Research for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Call for Papers: GAIA Open Access Thematic Issue

A GAIA thematic issue will focus on the roles and contributions of research in achieving the Agenda 2030 and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The guest editors hereby invite the growing research community on sustainable development to submit papers and to share their reflections, experiences and, in particular, their empirical insights.

Background

In September 2015 the General Assembly of the United Nations unanimously adopted the Agenda 2030. At the core of the agenda are 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 related targets. The SDGs mark a new era in the discourse on and efforts for sustainable development. Contrary to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), they resulted from a broad based global negotiation process that not only included all 193 UN member-states, but also a broad range of organisations from civil society, economy, and science. As a result, the SDGs include the social, economic and, in particular, the environmental dimension of sustainable development in a much more comprehensive manner than the MDGs, and therefore resolve the confinement to developing and transition countries, making sustainable development a truly global concern. This implies that all nations and societies are challenged to contribute to a more sustainable world.

The SDGs mark a decisive point and crucial achievement in the discourse on sustainable development. For the first time since the basically normative paradigm of sustainability surfaced three decades ago, goals and targets of sustainable development are now comprehensively formulated and globally adopted. In other words, for the first time the SDGs represent the globally shared value dimension or target knowledge of sustainable development.
As the title ‘Agenda 2030’ implies, the SDGs are to be achieved or at least significantly approached within the next twelve years, meaning that action is urgently needed and that societies, economies, and governance systems are fundamentally challenged to produce change and transformation towards the agreed normative settings of the SDGs.

The urgency of action and transformation towards the SDGs poses major challenges to knowledge societies and hence to science and research, as knowledge has to be produced and applied on how to move from the current to the desired state in the multiple dimensions represented by the SDGs. For science and research this implies that – based on system knowledge – focus has to shift to producing transformation knowledge that takes into account the multidimensionality and societal contextuality of the value dimension of sustainable development.

Aims and Scope

The thematic issue of GAIA on the SDGs aims at documenting the experiences and insights of a broad range of research initiatives and endeavours that try to cope with the challenges posed by a focus on contributing to achieving the SDGs. This should promote mutual learning and discourse in view of renewing science and research for sustainable development.

GAIA offers different peer-reviewed article formats, in particular Forum contributions and Research articles (see www.oekom.de/ gaia/submission-guidelines). For these different formats, authors are encouraged to contribute to the following broad themes:

- Reflexions on the institutional and methodological challenges for research, the system of science, and the science-society or science-policy nexus posed by the aim to contribute to achieving the SDGs (preferably as Forum contribution)
- Reflexions and insights on the role of science and research in promoting the Agenda 2030 and in closing knowledge gaps in the SDGs and their interlinkages (as Forum contribution or as Research article)
- Experiences and insights gained from concrete contextual and/or thematic research endeavours that aimed at or resulted in improved situations in one or several SDGs (as Forum contribution or as Research article)
- Insights and empirical results on the trade-offs and co-benefits of the SDGs in general or in concrete contexts and conclusions on how to reduce trade-offs and increase co-benefits (preferably as Research articles)

Deadlines, Submission, and Review Process

Authors are encouraged to use the different article formats offered in GAIA, in particular Forum contributions and Research articles. Please find the Guide for Authors here: www.oekom.de/gaia/submission-guidelines

Authors are encouraged to submit extended abstracts to the guest editors. Upon acceptance, authors will be invited to submit full manuscripts. Papers will be peer reviewed. Upon acceptance, they will be published Open Access. No author fees will be raised. Publication language is English – papers must be written in good English.

Please submit abstracts via e-mail: urs.wiesmann@cde.unibe.ch and gaia@oekom.de.
Important Dates

- 21st May 2018 or earlier: submission of extended abstracts (500 to 1000 words) via e-mail to urs.wiesmann@cde.unibe.ch and gaia@oekom.de
- 29th June 2018 or earlier: invitation for full paper submission
- 1st October 2018 or earlier: submission of full papers via our journal management system (www.oekom.de/gaia/submission-guidelines)
- End of November 2018: communication of decisions by co-editors on acceptance, rejection, or recommended revisions to authors
- Early 2019: revisions, rebuttals, potential second round of reviews
- Beginning of March 2019: final decision on manuscripts
- Spring 2019: publication of thematic issue

Co-Editor and Guest Editors

Irmli Seidl is the responsible GAIA co-editor of the thematic issue.

The guest editors are Océeane Dayer and Urs Wiesmann, Co-Chairs of the Swiss Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN).