

TRANSREAL TRANSformative REALism for effective climate action

Novy A.¹, Stroissnig U.¹, Barlow N.¹, Strickner A.¹, Bärnthaler R.¹, Lexer W.², Stickler T.², Buschmann D.², Maltzahn L.³, Müller H.³

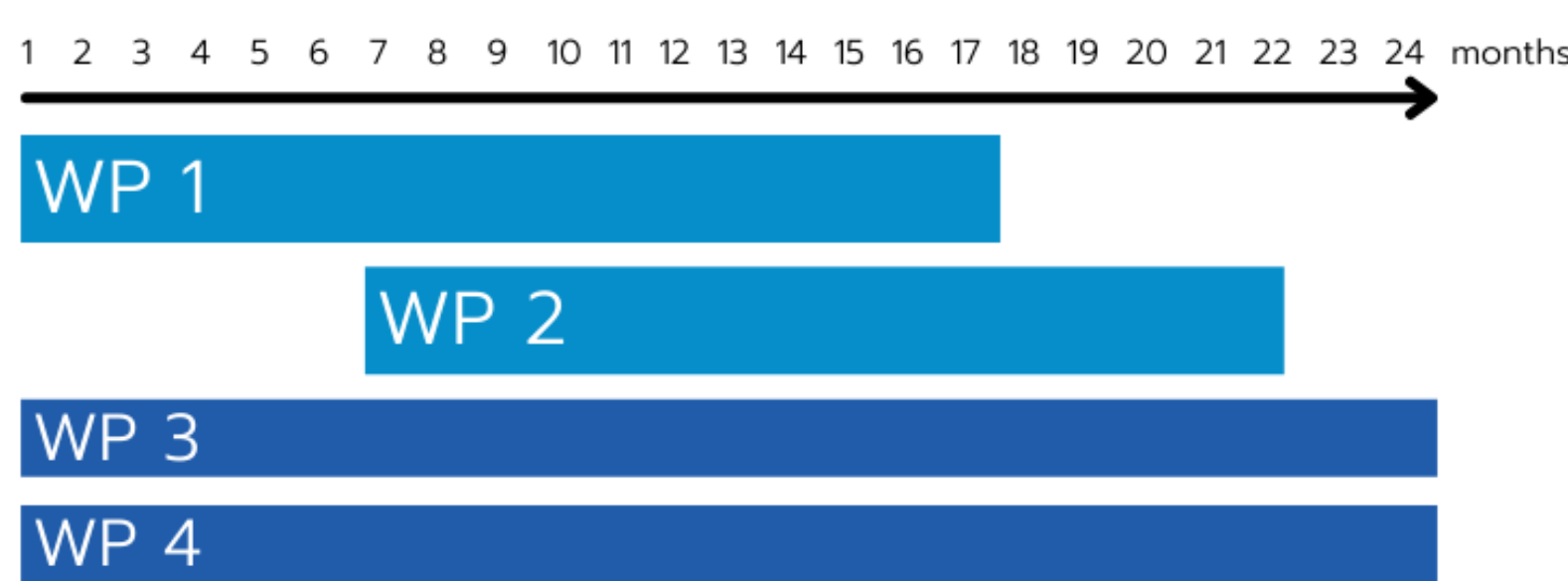
¹ WU Wien, Institute for Multi-Level Governance and Development / Department Sozioökonomie

² Umweltbundesamt – Climate Change Adaption & Sustainable Development

³ Degrowth Vienna

Facts & timetable

- Duration: Dec. 2021 – Nov. 2023
- Funding: Klimafonds – ACRP 13th call
- Work packages (WP):
 - Facilitating multi-level transdisciplinary co-production of knowledge
 - Conducting local participatory research processes in rural case study areas
 - Knowledge integration and dissemination
 - Project management



Abstract

TRANSREAL explores innovative ways to combine radical with incremental and feasible action to achieve climate-friendly and climate-resilient practices and policies. Such transformative climate action (TCA), contributing to a desired social-ecological transformation, links short-term objectives to improve immediate living conditions with long-term concerns to stay within planetary boundaries. The project will co-design such TCAs in two Austrian rural micro-regions in the field of land use and soc.-econ. aspects of housing, like countering splintered development, providing affordable housing, contributing to village regeneration and local job creation, and sustaining provisioning. The overarching research question of TRANSREAL is how transformative realism can improve climate action.

Research questions

- WP 1: How can climate actions be designed to effectively contribute to socio-ecological transformation?
- WP 2: What are concrete TCAs in the socioeconomics of climate-friendly land use in two rural case study regions in Austria?
- WP 3: How (in which organizational setting and by means of which forms of knowledge) can relevant knowledge for TCAs be produced?

Focus & content

- Strategy „Transformative Realism“
- Combination of...
 - ...visionary/transformative targets with pragmatic/incremental measures
 - ...short-term targets of fostering essential and non-essential local provisioning in the foundational economy (food, housing, energy, ...) with long-term targets in climate policy
- Main objectives:
 - change of framework conditions – with a focus on spatial structures, land consumption and housing
 - support of climate-friendly, socio-ecol. and resilient actions
- Identification of „Transformative Climate Actions“ (TCAs)
- Empirical research in two micro-regions (St. Johann and Pöllau) with participation opportunities for local stakeholders

Methodology

The project team will investigate scientific literature and innovative and exnovative multi-level strategies for climate action at international and domestic levels, trying to transfer knowledge in a context-sensitive way. In Austria, it will strengthen knowledge alliances of diverse actors: from public administration experts and grassroots activists to local and national professionals, policy-makers, and decision-makers, including regional managers.

Multi-scalar project design:

- Multi-level governance and transdisciplinarity will guide policy recommendations, the process of knowledge production and the internal organization
- WP1 on inter-/national level, WP2 on local level, WP3 synthesis of both
- Extended case method: combination of qualitative methods with reflexive learning processes in St. Johann and Pöllau (including e.g. explorative interviews, literature analysis, and participatory interventions)

Expected results

TRANSREAL...

- will produce relevant knowledge for policymakers, professionals, researchers, civil society activists and citizens, the interested public and the local population.
- combines the need for radical change and the necessity of well-designed steps towards transformations.
- gives tools to funding programs for research on transformative climate policies and their implementation.
- will contribute to closing research gaps between incremental climate interventions and radical TCAs by designing innovative forms of knowledge production and dissemination.
- supports regional change agents and local decision makers by providing concrete knowledge on TCAs, thus translating the often too abstract academic debate into practicable policy options.
- offers degrowth activists and young people in general experiences with local citizens, professionals and policymakers to enrich their understanding of desirable and feasible practices and policies.