

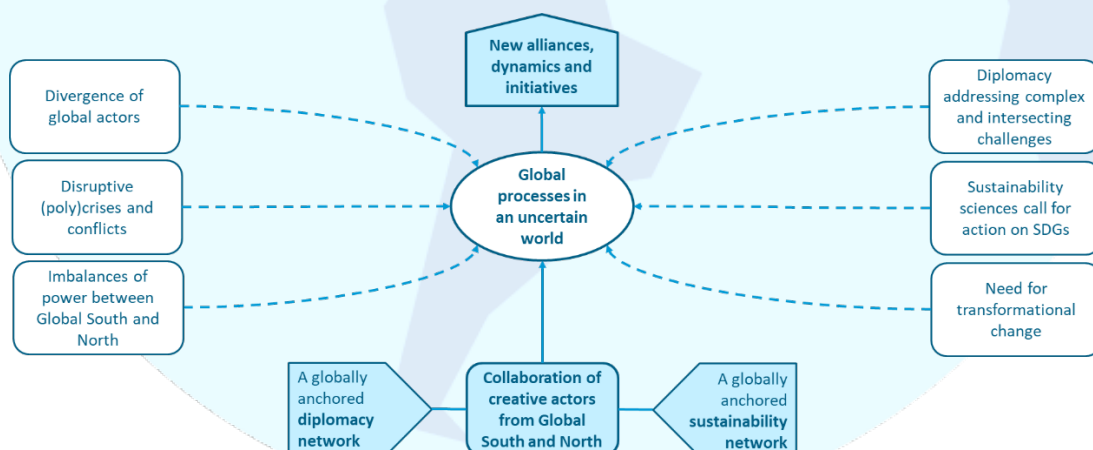
## Call for participation

### Navigating Uncertainty: Diplomacy and Sustainability Actors Forging New Alliances

An initiative to establish an “accelerator group” to act at the Hamburg Sustainability Conference (07 & 08 October 2024 in Hamburg, Germany)

The divergence of global actors coupled with multiple crises and conflicts increasingly undermine collaboration and cooperation around environmental protection, sustainability and prosperity measures, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), among others. Three partners, the International Academy Transformation for Environment and Sustainability (TES Academy) at the German Environment Agency (UBA)<sup>1</sup>, the Global Diplomacy Lab (GDL)<sup>2</sup> and the Centre for International Postgraduate Studies of Environmental Management (CIPSEM)<sup>3</sup> have come together to explore barriers, challenges, and incentives for international collaboration in sustainability discourses working on real cases in a collaborative process, to present evidence-based recommendations at the Hamburg Sustainability Conference<sup>4</sup> (HSC), and to discuss them with additional actors as an enlarged “accelerator group”.<sup>5</sup> The HSC aims to reduce barriers to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by introducing new approaches to global cooperation.

We especially believe that actors at the intersection of sustainability and diplomacy, from different regions of the world and with their diversity of perspectives and mindsets, can create new patterns of dialogue and alliances to rebuild trust and cooperation. In this sense, this initiative aligns with SDG 17 “Partnerships for the goals”, which aims to strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development.



<sup>1</sup> [www.tes-academy.de](http://www.tes-academy.de)

<sup>2</sup> [www.global-diplomacy-lab.org](http://www.global-diplomacy-lab.org)

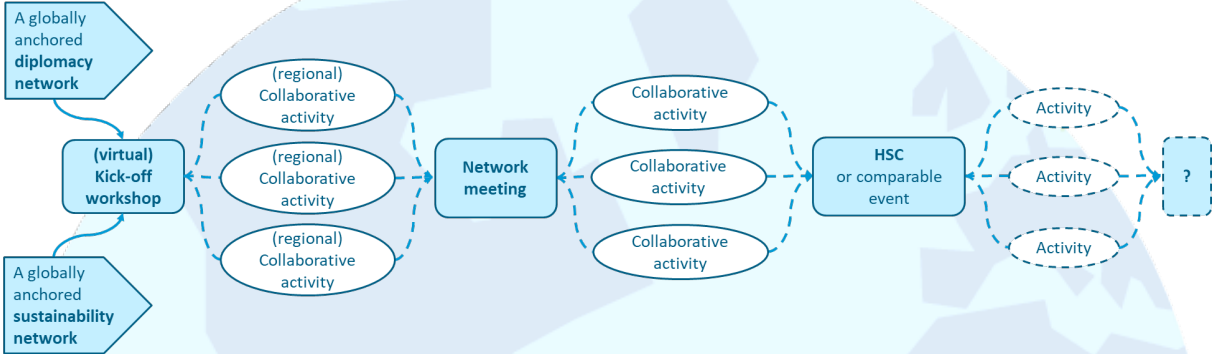
<sup>3</sup> <https://tu-dresden.de/cipsem>

<sup>4</sup> [www.sustainability-conference.org](http://www.sustainability-conference.org)

<sup>5</sup> or comparable event, application for HSC accelerator group ongoing

Our approach aims to recognise differences in understanding, perspectives and needs, as well as to better understand local realities in different regions of the world and their global references. A group of up to 20 participants will work on real sustainability cases, which they themselves propose. These cases will have a local relevance and reflect the challenges of the uncertain world. During the dialogical process, new actor constellations and activity patterns should become visible, creating a new and fresh perspective on the chosen sustainability issue. Previously unseen stakeholders and their interests and influence, "blind spots" and nexuses will be identified, revealing alternative starting points for subsequent concrete actions and their possible impact to encourage its adoption and upscaling. The thematic focus of the process will be jointly determined by the participants at the outset and will focus on SDG-related issues with an environmental perspective that need to be addressed globally.

Members of the globally anchored network of the Global Diplomacy Lab or the CIPSEM Alumni Network of the UNEP/UNESCO/BMUV International Training Programme<sup>6</sup> are therefore invited to apply for participation in this collaborative dialogue process leading to the Hamburg Sustainability Conference, on 07 & 08 October 2024 in Hamburg, Germany:<sup>7</sup>



**Key questions**

What approaches to dialogue and cooperation will ensure a strong global sustainability policy? In a changing world order, how can different actors from all over the world interact and act together in a trust-building and solution-oriented way? How can the increasing agenda-setting power of actors from emerging and developing countries catalyse a just transformation towards a sustainable world for all humans? How can the possibly diverging visions for a socio-ecological transformation be better reconciled and aligned?

**Draft process architecture**

Addressing these key questions requires an agile process architecture to support, guide and engage the diverse participants adequately. The process will rely on the collective intelligence and experience of the participants, focusing on methods of mutual transformative learning that go beyond the classic “presentation and discussion” mode. Such collaborative approaches can unleash energies to align interests and combine resources and levers for change “... to find innovative solutions, engage locally, challenge entrenched power, and drive a transformation towards a prosperous economy, thriving society and healthy environment.”<sup>8</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> <https://tu-dresden.de/cipsem/unep-unesco-bmuv>  
<sup>7</sup> or comparable event, application for HSC accelerator group ongoing  
<sup>8</sup> UNITE TO IGNITE: Accelerating the transformational power of partnerships for the SDGs and beyond. Lorna Benton and Darian Stibbe, The Partnering Initiative; and UN DESA, Partnerships 2030, Global Forum for SDG Advisory Bodies 2023, p.4.

The results of the working phase of several months prior to the HSC will be presented and further discussed during a workshop at the conference and deepened with additional partners from industrialized countries. A follow-up process will concretise these results for subsequent implementation.

The following process steps are proposed (primarily in virtual formats) from March 2024:

#### Before the conference

- Engage up to 20 interested network members as participants (initial virtual meeting is planned for 26 March 2024).
- Jointly explore thematic cases related to sustainability topics.
- Establish a "shared vision" as a basis for further engagement.
- Virtual group meetings are expected at least once a month, and closer to the conference 2-3 times a month.
- (Virtual) events with a regional focus to collect perspectives and experiences to provide specific insights.
- We also aim at organising one in-person meeting prior to the conference (tbc, depending on funding and visa requirements).
- Use the results for a solution-oriented search for common patterns and entry points.
- Planning of an interactive workshop at the HSC.

#### At the conference

- Deepen and present intermediate results, define the goals for the further implementation process and potential next steps.
- Involve additional partners to broaden participation.

#### After the conference

- Continue and consolidate the process to realise (or scale up) promising initiatives.
- As a perspective: a follow-up event of several days in summer/autumn 2025.

#### **Partners**

The key process partners are both networks with members primarily from emerging and developing countries. As members, you are already established experts and decision-makers from emerging economies and developing countries at the interface between science and politics, working in relevant institutions in policy, administration, science, business or civil society and who already bear responsibility for sustainable development in your countries. Your networks emphasise the value of multi-perspective work from a technical, sectoral, cultural and geographical perspective, which facilitates a common understanding of the approach proposed here.

#### **Details for participation**

As a member of the GDL or the CIPSEM Alumni Network you are invited to participate in this initiative. Benefits from participating in the initiative include:

- Intensive familiarisation with (new) agile, collaborative processes, with the opportunity to apply these skills in your own professional context.
- Expansion of your international network, with a high potential for future collaboration.
- Opportunities for substantive learning: real case studies generate knowledge transfer among participants, revealing new options for action. Those presenting the cases are likely to gain insights for the challenges in their own professional context.

- Opportunity to establish new inclusive and collaborative dialogue formats for impactful sustainability efforts.
- Participation in the prospective follow-up process.

**To participate, please register until 13 March 2024** via <https://crm.bu.tu-dresden.de> (portal provided by CIPSEM).

During the registration, please share:

- In your view, where has international cooperation worked well and/or where has it not worked well with regard to the overall situation described above? What are the reasons for this?
- How does the content of the call match with your specific (professional) role and competencies?
- What motivates you to get involved?
- Which case(s) from your personal practice or your institution's experience would you suggest as input for collaborative analysis and problem-solving during the process to generate new ways to approach a challenge?

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