

Edinburgh Environment and Development Network (EEDN)

Nitrogen with a social sciences twist

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Location: Training & Skills, [ECCI](#), University of Edinburgh

14 December 16:00 - 18:00

The nitrogen challenge is one of the biggest environmental problems of the 21st century. Excessive nitrogen - in its reactive form - is a major contributor to both the climate and ecological crisis. Multiple sectors including agriculture, transport, waste, and energy, amongst others, are contributing to the problem and therefore need to be part of the solution. So why then is so little known about it? Nitrogen science has so far been dominated by the natural sciences. Studies on nitrogen feature biogeochemistry, plant production, soil science, nitrogen budgets, and environmental impacts. Yet in terms of our social understanding of nitrogen, the research has been more limited. This talk introduces the N challenge and will highlight examples of interdisciplinary research and the ways that the social sciences can be used in the field of nitrogen research. Examples are drawn from the social science research studies being carried out by the GCRF UKRI South Asia Nitrogen Hub (SANH) – a partnership that brings together 32 leading research organisations with project engagement partners from the UK and South Asia. The importance of the social sciences in nitrogen research is outlined, dispelling the myths held about the social sciences, highlighting what social science methods can be applied in nitrogen research, and how such research can support policy actions for sustainable nitrogen management.



Photo 1: Farmer focus group discussion on fertiliser use and management in Nepal Photographs: SP Pradhan



Photo 2: Nepalese farmer, in Dhulikhel, Nepal Photographs: SP Pradhan



Further information

Edinburgh Environment and Development Network (EEDN) events: <https://csfl.ed.ac.uk/edinburgh-environment-development-network>

UKRI CGRF South Asian Nitrogen Hub (SANH): <https://sanh.inms.international/>

EdinburghX: The Role of Social Sciences in Nitrogen Research free online course [available](#)

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