

Call for Applications 2023

BEYOND 2030

Envisioning sustainable and resilient places
for transformative change

Societal transformation requires positive visions of a desirable future. At present, however, future discourses of the Anthropocene are more often than not dominated by dystopian scenarios (e.g. evidence-based “climate breakdown” or hypothetical “planetary urbanization”), by backward storylines (e.g. “coal phase out”, “building back better”, “resource sovereignty”), or by technocratic utopias that lack a sustainability cause and social-ecological concern (e.g. “smart city”). Apparently, such narratives also remain largely generic with regard to change and transformation *in spatial terms and in particular places*.

Within sustainability sciences the role and relevance of place-based positive visions has been widely discussed. In general, such visions are understood to:

- Offer quantitative and qualitative criteria for assessing the breadth, depth and speed of change required, thus enabling the design of pathways leading to vision achievement, and corresponding action in the present;
- Translate between general and abstract global change parameters and the concrete and spatially diverse implications and impacts for particular places and communities, thus making future affectedness transparent, tangible and shapable (e.g. “zero city”);
- Enable participatory and empowering “future dialogues” that contribute decisively to renegotiate value orientations, goal conflicts and trade-offs, as well as to mobilize and integrate knowledge, thus leveraging normative change and diverse types of innovations (behavioural, technological, institutional, etc.);
- Provide a vital motivation for actors to overcome obstacles and resistances to transformations (institutional, political, economic, social, cultural, material, technological, etc.).

However, novel research insights and propositions are needed urgently to cope with the *substantive difficulties* that envisioning sustainable and resilient places beyond 2030 meets in practice:

- Key transformation challenges (sufficiency, mitigation, adaptation, food, health, consumption, etc.) require *thinking and working across multiple boundaries* – policy domains, government levels, societal sectors and territories. Demands on systemic integration and collaboration for envisioning are thus higher than ever before;
- The *complexity and uncertainty* of spatial sustainability transformations demand novel approaches and methods to conceive of, analyse and discuss possible and desirable futures, addressing e.g.
 - data issues (critical gaps, overall abundance, integration, interpretation)
 - stakeholder participation and co-creation
 - valuation and assessment
- Public sector urban and spatial planning lacks *competencies, resources and skills for envisioning* as an open and participatory process – contrasted by an expanding “future production” through the private sector (e.g. platform urbanism), as well as civil society (e.g. social movements);

Against this backdrop, the Dresden Leibniz Graduate School (DLGS) is looking for innovative research proposals that focus on one or several of the following 3 key issues:

1. Design and develop new approaches, concepts, techniques, methods and/or tools for envisioning sustainable, resource saving and resilient places beyond 2030;
2. Examine and question current discourses, policies, practices, techniques and/or methods dealing with the long-term future of places beyond 2030 – considering e.g. the emergence and shaping, spatiality, and geographical patterns, normative claims, politics and/or de-/institutionalization of such approaches;
3. Understand and assess place-related envisioning capacities for enabling broad and meaningful participation in future co-creation and assessment as well as integration of such futures within today’s policy- and decision making.

We invite creative applications from excellent graduates of master programmes in any scientific discipline(s) originating from any country, meeting [admission requirements](#) at the TU Dresden. You are free to design the research proposal according to your particular competencies and interests. **However, all proposals must address the above call topic and fulfil the selection criteria.**

Interdisciplinary¹ and transdisciplinary² approaches are strongly encouraged. In order to ensure feasibility, proposals for *transdisciplinary* research must be linked to ongoing IOER projects in the Dresden/Saxony region (see www.ioer.de), and applicants must demonstrate German language proficiency (C1 level) for working with diverse local stakeholders.

Application deadline:

September 1st, 2022

Start of the programme:

March 1st, 2023

A detailed description of the application requirements and procedure can be found on the DLGS website:

www.dlgs-dresden.de

For additional information please contact the Scientific Coordinator:

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The DLGS – Dresden Leibniz Graduate School is a joint interdisciplinary facility of the Leibniz Institute of Ecological Urban and Regional Development, Dresden (IOER) and Technische Universität Dresden (TUD).

¹ Combining and integrating different disciplinary theories, concepts and/or methods.

² Involving non-scientific actors in the entire research process.