

Study Information and Informed Consent for Participants

Project Title: Do we really work transdisciplinary? Transdisciplinary research for reaching the sustainable development goals in Sub-Saharan Africa

Investigators: dr. Nora Engel and dr. Dirk Essink (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Netherlands)

You are being asked to participate in a research project called “Do we really work transdisciplinary?” that is conducted by partners at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (VU), Maastricht University (UM), TU Delft, and The Sustainable Development Goals Center for Africa (SDGCA). Prior to your participation in the survey, we ask that you give your written consent. Below you will find short descriptions about the project, procedures, benefits, anonymity, and withdrawal. If any questions or concerns arise, please contact the project leads Nora Engel (n.c.engel@vu.nl) or Dirk Essink (d.r.essink@vu.nl).

1. Nature and Purpose of the Project

This research aims to understand how Transdisciplinary Research (TDR) is practiced in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) on projects that address more than one Sustainable Development Goal (SDG). TDR is a promising concept used by researchers, funders and policymakers in sustainable development initiatives and projects. However, its ability to efficiently address the world’s most pressing issues has been the subject of debate and others have called for a better shared understanding of this increasingly funded research model. Through the use of surveys, interviews, focus group discussions, and workshops, this research aims to answer the questions: *How can we genuinely work transdisciplinary within the context of sustainable development? And what lessons can be learned to improve transdisciplinary practice in SSA?*

2. Explanation of Procedures

The survey should take no longer than 20 minutes. We aim to inquire about transdisciplinary approaches as part of the design of PhD projects and to assess barriers and facilitators in applying TDR principles in these projects.

3. Benefits

Though you will not directly benefit from taking part in this study, we hope that the results will inform policy recommendations to improve TDR practice for sustainable development initiatives. There are no risks associated with this study.

4. Confidentiality

With your permission, we would like to record the discussions that take place via teams or zoom or with an audio-recorder for in-person meetings and write down the information afterwards. If you have any objections to being recorded, please let us know and we will only take notes. We will remove information that has potential to identify you from the transcript or notes taken before sharing it with other co-authors. All the information collected for this study (your answers, written or recorded) will be kept strictly confidential by identifying you with a unique

code (or study ID) to which only the study investigator and research assistants will have access. Only de-identified transcripts, survey answers and notes will be kept on a password protected server or a locked cabinet for a max number of 10 years. Audio-files will be destroyed after transcription. You have the right to access your own data. The results from this study (including quotes) may be published, but your identity will not be revealed.

In this survey, we do not ask you for any personal or identifying information. Your survey responses will be kept strictly confidential in which only the study investigator and research assistants will have access. This data will be kept on a password protected server or a locked cabinet for a max number of 10 years. You have the right to access your own data. The results from this study (including quotes) may be published, but your identity will not be revealed.

5. **Refusal/Withdrawal**

Participation is voluntary and refusal to participate in this study will have no effect on any future services you may be entitled to from the VU, UM, TU Delft, or SDGCA. Anyone who agrees to participate in this study is free to withdraw from the study at any time with no penalty. If you choose to withdraw your consent to the use of your data, it will be destroyed by researchers.