



BRIDGES Recognition Programme

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OVERVIEW

The BRIDGES Recognition Programme has been developed in line with the decision of the IGC of the MOST Programme (Item 7 of the Agenda, point 3) at its 15th Ordinary Session, 30-31 March 2021. It is also in line with the developing strategy for BRIDGES for the period 2025-2028. The core objective of the programme is to recognise transdisciplinary, humanities-inclusive research projects, educational programmes, and community co-produced initiatives that serve to foster sustainable socio-ecological development at a range of scales: locally, nationally, regionally and internationally.

The ambition of the BRIDGES' Recognition programme is to stimulate profound social, economic and environmental transformations. The programme works to meet this ambition in part by identifying convergent models of knowledge production that support sustainable development demonstrably; it does so, moreover, by promoting the application of innovative approaches to socio-ecological resilience in real-world contexts where the challenges to and benefits of these transformations may be most critical. The BRIDGES Recognition programme also seeks to develop a wider pool of data, exemplary cases/sites and actionable knowledge from the interlinked and dynamically reinforcing domains of the humanities, arts, educational sciences and social sciences. One key aim is to better inform policy discussions and priorities among Member States of the MOST Intergovernmental Council, and more widely in multilateral contexts encompassed by UNESCO and the UN system.

This document sets out the parameters of projects, programmes, events and activities (including site-based and community co-sponsored initiatives) that can be acknowledged according two broad categories of recognition: 1. Event/Activity Recognition; and 2. Project Recognition. It clarifies the benefits and requirements of formal recognition and details the application process, including the review criteria and evaluation procedures, as well as the benchmarks for validation.

The BRIDGES Recognition programme will be launched in 2025. Applications for initiatives seeking recognition will be welcomed on a rolling basis, and decisions regarding potential recognition will be announced typically twice a year following Governing Council approval of applications.

BRIDGES was founded in 2021 to help mitigate the most urgent societal and environmental challenges addressed by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Our aim is to inspire meaningful collaboration in research, education and public action, recognising the value of different epistemic communities and knowledge domains intersecting in convergent efforts to address the world's most pressing socio-ecological challenges. Our mission, therefore, is *to support and encourage transdisciplinary sustainability science projects and activities that bridge different*

knowledge systems, promoting meaningful social transformation and shaping salutary policy action at local, national, regional and global levels.

The following section sets out the rationale for BRIDGES Recognition. It outlines the benefits and requirements of recognition, as well as the formal protocols guiding review and evaluation of applications seeking recognition.

CATEGORIES OF RECOGNITION

BRIDGES Recognition can be granted to

1) Events/Activities

Individual shorter-term events/activities (e.g. exhibitions / symposia / conference / festivals / field schools) that usually occur or have a duration within the time frame of a single calendar year,

2) Projects

Longer-term initiatives (typically beyond two years) deemed exemplary in their design and execution that clearly demonstrate the means to be accomplished.

Recognition in either of the categories is predicated on an expectation of meaningful co-production in the planning, execution and delivery of initiatives seeking recognition from BRIDGES.

Compared with shorter-term events and activities, initiatives that require sustained coordination of partners/teams and substantive co-creation of knowledge or solutions over a longer duration of time require setting a higher bar of expectations. Project management, the complexity of tasks, sustainability challenges that can be addressed satisfactorily and even the deliverable outcomes are likely to be more significant in the kinds of projects defined in the second category of recognition. Evaluation of initiatives in each category should thus be weighted accordingly by reviewers.

In either category, applications should demonstrate the value and purpose of equitable collaborative relationships involving a range of societal partners, from academia to civil society and traditional/Indigenous/local communities.

A successful application for BRIDGES Recognition entitles the recognised initiative to use the BRIDGES logo for the duration of the project/event/activity, as well as in all of the initiative's public communications. This permission can extend to efforts to secure or augment funding for the initiative; to build or extend partnerships with groups/organizations directly participating in the initiative; or to seek necessary permissions and approvals required to carry out the project as recognised.

Benefits of BRIDGES Recognition

BRIDGES Recognition brings a number of potential benefits and opportunities as well as responsibilities and obligations to initiatives seeking this form of validation. Recognition will raise the profile of the initiative providing immediate, global recognition of the initiative's value.

Recognition by the BRIDGES Coalition provides assurance for policy makers, funders, collaborators, local citizens and authorities, as well as the global community more generally, of the initiative's quality and significance.

A Recognised initiative allows for the:

1. Use of the BRIDGES logo on the initiative's webpage, social media, published/promotional materials that refer specifically to the initiative.
2. Showcasing of the initiative on the UNESCO-MOST BRIDGES website.
3. Mention of the initiative in UNESCO-MOST BRIDGES publications, reports and promotional materials.
4. Highlighting of the initiative in UNESCO-MOST and BRIDGES fora and events.
5. Inclusion of projects and their sponsoring partners in the BRIDGES newsletter, which links with a global network of researchers, educators, policy makers and societal leaders.
6. Opportunities for wider dissemination of the initiative's activities, achievements and outcomes/results.

Expectations Following BRIDGES Recognition

1. When a recognised initiative is publicly referenced/showcased in any way (publications, social media, presentations etc.), mention of BRIDGES Recognition, including use of the BRIDGES logo, is required.
2. All recognised initiatives must provide a short summary (up to 500 words) and high-quality photographic materials (with necessary permissions secured) for the UNESCO-MOST BRIDGES website.
3. All recognised initiatives must submit an annual update to the BRIDGES International Programme Office (IPO) while the project remains ongoing, including a 300-word progress report and current photographs of the initiative, with names of partners, participants and sponsoring organisations provided in captions, as relevant. It is the responsibility of the validated initiative to secure any required permissions for use of intellectual property (photos, logos, etc) and names of any depicted participants for publication of these materials.

4. All recognised projects are required to contribute annually to the BRIDGES webpage blog.
5. All recognised projects should submit a final report (ca. 2000 words) to the BRIDGES International Programme Office, including an assessment by the sponsoring organization/s, and a detailed discussion of the project's results, which should include actionable recommendations to policymakers and, where relevant, local authorities.

CONDITIONS OF RECOGNITION

BRIDGES Recognition is awarded to initiatives as defined in this document under two broad categories of recognition:

1. shorter-term / individual events and activities;
2. longer term projects, programmes and managed sites.

Organisations or consortia applying for BRIDGES Recognition should have good standing in the sustainability domain or in local, regional and/or international contexts of knowledge co-creation / applied solutions. For further requirements and expectations, see further below under CRITERIA FOR RECOGNITION.

Recognition and its benefits are not transferable to sponsoring organisations for any uses separate from the recognised initiative. Abuse of this rule can result in revocation of an initiative's BRIDGES Recognition.

Use of the BRIDGES logo for initiatives earning BRIDGES Recognition is authorised for the duration of the recognised initiative or for reporting and communication purposes following the initiative's conclusion. The duration of the initiative must be specified in the original application. Sponsoring groups desiring to extend the length of BRIDGES recognition beyond this specified time must apply for extension or renewal of the recognition awarded in good time and show cause for the extension / renewal.

Initiatives seeking recognition require sponsorship by an organisation with legal personhood, whether this entity is the sole applicant or the lead partner in a consortium of partner organisations. This organisation assumes responsibility for the recognised initiative as the primary point of contact with the UNESCO-MOST BRIDGES Coalition and is responsible for compliance with all conditions and obligations outlined in this BRIDGES Recognition protocol. This responsibility includes undertaking remedial steps with the validated initiative's wider consortium of partners, if any such steps prove necessary.

RECOGNITION PROTOCOL

The process for BRIDGES recognition is set out here in a step-by-step guide from publication of guidelines on the BRIDGES website through to the application process, the review procedures, and eventual approval by the Governing Council.

1. The BRIDGES Recognition programme will be advertised on the BRIDGES webpage (and social media). Links to the online application form, the process and guidelines are openly available and (machine) translated in several languages.
2. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis but will be administered in batches twice a year. Biannual reviews aim to be synchronised with the meetings of the Governing Council (typically in the New Year and autumn).
3. The application and review processes are administered by the UNESCO-MOST BRIDGES International Programme Office (IPO).
4. The online application is submitted to the IPO.
5. IPO officers complete the initial pre-review; notifying applicants who do not meet the criteria. Those who meet the criteria continue to the independent review stage.
6. Once approved for full review, the BRIDGES Recognition Working Group (RWG), with coordination support from the IPO, selects appropriate reviewers from among nominees put forward by BRIDGES Hubs, Coalition members and strategic partners. Applications and all supplementary materials are then sent to the selected reviewers.
7. Reviewers' reports are returned to the IPO. If reviews are broadly aligned, applications with a majority of positive assessments are forwarded to the RWG to confirm that all criteria for recognition have been met.
8. In cases where there is a significant discrepancy between reviewers' assessments, an additional blind review will be commissioned to establish a clear majority judgement. The RWG will then consider the full set of reviews before making its recommendation.
9. Following these steps, a final recommendation is made to the Governing Council on whether the application should receive BRIDGES Recognition.

N.B.: MOST's Scientific Advisory Council (SAC) has a statutory role in the review process. The designated SAC contact will participate in the final review of applications before recommendations are submitted to the GC. A representative of CIPSH should also be involved to ensure balanced humanities representation among the projects recommended for recognition.

10. Recommended applications will be considered for final approval at the next scheduled ordinary meeting of the BRIDGES Governing Council.

CRITERIA FOR RECOGNITION

BRIDGES recognises the importance of championing initiatives that address complex, multi-faceted societal challenges in innovative ways to stimulate transformative change for the benefit of societies, people and planet.

In keeping with the BRIDGES Principles (see page 9), inclusive approaches to transdisciplinary knowledge co-creation is a priority for the UNESCO-MOST BRIDGES Coalition and this priority extends to the BRIDGES recognition programme. Transdisciplinarity necessitates meaningful dialogue and collaboration across disciplines and knowledge domains, drawing upon the strengths and unique contributions of the humanities and arts, including educational sciences, as well as traditional and Indigenous knowledge systems and community expertise. In this way BRIDGES seeks to promote key new capacities internationally while also endorsing initiatives that attend to the disparate realities of local contexts, challenges and solutions.

Criteria for BRIDGES recognition are:

1. The initiative aligns predominantly with the six principles of the UNESCO Guidelines on Sustainability Science in Research and Education and the five additional BRIDGES principles, both outlined below;
2. The initiative addresses specific global, regional or local challenges encompassed by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), or new challenges recognised over time by the United Nations, UNESCO and other UN organisations as cognate with these challenges;
3. The initiative recognises the importance of balanced partnerships and collaborations across academic and non-academic sectors in the co-creation of knowledge and advancement together toward achieving appropriate co-produced solutions to the challenges being addressed;
4. The initiative is inclusive of insights of the humanities and/or other epistemic domains based both in mainstream academic and non-academic traditions of knowledge creation, providing an evident understanding of the historical context of human impact on the planet and the cultural impact of prevailing modes of production and social relations at a range of temporal and geographic scales.

APPLICATION FOR BRIDGES RECOGNITION



BRIDGES supports projects that drive meaningful action and transformative change, aligned with the UNESCO Guidelines on Sustainability Science in Research and Education (2017) and the UNESCO-MOST BRIDGES Principles. Humanities-inclusive sustainability science is a novel transdisciplinary approach that integrates traditionally undervalued knowledge systems with established academic methods to address pressing social and environmental challenges, as outlined by the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs, 2015).

This approach values non-academic expertise as well as academic traditions not encompassed by STEM subjects, promoting meaningful co-creation of knowledge and co-production of sustainability solutions. It does so by blending the Humanities and the Arts, as well as traditional and Indigenous knowledge systems, with STEM disciplines in ways that do not reduce traditionally underutilised/underrepresented knowledge domains from the Social and Human Sciences to instrumental, translational or other peripheral roles. The importance of centring these knowledge domains is crucial to ambitions of co-produced and convergent sustainability science¹, as increasingly called for in international contexts (such as the ISC's working paper Looking at the Future of Transdisciplinary Research²).

Initiatives recognised by the BRIDGES Coalition for Recognition are expected to demonstrate methods and outcomes of co-production that not only contribute solutions

¹ Sustainability science looks to how societies can flourish fairly and safely within planetary limits, by integrating knowledges from a range of fields and sources in order to co-create just and viable futures.

² Kaiser, M and P Gluckman. 2023. Looking at the future of Transdisciplinary research. Centre for Science Futures. International Science Council. Paris.

to societal challenges but also have the potential to contribute to vital science-policy engagements at local, national, regional and/or global levels.

When completing your application, please ensure, that you clearly indicate how your project attends to the **BRIDGES guiding principles** listed here:

1. The BRIDGES Coalition is humanities-centred but not limited to the humanities. We value contextualised and diverse approaches to sustainability, and we acknowledge that persistent challenges are often complex, yielding sometimes contradictory responses. We encourage robust debate in efforts to meet these challenges.
2. The BRIDGES partners understand the Earth not solely as a planetary system, nor as a reservoir of resources, but as a web of meanings and interactions that is inherently multilayered and pluralistic.
3. The BRIDGES Coalition is committed to a critical understanding of sustainability that emphasises the diversity of its subjects, objects and timelines.
4. BRIDGES will work to establish a world of new relationships, based on convergent understandings and co-design, among the co-inhabitants of the Earth.
5. The BRIDGES partners are committed to an ethical approach to resource mobilisation and use.

Also reference the ways in which your proposal harmonises with the UNESCO Guidelines for Sustainability Science in Research and Education (2017)³, as enumerated below:

1. Sustainability Science is specifically responding to the **interdependent, complex and mutually reinforcing character** of natural, social and cultural ongoing, global and local sustainability challenges. Sustainable development, as expressed in the United Nations Agenda 2030, is exactly about the interplay of such challenges.
2. Sustainability Science aims at mobilizing, generating, disseminating and implementing **knowledge necessary to define and achieve sustainability** as a response to such challenges in the concrete contexts of different geographical and temporal scales. Such knowledge includes new technologies and innovative processes.

³ UNESCO. 2017. Guidelines on Sustainability Science in Research and Education. SC/SHS/1. 2017. Paris. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000260600>.

3. In addition to generating knowledge, Sustainability Science focuses on **solving problems, understanding dilemmas and conflicts of goals and interests**, with a view to move towards more integrated and coherent policy agendas, policy options and foresight scenarios that take into account both short-term and long-term needs.
4. Sustainability Science is crosscutting science by nature, having as a major goal to seek complementary **cooperation** between natural and social sciences, the humanities, the arts and, in particular, to ensure the participation of diverse non-academic stakeholders, through a collaborative process of co-design, co-production and co-management.
5. Sustainability Science is based on both **academic freedom and academic responsibility** towards societal needs.
6. Sustainability Science **requires important new capacities of individual scientists** for integrated critical analysis and foresight; the ability to cope with systems thinking, changing environments, risks and insecurity; and the capacity to recognize and address diverse values as well as conflicts of goals and interests, to empathise and work responsibly and collectively in diverse partnerships. Such capacities need to be strengthened through all forms of education.

Please complete the application form online. You will need to provide the following information:

Full name (surname, first name):

Title:

Organisation:

Postal address:

Postcode/zip code:

Telephone number (including country code):

Email address:

1. Project title
2. Is the application seeking Recognition under category 1 (shorter-term individual activities or events) or category 2 (longer-term projects, programmes, managed sites).
3. Website and social media URLs of lead organisation and key partners submitting the application
4. Overview (250 words)

This will be the description that will be used on the UNESCO-MOST BRIDGES website. Please include your aims and objectives, a brief description of your mission and methods, and who you are working with. Please avoid jargon and write in accessible language.

5. Methodology/approach/viability (up to 1000 words)

- a) Which societal challenges are being addressed by the initiative and how?
- b) How is the initiative humanities-informed/inclusive (including arts and qualitative social sciences, or traditional/Indigenous/local knowledge systems)
- c) Demonstrate how your initiative is transdisciplinary/interdisciplinary, co-designed and meaningfully collaborative. Provide explicit explanation of *how* societal partners were involved from the outset.
- d) Identify the people/groups/communities that come together in this initiative and describe their role in the initiative.
- e) Describe the *governance structure or formal agreement (MoU)* that guarantees co-ownership of knowledge and dissemination of results, ensuring the relationship is non-extractive.
- f) Explain the process used to establish mutual reflexivity—i.e., how collaborating groups addressed and examined their inherent biases to enable co-creation.
- g) State why the designated method is important to the success of your initiative.
- h) Outline the steps you will take to achieve your goals.
- i) If your initiative is at the development stage provide clear and explicit details concerning how you expect to secure the support required to achieve your goals.

6. Describe the value of your initiative to society (500 words)

- a) List any expected outcomes, outputs and anticipated impacts
(In this section, please explain the short-term and long-term projected outcomes and what societal benefit or impact you are expecting.)
- b) Outline your expected outcomes and the benefit to society
(Clearly state if the expected impact is local, regional, national and/or global in nature and how it may feed into the science-policy interface at a local, national, regional and/or global level. If intergenerational impacts are anticipated, please provide details.)

7. Please indicate the stage of development of your initiative

- a) In development
- b) Proposal submitted awaiting funding decision
- c) Fully resourced and running

(If you are seeking funding, make sure you clearly explain how you plan to secure financial or other support and show the steps you are taking to make this a reality.)

8. You can upload up to 3 pieces of supporting resources, but please select these carefully to provide reviewers with the most relevant information. Files larger than 10MB will not be accepted. If you wish to include a video, please provide a single URL to a video **no longer than 5 minutes**. Reviewers will only look at the first link provided and will disregard any additional links. Please be selective; include only what strengthens your application. Quality not quantity.

For example, you might include:

- Letters from societal partners
- MOUs
- Publications
- Images