

OPAL Mid-term evaluation: Progress and pathways to impact

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on behalf of the OPAL project

ETH zürich



Funded by:



Why is oil palm so controversial?

- Positive impacts on local growth and poverty alleviation
- Social and environmental conflicts
- The problem is not the crop, but on how and where it is planted, and by whom

Is sustainable palm oil possible?

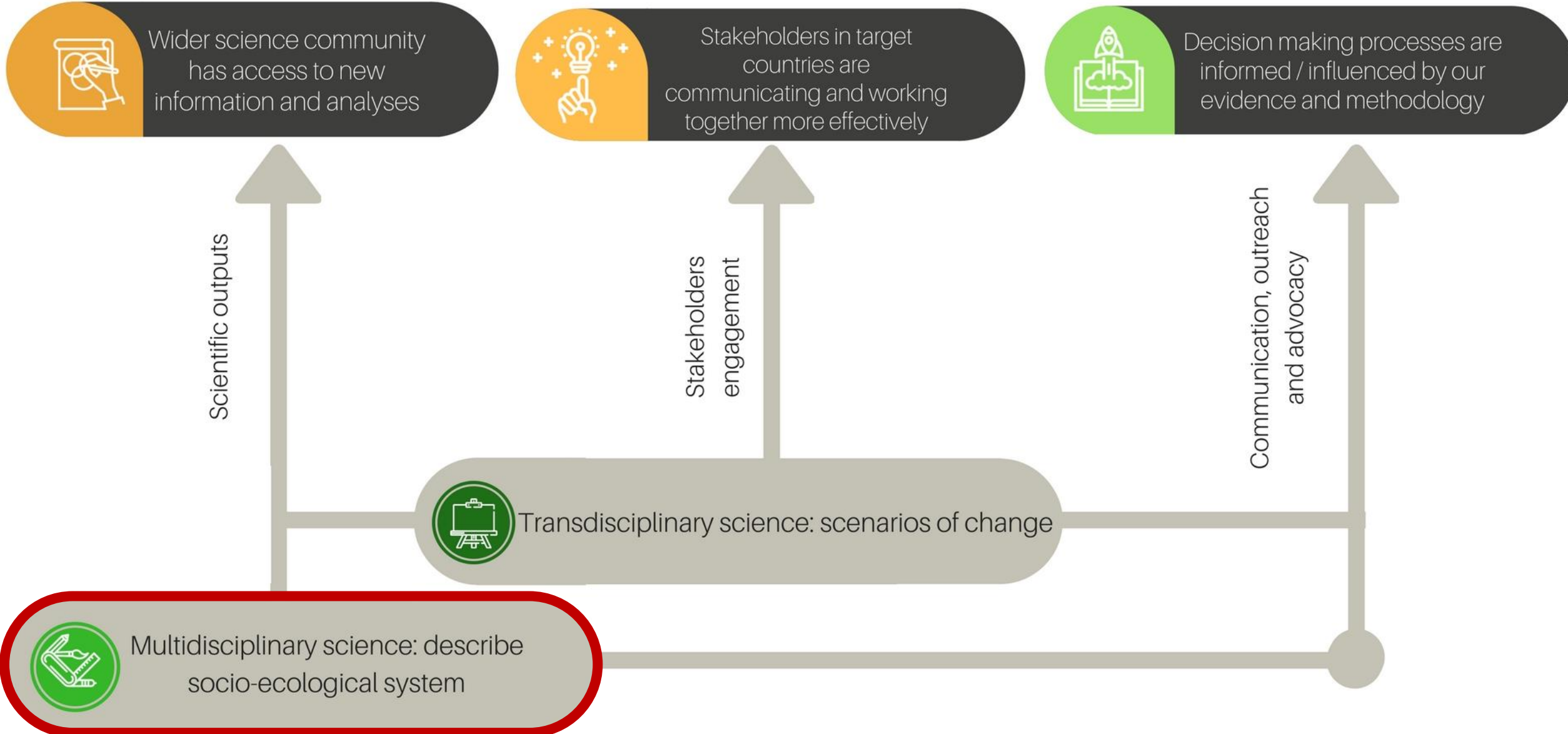
- Understanding social and environmental trade-offs in integrated ways is crucial to inform progress to sustainability
- OPAL provides new knowledge and mechanisms to explore alternative avenues to sustainable palm oil production in different contexts

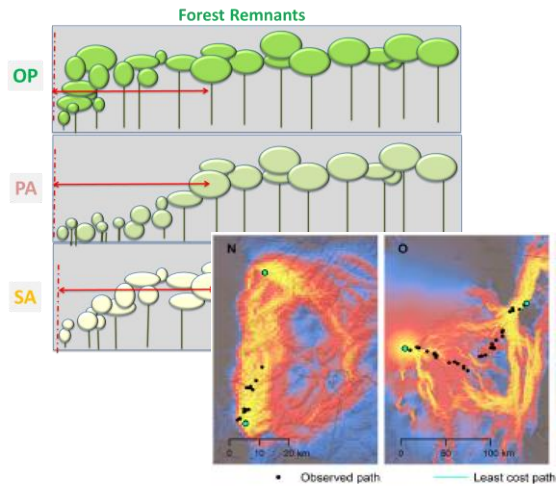
Why (only) three countries?

- We cannot work in more countries given our available resources.
- **Context matters:** situations differ, as do avenues for sustainability. We need to capture this variability for globally relevant discourses.
- The selected countries cover the range of possible situations
 - a. Cameroon: Long established but low productivity
 - b. Colombia: High quality but high costs of production
 - c. Indonesia: High productivity and low costs of production, but large environmental impacts

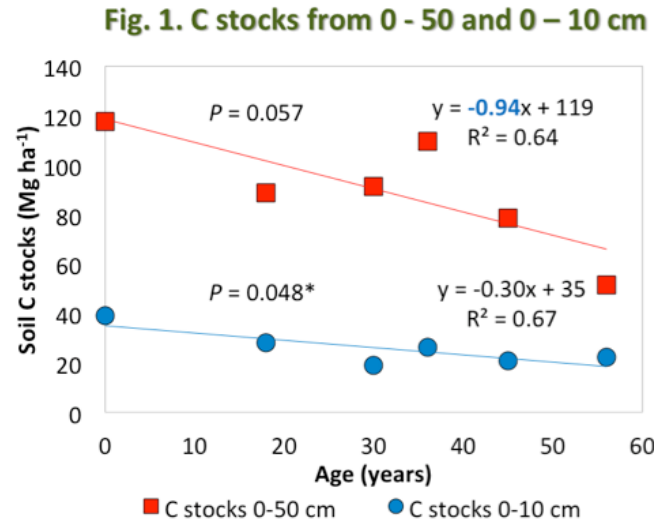


Improving oil palm management through more informed decision making

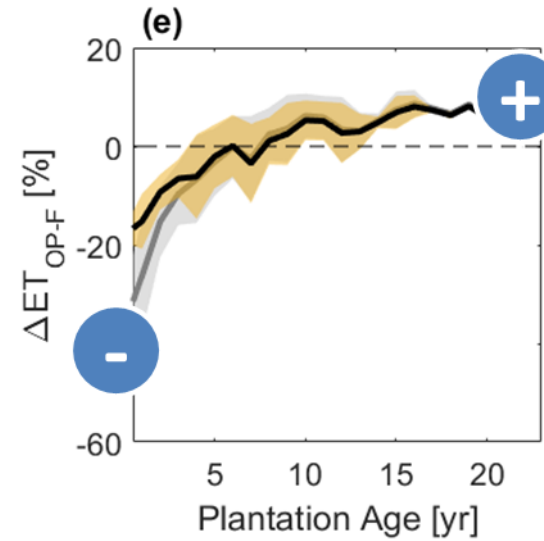




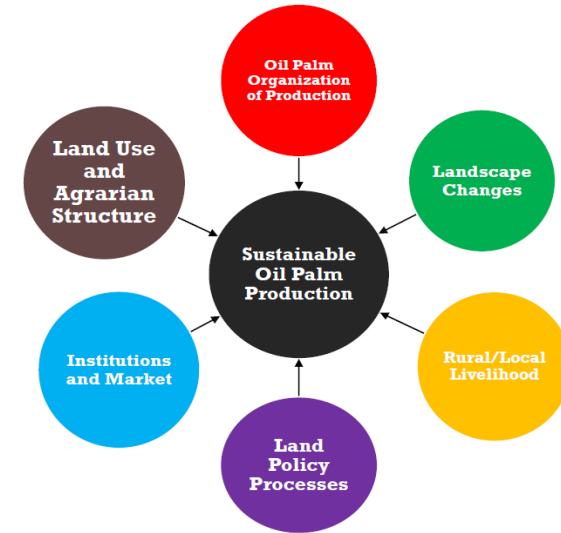
Structural habitats, land cover & animal mobility



Dynamics of soil fertility & carbon



Eco-hydrological modelling



Social & economic impacts



Multidisciplinary science: describe socio-ecological system



Social & economic impacts



Multidisciplinary science: describe socio-ecological system

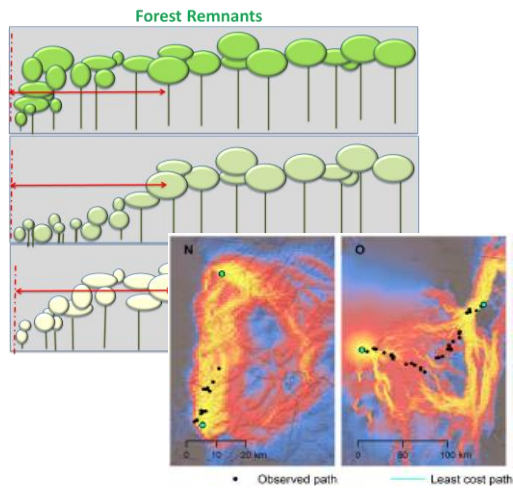
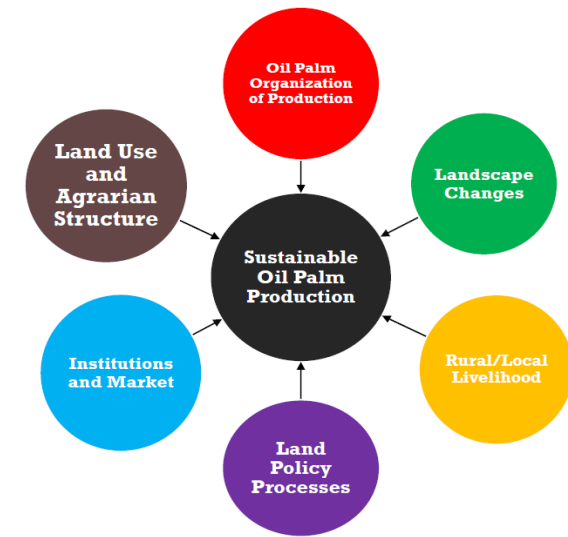
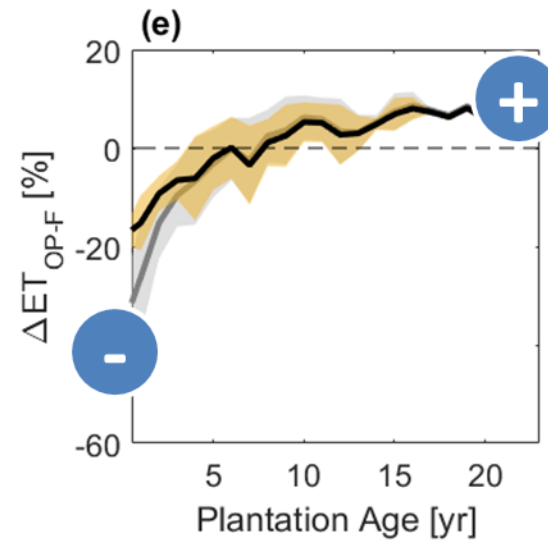
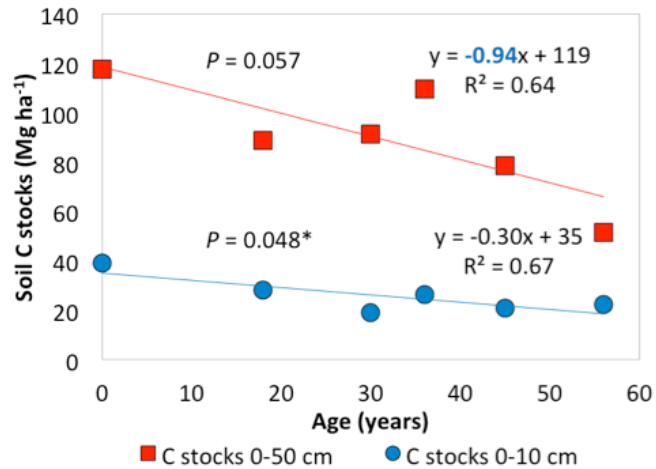


Fig. 1. C stocks from 0 - 50 and 0 - 10 cm



• Phase II activities:

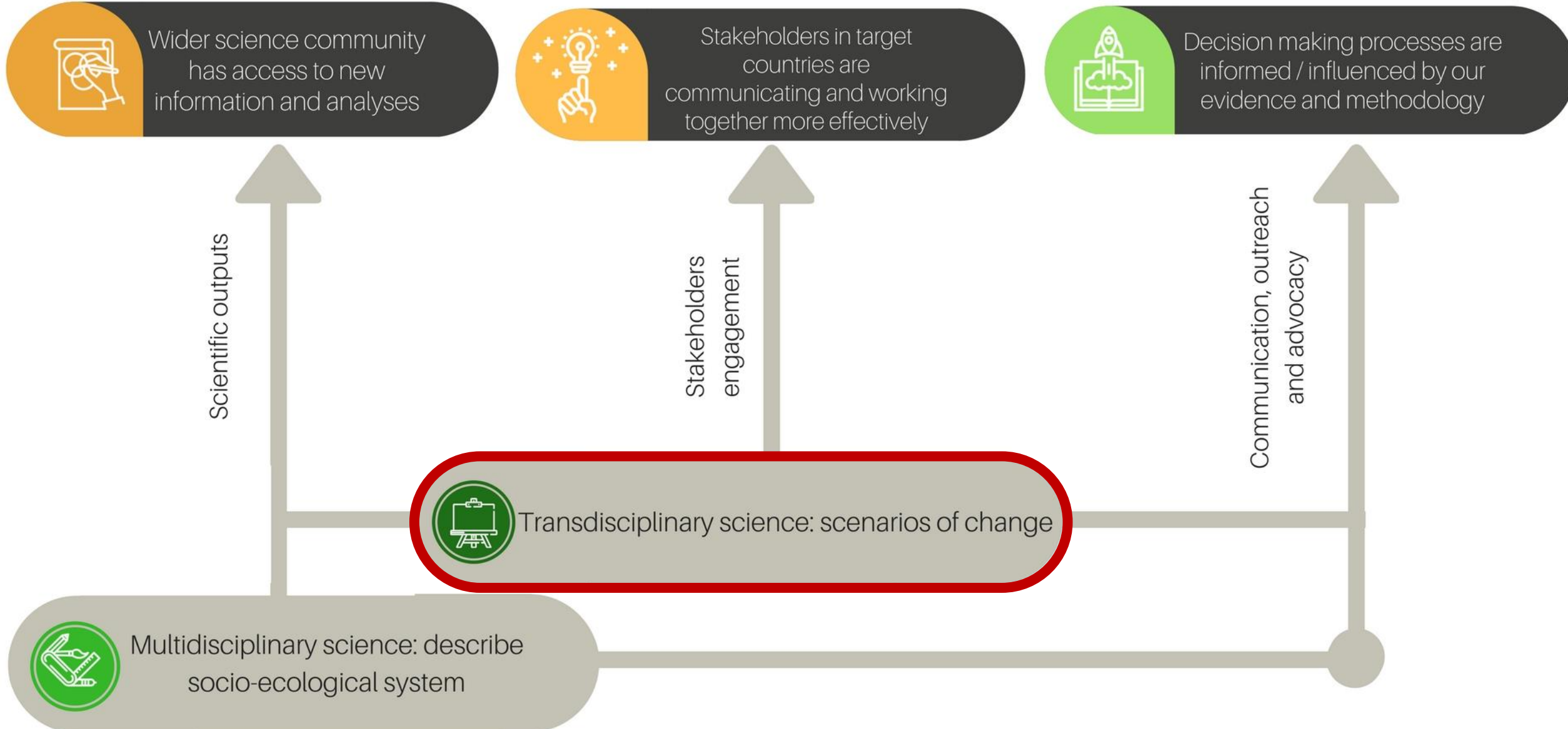
- Biodiversity costs of oil palm expansion scenarios in three countries
- Oil palm intercropping effects on soil, productivity, carbon, and income
- Pantropical analysis of eco-hydrological fluxes
- Livelihood trade-offs in oil palm transitions from forest and pastures
- Policy analysis to support sustainable oil palm development in the tropics



Multidisciplinary science: describe socio-ecological system



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Scientific outputs

Stakeholders engagement

Communication, outreach and advocacy

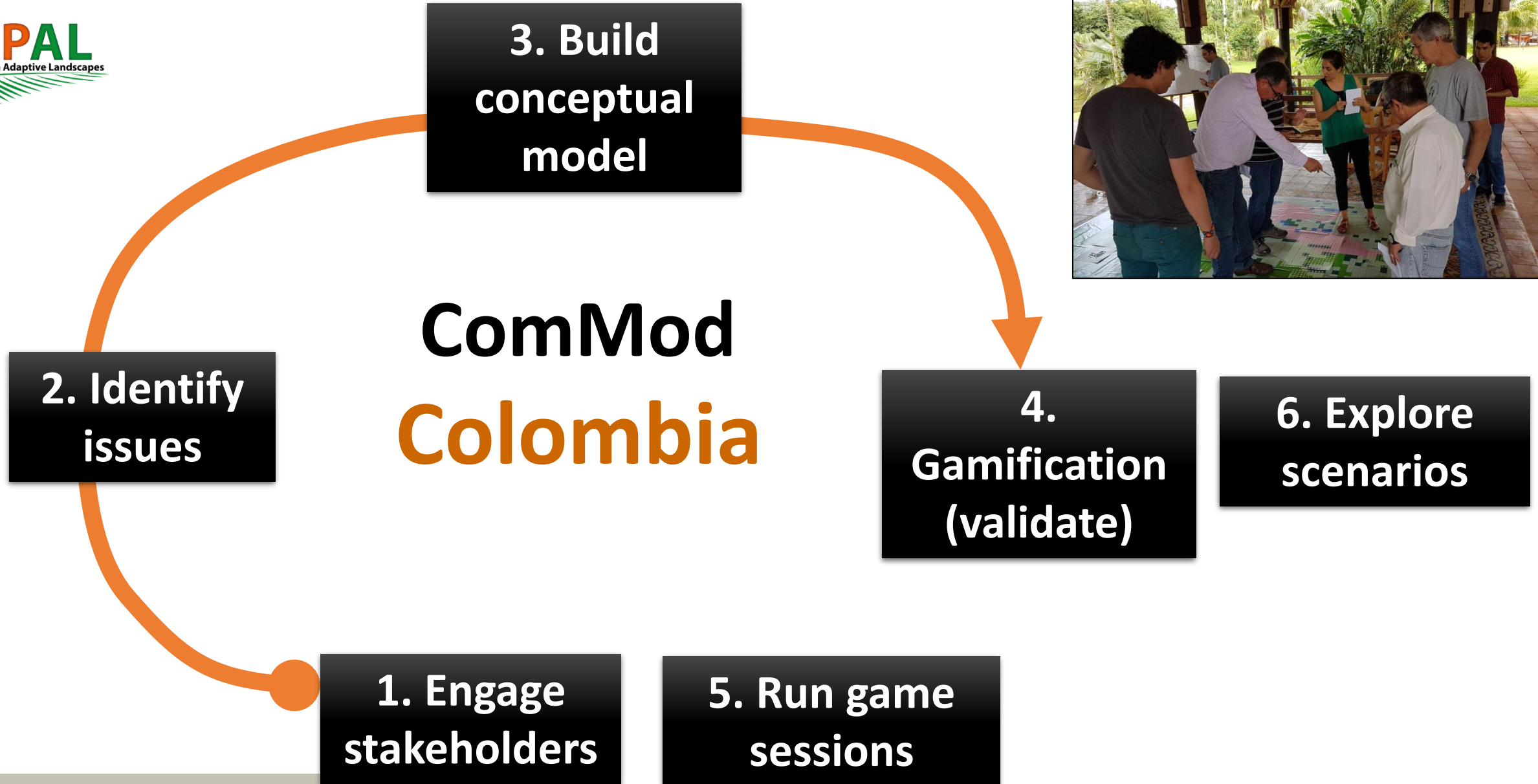
Wider science community has access to new information and analyses

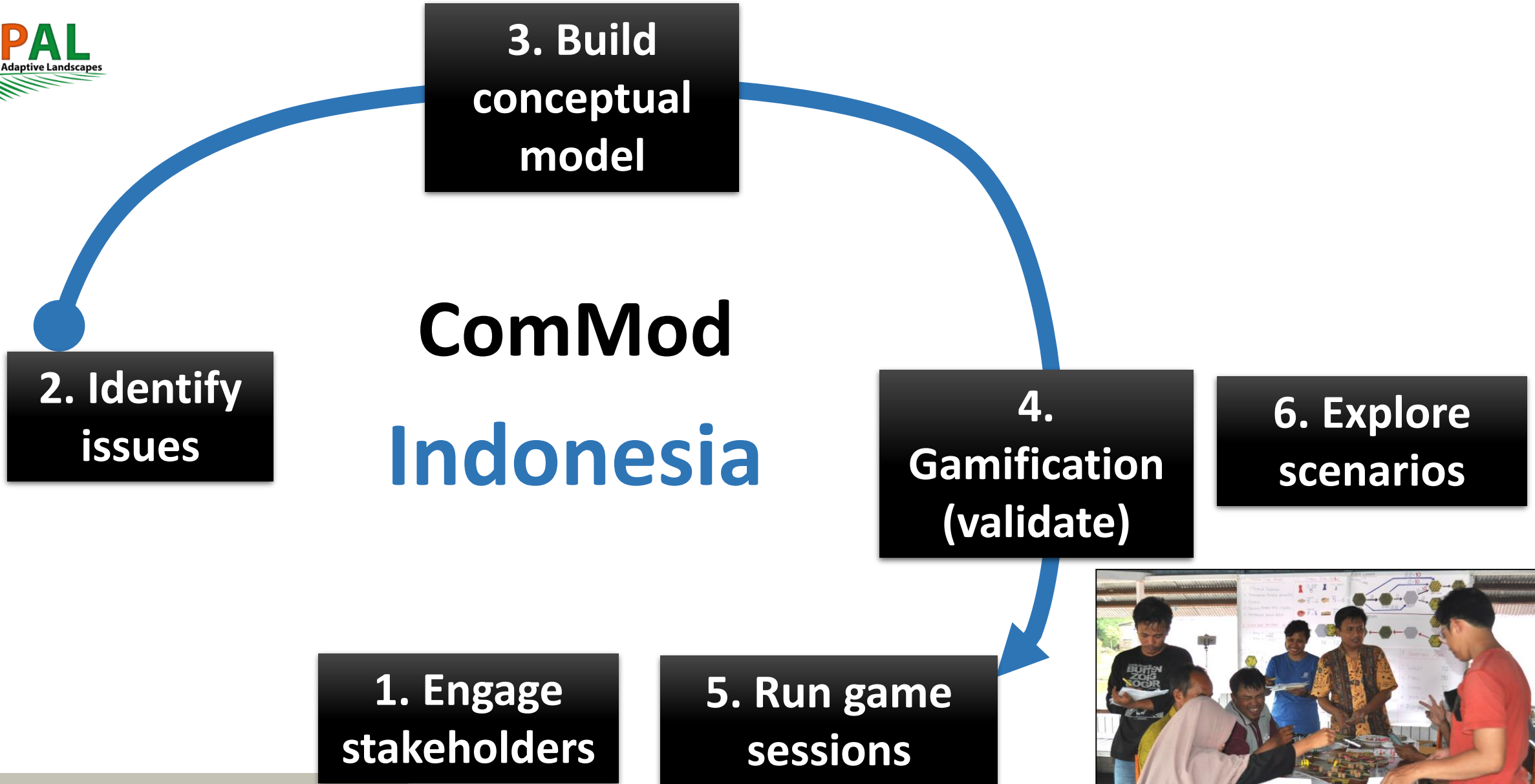
Stakeholders in target countries are communicating and working together more effectively

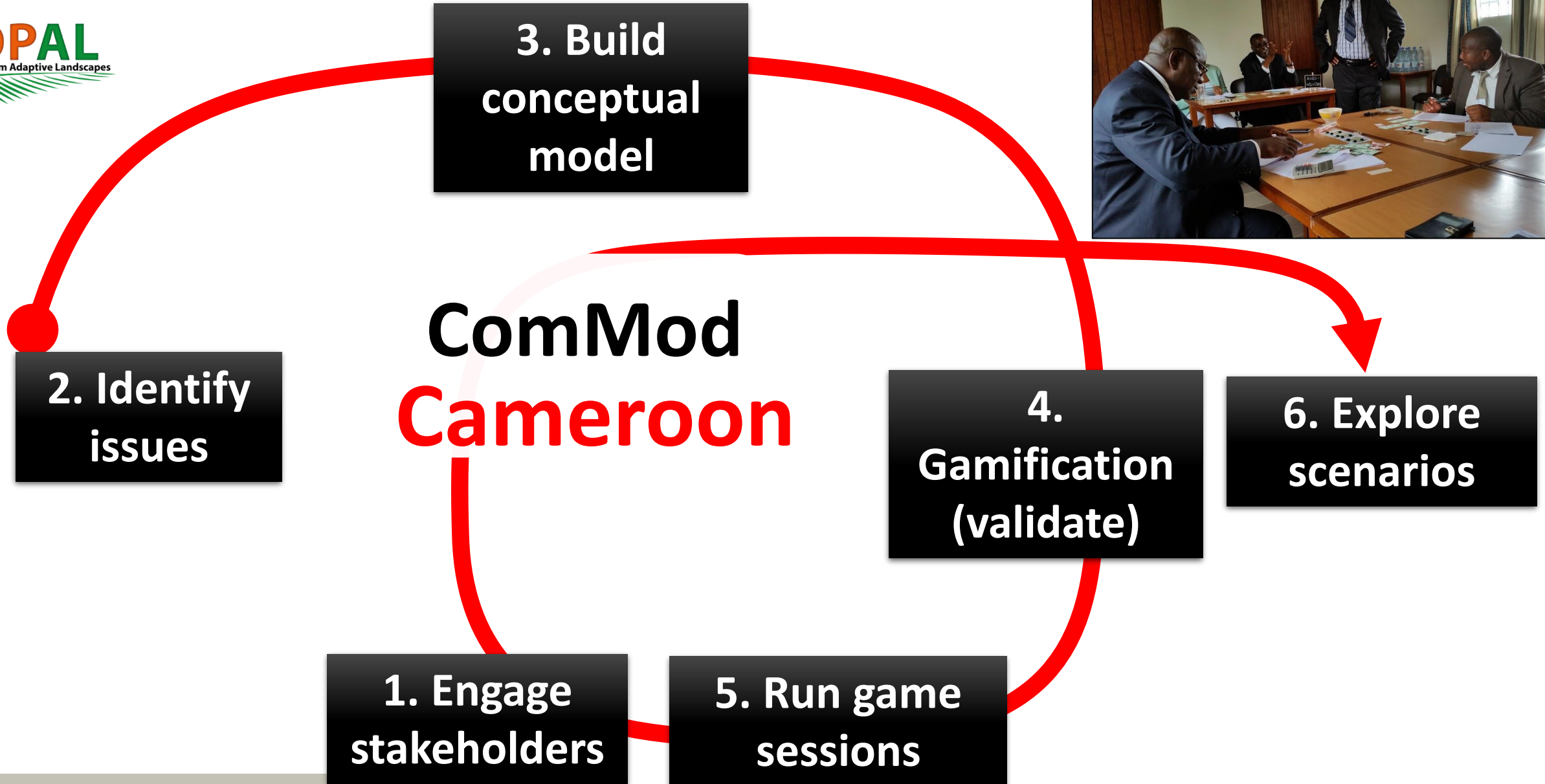
Decision making processes are informed / influenced by our evidence and methodology

Transdisciplinary science: scenarios of change

Multidisciplinary science: describe socio-ecological system









Pathways to impact in Cameroon

- Engaging smallholders and agro-industries on cooperatives through COMMOD derived scenarios
- Ministry of Agriculture is using the game to explore options for smallholder cooperatives
- The CoPalCam game facilitates discussions on national palm oil strategy with the *Ad-Hoc Committee for the Elaboration of the National Sustainable Palm Oil Strategy*

Pathways to impact in Colombia

Current activities

- Trade-off analysis of oil palm intensification and expansion
- Reinforcing engagement between stakeholders

Future activities

- Better understanding of farming practices and their relations with landscape configuration
- Feeding knowledge based outcomes into policy dialogues

Pathways to impact in Colombia

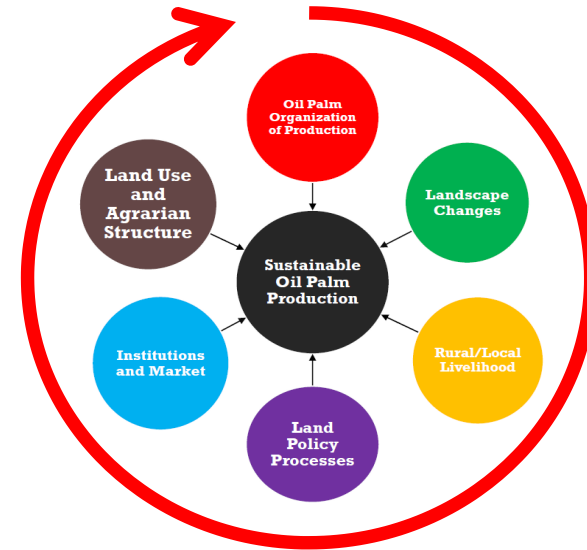
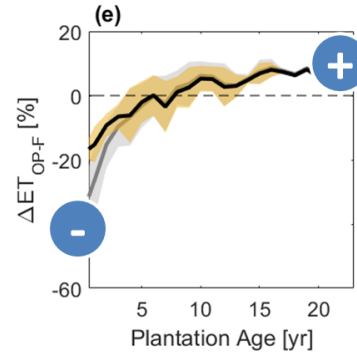
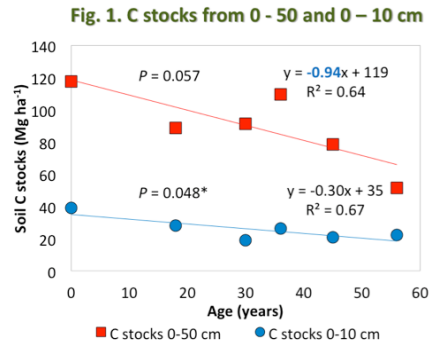
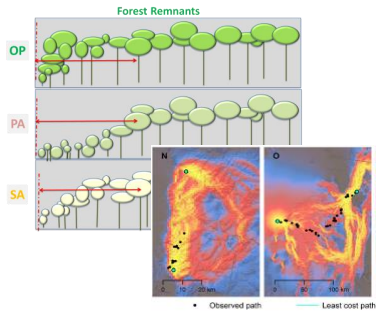
- 2017 **Adapt** the model to small and medium growers to explore how alternative practices affect land cover transitions
- 2018 **Scale-out** the implementation of RPG sessions with different stakeholders
- Integrate** biophysical aspects into revised game scenarios
- 2019 **Respond** to new and emerging threats and opportunities through the development of new scenarios

2020 **Communicate** COMMODO outcomes into appropriate policy processes

Use the RPGs as boundary objects in policy discussion forums

- National Policy on Climate Change (PNCC)
- Strategy for Deforestation Control and Forest Management
- Colombian Low Carbon Development Strategy
- The National Restoration Plan

What's next? Integrating multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary outputs



Natural sciences

Social sciences

Provides a framework to model impacts resulting from players' decisions (Impacts)

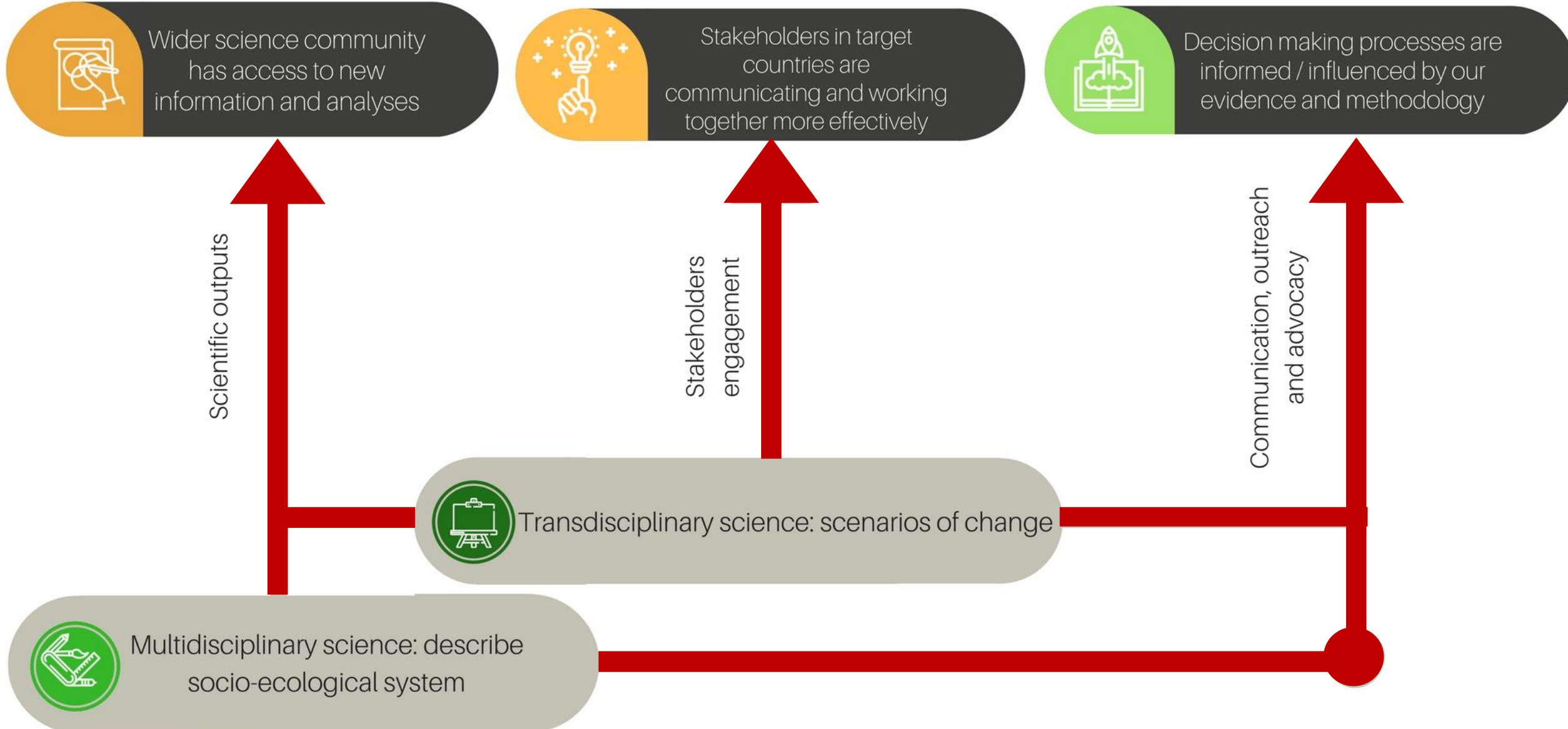
Provide background for player actions in the game (Decisions)



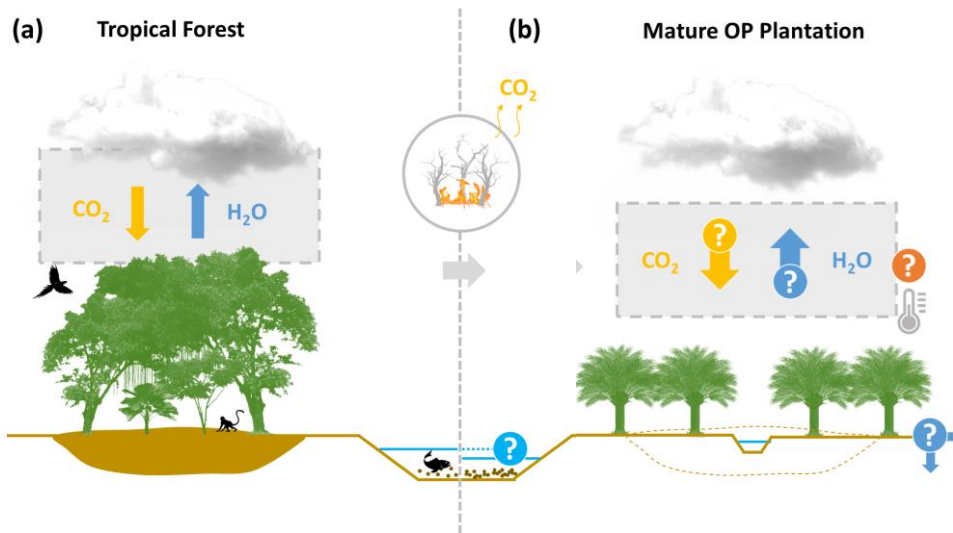
COMMOD



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Scientific outputs



- **Phase II activities:**

- Focus on scientific publications (31 publications outlined)
- Eight synthesis papers
- Presentations in international conferences
- Participation in wider scientific debates and initiatives



AY, 38 y.o.
Villager, Buluq Sen Village

What did you learn from the game?

*«Game ini mudah untuk dimainkan, karena mendekati pola hidup sehari-hari masyarakat desa Buluq Sen.
Game ini membuka pandangan kita untuk menjaga lingkungan.»*

- *This game is easy to play because it is similar to what we do everyday in Bulug Sen Village. **This game has opened my mind to protect the environment.***

[Changing stakeholders perceptions and knowledge]

Stakeholder Engagement



**Jacquis Kemleu Tchabgou –
Secrétaire Général/Association des Raffineurs des
Oléagineux du Cameroun (ASROC)**

What steps do you recommend?

« Elle a enfin suggérée une réflexion devant porter sur la mise en place d'une inter-profession (entre producteurs et transformateurs) dans la Filière de l'huile de palme. »

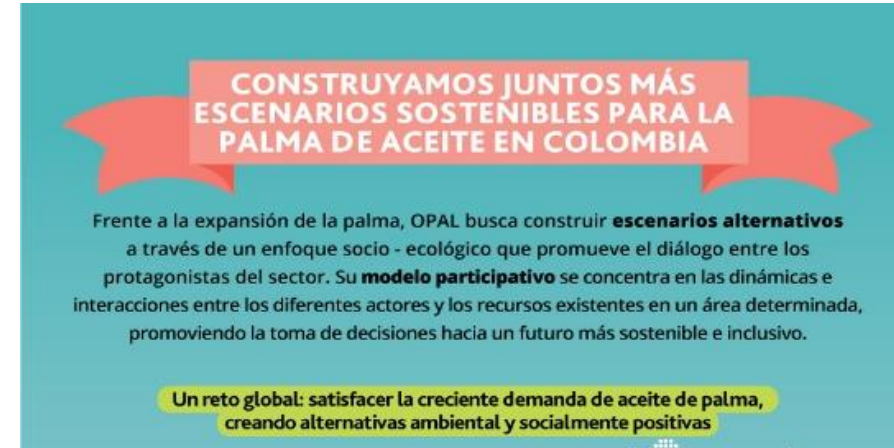
- *The workshop eventually suggested the **creation of an alliance of producers and 1st + 2nd transformation in the supply chain?***

[New initiatives as a direct outcome of game session discussions]

Communication, outreach and advocacy



Participation in policy arenas



Targeted dissemination



Outreach activities



Media articles

Schmiermittel der Welt

Challenges

Research process

- Complexity of the issue
- Building trust
- Scaling-up models
- Limited biophysical data for modelling
- Integrating biophysical and social sciences

Project management

- Staff turnover
- Finding champions
- Communication across a global and multi-disciplinary team
- New partners needed to address gaps

Impact and outreach

- Emerging issues and new opportunities: Postconflict Colombia
 - Conflicting policies, limited institutional capacities
 - Multilevel institutional engagement
-
- **We remain a relatively small player: identify niche and key messages in policy debates**

Appel lancé pour renoncer à l'huile de palme

par Bettina Zanni/jbm - Deux ONG lancent une campagne demandant aux détaillants suisses d'interdire l'huile de palme. Les commerces ne voient pas l'intérêt d'une telle action et préfèrent l'huile de palme durable.

<http://www.opal-project.org/>

Integration of outputs III: Synthesis papers

Global policy debates & processes in the OP sector

Bottom line in sustainability debate – how does this differ and what are the commonalities?

Who is actively shaping perceptions in OP sector

How do different countries react to these pressures?

Social / economic / environmental impact / benefits / tradeoff of different business models

What are the context, issues and development pathways?

- Agroindustry /private/ small holders

What are the perceptions of consumers + actors through the value chain?

What is a smallholder?

OPAL Theory of Change

