COMET-LA:
Community-based Management of Environmental Challenges in Latin America

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This research has been financed by the Seventh Framework Programme of the European Commission in the frame of the Project "Community based management of environmental challenges in Latin America" (FP7-ENV2011-282845 COMET-LA)

OUTLINE

- The Project
- The Case Studies
- The Working Method
- The first results
- Some lessons learned
- Our main challenges

COMET-LA Project

COMET-LA. Basic information

- **COmmunity-based Management of EnvironmenTal challenges in Latin America**
- **Objective:** To identify sustainable community-based governance models for the management of natural resources that could be used in different social-ecological systems in a context of climate change and increasing competition in their use
- **Scheme:** Research for the benefit of Civil Society Organizations
- **Total Budget:** 2.473.699,80€
- **EU contribution:** 1.870.973€
- **Date:** 15 Jan 2012- 14 Jan 2015

COMET-LA Partnership

UCO	**ES**	**European research institution**
NILU	NO	European research institution
JHI	UK	European research institution
SGM	PT	European SME
PUJ	CO	Latin American research institution
UNAM	MX	Latin American research institution
IADO	AR	Latin American research institution
AQM	AR	Latin American CSO
CCC	CO	Latin American CSO
ERA	MX	Latin American CSO
CEIUCN	ES	Branch of international CSO

3 ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS

- Management of Water and Biodiversity
- Management of Forest and Land Use
- Management of Marine and Coastal Areas

3 CASE STUDIES

Colombia: Basins at the Pacific Coast
- Pontificia Universidad Javeriana
- 2 Community Councils of Black Communities

Mexico: Forest community at Sierra of Oaxaca
- UNAM
- ERA (a local CSO)

Argentina: Bahia Blanca Estuary
- Argentine Institute of Oceanography
- Aquamarina (a local CSO)

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Case Studies

COMET-LA Case Studies

Outstanding natural resources

Big pressures on them

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Water & Biodiversity Management in the Pacific Colombian Coast

- Very high biodiversity and water resources
- Community property of land recognised by CO Constitution
- Community-based management
- Black communities
- 2 Community Councils as partners (even if only one funded by EU)
- Strong conservation attitude
- Empowered actors and strong leaders
- Tradition of working with university partner: mutual trust
- Illegal mining & crops
- COMET-LA as a trigger

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Forest Management in the Sierra of Oaxaca (Mexico)

- Extremely well conserved forest (timber & non-timber).
- Regeneration process
- Community property of land recognised by Government
- Small indigenous community
- Customary uses regime
- Strong social capital (leading to positive & negative effects)
- Conservation prevails over development
- Emphasis on 'isolating' community from external influences

COMET-LA Case Studies

Ocean & Coastal Management in Bahia Blanca Estuary (Argentina)

- High environmental value estuary
- Unique wetland system
- Strong archaeological and paleontological value of beaches
- Dune regeneration disturbed by building and housing
- Artisanal fishermen (disappearing)
- Important economic port (project to increase dredging in the estuary)
- Petrochemical and industrial site
- Incipient collective action and community-based conservation

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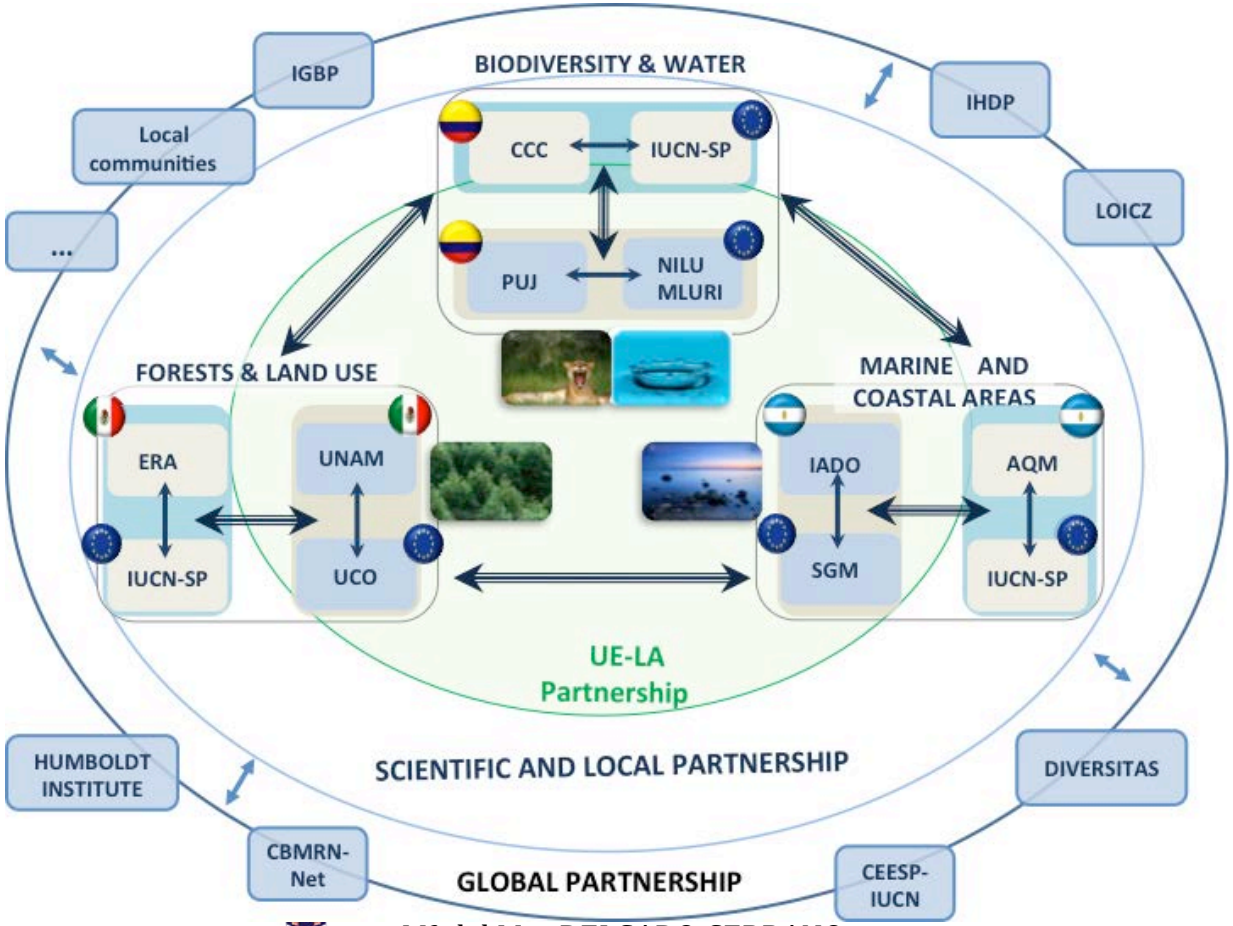
Working Method

COMET-LA Learning arena

- A place to integrate **local** and **scientific** knowledge in the management of natural resources.
- **Twin-objectives**:
  - Scientists support local management by targeting their research and provide managers and local communities with **understandable** and **useful** information to take decisions
  - **Local knowledge** and **good practices** on sustainable community-based models are integrated in the management of environmental and climate changes.

Joining locally-owned knowledge with scientifically-supported methods to facilitate progress toward sustainable management of natural resources

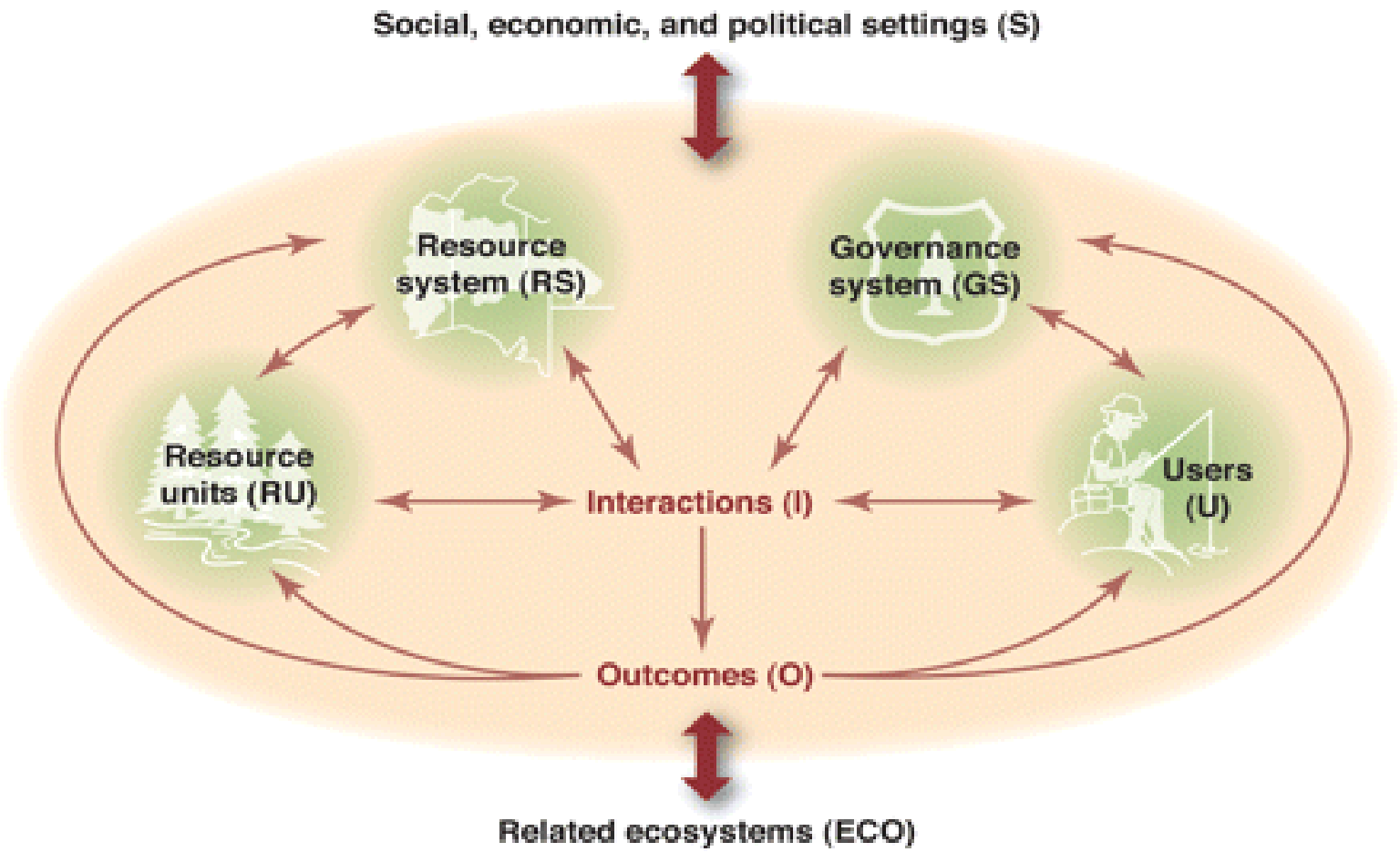
COMET-LA Learning arena



COMET-LA Phases and Methods

1. Characterization of Social Ecological Systems
2. Identification of current and future key variables using Prospective Analysis techniques
3. Building of Scenarios for future changes and challenges.

Applying Ostrom's Framework



Framework to Characterise SES

OSTROM Framework
Battery of indicators:
8 first-tier variables
53 second-tier variables
(broad and diffuse variables)

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132 third-tier variables

- Identification of key variables at each SES
- Data under final analysis

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First Results

First Results

- A locally-adapted framework to characterise SES
- Identification of **key variables** to analyse the **sustainable evolution of SES,** working with the **local communities**
- Proposal of **locally-adapted tools** to characterise and analyse SES
- Identification of **shortfalls** and **good practices** when working with local communities (building the **learning arena**)

Some Results

SUSTAINABILITY	MEXICO	COLOMBIA	ARGENTINA
ENVIRONMENTAL	Very High	Medium-High	Weak
SOCIAL	Weak	High	High
ECONOMIC	Weak	Weak	High

VULNERABILITY

Result Analysis

MX and CO communities **trapped** by their **environmental richness** and by their **economic poverty**

Result Analysis

AR area: from **few people** and a **lot of resources**, to **increasing pressure on resource** use and the need to **collective action** for **conservation & development**

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Learnt Lessons

Learning Arena

- **Knowledge** must be:
  - Salient (are communities worried by environmental challenges?)
  - Credible (do we trust each other as K providers?)
  - Legitimate (are all important stakeholders on board?)

- … to **foster Actions**

Learning Arena

- **Results** are very **dependent** of the **initial situation** of the CS and of **matching** of the **objectives** with the **needs** of stakeholders
  - From immediate results in Colombia to longer term in Argentina. Mexico is an intermediate situation

- To define the **working methods** and discuss the strategies to develop the learning arena in advance
  - Not always scientific methods are the most adapted to local idiosyncrasy

Working Method

- To **'create' trust** among the participants and not false expectations
  - Very important to know the 'history of research institutions' in the area
- To give time to create a **'common vocabulary'**
  - We can't expect stakeholders to be familiar with scientists jargon
  - Misunderstandings due to 'official discourses' in 'fashion topics' such as climate change
- To use tools that facilitate **broad participation** and prevent floor holding

Working Method

To **empower the community: co-researchers** training
- Facilitators
- Trained in the working method

To involve **different social sub-groups**: women, young people

To **feedback** results and to discuss views and perceptions with the community

To identify **social structures** that potentially **hinder** development

To identify **dominant actors** and **key individuals** that can **foster interactions**, but also **block** them

Working Method

- To use **different methods** and to use **different sources** to avoid biased representation of the facts
- To avoid **over-simplification** of the reality
- **Participatory techniques** are **costly** in **time**, **money** and **resources**
- Local **stakeholders** can be **ill-equipped** to deal with the complex nature of SES
- Neither **collective learning** nor **integrating** local and **scientific knowledge** are **easy tasks**

COMET-LA Challenges

Challenges

How to link **Nature Conservation** and **Economic Welfare**

How to help **local people** to access the **benefits** of their **sustainable management actions**

How **commons institutions** can **function accross levels**

How to solve **conflicts** posed by **changing norms, values and world views about property rights**

How to effectively link **local** and **scientific knowledge, local** and **global needs**

How to create **interactions** and **K sharing** in the **CS**

How to link **Knowledge** to **Action**

THANKS FOR YOUR ATTENTION

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