

I A S S

Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies e.V.

Announcement

Research Fellows (Post Doctoral) at the IASS (Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies) in Potsdam

Closing Date: 30th June 2010

The Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies (IASS) in Potsdam invites applications from suitable candidates for the position of Post Doctoral Research Fellow. The appointment will be made on a fixed-term basis for 6 months.

The Fellows will work on the project 'Science for Sustainable Societal Transformation: Towards Effective Governance' (TransGov). With this project, the IASS wants to contribute to the improvement of governance for sustainable development, on fields of particular interest including institutional change and the governance of climate emergencies. As an open space for advanced scientific studies that is relevant for how we take long term decisions in open democracies, IASS offers opportunities for post-doctoral researchers, and builds bridges between science, politics and society. The project includes a series of workshops and dialogues.

For the project **4 Research Fellows** will be appointed who will work in the field of **knowledge democracy**, the design of **institutions** for sustainable development, the **governance of non-mainstream issues** and the mechanisms of **transformations** towards sustainability.

The work will focus on scientific stock-taking, discussing the results in a transdisciplinary setting and formulating new concepts and ideas.

Job description:

- To gather and present in a concise form the latest academic insights regarding the topic (stock-taking)
- To write discussion papers for, and take part in knowledge-transfer activities, including collaborative meetings with other researchers, with policy-makers and societal stakeholders involved in the topic
- To contribute to online and written discussions regarding the topic;
- You may be asked to perform other duties occasionally which are not included above, but which will be consistent with the role.

Qualifications: A doctoral degree in a relevant academic discipline (social, political and cultural science) and scientific experience in one or more of the above mentioned key issues; ability to solve problems in a challenging environment; excellent inter-personal communication skills both in written and spoken English.

Interested candidates who fulfil the requirements should submit an application letter, CV and two relevant publications by 30th June, 2010 to louismeuleman@publicstrategy.nl.

Interviews will be held on 15th and 16th July 2010 in Potsdam at the IASS. Only shortlisted candidates will be invited for the interview.

Further information regarding the project can also be provided by Dr. Louis Meuleman louismeuleman@publicstrategy.nl and on www.publicstrategy.nl.

Project description attached.

PROJECT FACTSHEET **TRANSgov**

Science for Sustainable Societal Transformations:

Towards Effective Governance

The Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies (IASS, established 2009) in Potsdam, Germany, aims to contribute to the improvement of governance for sustainable development through investigating and discussing issues such as institutional change and the governance of climate emergencies.

As an open space for advanced scientific studies that accounts for long-term decisions in open democracies, IASS makes key contributions to sustainability studies, linking natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities. The IASS also serves as a platform to bring together science, politics, business and civil society.

Project TransGov

The project Science for Sustainable Societal Transformations: Towards Effective Governance (TransGov), which starts in June 2010 and continues for one year, aims at

- Making top scientific insights available and useful for solution thinking on sustainability and climate change issues
- Contributing to the methodology for integrating ‘hard’ knowledge from various scientific disciplines, and ‘soft’ knowledge produced by societal actors, and shaping participatory approaches for better decisions and more effective implementation.
- Evaluating constraints and opportunities for the contribution of knowledge in democratic decision making processes
- Framing evidence-based reasoning for preventing unsustainable trends from turning into runaway emergency situations
- Exploring knowledge-bound governance concepts that address non-mainstream carbon strategies and change management processes that foster sustainability.
- Organizing the research process in a deliberative way which involves researchers from various

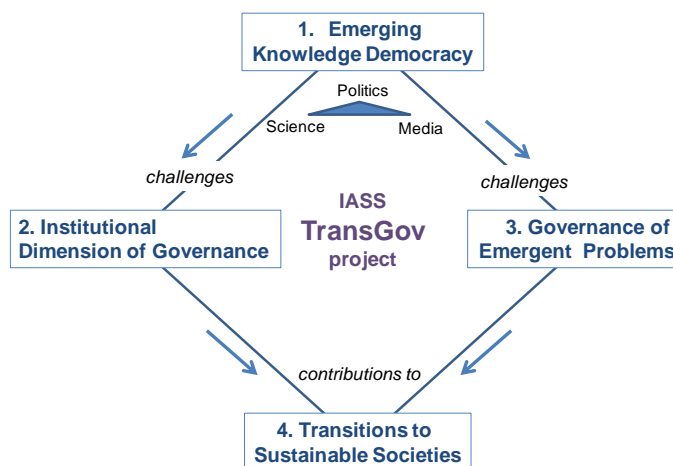
disciplines and stakeholders from the public and private sectors as well as civil society.

Expected results

The project will result in practical recommendations for scientific, governmental and other actors. The following concrete products are foreseen:

- A conclusive **IASS TransGov 2011 Memorandum on the Governance of Sustainable Societal Transformations**, which will be a benchmark for scientific research and for political decision making
- A TransGov **final report (book)** which compiles the main results and papers
- **Targeted articles, research and discussion papers**, produced by participants of the project, aimed at presenting results and stimulating discussions, which are the basis for both -academic articles and other publications in print and online media. Also informal outlets like blogs, interviews and opinion articles will be provided.

Key issues



Four interconnected **key issues** will be addressed in depth. The first issue is the ‘umbrella theme’ of the project:

1. Knowledge Democracy

The emergence of knowledge democracy (a concept addressing the growing tensions between centralist and participative forms of science, politics and media, and between each of the three arenas), and the impact on the quality and acceptance of **evidence** is a new challenge for sustainable development. The hypothesis is that the emergence of participative forms of democratic decision making, knowledge production, and the communication of knowledge and decision making processes, if not understood well, may produce conflicts and tensions that block progress on sustainable transformations and on dealing with urgent global problems like climate change and related issues.

This hypothesis will be investigated through two themes:

2. Institutions

Which institutions, on which scales/levels, can induce change towards sustainability? Is unanimity a condition for sustainability transformations, or a dogma which may be in conflict with such transformations? Which governance structures are best suited to apply scientific knowledge in politics? Do we need new institutions? Can the current multilateral system be improved? On which premises would a new institutional framework be based? Do we need a different framework or more variety?

Our working hypothesis is that the institutional frameworks for sustainable development and climate policy are based upon classical, hierarchical premises, and should be re-designed to allow for more variety in order to better deal with complexity, participation and questions of transparency.

3. Global emergencies

Key questions are: What happens in case of emergencies caused by damaging climate change or resource depletion? Which are the tipping points in the climate system? What legal regime best addresses a climate emergency? Is it justified to restrict democracy given a climate emergency? Which institutions are needed?

The working hypothesis is that the current global governance of environmental policies works exclusively on the assumption of linearity in which damages occur (develop) over time by processes of accumulation of hazardous substances (gradually vanishing species and biotopes and so on). This myopic view works thanks to the observation that sudden catastrophes are bound to regional and local impacts. This assumption is to be questioned by the project's effort to collect evidence for a possible global dimension of emergencies. Advanced thinkers will be brought together to define the case for global emergencies. Once criteria will be established for a better understanding of those non-mainstream issues there is a last hypothesis: Global emergencies can be sufficiently dealt with by national emergency legislation; except for the liability regime and the feasibility of rapid response.

4. Transformations

The three-dimensional nature of the Brundtland interpretation of sustainable development, the 3P's (people, planet, profit), necessitates a methodology for evaluating cases that are not Pareto-optimal in all three dimensions. Trade-offs between P's will be necessary in many real world developments. Such a methodology is a necessary but not sufficient condition in developing theoretical support for an optimal transformation. The transformation from our current societies towards

sustainable societies requires small steps (incremental change), but also large steps (systemic change). How do the two types relate to each other? The working hypothesis is that the existing methodologies of large-scale transformations towards more sustainability lack coherence, are incomplete, and usually unsuccessful; improvement should be possible by (a) filling 'gaps' like how to formulate a business case for sustainability, and (b) making the methods better adaptable to different cultures and traditions.

A transdisciplinary approach

The project should follow an iterative process comprised of three integral steps: stock-taking and diagnosis, design and development and dialogue with decision-makers.

IASS believes that the organizational design of the project should reflect key characteristics of sustainable development: we should walk the talk. Sustainable development is a process that involves governments, civil society, private enterprises, and the general public. At least the first three groups should be involved in some form during the project. This broad inclusion also applies to the way knowledge is produced; therefore, in this project, a wide range of scientific disciplines and practical, lay knowledge will be relevant. This is a transdisciplinary approach: scientifically sound, and practicable in society. Although the focus initially will be on scientific stock-taking and integration, the inclusion of political decision makers, civil society and the business sector should start in an early phase.

During the project, experts from the IASS Board Members' organisations and from other research institutions will be involved, as well as representatives from other arenas/networks with relevance for the project objectives. With institutions who may have a partly overlapping remit, contact will be established in order to prevent redundant work and to seek cooperation, where appropriate.

Organisation

Prof. Dr. Klaus Töpfer serves as the Executive Director of the IASS and animates the cluster 'Global compact for Sustainability' under which this project runs.

Dr. Louis Meuleman is the project director.

The other Steering Group members are **Prof. Dr. Roeland J. in 't Veld** and **Dr. Günther Bachmann**.

More information, including application procedures for post-doc Research Fellows will be available on www.iass-potsdam.de.

For information about the project, please contact louismeuleman@publicstrategy.nl.

IASS

Kleistvilla

Berliner Straße 130, D-14467 Potsdam, Germany

8 Juni 2010