

Impact case study (REF3)

Institution: University of Gloucestershire		
Unit of Assessment: UoA 13 Architecture, Built Environment and Planning		
Title of case study: Pioneering co-design approaches in agri-environmental governance		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: Jan 2009 – Dec 2019		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Janet Dwyer	Director of CCRI, Professor of Rural Policy	2002 – present
Julie Ingram	Professor of Innovation for Sustainable Agriculture	2000 – present
Jane Mills	Associate Professor in Agri-environmental Behaviours	1997 – present
Chris Short	Associate Professor in Environmental Governance	1995 – present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: Jan 2016 – Dec 2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
1. Summary of the impact		
<p>Since 2005, CCRI has pioneered and established action-oriented, participatory and inclusive research relationships with stakeholders in contrasting local initiatives, promoting sustainable and resilient land management through social innovation, and co-designing agri-environmental governance. CCRI researchers have engaged for significant periods in place-based, bottom-up land management initiatives in England (Exmoor, Upper Thames catchment, Marlborough Downs, Stroud) to demonstrate the value of local-level involvement, and harness local knowledge, in agri-environmental design and implementation. This co-development process has enabled local stakeholders to engage in more effective action, increase impact and thereby build their capacity to analyse, develop and influence future farming policy in England, beyond Brexit.</p>		
2. Underpinning research		
<p>CCRI's sustained engagement in local land management initiatives has forged real world impacts from a suite action-oriented research programmes. Playing the role of enabler, evaluator and critical friend has added new knowledge, insights and co-evaluation capacity to several developing initiatives. The approach has combined social science, natural science and creative arts methods to stimulate social innovation in agri-environmental decision-making. Research teams have established trusting relationships where research outputs were co-created and closely interwoven with policy and practice processes and outcomes. Partners have identified this as an unusual way of working for a university research institute, which they particularly value. Our investment in multi-actor partnerships has brought stakeholders together to develop co-evaluation and reflexive learning, increasing their ability to find integrated solutions to land management challenges. Through these experiences, the initiatives have gained increased confidence and reputation, which has in turn influenced national policy. Specific research programmes underpinning the impacts are as follows:</p>		

A suite of CCRI project evaluations and related systemic analyses (e.g. Dwyer 2014), including a major farm survey, workshops and several strategy papers researched and co-developed with multi-stakeholder partners in Exmoor over ten years, culminated in publication of 'Exmoor's Ambition': a transformative proposal for sustaining and enhancing Exmoor's farmed landscapes and communities, in 2016. The stakeholder partnership is now one of Defra's 'tests and trials' for the new Environmental Land Management (ELM) programme.

- In sustained co-development of the Stroud Natural Flood Management project (NFM, 2015-present), CCRI has worked with Stroud District Council and the Environment Agency to reduce flood risk and boost biodiversity in the Frome catchment. NFM uses various natural interventions in the catchment's headwaters to 'slow the flow' and reduce the risk of flooding, providing a low-cost, bottom-up approach that has meaningfully engaged local communities and farmers. CCRI's co-evaluation included a report and a film about the project, promoting the approach (Short et al 2018). The initiative thereby achieved national recognition and the former project officer is now a national NFM policy adviser in the Environment Agency.
- The Water with Integrated Local Delivery (WILD) project (2012-2019) is a partnership of FWAG, Gloucestershire Rural Community Council, Cotswold Water Park and CCRI, pioneering integrated delivery of natural resource enhancements in the Upper Thames catchment. WILD has engaged parish councils, communities and land managers in sustainable management of watercourses, tackling challenges including pesticide contamination and local flooding. CCRI and FWAG co-developed and applied an innovative Integrated Local Delivery framework within WILD (Short 2015). This novel, systems-based approach was further evaluated and promoted in the EU research project PEGASUS (Dwyer et al, 2020) and accepted as a case study in sustainable management by the International Partnership for the Satoyama Initiative. The partners are now running a test and trial for Defra's ELMs.
- Marlborough Downs farmer-led initiative (Mills et al 2016) developed innovative action for biodiversity, amenity and community outreach, co-ordinated by an expert facilitator-adviser (Ingram et al 2020). CCRI was invited to co-develop evaluation and knowledge-sharing activities with the initiative, over a critical 3-year period. This enabled its re-design, generating renewed enthusiasm for further activity and achievements. It subsequently became an ELMS test and trial project.

3. References to the research

EXMOOR ANALYSIS - Dwyer, J. (2014) Policy integration for sustainable agricultural landscapes: taking stock of UK policy and practice. *Landscape Research*. DOI:10.1080/01426397.2013.784245.

STROUD NFM - Short, C, Clarke, L, Carnelli, F, Uttley, C and Smith, (2018) Capturing the multiple benefits associated with nature-based solutions: Lessons from a natural flood management project in the Cotswolds, UK, *Land Degrad Dev*. doi.org/10.1002/ldr.3205. (Listed in UoA 13 REF2).

CO-INNOVATION APPROACH - Dwyer J, Short C, Berriet-sollic M, Déprés C, Lataste F-G, Hart H, Prazan J (2020) Fostering resilient agro-food futures through a social-ecological systems

framework: Public–private partnerships for delivering ecosystem services in Europe, *Ecosystem Services*, 45, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecoser.2020.101180>. (Listed in UoA 13 REF2).

UTCP AND WILD - Short, C. (2015) Micro-level crafting of Institutions within Integrated Catchment Management: early lessons of adaptive governance from a Catchment-Based Approach case study in England. *Environmental Science and Policy*, August, DOI: 10.1016/j.envsci.2015.06.009. (Listed in UoA 13 REF2).

FOUNDATIONS OF ENGAGEMENT - Mills, J., P. Gaskell, J. Ingram, J. Dwyer, M. Reed, and C. Short. (2016). Engaging farmers in environmental management through a better understanding of behaviour. *Agriculture and Human Values*:1-17. doi:10.1007/s10460-016-9705-4.

CO-INNOVATION APPROACH - Ingram, J. Gaskell, P., Mills, J. and Dwyer, J. (2020) How do we enact co-innovation with stakeholders in agricultural research projects? Managing the complex interplay between contextual and facilitation processes. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 78. pp. 65-77. doi:10.1016/j.jrurstud.2020.06.003. (Listed in UoA 13 REF2).

4. Details of the impact

CCRI's research and evaluation activities, supporting and enabling co-production and co-design of environmental initiatives with farmers, land managers and rural communities, have resulted in three main impacts, identified by key actors:

- A. A shift in appreciation by Defra of the benefits of working with place-based, bottom-up initiatives, and the adoption of co-design as a central feature in development of the Environmental Land Management Scheme (ELMS) as the future farm support policy for England;
- B. Enabling and strengthening local actor interconnections, reflexive practice and capacity-building within initiatives, generating more local impact and greater confidence to engage with and influence national policy;
- C. Evidence and facilitation to ensure these initiatives can secure funding for the future.

A. Influencing government thinking and approaches to agri-environmental policy design

CCRI's work has helped these initiatives to influence Defra's approach to developing the Environmental Land Management (ELM) scheme for England.

Because of CCRI's research activities in these cases, there is:

- Greater appreciation by local stakeholders of the complexities of public goods and ecosystem services delivery (Dwyer et al 2020), stimulating innovative local action with direct relevance to national policy.
- stronger evidence of the value of co-design approaches (Ingram et al 2020) feeding into the national policy development process (Short et al 2018);

more confidence that targeted and tailored actions that meet both environmental and socio-economic needs locally (Dwyer 2014) are simultaneously meeting national policy objectives (Short 2015).

B. Strengthening the development and implementation of local initiatives

CCRI's action-oriented research with local initiatives has led to effective governance approaches based on partnership, where researchers engage with land managers and policy actors in the co-design, ongoing reflection and shared implementation of agri-environmental schemes and sustainable land management initiatives (Dwyer et al 2020). Through CCRI research teams' facilitation, continuous evaluation and feedback, improved relationships have been promoted between land managers and local organisations, enabling empowerment of these partnerships. In turn this has led to tangible environmental and social benefits, including enhanced biodiversity and landscape quality in Exmoor); reduced flooding in Stroud); improved water quality in the Upper Thames and in the generation of local social capital and quality of life in all locations, evident through new recreation opportunities, stronger community bonds, more shared understanding between actors and greater confidence to work together.

In Exmoor, CCRI has stimulated collective action among farmers to form the Exmoor Hill Farming Network (EHFN), with support of Exmoor National Park Authority (ENPA), and subsequently worked with these partners and others to build a shared vision for future farming and the environment, culminating in the publication of the 'Exmoor Ambition'. The Chair of EHFN and the Chair and Chief Executive of ENPA highlighted that CCRI's involvement transformed the relationship between the NPA and land managers, for the better (Mills et al 2016). Without this they would not have been able to bid for Defra's 'test and trial' and influence the development of ELM. The Exmoor Ambition received significant attention from Defra, including a Ministerial visit, and the NPA and EHFN have been overwhelmed by the number of farmers wanting to engage as a direct result of CCRI's research.

C. Securing future funding

CCRI's focus on sustainability and resilience within local initiatives has shown the value of institutional innovation, which has in turn proved to be instrumental in securing future funding. Investment in strong, multi-actor partnerships facilitated by the research has ensured that partners are able to access wider and more varied funders.

In WILD, CCRI acted as a critical friend (Dwyer et al 2020) in an EA-funded initial project (2013-16). This was continued in a follow-on project (2016-19) with three separate funders. The current project runs for a further 3 years with five funding streams covering a diverse range of issues, all hinging around local actors implementing and achieving improved natural resource management. WILD's innovative capacity has made the case study a flagship Defra 'test & trial' project and stimulated funding successes for broader goals and new project activities, including major new charity-funded project investigating WILD's potential to deliver local food.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

Independent interviews were carried out with 9 individuals across the 4 case studies and other national contacts between November 2019 and June 2020. (*Denotes interviewee contact details that have been uploaded onto REF3). The sources of evidence uploaded as part of the ICS are as follows:

1. Confirmed notes from the independent interview with Sarah Bryan* (CEO) and Robin Milton (Chair) both of the Exmoor National Park Authority, Dave Knight* (Chair Exmoor Hill Farming Network) and Naomi Oakley (Natural England, Exmoor) – to corroborate the claims relating to the **Exmoor Ambition** and the collaboration achieved between Exmoor National Park

Authority, Exmoor Hill Farming Network, Natural England and other local stakeholders and the subsequent impact with Defra.

2. Confirmed notes from the independent interview with Graham Scholey* (Environment Agency) and Jenny Phelps (Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group) – to corroborate the claims relating to the **Upper Thames Catchment Partnership** claims, including those related to the (Water with Integrated Local Delivery) **WILD project**. Correspondence showing that the **WILD project** has been accepted as a case study by the Satoyama Initiative <https://satoyama-initiative.org/about/>

3. Confirmed notes from the independent interview with Jemma Batten* (Black Sheep Countryside Management) – to corroborate the claims relating to the **Marlborough Downs** farmer-led initiative.

4. **URL** to Stroud District Council website where links to M&E and the NFM film are clear. The NFM officer, Rosemary McCloskey, (Stroud District Council) can corroborate the claims relating to the **Stroud Rural SuDs** natural flood management project. <https://www.stroud.gov.uk/environment/flooding-and-drainage/stroud-rural-sustainable-drainage-rsuds-project>

5. Confirmed notes from the independent interview with James Le Page* and Beth Brockett (Defra and Natural England) – can corroborate the **claims made in relation to the four projects** and their connection to developing post-Brexit policy.

6. **URL - The Exmoor Ambition** publication including a recognition of the role CCRI played in its development. https://www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0027/248436/ExmoorsAmbition_Web.pdf

7. **URL - Stroud** is a case study and the Short et al (2018) article is referenced on page 62 in the National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy for England https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/920944/023_15482_Environment_agency_digitalAW_Strategy.pdf

8. **URL - Upper Thames Catchment Partnership** Clear link to CCRI on the main page <https://www.fwagsw.org.uk/upper-thames-catchment-partnership>

9. **URL - Marlborough Downs** Link to the CCRI evaluation: https://9e79d4bc-1177-432c-9773-12b2cf784972.filesusr.com/ugd/0d71a1_cfbb992888c54625ac29e5892dffdac7.pdf