



## **The Earth System Governance Research Alliance invites expressions of interest to host its International Project Office**

### **1. Introduction**

The Earth System Governance Research Alliance invites expressions of interest from universities and other research institutions, including consortia consisting of multiple institutions, to host its International Project Office. This is an exciting and unique opportunity for research institutions to host one of the largest interdisciplinary social science research networks on global sustainability, and to contribute to the interdisciplinary search for novel approaches for much-needed sustainability transformations.

Since the establishment of the Earth System Governance Research Alliance in 2008, the network has continually expanded, and now comprises a vibrant international community of over 700 researchers engaged in cutting-edge interdisciplinary, globally relevant sustainability scholarship. The research alliance organizes a series of prestigious annual conferences, and maintains a leading international publication portfolio, including a high-impact flagship journal, *Earth System Governance*, and two book series with Cambridge University Press and one series with MIT Press. 17 global Taskforces and Working Groups organize research on the details of global sustainability governance, and numerous activities support early career scholars. The network is globally diverse, and a dedicated South-South Initiative brings together leading scholars from Africa, Asia, and Latin America in joint discussions and research activities. The project is coordinated by a gender balanced, geographically representative [Scientific Steering Committee](#), comprising two co-chairs and 13 senior scholars from across the globe.

For more details, see [Earth System Governance Project in numbers](#)

### **2. Background and Conceptual Foundations**

The Earth System Governance Research Alliance was launched in 2008, originally as a core project of the International Human Dimensions Programme on Global Environmental Change (IHDP). The ESG research alliance understands earth system governance as an integrative research framework that marks a shift of focus from a narrowly defined nation-state-oriented 'environmental governance' paradigm to a much broader understanding of multi-level and multi-actor governance in a planetary perspective, integrating social, ecological, technological, political, and cultural aspects across scales from the local to the global. The details of the conceptualization and research agenda of the Earth System Governance Research

Alliance is laid out in its 2018-2028 Science and Implementation Plan that defines [the project's research agenda](#).



Figure 1: Timeline of key ESG Research Alliance milestones

### 3. The International Project Office: Hosting benefits and responsibilities

The administrative core of the Earth System Governance Research Alliance is its International Project Office (IPO), which provides essential support to ensure the successful functioning of the network. After initial hosting by the United Nations University in Bonn, Germany, the International Project Office was based from 2012 to 2018 at Lund University, Sweden, and is currently hosted (from 2019 to 2024) at Utrecht University in The Netherlands. The ESG research alliance is now inviting proposals from potential future host institutions for the period 2024 onwards.

The International Project Office currently comprises three full time staff members responsible for management, organization, administration, and communication of the network.

Hosting the next phase of the ESG research alliance's International Project Office is a unique opportunity for global research institutions or consortia to be at the center of leading international scientific activities that advance cutting-edge social science and interdisciplinary research, innovation and broader stakeholder engagement in the politics and governance of sustainability. The next host of the International Project Office will play a central role in shaping further development of the network, its scientific initiatives, and the debates, impact and outreach activities of the network, in close cooperation with, and guidance by, the Scientific Steering Committee.

#### Benefits of hosting the International Project Office

- Play a central role in leading an interdisciplinary global community of over 700 scholars with a wide sphere of scientific, policy and societal impact.
- Attain international prestige through hosting an established high-profile global scholarly network.
- Gain recognition as a hub of excellence at the forefront of research innovation on global sustainability and transformation governance.
- Support global networking, leadership development and mentoring activities.
- Attract top scientific talent from the wider network to work at the host institution and its partners.

- Facilitate institutional promotion and branding on the official network website, publications, events, and materials, including ongoing conferences across continents, and specifically exposure during the annual conference.
- Facilitate early career scholar development, and advance diversity, representativity and equity through ever-broadening inclusion and participation practices in science.
- Contribute specifically to network development among scholars in the Global South and link them with Global North networks.
- Benefit from far-reaching social media platforms with high impact (2500 email subscribers and 15000+ followers across social media channels).
- Coordinate or participate in and benefit from transnational research funding applications.

#### **Responsibilities of the host institution**

- Commit to a 3-5 year or longer hosting period.
- Provide financial support and office space for International Project Office staff members, which currently include an executive director, along with 1-2 (full or part time) staff for communication, network coordination and administration.
- Providing limited funding for IPO operational activities, such as travel, and communications.
- Lead ESG research alliance strategy development in coordination with the Scientific Steering Committee.
- Represent the network globally.
- Designate an academic representative from the host institution to join the Scientific Steering Committee to ensure close coordination and collaboration between the IPO and the SSC.

#### **4. Submitting an expression of interest and further information**

The Scientific Steering Committee of the ESG research alliance welcomes interested institutions (individually or in consortia) to submit an expression of interest to explore potential hosting of the next International Project Office.

Please send an initial expression of interest and direct all queries to the current co-chairs of the ESG research alliance's Scientific Steering Committee: Prof. Dr. Aarti Gupta ([aarti.gupta@wur.nl](mailto:aarti.gupta@wur.nl)) and Prof. Dr. Louis Kotzé ([louis.kotze@nwu.ac.za](mailto:louis.kotze@nwu.ac.za)), with cc to [ipo@earthssystemgovernance.org](mailto:ipo@earthssystemgovernance.org).

Expressions of interest are invited on a continuous basis, with the first round to be considered before December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023.