlandsproject](#)