



international social science council



Transformations to Sustainability Programme

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1 September 2015, Sao Paulo



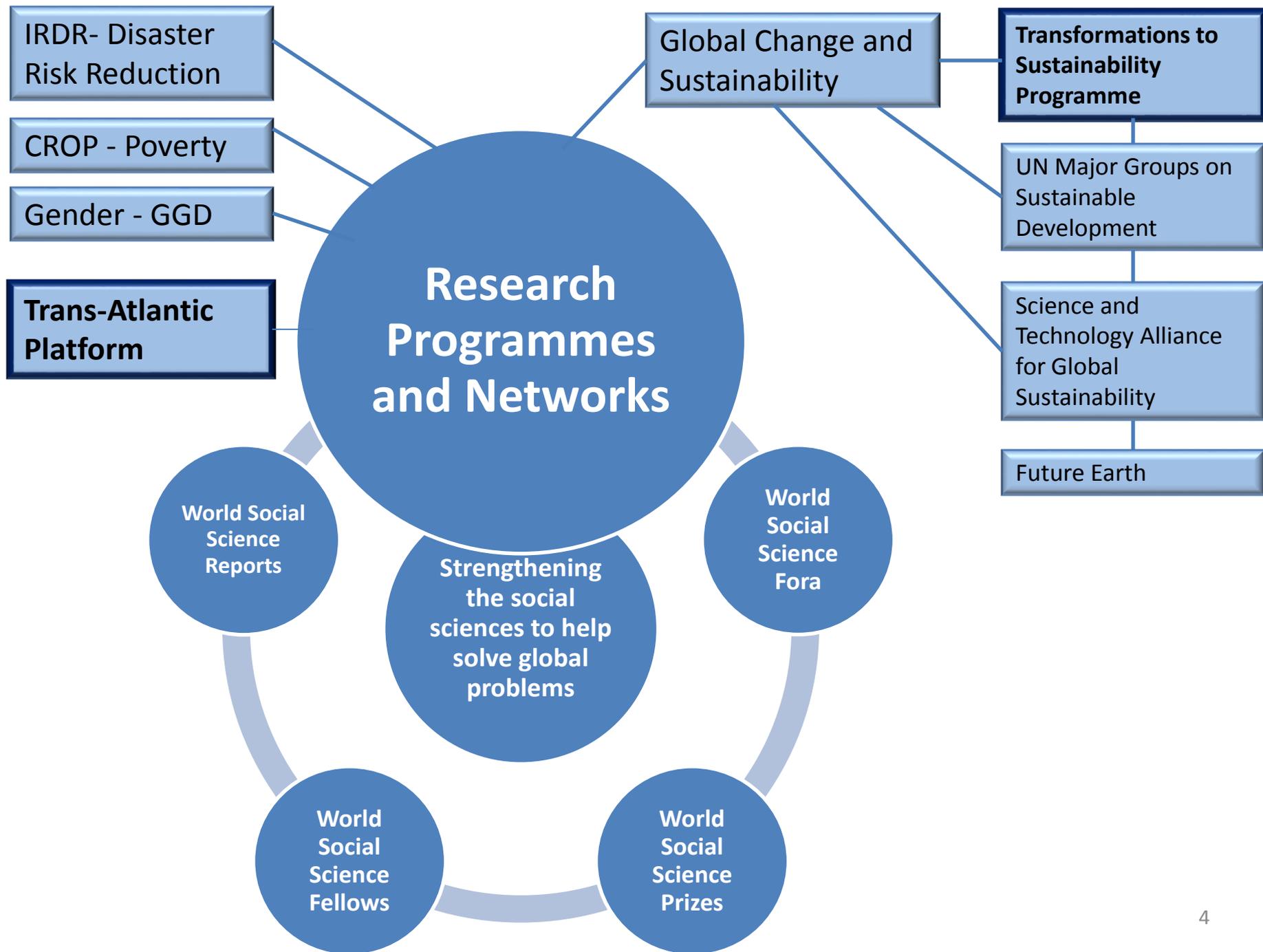
Transformative Research: Interactions Between Social
Sciences, Humanities and Environmental Science

01/09/2015

Overview

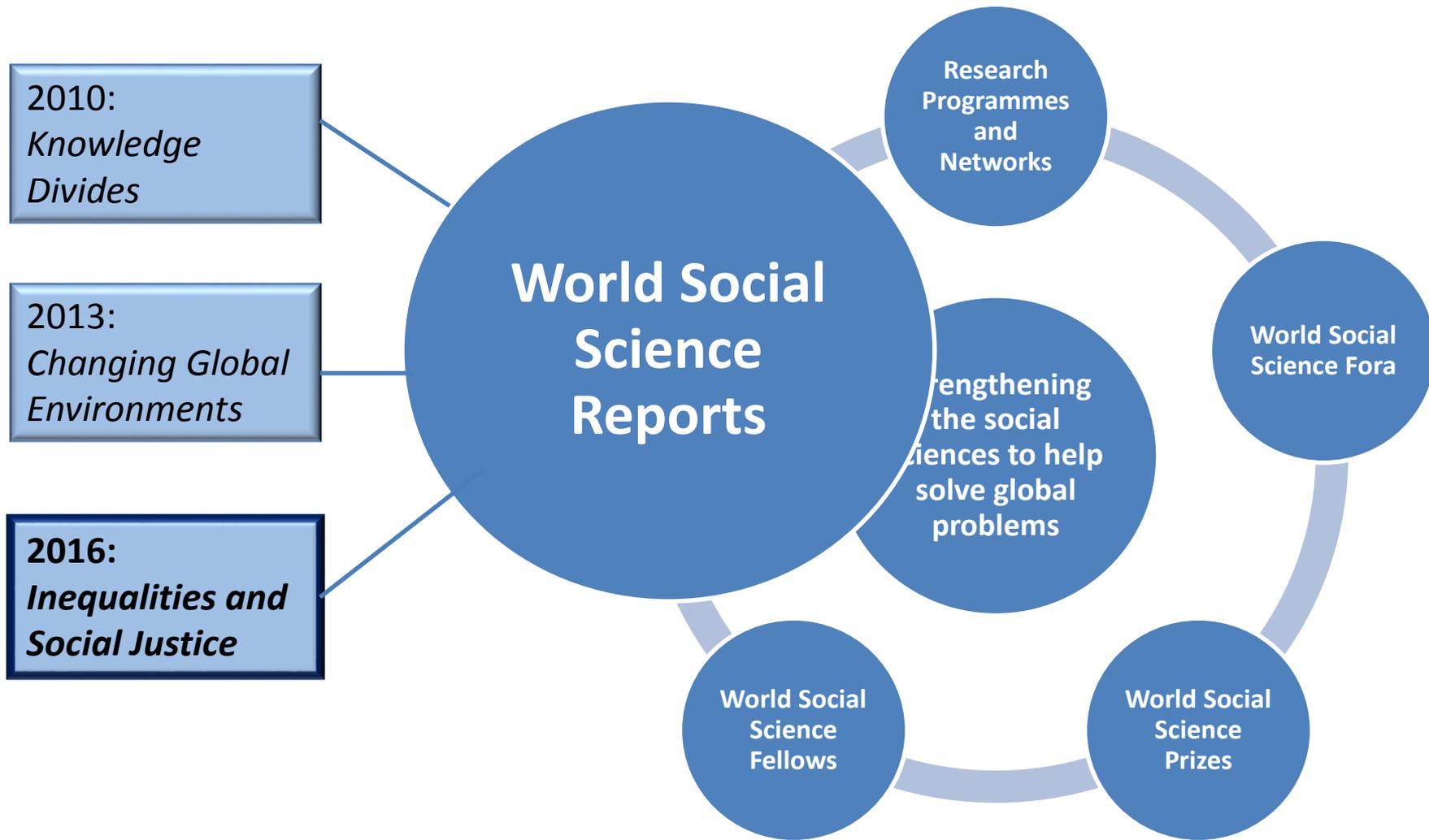
- The ISSC
- The context: Integrated research for global sustainability
- ISSC's work on global environmental change and sustainable development
- Transformations to Sustainability Programme

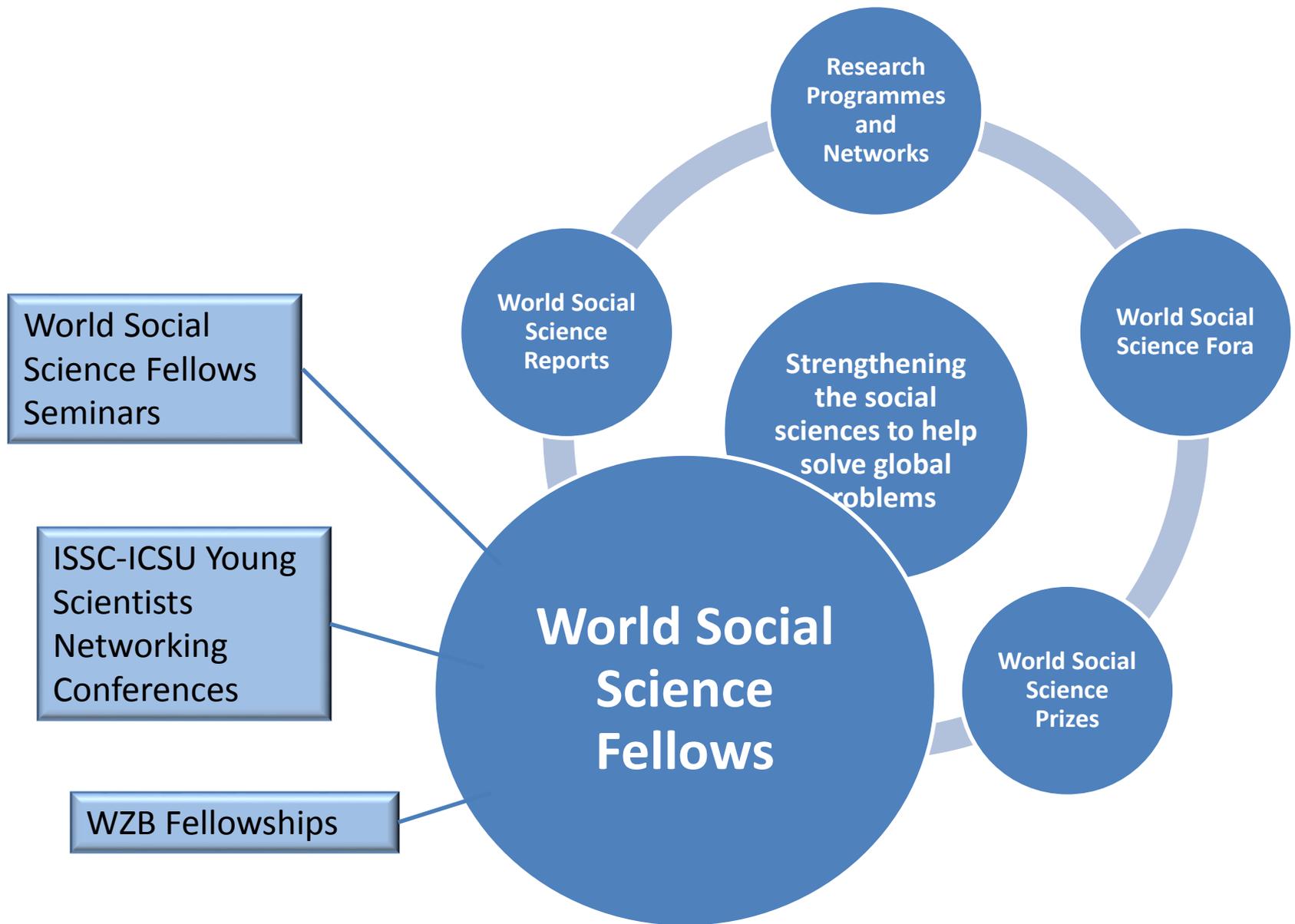






WORLD SOCIAL SCIENCE FORUM 2015
13-16 September 2015







The grand challenge

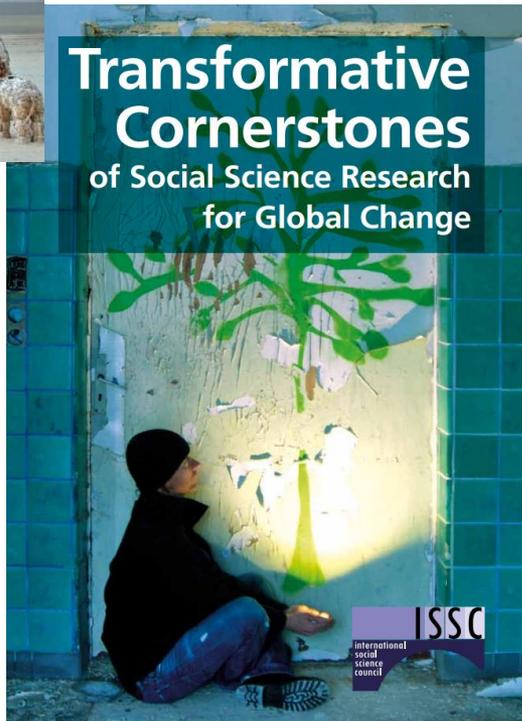
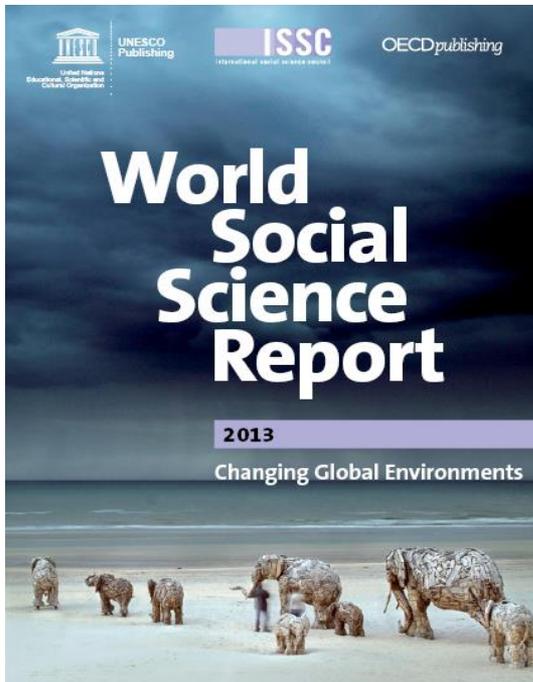
To urgently contribute transformative solutions to a converging set of global crises, working simultaneously to protect planetary resources, safeguard social equity and human wellbeing

Science system realities

- Persistent funding pressures
- Continued, and growing, public mistrust
- A new sense of urgency and pressure for science to make a difference to real-world problem-solving

The emerging response

- **Challenging – and changing – science**
Doing integrated science that makes a difference, pursuing excellence through engagement in open knowledge-action arenas
- **Challenging science policy and practice**
Time to create the ‘conditions of possibility’, socially engaged science for a sustainable and just world



ISSC: Mobilising the social sciences

- 2011: GEC Design Project 2
- 2012: Transformative Cornerstones of Social Science Research for Global Change
- 2013: World Social Science Report
- 2014: Launch of the Transformations to Sustainability Programme



While the particular transformations before us to a low-carbon and resilient future will be unprecedented in their scope and scale, the social sciences hold essential knowledge from prior episodes of deep social change about how to change norms, policies, institutions, businesses, social practices and human behaviour.

Transformations - complex processes of profound social change: altering our social and economic systems, values and lifestyles in ways that could put society on a fundamentally different development path

The social science foundation of research on global environmental change

- Played central roles in understanding the human processes, activities and contextual drivers - factors that underlie the anthropogenic causes of climate change
- Leading role in understanding human vulnerabilities and social system impacts of climate change
- Experts on feasible pathways to implementing viable, equitable, and socially acceptable mitigation and adaptation solutions

Knowledge gaps

Complex processes of profound social change that are multi-dimensional, involve multiple actors, occur at different rates and scales, and can be deliberate or unplanned

A graphic consisting of a solid black rectangle. Inside the rectangle, the words "THE KNOWLEDGE GAP" are written in a bold, white, sans-serif font. The text is arranged in three lines: "THE" is centered at the top; "KNOWLE" is on the second line, and "DGE" is on the third line, with "KNOWLE" and "DGE" aligned to the left and right respectively; "GA" is on the fourth line, aligned to the left, and "P" is on the fifth line, aligned to the right. The overall effect is a fragmented, high-contrast representation of the phrase.

THE
KNOWLE DGE
GA P

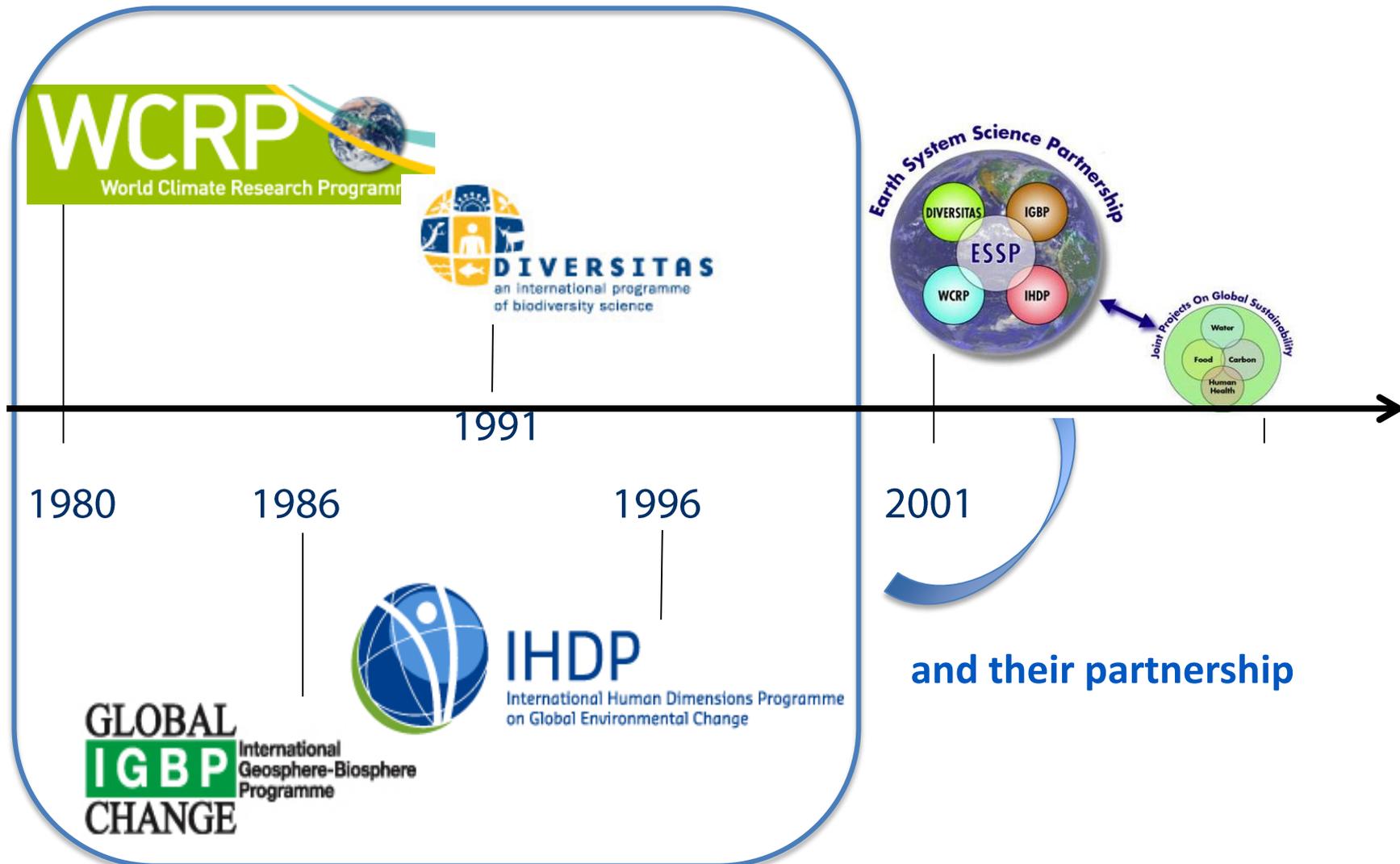
Objective

Build and connect global knowledge to intensify the impact of research and find new ways to accelerate sustainable development,

By promoting new ways of producing knowledge, and making sure it gets used:

- Working globally
- Working across disciplines and fields of science (interdisciplinarity)
- Working with society on the co-design and co-production of knowledge (transdisciplinarity)

Transforming international GEC research: Strengthened integration and a stronger solutions-orientation



BELMONT
FORUM



ICSU

International Council for Science

futureearth
research for global sustainability

ISSC

international social science council



**UNITED NATIONS
UNIVERSITY**



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



**SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
SOLUTIONS NETWORK**
A GLOBAL INITIATIVE FOR THE UNITED NATIONS

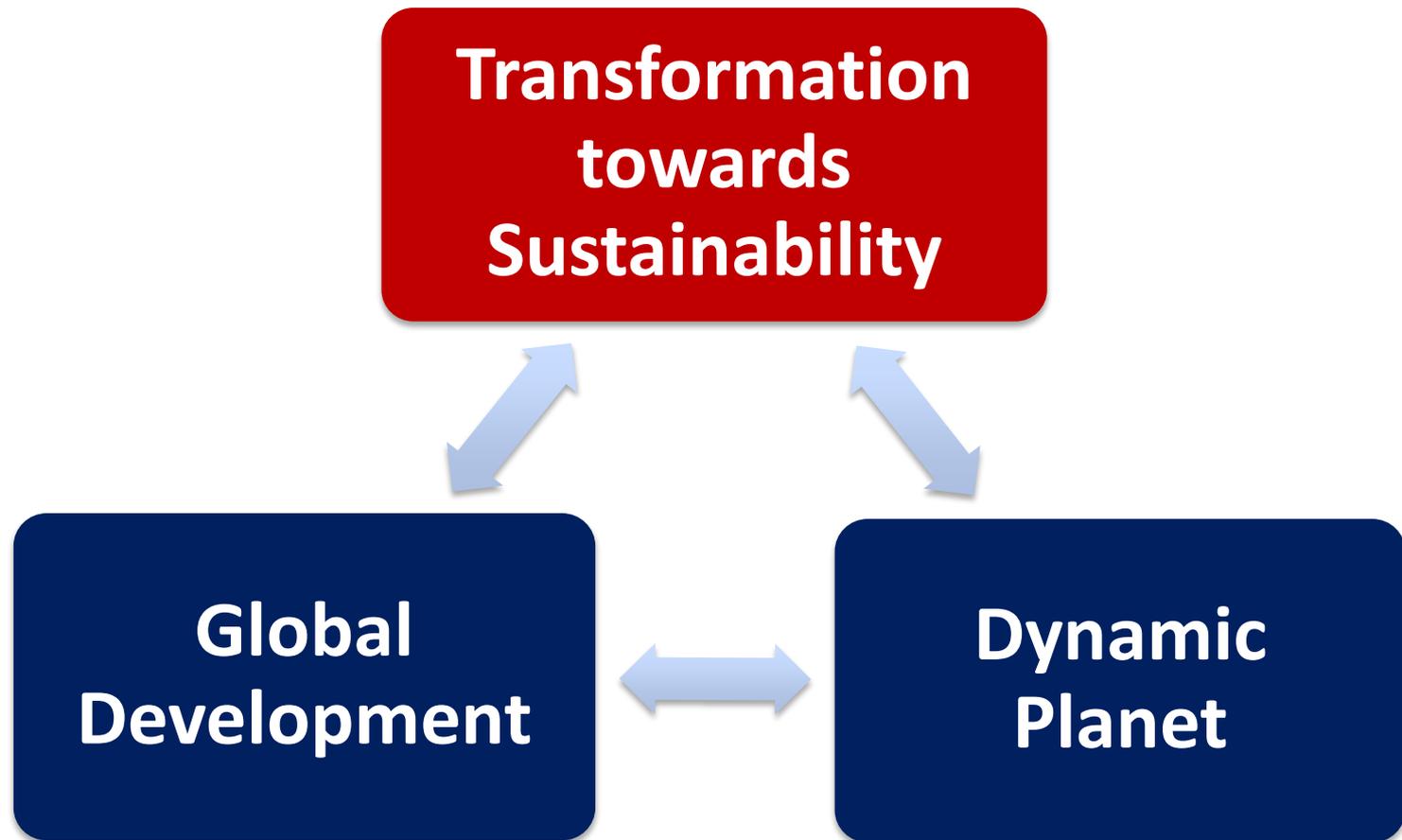


WMO

Grand societal challenges

1. Deliver water, energy, and food for all, and manage the synergies and trade-offs among them
2. Decarbonise socio-economic systems to stabilise the climate
3. Safeguard the terrestrial, freshwater and marine natural assets underpinning human well-being
4. Build healthy, resilient and productive cities
5. Promote sustainable rural futures to feed rising and more affluent populations
6. Improve human health in relation to GEC
7. Encourage sustainable consumption and production patterns that are equitable
8. Increase social resilience to future threats by building adaptive governance systems.

Future Earth: 3 integrated research themes



ISSCs Transformation to Sustainability Programme



Vision

An openly accessible global knowledge trust on social transformation that informs effective and equitable solutions to the urgent problems of global change and sustainability

Main objectives

- **Increase the social science (incl. behavioural and economic science) contributions** necessary to craft more effective, equitable and transformative solutions to the problems of global change and sustainability
- **Increase the use of such knowledge** by policy makers, practitioners, the private sector, citizens and activists

T2S programme research questions

- What do we know about processes of change in particular places where social and environmental problems converge?
- What changes at individual, organisational, cultural and systemic levels are needed?
- How can these be realised in ways that are socially acceptable and adequately anticipate future challenges?
- What novel visions for change exist, whose visions count, how do powerful interests influence unfolding trajectories of change?
- What are possible levers of change and who are potential change agents?
- What types of decision making processes are required to foster deliberate and democratic processes of transformation?
- What is the role of science in such processes?

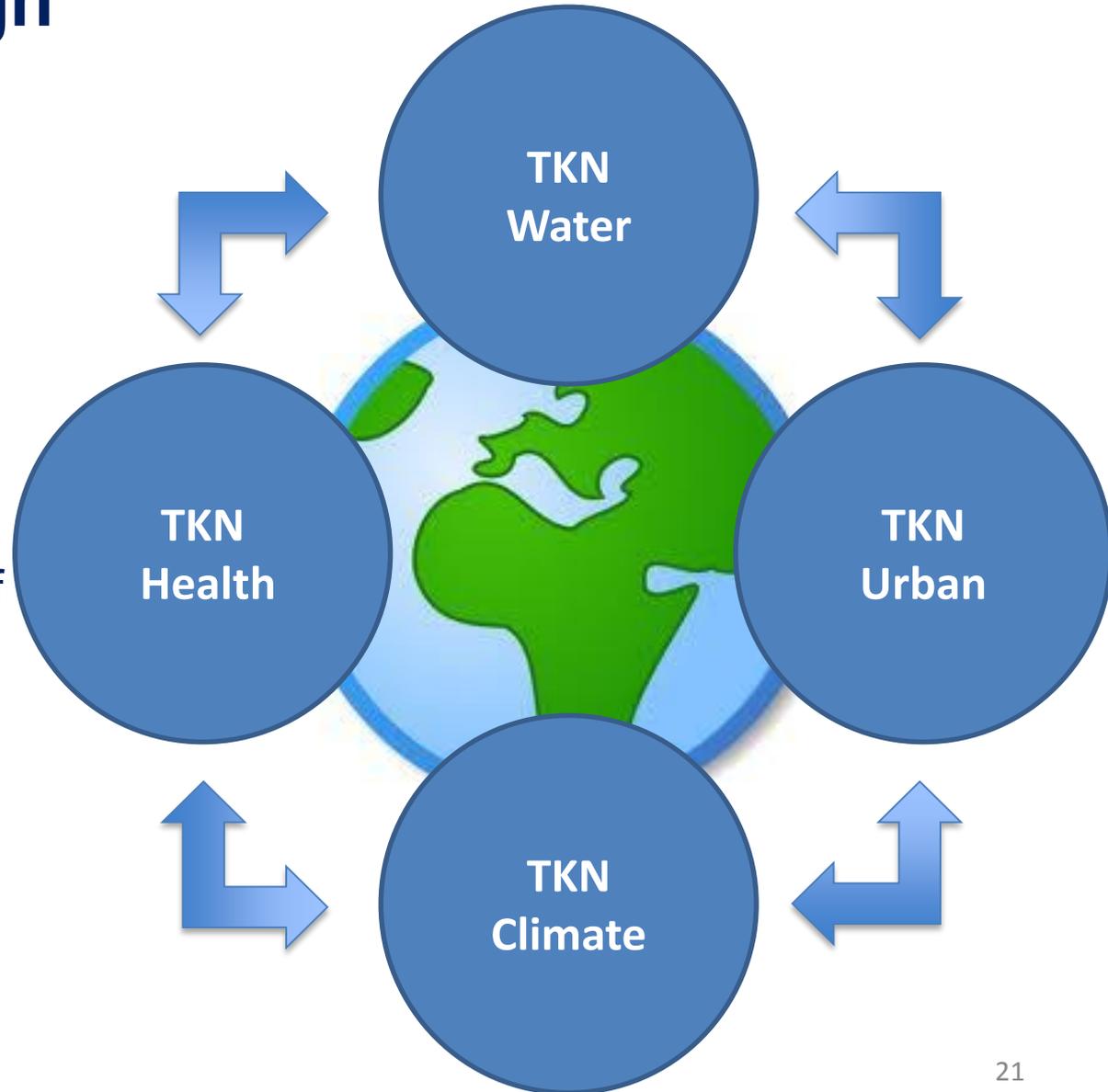
Programme design

Transformative Knowledge Networks

- Social transformation in context, focusing on concrete challenges
- Solutions-oriented research and mutual learning: co-design and co-production of knowledge

Global knowledge trust: Annual workshops on

- Social transformations
- Transformative science
- Euros 900.000 over 3 years



Transformative Knowledge Network (TKN) principles

- 1. Focus on a social transformation need or opportunity in relation to a specific sustainability challenge**
- 1. Transnational collaboration**
 - Supporting teams in at least three countries
 - Including at least one low- or middle-income country
- 2. Integrated research**
 - Putting social science researchers (from academia, research NGOs and other sectors) in the lead
 - Encouraging inter-disciplinarity within and beyond the social sciences

4. Solutions-oriented research

- Emphasising the iterative co-design, co-production and co-dissemination of knowledge in communities of practice (science working with society)
- Building mutual networks of learning

5. Capacity building

- Involving low- or middle-income country researchers in the co-leadership of TKNs
- Demonstrating direct benefits for early career researchers (esp. post-doctoral level)

6. Reflexivity and learning

- Ongoing recording and analysis of TKN processes and outcomes

Work plan 2014-2015

Mar 2014: Call for seed funding

Sept 2014: Seed grants selected

Nov 2014: Transformative Knowledge
Workshop I

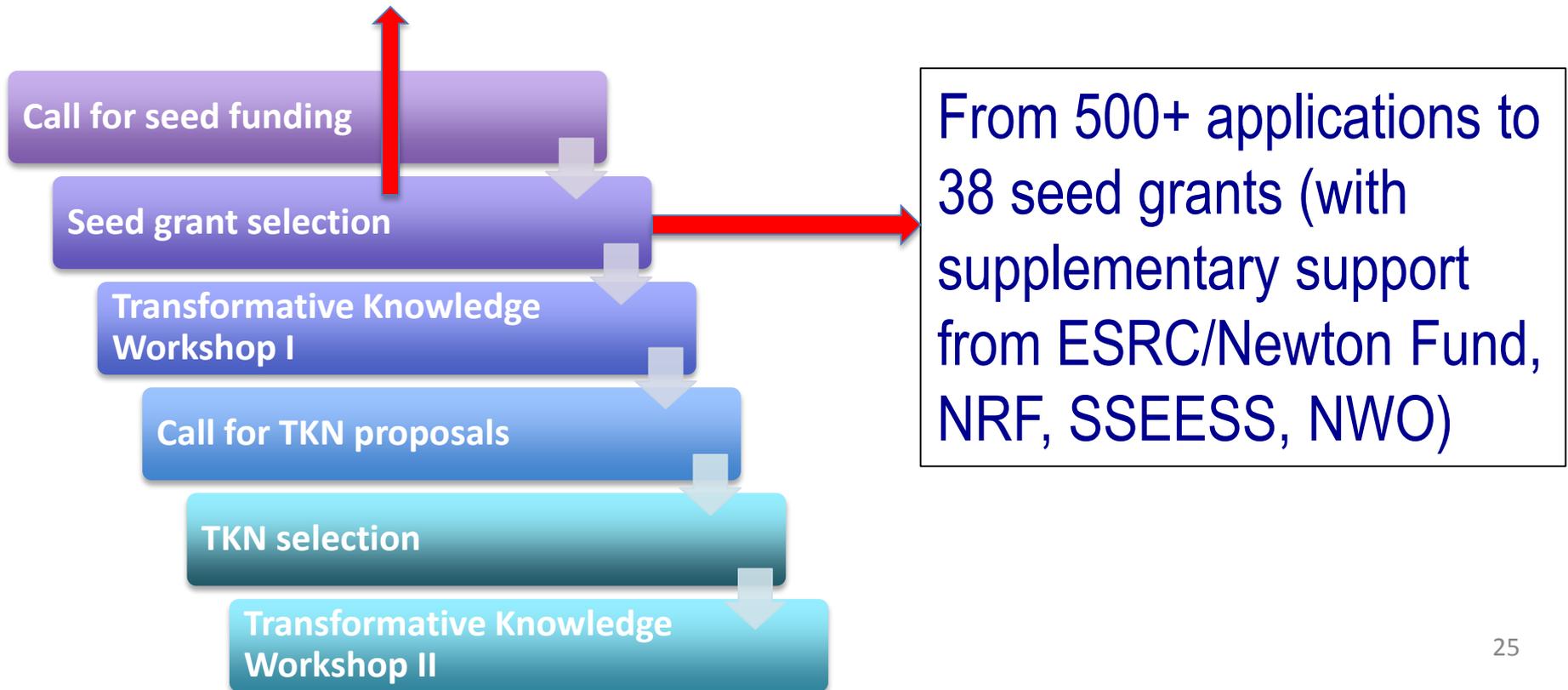
Dec 2014: Call for TKN proposals

By Sep 2015: 3+ TKNs selected

Sept 2015: Transformative Knowledge
Workshop II

2014 Seed Funding

- Implemented and funded by ISSC (Sida)
- Purpose: Preparing for TKN proposals
 - Building scientific and stakeholder networks
 - Co-designing potential TKN proposals



Transformative Knowledge Workshops

1 - 17-19 November 2014, Potsdam

2 – 11-12 September, Durban



Provide a baseline for building a global knowledge trust on social transformations

COSUST Special Issue

Sustainability and the Imagination, Durban, Sep 2015

TKN Workshop Goals

To lay the foundation for the global Transformations Knowledge Trust that ISSC's T2S Programme aims to create.

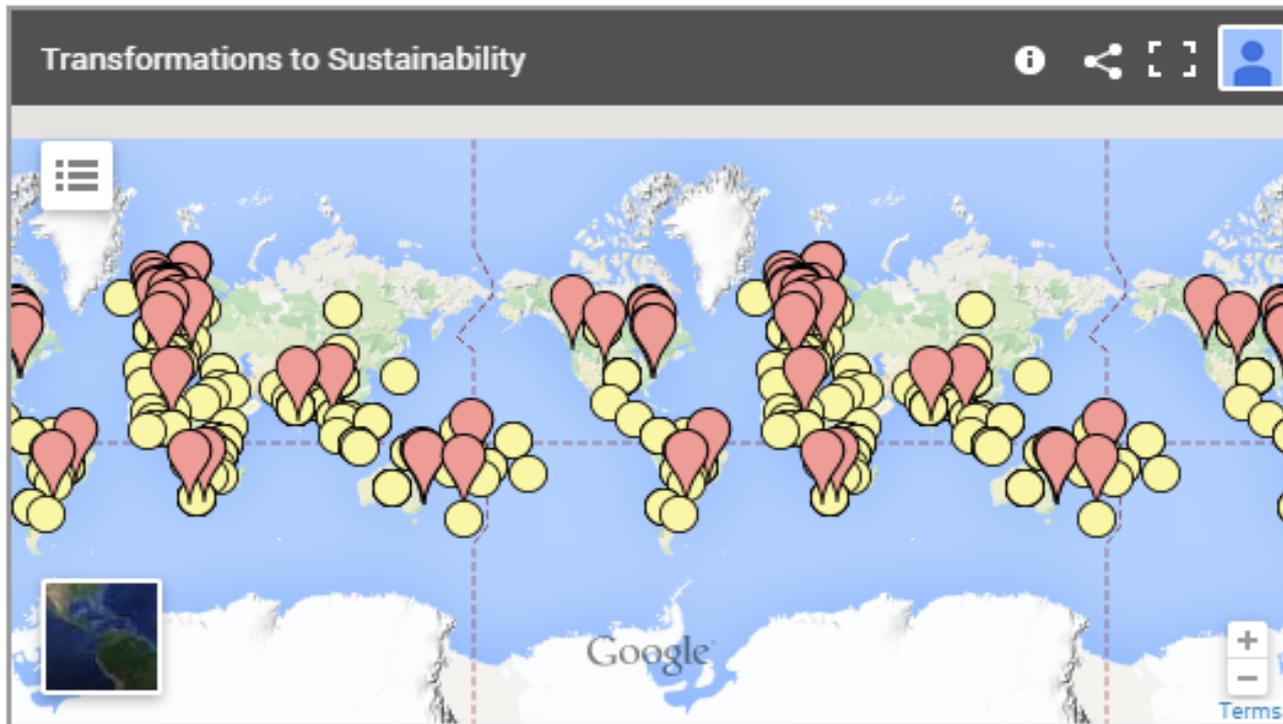
- Inform and Inspire Seed Grant Proposals
- Establish a Baseline on Social Transformation Knowledge
- Engage in Multi-disciplinary Dialogue
- Immerse in the Interconnected Challenges of Global Change and Sustainability
- Engage Funders



First call for TKNs: Dec 2014

- 100 applications received for 3 grants
- TKN funding, implemented in partnership with the Belmont Forum (NRF, South Africa and JST, Japan)
- Awards by September 2015

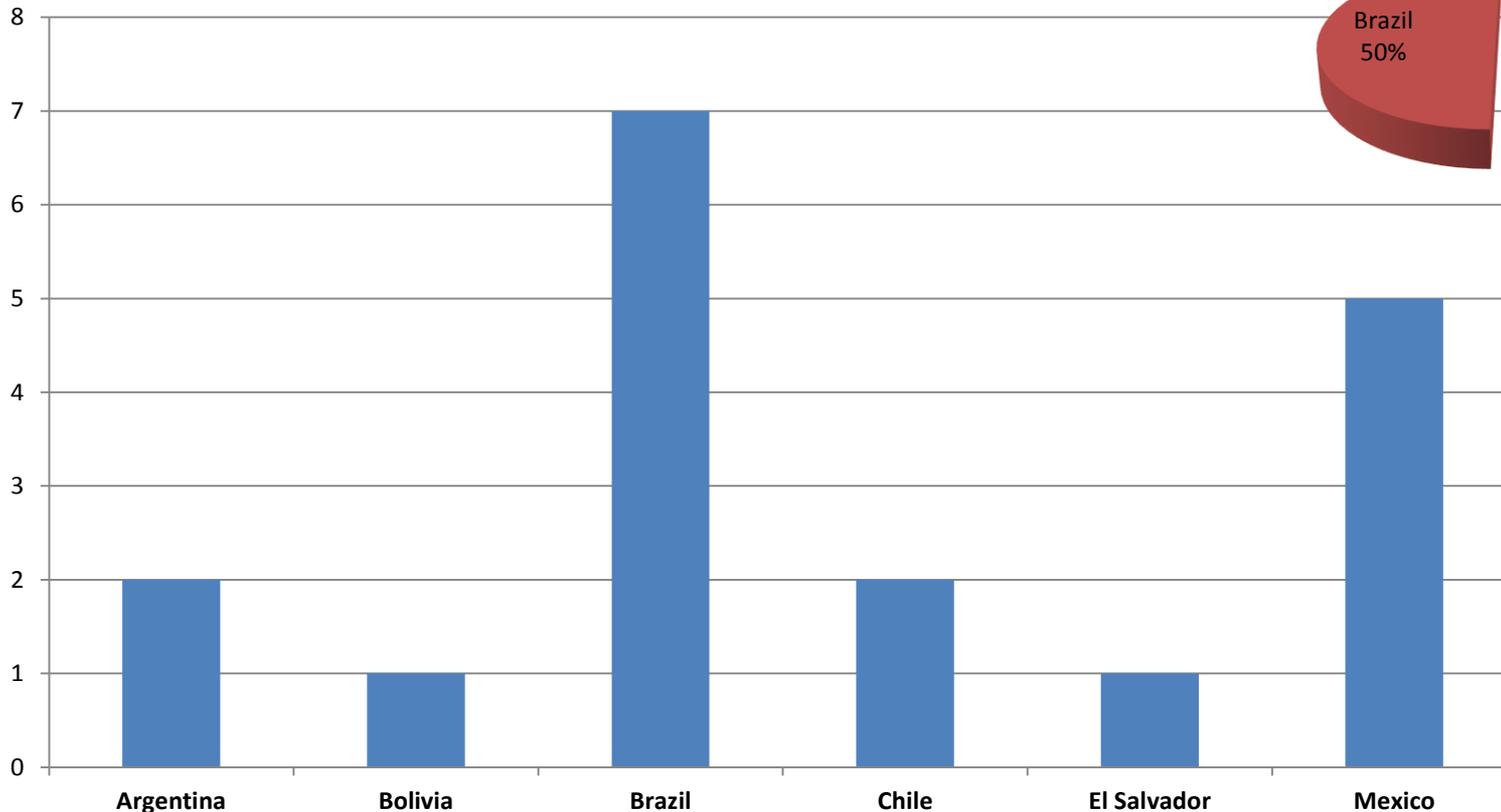
Successful Seed Grants



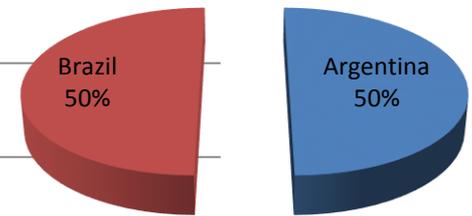
- **38** seed projects based in **18** countries in **6** major world regions (Africa, Asia, North & South America, Europe/Eurasia, Austral-Pacific)

Seed grant applications – Latin America

Country of LA lead applicants' host institutions
N=18 from 460 applications

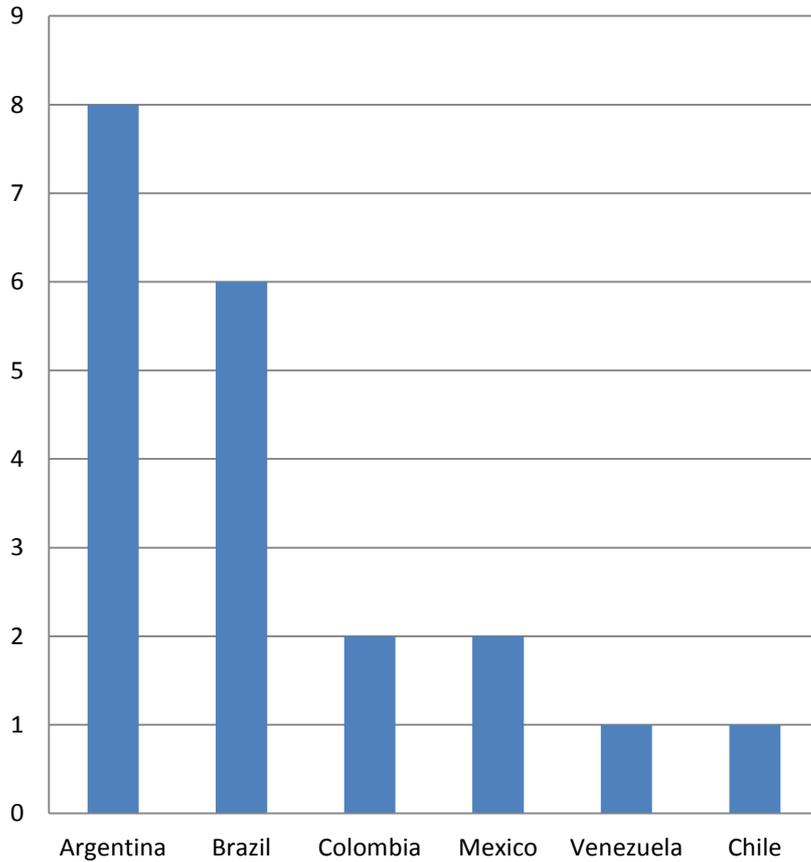


Country of host institution
of LA grantees, n=2



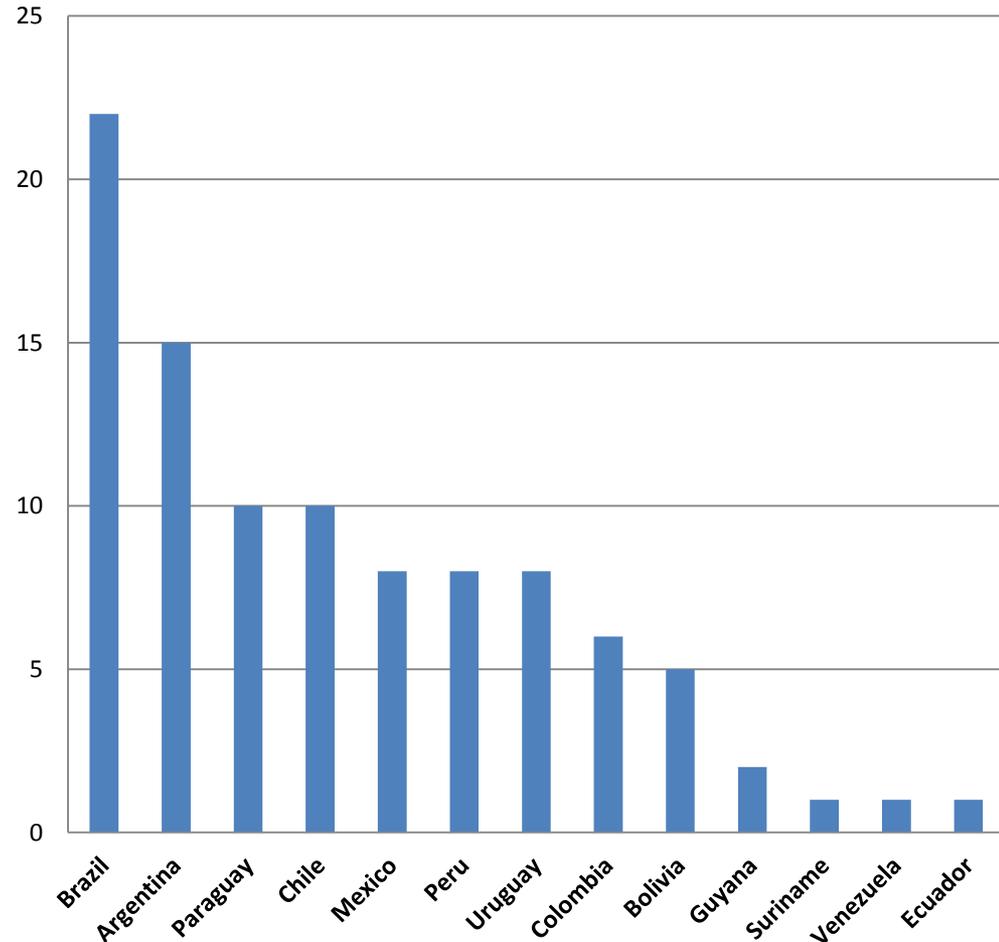
TKN applications: 20 Latin American Coordinators

LA lead applicants in TKN proposals, by country, n=20



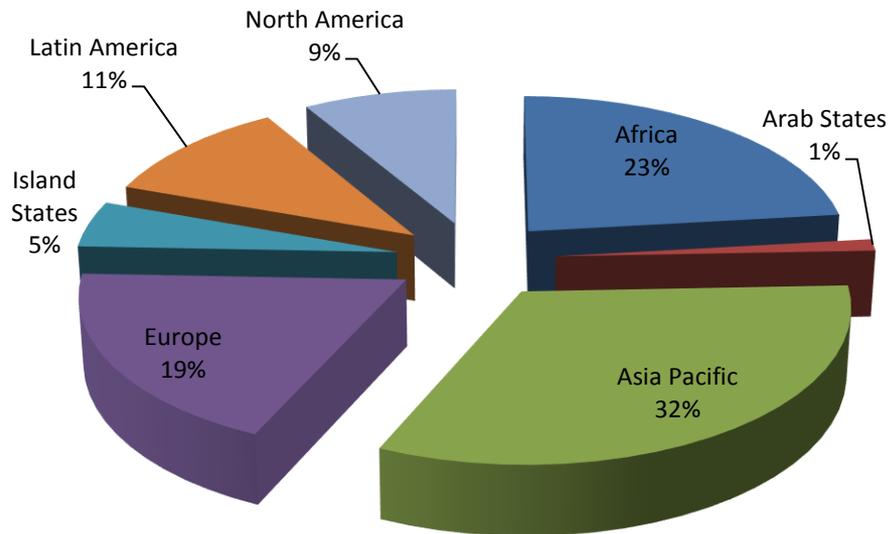
TKN applications: 97 Latin American Main Partners

LA partners in TKN proposals, by country, n=97



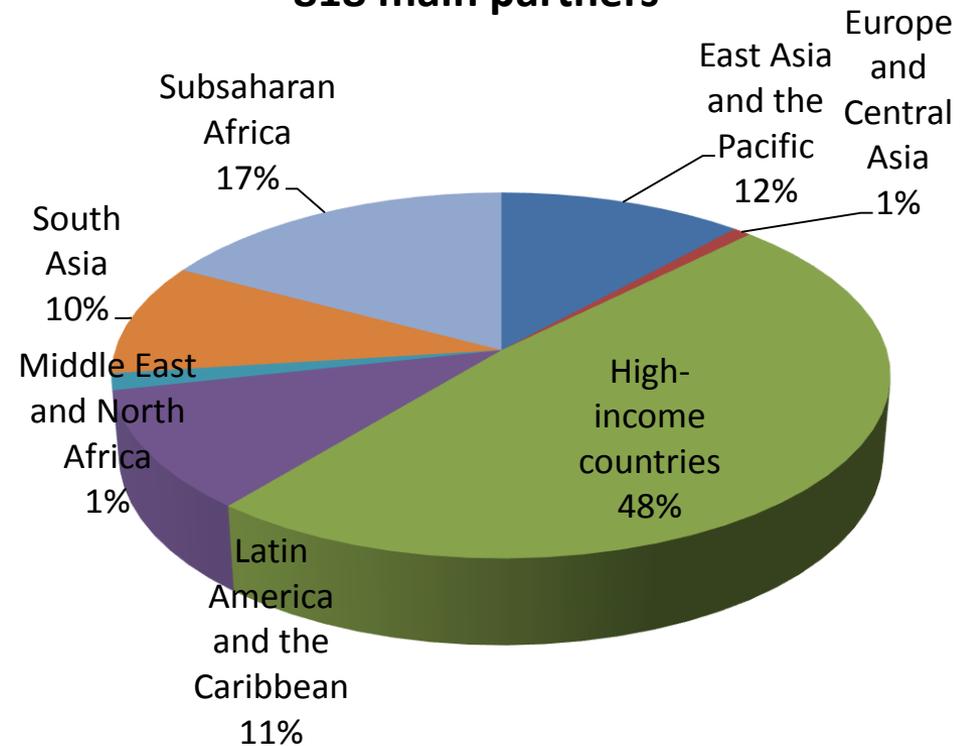
Seed Grant regions of research sites and partners

N=38



TKN applications region of research sites and partners

189 lead applicant institutions,
818 main partners



TKN application: Constructing pathways to sustainability: learning across disciplines, sectors regions and cultures

The 'Pathways to Sustainability TKN' aims to produce evidence and practice for a step-change in how innovative social science applications can respond to real-world sustainability challenges.

- It will do so by understanding and constructing transformative pathways to sustainability across three themes: water and waste in sustainable cities; low carbon energy transitions for the poor; and sustainable agricultural and food systems for healthy livelihoods.
- The network proposal builds on 6 seed-funded, national/regional co-design workshops that involved multiple stakeholders in Latin America, Africa, North and Central America, India, Europe and China. Each defined and prioritized sustainability challenges in different local contexts, across the 3 themes to address vital transformations linking local and global scales.
- In the next phase we will explore responses to these challenges in depth, innovating TD approaches for understanding and catalyzing change. Through cross-learning between and across paired network hubs in low, middle and high income settings. We will examine and compare the processes of constructing transformative pathways to sustainability in diverse historical, political, and cultural contexts.

P-Futures: Towards urban and food security: integrating sustainable phosphorus management in urban decisions

Without access to phosphorus farmers and nations cannot produce food. The world's source of phosphorus fertilizer is geopolitically and physically scarce, and mismanagement of phosphorus is polluting rivers and oceans. We lack effective local and global governance mechanisms to ensure long-term access to phosphorus, to minimise pollution and stimulate and support sustainable phosphorus practices.

- The P-FUTURES project will directly addresses this gap by working with stakeholders to determine how cities food and water systems can cope and transform in the face of the emerging global phosphorus challenge.
- The Urban Phosphorus TKN, established in the ISSC Seed Grant phase, will work to establish a long-term transformation pathway as an outcome in each partner city: Sydney (Australia), Blantyre (Malawi), Hanoi (Vietnam), Phoenix (USA)
 - YEAR 1: Giving voice – assessing local context, vulnerabilities and opportunities
 - YEAR 2: Sustainable pathways – developing future scenarios, goals and transition paths
 - YEAR 3: Implementation – operationalizing transformational change through planning and action

**INTEGRATING
KNOWLEDGE:
Translational
Competencies**

**INTEGRATING PEOPLE:
Transactional
Competencies**

KNOWLEDGE

PEOPLE

WHO: PLANNING

**Getting the right
disciplines / data /
information**

**Getting the right
collaborators**

HOW: PROCESS

**Building new
knowledge**

**INTER- and TRANS-
DISCIPLINARY
RESEARCH and
ACTION**

**Building new
relationships**

**Role of the social
scientist**

Building the programme

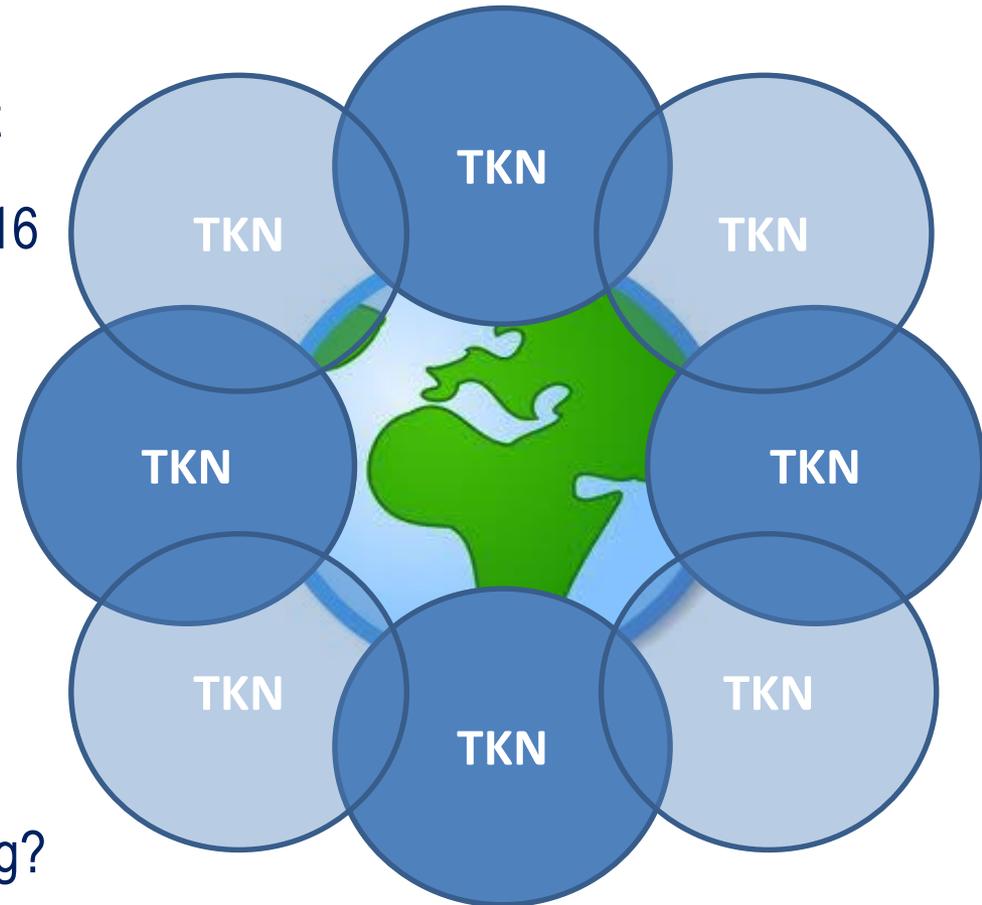
Outcomes of the October 2014

Belmont Forum meeting:

- European Commission as a Belmont forum member hosted a Scoping workshop (May 2015) towards a 2016 ERANET (NORFACE)
- Sept 2015 NORFACE London scoping workshop

T2S flexible mechanism – global programme, common pot funding

How do research organisations and societal/knowledge partners collaborate on international, TD projects? What conditions foster such triple loop learning?



In conclusion:

- The ISSCs Transformations Programme comprises a major contribution – new funding for new science – to Future Earth
- It is the only initiative focusing on Future Earth's Transformations theme
- The sustainability challenges it addresses cover Future Earth's grand societal challenges
- It has been explicitly designed to support truly global, integrated, co-designed and co-produced research
- The scientific community's readiness to respond is evident

ISSC

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Towards science for a sustainable and just world.

Thank you!