Participatory Systems Thinking and Modelling for Sustainability

ABSTRACT

Participatory systems thinking and modelling may be broadly defined as any approach aiming to engage a group of participants in a deliberative process for knowledge sharing and co-creation, wherein a systemic and integrative perspective is applied to the study of a complex sustainability issue. In Participatory System Dynamics Modelling (PSDM), stakeholder groups typically collaborate in the development of a shared understanding of a dynamic problem and in integrative model-building processes supporting problem identification and policy analysis. Why is stakeholder participation essential in sustainability dialogues? What is the value of PSDM approaches in structuring integrated sustainability assessments? How does a typical participatory modelling process unfold? How to design a PSDM process, from stakeholder identification, through management of collaborative systems mapping and modelling workshops, to policy implementation? This seminar will explore these critical questions and debate advantages and challenges of modelling with stakeholders using systems thinking and system dynamics methods. Drawing from a diversity of case studies and application topics – e.g., water management, degrowth, biodiversity conservation and ecosystem services, sustainable consumption – an overview of practical experiences will illustrate the lessons learned throughout the years in experimenting with PSDM approaches.