



Planning a multidisciplinary Sustainability Transitions Study Module at the University of Jyväskylä

At the University of Jyväskylä, Finland, ECF4CLIM supported the interdisciplinary collaborative development process of a 25 credit study module called “Basic Multidisciplinary Studies in Sustainability Transitions”. This study module introduces students to the needs, barriers, and opportunities of sustainability transitions from a multidisciplinary perspective of technological solutions, social governance systems, cultures, and behaviours.

The interdisciplinary planning proved to be fruitful, but challenging. University regulations for promoting sustainability and the JYU.Wisdom, an open and transdisciplinary community of the University of Jyväskylä were good starting points for the development. Despite the university’s favourable regulations, the first attempt to begin the planning process didn't succeed. Leaders’ decisions were needed to designate an official planning group enabling

all the faculties to participate in its development. However, allocation of resources and academic credits among faculties occasionally revealed underlying tensions and the defense of institutional interests.

The success in interdisciplinary planning demanded genuine commitment to understanding colleagues from other disciplines, contributing to the common good and dedicating personal time or reallocating effort from other responsibilities. Engaging with diverse viewpoints during the planning process helped broaden participants’ perspectives on sustainability. Multidisciplinary planning was considered as a valuable opportunity to step outside disciplinary silos, gaining insight into other fields’ perspectives as well as identifying issues that often remain unaddressed—those residing in conceptual “no man’s land.” Dialogue was considered essential for enabling the emergence of new perspectives.