



BRIDGES PRINCIPLES

The formation of BRIDGES as an international coalition is proposed as a means to complete and thereby strengthen the sustainability science domain as it has developed over the past two decades. The objective is to foster sustainability science as a renewed, integrated approach that builds from the Humanities, encompassing the Social and Natural sciences, the Arts and other knowledge domains, through a process of co-design and co-construction that values the relevance of critical reasoning.

The BRIDGES initiative builds upon the refined sustainability science paradigm inaugurated in 2017 with the launch of UNESCO's *Guidelines for Sustainability Science in Research and Education*. With reference as well to the World Humanities Conference outcome document *A New Humanities Agenda for the 21st Century* (2017), BRIDGES seeks to operationalize these guidelines, the key principles of which are summarized below.

In order to explore both the programmatic and procedural foundation for BRIDGES as an international coalition for action in sustainability science, UNESCO's Management of Social Transformation (MOST) Programme organized a workshop on 5-7 October 2019 in Sigtuna, Sweden. This workshop followed two other establishment workshops that occurred earlier this year: the first hosted in March in Mação, Portugal, and the other in June at UNESCO headquarters in Paris, France.

The discussions in Sigtuna allowed preliminary decisions to be taken among the emerging network of partnering organizations¹ on the core principles to be followed by the coalition:

1. *The BRIDGES Coalition is humanities-centered but not limited to the humanities. We value contextualized 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 emphasizes 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 mobilization and use.*

¹ UNESCO's Management of Social Transformation Programme (MOST), International Council for Philosophy and Human Sciences (CIPSH), Mälardalen University, Humanities for the Environment (HfE) Global Observatories, Network International Science Council (ISC), Cappadocia University Environmental Humanities Center, Ecole Normale Supérieure de Lyon, Earth Politics Center, Europa.Blog, French National Research Institute for Development (IRD), Future Earth, German Commission for UNESCO, Humanities European Association for Culturally Integrated Landscape Management (APHELEIA), International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), International Federation for Modern Languages and Literatures (FILLM), Leuphana University, National Library of Lithuania, Institut fondamental d'Afrique noire (IFAN), International Union of Prehistoric and Protohistoric Sciences (UISPP), North Atlantic Biocultural Organization (NABO), Stefansson Arctic Institute, Stockholm Resilience Center, Swiss Academic Society for Environmental Research and Ecology (SAGUF), Third Pole, UNESCO Chair on global understanding at Jena University, UNESCO Chair on Art and science for the SDGs at ICN Business School, University of Bristol, Arctic Studies Centre at Liaocheng University, University of Iceland, University of Wales Trinity St. David, Uppsala University Chair on Climate Change, World Academy of Art and Science.

Strategic priorities will include identification and introduction of exemplary transversal and transectorial projects connecting Humanities and Social Sciences disciplines with Natural Sciences, the Arts and applied scientific fields. Effective co-production between this broader and more inclusive configuration of academic knowledge communities and non-academic actors / stakeholders from society will be enabled through co-designed and co-developed case studies focused on achieving sustainable environments and societies. The coalition will strive to identify, promote and disseminate such case studies, as well as replicable model curricula and territories-based best-practices, consistent with the goals and principles of robust sustainability science.

Key principles of the UNESCO Guidelines for Sustainability Science in Research and Education

1 The interplay of global and local challenges (keywords “interdependency,” complexity”)

Sustainability Science responds specifically “to the **interdependent, complex and mutually reinforcing character of ongoing natural, social and cultural challenges occurring at both global and local scales**. Sustainable development, as expressed in the United Nations Agenda 2030, is exactly about the interplay of such challenges” (UNESCO SuS Guidelines 2).

2 Knowledge (keyword “co-production”)

Sustainability Science aims to generate, disseminate, mobilize and implement “**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” (UNESCO SuS Guidelines 3).

3 Integration and foresight (keyword “process”)

“Sustainability Science focuses on **solving problems, understanding dilemmas and addressing 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” (UNESCO SuS Guidelines 3).

4 Collaboration & Integration (keyword “networking”)

“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” (UNESCO SuS Guidelines 3).

5 Freedom & Responsibility (keyword “socialization”)

“Sustainability Science is based on both **academic freedom and academic responsibility** towards societal needs” (UNESCO SuS Guidelines 3).

6 Education for Complex Action (keyword “praxis”)

“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 empathize and work responsibly and collectively in diverse partnerships. Such capacities need to be strengthened through all forms of education” (UNESCO SuS Guidelines 3).