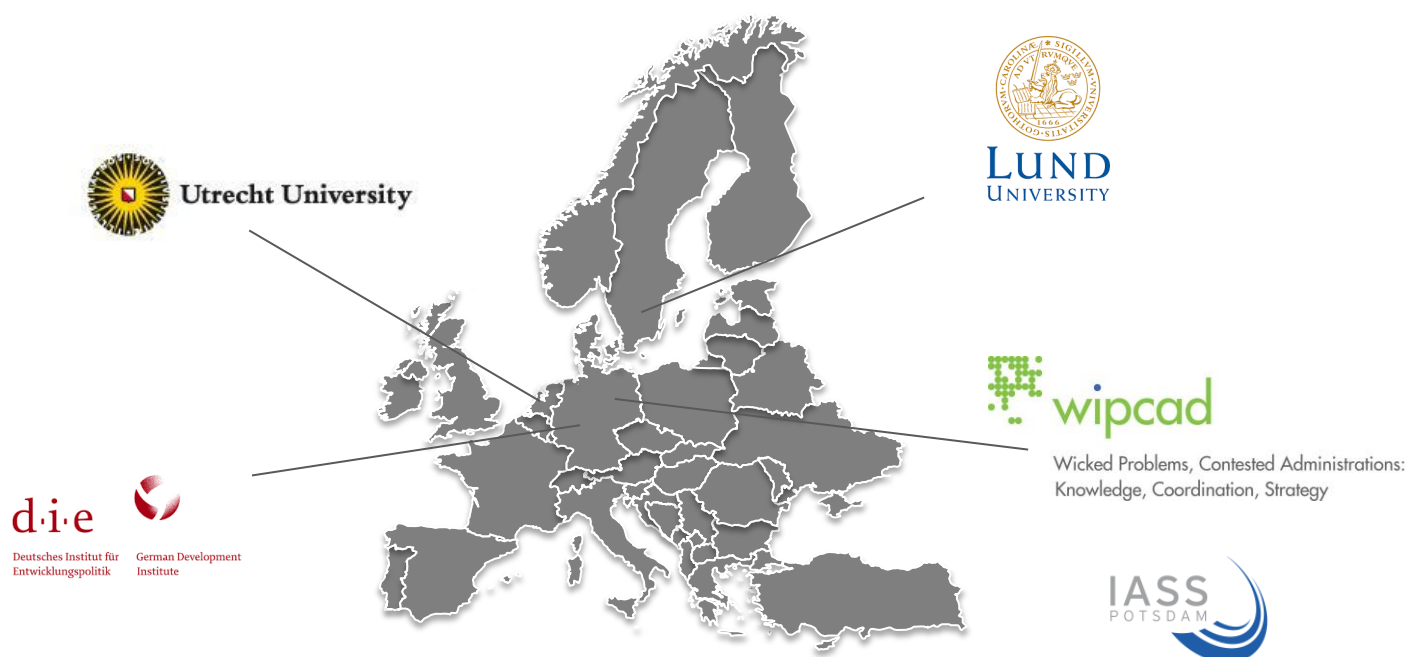


ESG Research Trip Europe

March 27 – April 4 2017



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Introduction

Background

From the 27th of March to the 4th of April 2017, eight research fellows from the Earth System Governance (ESG) project made a research trip through Europe, visiting Research Centres of the ESG project and related research and policy institutes, with the aim to strengthen the network and prospects for early career researcher within the network. We visited ten institutes in six cities and four European countries. Our research trip started at the Copernicus Institute of Sustainable Development at Utrecht University in the Netherlands. We then visited the German Development Institute (DIE) and the United Nations Global Action Campaign in Bonn. In Potsdam, we visited the Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies (IASS) and the WIPCAD research training group at Potsdam University. We then moved on to Lund University where the Lund University Centre for Sustainability Studies (LUCSUS) and Political Science Department hosted our visit. We concluded our research trip in Copenhagen, where we visited the Department of Political Science at Copenhagen University and participated in a guided cycling city tour with a focus on sustainable urban planning.

In this report we describe our experiences during this one week adventure. The full itinerary of the research trip is provided in the appendix.

Objectives

The following objectives for the research trip were identified beforehand:

- To visit several European research centres in the ESG network with a group of early-career researchers
- To create connections between early-career researchers, and between early-career and senior researchers in the ESG network
- To exchange and discuss new research directions, theories and methodologies in earth system governance research
- To improve networks for potential future collaboration between ESG research fellows in Europe
- To enhance the visibility of ESG research centres in Europe

Sponsors

We would like to express our gratitude to the institutes and organisations that hosted us during our research trip and helped us with financial support. Without their willingness and support this activity would not have been possible. We want to thank in particular: the Copernicus Institute of Sustainable Development at Utrecht University, the German Development Institute in Bonn, the WIPCAD research training group at Potsdam University, LUCSUS and the Political Science department at Lund University, and the International Project Office of the Earth System Governance project.

Utrecht

Coordinators: Lucas Rutting & Sandra van der Hel

Participating institute(s): Copernicus Institute for Sustainable Development

Focus area: New directions in ESG research

Day 1: Utrecht

Monday March 27

The eight participants for the research trip met in Utrecht, We started our research trip in the afternoon with a city tour, a visit to the Academy building, and a welcome dinner in Utrecht's oldest pub.



Day 2: Utrecht

Tuesday March 28

Introduction to the Environmental Governance group

Participants: members of the Environmental Governance Group at Utrecht University and ESG research fellows based at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (VU) and Wageningen University and Research Centre (WUR).

Welcome and introduction by Prof. Frank Biermann

Prof. Frank Biermann welcomed participants to the Copernicus Institute of Sustainable Development at Utrecht University and introduced us to the analytical focus of the Environmental Governance group. He also gave an update on current developments in the ESG

project.

E(S)G speed date

A speed date with members of the Environmental Governance group and visiting researchers gave an introduction to the three analytical themes of the Environmental Governance group: Modes of Governance, The Normative Foundations of Governance, and The Governance of Societal Transformations.

Presentations by two visiting researchers

Zerrin Savasan and Jennifer Bansard presented their research:

- “Enhancing compliance through cooperation opportunities between compliance networks and multilateral environmental agreements” – by Zerrin Savasan
- “New kid on the mitigation block: coastal carbon. Mapping the emergence of an issue field” – by Jennifer Bansard



Excursion Oostvaardersplassen

In the afternoon we visited the Oostvaardersplassen, a nature area in the Flevoland province of the Netherlands which is known as an example of ‘rewilding’. In this area, nature is allowed (in principle) to run its course independent of human interference. During the excursion we learned about the history and vision of this area and current management and political challenges. A ranger and ecologist guided our visit. After a short movie and introduction by our guides, we embarked on a two hour walking tour during which we discussed the environmental governance dimensions and contestations of this area.



Day 3: Utrecht & Bonn

Wednesday March 29

Workshop New Direction in Earth System Governance

by Agni Kalfagianni, Rak Kim and Joost Vervoort

During this interactive workshop, we immersed ourselves into three key themes of the Environmental Governance Group: planetary futures, planetary integrity and planetary justice. We started the morning with three presentations:

- Foresight: engaging with future uncertainty – by Joost Vervoort
- Planetary justice – by Agni Kalfagianni
- Planetary Integrity – by Rak Kim

Based on these presentations, we began to developing our own scenarios about the future of planetary integrity and justice. As a group, we selected six drivers which we viewed as important for exploring future developments with respect to these themes. We then sat down to think about possible scenarios based on these four drivers. The morning workshop was too short to develop the scenarios in full, but we found this a useful and fun exercise to think about the future of planetary justice and integrity. We plan to develop these scenarios further together with participants in the workshop.



Travel to Bonn and city tour

In the afternoon we took the train to Bonn, arriving there just in time for a sunset city tour through the historical city centre.

Bonn

Coordinator: Sander Chan & Carole-Anne Senit

Participating institute(s): German Development Institute (DIE), UN Global Action Campaign

Focus area: Interconnections between sustainable development and climate change

Day 4: Bonn

Thursday March 30

Morning session at the German Development Institute

Participants: Clara Brandi, Sander Chan, Ines Dombrowsky

The need to explore interconnections between sustainable development and climate change has become increasingly urgent as governments and other actors are moving towards implementing both the Paris Climate Agreement and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. At DIE, the newest ESG Research Centre, we discussed issues at the climate and development nexus and learned about several ongoing DIE initiatives:

- Welcome & Introduction to DIE and Klimalog Project – by Clara Brandi
- Galvanizing the Groundswell of Non-state and Subnational Climate Actions – by Sander Chan
- Governing the water-energy-food nexus related to hydropower on shared rivers – by Ines Dombrowsky

Two participants discussed their research:

- Mainstreaming Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction into Development Planning – by Karsten Schulz
- Civil society participation in negotiating the SDGs: what difference has it made for the global governance of sustainable development? – by Carole- Anne Senit



Visit to UN Global Action Campaign

In the afternoon, we were invited to the UN to discuss the SDG Global Action Campaign and the United Nations System Staff College. Four UN representatives introduced their respective institutions: Laura Hildebrandt, Xavier Longan and Gayan Peiris from the SDG Action Campaign, and Natalia Galat from the UN System Staff College.

Our discussion covered:

- Role and activities of the Campaign: engage stakeholders, encourage ownership, sponsor people-driven monitoring to strengthen accountability (examples of activities)
- Main opportunities and challenges in pursuing these aims



We introduced the ESG network and discussed possible synergies and collaborations. See more information on this in Appendix D (Collaboration opportunities).



Potsdam & Berlin

Coordinators: Jennifer Bansard and Alejandro Esguerra

Participating institute(s): WIPCAD research group, University of Potsdam; Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies (IASS)

Focus area: Science-policy and transdisciplinarity

Day 4: Potsdam

Friday March 31

Visit to the Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies (IASS)

Participants from IASS: Miranda Boettcher, Henrike Knappe, Giulia Molingengo, Stefan Schäfer
External participants: Larissa Koch, Jennifer Garrard, Julia Dennis

During the morning session with researchers from IASS we discussed the way environmental governance research relates to policymakers and society at large. Participants from IASS introduced three of their recently started projects:

- **Futurization of politics project** (by Henrike Knappe): looking at theories of future construction in order to make sense of how future images are present in politics.
- **Co-production project** (by Giulia Molingengo): set up a community of practice to try to design with them a research adapted to the challenges that policymakers and practitioners are facing.
- **Climate engineering project** (by Stefan Schäfer): Studies the development of the climate engineering discourse, which has been reflexive from a social science perspective, and includes civil society perspectives.



Visit to Potsdam University

In the afternoon, we visited the WIPCAD research group at Potsdam University. WIPCAD, which stands for “Wicked Problems, Contested Administrations: Knowledge, Coordination, Strategy”, is a research group studying how different administrations deal with complex problems, like climate change. The session at WIPCAD focussed on science communication.

We started with a ‘PowerPoint karaoke’, in which two of us (Lucas Rutting and Sandra van der Hel) presented each other’s research. The Lucas and Sandra prepared a short PowerPoint presentation (5-6 slides) ahead of the event. The idea hereby was to target an “informed audience”; not to comprehensively represent an entire dissertation project but rather highlight one specific aspect; as well as address the relevance of the topic and the personal curiosity that drives the researcher. The participants were given 10 minutes at the beginning of the session to read each other’s presentations and were tasked to present their colleague’s work to the group (within 10 minutes). They were then given 5 minutes to complement what was said on their project before opening up to questions from the group. Building on this exercise we discussed strategies for the concise presentation and communication of scientific research. Also, we reflected more broadly on how we as scientists present knowledge to various publics as well as how one may conceptualize the interface of science and politics.

The last session concluded the discussions we had during the day. We watched a short video starring Maarten Hajer on the issue of how to perform expert authority in times of crisis. The subsequent discussion focussed on the themes of how to organize expert authority, how to represent various publics in such organizations as well as how to become more reflexive on the role of science in democracy.



Day 5 & 6: Berlin

Saturday April 1

On Saturday, we undertook an excursion to Tempelhofer Feld, an open space in Berlin, previously an airport. Tempelhof airport closed in 2008. Since then, the space has turned into a recreation area for the citizen of Berlin. On the day of our visit, one of the first sunny days in spring, the field was full of activity, from kite runners to in-line skaters, cyclists and joggers, from families going for a walk to friends enjoying a picnic or barbeque.

We visited an urban gardening project on the Templehof, and learned about the emergence of this public space, but also the controversies surrounding it. Conflicting uses, including housing, recreation and nature conservation have led to disputes about the development of the area. In 2014, the citizen of Berlin decided through a referendum not to allow construction on the site, securing, for the moment, Tempelhofer Feld as the biggest open green space in the middle of a

city.

We found it interesting to see similarities between the governance challenges of this urban space and the Oostvaardersplassen nature conservation area that we visited on the second day of the research trip. Both spaces can be seen as experiments in dealing with contested spaces and new forms of society-nature relationships.



In the afternoon we took a train from Berlin to Rostock for the ferry to Sweden. Unfortunately we missed the ferry due to train delays. We thus spend the night in Rostock, a beautiful Hanseatic city, and took the ferry to Trelleborg the following day, arriving in Lund Sunday evening.

Lund & Copenhagen

Coordinators: Ina Möller & Charlotta Kjällerström

Participating institute(s): Lund University Centre for Sustainability Studies (LUCSUS), Department of Political Science, the Centre for Environmental and Climate Research (CEC) and the International Institute for Industrial Environmental Economics (IIIEE), Lund University

Focus area: Science, society and the urban setting

Day 7: Lund

Monday April 3

Morning session at LUCSUS

Participants: Ruben Zondervan, Charlotta Kjällerström, Ina Möller, Emily Boyd, Åsa Knaggård, Vasna Ramasar, Henner Busch

We were welcome by Ruben Zondervan, Executive Director of the ESG project. Two participants presented their research for an audience of LUCSUS staff and students of the MSc program:

- One Planet Thinking - by Nora Sticzay
- Anticipatory governance - by Karlijn Muiderman

We then discussed the science-society nexus with a panel of scientists and invited extra-scientific experts. The discussion focussed on tensions at the nexus between science and society, including questions on researcher responsibility, activism and engagement with society.

We concluded the morning session with lunch and a speed-date with LUCSUS staff.

Campus tour

In the afternoon, we embarked on a campus tour visiting the following institutes:

- The Department of Political Science
- The Centre for Environmental and Climate Research (CEC)
- The International Institute for Industrial Environmental Economics (IIIEE)



Dinner and brainstorm at LUCSUS

The day was concluded with a dinner at LUCSUS, where we discussed options for early career activities at the next ESG conference in October 2017 in Lund. Several of the research trip participants volunteered to organize an early career workshop and get-together ahead of the conference.

Day 8: Copenhagen

Tuesday April 4

Visit Copenhagen University

The final day of the research trip took us across the world famous Øresund Bridge to Copenhagen. At Copenhagen University's Centre of Social Sciences, Anne Bach Nielsen, PhD candidate and former project coordinator at the municipality, presented her research on the city's climate adaptation policy.

Cycling tour Copenhagen

In the afternoon, we met with the COurban design collective, a consultancy initiative on democratic city planning through co-creation and participatory design processes. Two of the founders of this project took us on a bicycle tour explaining the city's urban planning and their use of scientific insight to improve urban sustainability, liveability and citizen health.



Insights and outputs

In one week time, we were fortunate to meet with a great number of inspiring people. We learned about ongoing and exciting research projects and discussed new directions in earth system governance research. We also presented our own research and received feedback on our work. Finally, the research trip was a great way to get to know other ESG research fellows and share experiences as early career researchers in this field.

The following topics were prominent in the conversations we had during the research trip, and we plan to continue working on these topics within the context of the ESG network:

- *Foresight and scenario*: a new and exciting approach in ESG research. In the workshop at Utrecht University we applied scenario thinking to the issues of planetary justice and planetary integrity. We found this a fruitful exercise that provided new perspectives on these emerging topics in ESG research. We plan to write a collaborative paper based on the insights from this exercise, and the ongoing work that some of us do in this domain.
- *Governance in the Anthropocene*: we were struck by the similarities in governance challenges experienced by two apparently dissimilar cases of the Oostvaardersplassen and Tempelhofer Feld. Both cases can be seen as ‘wild experiments’, in which novel ideas about social and ecological systems are tried and tested in real life. We think these cases provide good examples to discuss Anthropocene challenges, human-nature relationships, and the role of governance thinking in this domain. We plan to draw up a working paper as a starting point for further collaboration on this topic.
- *Science/society*: on many occasions during the research trip, we discussed the links between research and practice in governance for sustainability. Most of our projects do in some way relate to this topic, and all of us as researchers are concerned about ongoing developments pointing to a deepening divide between science and society. This might be a topic that we can explore further in a future early-career workshop.
- *Participation*: another common theme across our projects is participation. We discussed common ideas, promises and challenges of participation at multiple institutes that we visited, both in academic settings and at institutes that work across science and society. This is a topic that we would like to continue working on and might also provide a good topic for a future early-career event.

We thus see many opportunities to continue working together and look forward to further collaborations in the ESG community across Europe and globally!

Appendix A: Tips & Tops

Tips <i>What would you do different next time? What did not work well? What is important to keep in mind when organizing a research trip?</i>	Tops <i>What did you like about the research trip? What would you keep the same if a research trip like this was organized again?</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When arranging the meeting schedule, keep in mind that it takes longer to move from A to B with a group than alone • Interaction is the most important part of the trip. Arrange enough time for this in formal and informal settings. Make sure that research institutes are aware of this and create possibilities for interaction with their staff. • I agree this [interaction] is really important. And in fact it's great that we missed the night ferry, otherwise we would not have had some time to discuss between each other about what we had done so far. Perhaps another space for discussion like that at the end of the trip would be nice and would allow us to wrap up what we did and discussed. • Liaise with the organizations we're visiting so as to explain the purpose of the ESG visit and prepare possible discussion topics • Perhaps finding ways to establish a relationship or follow-up event? Around a paper/conference/meeting? • I really enjoyed the presentation about Copenhagen on the last day of the trip, it would be great if we could replicate to allow host researchers to present a research that would be in some way related to the places we're visiting. This would perhaps prevent from having some presentations that look a little bit disconnected 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (everything, of course :)) • The relatively small size of the group: allows for good interactions over the course of the trip • Including different types of organizations (aka different types of university departments/entities, but also non-university research institutes etc.) • Plan the trip in a way that the travel time between the different stations is not too long • A good mix of different types of activities/ theory and practice: research presentations and discussions combined with field trips • Mixing research with field trips was one of the most interesting aspect of the trip, it was really inspiring to see some concrete applications of what we usually see in more theoretical research. • Great to spend time with peers - good way to get to know the community of ESG fellows • Discussing the ESG Lund conference – contribution to strengthening the network • Good mix of topics and theories: environmental, social and political issues • Different ways of presenting research (mix of classic presentations, powerpoint karaokes, roundtables with host researchers, trip participants, and practitioners → this would actually be a way to engage more the research institutes that we are visiting) • Diverse modes of transport • Great that the group was composed of fellows with different levels (PhD students, post-doctoral fellows, teachers)

Appendix B: Participants

Zerrin Savasan

Assistant Professor, Selcuk University, Turkey

Key words: compliance; compliance mechanisms; compliance networks

Project title: "Enhancing Compliance through Cooperation Opportunities between Informal Environmental Compliance Networks and Multilateral Environmental Agreements"



Jennifer Bansard

PhD, University of Potsdam, Germany

Key words: coastal carbon; issue emergence; science & policy

Project title: "New kid on the mitigation block: coastal carbon - Mapping the emergence of an issue field"



Carole-Anne S nit

PhD candidate at Utrecht University, in joint supervision with IDDRI

Key words: civil society, participation, Sustainable Development Goals

Project title: "Taking democracy to the next level? Global civil society participation in the shaping of the Sustainable Development Goals from Rio to New York (2012-2015)"



Karsten Schulz

Postdoctoral Researcher, Governance and Sustainability Lab, University of Trier

Key words: political ecology, adaptation, sustainability transformations

Project title: "Water Power"



Participants (continued)

Sandra van der Hel

PhD candidate, Utrecht University

Key words: politics of science, science for sustainability, Future Earth

Project title: “New Science for Global Sustainability? The impact, implementation and implications of new design principles for global change research”



Lucas Rutting (Dutch)

PhD candidate at Utrecht University

Key words: Foresight, Governance, Sub-Saharan Africa

Project title: “Foresight-guided policy development in Tanzania, Burkina Faso and Uganda – a comparative case study”



Karlijn Muiderman

PhD candidate at Utrecht University

Key words: anticipatory governance, climate change, migration

Project title: “The challenges of reconceptualizing anticipatory governance to climate change and migration in the Sahel”



Nora Sticzay, (Hungarian)

PhD candidate, Utrecht University
Monitoring and Evaluation Officer at WWF

Planetary boundaries, norm setting, One Planet Thinking

“Innovative norm setting for economic actors- The One Planet Thinking approach”



Appendix C: Full schedule

Monday 27 March	Afternoon	Arrival Utrecht
	Evening	Welcome dinner
Tuesday 28 March	Morning	Visit Environmental Governance group, Copernicus Institute of Sustainable Development, Utrecht University
	Afternoon	Excursion Oostvaardersplassen
	Evening	Dinner with ESG research fellows in the Netherlands
Wednesday 29 March	Morning	Workshop New Directions in ESG (Copernicus Institute of Sustainable Development, Utrecht University)
	Afternoon	Traveling to Bonn by train (3 hours)
	Evening	Dinner in Bonn
Thursday 30 March	Morning	Visit German Development Institute (DIE)
	Afternoon	Visit UN Global Action Campaign
	Evening	Train to Potsdam (6 hours)
Friday 31 March	Morning	Visit Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies (IASS), Potsdam
	Afternoon	Visit WIPCAD research group, University of Potsdam
	Evening	Dinner in Berlin
Saturday 1 April	Morning	<i>Free time</i>
	Afternoon	Excursion Templehof
	Evening	Train to Rostock (2 hours) Ferry to Trelleborg, Sweden (overnight)
Sunday 2 April	Morning	Arrival in Trelleborg, Sweden (8 am) Train to Lund (1 hour)
	Afternoon	Science-society city tour Lund
	Evening	<i>Free time</i>
Monday 3 April	Morning	Visit LUCSUS, Lund University
	Afternoon	Campus walk and visit to several departments
	Evening	Dinner at LUCSUS
Tuesday 4 April	Morning	Field trip Copenhagen: sustainable city bicycle tour
	Afternoon/evening	Travel back home

Appendix D: Collaboration opportunities

The ESG research trip in Europe opened avenues for collaboration with new institutions, including the SDG Action Campaign and the United Nations System Staff College.

Xavier Longan, Laura Hildebrandt, and Gayan Peiris introduced the **SDG Action Campaign**, which is a special initiative from the United Nations' Secretary General administered by the UN Development Programme. It aims to support the UN system and Member States in the implementation of the SDGs by fostering advocacy and public engagement. In doing so, the Campaign seeks to create awareness and ownership around the SDGs and to generate political will to make the goals attainable.

Various engagement techniques were mentioned by the representatives of the Campaign that met with us. These include:

(a) the MYWorld 2030 Survey, which tests awareness around the SDGs and tracks progress on the goals, based on citizens' perceptions – it is already online;

(b) a MYWorld 2030 scientific version of the survey to be disseminated to governments and universities; and

(c) a Global Festival of Ideas: this latter engagement technique is an annual meeting that brings together policymakers, the private sector, civil society organizations, researchers, gaming experts, and policy simulators. It consists of high-level plenary sessions with presentations to discuss and debate critical ideas; real-time problem solving through policy simulations and participatory games based on interactive technology; and innovation hubs that showcase the work of a wide array of organizations. The aim of the game is to engage participants in the trade-offs at the heart of SDG implementation by designing and trying policy solutions.

The **Global Festival of Ideas** was mentioned by Xavier Longan as one of the potential avenues for collaboration with the ESG network, which could participate in one of the plenary sessions of the next Festival that should be held in Bonn in 2018. In our view, such participation could materialize in at least two ways: co-sponsorship in organizing a plenary session, and providing keynote speakers from the ESG network to participate in a plenary session, in TED talks, etc. We think this could be of great value to the ESG network, by fostering its visibility among many actors (UN system, policymakers, private sector, and civil society) and by providing the network with another channel to disseminate the knowledge of its fellows and lead faculty members to a wide audience.

In the second part of the meeting, **Natalia Galat** introduced the **United Nations System Staff College**. The Staff College provides learning, training, and fosters knowledge dissemination across UN agencies and their staff in three specific areas: leadership and management, peace and security, and sustainable development. The overall objective is to promote interagency collaboration, increase the operational effectiveness of the UN system, and equip UN staff with the required skills and competencies to face today's global challenges. In terms of learning, the Staff College provides different types of services, including tailor-made courses, e-learning solutions, and learning events and retreats. Learning events include the UN Reflection Series, SD Talks, and the **UN Summer Academy**. The latter has specifically been mentioned by Natalia Galat as one potential collaboration avenue with the ESG network. This consists of a 5-day

programme that offers executive education, learning, and knowledge exchange to those working to advance sustainable development approaches. We should further explore with UNSSC the possibilities that the ESG project participates in this initiative, as well as other UNSSC learning events: in doing so, we would have to enquire how the programme is designed and how the speakers are selected, and assess the extent to which ESG could collaborate (i.e. by providing speakers).

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