

STSM Report

STSM reference: COST FP1201

Title: Analysis of the TRAVELLAB method – Improving learning efficiency from stakeholder interaction

Working Group: TG – TRAVELLAB

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Purpose of the STSM

The TRAVELLAB is an approach especially designed for facilitation stakeholder interactions. The TRAVELLAB approach is designed within COST Action FACESMAP with the aim to facilitate interaction between stakeholders and participants of the Action.

The objectives of TRAVELLAB are focusing on ensuring that research questions and approaches of the Action are relevant to both policy and practice, providing opportunities for the participants to better understand different contexts where the problem occurs, and to facilitate knowledge exchange between participants and local stakeholders.

To ensure that the method fulfils the above mentioned Task-Group TRAVELLAB established data collection procedure for collecting data from the TRAVELLAB. The data were related to the observation notes and content notes.

The purpose of this STSM to analyze the observation data, including the reflection data from the Solsona meeting, prepare proposals for the next TRAVELLAB visits, contribution to the paper(s) focusing on the method and what we have learn from it, and prepare steps for including remaining TRAVELLAB visits into the research.

Description of the work carried out during the STSM

The first activity of the STSM was review of the status of the methodology paper and observation data analysis carried out prior to the STSM, and finalizing coding of the observation notes. The coding developed after the TS in Sweden was done based on the content of the observation notes and participatory research literature. Taking into account that the draft paper has three research questions, certain addition to the codes were implemented in order to properly address the research questions. Furthermore, observation notes from Zagreb meeting are gathered into one file and uploaded to FACESMAP website.

The observation notes were analyzed together with the reflection notes obtained from the TRAVELLAB visit in Solsona, Spain. During the STSM we have agreed that the reflection and observation notes need to be analyzed separately. The reflection notes from Solsona will be analyzed together with the reflection notes that will be obtained during the last TRAVELLAB visit in Inverness, Scotland.

Literature review focused on work with participatory research literature and educational literature with focus on triple-loop learning.

Preparatory work for FACESMAP meeting in Krakow, Poland, included preparation of the data sheets for easier analysis, and preparation of draft protocol for obtaining reflections from the TRAVELLAB participants during the meeting in Inverness, Scotland.

After the Krakow meeting, notes from the observers are gathered into one file that will be uploaded on FACESMAP website. Furthermore, based on the TRAVELLAB Task-Group meeting in Krakow, we have focused on including the agreed conclusions from the meeting in further STSM work. This mainly includes changes in proposed journals for publication of the paper and inclusion of the triple loop learning framework.

Description of the main results obtained

Coding process

The coding process was done in two phases. First phase was done based on the content of the notes and participatory research literature. In the second phase, existing codes are appended with the codes related to the research questions from the draft paper.

Phase one

The coding process started after reading the observation notes from first three meetings of TRAVELLAB. Framework of the method and focus on participatory research are considered during the coding process. However, some of the categories are identified and underlined because of significant observation notes on them. The main categories are grouped into the following codes: Structure, Group management, Questions, Implementation, Participation, and Understanding.

Observations related to the structural design of the TRAVELLAB were coded under “STRUCTURE” code. Those observations and remarks focus on stakeholders and excursion site selection, time management, remarks about necessity of more or less structure in the method, and last but not dedicated time for reflection. It has to be taken into account that above mentioned sub-codes are not all structural elements of a method but they are the ones mentioned in the notes.

Because TRAVELLAB method is based on presence of large group of researchers and stakeholders, observations about the “GROUP MANAGEMENT” were grouped under one code. They are focused on factors influencing attention of the group, issues related to organization of a large group, and remarks on size of the group and possibilities to have smaller groups.

As the main role of the method is to collect data, observations about “QUESTIONS” asked are grouped under one code. They include remarks related to the way questions were asked, type of the questions and preparatory process related to the questions.

Observed information collected during implementation of the field trip helps researchers to improve the process and replicate positive parts of the trip, while at the same time, try to avoid issues identified as negative. These information are coded under “IMPLEMENTATION” code. They focus on background information content and timing, issues fostering or impeding discussions, need for facilitation and contribution of the method to better understanding.

Observation and remarks coded under “UNDERSTANDING” can be divided into two groups of sub-codes. First group is related to the statements that are in relation to the WG topics of interest (owners, management and policy), and second group related to the specific topics identified from the observation and reflection notes. Those topics are focused on tacit knowledge, country comparison, history, and clarifying and technical questions. This code and sub-codes are further developed in phase two.

Taking into account that better understanding of issues related to forest ownership across Europe is one of the objectives of the TRAVELLAB, participation is considered as one of the important focus in achieving this

objective. The observations and reflections coded as “PARTICIPATION” focus on issues related to the elements fostering or impeding interactions as well as statements related to the multidisciplinary group of researchers.

Phase two

During this phase, sub-codes under “UNDERSTANDING” are further developed. When analysing research questions, some limitations of the observation notes are discovered. Observation notes lack content and are focused mostly on structural elements. However, there are content data available in these notes and they contribute in answering the research question related to the contribution of the TRAVELLAB to the understanding of the wider context of forest ownership. At the same time addressing interests of three working groups (forest owners, management and policy) from the observation notes was more difficult.

The objective of the TRAVELLAB focuses on understanding of the diversities of the forest issues in Europe. To understand differences across Europe it is needed to access both explicit and tacit knowledge. Explicit knowledge can be codified and is easily transferable and tacit knowledge is intuitive and more difficult to access (Lam, A. 2000). While general picture of the forestry ownership issues can be painted with country reports and using explicit knowledge, better understanding of differences is in accessing tacit knowledge.

TRAVELLABs added value is having a broad range of researchers, with their own country experiences, engaging in stakeholder interactions in different parts of Europe. This provides basis for country comparison on a different level from comparing country reports.

In some cases, historical background provides relevant information for the current status of the problem as they are often connected with changes in policy environment. Thus, capturing discussions on history can be relevant to better understanding of current situation.

As previously stated, intuitive and unarticulated tacit knowledge is not easily communicated and requires some level of knowledge about the issue (Lam, A. 2000). In the case of TRAVELLAB it means fostering open discussion during stakeholder interaction. Known topic, clarifying questions and technical information can be sometimes useful for starting a good discussion.

Based on the above mentioned, I have coded the observation notes related to the first research questions “Contribution of TRAVELLAB to better understanding...” in four groups: Tacit knowledge, country comparison, history, and clarifying and technical questions.

Further use of the framework

Observation notes provide good insight into the positive and negative aspects of both planning and implementation phases of the method. Each coded statement is thus marked as positive or negative and in that way can be analysed and used as a recommendation for further use of the method in other COST Actions. The analysis of the observation notes will result in the section on logistics that will be included into the main peer reviewed paper on TRAVELLAB.

These “dos” and “don’ts” provide guidelines for future application of the method as they focus on the structural elements of the process in both preparatory and implementation stages.

The TRAVELLAB process started in Sopron, Hungary. This TRAVELLAB visit was not structured and it is considered as preparatory. For the second visit, more preparatory work was done and it resulted in first TRAVELLAB visit which resulted in development of observation notes, content notes and reflections notes collected within each Working Group. Observation notes focused on structural framework and implementation process, providing data on the issues resulting in both failures and successes in achieving the TRAVELLAB objectives. Analysis of these notes provides guidelines for prevention of failures in obtaining the desired data, and in facilitating stakeholder interaction. The notes also provide information on potential techniques and tools for improving the process.

Future collaboration with host institution

Task-Group meeting in Krakow discussed current status of the TRAVELLAB paper and provided useful proposals on further steps related to the method development and publication. The proposals from the meeting included focusing on publishing in forestry journal rather than methodological journal. The further work will focus on the section of the paper dealing with the logistics of TRAVELLAB. Furthermore, the designing the reflection process that should be implemented during the FACESMAP meeting in Inverness, Scotland will be done in the upcoming period. After all data are collected and analyzed, including the data from the TRAVELLAB visit in Scotland, further work on different publications will be done.

Foreseen publications/articles resulting or to result from the STSM

- Peer reviewed paper on TRAVELLAB approach focused on learning method
- Peer reviewed paper(s) on TRAVELLAB observation notes

Literature

Lam, A. (2000). Tacit knowledge, organizational learning and societal institutions: an integrated framework. *Organization studies*, 21(3), 487-513.

Tosey, P., Visser, M., & Saunders, M. N. (2011). The origins and conceptualizations of 'triple-loop' learning: A critical review. *Management Learning*, 1350507611426239.

Peschl, M. F. (2007). Triple-loop learning as foundation for profound change, individual cultivation, and radical innovation. *Construction processes beyond scientific and rational knowledge. Constructivist foundations*, 2(2-3), 136-145.



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Confirmation of the successful execution of STSM, by Doni Blagojević

To whom it may concern

Dear Sir or Madam,

By this letter I confirm that Institute of Biological and Environmental Sciences, School of Biological Sciences, University of Aberdeen, hosted Doni Blagojević during his COST FP 1201 FACESMAP, STSM mission. The Early Stage Researcher Doni Blagojević worked on a development of paper related to TRAVELLAB method, particularly focused on the analysis of TRAVELLAB observation data, for a period of four weeks and fulfilled the obligations of his STSM. The mission was beneficial to both, fulfilling the COST FP 1201 FACESMAP STSM mission and adding to his research work which would benefit from the methodology used in this STSM.

Sincerely,

Dr Diana Feliciano

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Diana Feliciano'.