Guidelines for organizing the

International Sustainability Transitions conference

The International Sustainability Transitions conference (IST) is the yearly scientific gathering of the global community of researchers, policymakers, and practitioners working on socio-technical transitions to sustainability. IST is organized under the auspices of the Sustainability Transitions Research Network (STRN). Each year, a different institute, chosen by the STRN steering group, organizes IST (institutions may also join forces to host). STRN strives for a broad and balanced geographic representation in the choice of IST hosts. This note provides guidance for institutes seeking to host IST; STRN will also provide guidance to applicants during the application process.

There are several goals associated with IST. IST is the main networking event of the global sustainability transitions community. It is a space where newcomers as well as established scholars and practitioners can meet likeminded people, which is especially important for those who do not work at established hubs of transitions research. IST serves to exchange knowledge and generate new insights; IST encourages contributions that push the frontiers of the field of sustainability transitions. IST also generates visibility, both for the community and ideas of transition studies in the wider landscape of research and practice, and for the conference host(s) as vital pillars in the STR network.

IST conferences are generally organized around core topics of sustainability transitions (please see the research agenda by Köhler et al. 2019 for guidance) research plus a 'conference track' that focuses on the main topic chosen by that year's organizers. The main topic should function as an 'umbrella' and engage with current issues in sustainability transitions research and practice.

Institutions that host IST are expected to be actively engaged in sustainability transitions research and/or practice. Hosts are invited to join STRN as an institutional member, with

membership fees waived for the first year. Hosting institutions are highlighted on STRN's website and in the STRN newsletter.

Organizing IST can be quite challenging because of its size (ca. 500 participants) and ambition, especially for smaller institutions, which is why experiences in conference organization (and the associated resources: personnel, space, online tools etc.) as well as profound knowledge of transition studies and strong ties within STRN are essential. STRN will support conference organizers with its prior experience, some secretarial support and a bursary for participants from the Global South.

Following criteria are used by STRN to choose IST hosts (listed in order of importance):

- (1) Embeddedness in transitions research: The host institution's links to transition research and the STRN community
- (2) Feasibility: Resources of the host institute (personnel to organize the conference; space (physical and/or virtual) in which to hold the conference)
- (3) Diversity: We seek variation and diversity among hosts, i.e. not always the usual suspects, countries, places. Places inside and outside of Europe are given equal consideration.
- (4) Content: What will be the main theme of the conference; what are plans for practitioner engagement?

Application to host IST: Required information

Please enter the following information in your written application:
- (1 + 3) Information of institute:
  - Name, location
  - Links to transition research & practice, and to STRN community
  - Please argue why STRN should choose your institution as an IST host: what are the benefits for the STR community

- (2) Operational information on the planned conference:
  - Date of conference
    - Please see below for a list of conferences that are relevant to the IST community. IST should be planned to not overlap with any of the conferences on the list.
  - Length of conference
    - As an indication: recent conferences have been 3 days, with a pre-conference NEST session and social events in the evenings.
  - Mode of delivery
    - E.g. in-person, hybrid, online, and/or including local hubs in sustainability transition research centers?

- Please make sure to highlight inclusivity of the conference time and space.
        - Dedicated human resources to conference organization
            - Strategic and operational project coordinators: commitment from high level of institutions plus people who will run day to day of organizing.
        - Any other partnerships (MOU) that are in place/need to be in place
            - Please note that IST partners and sponsors are restricted to the public and non-profit spheres.
        - Timeline of planning
            - Highlighting key milestones and activities and key decisions that need to be made.

- (4) Content-related information on the planned conference:
    - Please elaborate on the topic/focus of conference, why it is important, and key questions to be addressed
    - Engagement with practitioners
        - Please detail how practitioners will be engaged - e.g. practitioner day or half-day; or regional hubs; or reduced fees for practitioner access.

Conferences relevant to STRN community (avoid timing overlap with IST)

- NEST
- EU-SPRI
- EASST / 4S
- ESG

Previous IST hosts

Year	Host(s)	Link
2023	Utrecht University, Utrecht, NL	https://ist2023.nl/
2022	Stellenbosch University, Stellenbosch, South Africa	https://consultus.eventsair.com/ist2022-conference/

	Monasch University, Melbourne, Australia Georgetown University, Washington D.C., USA	
2021	Fraunhofer Institute for Systems and Innovation Research ISI, Karlsruhe, Germany	https://www.ist2021-karlsruhe.de/ist2021-en/index.php
2020	AIT Austrian Institute of Technology, Vienna, Austria Vienna University of Economics and Business, Vienna, Austria	http://ist2020.at/
2019	Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada	https://carleton.ca/istconference/
2018	University of Manchester, Manchester, UK	http://www.confercare.manchester.ac.uk/events/ist2018/