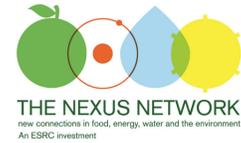


Governance of the nexus

From buzz words to a strategic action perspective

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Summary

In this think piece, we develop the foundations for a strategic action perspective on the governance of the nexus. Our enquiry into the governance dimension of the nexus incorporates three propositions. First, it acknowledges that nexus challenges cannot be separated from the perceptions, interests, and practices of actors associated with a nexus. Second, our approach builds on a relational understanding of nexus governance as arising from relationships between actors (actor networks) and ideas and interests (issue networks) across multiple domains. Third, our approach emphasizes the need for addressing nexus challenges by working with and through existing governance arrangements.

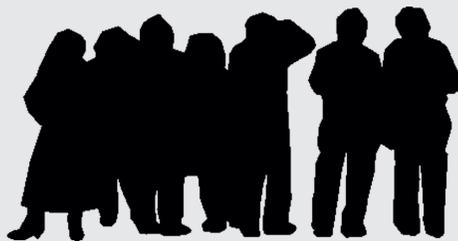
Our strategic action perspective explores a set of key questions to address nexus challenges:

1. How can we identify nexus challenges, i.e. what is the problem/solution?
2. How can we disentangle interconnections, i.e. what is, can and should be integrated?
3. How can we respond to nexus challenges, i.e. what are conceivable and achievable ways forward?

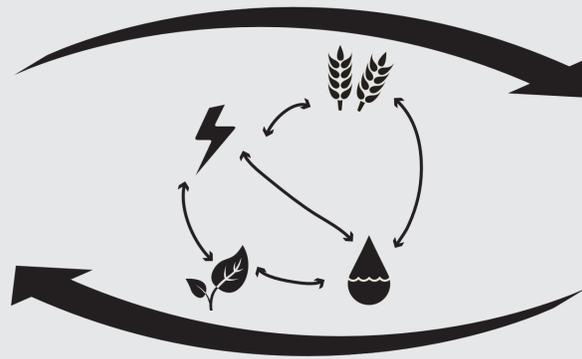
Actors' perspective

Putting people at the heart of the nexus

An actor-oriented perspective allows us to inductively investigate nexus challenges and associated governance dilemmas



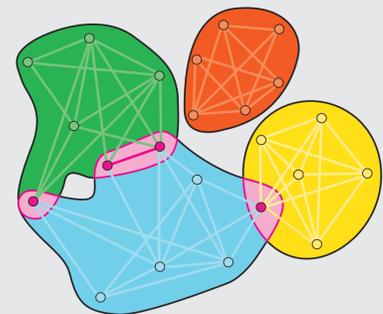
A strategic action perspective on the nexus



Network perspective

Thinking in terms of relations rather than sectors

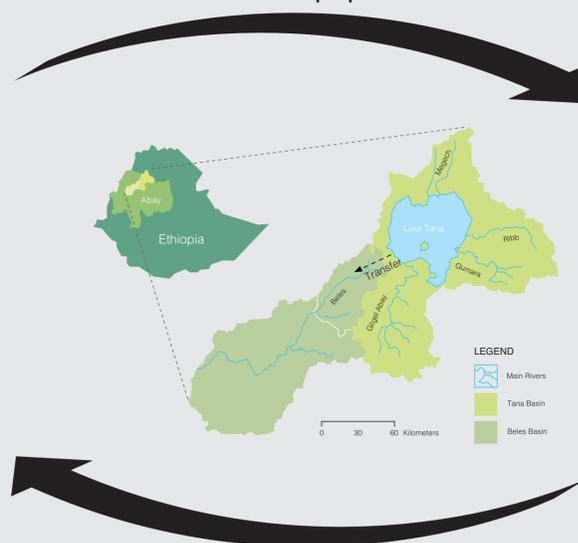
A network perspective can help unpack how actors and issues are linked to each other across sectors and scales



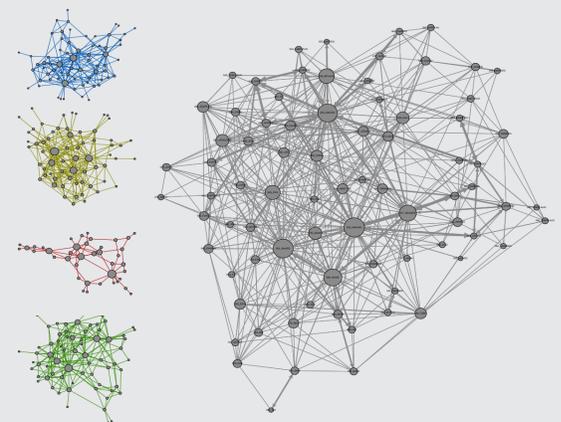
Engaging actors



Empirical illustration from the Upper Blue Nile



Mapping networks



Ways forward

The global and national agendas are currently being re-aligned for meeting fundamental and complex development challenges as addressed in the Nexus. There will be an increased demand in decision-making for practical ways to address interconnected nexus challenges to ensure development and sustainability goals.

A future research agenda on the nexus should:

- Draw on existing knowledge, actor relations and procedures, rather than creating new 'ideal' ones.
- Address the political economy of the nexus to identify factors working against the changes required.
- Outline how to reduce complexity in a meaningful way and avoid premature and inequitable problem 'closure'.