



Integrating research for water management: synergy or dystopia?

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In the hope of speeding translation from research to policy, the EU, and other funding bodies, advocate interdisciplinary research whilst underplaying real obstacles to achieving common aims and collaborative methodologies amongst the natural and social sciences. Attention has been concentrated mainly on the incorporation of economics, which shares some epistemic characteristics with hydrology. Ecological history, political science, anthropology and sociology have much to offer but are relatively neglected in interdisciplinary projects. Ignoring these subjects has led to neglect of indigenous knowledge and imposition of water legislation with a poor fit to existing regimes and practices. Growing interest in extrapolating hydrological results from limited field observation to universal rules, for example on the merits or demerits of planting trees, means that there is urgency in stimulating more broadly-based research. From inside observation of a dysfunctional and antagonistic interdisciplinary research project and experience of management of interdisciplinary research, some suggestions are made on the preconditions necessary for successful collaborations.