Innovative Session: “How can the Earth System Governance community effectively contribute to the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals?”.

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The UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development stresses the fundamental role science should play for implementing the 17 SDGs. In this context, the Future Earth platform encourages the scientific community to complement disciplinary research with inter- and transdisciplinary co-production of knowledge together with societal actors for generating knowledge that supports sustainability transformations. To achieve this aim, international sustainability research networks are currently working on novel approaches through organizing conferences, webinars or working groups dedicated to the issue, designing science-policy-interfaces, or studying best practices. However, many of the network representatives find it challenging to implement collaborative approaches within their structures and to create conditions, which are truly favourable for co-production. A major reason for this challenge is the global scope of these networks. Traditionally, co-production approaches have mostly been applied in rather local settings. How can global scale, international research networks effectively foster the production of knowledge relevant for key actors in the implementation of the SDGs?

The goal of this session is to discuss different perspectives of how the ESG network can tackle the above mentioned challenge. The session will start with a short introduction on the topic and a presentation on how other global networks such as GLP, PECS, GMBA, BioDiscovery, and PAGES addressed the issue. By doing so, we will focus on different theories of change, as well as implementation strategies and implementation experiences of these networks. Then, we will moderate a discussion with all participants. The discussion will be organised by applying the “fishbowl”-technique to allow all participants to express their perspectives. The following are key questions for the discussion: What kind of knowledge production is needed for implementation of the SDGs? How can the ESG networks foster such research? What are favourable context conditions? What change theories are underlying the different approaches? The discussion will be documented by jointly creating generic models of transformative sustainability research network.

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