



Sustainable knowledge development across cultural boundaries: Experiences from the EU-project SILMAS (Toolbox for conflict solving instruments in Alpine Lake Management)

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Increasingly people have to communicate knowledge across cultural and language boundaries. Even though recent technologies offer powerful communication facilities people often feel confronted with barriers which clearly reduce their chances of making their interaction a success. Concrete evidence concerning such problems derives from a number of projects, where generated knowledge often results in dead-end products. In the Alpine Space-project SILMAS (Sustainable Instruments for Lake Management in Alpine Space), in which both authors were involved, a special approach (syneris[®]) was taken to avoid this problem and to manage project knowledge in sustainable form. Under this approach knowledge input and output are handled interactively: Relevant knowledge can be developed continuously and users can always access the latest state of expertise. Resort to the respective tools and procedures can also assist in closing knowledge gaps and in developing innovative responses to familiar or novel problems.

This contribution intends to describe possible ways and means which have been found to increase the chances of success of knowledge communication across cultural boundaries. The process of trans-cultural discussions of experts to find a standardized solution is highlighted as well as the problem of dissemination of expert knowledge to variant stakeholders. Finally lessons learned are made accessible, where a main task lies in the creation of a tool box for conflict solving instruments, as a demonstrable result of the project and for the time thereafter. The interactive web-based toolbox enables lake managers to access best practice instruments in standardized, explicit and cross-linguistic form.