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Dear Pathways enthusiast,

Caught in the urgency of the global challenges we are facing, we are compelled to act fast. So fast, in fact, that key aspects of how and why we act can become unclear, blurred by this urgency. Sustainability research is no exception.

The term pathways for sustainability conveys the notion of a transformative journey. This journey, like any journey, implies movement and direction. When wanting to act fast, it is easy to forget that movement and direction only make sense in light of their counterparts: pauses and situatedness. Movement only becomes manifest following pauses, and direction is only meaningful in relation to where we stand. The Pathways Initiative therefore aims to create a space where we can pause and ask ourselves, as a community, "where are we exactly?", "where should we go next?", and "how can we get there?". Addressing these questions will only reinforce our capacity to continue the transformative journey with drive and confidence.

The Pathways Initiative provides a space where we can reflect on concepts and theories of change, and discuss the practical implications of sustainability science and transdisciplinarity for research practices. In doing so, the initiative aims to develop and support agenda setting, synthesis and capacity building activities around pathways for sustainability. Finally, through this Initiative, we look forward to working together with all of you, promoting the learning, research, and work being done by the Future Earth community in support of societal transformations towards sustainability.

Welcome to the Pathways Initiative.

The Pathways Initiative Steering group
Ariane de Bremond (Gobal Land Programme) / Cornelia Krug (bioDISCOVERY) / Flurina Schneider (Institute for Social-Ecological Research) / Odilwe Selomane (Programme on Ecosystem Change and Society) / Mark Stafford Smith (Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation) / Davnah Urbach (Global Mountain Biodiversity Assessment) / Cosma Caze / "Thabo Dikgale" / Ria Lambino / Gilles Murcianiak / Sandrine Paillard / Judi Ungweni
Future Earth Secretariat

To learn more about the Pathways initiative, please visit our [website](#).



News and Events



The Pathways Forum is a bi-monthly online event where experts get a chance to critically reflect and exchange on the conceptual and practical implications of doing sustainability research and engaging in transdisciplinarity.

This inaugural Forum will be an introductory self-reflection on three dimensions of sustainability research: (1) how to bridge the gap between global challenges and local initiatives through a pathways approach, (2) how to engage in collaborative research in multicultural and multidisciplinary contexts, and (3) how the normative underpinnings of sustainability research influence the way research is done and valued.

[Register for this event](#)



A virtual 'bazaar' event for researchers and other participants in sustainability initiatives interested in transdisciplinary methods.

This online methods 'bazaar' will create a space for early career researchers from diverse countries and contexts to share experiences and learn from case studies of transdisciplinary research in sustainability. Building on contributions from participants, the event will be an opportunity to reflect on ways of using methods, practices, actions, and associated skills in sustainability and transdisciplinary research and practice. In celebrating and sharing experiences, the event aims to foster connections between early career researchers and practitioners involved in sustainability research across different regions of the world.

This event is part of the STEPS Centre's [Methods theme](#).

[Register for this event](#)

Opportunities

Funding call : Horizon Europe Framework Programme 2021-2022

[Developing nature-based therapy for health and well-being](#)

Timeline: Two-stage with opening 28 October 2021, closing 15 February 2022 and 6 September 2022

Research & Innovation will support the development of nature-based therapy to help communities turn the ecological transition into opportunities for good health and well-being, increased resilience, and positive long-term prospects such as the creation of green jobs.

[Assessing the socio-politics of nature-based solutions for more inclusive and resilient communities](#)

Timeline: one-stage with opening 28 October 2021, closing 15 February 2022

Research & Innovation will contribute to develop rural, coastal and urban areas in a sustainable, balanced and inclusive manner thanks to the deployment of nature-based solutions (NBS) and to a better understanding of the environmental, socio-economic, behavioural and cultural drivers of change.

[Assessing the nexus of extraction, production, consumption, trade and behaviour patterns and of climate change action on biodiversity in the context of transformative change](#)

Timeline: one-stage with opening 28 October 2021, closing 15 February 2022

In line with the EU biodiversity strategy, a successful proposal must develop knowledge and tools to understand the role of transformative change for biodiversity policy making, address the indirect drivers of biodiversity loss, and initiate, accelerate and upscale biodiversity-relevant transformative changes in our society.

Funding call : Biodiversa

[Call of the European Biodiversity Partnership on "Supporting the protection of biodiversity and ecosystems across land and sea"](#)

Timeline: Two-stage with opening October 2021, pre-proposals in November 2021, and deadline for full proposals in April 2022

The call will cover three non-exclusive themes: "Knowledge for identifying priority conservation areas, establishing effective and resilient ecological networks, enhancing species-based protection, and preserving genetic diversity"; "Multiple benefits and costs of biodiversity and ecosystem protection: synergies and trade-offs"; and "Effective management and equitable governance to deliver bold conservation outcome".

Call for papers : special issue of Sustainability on "Transformations for a Sustainable Future"

What is 'transformation'? Is it different from 'resilience', or 'sustainable development'? How are they related? What exactly will these transformations require? Will they vary according to country or geographic region? How should they be operationalized? Which stakeholders and partnerships will be critical and why? What are the barriers? Are there limits? What opportunities exist or can be created?

This Special Issue of *Sustainability* will feature research articles, reviews, and case studies that answer these questions from various theoretical, methodological, conceptual, and geographic perspectives.

Deadline for Submissions: 31 December 2021

[Learn more about the call](#)

Pre-announcement of a call for communication products on Pathways for Sustainability

As part of the Science-based Pathways for Sustainability initiative, the Future Earth Secretariat will issue a call for communication products by the end of 2021. The goal of this grant is to promote important scientific works on pathways for sustainability at any geographical scale through suitable quality publications and other types of communication products. The grant will support the development of publications and communication products targeted at decision makers, practitioners, or more broadly, interested citizens. The call for proposals will be open for a 1-year period. The call text and the date for the first selection of awardees will be communicated in the next Pathways Newsletter.

Spotlight



Human-nature connectedness as a leverage point for sustainability transformation

Special issue based on the great success of the Leverage Points 2019 conference at Leuphana University in Lüneburg, particular on its theme of human-nature connectedness. The connection between humans and their surrounding nature has been underlined over the past decade, as strengthening this connection may simultaneously increase human well-being and ecological sustainability. Humans constantly interact with their surrounding nature. Through these human-nature interactions a relation is formed, which can be seen as one realm of leverage. In this realm, targeting the most effective leverage points has a high potential to transform our world into a more sustainable state. The authors of the article collection, which is the result of the Special Issue 'Human-nature connectedness as a leverage point for sustainability transformation' present their findings on what some of these leverage points could be.

[Read the special issue](#)

News from the Belmont Forum Pathways CRA

13 research networks have been funded under the Belmont Forum Collaborative Research Action (CRA) on Pathways for Sustainability. The funded networks seek to assess the positive and negative inter-linkages between the economy, technology, institutions with the environment, climate, biodiversity, and human well-being to understand potential pathways to a sustainable world. A critical focus of these networks is the co-production of knowledge and solutions using a transdisciplinary approach with deep engagement of societal stakeholders to ensure ownership of research outcomes, relevance to decision-makers, social acceptance, and empowerment.

In later issues of the newsletter, this section will be dedicated to informing you about the networks' projects.

[Learn more about the funded networks.](#)



Publications

Featured Publications

[From planetary to societal boundaries: an argument for collectively defined self-limitation \(2021, Sustainability: Science, Practice and Policy\)](#)

The planetary boundaries concept has profoundly changed the vocabulary and representation of global environmental issues. We bring a critical social science perspective to this framework through the notion of societal boundaries and aim to provide a more nuanced understanding of the social nature of thresholds. [...] While formulating societal boundaries implies a controversial process - based on normative judgments, ethical concerns, and socio-political struggles - it has the potential to offer guidelines for a just, social-ecological transformation. Collective autonomy and the politics of self-limitation are key elements of societal boundaries and are linked to important proposals and pluriverse experiences to integrate well-being and boundaries. The role of the state and propositions for radical alternative approaches to well-being have particular importance. [...] Toward the aim of defining boundaries through transdisciplinary and democratic processes, we seek to open a dialogue on these issues.

[Read the paper](#)

[Hot topics in governance for forests and trees : Towards a \(just\) transformative research agenda \(2021, Forest Policy and Economics\)](#)

We are living in a time of crisis on planet Earth. Urgent calls for transformational change are getting louder. Technical solutions have an important role to play in addressing pressing global challenges, but alone they are not enough. After all, who decides what kind of transformation is needed, of what, and for whom? What principles guide those decisions, and how are decision-makers held accountable? This commentary article argues that these governance questions are central in any solution, in order to simultaneously address the planetary crises of forest and biodiversity loss and degradation and growing inequality. To this end, we examine governance in forests and around trees, in landscapes and on farms, through the lens of power and social justice. For applied research aimed at actionable solutions to these global problems, we propose a governance research agenda for the next decade that is both transformative and just.

[Read the paper](#)

Other Publications

[Realising potentials for arts-based sustainability science \(2021, Sustainability Science\)](#)

[Read the paper here](#)

[How norms, needs, and power in science obstruct transformations towards sustainability \(2021, Environmental Research Letters\)](#)

[Read the paper here](#)

Do not hesitate to send us your inputs for the next Pathways Newsletter at cosma.caze@futureearth.org

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