What is a metacoupling approach?

A metacoupling approach helps to systematically understand human-nature interactions (couplings), by highlighting intricate connections between multiple regions and communities. In this way, metacoupling helps to unveil the ways in which environmental changes and resource use in one area can affect vulnerable communities and ecosystems in distant locations. This can lead to a broader perspective on equity issues, making it clear that seemingly local actions have global consequences and vice versa.

See SARA’s Metacoupling brief for more details
Applying a metacoupling approach, according to the steps outlined in the SARA Metacoupling brief, can facilitate in understanding important social-ecological flows and associated actors who might mediate or be impacted by these flows. In order for BR to be collectively governed across jurisdictional and sectoral levels, and to the benefit of both people and nature, a deeper understanding of who wins and who loses from natural resource decisions is needed and a metacoupling approach can help with this.

Metacoupling recognises that interactions across the three BR areas and external landscapes can have differential impacts on various groups of stakeholders.

Since 2022, the Southern African Resilience Academy (SARA) has supported collaborative working groups to pursue inter- or transdisciplinary synthesis research under the guiding theme of "Building equitable resilience in Southern Africa". This is in line with SARA’s role as a convening and support space for researchers and practitioners working across Southern Africa to engage around pressing resilience and development challenges in the region.

SARA is an initiative of the Global Resilience Partnership (GRP), with support from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). The academy's goals are to strengthen existing expert networks, expand collaboration, and facilitate the co-production of policy and practice-relevant knowledge.

Through its links with other regional networks, SARA aims to contribute directly and meaningfully to regional and global policy discussions around resilience and development, and elevate the Southern African voice in international fora. SARA is coordinated by the Centre for Sustainability Transitions (CST) at Stellenbosch University in South Africa. It is co-funded by the South African Research Chair in Social-Ecological Systems and Resilience.

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