

14th International Sustainability Transitions (IST) Conference 2023

Responsibility and reflexivity in transitions

Call for abstracts

Utrecht, The Netherlands

August 30th – September 1st, 2023

Early career researcher day August 29th

We are excited to launch the call for abstracts for the 14th annual International Sustainability Transitions conference. This year's conference theme is 'Responsibility and Reflexivity in Transitions'. As the first in-person conference in 3 years, this gathering constitutes a special and important moment of reflection for our community.

The multi-faceted challenges facing the global community necessitate a deep reflection on just sustainability transitions. Coming off the heels of the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the climate crisis, energy security and resource scarcity have become extraordinarily intertwined, affecting all aspects of life and all facets of sustainability transitions – from food accessibility to droughts to transportation – and ranging from the world's wealthiest countries to those hardest hit. However, these challenges may lead to competing priorities. While we see record deployment of solar and wind energy technologies, countries are also reactivating coal and a debate has been reinvigorated about the role of nuclear power in the energy mix. Community-supported agriculture and agroecology continue to grow whilst vast quantities of industrially produced grain are stimulated to supply basic global food needs. In this time of upheaval, we may indeed have an opportunity to make changes that were thus far locked out. Do we now go back to 'normal'? Do we make room for change? If so, how? How do we encourage and safeguard the time and space to critically reflect on deeply held assumptions about how our societies could or should function while being confronted with a sense of urgency?

This conference's theme encourages not just a reflection on such changes and the responsibility we must take to ensure that any transition is a just transition, but also on what the role of reflection actually is and could be in such debates. How can we better understand the responsibility of actor groups in transition processes? Which responsibilities do we ourselves have as a research community? How do we reflect on deeply held societal norms and practices within and outside of academia that stimulate or impede transitions?

Furthermore, responsibility and reflexivity are not only the purvey of the academic community, preaching from the so-called ivory tower. A responsible and reflexive transition pertains equally to civil society, the government, industry & business actors and many more. Hence, meaningful engagement remains critical. As academics, we see many new formats and techniques emerging to engage with practitioners and civil society, such as action research and knowledge co-production. Innovative approaches to education and interaction have emerged, for example, through the massive upscaling of digital platforms and use of game-based educational programs.

To reflect on these innovative approaches, there will be many interactive and engaging platforms for discussion in addition to classic full paper, speed-talk, dialog, plenary and poster sessions. First, we are introducing a debate format – led by leading scholars – into the conference to spark a reflection on contentious transitions' topics. Second, we propose to look into the future at a time of turbulence. What are the emerging trends, who is responsible, what are the built-in corrective mechanisms, what are the key tensions at play, how do we make these transitions a reality? To do so, there will be a variety of workshops designed in collaboration with Utrecht University's Urban Futures Studio to engage with techniques of imaginaries. Furthermore, we will be engaging with local and regional stakeholders to discuss how transitions are happening on the ground in the city and province of Utrecht.

HYBRID: We are making provisions to allow for online participation and envision that main events (keynotes, debates, etc.) will be streamed live. Online participants will present their work in dedicated online channels. It is unlikely that there will be full hybrid functionality for all sessions.

The call welcomes submissions to the conference theme or that engage with the core STRN research agenda:

1. Conference track – reflexivity and reflection in transitions
2. Understanding transitions – conceptual contributions to transition frameworks
3. Methodologies for transitions research
4. Governing transitions
5. Organizations and industries in transitions
6. Politics, power and policy in transitions
7. Movements, culture and civil society in transitions

8. Transitions in practice and everyday life
9. Geography of transitions
10. Ethical aspects of transitions: distribution, justice, poverty
11. Open track

Key dates

December 20th, 2022 – Abstract submission system opens

Friday, March 3rd, 2023 – Abstract submission deadline

End-April – Anticipated notification of abstract acceptance

End-April – Early bird registration opens

May 31st – Early bird registration deadline

May 31st – Regular registration opens

June 30th – Presenter registration deadline

End July – Full paper submission deadline

Early-August – Regular registration deadline

August 15th – Digital poster submission deadline

August 30th – September 1st, 2023 – Conference week

Session formats

Full paper sessions: 90-minute sessions for presentation and discussion of original research papers (typically 3-4 per session). Full paper submissions will be grouped by the organizers into themed sessions in accordance with the conference tracks. Authors are required to submit a draft of their full paper in advance of the conference.

Speed talks: 90-minute sessions for 6-7 speed talks (5-minute presentation, 5 minutes for Q&A), which can introduce new research ideas, data and analytical insights, and early-stage work to provide a basis for collective discussion. Like the full paper sessions, short paper submissions will be grouped by the organizers into themed sessions in accordance with the conference tracks. Submission of full papers is not required for speed talk sessions.

Dialog sessions: 90-minute sessions that aim to stimulate discussion and interaction around a particular thematic focus. These sessions are proposed by an external session organizer and chair with pre-agreed speakers. The session organizer should propose the precise format of the session. Full papers are not required for submission to this session.

Special sessions: 90-minute sessions for presentation of full research papers under a preordained topic. The format is similar to a full paper session, but a special session is proposed by an external session organizer with pre-agreed speakers. We suggest 3-4 pre-agreed speakers.

Like in a full paper session, authors are required to submit full research papers in advance of the conference.

Poster session: to facilitate an engaging poster session, posters will be visible throughout one full day of the conference in the general coffee and lunch area. Presenters will be expected to be available for discussion during one of the coffee breaks on the poster day. The posters will also be available to online participants. A full paper is not required for posters. Participants are expected to bring their own posters. We will provide poster stands and a digital copy of the poster will be included in the conference proceedings.

NOTE: you may indicate your preference for a session format, but please note that the organizers may allocate submissions to an alternative session format depending on the volume of submissions, and to ensure we have a viable and lively conference program. Any such reallocation will be clearly communicated in the decision letter.

Abstract submission requirements

Extended abstracts for all session formats should be submitted by **Friday, March 3rd, 2023**, through the [abstract submission system](#). All submissions need to clearly identify the most relevant conference track. Abstracts should describe the key research questions, theory, method, findings and implications. Abstracts should indicate the preferred session format. If you feel your abstract does not fit in any of the tracks, you may select the open track and enter a track title. We will accommodate open track requests as best as possible. Abstracts for full-paper, speed talks, dialog sessions and posters should be max. 500 words, excluding references.

Abstracts for dialog sessions should describe the thematic focus, the contributions of speakers, and explain how the session will be organized (e.g., how it will maximize audience participation). Please include brief biographies of authors and session organizers (max. 4 lines).

Proposals for special sessions should include: i) a maximum 500-word abstract (excluding references) for the session overall; and ii) a maximum 500-word abstract (excluding references) for each speaker. Please clearly indicate if there is a preference for an in-person or online format.

NOTE: there will be very limited hybrid functionality to facilitate interaction between in-person and online participants. Online sessions will be organized for the online audience.

Paper format guidelines

Full papers need to be uploaded by July 31st, 2023. Please stick to 5,000 – 10,000 words, including references, tables and figures. Manuscripts should be of very good quality, i.e., as if you would submit them to a peer-reviewed journal.

Although no (printed) conference proceedings will be published, we anticipate making a PDF version available to conference participants.

Review Process

Submissions will be reviewed based on the following criteria: novelty, quality and engagement with the conference theme and STRN research agenda. Outcomes will be communicated by late-April, 2023. Please note that the organizers may allocate submissions to an alternative session format or track depending on the number of submissions, and to ensure we have a viable and lively conference program. Any reallocation will be clearly communicated in the decision letter.

Newcomer & Early Career Session

The Newcomer & Early Career Researcher Session aims to connect early career researchers to the vibrant sustainability transitions community, and to explore complementarities with related research fields, perspectives and approaches. The event is organized by the Network of Early career researchers in Sustainability Transitions (NEST). Tune in to the [NEST webinar series](#), check out the [NEST website](#), follow NEST on Twitter [@transitionsnest](#) and email Transitionsnest@gmail.com

Financial Need Scholarship

The IST 2023 organizing committee is inviting applications for a limited number of grants (fully waived conference participation fee) for selected presenters and co-authors with limited resources. Applicants need to be affiliated with an academic institution / organization and demonstrate a need for financial support. Please note that the application needs to be granted by the organizing committee prior to conference registration, as conference fees that have already been paid cannot be refunded in this case. When submitting your application, please include a short (1-page) letter of motivation where you clearly indicate your institutional affiliation, engagement with the STRN community and explain the need for support. You may include a letter from your institution to support the request.

Communication and contact information

[Click here to submit your abstract](#)

For any questions, please email: IST2023@uu.nl

Website: www.IST2023.nl

[Copernicus Institute of Sustainable Development](#)

[STRN – Sustainability Transitions Research Network](#)

[NEST – Network for early career researchers in Sustainability Transitions](#)

About the organizers

Conference organization is led by staff of the Copernicus Institute of Sustainable Development, Utrecht University:

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