

Conveners:

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Title:

The power of social innovation in mountain areas to steer a sustainable governance of nature

Session description:

Social innovation is often seen as a force to promote sustainable development and steer a sustainable governance of nature. As a product of the policy discourse, social innovation has led to the promotion of civic values as a means of delivering support to communities and enhancing sustainable use of ecosystem services where markets and existing institutions fail. Attention to social innovation has been rising. It is becoming particularly relevant in (marginalised) mountain regions, including of the Carpathian Mountains, where market imperfections and a shortage of public funding are obstacles on the way towards sustainability transformations. Thus, in the proposed session, participants are invited to address the following conceptual and empirical issues:

- What are key societal challenges in mountain areas? What are adaptive and transformative responses of forest-dependent communities to the challenges faced?
- Has social innovation been shown to steer the development of disadvantaged communities towards sustainability? What are its examples? What are the opportunities, barriers, and trade-offs involved?
- What are driving forces of social innovation and key observations as to its emergence and development? What are key determinants and scaling opportunities of social innovation?
- What are inter- and transdisciplinary approaches that foster social innovation? How can early involvement of expert and/or local/indigenous knowledge foster its development?
- What is the role of hierarchies (local, national, transnational) governance structures, private sectors, markets and networks, and various non-state actors, partnerships and collaborations in enabling social innovation and supporting different forms of its scaling up, out and deep?
- What are the principal causes of unevenness in social innovation? Do social capital and cultural differences play key roles? What's the role of nature and human-environmental interactions?
- Are actions of the state crucial in delivering more sustainable outcomes (social, institutional, environmental and economic)? To what extent does successful social innovation depend on drawing down public funds? What are other financial opportunities for social innovations to sustain and advance?
- What are policy implications of social innovation? To what extent and under what circumstances can social innovation deliver transformative opportunities to people

on the ground? Can social innovation trigger transition of governance/ policy system towards sustainability, and how this applies to the Carpathian Mountains?

The list of questions for the proposed session is not prescriptive. Presentations from various disciplines, and inter-disciplinary and trans-disciplinary talks are welcome, particularly those addressing social innovation in the Carpathian Mountains. We will strive to advance the knowledge of the role, power and place of social innovation in the development of socio-ecological systems, seeking to provide innovative solutions and sustainability considerations, ideas potentially useful for policy makers and practice communities of different levels, with ultimate aims of building the resilience to global changes in marginalised mountain areas.