



Junior Scientists Tandems

Final Report

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During my career exploration stay in Marburg university, I had a highly enriching experience that allowed me to apply my research skills and knowledge acquired over the years. This opportunity enabled me to integrate my expertise in climate change, mitigation strategies, and engagement with ethnic and rural communities. I actively participated in research discussions, contributing a decolonial perspective and fostering diverse viewpoints within the academic space. The experience not only solidified my technical knowledge but also expanded my ability to engage in interdisciplinary dialogues with professionals from diverse backgrounds.

One of the most valuable aspects of this experience was gaining insights into European academia and understanding the research methodologies employed by PhD students and professors within the research group I collaborated with. My supervisor's expertise in environmental economics provided a unique learning opportunity, significantly enhancing my understanding of the intersection between economic theories and environmental challenges. Additionally, I was able to exchange ideas with experts in sustainability and governance, broadening my analytical perspective on global environmental policies. This exposure to various theoretical frameworks helped me refine my methodological approach and reinforced the importance of interdisciplinary research in addressing contemporary environmental issues.

Beyond academic engagement, I had the opportunity to interact with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds, which exposed me to different worldviews and realities unfamiliar to me. These interactions strengthened my critical thinking skills and encouraged me to formulate new research questions, helping me reflect on my professional path and refine my career aspirations. Engaging with peers and professionals from different cultural and academic backgrounds allowed me to challenge my own assumptions and expand my perspective on socio-environmental issues. Furthermore, attending seminars and discussions within the research group provided an in-depth understanding of the complexities of global sustainability challenges and policy implementation.

However, due to scheduling conflicts between my supervisor's classes and my German language lessons, I was unable to serve as a guest assistant in his class. Nevertheless, I attended lectures whenever possible, which allowed me to deepen my understanding of global challenges related to sustainable development and the governance of natural resources. The discussions in these classes provided a critical perspective on resource distribution, climate justice, and the role of governance structures in shaping sustainable practices. Although I was unable to take on a formal teaching role, these learning experiences contributed to my ability to engage in academic discussions more effectively and apply critical thinking in my research endeavors.

A major challenge I faced during my stay was my late arrival, as my scholarship and visa were approved after the academic semester had already begun. This situation limited my ability to



enroll (as a guest) in university courses making it difficult to integrate with other students and fully immerse myself in the university's academic life. The delayed approval of my scholarship and visa not only affected my academic involvement but also hindered my ability to establish connections with fellow students and researchers early in the semester. Moreover, as a junior researcher, I did not have access to student groups or other university-sponsored academic spaces beyond my research group, which contributed to a sense of isolation. The lack of access to student communities and academic networks outside my research group made it challenging to fully engage with the broader university environment.

I believe that ATSAF could provide more structured guidance on life in Germany—not only in cultural terms but also regarding practical aspects such as securing housing, which proved to be a particularly challenging process. Although my supervisor supported me in finding accommodation, I realized that this task could have been better managed with more advanced preparation. Finding housing as a foreign researcher was particularly difficult due to high demand, language barriers, and administrative hurdles. A more detailed pre-arrival guide, including practical information on housing options, cultural adaptation, and integration strategies, would have been extremely beneficial in easing my transition.

Despite these challenges, this experience was invaluable for my personal and professional growth. It reinforced my confidence in my abilities and demonstrated that I am capable of overcoming obstacles to achieve my goals. The experience also emphasized the importance of resilience, adaptability, and self-initiative in academic and professional settings. I am deeply grateful to the ATSAF team for their support throughout the visa application process and for facilitating this unique opportunity, which has significantly contributed to my academic and career development.

Moreover, my time in Germany allowed me to reflect on my long-term professional aspirations and explore different career paths within sustainability research, environmental governance, and policy analysis. Exposure to European research methodologies, policy frameworks, and academic structures has provided me with new insights that will shape my future work in the field. I also gained a deeper appreciation for the role of international collaboration in addressing global environmental challenges and fostering innovative solutions to pressing sustainability issues.

Looking ahead, I intend to leverage this experience to enhance my research capabilities and contribute more effectively to socio-environmental projects. I plan to build on the knowledge acquired during my stay and apply it in my future research endeavors, particularly in the areas of climate policy, sustainable development, and community-based environmental initiatives. This experience has reaffirmed my commitment to working at the intersection of academia,



policy, and community engagement to drive meaningful change in sustainability and governance.

In conclusion, my career exploration stay was a transformative experience that provided me with invaluable academic, professional, and personal growth opportunities. Despite the challenges I faced, I have gained critical insights that will guide my future career path and academic pursuits. I once again extend my gratitude to the ATSAF team for their continuous support, which made this enriching journey possible.

One of the key findings of my research during this stay was the analysis of feedback loops in decision-making processes regarding deforestation. The study identified multiple feedback loops influencing collective deliberation and policy formulation:

The deliberative processes analyzed reveal that the interaction between different feedback loops significantly influences the quality and effectiveness of the discussions. In Juan 23 groups (low-income neighborhoods), reinforcing loops, such as collective learning and intergenerational cooperation, generate a positive cycle where the diversity of participants and the quality of the dialogue are mutually reinforcing. However, these effects can be counteracted by balancing loops, such as diversity management and participation facilitation, which regulate group dynamics to prevent certain voices from dominating the debate or fear of judgment from limiting the expression of ideas.

The Esmeralda groups (middle to high income neighborhoods) (more leftist population) show the importance of structural factors in deliberation. The discussion on deforestation in Caquetá not only addresses environmental dimensions, but also faces tensions between conservation and socioeconomic development. The preference for community-based solutions and distrust of state interventions highlight the need for well-structured participatory processes. In addition, the presence of dominant leadership and group fatigue affect the quality of deliberations, showing the urgency of strengthening group norms and facilitation strategies to ensure a more equitable and effective process.

To improve the effectiveness of these deliberative spaces and their impact on policy formulation, it is crucial to implement strategies that balance feedback loops. Active facilitation, leadership management, promotion of participant diversity and fatigue management are key interventions to optimize the quality of dialogue and decision-making. A community approach based on cooperation and shared learning will translate these discussions into concrete and sustainable policies to address deforestation in Caquetá.



My walks through Marburg



My first German breakfast and Christmas dinner with the research group.
