

Science for Sustainability

Detailed Programme 2025

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Time	Session type	Room
9.20 - 11.00	Plenary	The Lounge

- **Emilia Nygård (Regeneration 2030), Paavo Järvensivu (BIOS), Matti Pihlajamaa (VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland), and Sari Multala (Ministry of the Environment):**

Resilient Systems - Breaking the Sustainability Bubbles

Panel synopsis:

This panel discussion aims to explore critical perspectives on green transition, innovation, and collective change. Panelists will discuss whether current frameworks provide real solutions or remain superficial, addressing themes such as degrowth, sufficiency economy, and just transition.

The session will begin with a video greeting from Minister of the Environment Sari Multala.

Moderated by: Susanna Lehvävirta (University of Helsinki, HELSUS) and Kirsi Niinimäki (Aalto University)

Panelist biographies:

Emilia Nygård is the chair person of ReGeneration 2030. ReGeneration 2030 is a fully youth-led organisation, uniting young activists for sustainability from the Nordic and Baltic Sea region.



Matti Pihlajamaa is a senior scientist at VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland. His work focuses on science, technology, and innovation policy, innovation management, and sustainability. He manages research projects in innovation studies and consult companies and public organizations in designing effective approaches to promote sustainable innovation.



Paavo Järvensivu is a co-founder of the independent research unit BIOS, where he studies the political economy of ecological reconstruction, or the rapid sustainability transformation of society. His recent focus areas include industrial policy and transition planning. Järvensivu holds the title of Docent of Environmental and Social Policy at the University of Helsinki.



Sari Multala leads the Ministry of the Environment as the minister of Climate and the Environment. Within the Finnish Government, she is responsible for matters related to the environment, construction and housing. These include climate policy, nature and water protection, preventing environmental pollution, circular economy, construction and land use, and housing policy.

Minister Multala is also responsible for matters covered by the Energy Department of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment.



11.15 - 12.30

Seminar

Revelation Space 1

➤ **Towards Biodiversity-Respectful Futures**

Session chair: Marileena Mäkelä (University of Jyväskylä)

Speakers:

Iryna Herzon (University of Helsinki): Maintaining farmland biodiversity in modern cattle production indicates trade-offs with production

Aija Hokkanen (University of Jyväskylä): Assessing the biodiversity footprint of an investment portfolio

Brayshna Kundi (University of Jyväskylä): Facilitating corporate biodiversity action: Application of biodiversity footprinting within nature-related assessment, disclosure, and target-setting landscape

Venla Leppilampi (University of Jyväskylä): The carbon and biodiversity footprint of Finnish transportation system

Session organizers:

Natasha Järviö (University of Helsinki), Tiina Onkila (University of Jyväskylä), and Ville Uusitalo (LUT University)

Synopsis: In treating nature as a mere resource, we, as humans, are unwittingly eroding the very biosphere upon we are dependent economically, as well as for our survival as a species. As biodiversity impact methods are improving and interest in measuring our impacts is increasing, we are increasingly becoming aware of the scales of our impacts, the hotspots, and the sources of biodiversity loss. Nonetheless, what we seem to be lacking most are alternative visions of how the losses could be turned into gains for biodiversity, our planet, and ultimately ourselves. Within leadership research the focus has for long been on the realization of collective aims, on driving transformation to achieve human wellbeing in material terms. How could pursuing human wellbeing be done with respect for the planet and biodiversity? Futures research seeks to unravel the multiple alternative futures that lie ahead of us. It is our visions of the future that guide our actions today, and vice versa, our actions today will shape the future to come.

This session focuses on biodiversity respectful futures. The interdisciplinary effort of bringing together the insights from natural and social sciences aims at creating a new paradigm of biodiversity respectful futures. This can be accomplished through improved measurements, covering previously ignored impacts, and through the actions, decisions, and future visions, that are urgently needed today to create a biodiversity rich future for tomorrow.

➤ **Re(De)-Constructing Sustainability in Socio-ecological Systems: From “Slumber to Just Lumber?”**

Session chair: Ayonghe Akonwi (University of Helsinki)

Speakers:

Chenmei Li (University of Helsinki): The Contentious Cacophony: Chinese Engagement and Microlevel Reflexive Discourses in The Forest Sector of DRC

Hannah Ehrlichmann (University of Helsinki): Colonial Financial Legacies and Historical trade networks in the Cameroonian Forestry Sector

Jukka Luhas (University of Helsinki): From Peat Extraction to Wetland Cultivation: Exploring Markets, Resilience, and Justice in Southern Finland

Kaisa Raatikainen (University of Jyväskylä & The Finnish Environment Institute, Syke): Leveraging social-ecological sustainability across the Finnish forest sector

Session organizers:

Ayonghe Akonwi (University of Helsinki), Corinna Casi (University of Helsinki), and Ville Alizée (University of Helsinki)

Synopsis: In today's polycrisis, a pressing challenge is how best to incorporate sustainability solutions towards more resilient, just, and healthy futures. This session addresses inequities plaguing forest areas in the Global North and South. This includes tensions that challenge businesses' ability to meet sustainability demands, such as carbon reductions versus profitability; conflicts where local people's access rights overlap with forest preservation efforts; and anthropogenic pressures that disrupt biodiversity. While the imperative has been for a sustainability transition to future pathways that ensure fairness in distributing benefits among diverse forest users, taking a more active role in this transition necessitates decisive actions from researchers and business practitioners to challenge the 'slumbering' conditions that currently weaken sustainability potential.

Social-ecological systems offer opportunities for both social and ecological components to influence 'deep sustainability' through policy and everyday practices. For instance, the UN SDGs urge member states to adopt best practices in climate mitigation, wellbeing, and equality. In the Nordic region, an ambition is to transition towards a forest-based circular bioeconomy. COP29 calls for financing climate adaptation and fostering green growth in Africa. While there is hope for a deeper framing of sustainability which could bring about justice, inevitable tensions persist—from colonial legacies of imperialism to forest movements advocating against extensive logging.

➤ **Indigenous and Ancestral Knowledges for Sustainability Transformations**

Session chair: David Caicedo Sarralde (University of Helsinki)

Session organizers:

David Caicedo Sarralde (University of Helsinki) and Anudini Wijayarathna (University of Helsinki)

Synopsis: In the context of south-western Colombia, struggles for agroecology and seed sovereignty unfold amidst competing development imaginaries, indigenous ontologies such as Buen Vivir, and national policy processes. Narratives of local development and de-growth intersect with indigenous knowledges, shaping grassroots mobilizations for the protection of native seeds while also generating tensions as different worldviews collide.

This session focuses on the political economy of seed sovereignty, with particular attention to the collaborative formulation of Colombia's 2024 national agroecology policy. A decolonial and indigenous epistemological framework provides a lens to understand the marginalization of local knowledges within broader land and policy struggles, while a cultural political economy perspective helps unpack the socioeconomic dynamics, power relations, and meaning-making systems at play in contexts where agroforestry and coca cultivation coexist.

Interactive exercises inspired by game theory will illustrate how bargaining power influences collective decisions and policy outcomes. By combining theoretical reflection with participatory methods, the session seeks to highlight how alternative ontologies and grassroots struggles are shaping pathways toward agroecology transitions and the defense of native seeds.

➤ **Imagine manufacturing –
conceiving localized systems
change from natural fibres**

Session chair: Ulrika Dahlberg
(Novia)

Session organizers:

Ulrika Dahlberg (Novia) and Samica Sadik (University of Helsinki)

Synopsis: The workshop participants are divided into groups and asked to interact together for the development of local agri-food led systems related to natural fibres. No prior knowledge of the industry is required. The workshop starts by an introduction to most common Finnish natural fibres and materials originating from agricultural production, and what issues and opportunities as well as liabilities related to these lines of production there are.

All groups are given their “own farm”. The farms are slightly different in size and mode of production. After the introductory part, a “farm” can choose the most convenient production in order to form a local cluster, adding needed enterprises for a successful future.

General guidelines for the creation of local clusters are circularity and diversity - in terms of biodiversity, on-farm diversity and diversity among the people and businesses operating in rural areas. The target of the exercise is to concretely show the components of a farm enterprise, as well as the potential supply chains. Furthermore, there is a requirement of cooperation and sharing between the groups, to create profitable and useful synergies - all important in creating resilient and healthy local systems.

From the exercise we hope to gather knowledge on the participant's understanding of local systems and what the preferred outcomes of the workshop are. These outcomes will be integrated and communicated appropriately through ongoing projects for the development of local economies.

➤ **Global access and availability of
anti-infective medicines**

Session chair: Leena Hanski
(University of Helsinki)

Session organizers:

Juli Mansnerus (University of Helsinki), Taina Pihlajarinne (University of Helsinki), and Jukka Mähönen (University of Helsinki)

Synopsis: Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) poses a major global health threat, disproportionately affecting low-resource settings where mortality rates are high and access to anti-infective medicines is limited. Current mitigation strategies are largely shaped by high-income country perspectives, overlooking the specific challenges and contexts of the global south. At the same time, the scarcity of new antibacterial drugs reflects structural disincentives in pharmaceutical innovation, where profitability remains a central barrier.

This session brings together interdisciplinary perspectives to explore pathways for sustainable and equitable solutions to the AMR crisis. Key themes include the development of new business models for health value creation, the role of traditional medical knowledge in AMR mitigation, regulatory frameworks that incentivize discovery and ensure equitable access, and overcoming technological limitations in anti-infective drug development. The discussion aims to highlight how global and local approaches can converge to tackle one of the most pressing health challenges of our time.

➤ **Fostering imagination and pluralism in biodiversity conservation: from global universalism to local diversity**

Session chair: Heidi Lehtiniemi (University of Helsinki)

Speakers:

Emma Sicher (HfG Offenbach): Diffracting Biodesign: Integrating bioregional diversity in grown materialities

Heidi Lehtiniemi (University of Helsinki): Shaping biodiversity from within: How experts' perceptions of values, rules and knowledges influence biodiversity assessment

Samuli Pitzén (The Finnish Environment Institute, Syke): Promoting biodiversity policy integration via scientific knowledge: How do EU policies align with IPCC and IPBES findings?

Kaisa Pietilä (The Finnish Environment Institute, Syke): Global biodiversity negotiations as a performance – insider's insights from the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

Session organizers:

Heidi Lehtiniemi (University of Helsinki) and Kaisa Pietilä (The Finnish Environment Institute, Syke)

Synopsis: Are global environmental goals and targets narrowing down our imagination and the way we see ourselves as a part of nature? In addition to the physical loss of biodiversity, are we also losing spiritual and cultural parts of ourselves? While global cooperation and shared commitments to halting biodiversity loss are needed, biodiversity and its conservation are inherently tied to space and time in any given local context. Despite efforts to incorporate pluralistic approaches, multilevel biodiversity governance often reinforces existing power dynamics. Hence, mainstream biodiversity governance continues to suppress marginalized voices, and it is abundantly clear that business as usual will not halt biodiversity loss.

We welcome empirical contributions exploring different actors and their perceptions of biodiversity on global, regional and local levels of biodiversity governance. Themes include but are not limited to 1) the interplay between mainstreaming biodiversity conservation and nursing creativity and pluralism through local conservation actions, 2) the trade-offs of top-down and bottom-up conservation and the framing of biodiversity they promote, and 3) examples of alternative understandings or emerging actors in biodiversity conservation. This session is a seminar, and we will invite both presenters and participants to critically reflect on their own role and biases regarding mainstream biodiversity conservation. We plan on piloting arts-based participation methods to complement the scientific exchange.

➤ **Lunch**

➤ **Sustainable Built Environments: Transforming Housing and Urban Green for a Low-Carbon Future**

Session chair: Vesa Kanninen (University of Helsinki)

Speakers:

Julia Johansson (University of Helsinki): Resident-driven housing sustainability: Local Sustainability Initiatives

Paula-Kaisa Leppänen (Aalto University): The role of residential vegetation in climate change mitigation and adaptation

Anne Viljanen (University of Helsinki): Toward resilient urban environments: Transition pathways in nature-based solutions

Ilmari Talvitie (Aalto University): Evolution of building whole life carbon: accounting for carbon stock losses

Session organizers:

Vesa Kanninen (University of Helsinki) and Ranja Hautamäki (Aalto University)

Synopsis: Sustainable futures in the built environment require addressing both material and spatial dimensions as well as the socio-technical processes shaping housing and infrastructure. Urban green infrastructure and nature-based solutions play a key role in enhancing carbon sequestration, resilience, and livability by mitigating heat, flooding, and poor air quality. Transitioning to socially equitable, climate-neutral communities further calls for renovation, circularity, policy interventions, and equitable solutions.

This session explores:

- What assumptions and knowledge guide innovation toward low-carbon cities?
- What challenges must be tackled to unlock innovation potential?
- Who are the key actors in the low-carbon business ecosystem?
- How can carbon neutrality be assessed holistically, including emissions, sinks, and co-benefits?

13.45-15.00

Seminar

Revelation Space 2

➤ **Promoting food systems resilience in the Nordic and Baltic countries through a regional approach**

Session chair: Silvia Gaiani

Speakers:

Alexandra Kekkonen (Estonian Business School): Food systems resilience: an Estonian regional perspective

Vilma Atkočiūnienė (Vytautas Magnus University): Food system resilience: a Lithuanian regional perspective

Silvia Gaiani and Urszula Ala-Karvia, (Ruralia Institute and University of Helsinki): Food systems resilience: a Finnish regional perspective

Ólafur Ögmundarson (University of Iceland): Food systems resilience: an Icelandic regional perspective

Egil Petter Stræte (Ruralis, Institute for Rural and Regional Research): Food systems resilience: a Norwegian regional perspective

Mohammad Mozumder (Novia): Governance in Finnish Small-Scale Fisheries: Pathways to Sustainable Practices

Session organizers:

Aleksandra Kekkonen (Estonian Business School), Urszula Ala-Karvia (University of Helsinki), Egil Petter Stræte (Ruralis - Institute for Rural and Regional Research), Vilma Atkočiūnienė (Vytautas Magnus University), Ólafur, Ögmundarson (University of Iceland), and Jennifer Avci (Sustainable Gastro & InterregBSR project BSR Food Coalition)

Synopsis: Decreasing food imports, fossil fuel independencies, fertilizers independence and building sustainable and resilient food systems are priorities for local governments, regional cooperation, and international development.

In line with this, our seminar focuses on subsidiary principles and Regional Food Systems (RFSs) and on how they can contribute to improve the sustainability and resilience of national and transnational food systems in the Nordic and Baltic countries. By regional food systems, we refer to systems where foods are produced, processed and retailed within a defined geographical area and linked to specific regional traditions, heritage and socio-cultural practices.

The aim will be to collect different experiences on regional food systems resilience practices and to identify which ones might work best in the Nordic Baltic context.

➤ **Bridging Strategy and Impact: Advancing Sustainability Communications for Meaningful Change**

Session chair: Romas Malevicius (King's College London)

Session organizers:

Romas Malevicius (King's College London) and Jennifer Avci (Sustainable Gastro & InterregBSR project BSR Food Coalition)

Synopsis: The workshop will explore how to communicate sustainability effectively before, during, and after projects. With only five years left to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and increasing consumer eco-awareness and funding requirements, organisations must develop strategic communication that goes beyond traditional environmental messaging. This session will equip participants with tools to craft responsible, transparent, and impactful sustainability communications.

The workshop will introduce the PLANET Framework (Malevicius, R., et al. 2025) a structured approach that aligns communication strategies with sustainability principles. Participants will engage with key sustainability communication challenges, focusing on stakeholder engagement (Freeman et al., 2018) and greenwashing risks. The session will also examine how to incorporate sustainability into funding proposals and project dissemination strategies using the Triple Bottom Line approach (Zaharia & Zaharia, 2021) and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

By the end, attendees will gain practical strategies for integrating sustainability into projects and improving stakeholder engagement. The key takeaway will be a shared understanding of enhancing sustainability communication and making project proposals and dissemination strategies more effective.

➤ **Biodesign Innovations for Species Conservation and Coexistence**

Session chair: Barbara Pollini (Aalto University)

Speakers:

Asya Ilgün (Artificial Life Lab, University of Graz) and Madison Lindsay (Royal Danish Academy): Designing with Decay: Microbial and Spatial Strategies for Urban Social and Ecological resilience

Andrzej Tarasiuk (Häme University of Applied Sciences) and Julie-Anne Gandier (Häme University of Applied Sciences): Working in community with microbial diversity as a resident artist

Session organizers:

Barbara Pollini (Aalto University)

Synopsis: As human activities continue to create low-biodiversity built environments and encroach on natural habitats, the need for innovative approaches to species integration and conservation has become critical. This roundtable will explore cutting-edge case studies that can promote biodiversity while enabling sustainable human development and human-wildlife coexistence.

This session addresses the following RQ: What findings and innovations do we have for non-human species conservation, collaboration, and cohabitation? The panel discussion aims to identify practical and scalable solutions bridging the gap between scientific research and real-world application.

➤ **Walking together to learn on environmental researchers' advocacy**

Session chair: Anna Salomaa (LUT University)

Session organizers:

Anna Salomaa (LUT University), Anni Arponen (University of Helsinki), Panu Halme (University of Jyväskylä), and Iryna Herzon (University of Helsinki)

Synopsis: This workshop is organized in the form of a walking meeting ("walkshop"). The aim is to share experiences on efforts and ideas to impact policy to be more sustainable, to introduce the newly established Finnish Environmental researchers' advocacy network (Ympäristötutkijoiden vaikuttamisverkosto), and to collect ideas and volunteers for its functions.

The starting point of the walkshop is that sustainability advocacy is a necessity in the present crises (van Eck et al 2024). To advance these activities, our discussion has the normative premise that advocacy by scientists is justified and needed; we aim not to engage in discussions around the "neutrality myth" of science. The session welcomes scientists as well as other societal changemakers to join.

In the walkshop participants will grow their networks and learn successful and non-successful practices on creating impact. The participants walk together outside and stop to listen to a brief introduction about the newly established Environmental researchers' advocacy network, which aims to help individual environmental researchers to create evidence-based impact for sustainability, for example creating contacts and sharing best practices on how to react and impact topical political questions. for multisectoral impact. The walkshop will help researchers to navigate in the interdisciplinary science-policy-society interface when not being policy neutral. The outcomes and metrics for success are networking and increased knowledge on the capabilities to societal impact and on the Environmental researchers' advocacy network.

➤ **Coffee break**

➤ **Rethinking Consumption in the Age of Degrowth**

Session chair: Juulia Räikkönen (LUT University)

Speakers:

Juulia Räikkönen (LUT University): Introduction

Sanna Ahvenharju (Finland Futures Research Centre): The Limits of Choice: Consumer Acceptability of Strong Sustainability Policies

Esa-Pekka Nykänen (University of Turku): Mainstreaming Sustainable Consumption Through Regulation: Public Acceptance of New Meat Reduction Policies

Daniela Amandolese: Adaptive Biofabrication through a Mycelium-Robots-Human Ecosystem: Growing Futures Project

Session organizers:

Juulia Räikkönen (LUT University), Sanna Ahvenharju (Finland Futures Research Centre), and Samuel Piha (University of Turku)

Synopsis: Household consumption is a key driver of the ecological crisis, yet current policies and public discourse rarely challenge the assumption of continuous material prosperity. As environmental and geopolitical crises escalate, the collapse of consumer society is becoming a pressing concern. The session explores consumer transformation and the acceptability of strong sustainability policies by asking: Who needs to degrow, who are receptive to consumption restrictions, and how should we prepare for declining living standards?

➤ **Sustainable Pluralized Futures: Indigenous Knowledge and the Transformation of Universities**

Session chair: Jimena Bigá
(University of Helsinki)

Speakers:

Jimena Bigá (University of Helsinki): Land-based education and education policies in the Brazilian Northeast

Tuija Veintie (University of Helsinki): Indigenous youth, collective resilience and transformative education

Reetta Toivanen (University of Helsinki): Legal anthropology in connection to her research

Session organizers:

Jimena Bigá (University of Helsinki), Pirjo Virtanen (University of Helsinki), Hanna Guttorm (University of Helsinki), Victoria Peemot (University of Helsinki), Reetta Toivanen (University of Helsinki), and Tuija Veintie (University of Helsinki)

Synopsis: As universities embrace sustainability and pluralized futures, a key challenge arises: how can academic institutions meaningfully integrate and dialogue with Indigenous knowledge and perspectives? This roundtable will discuss sustainability beyond Western perspectives on development and environmental practices. By unpacking dominant frameworks, the discussion will highlight alternative ways of understanding ecological balance and stewardship, well-being, and sustainable futures.

Key questions for discussion include: What changes are needed to decolonize curricula and research practices? How can Indigenous-led methodologies shape sustainability education and climate action? How do we navigate tensions between institutional frameworks and Indigenous sovereignty over knowledge production? What role does language play in sustainability, and how can universities support linguistic diversity?

By centering Indigenous perspectives and critically reflecting on Western sustainability models, this conversation aims to illuminate pathways for universities to become spaces of coexistence, respect, and transformative learning.

➤ **Special Issue on Just Green Transition in the Arctic**

Session chair: Tero Kivinen
(University of Helsinki)

Speakers:

Kaj Forsius (Finnish Environment Institute (Syke)): Participation and Justice in the Green Transition: Changing Legal Frameworks in Finland

Anna Varfolomeeva (University of Oulu): More-than-human actors as stakeholders in Finland's energy transition: a social media analysis

Session organizers:

Tero Kivinen (University of Helsinki), Dorothee Cambou (University of Helsinki), and Berfin Osso (University of Helsinki)

Synopsis: How does the green transition impact local communities, Indigenous Sámi, workers, and other subaltern groups? What role does the law play in ensuring a just transition?

This session invites participants to share their research and insights on the effects of the green transition in the Finnish Arctic. The session will explore how legal and policy frameworks shape the transition, either by supporting marginalized groups or by excluding them from its potential benefits. A key focus will be on how legal processes account for the rights and interests of both human and non-human actors. Presentations will address the experiences of Sámi communities, migrant workers, and the broader recognition of animal rights in the context of the green transition.

The aim of the workshop is to develop a special issue or edited volume on a Just Green Transition in the Finnish Arctic. The session authors represent 'REBOUND (Reconceptualizing Boundaries Together Towards Resilient and Just Arctic Future(s))', a consortium project led by the Arctic Centre at the University of Lapland and funded by the Finnish Strategic Research Council. REBOUND examines how legal, political, and business processes designed to facilitate the green transition affect the rights of marginalized, misrecognized, or unrecognized groups, including migrants, Indigenous populations, and non-human animals.

➤ **Environmental Death: Exploring Green Burial Practices in Finland**

Session chair: Rosa Rantanen
(University of Helsinki)

Session organizers:

Rosa Rantanen (University of Helsinki), Stephanie Sinclair-Lappi (Suomen Luontohautausliitto ry), Mari Könönen (The Natural Resources Institute Finland, Luke), Mikko Weckroth (The Natural Resources Institute Finland, Luke), Philip Chambers (University of Helsinki and University of Eastern Finland), and Kimmo Malin (University of Helsinki and University of Eastern Finland)

Synopsis: In Finland, 62 000 people die annually and their remains are buried or cremated. While these are currently the two allowed ways of burying in Finland, they are not necessarily the most environmentally friendly or sustainable. To encourage a just systematic change toward green burial practices, we need to look at climate and environmental research, acknowledge cultural and religious practices, and identify social taboos and possible legal constraints, as well as public safety and health concerns. In some countries, green burials are also a growing business. This trend can attract more companies to make environmental choices but also raises questions about what can be sold as green solutions.

In this session, the different environmental, legal, ethical and societal questions related to developing new green burial solutions in Finland and beyond are looked at. The discussion revolves around questions such as what is meant by green burial, what is the relationship between forests and nature to burials, what kind of practices already exist globally, and what is needed to create a baseline transdisciplinary understanding of Finnish green burial practices for further research and development of new solutions. The sessions consist of short presentations and group discussions facilitated by the organizers, aiming to map out existing research, relevant actors and research gaps related to green burials.

➤ **University of Helsinki Reception**

On 1 October, we warmly welcome you to an evening reception at the University of Helsinki's Main Building. The reception takes place in the heart of Helsinki, at the University of Helsinki main building, and marks a pleasant conclusion to the day's programme of the first conference day.

The reception will open with welcoming remarks by Anne Portaankorva, vice rector for research and sustainability at the University of Helsinki. Light refreshments will be served, and the reception offers a relaxed setting to meet, mingle, and network with fellow attendees.

Attendance requires prior registration (deadline: 15.9.).

Time	Session type	Room
9.30-10.45	Seminar	Revelation Space 1

➤ **Sustainability agency – Exploring actors and their agency in shaping sustainable futures**

Session chair: Satu Teerikangas
(University of Turku)

Speakers:

Irene Kuhmonen (University of Jyväskylä) & Tuomas Kuhmonen (University of Turku): A morphogenetic approach on agency and structure in sustainability transitions

Heli Nissilä (Aalto University & Academy of Finland Research Fellow): Carving space for new professions: identity work in the nascent impact investing field

Irene Vivas Vallina (AwareNest): Bursting the Awareness Bubble: Democratizing Climate Science and Empowering Collective Action through Community Facilitation

Session organizers:

Satu Teerikangas (University of Turku) and Kuhmonen Irene (University of Jyväskylä)

Synopsis: In undertaking systemic change toward sustainable futures, the agency of actors is critical. Upon closer look, though, one can ask, who is engaged in sustainability work, and what are the evolving dynamics of such proactive engagement?

Taking a closer look at academic knowledge on actors' agency in building sustainable futures, though, one finds more questions than answers. As the literature spreads across the social and natural sciences, there is no 'one body of literature' to turn to for answers. Indeed, numerous actor types have been identified as active change agents in the pursuit of sustainable futures, be it social entrepreneurs, activists, change agents, employee volunteers, among many others. Critically speaking, the terminology used to appreciate actors pursuing sustainable futures is multifaceted, spans levels of analysis, theoretical bases and fields of science.

This session invites presentations on ongoing research (be it empirical, conceptual or theoretical) as regards different types of actors engaged in building sustainable futures, be it individuals (e.g. employees, managers, social workers), activists, forms of organizing, multi-organization platforms or forms of governance.

In so doing, this session aims to appreciate and take stock of this broad, loosely coupled body of knowledge that spans disciplines, involves numerous terms, concepts and theoretical bases. All the while, the session engages the audience in exploring the evolving multi-theoretical, multi-level and interdisciplinary field of study on sustainability agency. Going forward, the ambition is to create a platform for scholars with various backgrounds to engage in, explore and further develop this interdisciplinary field of research.

➤ **Legitimate public policies: Promoting well-being and ecological sustainability**

Session chair: Joonas Uotinen (Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare)

Speakers:

Dalia D'Amato (Finnish Environment Institute (Syke)): Justice in multi-level transformative governance for biodiversity

Marleena Halonen (Aalto University): Organizational Perspectives on Resilience and Transformation: Systemic Sustainability Management

Anni Orola (LUT University): Can social sustainability management tools (e.g. social life cycle assessment) contribute to increasing wellbeing globally?

Deniz Turkcu (Lut University): The Dark Side of Policy-Led Transitions: Tensions and Mitigation Strategies in the German Context

Session organizers:

Joonas Uotinen (Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare), Jukka Sivonen (University of Turku), and Maria Vaalavuo (University of Turku)

Synopsis: Ecological sustainability is at stake and public support for necessary measures is wavering. People desire personal well-being despite its impacts on planetary ecology and the costs to others' well-being, both today and in the future. Sustainability transition requires legitimate public institutions that support both well-being and ecological sustainability.

This special session calls for novel approaches to public institutions: How do current public institutions (including, especially, the welfare state institutions and their culture-dependent variants, but also other relevant institutions) cater to all well-being, its equal distribution, ecological sustainability and legitimacy? What aspects or parts of current public institutions work well for these aims, and what aspects do not serve these aims? How can public institutions be changed to better cater for these aims?

➤ **What is enough? – Approaching the sufficiency transformation 'inside-out' by discussing our lived experiences**

Session chair: Rasmus Sihvonen (University of Eastern Finland)

Session organizers:

Rasmus Sihvonen (University of Eastern Finland), Satu Lähteenoja (Demos Helsinki), and Seona Candy (Demos Helsinki)

Synopsis: People and the rest of nature are burning out as we continue to overwork and overconsume. Yet, we're faced with contradictions as the grand narratives of our culture prescribe more work, efficiency, productivity and consumption for both well-being and solving the ecological crisis.

Current framing of sustainability issues and the needed transformation mainly revolve around the societal level structures - those that are external to us and our immediate experiences. Could the complex sustainability transformation serve us better, if we begin from our 'inner structures' by deliberating on our lived experiences within the current external ones? As we gain a better understanding of our experiences, could this deliberation simultaneously evoke a cultural shift and action - a transformation inside-out?

In this framing, the phenomena of overwork and overconsumption raise the question: what is enough - what is sufficient? Is the sustainability transformation actually a sufficiency transformation, and what if it makes our lives better and more meaningful? Can we approach it by pausing for a moment and discussing our experiences related to sufficiency and insufficiency?

In this session, participants are given 1) an introduction to ongoing research with constructive group discussion, dialogue, as a method to study people's experiences and evoke shifts in them, and 2) an opportunity to engage in such a dialogue to reflect on one's own and others' experiences of sufficiency and insufficiency, in work and consumption. At the end we will reflect on the significance of having these kinds of dialogues in the times that we currently live in.

9.30-10.45

Workshop

Showroom

➤ **Beyond the Growth Bubble: Media, Narratives, and the Transition to Sustainable Futures**

Session chair: HELSUS Media Team (University of Helsinki)

Session facilitators:

Susanna Lehvävirta (HELSUS) and Marja Heinonen (Independent)

Speakers:

Silva Rehn (Kauppalehti), Tuuli Hirvilampi (Tampereen yliopisto), Erkki Mervaala (Syke), and Kimmo Lunden (Maaseudun tulevaisuus)

Session organizers:

HELSUS Media Team (University of Helsinki): Sini Holopainen (HELSUS), Susanna Lehvävirta (HELSUS), and Marja Heinonen (HELSUS, media specialist)

Synopsis: The session explores how media shapes discourse on sufficiency, degrowth, and green growth, and the role it plays in sustainability transformations. Media narratives often reinforce mainstream economic paradigms, while sufficiency, post-growth and post-GDP themes remain overlooked. Since media strongly influences worldviews and perceptions of sustainability, understanding its role is key to imagining futures beyond the current economic model.

Discussion focuses on questions such as: what perspectives are missing from media coverage, whose voices are not heard, what expertise relevant to sustainability transformations is absent, and who decides how the economy is represented. Attention is also given to how strong sustainability and systems analysis can be integrated into mainstream narratives.

The goals of the session are to analyze how media represents economic growth, sufficiency and degrowth; to strengthen collaboration between researchers and journalists; and to explore ways media content could better support sustainability transformations. Audience engagement includes a "Solution Battle" where teams propose ways to improve the linking of economics and sustainability in media.

9.30-10.45

Workshop

Drive

➤ **Bursting the bubble for real - the civilisation will collapse**

Session chair: Milla Unkila (University of Turku, BIODIFUL)

Session organizers:

Milla Unkila (University of Turku, BIODIFUL), Saska Tuomasjukka (University of Turku, BIODIFUL), Outi Uusitalo (University of Jyväskylä, BIODIFUL), Sanna Ahvenharju (University of Turku, BIODIFUL), and Aino Tarkkio (University of Turku, BIODIFUL)

Synopsis: The collapse of civilization is inevitable. We sustainability researchers know that, however for reasons of preserving our sanity, prestige or income we continue in collective self-denial. Yes, there are solutions to individual issues – we can curb emissions, compensate for nature loss and embrace novel energy technologies – but when we consider the planet as a system of not only natural systems but also of economic mechanisms, political structures and social trajectories, there is but one conclusion: a tabu that causes anxiety we currently carry alone.

However, accepting this does not mean giving up. Instead, we should open the discussion of our aims and narratives: what can we sustainability researchers genuinely do? We can try to mitigate the collapse, increase our adaptability or even explore the types of underpinnings we would like to see the future civilizations built on. There are many possible ways to reframe and reorient our work – to ease our anxiety and experience meaningfulness.

The aim of this interactive roundtable is to engage the participants in genuine reflection – what could, and should we sustainability researchers do? In practice, the session builds on a sequence of statements presented by the facilitator and commented on by the participants around the table. After each statement the facilitator will ask the audience for their thoughts, encouraging open reflection. There will be no individual presentations, only the introduction of the people around the table and the basic premise of the session, which allows for using the whole session to genuinely engage the audience.

9.30-10.45	Roundtable	The Lounge
<div> <div></div> <div> Envisaging collaboration for sustainable innovation: Pushing the boundaries through law and governance </div> </div> <div> Session chair: Dhanay Cadillo Chandler (University of Lapland) </div>		<div> Speakers: </div> <div> Marie-Elodie Bourot (Independent sustainability consultant specialized in CSRD compliance) </div> <div> Rolando Tomasini (Director of Partnership Development for Europe in the Asia, Middle East, and Europe division at PATH) </div> <div> Rosa Ballardini (Director of Partnership Development for Europe in the Asia, Middle East, and Europe division at PATH) </div> <div> Jaakko Siltaloppi (Senior Research Fellow Faculty of Management and Business, Industrial Engineering and Management at Tampere University) </div> <div> Jaakko Tuomainen (Borealis Group) </div> <div> Session organizers: </div> <div> Dhanay Cadillo Chandler (University of Lapland), Yasmine Bounouara Parizet (University of Tampere), and Anwar Al-Hamidi (University of Lapland) </div>

Synopsis: Sustainability driven innovations are pivotal in reshaping our future by offering transformative solutions to the world’s most pressing environmental challenges. From a policy perspective, science, technology and innovation (STI) policies are increasingly recognized as essential drivers of sustainable development by promoting green technologies and climate change mitigation; health innovations; knowledge and capacity building; governance and policy alignment amongst other. Innovation is largely dependent on structures, processes, collaborative arrangements, implementation, and scaling of innovative solutions.

While governance guides and supports innovation, it also requires navigating the dynamics of power, regulation, collaboration, and social justice. To burst the sustainability bubble, it is necessary to look beyond the single field-approach to find workable solutions to the intricacies related to sustainable innovations. Given the interplay between law, ecosystems governance, and innovation, this special session focuses on how to overcome social, cultural, political, and economic barriers in the implementation of sustainable innovation?

The panelists will explore existing tensions related to IPRs and collaborative arrangements; collaboration through multi-stakeholder partnerships; and governance mechanisms. The aim is to enhance coherence across sectors, promote inclusive ecosystems innovation and to support sustainable business models. Hence, driving technological progress and contributing to sustainable, inclusive, and resilient societies.

The Lounge

- **Angele Alook (York University) and Bonn Juego (University of Jyväskylä):** Global Cooperation and Sustainability Visions

Dialogue speaker biographies:



Angele Alook is an Associate Professor in the School of Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies at York University. As a member of Bigstone Cree Nation in Treaty 8 territory, her research has mainly focused on the political economy of oil and gas in Alberta. She specializes in Indigenous feminisms, life course approaches, Indigenous research methodologies, cultural identity, and the sociology of family and work.

She is a co-investigator on the SSHRC-funded (Partnership Grant) Corporate Mapping Project, where she completed research with the Parkland Institute on Indigenous experiences in Alberta's oil industry and its gendered impact on working families. Angele is also a member of the Just Powers research team, a SSHRC-funded Insight Grant. Angele is a member of the Just Powers research team, which is a SSHRC-funded Insight Grant. Through the Just Powers project Angele has been able to produce a documentary called "Pikopaywin: It is broken" which features stories on the land with Indigenous traditional land users, environmental officers, and elders. She is directing her research toward a just transition of Alberta's economy and labour force and the impact climate change has on traditional Treaty 8 territory.

Bonn Juego is Senior Lecturer in International Development Studies at the University of Jyväskylä, Finland, and Chair of the Finnish Society for Development Research. He is an invited contributor to the Great Transition Initiative and a founding editorial board member of Just Ecological Political Economy – the HELSUS Global South Blog.



His research, teaching, and public engagement focus on the political-economic, socio-ecological, and technological dimensions of capitalism. His work addresses critical global issues, including inequality, climate change, sustainability strategies, democratization, wars, resource conflicts, social movements, commons, and alternative futures.

Previously, he was a Lecturer in World Politics at the University of Helsinki and taught Corporate Environmental Management at the Jyväskylä University School of Business and Economics. He has also held Visiting Research Fellowships at the University of Copenhagen and the City University of Hong Kong.

He studied international relations at Aalborg University (Denmark), heterodox development economics at the University of Cambridge (UK), technology governance and innovation policy at Tallinn University of Technology (Estonia), and regional integration at the University of Malaya (Malaysia).

Prior to joining academia, he worked with government institutions, a business school, and civil society organizations in the Philippines – experiences that continue to shape his commitment to bridging scholarship and practice.

Dialogue synopsis:

This dialogue sets out to explore key sustainability challenges and visions for a just and resilient future. The session addresses questions such as: How can global co-operation be strengthened across regions and stakeholders? What are the right priorities for sustainability transitions? How can we balance globalisation and localisation, tackle inequalities, and foster paradigm shifts toward sustainable development?

Through open discussion, the speakers will share their perspectives on the global sustainability transformation and present their own visions for a better future. Audience participation will be encouraged throughout.

Moderated by: Susanna Lehvävirta (University of Helsinki, HELSUS) and Kirsi Niinimäki (Aalto University)

12.00-13.00

➤ Lunch

13.15-14.30

Seminar

Revelation Space 1

➤ **Awakening a sustainable mediatechnological relationship – ecomaterial perspectives on the media society**

Session chair: Aino Kangaspuro-Haaparanta (Tampere University)

Speakers:

Aino Kangaspuro Haaparanta (Tampere University): The Dirty Silence of Journalism: Pursuing Planetary Sustainable Journalism from the Perspective of Political Media Ecology

Antti Kurko (Tampere University): Material Dimensions of Everyday Photography Practices: Digital Excess in Image-centred World

Toni Taipalus (Tampere University): Data storage design choices and their impacts on sustainability

Session organizers:

Aino Kangaspuro Haaparanta (Tampere University), Antti Kurko (Tampere University), and Tarja Rautiainen-Keskustalo (Tampere University)

Synopsis: Media technology, such as the pocket-sized smartphone, is an integral part of our daily lives. Through this algorithmically life-rhythmizing smart device, we read news, pay bills, capture meaningful moments in photos, and simultaneously generate vast amounts of data. We often use these wireless technologies without considering the multi-level and multidirectional ecological-material cause-and-effect relationships intertwined with media technology and the infrastructure that enables its use.

In recent decades, media scholars have increasingly become interested in the environmental impacts of digital technology (see, e.g., Gabrys 2011; Maxwell & Miller 2012; Taffel 2019). For instance, CO₂ emissions from the ICT sector already match those produced by global air travel (Laaksonen et al. 2024, 4). Our rapidly digitalizing technolife is also generating an explosive increase in electronic waste (Baldé 2024, 12–13). Additionally, energy- and water-intensive data centers are being built at an accelerating pace not only in the already drought-stricken Global South, but also in the sparsely populated Global North (Li et al. 2023; Lehuedé 2024).

Goals of the session:

- Foster interdisciplinary dialogue on the relationship between media technology and sustainability.
- Explore concrete ways in which media technology can support ecological sustainability.

➤ **Medicalization: Sacred or Sacrificial? Understanding the Sacred in Medicine for a Sustainable Healthcare System**

Session chair: Kristiina Patja (University of Helsinki)

Speakers:

Kristiina Patja (University of Helsinki): Why is the expansion of medicine into areas of life a sustainability issue?

Heikki Pesonen (University of Helsinki): Introduction to the Concept of Sacred in Medicine

Anna Jarske-Fransas (University of Helsinki): Rituals and the Sacred in Medicine Affecting the Sustainability of Health Care

Jaana Laisi (University of Helsinki, MD): Guided discussion: What aspects of medicine and healthcare do we treat as sacred, and how does this impact sustainability?

Session organizers:

Kristiina Patja (University of Helsinki), Heikki Pesonen (University of Helsinki), Anna Jarske-Fransas (University of Helsinki), and Jaana Laisi (University of Helsinki)

Synopsis: Healthcare systems globally are facing significant sustainability challenges, both in terms of resource efficiency and their role in broader societal transitions. We explore the concept of medicalization—the expansion of medical definitions and interventions into areas of life previously not considered medical issues—influencing the sustainability of healthcare.

The session integrates perspectives from medical research, sustainability science, and study of religions to provide a holistic understanding of how deep-seated cultural beliefs shape medicalization and, consequently, the sustainability of healthcare.

Goals of the session:

- Examine medicalization as a driver of healthcare sustainability challenges.
- Apply study of religions perspectives to analyze how values, norms, and beliefs shape healthcare's role in sustainability transformations.
- Identify solutions to reduce unnecessary medicalization while maintaining high-quality, equitable healthcare services.
- Engage participants in a critical discussion on to broader sustainability goals.

➤ **Harmful hopes and deceptive optimism – how to imagine hope that can disrupt the status quo?**

Session chair: Johanna Ahola-Launonen (Aalto University)

Speakers:

Heidi Sinevaara-Niskanen (University of Lapland) & Marjo Lindroth (University of Lapland): (Counter)productive hope: Scrutinising the role of hope in sustainability

Carla Paoliello (University of Lisbon & Cieba): What possibilities emerge when we teach sustainability in dialogue with other forms of life?

Sofi Kurki (VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland): Regenerative economics – hope or hype?

Johanna Ahola-Launonen (Aalto University): Understanding hope: Techno-optimism and techno-pessimism as situated epistemic-affective orientations

Session organizers:

Johanna Ahola-Launonen (Aalto University), Sofi Kurki (VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland), Marjo Lindroth (University of Lapland), and Heidi Sinevaara-Niskanen (University of Lapland)

Synopsis: In times of crisis, hope is often framed as essential for action, motivating change and sustainability transformations. However, hope is not inherently progressive—it materializes in infrastructures, policies, and investments that shape which futures become possible. Some hopes sustain harmful systems rather than challenge them, deterring meaningful action or diverting resources from viable alternatives. Unviable technologies, speculative sociotechnical imaginaries, or localized solutions framed as universal "silver bullets" can create false reassurance that transformation is underway when structural shifts remain elusive.

Distinguishing between hope that enables change and hope that sustains harmful status quos is not straightforward. Harm is often recognized only in hindsight, after significant resources have been invested. Moreover, hope is unequally distributed—who has the authority to define what constitutes "harmful hope," and whose futures are at stake? Building on critical perspectives, including those that challenge the depoliticizing effects of hope, this session examines hope as a force shaping sustainability governance, technological development, and systemic change. What potential does hope have for disrupting the status quo—or even fueling radical transformation?

13.15-14.30

Roundtable

Passion

➤ **Back to the Future: Traditional and Indigenous Knowledge for Sustainable Innovation**

Session chair: Julia Valle Noronha (Aalto University)

Session organizers:

Julia Valle Noronha (Aalto University), Barbara Pollini (Aalto University), Andrea Botero (Aalto University), and Maarit Mäkelä (Aalto University)

Synopsis: While the rights and cultures of indigenous peoples are still overshadowed by economic and geopolitical interests, for millennia indigenous and traditional communities have developed sustainable practices rooted in local ecosystems. As we face global environmental challenges, integrating indigenous and Western knowledge and approaches to research and design offers a powerful pathway to innovative, sustainable solutions.

In this session the aim is to explore and identify concrete ways to incorporate traditional and indigenous knowledge into sustainable innovation practices, fostering a bio-centric approach to address environmental challenges.

Among the expected outcomes are:

- Identifying key areas where traditional knowledge can enhance sustainable practices
- Highlighting guidelines for respectful and ethical collaboration with indigenous communities
- Collecting successful case studies addressing traditional knowledge to tackle sustainable issues.

This session aims to bridge diverse perspectives and cultures, fostering innovative solutions that respect and can be inspired by traditional wisdom.

13.15-14.30

Workshop

Drive

➤ **Breaking Silos: Advancing Interdisciplinary Processes in Research Science for Sustainability**

Session chair: Anahita Rashidfarokhi (University of Helsinki)

Speakers:

Megan Dale (Lut University): Creating holistic participation in sustainability: Immigrants and Refugees Participation in Sustainability Transformations

Silviya Korpilo (University of Helsinki): Interdisciplinary experiences from the GREENTRAVEL project

Yousef Sakieh (University of Jyväskylä): Bursting the Ecosystem Bubble: Disciplinary Incommensurability and Conceptual Mismatch in Sustainability Science

Rory Taylor (University of Helsinki): Boundaries are relational: Geodesign as a method for boundary management and knowledge co-production in conservation

Session organizers:

Anahita Rashidfarokhi (University of Helsinki), Sonali Sharma (University of Helsinki), Valtteri Aaltonen (University of Helsinki), and Erik Andersson (University of Helsinki)

Synopsis: Interdisciplinary research is often seen as an essential approach for addressing complex sustainability challenges. Yet, despite widespread recognition of its value, knowledge co-production across disciplines remains a challenge. How and when to bridge (which) disciplinary divides to reach desired outcomes (which are multiple and not necessarily compatible) is a topic for both research and practice, and not least the latter is hampered by institutional structures that often reinforce disciplinary silos or impose an unstructured multitude of perspectives without a clear thought about why.

How, then, can we facilitate meaningful interdisciplinary collaboration in sustainability science? What framings, methods and strategies address the existing structural barriers (e.g., academic reward systems, funding limitations, and passive institutional approaches)?

This session will explore forms and reasons for interdisciplinary research and pathways for enhancing interdisciplinarity in practice. Through different ways of giving voice to experiences, the session will include dialogue-based exercises and real-world examples, discussing the following points:

- Different roles and reasons for interdisciplinary work (synthesis, critical cross examination etc.)
- Methods and tools for promoting collaboration and knowledge co-production.
- Strategies for balancing disciplinary depth with integrative approaches.

14.30-15.00

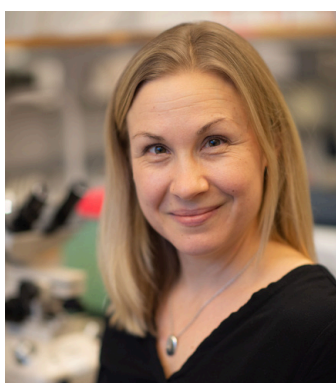
➤ Coffee break

15.00-15.20

Keynote

The Lounge

- **Pauliina Damdimopoulou (Karolinska Institute):** Chemicals, Plastics & the Future of Fertility - is there hope for the humankind?



Keynote speaker biography:

Pauliina Damdimopoulou is Professor of Reproductive Biology at Karolinska Institutet (KI), Stockholm. She earned her PhD in 2008 from the University of Turku, Finland, and trained as a postdoc in France and at KI. Since 2014, she has led the Chemicals and Female Fertility Laboratory at KI.

She is a 2023 ERC Consolidator Grant awardee, ERC Ambassador for Sweden, and co-lead of the Environmental Endocrinology Focus Area of the European Society of Endocrinology. She has published over 100 research papers.

➤ **Bursting the greening bubble: Building multispecies connectivity in urban areas for indigenous species**

Session chair: Long Xie (University of Helsinki)

Speakers:

Chenmingyang Jiang (University of Helsinki & Sichuan Agricultural University): Study on the cultural tourism and ecological security pattern in the Jianmen Shu Road

Mika Saarenpää (University of Helsinki): What about the microbes? Building greener cities with microbes in mind

Antti Tenkanen (University of Helsinki): Rescuing and transplanting local flora for later re-greening of a major apartment construction site.

Long Xie (University of Helsinki): Ecological Indicator Traits of Vegetated Roof Plant Communities: A Five-Year Monitoring of Establishment Methods

Rita Hakola (University of Helsinki) : The role of habitat connectivity and quality in supporting wood ants in urban forests of Helsinki

Session organizers:

Long Xie (University of Helsinki), Antti Tenkanen (University of Helsinki), and Julia Hämäläinen (University of Helsinki)

Synopsis: Current urban planning increasingly aims to enhance biodiversity, greenspace connectivity, high-quality recreation, and other ecosystem services. However, urban greening initiatives are often designed and implemented without a clear understanding of critical ecological connectivity, leading to fragmented greenspaces isolated by roads and buildings. Additionally, exotic species are frequently used in urban landscapes, while the lack of knowledge and resources limits the integration of native species. Climate change further exacerbates the issue by increasing the risk of exotic species becoming invasive. This session aims to burst the prevailing urban greening bubble by introducing innovative, ecologically critical approaches: enhancing habitat quality and connectivity for native species while ensuring these species contribute to ecosystem services.

➤ **Smart and functional biobased materials in healthcare**

Session chair: Mina Zare-Lahti (University of Helsinki)

Speakers:

Yinyin Bao (University of Helsinki): Digital Light 3D Printing of Biodegradable Polymers

Aleksi Kröger (University of Helsinki): Raman Spectroscopy Reveals Characteristics of Sugar Excipients in Freeze-Drying of Nanofibrillated Cellulose

Maryam Abidizadegan (University of Helsinki): Cryptophytes: A Promising Source of Phenolic Compounds with Healthcare Applications

Patrícia Figueiredo (University of Helsinki): Tailoring Lignin Nanoparticles for Life Sciences Applications

Session organizers:

Mina Zare-Lahti (University of Helsinki), Minh Ho (University of Helsinki), and Muhammad Majtaba (VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland)

Synopsis: Sustainable and biobased materials are gaining significant attention in healthcare due to their biocompatibility, biodegradability, and functional properties. This session will explore recent innovations in smart and functional biobased materials, focusing on their healthcare applications in drug delivery, wound healing, regenerative medicine, and wearables.

Traditional materials often lack the adaptability required for modern medical applications, highlighting the need for more advanced solutions. The integration of smart materials, which can respond to physiological stimuli such as temperature, pH, or enzymes, offers versatile alternatives. The session will provide an overview of biobased materials, emphasizing their biodegradability, biocompatibility, and advanced functionalities such as stimuli responsiveness and self-healing properties. Key technological advancements will be discussed, including 3D bioprinting, hydrogels, delivery systems, and biomaterials-based wearables, which enhance sustainability and functionality in healthcare.

A key focus will be on how these materials contribute to a circular bioeconomy while offering smart solutions for biomedical applications. The session will address scalability, development challenges, and future research directions, bridging the gap between research innovations and real-world health applications.

15.30-16.45

Roundtable

Showroom

➤ **Degrowth and digitalisation, laying foundations for a new regulatory approach to platform economy**

Session chair: Beata Mäihäniemi (University of Lapland)

Speakers:

Corinna Casi (University of Jyväskylä): Ethics and Degrowth: Learning from Indigenous Wisdom and Environmental Ethics Perspectives

Pasi Takkinen (University of Tampere): Reimagining Digital Platforms through the Lens of Sufficiency and Education

Marta Maroni (Maastricht University): Constitutionalizing Degrowth: Can Law Restrain Platform Power?

Tuomas Pöysti (Geradin Partners): From Law Enforcement to Sufficiency Governance in Platforms: Are the State and Private Actors Ready?

Sanna Taskila (Macon Oy): Can Circular Business Models Align with Degrowth?

Session organizers:

Beata Mäihäniemi (University of Lapland), Pasi Takkinen (University of Tampere), Marta Maroni (Maastricht University), Tuomas Pöysti (Geradin Partners), Corinna Casi (University of Jyväskylä), and Sanna Taskila (Macon Oy)

Synopsis: Online platforms continue to exercise a tremendously negative impact on the environment, e.g. Temu and SHEIN sell large amounts of cheap clothes packed full of dangerous chemicals which may endanger health of EU consumers. The effect of the platform economy on green transition remains understudied (Moriya et al 2019, Wang et al 2023, Fenwick & Vermeulen 2019) especially from a legal perspective. However, there is incompatibility between business models of online platforms and effective legal protection of environment. In accordance with the recent measures undertaken by the European Union in the sphere of Green Deal (2019) and circular economy (European Commission 2020) fair and contestable market is also one where enterprises act sustainably.

A degrowth approach to economy- 'reduction of energy and resource throughput designed to bring the economy back into balance with the living world' (Hickel 2020) 'to break with the cycle of productivity'(Latouche 2020), is a lens for our interdisciplinary discussions.

The session addresses the following questions: How most important pieces of regulation such as Digital Markets Act, Digital Services Act, corporate responsibility directive, directive on corporate sustainability due diligence, impact the possible transition from efficiency-focused to degrowth-focused economy? Is it feasible to implement a policy that embraces degrowth?

Another aim of the session is to critically elaborate on panel findings in a joint blogpost and facilitate further collaboration between discussants.

➤ **Lack of motivation for individuals to make sustainable choices? Find the enormous potential of individuals**

Session chair: Laura Kallio (University of Helsinki)

Speakers:

Laura Kallio: Compassion as a key concept for inner transformation in sustainability: A literature review

Joula Siponen (INAR, University of Helsinki): Cultivating professional climate change competence

Mohammad Mozumder (NOVIA University of Applied Science): Rediscovering Hidden Gems: Conservation of Undervalued Fish Species for Ecological, Social, and Economic Sustainability

Sini Valmari (Natural Resources Institute Finland (Luke)): From intention to identity: Developing individual agency in sustainable choices in the digital world

Session organizers:

Laura Kallio (University of Helsinki) and Joula Siponen (INAR, University of Helsinki)

Synopsis: Many studies show human activities since the 19th century have been the primary driver of climate change. Therefore, it is essential to make significant changes in the human behaviors which have been contributing to climate change. Research has shown that compassion has the potential to act as a building block of sustainability skills, thus promoting the agency for pro-environmental behavior. According to a definition of compassion, it influences on individual's perception and recognition of grievance (e.g. injustice or inequality) a starting point of seeking appropriate information to discover solutions for the problems. Furthermore compassion skills increases the probability of acting against the perceived policy of injustice.

As an orientation to the topic an exercise on climate compassion will be held together in the beginning of the session. The orientation is followed by a review of how individuals' sustainability skills have been developed by training their compassion skills. After the presentation participants get to elaborate in small groups the main question and to come up with things (in society, in business and in non-profit organization) that can be seen to have potential to create new incentives and motives for individuals to act more prosocially or pro-environmentally. At first, the participants will discuss the topic in pairs with the roles of conscious listener and conscious speaker that will be familiarized with by the facilitators in advance. Finally, the core thoughts will be documented by each participants on post-it, and a short mobile survey will be answered by the participants about their thoughts on the subject of the workshop.

➤ **Deliberating sustainable place of livestock within consumption corridors**

Session chair: Iryna Herzon (University of Helsinki)

Session organizers:

Iryna Herzon (University of Helsinki) and Kaisa Kurki (LUT University)

Synopsis: Addressing the scale of animal food production and consumption is of paramount importance in the transition towards sustainable agriculture and food systems. In the session it is proposed that active engagement with the concepts of the consumption corridors and of sufficiency may provide powerful tools of deliberation around a much contested and highly polarised debate on the role of livestock in food systems. The consumption corridors concept defines a space between a minimum (the floor) and maximum (the ceiling) consumption level, which allows everybody to meet their needs without compromising ability of others to satisfy theirs, thus maintaining a good life of all within planetary boundaries (Fuchs 2021). Sufficiency centers on a good life while recognising 'enoughness' as an end and means to sustainability (Clapp 2017).

After a brief introduction by the session organisers, the participants will engage with the concepts through playing in a novel game we call The Planetary Plate Puzzle. The game setting will provide a safe space for respectful non-polarized discussions on the multifaceted aspects of personal and shared dietary choices, especially around the role of animal source foods and in the cultural contexts of such choices, as they evolve through time. The session organizers' highly interdisciplinary and multicultural team believes that deliberating on sustainability of eating as an agricultural act we could both gain insights into the process of sustainability transitioning and foster discussions away from polarization that stalls societal transitions toward sustainability (Herzon et al. 2023).