

**15th Annual International Sustainable Development Research Conference
July 5-8, 2009**

***"Taking up the Global Challenge: Analysing the implementation of
innovations and governance for Sustainable Development"***

CALL FOR PAPERS

Track nr 1B: *Long term change towards sustainable societies: Scenarios,
forecasting and backcasting*

Track chairs: Prof. Philip Vergragt (Tellus/Massachusetts Institute of Technology, USA), Prof. Bert de Vries (Utrecht University, the Netherlands), Prof. Rik Leemans (Wageningen University, the Netherlands)

Long term change towards sustainable societies: scenarios, forecasting and backcasting.

Sustainable development requires both deep and fast changes in technologies, policies, economies, institutions, lifestyles, and values. Such changes have been explored in many types of scenarios. In recent years global scenarios of climate change have captured most of the attention, but there are many types of scenarios and forecasting.

In this track we will explore both methodological and substantive developments in qualitative and quantitative scenario analysis, forecasting, foresight, and backcasting, especially in relation to the imperative of deep and fast changes towards sustainability. In this context, backcasting has been used for formulating normative future visions through multi-stakeholder processes, and has explored the conditions for implementation of elements of these normative visions. In contrast, forecasting and foresight explore the future under certain initial or boundary conditions, such as strong policy interventions or fast technological developments. An emerging problem for both in the context of climate change is the lack of speed; many of those changes are slower than they should be against the backdrop of population growth, increasing welfare, and limited resources and increasing environmental threats.

Papers are invited that report research or reflect on the roles scenarios, forecasting, foresight, and backcasting studies can play in faster and deeper socio-technical and societal changes towards sustainability on the global, regional, and local levels; on the long term and the medium term; and on which aspects of these methods make them especially relevant for policy makers and innovators in the context of implementing deep change. Scenarios, forecasts, foresights, and backcasts may be integral or sectoral, relating to energy, food, health, transportation, or housing systems; they may be global or more specific for developing or developed regions. They should preferably be systemic including both production and consumption, both technologies and policies, and consider reflexivity and learning. Furthermore, papers are welcomed that compare various studies using a particular approach (e.g. scenarios or backcasting) or make comparisons across different approaches.

Reflecting on the Great Transition Initiative and opportunities for change

Within track 1B a special session will be organized to reflect on the Great Transition Initiative by the Tellus Institute, Boston. The Great Transition towards

Sustainability is one among a series of global scenarios, most of which are less desirable, like Fortress World or Barbarization. These scenarios were originally developed by the Global Scenario Group, and have now been remodeled by a revised "Polestar" scenario tool. The Great Transition narrative has been enriched by means of a series of papers exploring dimensions of a Great Transition world, like business and economics, governance, well-being, technology, and values. Deep change could be brought about by a global citizens' movement rather than by policy reform or by technological innovations.

In this session scholars and activists are invited to reflect on the Great Transition from an academic perspective and from the perspective of intervention and implementation. How does the Great Transition vision relate to sustainability science? How could it be enriched through academic disciplines and research? Which research questions does it generate? How could it diffuse faster and more effectively into global and local change processes? How to incorporate small elements of change as components of a Great Transition? Which types of interventions could be effective? Scholars and activists are invited to react to the Great Transition essay or on one of the papers of Frontiers of a Great Transition (www.greattransition.org).

Please look at the detailed instructions and deadlines for submitting your abstract and paper, using the Submission & guidelines button at the left side.