



Using collaborative PhD training and supervision initiatives in facilitating integration within and across interdisciplinary, collaborative projects

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We discuss the potential of using PhD and early-career researcher training and supervision initiatives in facilitating integration across collaborative, interdisciplinary research projects. Such initiatives are used successfully in graduate training programmes of large consortia, but are often underutilized in Earth Sciences research projects. To better benefit from these initiatives means that the project coordinator/manager needs to take an active role in facilitating the efforts.

Specifically, we discuss some examples of positive experiences, potential risks/pitfalls and lessons learnt in regard to building integration through:

- 1) Joint PhD supervision advisory committees;
- 2) Collaborative and/or interdisciplinary courses, workshops and summer schools;
- 3) PhD-researcher-led initiatives and networks;
- 4) Joint networking and career building opportunities;
- 5) Shared resources and support between mentors and supervisors.

From the perspective of young researchers, the above-mentioned activities improve access to support and resources, skills and career development, and facilitate the overall publishing result and graduation speed. From the perspective of project coordinators, education initiatives are a core capacity building measure as such. Furthermore, they can improve integration between project partners and collaborators via e.g. enhanced interactions, increased number and channel of collaborative outputs, and improved overall project impact. Better integration of early-career researchers can be beneficial for the sustainability of the project.

The presenters coordinate the German-Southern African research project EMSAfrica (Ecosystem Management Support for Climate Change in Southern Africa). This project is part of the second phase of the BMBF-funded systemic research programme SPACES (Science Partnerships for the Assessment of Complex Earth System Processes in Southern Africa), which fosters interdisciplinary collaboration between and within the different projects. Via a shared capacity building platform, joint training initiatives are being developed and best practices will be shared.