

Transdisciplinary Research on Sustainability in Europe: generic issues

CONVERGE & Charles University Environment Center Prague Research Conference: early call and announcement

Expert Conference Prague, May, Thursday 23rd – Friday 24th, 2013

One and a half day workshop of approximately 50 invited experts from across the EU area who are working in Transdisciplinary Research for Sustainability (TDRS). This event is for professionals from the European Research Area (ERA) organisations and policy areas and for those who are running (or have run) transdisciplinary research projects on sustainability. This event will be hosted by the CONVERGE EU FP7 research project and the Charles University Environment Center.

Context:

Major EU research programmes are calling for transdisciplinary research to address ‘wicked’ joined up and complex problems – particularly in the area of sustainability. Whilst there is an emphasis on the dissemination of substantive results from funded projects, there is less attention to the sharing of the experiences and lessons learnt from the project processes, problems and issues and strategies developed for dealing with these. This gathering provides an opportunity to share and reflect on issues of TDRS including methodology and management, together with an opportunity to contribute to recommendations to the ERA for the further development of research capacity on TDRS.

Aims:

To help to inform the EU’s research agendas and meta-agendas about evaluation, conduct and processes of TDRS with information, perspectives and analyses from practitioners. To explore the Convergence and MOSUR approaches, tools and concepts might inform and link with agendas in TDRS. To discuss and develop recommendations to the ERA to help enable better and more productive TDRS.

Registration:

There is no registration fee. Registration for participation in the conference can be made [online here](#).

Objectives:

- Contribute to the EU’s research agendas, priorities and orientation
- Report on lessons learnt in TDRS in the course of the CONVERGE& MOSUR projects
- Test Convergence and MOSUR approaches with a range of EU interdisciplinary researchers as part of practitioner review and knowledge transfer
- Take forward results from previous meetings on TDRS
- Help to develop a Critical Mass of scholars interested in generic issues of TDRS across different interdisciplinary clusters focussing on sub-themes of sustainability
- To help to develop capacity for TDRS in Europe

- Placing ERA in the global community of scholars working on TDRS

Indicative themes and *call for posters*:

We invite posters and accompanying presentations of no longer than 10 minutes in length on the following areas (responses to the call for poster presentations can be made via the registration page):

- The role of values in TDRS including research ethics, Sustainability & Convergence principles
- Philosophical and methodological issues in TDRS – and implications for project design and management
- The role of stakeholder engagement and co-creation of knowledge in TDRS
- The role of research in response to social and ecological crisis in Europe and more globally
- TDRS relevant competences and higher education – what are the TD knowledge transfer/ co-creation/ dissemination patterns (and how do we prepare appropriate specialists)?
- TDRS and decision making – follow up to the Prague conference “Scientists and Decision Making Processes”. Identification and exploration of many issues that arise when science and TD knowledge is applied – but also when the knowledge is developed specifically to inform certain important societal choices.
- Case study accounts from specific projects identifying issues and strategies
- Generic issues to do with ERA policy, call development, proposal assessment etc
- Issues identified in the global TDRS community and/or review of trends etc
- Advocating for specific recommendations to the ERA (Convergence examples include: Recommendation that benefits for Future Generations should be mandated for all FP7 proposals; Recommendation that the ERA should take a global lead on Academic Freedom in Sustainability Research when researchers are under pressure to hide, minimise or ‘spin’ results that challenge powerful institutions and vested interests.)

Workshop topics will include:

- Outline literature review and mapping of existing networks
- Mapping of theoretical, practical and applied areas of concern – eg stakeholder engagement and participation
- Engagement of TD science in decision-making – policy frameworks and good practices
- New patterns of communication within TD research and education.
- Identifying gaps and problems in the EU research agendas and grant schemes for TDRS themes
- Making links with other networks in global regions working on the same issues
- Developing a list of recommendations to the ERA and processes to continue dialogue

Thursday 23rd May; 10 am – 5pm; Conference Dinner 7pm

Conference Venue: [Charles University Rectorate \(main administrative building\), Ovocný trh 3/5](#)

Session 1: Overview of issues in Transdisciplinary Research for Sustainability in the EU

Welcome from CONVERGE, MOSUR projects

Philippe Galiay, DG Research, 'Science in Society', European Commission: 'Transdisciplinarity, Responsibility and Horizon 2020'

Dr Maik Adomssent, Leuphana University and COPERNICUS Alliance: overview of issues in TDRS from the researcher perspective

Speaker from Lund University Philosophy Department: Philosophy and Methodology of TDRS - tbc

11.30 COFFEE

Session 2: Reflections on Research Projects: -creation of knowledge with Stakeholders; TDRS Research Ethics

Short presentations speaking to posters which will be available to view over lunchbreak and for the rest of the conference. Themes to include: Proposal and Team Development; Team Leadership and Facilitation; the TDRS Research Student and Researcher; Co-creation of Knowledge with Stakeholders; TDRS across Business, Civil Society, Government sectors.

1.30 LUNCH

Session 3: Lessons from CONVERGE and MOSUR; Developing the agenda in TDRS

Dr Jenneth Parker: Degrees of Interdisciplinarity and the Difference they make: Issues of TDRS in the CONVERGE project

Speaker from MOSUR on Managing Transdisciplinary Consortia

Small group discussions of a proposed agenda for further work on TDRS

Feedback from groups – also available on flipcharts to be viewed

3.45 TEA/COFFEE

Session 4: Workshop Mapping of networks and agendas for TDRS in Europe and more globally

3 groups: 1 group Mapping existing networks on TDRS ; 1 group working further on agendas in TDRS for the consideration of the ERA; 1 group the global debates and networks

5PM CLOSE

7PM CONFERENCE DINNER (venue near to University; participants pay individually)

Friday 24th May; 9am – 2pm;

Session 1: Presentation of some draft recommendations to ERA. To include:

Sandor Fulop former Hungarian Commissioner for Future Generations: Future Generations as Key Research Stakeholders in all TDRS calls tbc

Speaker from Transparency International: Academic Freedom, Corruption and TDRS - need for a global initiative to support transparency of information on Sustainability

COFFEE

Session 2: workshops on recommendations

Participants come prepared with suggestions for discussion according to event format

Session 3: summary and ways forward – reflections from some invited participants

1.40 LUNCH

2.30 CLOSE OF FORMAL EVENT

Friday 24th May; 2.30pm – 4pm;

An informal research 'sandpit' will be held at the end of the conference for those who wish to remain to discuss future potential cooperative research projects and opportunities.

BUDGET considerations:

Participants to fund own accommodation and travel – unless expenses are agreed exceptionally; Room hire; catering; equipment, hospitality paid for by the organisers **EXCEPT FOR the Conference Dinner** to be arranged in mid-price restaurant by organisers and paid for by participants.

Accommodation, if required, will be arranged by the Charles University Environment Center (CUEC) in the hotel where its offices are located – Hotel Krystal (<http://www.prague-hotel-krystal.cz/>). The price for a single/double room is EUR 24/36, including breakfast. The hotel is a five-minute drive from the airport, and a 20-minute tram/metro ride into the city centre. Given that Krystal is a budget hotel, however, CUEC will provide a list of more expensive hotels closer to the city centre where the conference venue will be booked, if so desired.

Key contacts:

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