

Earth System Governance:

Framing analytical problems

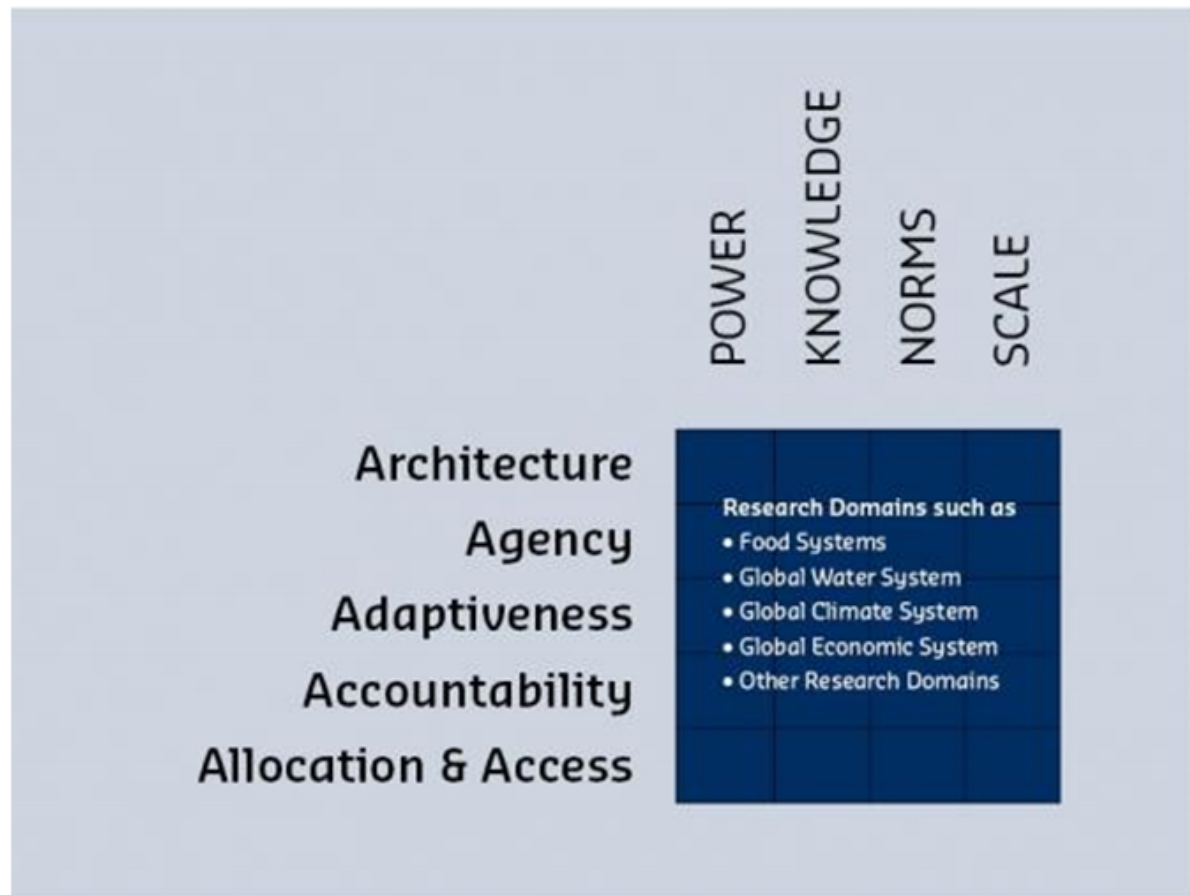
Earth System Governance – the concept



- Earth system governance (ESG) : the interrelated and increasingly integrated system of formal and informal rules, rule-making systems, and actor-networks at all levels of human society (from local to global) that are set up to steer societies towards preventing, mitigating, and adapting to global and local environmental change and, in particular, earth system transformation, within the normative context of sustainable development
- The notion of governance refers here to forms of steering that are:
 - less hierarchical than traditional governmental policy-making (even though most modern governance arrangements will also include some degree of hierarchy),
 - rather de-centralized, open to self-organization, and
 - inclusive of non-state actors that range from industry and non-governmental organizations to scientists, indigenous communities, city governments and international organizations.

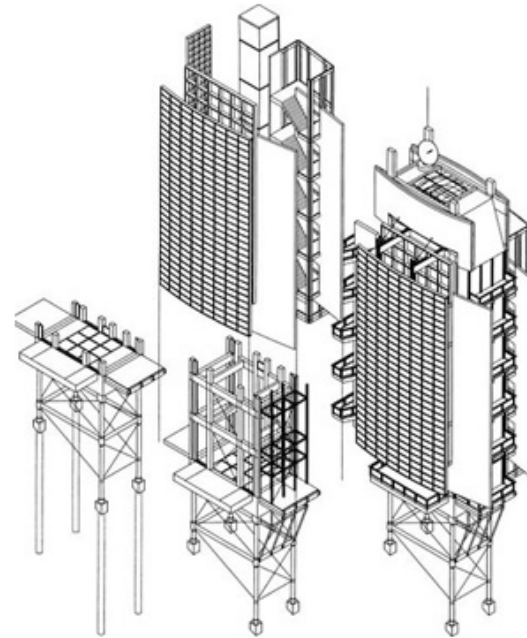
<http://www.earthsystemgovernance.org>

ESG – the analytical problems and flagship activities



ESG - Architecture

- Includes questions relating to the emergence, design and effectiveness of governance systems as well as the overall integration of global, regional, national and local governance
- Core questions include:
 - how is performance of environmental institutions affected by their embedding in larger architectures?
 - What are the environmental consequences of non-environmental governance systems?
 - What is the relative performance of different types of multilevel governance architectures?
 - How can we explain instances of 'nongovernance'?
 - What are overarching and crosscutting norms of earth system governance?



ESG - Agency

- Understanding effective earth system governance requires understanding the agents that drive earth system governance and that need to be involved.
- The research gap is here especially the influence, roles and responsibilities of actors apart from national governments, such as business and non-profit organizations, the ways in which authority is granted to these agents, and how it is exercised.
- Core questions:
 - What is agency?
 - Who are the agents of earth system governance (especially beyond the nation state)?
 - How do different agents exercise agency in earth system governance, and how can we evaluate their relevance?



ESG - Accountability

- The more regulatory competence and authority is conferred upon larger institutions and systems of governance the more we will be confronted with questions of how to ensure the accountability and legitimacy of governance.
 - What are the sources of accountability and legitimacy in earth system governance?
 - What are the effects of different forms and degrees of accountability and legitimacy for the performance of governance systems?
 - How can mechanisms of transparency ensure accountable and legitimate earth system governance?
 - What institutional designs can produce the accountability and legitimacy of earth system governance in a way that guarantees balances of interests and perspectives?



"Just sign here, sir - it clears me of any responsibility."

ESG - Adaptiveness

- ESG must respond to the inherent uncertainties in human and natural systems.
- It must combine stability to ensure long-term governance solutions with flexibility to react quickly to new findings and developments.
- We must understand and further develop the adaptiveness of earth system governance:
 - What are the politics of adaptiveness?
 - Which governance processes foster it?
 - What attributes of governance systems enhance capacities to adapt?
 - How, when and why does adaptiveness influence earth system governance?



ESG - Allocation and Access

- Earth system governance is, as is any political activity, about the distribution of material and immaterial values
 - How can we reach interdisciplinary conceptualizations and definitions of allocation and access?
 - What (overarching) principles underlie allocation and access?
 - How can allocation be reconciled with governance effectiveness?





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Questions?

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