



# ITD Alliance

Global Alliance for  
Inter- and Transdisciplinarity

## April 2024 Newsletter

### Newsletter highlights in brief

#### Editorial

#### News from the ITD24 conference:

- record submissions
- announcement of panel on navigating ITD careers
- registrations open on May 1, early bird closes on 30 June.

#### News from the Leadership Board and Executive Secretary:

- Executive Secretary to step down on June 30
- review of financial status and administrative needs
- reduced two-year individual membership fees
- becoming more active in training, and discussions with TD Training Collaboratory
- JUST IN: invitation to join The Earth Humanity Coalition.

#### News from the Working Groups:

- Early Career Researcher working group: handbook now online, activities at ITD2024, virtual coffees
- Integration Experts and Expertise working group: ITD2024 submissions
- Toolkits and Methods working group: minor revisions to peer-reviewed article.

#### Policy and Funding News:

- Global Call from the International Science Council (ISC) for Science Missions for Sustainability (Deadline 31 May)
- New university ranking system.

#### Calls for Participation and/or Contributions:

- Call for presentations: Science of Team Science 2024 conference.
- Call for submissions: Special issue in Higher Education Research and Development journal 2025: Educating for Societal Transitions.
- Call for articles: Special issue of the Journal of Integrative Environmental Sciences focusing on Co-Creating Transdisciplinary Researching and Learning for Transformative Socio-Environmental Change.
- Call for papers: 12<sup>th</sup> European Conference on Education stream on 'Interdisciplinary, Multidisciplinary & Transdisciplinary Education.'

- Call for contributions to the Handbook of Research Methods and Applications in Sustainability Transformations: Social Science Perspectives.

Country News from:

- the German-speaking countries
- Switzerland
- the UK
- the USA.

Journal News:

- New special issue from GAIA on “Impacts of real-world labs in sustainability transformations”
- Collection on “Practice-based research of interdisciplinary higher education” in Humanities and Social Sciences Communications
- Wondering where to publish?

About this Newsletter



## Editorial

Dear ITD-Alliance Members and Colleagues,

Welcome to the second newsletter of the ITD-Alliance for 2024. An important activity of the ITD-Alliance is to seize opportunities to influence national, regional and global research and funding policies. See the “Just In” item in the Leadership Board news about the possibility to influence the activities of the International Decade of Sciences for Sustainable Development 2024-2033.

We can’t do this without you! We need on-the-ground input and, where possible, involvement to:

- alert us to enquiries and other opportunities to have input;
- identify opportunities to partner with relevant organisations;
- help shape pitches so they are most influential;
- monitor follow-through on implementation.

Please contact [Gabriele.Bammer@anu.edu.au](mailto:Gabriele.Bammer@anu.edu.au) when opportunities come across your desk.

In late February, I used my position as President of the ITD-Alliance, as well as involvement with a sister organization, NITRO-Oceania (Network of Leaders of Interdisciplinary and Transdisciplinary Research Organisations in the Oceania region) to comment on the lack of attention to transdisciplinary research and education in the final report of a major Australian review of the higher education system. It was published in Future Campus, a weekly newsletter providing news, analysis and insights to more than 10,000 subscribers in the Australian higher

education sector (<https://futurecampus.com.au/2024/02/28/whats-critically-missing-from-the-universities-accord-report-transdisciplinarity/>).

Hearty congratulations to the ITD-Alliance Early Career Researchers working group for their insightful, just-published handbook! More information is provided in the working group report below. The outstanding activities of all three working groups are pivotal to the success of the ITD-Alliance. If you are not already a member, consider getting involved. At this stage in the development of the ITD-Alliance, the working groups rely entirely on volunteers, making willing helpers a great asset. It also makes their achievements all the more remarkable and appreciated.

Many thanks to Simon Scott who responded to the call in the last news for country contributors, as well as to everyone else who sent in material for this news.

Gabriele Bammer  
President, ITD-Alliance  
5 April 2024



**ITD24 - International Transdisciplinarity Conference 2024, Utrecht, the Netherlands, November 4-8** <https://itd-alliance.org/itd24/>

*Nearly 400 submissions*

The conference organisers report a record number of contributions: 385! Contributions are currently out for review and everyone who submitted a contribution will be notified by the beginning of May. The conference board greatly regrets that venue and timing limitations mean that many proposals will have to be rejected.

*Panel announcement: 'Navigating uncharted waters: Pathways of an ITD career'*

Delft University of Technology's BinBin Pearce will chair a panel of researchers at different stages of their careers to discuss the realities of living out a professional life within an ITD field, highlighting the delicate balance between creativity and risk. To find out more, see: <https://itd-alliance.org/keynotes/>.

*Registration opens on May 1st*

Limited Early Bird tickets are available until 30 June, see: <https://itd-alliance.org/conference-fees/>.



## News from the Leadership Board and Executive Secretary

The Leadership Board continues to have two meetings each month, allowing all members to participate at a reasonable time of day.

Tobias Buser, who has been the Executive Secretary of the ITD-Alliance since its formation in 2019, has decided to step down from the position at the end of June to pursue other opportunities, particularly ones that allow more face-to-face interaction. He will continue in his role as the ITD-Alliance representative on the organising committee of the ITD24 conference. There will be more on farewelling Tobias in the June newsletter.

The Leadership Board has embarked on a process of reviewing the financial status and administrative needs of the ITD-Alliance and is looking for ways to increase funding in order to take full advantage of the growing opportunities to advance inter- and transdisciplinarity. This process was set in train before the resignation of the Executive Secretary in recognition of the impossible workload associated with that position, which was noted by the President in acknowledging the Executive Secretary's contributions.

The February meeting of the Leadership Board approved a reduced membership fee for individual members joining for two years. At the March meeting the Leadership Board approved guidelines for responding to requests from other institutions for cooperation in events.

At the February and March Leadership Board meetings there were also discussions on how the ITD-Alliance could become more active in training. This was triggered by an approach from Margaret Krebs, Project Director of the TD Training Collaboratory (a US National Science Foundation-funded project run by Stanford University and including several individual ITD-Alliance members) to consider a role in the long-term maintenance and expansion of the train-the-trainer program it is developing, once its funding finishes in 2025. The Leadership Board anticipates that has the potential to provide exciting opportunities for interested ITD-Alliance members and will report on developments in future newsletters.

**JUST IN:** To be discussed at the April Leadership Board meeting is an invitation to the ITD-Alliance to join The Earth Humanity Coalition, which is tasked with implementing the goals of the International Decade of Sciences for Sustainable Development 2024-2033 (IDSSD) proclaimed at the UN General Assembly (UNGA Resolution A/77/L.100, 25th August 2023). An exciting proposal is to develop a Global Network of Transdisciplinary Hubs for Sustainable Development.



## News from the Working Groups

### **News from the Early Career Researcher (ECR) working group (WG) (BinBin Pearce)**

- We held the second virtual coffee in 2024 on March 7<sup>th</sup> during which we brainstormed ideas for the ITD2024 pre-conference event that the working group has been asked to organize. We have submitted these ideas to the organizing committee and look forward to realizing them for the conference.
- The ECR WG will also be organizing a plenary session for the ITD2024 entitled “Navigating uncharted waters: Pathways of an ITD career”. We will be reaching out to people within the ITD Alliance to be panelists. Stay tuned!
- The “Handbook for ITD ECRs” is [now online!](#) We encourage you to consider sharing it as a resource with your students if you are in a supervisory role. Or share it with your peers if you are an ECR yourself. We are looking for feedback especially from the supervisory perspective because we would like to better understand how different supervisors address the topics mentioned in the handbook to their students. As it is a living document, please feel free to give us suggestions for how to improve the material.
- Ulli Vilsmaier joined us in conversation at the virtual coffee on April 2<sup>nd</sup> and Sabine Hoffman will join us on June 5<sup>th</sup>.

### **News from the Integration Experts and Expertise working group (Sabine Hoffmann):**

- On February 6, 2024 Helena Guimarães, Paul Hirsch, Christian Pohl and Sabine Hoffmann organised a pilot workshop to discuss the various roles of integration experts in inter- and transdisciplinary research. Based on the insights gained from this workshop, they submitted an abstract to the ITD 2024 conference to further explore integration experts’ creative and supportive contributions.
- On February 20, 2024 Bianca Vienni Baptista and Sabine Hoffmann led the fourth informal exchange of innovative teaching and learning formats to finalize joint submissions for the ITD 2024 conference.

### **News from the Toolkits and Methods working group (Bethany Laursen):**

- As part of their “[Inventory Project](#),” core members of the Toolkits & Methods WG are undertaking minor revisions of a peer-reviewed article entitled “Toolkitting: An unrecognized form of expertise for overcoming fragmentation in inter- and transdisciplinarity.” The article is being considered for the ongoing article collection “[Expertise in integration and implementation for transformative research](#)” in the journal *Humanities and Social Sciences Communication*.



## Policy and Funding News

### **Global Call from the International Science Council (ISC)**

The ISC is initiating a global initiative to practice TD at scale and has launched a Global Call to co-design and embark on Science Missions for Sustainability <https://council.science/mission-science/>.

The goal of Science Missions is to elevate the collaboration between science, policy, and society to new heights to produce actionable integrated knowledge and find solutions that match the scale of humanity's most critical challenges. Each Mission will focus on mobilizing coordinated, collective science-based actions towards addressing complex sustainability challenges at the global, regional and local levels. This provides a great opportunity to practice transdisciplinary research at scale.

The invitation is for novel collaborative consortia of scientists and scientific organizations, policymakers, non-governmental organizations, communities, and the private sector, working on the cutting edge of identifying solutions for complex sustainability challenges, to co-design Science Missions for sustainability over an initial 18-month period. The call is open to bids for Pilot Missions worldwide, but ISC strongly encourage pilots led by institutions located in the Global South to apply. The deadline for applications is 31 May 00:00 UCT.

### **New University Ranking System**

A new university ranking system by Leiden University's Centre for Science and Technology Studies claims to be the "world's first fully-reproducible, transparent ranking system." It is still too early to say whether there will be impacts for inter- and transdisciplinarity from the Leiden Ranking Open Edition 2024 (<https://open.leidenranking.com/>). Some readers may be interested in this Australian perspective on the ranking system (<https://futurecampus.com.au/2024/01/30/final-siren-for-rankings-game/>).



## Calls for Participation and/or Contributions

### **Call for presentations: Science of Team Science 2024 conference**

The Science of Team Science 2024 conference will be held online July 30-August 1, 2024. The call for poster, oral and panel presentations is open, with a deadline of April 30, 2024. See <https://www.inscits.org/>. The host, InSciTS (the International Network for the Science of Team Science), is a member of the ITD-Alliance.

**Call for submissions: Special issue in Higher Education Research and Development journal 2025: Educating for Societal Transitions.**

Key themes are:

- Navigating complexity and change
- Transdisciplinary curriculum and education
- Mutual learning and partnerships
- Social and environmental responsibility
- Affect and activism in and beyond the classroom.

For more information, see [https://think.taylorandfrancis.com/special\\_issues/educating-for-societal-transitions/](https://think.taylorandfrancis.com/special_issues/educating-for-societal-transitions/). Manuscript deadline 30 June 2024.

**Call for articles: Special issue of the Journal of Integrative Environmental Sciences focusing on Co-Creating Transdisciplinary Researching and Learning for Transformative Socio-Environmental Change.**

See [https://think.taylorandfrancis.com/article\\_collections/journal-of-integrative-environmental-sciences-co-creating-transdisciplinary-researching-and-learning-for-transformative-socio-environmental-change/](https://think.taylorandfrancis.com/article_collections/journal-of-integrative-environmental-sciences-co-creating-transdisciplinary-researching-and-learning-for-transformative-socio-environmental-change/).

The goal of this collection is to explore how inter- and transdisciplinary learning and research help approach the complexity of large dynamically entangled societal and environmental issues. This special issue is open access, and the deadline for manuscripts is 30 June 2024.

**Call for papers: 12<sup>th</sup> European Conference on Education stream on ‘Interdisciplinary, Multidisciplinary & Transdisciplinary Education’**

This conference will take place in London (and online) from 11-15 July 2024. The conference is held in partnership with Birkbeck, University of London, the IAFOR Research Centre at the Osaka School of International Public Policy, at Osaka University, and in affiliation with University College London.

‘Interdisciplinary, Multidisciplinary & Transdisciplinary Education’ constitutes one of the conference’s submission streams. The final submission deadline for papers is Friday 19 April 2024. See <https://ece.iafor.org/>

**Call for contributions to the Handbook of Research Methods and Applications in Sustainability Transformations: Social Science Perspectives**

The Handbook is edited by Basil Bornemann & Machteld Simoens and will be published in the Edward Elgar Handbooks of Research and Applications series in 2025. Contributions are invited to Part V of the Handbook, which aims to bring together integrative, reflexive, and future-oriented perspectives on the application, communication, and development of methods in sustainability transformation research. Abstracts are due on 31 May 2024. Abstracts and enquiries to [machteld.simoens@unibas.ch](mailto:machteld.simoens@unibas.ch).



## Country News

### News from the German-speaking countries

Two new (German-speaking) working groups have been set up within the Society for Transdisciplinary and Participatory Research (GTPF, Gesellschaft für transdisziplinäre und partizipative Forschung). They are on “Formats, methods and context” which is tackling appropriate selection of suitable formats and methods for transdisciplinary and participatory research and on "Impact" which aims to further develop impact research and assessment. For more see: <https://gtpf.science/>

### News from Switzerland

The ‘Sustainability transformations and social sciences methods’ workshop held in Basel, in November 2023, was organised by the Social Transitions Research Group of the University of Basel, consisting of Basil Bornemann, Max Bergman, Antonietta Di Giulio, Rico Defila and Machteld Simoens. The workshop discussed the significance, potentials and limitations of social science methods in sustainability transformation research, focusing on transformation-oriented, inter- and transdisciplinary and transformative. There were inspiring inputs from Bethany Laursen (University of Michigan), Bianca Vienni-Baptista (ETH Zurich), Carlie Trott (University of Cincinnati), Julia Backhaus (RWTH Aachen), Julia Bentz (CICS.NOVA Lisbon), Karoline Augenstein (Leuphana University) and Rolf Lidskog (Örebro University).

Workshop discussion covered:

1. the 'future scientificity' of social science methods, addressing issues of methodological rigor in transformation research
2. navigating representation and inclusion, a tension that emerges in different dimensions. Whose questions to ask? What kinds of knowledge and expertise to include?
3. navigating contextuality and generalization, an ever-present tension within the social sciences and transformation research
4. impact for sustainability, highlighting different ways in which research on sustainability transformation can be produced, shared and received.
5. an open discussion on topics suggested by the participants, including the communication of methods and the decolonization of methodology.

The workshop provided a communal space for inspiration and reflection and both participants and organizers expressed their interest and desire to make this workshop a regular meeting. Would you like to help make this happen? Feel free to contact [machteld.simoens@unibas.ch](mailto:machteld.simoens@unibas.ch).

### News from the UK

The annual Interdisciplinary Learning and Teaching conference has been the main highlight in the UK calendar since it started in 2016. Overseen each year by Ida Kemp, it has played a significant role in building the ITD community in the UK ([see the website for past conferences, including presentation slides](#)). This year’s event was hosted by the University College for Interdisciplinary Learning at the University of Manchester on 21 March, and brought together



over 100 delegates from the UK, Europe, and the US. There were almost 50 presentations across the event, with themes on ‘creating experiences that support interdisciplinary learning,’ ‘assessments,’ and ‘the impact of interdisciplinary teaching and learning.’ The keynote was given by Higher Education Consultant, Professor Rafe Hallett, and was on ‘Designing interdisciplinary challenge-based education.’ Next year’s conference will take place at the London School of Economics.

## **News from the USA**

### *Convergence research lecture series*

The US National Science Foundation Growing Convergence Research Program (GCR) is devoted to "transitioning teams from research that is multidisciplinary to research that transcends disciplinary boundaries with novel conceptual frameworks, theories and methods." One resource that GCR has developed, with support from the [Toolbox Dialogue Initiative Center](#) (TDI Center), is the [Growing Convergence Research lecture series](#) (scroll down), an annual, public series of lectures that focus on the theory, study, and practice of convergence research. The series dates back to March 2021, and videos of most previous lectures are available on the lecture series webpage (see link above; scroll down the webpage). The 2024 series will commence in the next few months. If you are interested in the series and want additional information about it, please email Dr. Chet McLeskey, Associate Director of the TDI Center, at [toolbox@msu.edu](mailto:toolbox@msu.edu).

### *Consensus study on team science*

The US National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine recently launched a consensus study on team science. This is a follow-on to their very successful study that led to the publication of the 2015 report “Enhancing the Effectiveness of Team Science” (<https://www.nationalacademies.org/our-work/the-science-of-team-science>). The new study, titled “Research and Application in Team Science” (<https://www.nationalacademies.org/our-work/research-and-application-in-team-science>) is being led by a committee of experts from across disciplines, including ITD-Alliance Leadership Board member, Steve Fiore. The committee will spend approximately one year examining a set of inter-related issues around scientific collaboration. This includes a focus on team science as it relates to diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility. The committee will also explore best practices for team science including how to manage team science in virtual and hybrid environments. An additional area for study will be training for team science and how to measure science team effectiveness.



## Journal News

### **New special issue from GAIA on “Impacts of real-world labs in sustainability transformations”**

The open-access special issue features 15 articles that examine the impact of real-world laboratories (RwLs) from different perspectives. They highlight the nuanced processes of impact generation within RwLs, how RwLs initiate new collaborative practices, address challenges in realizing impact, and navigate political and power dynamics. Authors also suggest integrating systemic and sociological perspectives to improve planning and impact assessment and to enhance the transformative potential of RwLs. See:

<https://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/oekom/gaia/2024/00000033/a00101s1>.

### **Collection on “Practice-based research of interdisciplinary higher education” in Humanities and Social Sciences Communications**

“Practice-based research of interdisciplinary higher education” is an article collection that aims at building a community and building capacity around the study of interdisciplinary teaching and learning at universities and colleges around the world. The editors are Ida Kemp, Catherine Lyall, Simon Scott & Iris van der Tuin. To see the papers already published and to find out more about contributing, see <https://www.nature.com/collections/abebicbdh>

### **Wondering where to publish?**

The ITD-Alliance website provides information about journals that publish articles on inter- and transdisciplinarity, as well as other collaborative modes of boundary-crossing research and practice, see: <https://itd-alliance.org/resources/journals/>



## About this Newsletter

Together with td-Info (<https://transdisciplinarity.ch/en/aktuell/newsletter/>), the ITD-Alliance Newsletter aims to provide complementary sources of information about what’s happening in inter- and transdisciplinarity and related collaborative boundary-crossing approaches. The focus of this newsletter is the activities of the ITD-Alliance and its members, along with relevant policy news in education, funding and research, as well as events and activities.

The Newsletter is sent to all members of the ITD-Alliance and interested colleagues who have joined the mailing list.



Do you know someone who might be interested in this newsletter? Please share it with them.

To join the mailing list: <https://itd-alliance.org/newsletter>