APPENDIX 1 – **Full accounts from the authors' different fieldwork experiences in various early career stages, and related inter- and transdisciplinary challenges.**

Case 1: Building local collaborative relationships in a context of research fatigue in northern Brazil

I started my PhD in the fall of 2021, when, as a Brazilian citizen, I was awarded a four-year full PhD scholarship to conduct my research in a German research organization with co-supervision embedded in a Brazilian university. My research was broadly about marine fisheries governance in northern Brazil, more specifically in the Bragança region of the northeastern state of Pará. The focus on this region was partly motivated by a long-term collaboration existing between the two research organizations in Germany and Brazil.

I was made aware of the significant levels of research fatigue in the region from the first year of my PhD. Since I had only a few acquaintances in my study area, as a novice interdisciplinary researcher and little experience with transdisciplinarity, I viewed research fatigue as a significant challenge. I felt that I was not really entitled to conduct research in northern Brazil, as an outsider to a region permeated by strong social inequalities, and primarily affiliated with a Western European institution. Dealing with these feelings, figuring out best ways to engage with local actors and obtaining data, as well as conducting my research in an ethical manner all felt as overwhelming as it was necessary, particularly given the independent nature of my scholarship-based PhD project and the social and environmental governance context of the Brazilian Amazon region.

In addition to allowing me to maintain my academic connection to Brazil, my link to a local university in northern Brazil through my co-supervisor's lab was essential. Before and during fieldwork, I connected with researchers from the lab and several local universities, as well as key local partners, mostly via WhatsApp. This was helpful for discussing research ideas, establishing initial contact, and learning about ongoing, locally-led research and initiatives. Yet, it quickly became clear that I needed to allocate enough time to progressively build up a trust-based knowledge network in person. This implied spending as much time as possible on the ground to create time for trusted connections to develop with a range of actors at the national, regional, and local levels. I submitted multiple applications for funding to support my fieldwork in order to use all the months permitted by my scholarship funding agency (one quarter of the total scholarship period).

To increase the legitimacy of my research, I also made sure I would comply with the ethical clearance and official research approval requirements in Brazil. On the German side, submission of a thorough and detailed ethical clearance form along with a free and informed consent statement was required. On the Brazilian side, I became aware of the official research approval requirements by a Brazilian colleague who had worked there. Both formalization procedures were important for me to reflect more deeply on the ethical implications of my work. Yet, although institutionalized ethical clearance procedures formalize one's research, they do not always help obtain informal license from local actors.

In one of the coastal towns included in my study area, a local collaborator accompanied me during much of the fieldwork and played an important role in helping me navigate local social dynamics and establish trust with community members. This underscores the importance of not operating as a lone wolf in the field. This may be easier to handle for experienced researchers with well-established

networks. However, it is not a given for international ECRs working on their own projects and grants under time constraint. In my case, finding a receptive and available collaborator who was willing to guide and trust me in an unfamiliar region where I had no previous contacts was a matter of luck and building trust within my emerging local network. Great collaborations such as this one can emerge from the fieldwork and extend a posteriori through visits, digital communication, and joint academic work.

At other times, I also encountered hesitation, as interviewees understandably perceived me as a researcher 'parachuted in', despite my formal ethical clearance, affiliation with a local university, and Brazilian citizenship. Some interviewees told me about their experiences with parachute research, in an attempt, it seemed to me, not only to denounce these practices, but also to understand what guaranteed that I would do things differently. Without clear guidelines or training on how to navigate these situations, I often felt responsible for responding on behalf of the organization and the Western European research tradition I represented. In this context, my decision to adopt a qualitative research approach became an important ally in navigating research fatigue. Prioritizing depth and quality of engagement over the number of interviews allowed for a more dialogical, and less extractive research process, and felt as a way of respecting the time interviewees devoted to meeting and sharing their knowledge and experiences. At the same time, I occasionally worried that this approach would result in a lower interview-to-time ratio than might be expected for a PhD dissertation, but the analysis turned out to be extremely rich, sufficiently time-consuming, and enjoyable to conduct.

The month after the completion of my PhD and the end of my scholarship, I was unemployed and unable to benefit from the German social protection system, e.g. in terms of unemployment money or health insurance. Yet, with remaining funds linked to my PhD scholarship, I was able to travel back to Belém and Bragança to share my research and visit the acquaintances and local network I gained. These encounters took different forms, such as informal conversations over coffee or at the city square, more formal presentations at local organizations, and talks with students in university auditoria. While this return visit was both personally meaningful and well received locally, I am also aware that it would not have been possible without the remaining funds and some personal backup. This suggests that adequate support for transdisciplinary research requires further support for collaborations to extend beyond the formal duration of a project, including through funding for return visits, continued dialogue, and long-term reciprocal institutional partnerships.

Case 2: Participatory mapping in the tropics: placing support and ethics between two countries

I conducted both my PhD and first postdoctoral research project in the Bragantinian region, in Pará state, north Brazil. As an "independent" PhD researcher, not embedded in a larger project, I chose this area because my PhD host institution had long been working in the region and kept several research connections with Bragança. I embraced this as a challenge that was well-suited for the PhD: I would still be working in my home country, contributing to research and possibly policy-making there, while, at the same time, going out of my comfort zone by doing the fieldwork in a region in Brazil with which I was not familiar (I am from the northeast and had never worked in the north of Brazil). My goal was to develop an interdisciplinary project, as I would be mobilizing disciplines such as Biology, Political Ecology, Human Geography, and Social Sciences, as well as a transdisciplinary

research effort, trying to bring closer together knowledge co-production with local communities while aiming to deliver results to could be easily translated to local realities - both as science outreach and as products directed at decision-making on the ground and the creation of public policies in conservation and the management of the protected areas where I was working.

Being in Germany was also a challenge, having to do my PhD in English while trying to learn German for daily activities. I had lived in Germany before, but it was the first time that I felt the need to settle down in Germany and make it my home. This is likely a common situation for PhD researchers: the PhD period is longer than a master's and doing it in a foreign country adds a personal challenge to the professional one that is pursuing a PhD.

Among the many obstacles, both private and professional, being a scholarship holder (for the PhD I had a Brazilian scholarship) in a landscape where a lot of PhD researchers are already employees (have a "regular job position", with work-related rights, like employment benefits) was very frustrating. It is hard to try to perform similarly in an environment with so many different work arrangements and funding for the research and for training.

Fieldwork Challenges and Support Structures

Luckily, for the fieldwork itself, I found a good point of contact, my co-supervisor in Brazil, which helped me the best she could while I was there. A challenge was that I was not formally affiliated with the fieldwork institution, which made it almost impossible to try and obtain formal local support independently.

Dealing with bureaucratic hurdles, especially related to field activities, was difficult for me and added to the mental health toll, trying to fulfill German and Brazilian requirements, while getting little management support at either institution, despite an existing memorandum of understanding - MoU. That had an impact on the ethical aspects of the research. At the time, requirements were little known, and I got close to no advice on how to obtain the permits. In the end, I only managed to get the one to work in protected areas in Brazil but later found out that another one had just recently started to be required and almost no one knew about it and how to get it.

Overall, I found that the supervisory support during my PhD was deficient. At the time, there were few opportunities for mentorship, despite what I perceive to be growing efforts by universities to provide more and more support to ECRs. The support structures that do exist still feel discontinued and event-based, like a one-year mentorship, a six-month long peer-coaching program, with much dependency on peers and voluntary late career researchers to come and stay aboard such initiatives.

Having a formal training in Biology, I found little time and opportunity to learn about methods in the social sciences, both during the PhD and as a postdoc researcher. I have to rely on self-taught skills, online courses, short training and punctual support by peers and supervisors, etc., none of which are enough to fully and appropriately overcome the gap left by not having formal training in social sciences and humanities. As time and budget are limited for field activities, there is always - in my head, at least - a huge pressure to avoid failure. This fear of failure was powered by the lack of proper training and support, further increasing the mental burden of doing a PhD in a foreign country.

Regarding research fatigue, I would also add that people feel like there is no return or no concrete positive impacts of the research done. Many questions are asked, they feel like they are being heard,

but nothing changes. There is a "conflation" with surveys conducted by government authorities. I had the chance to approach this topic, albeit marginally, in a paper published shortly after my PhD (Borges et al., 2021). In this work, local perceptions of spatial management indicated both challenges and opportunities for effective zoning of sustainable-use protected areas in Brazil. I believe these pitfalls, and more legitimate knowledge co-production, could have been achieved had I received better support, especially in terms of ethics and the necessary permits and processes involved. It is not a silver-bullet, but paying special attention to ethics can entail better planning, including more robust inclusion and collaboration with local actors. Even if much of the planning faces real-life challenges, having contingency plans and constant adaptation strategies can ensure that inclusion and collaboration are permanently revisited and confirmed.

A need for structural change exists in terms of how academic production is evaluated, as transdisciplinary research encompasses other materials such as policy briefs, awareness raising material, besides only peer-reviewed publications. My CV seems weak when this type of production is not recognized, and one might need to sacrifice this type of material to try and focus on science's most valuable currency: peer-reviewed publications.

Case 3: Between the great expectations of interdisciplinary research and the reality of external limitations

I started my PhD in October 2021, thrilled by the prospect of conducting interdisciplinary work, incorporating ecology and social science. I had previously done a bachelor's in International Development, followed by a master's in Sustainable Resource Management, during which I focused mostly on forestry and soil science. The PhD, embedded in a large blue carbon-focused project, was therefore an excellent opportunity to bring together my social science and natural science backgrounds, applying them to the topic of mangrove forest restoration in Colombia and Malaysia. Initially, the idea behind my researcher position was to bridge the disciplines and work across the project's different work packages. In reality, I ended up turning towards qualitative social science research because the project I worked within was already heavily focusing on natural sciences, specifically ecology, and less on social science questions.

It soon became apparent that being positioned between disciplines without full anchoring in either was not the advantage I thought it would be: despite my understanding of both disciplines, I did not feel that I was an expert in either. I was rather lost when it came to defining my research aims and questions (within the structure and objectives of the project), and preparing for fieldwork. I found myself in a predominantly ecological research environment, with limited access to social science mentorship or peer support, further complicated by the Covid19 pandemic. Available PhD trainings largely reflected natural science priorities, offering little guidance on qualitative or interdisciplinary methods. I attempted to reach out to marine social scientists working in my institute, but in a high-pressure academic environment, seeking additional support often felt difficult to justify. Further along the PhD process, I was faced with the very disciplinary structure of the university I was affiliated with. I ultimately had to change the faculty I had planned to register to, from biology to geography, which also meant a change in supervision half-way through my research contract.

Early on, I grappled with my legitimacy to be conducting qualitative research in two Global South countries (Malaysia and Colombia) as a European researcher based in a Western European

institution, neither fluent in Spanish nor Malay. During my first field trips to Malaysia and Colombia, I was the only researcher conducting social science research in a team of around ten people. I felt responsible for managing the expectations of participants and at times project partners, knowing that the project had a short funding time and was primarily focused on gathering data, rather than setting up a mangrove restoration initiative. Back in Europe, I witnessed a lot of enthusiasm for "stakeholder engagement" and repeatedly heard about the importance of involving local communities in scientific projects, during various webinars, workshops, and conferences. Yet, in my experience, social science contributions were often framed in terms of their utility to natural science objectives rather than as valuable in their own right. This reflects a broader pattern in which the social sciences are undervalued or instrumentalized within marine research.

While conducting interviews with local community members, I had repeatedly heard complaints about scientists coming in, getting information or taking samples, and disappearing, never to be seen again. I too became one of those scientists. It took two years, after returning to Europe from my last field trips, to analyse all the data and write up my thesis. By then, the first phase of the project had ended, and so had my contract. I was in a strange situation, remaining in my institute as a guest researcher so I could keep my desk and laptop, and working everyday, while being officially unemployed. Though research contracts for PhD positions are most of the time 3 years long in my Western European institute, carrying out this type of qualitative research, which includes traveling for extended periods of time, is more time-consuming. In addition, striving for interdisciplinarity as an early career researcher also takes more time. I focused on completing my thesis as fast as I could, and any additional trips became unrealistic for me. I experienced this as falling short of my own ethical aspirations for the research process. I also questioned why this felt like my burden, while colleagues working with sediment and water samples did not feel the same responsibility to feedback their findings to local community members.

Reflecting on my experience, I see how the broader undervaluation of the social sciences, combined with structural constraints faced by PhD researchers – even in relatively privileged contexts – can contribute to more extractive forms of research.

Case 4: Navigating fieldwork and colonial continuities as a part-time PhD

My PhD is not embedded in a funded position or scholarship. I am affiliated with a university and a research institute in different places in a Western European country and live in the location of the institute. The choice to focus my PhD work on coastal Tanzania arose from my previous research experience there, as well as long-standing relationships between the institute and local partners. Despite the lack of funding, I was motivated by the prospect of working with researchers that I knew and appreciated. Since registering the PhD, I developed three unsuccessful scholarship proposals. In the meantime, I went through several short-term contracts and university teaching engagements while working side jobs in care and service sectors. Eventually, I secured a position at the research institute that also aligns with my research and settled to pursue the PhD in my spare time.

In my PhD project, I aim to explore discursive power dynamics, institutional change, and social equity in coastal governance. I consider myself a marine social scientist with an interdisciplinary background in intercultural relations, behavioral studies, and environmental governance. For my current research, I draw on institutional and critical social theories. Field visits, observations, and

interviews with local actors are crucial for me to develop a nuanced understanding of governance contexts and relationships. However, I was initially restricted by a lack of funding, work obligations, and the pandemic and felt stuck in trying to develop my research approach around these limitations. Two years into the PhD, a conference with great relevance to my research took place in Kenya. This felt like a "now-or-never" moment and I decided to quit my previous job and combine the conference visit with a three-months scoping field stay in Zanzibar, Tanzania. Apart from a small travel grant, this trip was mostly self-financed (supported by a private loan) and came at the expense of not qualifying for unemployment benefits in Germany. During this time, I conducted informal conversations and exploratory interviews to get a better sense of the local context, to further refine my research questions and approach. Still developing my rudimentary Kiswahili skills and aware of research fatigue, I did not directly engage with local fishers and their communities at the time and instead talked to actors in marine conservation, research, tourism, local organizations, and administration. Financial constraints and working on my third (unsuccessful) scholarship application during the field stay further limited my capacities for on-site engagement.

Tanzania is a country with a colonial history that continues to shape the present. Economic, political, and cultural repercussions of the brutal German and British colonial regimes remain palpable in modern-day resource conflict and governance dynamics. Persistent hierarchies, e.g. unequal access to capital, land ownership, natural resources, and social and political capital, often benefit a white/wealthy minority. Beyond profiting from the professional networks of local researchers and their support in obtaining research permits, I enjoy various privileges as a white researcher conducting fieldwork in this context. I am generally treated as a valued guest or even an authority figure, and met with respect, politeness, and hospitality (as opposed to how people from tropical countries are often treated in Europe). My whiteness and association with Western European academic and research organizations facilitate my access to local authority figures, such as senior researchers and high-level officials. Even with few financial resources (by Western European standards), I am able to live in comfort and at a much higher standard than the average local population.

While I try my best to acknowledge and reflect my positionality, I have limited means to create local benefits and to meaningfully foster equal collaborations and partnerships. Though I can offer co-authorship and peer review to local partners, I don't have sufficient time, money, or seniority to provide supervision, courses, or stipends to local ECRs (see, for example, Tilley & Kalina, 2021). Because of this, I feel additional pressure and guilt about progressing slowly with my PhD project, probably not meeting expectations of supervisors, partners, and local actors I have engaged with. Since my scoping trip in 2023, I returned to the region for a regional conference in Kenya and a subsequent short visit to mainland Tanzania but have not yet been able to return to Zanzibar to conduct further fieldwork or to share and discuss intermediate results with the local actors I engaged with. This also makes me complicit in parachute science, despite better intentions.

My situation feels like a mix of privilege and precarity. As a white, cis, able-bodied, middle-class woman living in my birth country in Western Europe, I face relatively little discrimination, few barriers to make enough money for a living, and never have to worry about my visa or citizen status (as opposed to many of my friends and colleagues). Even without funding, I have been able to draw on my position as a university student and research institute affiliate and related benefits and support systems, including access to workspaces and literature, professional networks, training

opportunities, publisher agreements, and small grants for fieldwork and conferences. But working part-time also means limited capacities to focus on my research and a constant state of financial insecurity. This makes fieldwork planning difficult, especially longer stays that would allow for deeper understanding and more meaningful engagement with local actors. While conducting an exploratory scoping trip was a privilege to begin with, it also came at the risk of not having another opportunity for a longer stay, as many travel support grants are only available in early phases of the PhD.

After identifying potential synergies with another project at my workplace, I am currently trying to figure out ways to make a contribution there and thus realize another field trip, while also advancing work on my PhD and fulfilling the responsibilities of my paid job. Thereby, I also hope to create new opportunities to return to local actors and collaborators, to listen, share, and co-create as initially intended.

Case 5: Facilitating South-South exchange and collaboration as an ECR

Over the past decade, a growing global movement, particularly from scholars and practitioners based in the Global South, has questioned extractive research practices commonly described as "parachute science". These dialogues have influenced (or forced) scientists and institutions in the Global North to reflect on their positionality, responsibilities, and modes of engagement in international research. Coming from India, while being institutionally based in western Europe, I navigate these tensions as an ECR in my everyday work. My research in the last five years has focused on social-ecological systems and transdisciplinary research in the tropical coasts. While the empirical contexts of my work are firmly rooted in the tropical coasts, much of the research planning, conceptualization, and decision making is institutionally based in Europe. Like many ECRs, a pre-doctoral researcher in my case, I am regularly met with the questions of how can one engage ethically with international research sites? At what point do well meant scientific projects and institutions run into the risk of parachute science? Especially in historically marginalised spaces in the Global South.

My academic journey into interdisciplinarity began with an Erasmus Mundus Joint Master's Degree (EMJMD) coordinated by 15 international universities across the globe. Studying during the COVID-19 pandemic (2020-2022), I lived and studied across Belgium, Italy, and Sri Lanka, ultimately conducting my master's thesis in Sri Lanka. Beyond disciplinary training, the programme fostered intercultural exchange and peer networks among ECRs from diverse geographical backgrounds. These networks, largely composed of Global South and Global South-connected researchers have formed the basis for my mutual learning and peer support then as a student and now as an ECR.

My subsequent work at a research institute in Germany further strengthened this perspective. After my graduation, I was selected for an Erasmus+ traineeship funded for which I moved to Germany. As an international research institute hosting scholars from across regions and disciplines, my work environment provided opportunities for me to bring my own regional (South Asia) expertise, networks, and research priorities into collaborative projects in Bangladesh and Malaysia.

As a Knowledge Exchange Officer within an international research project that aimed to co-design mangrove re-establishment in tropical coasts, I was tasked with planning and organising stakeholder engagement and knowledge exchange in Kuala Terengganu, Malaysia. With a familiarity of the mangrove research landscape in Malaysia due to my international master's program, I was quickly

able to leverage the EMJMD network there. The network of experts working in both academic institutions and non-governmental organisations helped me connect with other stakeholders relevant to our work and get their expert opinion and input in the initial planning phase of my work. These initial exchanges also allowed us to identify gaps in our objectives and refine our methodologies. More importantly, an online pre-exchange that focused on listening to the local collaborators and experts enabled us to learn about the past and present work in the region carried by local scientists and to not reproduce work that has already been done or planned. Additionally, during the engagements in the field we carried out collaborative stakeholder mapping exercises to identify most of the actors involved in mangrove management and invite many of them for a multi-stakeholder workshop to discuss the prospects and challenges of mangrove expansion in the region. This helped the project to be involved in a more inclusive knowledge co-production event that included both social and natural scientists along with local citizen collectives and some governmental officers. Furthermore, the priorities of local stakeholders in relation to mangrove management were also identified. In a nutshell, many stakeholders were strong to voice out that there is no space and need for mangrove expansion in the region and rather focus should be on protecting existing mangroves, and other ecosystems in the wetland complex.

In another project in Bangladesh, I led a study of local discourses of blue growth infrastructure, particularly a coal power plant and deep seaport, on a coastal island and analysed the justice concerns among the discourses. This work largely done in collaboration with ERCs in Bangladesh allowed us to engage in deeper discussions on the regional socio-political dynamics of gender, caste, and religion, and how it links to the equity and justice dimensions of growth-oriented plans and developments in the South Asian region. Drawing on my experiences from similar energy infrastructure landscapes in the east coast of India, I was able to draw parallels between the locally rooted systemic inequalities that reproduce environmental and social injustices to the marginalized communities living in these spaces.

Reflecting on these experiences, I argue that South-South exchange and collaboration can serve as a critical mechanism for reducing the risks of parachute science in Global North-led or Global North-funded research. When researchers from the Global South are positioned not only as field-based contributors but as agenda-setters, collaborators, and knowledge brokers, international research can move toward more equitable forms of knowledge co-production. For ECRs, cosmopolitan and interdisciplinary institutions and training programmes offer valuable spaces to experiment with such approaches. My ECR experiences from Western Europe suggest that fostering sustained peer networks, recognising diverse forms of expertise, and supporting South-South collaboration can help shift tropical marine research away from extractive models and toward more inclusive, reflexive, and globally informed scientific practice. My argument for more South-South exchange and collaboration among ECRs comes from the experience of organising it while being based in the Global North. I wonder how such endeavours emerging directly from and within Global South-led projects, institutions, and forums would look like.

Case 6: <u>From expectation to adaptation: planning and implementing fieldwork in unfamiliar Arctic environment</u>

My PhD focused on assessing the impacts of Arctic permafrost erosion on nearshore planktonic foodwebs. As a Global South citizen, I was awarded a full scholarship to undertake the PhD programme in Germany. Having investigated the carbon storage potential in tropical seagrass meadows during my masters project, assessing the carbon dynamics in the Arctic coastline was complementary. However, getting into the new field of plankton science required more reading and familiarity. Additionally, the transition from the tropics to the Arctic marked a venture into a totally different ecosystem sparked with curiosity and anxiety.

The data collection process involved two land expeditions to the Canadian Arctic. As a PhD student, I conducted a literature gap analysis, and with the help of the supervisors formulated the research questions and experimental design on the interplay between terrestrial discharge and phytoplankton dynamics in permafrost coastal zone. Yet all this while, I only imagined what permafrost looked like, from pictures and videos. The logistical preparation was also demanding, but deeply formative. Occasionally, "figuring out" the transportation of equipment, the biological samples, and the chemicals, that were sometimes classified as "dangerous goods" was highly complex and exhausting. Moreover, importing and exporting the samples and chemicals to Canada and Germany (EU) at a time when the world was coping with the COVID 19 pandemic required rapid learning and decision making across multiple domains.

In the field, delays in ice melt made it difficult to access the nearshore zone making the sampling process more complex than anticipated. It required adjusting our field plans accordingly, including setting up an alternative experiment, based on reality, working with the local Inuvialuits who better understood the coastal weather dynamics and wave patterns. In addition to the scientific preparation, my participation in the expedition as a non EU-citizen required visa processing and other additional travel arrangements. Coupled with multiple applications for the sample transportation permits, the "other aspects" required a considerable amount of time and energy during the PhD process.

In general, this case highlights the gap between imagined or expected fieldwork planning and the realities of implementation. It also pinpoints the logistical and bureaucratic challenges, combined with the environmental unfamiliarity that most ECRs undergo during and around fieldwork. The scientific and residency related paper work is crucial for successful implementation of the PhD process. They might be more involving especially for foreign researchers and students, yet they are usually not included in the research plan. Additionally, while a lot of time is utilized in these complementary activities, it is sometimes difficult to quantify their contribution to scientific productivity.

Case 7: Notes of successful fieldwork journeys

The execution of fieldwork constitutes an essential part of my professional activities, a practice that has been ongoing since the early stages of my career which began in Brazil and continued in Germany. My experience encompasses fieldwork in natural science, with a focus on the geochemistry of coastal and open ocean systems including those in the southern Atlantic Ocean, the North Sea, the Baltic Sea and the Indian Ocean, and in countries such as Germany, Poland, Brazil and India. And in many cases on an interdisciplinary approach. This experience has enabled me to confidently claim that fieldwork plays a substantial role in advancing marine science. Data collection

entails a responsibility as the data may be used in the description of environmental processes, application in models to simulate different environmental scenarios, and potentially assist in decision-making process within governance frameworks.

Fieldwork always involved a lot of activity, starting with the sampling strategy, which was usually discussed at several preliminary meetings with the project team. Here supervision was fundamental, wherein my role in the fieldwork and the sampling method was defined. Next, it was time to prepare and pack all the necessary instruments and consumables for the fieldwork and transport them to the study site. Several challenges appeared, such as what could be carried on which means of transport (e.g. airplanes and vessels), the costs involved in transporting heavy instruments or dangerous goods, and what could be carried to the country where work was planned. After the fieldwork, the same questions arose: how could the samples (usually water and sediments) be carried back to the institute and what permissions and transport methods were required to preserve the summed up samples. Here the affiliated and collaborators institutes, specially the host institute, were of great importance in providing the equipment and training, the management of the transportation and storage of the collected samples, and the acquisition of permissions, such as import/export of samples and the customs clearance.

During the fieldwork, adaptability to new environments was required, this sometimes meant changing climate zones, or staying on a vessel in good/bad sea conditions for several weeks. Moreover, it was often that the execution of the work may not align with the initial plan due to various circumstances, including accessibility to the field site, weather conditions, lack of experience, wrong equipment or problems with the adaptability. Working in different systems usually required the decision of which instrument/method can be applied, and in many cases, it has failed, which, of course, was frustrating. In this situation, the decision-making process was important in order to adjust and establish a new strategy based on the local context to be able to get the required measurements or samples.

It is worth mentioning that a common practice that facilitated the fieldwork was collaboration. It has always been of significant importance to have experts in the field on board, and in the case of interdisciplinary work, to have researchers with different areas of expertise. Working in a new environment is most of the time challenging and required comprehensive literature research and studies before and this step was smoothed by the exchange with collaborators already working/knowing in the area, ensuring a more realistic and advanced approach to the project. In most cases, this collaboration already existed at a personal (e.g. supervisor) or institute level before even the project started. Usually, the fieldwork was teamwork, which had many positive outcomes for me. Besides exchanging knowledge in the field, most of the network I have built so far started during those fieldworks.

One particular situation that is addressed in this article is that of projects being developed in a different country to the affiliated institute. In this particular context, the effective execution of fieldwork depended on the collaboration with local research institutes. The local research partners are the experts on the region and therefore are aware of the limitations and the possibilities of conducting fieldwork. Additionally, it was my experience that local institute partners provided considerable assistance in the acquisition of the necessary permissions and documentation for conducting the fieldwork as well as the transport of samples. In the case of a visa, the local institute was generally responsible for providing the necessary documentation. It is therefore evident that the

quality of the collaboration was of significant importance. It was essential that the collaboration is maintained at a trusted level, as there must be trust in the activities carried out between the involved researchers and institutes. Commitment to field activities, and post field measurements, acquisition of permits, adherence to site regulations, management of funding, and workload are some examples of behavior expected during the fieldwork.

Activities after the fieldwork are also important to point out which involve the discussion of the data and the inclusion of the involved researchers in the project in the planning of publication. The publication of the findings was always a delicate topic, as it was the product for which researchers and institutes would be evaluated, and in many cases, it was also the requirement for funding justification. In this regard, the field expert usually initiates the publication on their topic, and it is important to map the involved researchers who worked in the field on the topic of the manuscript to share the planned manuscript and the required data in early stages. Working together on publications meant that collaboration continued. This usually took a few months to start and sometimes even a few years to complete. When the main activities of the project were finished the good collaboration relationship continued, and expecting a more connected work in the next funding or project opportunity.