UNDERSTANDING THE APPLICATION FORM 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.

BRIDGES' 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 alongside academic traditions that fall outside of STEM. It promotes meaningful co-creation and co-production of knowledge in pursuit of sustainable solutions by bringing together the Humanities and the Arts, traditional and Indigenous knowledge systems and the STEM disciplines. Crucially, it does so without reducing underrepresented knowledge domains from the Social and Human Sciences to instrumental or peripheral roles. Centring these ways of knowing is essential for genuinely co-produced and convergent sustainability science, as increasingly emphasised in international contexts such as the ISC's Looking at the Future of Transdisciplinary Research working paper.

Initiatives recognised by BRIDGES are expected to demonstrate methods and outcomes of co-production that not only contribute solutions to societal challenges but also have the potential to contribute to vital science-policy engagements at either local, national regional or global levels.

EXPLANATION OF TERMS

Sustainability Science

Sustainability science is a field focused on creating flourishing resilient, equitable and non-extractive social systems. It is concerned with building futures rooted in dignity

and mutual care, looks to adaptation and rebalancing past injustices. Rather than focusing pointedly on the environmental sciences, it looks to understanding the social, emotional and practical conditions necessary to repair harms, create collective well-being and how to thrive without depleting people, places or the relationships they depend on.

Transdisciplinarity

Transdisciplinarity lies at the core of how the BRIDGES mission should be understood. In this context, it recognises the importance of equal partnerships that work together towards a mutually recognised solution that is fit-for purpose, and which respects basic value landscapes in society**.**

The cornerstone of transdisciplinarity is the participation of societal partners who are equitably involved in addressing significant social problems, issues and challenges. They should be engaged from the design stage through to co-production of any outcomes.

Transdisciplinarity recognises a shared *social responsibility* to work towards common or important social values and respecting different knowledge systems, and ownership of knowledge. Outcomes and relationships should not be extractive, and collaborating partners should be meaningfully involved in co-design, co-creation, co-ownership and dissemination of results/outcomes.

Transdisciplinarity always implies a multi-actor approach recognising the value of different beliefs, knowledge and value systems and expertise. These knowledge systems require the inclusion of social science and humanities (see below), but also include other knowledge systems and epistemic communities, such as local, traditional and Indigenous groups.

A precondition of transdisciplinarity is mutual reflexivity, acknowledging and examining inherent cognitive or other biases of collaborating groups to better enable co-creation and mutual endorsement of methods and results.

Humanities-inclusive

Humanities-inclusive research (equally embracing the arts and qualitative social sciences) underpins the approach to Sustainability Science advocated by UNESCO-MOST BRIDGES.

Key to addressing the global challenges addressed by the SDGs is the recognition that people and societies (particularly those in the global North) and their increasing

technological modes of production and disruption to culturally embedded social relations lie at the root of some of these problems.

Humanities-informed research brings different methodologies, critical thinking and an ethical focus reinforced by historically, geographically and culturally informed perspectives on dynamics of social-ecological systems.

Key skills essential to solve real-world problems are embedded in the arts, humanities and qualitative social sciences. These competencies include:

- Analytical methods and knowledge needed to evaluate the reliability of sources and identify knowledge gaps.
- Critical recognition of the need to draw on a wide range of sources to research the history, origins and causes of a problem, and to assess whether previous approaches to challenges worked or failed.
- Rigorous questioning of ideas, assumptions, contexts and contingent circumstances, promoting appropriate evidence-based conclusions and solutions.
- Ethical consideration of complex sustainability challenges and proposed solutions fit for context.
- Recognition of the inherent value of diverse epistemic paradigms (for example, different local/traditional/Indigenous knowledge systems).

Submission deadline

We accept applications throughout the year. However, we present positively reviewed application biannually to the Governing Council. The date of the Governing Council moves in accordance with UNESCO's calendar but they tend to be near the New Year and in the autumn.

When completing your application please ensure that you clearly indicate how your project attends to the BRIDGES guiding principles listed below. Please do this by indicating the principles **(P1-5)** following this example.

> 'Our initiative works with local artisans to revitalise traditional weaving techniques as a way of strengthening community identity and supporting sustainable livelihoods **(P1).** The project is co-designed with Indigenous elders to ensure that knowledge exchange is reciprocal and grounded in long-standing relationships with the land **(P4).** All financial decisions are made in collaboration with community partners to ensure transparent and non-extractive use of resources **(P5).'**

The BRIDGES Principles

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 those 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 make sure you reference the ways in which your proposal harmonises with the UNESCO Guidelines for Sustainability Science in Research and Education (2017) as enumerated below **(S1-6)**:

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 mobilising, 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. 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 recognise 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.

BELOW IS AN EXAMPLE OF THE APPLICATION FORM.
Please complete the application form ONLINE providing 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