



Transformations to Sustainability Programme

The International Social Science Council (ISSC) is pleased to announce the launch of a new global research funding programme on transformations to sustainability.

The Transformations to Sustainability Programme will promote research on the fundamental and innovative processes of social transformations needed to secure effective, equitable and durable solutions to some of today's most urgent challenges of global change and sustainability. They include, for example, climate change, biodiversity loss, water and food security, energy production and consumption, rapid urbanisation and their complex interactions with persistent poverty, growing inequalities, and social discontent and are more urgent in developing countries.

The transformations programme will support researchers from the social, behavioural and economic sciences to take the lead in developing international Transformative Knowledge Networks that will:

- undertake research on the needs and opportunities for social transformation in concrete contexts of application
- bring together researchers from different disciplines and fields of science, as well as different regions of the world
- engage stakeholders in the co-design and co-production of solutions-oriented knowledge and the development of networks of mutual learning, and
- build capacity for international research collaboration and support early career social scientists.

This initiative is intended as a major contribution to the work of Future Earth¹, a global research platform that provides knowledge and support to accelerate transformations to a sustainable world. Future Earth is co-sponsored by the members of the international Science and Technology Alliance for Global Sustainability².



¹For further information: www.futureearth.info

² Membership of the Alliance includes the ISSC, the International Council for Science (ICSU), the Belmont Forum and International Group of Funding Agencies for Global Change Research, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations University (UNU) and the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO). For further information: www.stalliance.org

Calls for Proposals

The Transformations to Sustainability Programme will issue two calls for proposals in 2014

Preparatory call for seed funding

This call will be implemented by the ISSC and is intended to enable social science researchers and their knowledge partners to respond meaningfully to the programme's call for Transformative Knowledge Network proposals. Up to 30 proposals for seed funding will be supported.

Issue of call	31 March 2014
Submission deadline	31 May 2014
Funding decision	30 June 2014

Open call for proposals for Transformative Knowledge Networks

The ISSC anticipates implementing this call in partnership with the Belmont Forum³. A minimum of three Transformative Knowledge Networks will be funded.

Issue of call	End of October 2014
Submission deadline	Mid-January 2015
Funding decision	End of April 2015

The programme description, set out in pages 7 to 14 of this document, provides a basis for both calls and should be read carefully by all applicants

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³ The Belmont Forum is a high level group of the world's major and emerging funders of global environmental change research. For further information: www.igfagcr.org/index.php/belmont-forum

Call for Seed Funding

Submission deadline: 18:00 (Central European Time) on 31 May 2014

1. What is the aim of the call?

The Transformations to Sustainability Programme has been set up to support the development of a series of Transformative Knowledge Networks that will conduct research on social transformations related to concrete challenges of global change and sustainability. The research, which will be led by social (including behavioural and economic)⁴ scientists, is expected to be international, integrated (bringing together different disciplines and fields of science, including the human, natural, engineering and medical sciences), solutions-oriented and transdisciplinary (meaningfully engaging societal stakeholders). A more detailed description of Transformative Knowledge Networks is presented in Section 4 of the programme description.

Seed funding will be provided to prepare researchers from all parts of the world to respond meaningfully to the call for Transformative Knowledge Network proposals that will be launched in October 2014. The seed funding is intended to allow social scientists to build necessary partnerships with colleagues in other disciplines and fields and other countries, to identify and establish contact with relevant societal stakeholders, and to engage them as knowledge partners in the co-design of proposals to develop Transformative Knowledge Networks.

Successful applicants for seed funding (see Section 2, below) will be expected to participate in a Transformative Knowledge Workshop to be held in Potsdam, Germany, from 9-11 September 2014. The purpose of this event will be to survey and discuss existing social science thinking about social transformations, encourage the exchange of ideas and possible partnership-building between those who have received seed funding, and help infuse relevant knowledge into the preparation of the full Transformative Knowledge Network proposals.

2. Who can apply and what are the other eligibility criteria?

The call for seed funding is open to individual social science researchers (from academic and other organisations that have a strong focus on research) from any part of the world.

Additional eligibility criteria:

- a) Applicants must have a PhD in the social sciences or at least five years full-time equivalent research experience.
- b) Applications must be completed in line with the application instructions outlined in Section 4 below, and must include all requested attachments.

⁴ All references to the social sciences should be understood as including the behavioural and economic sciences.

- c) The core description of the proposed work must not exceed five A4 pages (using 11 point font size, single spacing) in length, excluding required attachments.
- d) Applicants must indicate, in writing, their availability and commitment to participate in the Transformations Knowledge Workshop to be held in Potsdam, Germany, in September 2014 (see Section 1 above) or, in case of unavailability, to be represented at the workshop by a colleague who will contribute significantly to the proposed work.
- e) Applications must be written in English and emailed, in PDF format, to: transformations@worldsocialscience.org. Applications received after the deadline of 18:00 CET on 31 May 2014 will not be considered.

3. What is the grant period?

Successful applications for seed funding will be supported for a period of up to 6.5 months, from 1 July 2014 to 15 January 2015.

4. How much funding will be made available and what can it be used for?

The maximum amount of seed funding will be € 30.000,00 per successful proposal.

The following types of activities and associated expenses will be considered for support:

- a) Economy fare travel and accommodation for meetings with knowledge partners and field visits to potential research sites, communities, institutions that will be central to the proposed work.
- b) Workshops (e.g. scoping meetings, sandpits, action labs) with potential Transformative Knowledge Network participants or contributors, including researchers from other fields or countries, decision-makers, practitioners and other potential knowledge partners.
- c) Overhead costs, which should not exceed 15% of the total budget and may include a contribution towards administrative assistance.

To note: All applications should include the costs of the applicant attending the September 2014 Transformations Knowledge Workshop mentioned in Section 1 above. Such costs will include an economy return fare to Potsdam, Germany, as well as € 300,00 for three nights' accommodation.

5. How to apply and what should the application include?

The Transformations to Sustainability programme description (pages 7 to 14 below) provides a basis for the call for seed funding proposals.

Applicants are strongly advised to read the programme description, Section 4 in particular, which outlines the principles for the Transformative Knowledge Networks that the programme is intended to support.

Applications must be written in English and emailed, in PDF format, to:
transformations@worldsocialscience.org.

The application, which must not exceed five A4 pages (using 11 point font size, single spacing), must include the following:

- a) Proposal title.
- b) Applicant's details, including
 - a. Full name
 - b. Organisational affiliation and country
 - c. Full contact details
 - d. Nationality
- c) Clear, non-expert description of the transformation need or opportunity to be explored (including the identification of possible case studies) in a future Transformative Knowledge Network including the motivation for the significance of the global change and sustainability challenge or problem area to be addressed.
- d) Outline of the body of literature or school(s) of thought on transformative social change that might inform research in a future Transformative Knowledge Network.
- e) Outline of the applicant's understanding and experience of working with trans-disciplinary methodologies involving the co-design, co-production and co-dissemination of knowledge, as well as the motivation for the significance of such an approach in the proposed context of application.
- f) Indication of the countries and regions to be included in an eventual Transformative Knowledge Network proposal and description of the relevance of the proposed challenge or problem area in these countries.
- g) Indication of the other knowledge partners (academic and non-academic, specifying names (where possible), institutions and/or sectors) to be engaged in each case; if relevant, an indication of the nature and extent of existing working relations with these partners should be provided.
- h) Description of the strategy to be employed for purposes of engaging these partners in the co-design of a Transformative Knowledge Network proposal, including anticipated partnership opportunities and obstacles, and how to overcome the latter.
- i) Detailed description of proposed activities and a related work plan.
- j) Budget, with clear indication of budget categories and related expenses.

In addition to the above five-page document, the application must include as attachments:

- A short (maximum five pages) CV of the applicant, including a list of the five most relevant publications to the proposal.
- A written indication of availability and commitment to participate in the Transformations Knowledge Workshop in Germany in September 2014 (mentioned in Section 1 above) or, in case of unavailability, to be represented at the Workshop by a colleague who will be significantly contributing to the proposed work.

6. How will proposals for seed funding be selected and against which criteria will they be evaluated?

All proposals will be submitted for international scientific peer review and will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- Intellectual merit/scientific quality and innovativeness.
- Potential fit with the objectives of the Transformations to Sustainability Programme and principles for Transformative Knowledge Networks.
- Significance of the proposed challenge or problem area to the countries that the applicant proposes to include in an eventual Transformative Knowledge Network.
- Appropriateness of the proposed approach to interdisciplinarity and the co-design with societal stakeholders of a Transformative Knowledge Network proposal.
- Expertise and experience of the applicant in managing (or relevant to) inter- and transdisciplinary research collaborations.
- Relevance of the targeted knowledge partners, including societal stakeholders, to the proposed challenge or problem area.
- Relevance and feasibility of the work plan and appropriateness of the budget.

The final selection of proposals will be undertaken by the programme's Steering Committee (see Section 5 of the programme description).

7. What will the grant agreement require of successful applicants?

Successful applicants will be required to sign a standard grant agreement with the ISSC. The ISSC will expect the grant to be administered by the university or other organisation at which the applicant is employed or operates under.

The grant agreement will include terms and conditions related to:

- The grant start and termination date.
- The grant payment schedule.
- Substantive and financial reporting requirements and associated timeframes.
- Grant reconciliation and possible financial auditing requirements.

8. Who to contact if you have any questions?

The Transformations to Sustainability Programme Management Team can be contacted via:

Email transformations@worldsocialscience.org
Telephone +33 (0)1 45 68 48 60



Programme Description

1. Building a global knowledge trust on social transformation

Research on global change and sustainability increasingly goes hand-in-hand with calls for profound social change – complex processes of social transformation that are multi-dimensional, involve multiple actors, occur at different rates and scales, and can be deliberate or unplanned. What do we know about these processes in different, concrete contexts of application – in particular places that face converging problems of, for example, climate change, environmental degradation, poverty, social conflict, corruption and inequality? What changes at individual, organisational, cultural and systemic levels would be regarded as transformative in these situations and how could they be realised in ways that are both socially acceptable and politically feasible? What novel visions for change exist, whose visions count, and how do powerful interests influence unfolding trajectories of change? What are possible levers of change and who are potential change agents? What types of decision-making processes are required to foster deliberate and democratic processes of transformation, and what is the role of science in such processes?

The Transformations to Sustainability Programme seeks to address these types of questions by supporting research on social transformations in relation to urgent problems of global change and sustainability in specific social-ecological settings. The vision driving this initiative is of societies all over the world having access to a global knowledge trust on social transformation that can inform the development of effective, durable and equitable solutions to such problems.

2. Programme objectives and added value

The Transformations to Sustainability Programme aims to build scientific understanding of transformative social change in the face of global change and sustainability. More specifically, the programme seeks to:

- Increase the social science contributions necessary to craft more effective, durable and equitable solutions to the problems of global change and sustainability.
- Increase the use of such knowledge by policy makers, practitioners, the private sector, citizens and activists.

In addition to meeting these objectives, the programme intends to:

- Mobilise a broader community of social scientists to become involved in solutions-oriented research for global sustainability, and to make use of the best existing social science knowledge on social change and transformation for this purpose.
- Help to fully integrate them into important international initiatives such as Future Earth, and infuse knowledge on social transformation into other Future Earth and Belmont Forum-supported projects.
- Develop and test new approaches to the co-design and co-production of solutions-oriented knowledge for sustainability.

- Provide a basis for the building of innovative, multi-stakeholder networks of knowledge dissemination and mutual learning for longer-term collaboration on processes of transformative change.

3. Programme design

The Transformations to Sustainability Programme has been designed to support the development of a series of international Transformative Knowledge Networks. Each Network will be supported for a period of three years.

In order to ensure that the work of the Transformative Knowledge Networks contributes to building the envisaged global knowledge trust on social transformation, the programme will bring network coordinators together on an annual basis. The annual Transformations Knowledge workshops will facilitate cross-network knowledge-sharing and development, stimulate theoretical and methodological reflection, widen knowledge outreach opportunities, build capacity in Transformative Knowledge Network leadership, and encourage joint publication on social transformations as well as the practice of transformative science.

4. Principles for Transformative Knowledge Networks

To qualify for support, Transformative Knowledge Networks should adhere to the following principles:

- *Social transformations to sustainability as a research focus:* Transformative Knowledge Networks will conduct internationally comparative research on processes of social transformation, building on the ISSC's 'Transformative Cornerstones of Social Science Research for Global Change'⁵ framework (see summary, Annex 1). In addition to the production of new knowledge, Transformative Knowledge Networks should explicitly seek to draw on the existing body of knowledge on processes of social transformation and change from a variety of social and human science disciplines.
- *Concrete contexts of application:* The research on social transformations should be conducted in relation to specific problems of global change and sustainability in specific social-ecological settings. Such problems include, for example, climate change, water and food security, biodiversity loss, energy production and consumption, waste management or urbanisation, and their complex interactions with unsustainable patterns of growth, persistent poverty, growing inequalities and social discontent. The identification of specific problems should be undertaken by researchers in close collaboration with relevant non-academic knowledge partners (including decision makers, practitioners, private sector representatives, non-governmental and civil society organisations, activist groups).

⁵Hackmann, H. and A. Lera St. Clair (2012), *Transformative Cornerstones of Social Science Research for Global Change*, International Social Science Council. www.worldsocialscience.org/documents/transformative-cornerstones.pdf

- *Transnational collaboration*: Transformative Knowledge Networks should involve research teams from at least three countries, covering at least two regions of the world and including at least one low- to middle-income country (see Annex 2 for list of countries included in this category).
- *Integrated research*: Transformative Knowledge Networks will be led by social science researchers (who will serve as Network Coordinators) from academic and other organisations that have a strong focus on research. They should support interdisciplinarity within the social sciences and – depending on the concrete problem focus – between the social sciences and researchers from other fields, including the human, natural, engineering and medical sciences. Particular emphasis should be placed on connecting global environmental change, poverty, and development research communities.
- *Transdisciplinary, solutions-oriented research*: Transformative Knowledge Networks should pursue the co-design, co-production and co-dissemination of knowledge in communities of practice involving academic and non-academic knowledge partners. Ongoing recording and analysis of knowledge processes and outcomes will be essential for reflexive learning within and across Transformative Knowledge Networks.
- *Capacity development*: Transformative Knowledge Networks should be co-coordinated in partnership with researchers from low- or middle-income countries. They should demonstrate direct benefits to early career social scientists who obtained their PhDs no more than ten years ago. The Transformative Knowledge Networks will also need to link with and strengthen relevant academic educational networks and outreach activities, which are particularly fragile in the developing countries.

5. The funding framework

The Transformations to Sustainability Programme is being supported by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) for an initial period of four years (2014-2017). With this support the ISSC will fund up to 30 *proposals for seed funding*, and at least *three Transformative Knowledge Networks*. The ISSC anticipates implementing the main call in October for Transformative Knowledge Network proposals in partnership with the Belmont Forum, and will seek financial support for additional Transformative Knowledge Networks from other donors.

Successful proposals for seed funding will each receive up to € 30.000,00 for a period of 6.5 months.

Selected Transformative Knowledge Networks will each receive up to € 300.000,00 per year over a three-year period.

The call for seed funding proposals is intended as a preparatory phase, to allow successful applicants to build necessary partnerships with colleagues in other disciplines and fields, as well as other countries, identify and establish contact with relevant societal stakeholders,

and engage them as knowledge partners in the co-design of proposals to develop a Transformative Knowledge Network.

It is important to note that the call for Transformative Knowledge Network proposals will be an open call, not restricted to the recipients of seed funding.

6. Programme governance

The Transformations to Sustainability programme will be governed by an international Steering Committee appointed by the ISSC. In addition to its responsibility for advising on strategy development, resource mobilisation, and providing oversight of programme management, the Steering Committee will be responsible for all decisions on the selection of proposals and the associated allocation of funds. These decisions will be based on the recommendations of groups of independent scientific reviewers.

The programme will be run by a management team led by the ISSC Secretariat in Paris.

Email

transformations@worldsocialscience.org

Telephone

+33 (0)1 45 68 48 60

ISSC website

www.worldsocialscience.org



Annex 1

Transformative Cornerstones of Social Science Research for Global Change

The ISSC's *Transformative Cornerstones* report provides a research framework for understanding climate and other environmental changes as social processes embedded in specific social systems. The framework provides tools to question and rethink the shape and course of those processes and systems through time. They are called transformative because answers to the questions raised in each cornerstone should inform actions that result in ethical and equitable transformations to sustainability.

Cornerstone 1: Historical and contextual complexity

The first cornerstone concerns the complexity of global change. Social science needs to understand the political economy of these processes, and how they relate to other social problems, including persistent poverty. The task here is to distinguish between the interconnected drivers of global change, and to clarify the interdependencies of people's vulnerabilities to these and other social processes, such as migration or conflict. In-depth historical analyses are needed to explain the complex trajectories that have led to today's unsustainable lifestyles and models of progress, and to draw lessons from earlier instances of transformative change. It is also important to understand the influence of context: to address how global change risks, impacts, perceptions, experiences and responses differ across the world, across social classes, gender, race or faith, and between personal or professional identities.

Cornerstone 2: Consequences

Identifying and mapping current and future threats from global environmental change and their impacts on people and communities is the work of the second cornerstone. It is about exposing the diverse realities of living with such change, and calls for a special focus on poor and vulnerable communities. Research on the consequences of environmental change advances our understanding of the lives of those affected by processes such as climate change, including their coping mechanisms, responses, innovations and limitations. It raises important questions about social boundaries and tipping points related to environmental pressures on human systems, economies and the social fabric of life. This cornerstone also requires study of the outcomes of policy solutions and technologies, and how both can be improved.

Cornerstone 3: Conditions and visions for change

This cornerstone is about social change: how it happens, at what levels and scales, and what directions it might take. The purpose is to understand what drives individual and collective change, including changing social practices. It identifies what kind of leadership and what other capacities are required for successful change to occur, while being absolutely clear about the limitations and democratic pitfalls of deliberate intervention. Another goal is to shed light on criteria for successful, transformative actions towards equitable sustainability at the local, community level, and on how to scale these up into transformative global thinking. Feasible visions for change matter, but so do the methods and procedures by which they are built and the ways in which global change and its consequences are framed. This cornerstone raises questions about different narratives of socially desirable change, lifestyles and alternative futures. It also addresses concerns about social engineering, and asks about the feasibility of participatory approaches to achieving alternative visions of the future. Building consensus in ways that include marginalised and non-scientific views is a key challenge.

Cornerstone 4: Interpretation and subjective sense making

This cornerstone confronts the values, beliefs, interests, worldviews, hopes, needs and desires that underlie people's experiences of and responses (or lack thereof) to global change. These in turn shape personal narratives and social discourses about the nature of the world and the environment, and so drive people's views on the necessity for a transformation to global sustainability. It challenges social scientists to make sense of the assumptions and blind spots that underlie choices and priorities. These assumptions can block awareness of what needs to change and keep systems deadlocked in inaction. This cornerstone raises questions about the nature and role of transformative learning, and investigates the reasons for indifference, scepticism and denialism in the face of potential cataclysms such as climate change.

Cornerstone 5: Responsibilities

The double injustice imposed by the effects of environmental change on already vulnerable populations and on those without a voice calls for urgent work on what it takes to foster global and intergenerational solidarity and justice. It cannot be assumed that all responses will be "just" interventions. This cornerstone foregrounds obligations, duties and responsibilities to poor and vulnerable people and to future generations, bringing these concerns into the legitimate space of scientific inquiry, policy and practice. It addresses methods, evaluation systems and policy mechanisms, and ensures ethical approaches in the development of new visions and the building of new social systems. It focuses an ethical lens on all interpretations of and responses to environmental change, be they of a technical, political, economic or discursive nature.

Cornerstone 6: Governance and decision making

Many of the policy processes related to environmental change are poorly understood. Social science knowledge is needed on how decisions are made in the face of uncertainty; what pathways are available for influencing decision making; what determines the success or failure of political agreements; and what drives political will. Knowledge is also needed of the possible effects of different ways of framing environmental change on policy makers and practitioners. Not all expert input has the same policy appeal or is given an equal hearing by those in power. It is important to understand the role of science in policy processes, to know what makes knowledge work, whose knowledge counts, and where the limits of expert knowledge lie. This cornerstone focuses on institutional design and reform, and on building structures to enable dialogue across competing interests, values and worldviews, under conditions of uncertainty.

Source: Hackmann, H. and A. Lera St. Clair (2012), *Transformative Cornerstones of Social Science Research for Global Change*, International Social Science Council.

www.worldsocialscience.org/documents/transformative-cornerstones.pdf

Annex 2

List of low- and middle-income countries to be included in Transformative Knowledge Networks

Low-income economies:

Afghanistan	Gambia, The	Myanmar
Bangladesh	Guinea	Nepal
Benin	Guinea-Bissau	Niger
Burkina Faso	Haiti	Rwanda
Burundi	Kenya	Sierra Leone
Cambodia	Korea, Dem Rep.	Somalia
Central African Republic	Kyrgyz Republic	South Sudan
Chad	Liberia	Tajikistan
Comoros	Madagascar	Tanzania
Congo, Dem. Rep	Malawi	Togo
Eritrea	Mali	Uganda
Ethiopia	Mozambique	Zimbabwe

Lower-middle-income economies:

Armenia	India	Samoa
Bhutan	Kiribati	São Tomé and Príncipe
Bolivia	Kosovo	Senegal
Cameroon	Lao PDR	Solomon Islands
Cabo Verde	Lesotho	Sri Lanka
Congo, Rep.	Mauritania	Sudan
Côte d'Ivoire	Micronesia, Fed. Sts.	Swaziland
Djibouti	Moldova	Syrian Arab Republic
Egypt, Arab Rep.	Mongolia	Timor-Leste
El Salvador	Morocco	Ukraine
Georgia	Nicaragua	Uzbekistan
Ghana	Nigeria	Vanuatu
Guatemala	Pakistan	Vietnam
Guyana	Papua New Guinea	West Bank and Gaza
Honduras	Paraguay	Yemen, Rep.
Indonesia	Philippines	Zambia

Upper-middle-income economies:

Angola	Fiji	Palau
Albania	Gabon	Panama
Algeria	Grenada	Peru
American Samoa	Hungary	Romania
Argentina	Iran, Islamic Rep.	Serbia
Azerbaijan	Iraq	Seychelles



Belarus	Jamaica	South Africa
Belize	Jordan	St. Lucia
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Kazakhstan	St. Vincent and the Grenadines
Botswana	Lebanon	Suriname
Brazil	Libya	Thailand
Bulgaria	Macedonia, FYR	Tonga
China	Malaysia	Tunisia
Colombia	Maldives	Turkey
Costa Rica	Marshall Islands	Turkmenistan
Cuba	Mauritius	Tuvalu
Dominica	Mexico	Venezuela, RB
Dominican Republic	Montenegro	
Ecuador	Namibia	

Source: [http://data.worldbank.org/about/country-classifications/country-and-lending-groups#Lower middle income](http://data.worldbank.org/about/country-classifications/country-and-lending-groups#Lower_middle_income)