

Inter-University Sustainable Development Research Programme

Concept Document and Work Programme 2024-2030

Research and Transfer Centre “Sustainability and Climate Change Management” (FTZ-NK)

Ulmenliet 20

21033 Hamburg

Room 0.39 / AS4

T +49.40.428 75-6313

IUSDRP@haw-hamburg.de



Rationale

Much progress has been made around the world in the field of sustainable development since the publication of *Our Common Future* in 1987, and the summits held in Rio (1992 and 2012). The sustainable development initiatives and research evolved substantially over the past 25 years. The end of the UN Decade on Education for Sustainable Development (2005–2014) marked the start of a new era, titled 'Sustainability 2.0'. At a time when the UN is stepping up efforts towards pursuing sustainable development goals (SDGs), sound research on sustainable development is required more than ever before.

One of the gaps that are still evident relates to universities' ability to perform high-quality sustainability research. Against this background, The Inter-University Sustainable Development Research Programme contributes in various ways to member universities' efforts to consolidate their initiatives in the field of sustainable development. For instance:

- **By increasing their research funding:** funding from research projects may be increased by means of sustainable development research. Statistics show that sustainable development expertise clustered around research centres or programmes is more successful than ad hoc efforts and research bids made by individuals alone.
- **By enhancing institutional research profiles in the field of sustainable development:** at present, only a few universities already have an international and authoritative research profile in this field, even though many have great potential to develop it. This potential can be further optimised and increased by means of more coordinated approaches to bidding for and securing national and international funding for interdisciplinary and cross-faculty projects on matters related to sustainable development, and by increasing their visibility.
- **By increasing the intake of PhD students:** many universities have the potential to be attractive places for PhD students focusing on sustainability research, but at present – for various reasons – do not fully use it. The PhD programme to be led by the Inter-University Sustainable Development Research Programme will help realise this potential, and offer the critical mass needed to train a new generation of sustainability experts across the whole spectrum of themes and topics associated with it.
- **By increasing publication output:** in addition to increasing income and profile-building, the Inter-University Sustainable Development Research Programme will help its members achieve more substantial research outputs, which can be translated into the publication of more papers in indexed journals, as well as

innovative books and book chapters. The *International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education* and the World Sustainability Series, the leading book series on the topic, are some of the instruments to be used, as well as wider access to the world's leading journals on the environment and sustainable development matters.

The **Inter-University Sustainable Development Research Programme** will consolidate and further develop the know-how and profile on sustainable development among its member universities worldwide, helping them fully take advantage of the many possibilities for institutional consolidation and individual career development that sustainability research offers.

A working programme (2024–2020) for the Inter-University Sustainable Development Research Programme has been prepared and is now under implementation. It will be coordinated by the Hamburg University of Applied Sciences (Germany), but each member university is autonomous in respect of its individual activities, funding and operations.

Aims

The **main aim** of the Inter-University Sustainable Development Research Programme is to establish a platform through which member universities can undertake more research and project writing to mobilise funding on matters related to sustainable development, according to an agreed-upon work plan and agenda.

The Inter-University Sustainable Development Research Programme will ensure that energetic, committed experts at member universities have a sound basis for attracting and undertaking research projects, training PhD students, publishing more in indexed journals, organising high-profile events, working more closely with their peers (a clear requirement in the sustainable development research community) and hence **strengthening their personal and institutional profiles**.

In addition, the Inter-University Sustainable Development Research Programme will strive to develop the ability to **leverage organisational resources and maximise the benefits research projects may bring to member universities**.

The specific aims of the Inter-University Sustainable Development Research Programme are as follows:

- Assemble interdisciplinary, cross-faculty teams among its member universities that focus on sustainable development, with a keen interest in bidding for national and international sustainability research projects;
- Set-up and maintain a working environment that encourages international cooperation, supports institutional and inter-institutional project development, and hence increases the chances of success in project bidding and acquisition;
- Link and engage with the sustainability research community at member universities in the joint training of PhD students and the organisation of specific, strategic events;
- Catalyse and facilitate the production of high-quality joint publications in indexed journals, as well as in ground-breaking books and book chapters, in cooperation with well-established publishers.

Operationally, the Inter-University Sustainable Development Research Programme will **develop project proposals which can be submitted to national and international agencies and funding bodies**. It will also provide key support in promoting cooperation in the field of sustainable development between the member universities, in a way never seen before.

Topics

The Inter-University Sustainable Development Research Programme focuses on **sustainable development as a cross-cutting issue and on specific topics central to the international sustainability research agenda**. The list of topics includes but is not limited to:

- Sustainable energy production (renewable energy) and use (energy efficiency)
- Sustainable production and consumption
- Sustainable water use and management
- Sustainable waste management
- Sustainable transport
- Sustainable development and climate change (mitigation, adaptation and resilience)
- Education for sustainable development and curriculum innovation in sustainable development
- Sustainability in higher education institutions (e.g. campus greening)

Other topics may be added to the list in accordance with the expertise of the member universities and interested colleagues.

Strategic relevance

Apart from the fact that joining a programme of such high calibre will greatly enhance the profile of member universities, some other key factors which speak for joining the Inter-University Sustainable Development Research Programme are as follows:

- The **high level of interest** in the topic, which is likely to be maintained in the future;
- The **large demand-supply gap** seen in respect of sustainability research;
- The **extensive availability of funding** to support sustainable development research from public and private bodies;
- The **existence of ambitious government policies** in the field, whose implementation depends at least partly on research;
- The **broad existence of financing options** available in respect of project funding (e.g. as project coordinator, as project partner, as external consultancy, etc.);
- The **keen interest** from industry, banks and other sectors in the topic;
- The **opportunity to train** PhD students, produce publications and run influential events at member universities.

At present, **global expenditures on sustainable development research** (including the areas outlined under 'Topics') are estimated to be approximately USD 1 billion per year. The Inter-University Sustainable Development Research Programme will help unlock substantial funding possibilities for integrated projects on sustainability issues through which, for instance, universities and governments, or universities and industry, may work together.

Coordination and partners

The founding organisations of the Inter-University Sustainable Development Research Programme are the Hamburg University of Applied Sciences (Germany), where the programme's secretariat is based, and Manchester Metropolitan University (UK). A Memorandum of Understanding is signed with partner universities (via a letter of commitment) in order to formalise their involvement in the programme. Partner universities can then refer to themselves as members of IUSDRP and can take part in all its activities, organise or co-organise events, and coordinate or be partners in IUSDRP-led projects.

Operational aspects

The Inter-University Sustainable Development Research Programme will bring together researchers at partner universities with an interest in sustainable development research and its ramifications. The aim is to reinforce their profile and allow them to take greater advantage of the many benefits this topic offers.

The work of the programme will be overseen by an International Advisory Board composed of some of the world's leading experts on sustainability, who will provide advice, guidance and support the implementation of the programme's activities.

The operational components of the Inter-University Sustainable Development Research Programme involve five interrelated core tasks:

- **Project bidding and implementation:** This is the core element of the programme, where partners will apply and/or co-apply for funding and undertake projects on matters related to sustainable development.
- **Publications:** The programme will create publishing opportunities in the field of sustainable development, including special issues in indexed journals, the establishment of teams of authors to work on joint papers, and the launching of ground-breaking book projects.
- **Training:** The programme will seek to unleash the leadership potential of partner universities in terms of training as a whole, and MSc/PhD training in particular, on sustainable development issues. Here emphasis will be given to the provision of training on methods, approaches, strategies and the execution of projects related to sustainable development, at various levels.
- **Know-how transfer:** The programme will, by means of practical projects, transfer the best available know-how and expertise on sustainable development available in the partner universities to others, helping them advance the cause of sustainability at the institutional level.
- **Institutional strengthening:** By means of networking, the programme will help build systems and networks that can respond most effectively to emerging funding opportunities, and hence strengthen the member organisations.

A flagship of the Inter-University Sustainable Development Research Programme is the **'World Symposium on Sustainable Development at Universities' (WSSD-U) series**, which is the leading event in the field. Organised bi-annually, WSSD-U brings together the leading organisations and experts on sustainability in higher education, providing a unique opportunity for information exchange, networking and the documentation of project work and dissemination of results from research projects. This is complemented by the **'World Sustainable Development Teach-In Days'** (also a bi-annual event), the

use of the **World Sustainability Series** (published by Springer, one of the world's top-five scientific publishers) to produce high-calibre books, and the **International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education**, the world's leading academic journal in the field.

Thanks to its integrative and truly international approach, the Inter-University Sustainable Development Research Programme will achieve effective mobilisation of staff and resources, and use strategic events to attract the attention of scientists, policymakers, community members and media representatives. Ultimately, it will broaden awareness about the partner universities and their sustainable development research capabilities.

Membership

There are currently two ways of becoming a member: Regular and Premium Membership.

Regular IUSDRP Members have access to news and internal communication of the network, opportunities to engage in scientific research and to share news from their institution with other members, and participation in members' meetings.

Premium IUSDRP Members have all the opportunities offered to Regular Members in addition to a set of benefits. The benefits of Premium Members include:

NO PROJECT PREPARATION COSTS: Premium Members will be waived of the fees for project preparation and application bids. Up to two waivers can be redeemed per year.

INCREASED PUBLIC VISIBILITY: Premium Members will have the exclusive opportunity to host events with the support of the IUSDRP Staff, increasing their visibility nationally and Europe-wide.

ADVICE AND SUPPORT: Premium Members will have access to advice and the support of IUSDRP Staff and network when it comes down to preparing projects, events and papers, during the Premium Members' monthly meetings.

PRIORITY PARTNER: Premium Members will be considered thematic leaders and priority partners in publications, exclusive hosting of expert conferences and European and international project bids.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: Premium Members will have access to exclusive scientific and sustainability-related workshops, seminars, and mentoring sessions, to develop the skills of their staff.

MEMBER-ONLY DISCOUNTS: Premium Members will enjoy two full waivers in registrations for IUSDRP-related conferences, and 50% discount on additional registrations.

Annual Membership Fees

With an annual Premium Membership fee of Euro 3.000, all features listed above are covered.

BECOME A PREMIUM MEMBER NOW!

To become a Premium Member, contact us at iusdrp@ls.haw-hamburg.de

WORK PROGRAMME (2024-2030)

All years

- Joining of member universities
- Regular events which are announced at: <https://www.haw-hamburg.de/en/ftz-nk/programmes/iusdrp.html>
- Continuous recruiting of PhD students
- Regular publications to be announced at: <https://www.springer.com/series/13384>
- World Sustainable Development Teach-In Day (every year in December)
- The submission of project bids will be **continuously** pursued, and will be undertaken as soon as relevant calls for projects are issued by national and international funding bodies.

September 2024

- World Symposium on Sustainable Development at Universities (WSSD-U-2024) in Florianópolis, Brazil - <https://www.haw-hamburg.de/en/university/newsroom/news-details/news/news/show/6th-world-symposium-on-sustainable-development-at-universities/>

May 2025

- 5th World Symposium on Sustainability Science and Research, in Lisbon, Portugal <https://www.haw-hamburg.de/detail/news/news/show/5th-world-symposium-on-sustainability-science-and-research/>

June 2026

- World Symposium on Sustainable Development at Universities (WSSD-U-2026) in Europe

September 2028

- World Symposium on Sustainable Development at Universities (WSSD-U-2028) in Southeast Asia

June 2030

- World Symposium on Sustainable Development at Universities (WSSD-U-2030) in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Meet our team

Head of IUSDRP

Prof. Dr. (mult.) Dr. h.c. (mult.) Walter Leal
Director of the Research and Transfer Centre “Sustainability and Climate Change Management” (FTZ-NK)
Ulmenliet 20
21033 Hamburg
Room 0.39 / AS4
T +49.40.428 75-6313
walter.leal2@haw-hamburg.de

Executive Director

Laís Viera Trevisan
Research and Transfer Centre FTZ-NK
Ulmenliet 20
21033 Hamburg
Room: 0.33
Lais.VieraTrevisan@haw-hamburg.de

Executive Director

Dr. Amanda Salvia
Research and Transfer Centre FTZ-NK
Ulmenliet 20
21033 Hamburg
Amanda.Lange-Salvia@haw-hamburg.de

Executive Director

Dr. Joao Eustachio
Research and Transfer Centre FTZ-NK
Ulmenliet 20
21033 Hamburg
Room: 0.36
Joao.Eustachio@haw-hamburg.de