

Future Earth

Assembly meeting 2021



November 2021

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1. Welcome and Introductions

Introduction by Maria Uhle, co-chair of the Governing Council for Future Earth

The first Assembly meeting is the culmination of many efforts from many people who dedicated their time and energy to help Future Earth create and realize a more inclusive and transparent structure. This new structure will hopefully help catalyze more international collaboration to help us accelerate knowledge and action on some of the most pressing issues that are facing humanity and this planet. I want to warmly thank the external Review Committee for providing an honest assessment of our strengths and weaknesses and their recommendations on how to move forward, as well as the current Governing Council, the whole community, and especially their representatives on the Implementation Team, for all their input on how to create a more cohesive and collaborative structure.

The main objectives of the meeting are: to build a common understanding of the various aspects of the Future Earth transition (mission and objectives, governance and Secretariat organization); and to select representatives from the various assembly groups on the Governing Council. While this first Assembly meeting is about structural aspects of Future Earth, the next Assembly meetings will focus on the scientific strategic directions of Future Earth and topical contributions.

The Assembly has 139 assembly members, who are broken up into different groups defined by the Implementation Team in consultation with the Governing Council and the whole community. The Implementation Team has defined the various Assembly groups with the goal of gathering a diversity of members, as recommended by the Review Committee (see Figure 1a & 1b).

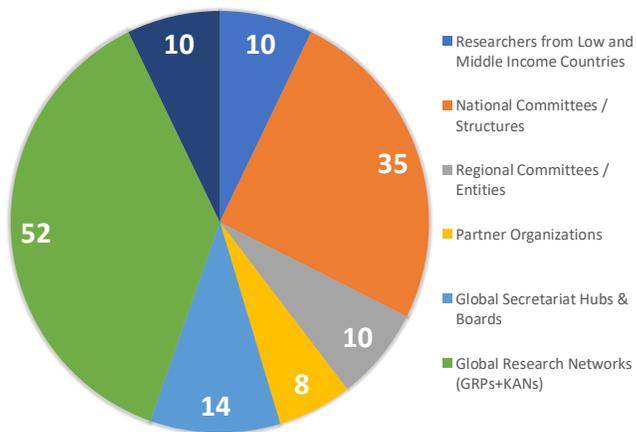


Figure 1a: Groups of the Assembly and their number of representatives (total number of representatives = 139)

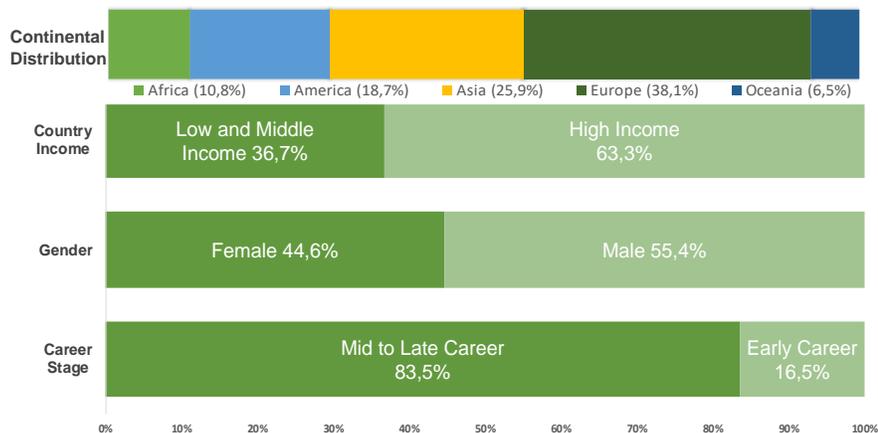


Figure 1b: Diversity of the Assembly representatives in geographical location, country income, gender and career stage, in percentage

The entities of Future Earth have worked incredibly hard over the past year. A lot of the science has continued, and I want to thank the community for keeping going while the structure was being developed.

Highlights of the recent work of the Global Research Networks, the national, subnational and regional committees and the Early Career Network can be found on the Future Earth website [here](#).

The Secretariat has helped facilitate the cross-fertilization of the knowledge and actions from the community, through the Earth Commission, the Pathways initiative and the 10 new insights in climate science. The Secretariat has also worked to build and mobilize our networks through various activities, and in support of early career researchers. The Secretariat was instrumental in unfolding SRI 2021, which was a great success. Finally, the Secretariat has continued to shape the global narrative, which is another pillar of Future Earth, for instance through the Anthropocene Magazine or the annual report.

Welcoming remarks by Andrea Hinwood, UNEP Chief Scientist

It's an absolute pleasure to represent UNEP in this Future Earth meeting. This is good timing as UNEP heads for its 50th year. It was established in 1972 against the backdrop of a range of scientific reports telling the world that we had major problems with our global environment. The world is even more complex now and we are within a new era characterized by the three planetary crises of climate change, pollution and waste, and biodiversity loss. Working together on these cross-cutting issues is imperative. Our research report on achieving the environmental dimension of the sustainable development goals shows that of the 93 environmental related SDG indicators, good progress has been achieved for 22 over the last 15 years. There are not enough data and/or progress regarding the other indicators. It is unlikely that we will reach the SDGs without substantial action. We need innovation, collaboration, open and transparent transdisciplinary and out of the box solutions. Together with the other custodian partners, we will continue to engage, both in stating agendas and leveraging science and innovation to feed into the complex mandate of living in harmony with nature. UNEP looks forward to working with you all and to working on solutions to achieve positive change.

Welcoming remarks by Heide Hackmann, Executive Director of the International Science Council

I'm delighted to have this chance to congratulate Future Earth and therefore all of us, on the first Future Earth General Assembly. The creation of this Assembly is a significant institutional milestone. It creates ownership and accountability for the work of Future Earth amongst its community and serves the pursuit of our Future Earth core values, including diversity and inclusivity. It is a basis for building a community that has a powerful global voice on sustainability science, and also for convening a multistakeholder community around global collaboration. This is needed more than ever, given the pressures of trends towards divergent nationalisms. In the face of a global pandemic, the agenda of Future Earth has never been more important. Covid 19 is a global wakeup call for all of us; it has highlighted the reality and urgency of the risks faced by humanity, and the need for us to really re-double our efforts to achieve global sustainability.

Notwithstanding the tremendous scientific successes of Future Earth and its global networks, the GRNs, Future Earth has had to navigate its way through institutional teething problems and through what has proved, I think, to be persistent and powerful divergences in understanding what the fundamental Future Earth purpose and approach should be. A lot of energy and time have gone into matters of mandate, governance, architecture, structure, and process, with the recent review of Future Earth having generated a further round of really serious rethinking and restructuring. Having been deeply involved in these processes, I really do believe that all of us have managed to address the necessary and sufficient conditions for Future Earth to now flourish in realizing its substantive science-led mission. That's where our joint focus and combined efforts now need to fall.

As we move ahead in pursuing influence and impact for sustainability science in all parts of the world, Future Earth can count on the full support of the International Science Council. We are a proud and committed custodian of Future Earth. As most of you know, the ISC itself is a rapidly evolving organization. We were established three years ago and have made significant progress in finding and using our global voice for science. We have developed and implemented forward looking strategies, policies and action plans and built an ambitious, relevant and responsive portfolio of scientific activities that address major contemporary global challenges, not only for society but also for science. Our new action plan, for the coming three years, will be adopted by the ISC General Assembly in just over two weeks' time; and like the first action plan, global sustainability is a central priority domain of action. For the Council, there is no doubt the biggest and most urgent challenge for contemporary science is to identify pathways to global sustainability and to assist in the creation and promotion of policies and public action that can advance societies along those pathways. As a custodian organization, we will support Future Earth in addressing this challenge. We will also rely on Future Earth to work with us as we seek to amplify and accelerate resource investment in sustainability science globally through the work, for example, that we are doing with the Global Forum of Funders. We will also work together to increase the visibility and influence of all science, within global policy processes.

I do want to thank the colleagues on the outgoing Governing Council, the leadership and members of the Advisory Committee, the Secretariat staff, all those involved in the task forces and the implementation processes, and you, the Future Earth community, for your input, your advice, your wisdom and for the work that lies ahead.

Welcoming remarks by Meriem Bouamrane, Programme Specialist, Man and the Biosphere Programme, UNESCO

It is very nice to be with you from UNESCO, from Paris, addressing this first assembly. It has been a journey, like Heide has said, and I also thank everybody who has brought us together today. UNESCO has been part of Future Earth since the beginning and we will continue to do so as custodian. It is more than ever crucial to have an entity such as Future Earth for sustainability science. The learning from all this journey together, from the start, is really that science, more than ever, is needed, as called for by the youth movement 'Unite Behind Science'. More than ever, we need to base our decisions on fact and on good evidence. At a time where the polarities are more vivid than ever, the governance work that Future Earth has done under the chairmanship of Maria Uhle is crucial. This is really a time to build bridges between different fields of knowledge, between science, indigenous and local knowledge, between different generations. In this respect, UNESCO is very happy with the progress made in Future Earth with the Early Career and Youth Fellows. Youth are calling upon all of us to change, to transform and it is very important from UNESCO's perspective that Future Earth builds those bridges and that the Early Career Researchers feel supported in this big transformation that we are going through. Lastly, Future Earth can also help to build bridges between different sectors. It is crucial that the science is done by scientists and that the recommendations are implemented by policy makers, and owned by all the different sectors. The crisis we are facing and the limited amount of time we have is calling for working together, and from different perspectives, respecting the point of view of different people. It is my wish also from UNESCO that all the work we have done and the discussions we will have during this first assembly show that everybody has a part to play, and that

science and sustainability science can really change people's lives. UNESCO remains committed to help you build all those bridges, to reach out to different communities and to transform science into practice in our different programs, and with support from the UNESCO Chairs Network.

Maria Uhle thanked all the Custodians, and as the co-chair of the Belmont Forum which is another custodian organization for Future Earth, echoed everything UNEP, ISC and UNESCO representatives said. She introduced Johan Rockström and Leena Srivastava, co-chairs of the Future Earth Advisory Committee, and thanked the Advisory Committee for all the dedication that they put into providing extremely invaluable points of view to help Future Earth get to where we are today.

Welcoming remarks by Johan Rockström, co-chair of the Future Earth Advisory Committee

It is great to be with you at this transformative moment. Last week, the United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres concluded, based on the scientific evidence provided in the IPCC 6th Assessment, that we have reached code red, and called for a planetary guardianship of the entire Earth system for humanity's future. This conclusion originates from 30 years plus of scientific advancements. We should be proud of where we come from, in terms of advancing integrated Earth system and sustainability science, and this origin is something that is incredibly important also in thinking about how we navigate our future because scientists are but one stakeholder in a diverse landscape faced with turbulence and large transformative changes ahead. The 19 Global Research Projects and the 8 Knowledge Action Networks of Future Earth originate from the International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme, Diversitas and the International Human Dimensions Programme and Earth System Science partnership. These programs were iconic, major investments that brought us to the take-off point of Future Earth, and the fundamental conclusion that we have created our own Geological Epoch, the Anthropocene, and that we need transformations across the entire world for a fair and equitable future within a resilient and stable earth system. My conclusion is, as co-chair of the Advisory Committee of Future Earth, that our comparative advantage as a Future Earth community is to be at the frontier of advancing interdisciplinary global sustainability science. We should very humbly recognize that we cannot do everything under the Sun in this global transition towards a fair and prosperous world future. The entire SDG agenda cannot lie on our scientific shoulders, but we can add incredible value, by filling knowledge gaps, providing invaluable insights and solutions, by filling knowledge gaps in partnership across natural and social sciences, and by holding hands with stakeholders around the world. We are today the world's largest network of scientists pursuing interdisciplinary global sustainability research. We have a tremendous opportunity to attract young scholars from north and south, east and west to really be the place where you want to be in order to advance the frontier of our understanding. I would like to hand that over as one of the testimonies of the Advisory Committee. We need to hold on tight to what is our identity and what is our comparative advantage: advancing knowledge in support of the global sustainability transformation.

Welcoming remarks by Leena Srivastava, co-chair of the Future Earth Advisory Committee

Let me start by saying what a great privilege it was for me to be on the Advisory Committee of Future Earth and to work with our really illustrious Governing Council. Let me also congratulate Future Earth on this massive exercise that strives to create a much greater ownership of the scientific community. A lot of time and effort has gone into this process and the outcome is extremely promising for the

world as a whole. From the experience of the last few years, the new solid organizational structure -- with clearly defined rules, responsibilities and agreed upon expectations -- is crucial to help every entity within this community to play its role more effectively and also enjoyably. As co-chair of the Advisory Committee, I do hope that Future Earth will be THE institution that will produce the trustworthy and actionable research that is going to pull planet earth back into a safe zone. Today, we do see a much greater acceptance of the science of climate change and of other global environmental challenges. Undoubtedly, we need to continue to refine our research but also look at the colliding forces of other global challenges. The need of the hour is to see how we translate this knowledge, and science-based solutions, into a universal response and accelerated action. This means a sharp focus on trust building, partnerships, participatory governance, and inclusive knowledge. In particular, we do have to bring in the developing world in a much stronger manner through inclusive finance and other related mechanisms. The Assembly will have a key role to play in enhancing the relevance and impact of Future Earth research.

2. Implementation Team process and outputs (presented by Cornelia Krug, Chair of the Implementation Team, see the presentation [here](#))

The external review completed in 2020 recommended that we reflect on the roles that the different entities of Future Earth play and how we could improve collaboration among these entities. As a response to that review, an Implementation Team was established with representatives from the Governing Council, the Advisory Committee, the Secretariat, the Regional and National Committees, the Global Research Projects, the Knowledge Action Networks, and the Future Earth Early Career Network.

The work of the Implementation Team was divided into four working groups according to Future Earth's:

1. Mission and Objectives;
2. Governance;
3. Global Research Networks (which encompass the Global Research Projects and the Knowledge Action Networks); and
4. Secretariat.

The mandate of the Implementation Team was to resolve differences in inputs to the Future Earth transition process, and provide detailed mechanisms, processes, and policies to move Future Earth forward. In consultation with the Future Earth community, the working groups met regularly amongst themselves, with the Implementation Team as a whole and with the Governing Council to draft recommendations. The recommendations were then reviewed, modified where necessary, and endorsed by the Governing Council.

The Governing Council approved the following documents:

- [Future Earth Mission and Objectives](#);
- [Future Earth Global Coordination Hub Terms of Reference](#);
- [Future Earth Global Secretariat Hub Terms of Reference](#);
- [Future Earth Assembly and Governing Council Terms of Reference](#);
- [Future Earth National Committee Structure Terms of Reference](#).

Two documents will need approval by the new Governing Council:

- Global Research Networks Terms of Reference;
- Core Fund Terms of Reference.

Throughout the transition process, the work of the Implementation Team was also important in building trust among the different members of the community.

3. The new Future Earth governance structure (presented by Stephanie Burton, member of the Implementation Team Working Group on Governance, see the presentation [here](#))

The Future Earth External Review provided the following recommendations on Future Earth's governance structure:

1. Transition to a more bottom-up governance;
2. Including more scientists in the governance of Future Earth;
3. A governance structure representative and inclusive of the whole Future Earth community.

The new governance structure of Future Earth, proposed by the Implementation Team and approved by the Governing Council is illustrated in figure 2 below.

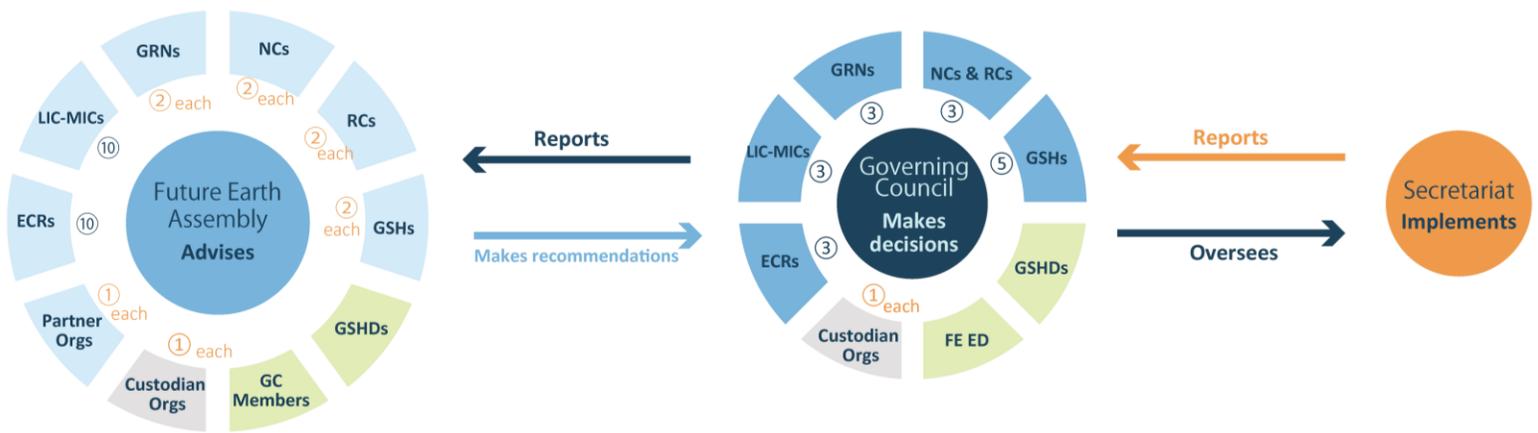
The interactions among Assembly members and groups and between the Assembly and the Governing Council are a key aspect of the new governance structure. Assembly meetings are an opportunity for all the different sectors of Future Earth to meet, to become familiar with each other and to work together on developing the scientific strategy and the direction of Future Earth. Each of the groups in the Assembly represents a wider community within their sector and has the opportunity to self-organize, to develop a shared message, and to interact with their representatives on the Governing Council. The communication between the Governing Council and the Assembly should be a two way process so that the Governing Council makes decisions based on the principles of inclusivity and representativity of the whole Future Earth community.

The main roles of the Assembly, which will gather annually and must act in accordance with the Future Earth vision and mission, are to:

1. Identify, discuss and advise on new and emerging priorities for the scientific and broader strategic development of Future Earth;
2. Make regular recommendations to the Governing Council on strategic and scientific priorities for Future Earth;
3. Elect the Governing Council and pass decision-making authority to it;
4. Review key initiatives and outcomes each year;
5. Review and advise on the Future Earth budget.

The Governing Council is the operational decision-making structure working on behalf of the Assembly. The Governing Council will gather at least quarterly and is composed of 17 members representing all of the groups in the Assembly. The main roles of the Governing Council are to:

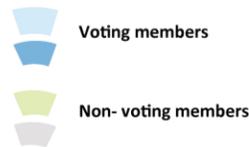
1. Oversee the strategic and scientific directions of Future Earth;
2. Support timely decision processes to advance Future Earth's agenda, strategies, activities and structures;
3. Oversee the Secretariat operations and the development of Future Earth policies and practices;
4. Report to the Assembly each year during the Assembly meeting.



Legend

ECR: Early Career Researchers
 FE ED: Future Earth Executive Director
 GC: Governing Council
 GRN: Global Research Network

GSH: Global Secretariat Hub
 GSHD: Global Secretariat Hub Director
 LIC-MIC: Lower and Middle Income Countries
 NC: National and Subnational Committee/Entity
 RC: Regional Committee/Entity



② Number of seats per entity within the group
 ⑤ Number of seats per group

Figure 2: The Assembly is composed of representatives from each Future Earth entity, who are gathered in groups: Global Research Networks (GRPs + KANs), Regional Committees and Structures, National and Local Committees and Structures, Global Secretariat Hubs Funders and/or Boards, Early Career Researchers Network of Networks, Researchers from Low and Middle Income Countries, Partner organizations. In addition to these groups, the following entities/persons are invited as non-voting members of the Assembly: Custodian organizations (Belmont Forum, ISC, UNEP and UNESCO), Elected Governing Council members, Global Secretariat Hubs directors.

Relevant Assembly groups elect their Governing Council representatives which is composed of 17 voting members and each Custodian organization and Secretariat hub director is invited as observer of the Governing Council.

The Assembly makes recommendations and advises the Governing Council who is the decision maker of Future Earth, and who oversees the secretariat implementation of activities. The Secretariat reports to the Governing Council, who reports to the Assembly.

4. The new Future Earth Secretariat (presented by Fumiko Kasuga, Director of the Japan Hub of the Future Earth Secretariat, see the presentation [here](#))

The Future Earth External Review provided recommendations on the Secretariat’s structure to:

1. Empower the Secretariat to fulfil its mandate; and
2. Improve the operational efficiency of Future Earth.

Accordingly, the Implementation Team proposed a new structure for the Secretariat that includes a Global Coordination Hub as the Secretariat’s headquarters and an expansion of Global Secretariat Hubs through an open-bidding process. The Implementation Team also developed their Terms of Reference, which were approved by the Governing Council, and the key points of which are summarized in table 1 below. The detailed Terms of References as approved by the Governing Council can be found here: [Future Earth Global Coordination Hub Terms of Reference](#); [Future Earth Global Secretariat Hub Terms of Reference](#).

Table 1: Future Earth Secretariat Hubs’ Terms of Reference (Key Points)

Global Coordination Hub	Global Secretariat Hubs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive representation through the Executive Director • Management of the governance and common resources (“Core Fund”) • Leading strategy development with guidance from GC, network oversight, and monitoring and evaluation, fundraising efforts and management of partnerships • Leading of global communications (internal and external) and overall coordination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constitute the distributed Future Earth Secretariat • Work with the Global Coordination Hub as a single unit to deliver the key functions of the Secretariat • Contribute to the main functions and operations of the Future Earth Secretariat • Support with a fixed annual contribution to the Core fund, including any financial or in-kind support for any International Program Offices (IPOs) of the Future Earth Global Research Networks within their country or region

As part of the open-bidding process, a committee was established to review the proposals for hosting the Global Coordination Hub and Global Secretariat Hubs and provide a recommendation to the Governing Council for approval. On July 9th, the Governing Council approved all 8 proposals for hosting Global Secretariat Hubs (including the 5 existing Hubs). The search for Global Coordination Hubs is ongoing and additional proposals to host Global Secretariat Hubs remain welcome. Currently, in the absence of a Global Coordination Hub and Executive Director, the Hub directors are sharing the executive roles.

In the past two months, several meetings were held with the new Hubs to learn of their ideas and plans. Additionally, a series of on-boarding workshops gathered the eight Global Secretariat Hubs to discuss their visions for Future Earth, to share Secretariat roles, and to explore their strengths and new ways to support each other, and to connect regional and local activities to global ones.



Figure 3: The Future Earth Secretariat is currently composed of 8 Global Secretariat Hubs. The 5 pre-existing Hubs (Canada, France, Japan, Sweden, and USA) are joined by the following new Hubs: China, South Asia, and Taipei.

5. Election of the Governing Council's members

Governing Council members are elected for a three-year term, renewable once. In order to allow rotation every year, the first elected Governing Council members will have staggered terms (of 1, 2 or 3 years). The Governing Council has 17 seats, distributed among the following 5 groups:

- Global Research Networks (GRPs and KANS): 3 seats;
- National and Local Committees and Structures and the Regional Committees and Structures: 3 seats;
- Researchers from low- or middle-income countries: 3 seats;
- Early Career Researchers: 3 seats;
- Global Secretariat Hubs' boards and/or funders: 5 seats.

Ahead of the Assembly meeting, a [call for nominations](#) for the Governing Council members was published on the Future Earth website and circulated within the community. A total of 42 eligible nominations were received (7 for the Early Career Researchers' group; 11 for the Global Research Networks' group; 6 for the group of Global Secretariat Hubs' boards and/or funders; 8 for the group of National and Local Committees and Structures and the Regional Committees and Structures; and 10 for the group of Researchers from Low- or Middle-Income Countries).

All Assembly members from the 5 groups were invited to vote online for their respective group's representatives 48h prior to the second day of the Assembly meeting. All Assembly members from and working in a low or middle income country were invited to vote for the election of the Governing Council representatives of the group of researchers from low and middle income countries. All Assembly members who are also early career researchers were invited to vote for the election of the Governing Council representatives of the group of early career researchers.

On day 2 of the Assembly meeting, each group gathered to discuss and ratify the outcomes of the election of their respective representatives. Each group had the possibility of not ratifying the election outcomes if at least two thirds of the group's voting members agreed not to ratify the election results. In case of non ratification in a group, the group would have gathered in October again to repeat the election process.

Election results

Of the 179 voting rights, 149 were cast and all groups reached the required quorum of two-third. On the day 2 of the Assembly meeting, all groups ratified the election outcomes. The 17 elected Governing Council members are presented in the table 2 below.

Table 2: Elected Governing Council Members, 2021 Future Earth General Assembly meeting

Assembly and Governing Council Groups	Name	Gender	Nationality	Country of work	Institution
Early Career Researchers	Gaby Langendijk	Female	The Netherlands	Germany	Helmholtz-Zentrum Hereon
	Arijit Paul	Male	India	Austria	University of Graz
	Gemma Purser	Female	United Kingdom	United Kingdom	University of Edinburgh
Global Research Networks (GRP or KAN)	Lisa Miller	Female	U.S.A. and Canada	Canada	Institute of Ocean Sciences
	Faten Attig Bahar	Female	Tunisia	Tunisia	University of Carthage
	Sirkku Juhola	Female	Finland	Finland	University of Helsinki
Global Secretariat Hubs Boards and Funders	Yukari Takamura	Female	Japan	Japan	Science Council of Japan
	Maria Uhle	Female	USA	USA	US National Science Foundation
	Deliang Chen	Male	Sweden	Sweden	University of Gothenburg
	Ursula Eicker	Female	Germany	Canada	Concordia University
	Jean-Marie Flaud	Male	France	France	French Ministry of Research
Regional, National, Local Committees and Structures	Stephanie Burton	Female	South Africa	South Africa	University of Pretoria
	Hanna Lappalainen	Female	Finland	Finland	University of Helsinki
	Taikan Oki	Male	Japan	Japan	University of Tokyo and United Nations University
Experts from Low and Middle Income Countries	Kalpana Chaudhari	Female	India	India	Institute for Sustainable Development and Research
	Lucas Enrico	Male	Argentina	Argentina	National Scientific and Technological Research Council (CONICET) and National University of Córdoba
	Gete Zeleke	Male	Ethiopia	Ethiopia	Addis Ababa University

Discussion on the election process

A series of break-out sessions were held for each group to ratify the election outcomes, discuss the election process, their representation on the Governing Council, and their internal organization as a group. The main points of these discussions are summarized below.

- Improving the election process:
 - Many groups suggested that in the next elections, members should have the opportunity to interact with the candidates before the election to get to know them better.
 - Given that in most of the groups the votes for the candidates were very close, one group suggested that nominees should not be allowed to vote for themselves in future elections.

- Representation of the different groups on the Governing Council:
 - The Global Research Networks group highlighted that while their group represents the biggest part of the Assembly, they have three representatives on the Governing Council, like smaller groups.
 - Each Assembly group and the Assembly as a whole will have to think carefully of the critical diversity criteria they want to fulfill in the next elections of Governing Council members, as the Governing Council is not currently representative of all types of diversity

6. Closing remarks

Maria Uhle highlighted the following points regarding the next steps for the Assembly and the Governing Council:

- The next Assembly meeting will take place in conjunction with SRI2022 in June 2022 in Pretoria, South Africa. It will be a hybrid format. While the 2021 Assembly focused on the election of the Governing Council, the next Assembly meetings will be an opportunity for the members and Future Earth groups to meet and set the tone for where Future Earth needs to go and what its priorities are.
- The new Governing Council will meet by the end of 2021 and will have, among other things, to finalize the Global Research Networks Terms of Reference and the Core Fund Terms of Reference.
- As no nominations for the Assembly co-chairs have been received ahead of the first Assembly meeting, an election will be organized before the next Assembly meeting. The Assembly's two co-chairs will serve in their individual capacity for 3-year staggered terms and can be re-elected for one additional term of 3 years. The Assembly co-chairs responsibilities include:
 - Guiding and overseeing the work of the Assembly;
 - Ensuring that the Assembly acts in accordance with the Future Earth vision, mission, objectives, and core values;
 - Overseeing the election of the Governing Council and possibly other votes when no consensus is found within the Assembly regarding recommendations to the Governing Council;
 - Preparing the annual Assembly meeting agenda with the Organizing Committee and the support of the Secretariat.

Maria Uhle warmly thanked the outgoing Governing Council and Advisory Committee, the Implementation Team and the funders of the Secretariat Hubs for the work they have done in the last years. She also thanked all the Assembly members for their active participation in the meeting and the team who organized the meeting.

Annex 1: Questions and Answers

Throughout the Assembly meeting, Q&A sessions were organized. The questions and their answers are presented below. A first set of questions is related to the Future Earth community (how engagement and collaborations are fostered), a second set of questions is related to the new governance structure and a third set of questions is related to the Secretariat. Questions and answers in blue boxes are questions which were not answered during the meeting by lack of time. The Secretariat answered those questions after the meeting.

Fostering engagement and collaboration in the Future Earth community

How does the new Future Earth structure encourage collaboration between GRPs and KANS?

Cornelia Krug: To begin with, from the next Assembly, our discussions will focus on science so that Assembly members learn about the various teams of work done by the Future Earth community. The Core Fund put in place by the Secretariat will be used to support collaborative activities between GRPs and KANs.

How does the new structure integrate collaboration work through Global Research Projects and Knowledge Action Networks for Low and Middle Income Countries?

Each Global Research Network can request and offer collaboration opportunities to be disseminated via their liaison officers. Previous Future Earth decision making bodies as well as the External Review have stressed the importance of developing fair representation in each (Scientific) Steering Committee - ensuring (1) representation from every major populated continent, (2) good gender balance, and (3) representation of different career stages. The Future Earth secretariat continues to promote these diversity criteria in the decision making bodies of the Global Research Projects and Knowledge-Action Networks as well as in other initiatives. The secretariat offers various cross-disciplinary synthesis opportunities to experts from all networks (which, in some cases, extends beyond the Future Earth community). Cross-network meetings are organized quarterly for the Global Research Networks, wherein two representatives from each Global Research Project and Knowledge-Action Network can attend.

How can Future Earth support scientists from Low and Middle Income Countries and early career researchers that are not members of Belmont Forum?

The Future Earth Secretariat supports scientists from Low and Middle Income Countries and early career researchers independently of Belmont Forum through different events and activities.

Is there any plan for engagement of youths from Low and Middle Income Countries to identify core problems and find solutions for different sectors ?

Various opportunities should be provided and active dialogue should be encouraged to engage youth in any country/region. Early career networks, various types of capacity building programs have been developed at Future Earth with such purposes.

What specific efforts were made by the Future Earth Secretariat to involve low- and middle-income countries, since its early onset. What actions can improve their engagement?

Wendy Broadgate: One of the Future Earth principles is to engage people from all parts of the world in all our activities, events or scientific committees. Some examples of past activities include the Seedbeds of Transformation conference in South Africa in 2018, the call for applicants for the SDG Labs in Africa, the Belmont Forum Collaborative Action on Pathways for which the Future Earth Secretariat funded African partners. More can be done and the many representatives from low- and

middle-income countries in the Assembly through their advice and engagement will certainly help the Secretariat to be even more active on this aspect.

Fumiko Kasuga: The former Future Earth regional centers in Asia (which have become or joined Global Secretariat Hubs) have helped to establish national committees for Future Earth and have encouraged local research activities.

There is no presence of national or local organizations of Future Earth in any country in Latin America. How will Future Earth participate in this region?

Veera Mitzner: Future Earth does not have a National Committee or Regional Office in any of the Latin American countries. However, we have a partner organization, which is the Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research, which has wide networks in the region. We have started the conversation with them regarding future engagement. The Global Hub in Canada and the Global Hub in the US are working together to see how we can strengthen our presence and engagement in Latin American countries. And if you are a Future Earth community member, based in Latin America, please reach out and be in touch with us because we really would like to support the community there, better, going forward.

I'm a physical scientist from a Global Research Network. How can I get involved in, contribute to, "Knowledge Action Network" activities?

Engagement with each Knowledge-Action Network or other Global Research Project is different. The best step forward on this is to contact the International Program Office (IPO) of the group or alternatively, when there is no IPO, a designated liaison to the network (from the Future Earth Secretariat). It is important that your interest in engagement has a tangible piece, for example, you wish to engage because of a specific need in your research, or your wish to contribute to the development of the broader network. Furthermore, interested individual scientists might join [memberclicks](#) directly and socialize there via the existing circles.

Could Future Earth somehow start engaging with scientists in Russia?

Future Earth has a National Committee in Russia, which works to mobilize and support sustainability science in the country. If you are a researcher working in Russia and interested in engaging in Future Earth activities, we suggest contacting the National Committee directly. You can find the contact information on the Future Earth website [here](#).

Is there a strategy to engage national funding agencies to provide support for Future Earth projects?

Maria Uhle: National Committees and Global Secretariat Hubs in a given country can help the researchers engaged in the GRNs, in the Early Career Network or in other Future Earth activities make connections with national funding agencies. It is the strategy we have pursued in the US in order to allow funders and various Future Earth entities to talk about how these groups can be supported through different programs and through different agencies. We have a shared responsibility and a commitment to helping to support the different entities and mobilizing resources so that we can all contribute to the whole of Future Earth.

What is the composition between social and life scientists within Future Earth?

It is difficult to respond precisely to this question as Future Earth is a network of networks. Nevertheless, given the history of Future Earth, its community remains dominated by natural scientists. The Secretariat works towards engaging the Humanities and Social Sciences community through most of its initiatives (see for instance the [Pathways initiative](#)) and through building partnerships (for instance with [PERN](#) or [BRIDGES](#)).

How does Future Earth apply transdisciplinarity in its organizational structure and ways of working?

Maria Uhle: Transdisciplinarity is a critical piece of sustainability science. It is also not the only piece that happens; there still needs to be some of the fundamental science that happens to generate knowledge and then work across the disciplines. Having the Global Research Projects and the Knowledge Action Networks coming together under the same “Global Research Networks” was decided to highlight that the action of developing and disseminating the knowledge and engaging with stakeholders is an integral part of all the Global Research Networks. We do not expect everybody to develop transdisciplinary approaches, but Future Earth wants to be able to facilitate the connections needed within its networks so that we can access and integrate the strengths of our different networks toward a common goal. I would really push us to think about having different ways to create those connections and to support transdisciplinary research. Transdisciplinarity is not the only thing that Future Earth does, neither is “disciplinary science” or “interdisciplinary science”. Future Earth covers the full spectrum and is about learning how to benefit from and utilize that whole spectrum as we move forward to advance sustainability science at large.

What are the challenges to engage nonacademic organizations in Future Earth activities? And do we overcome them?

Wendy Broadgate: We need to be efficient with people’s time when we are engaging nonacademic organizations and think carefully about what is in it for them because generally, there is not a bandwidth within external organizations to contribute to the deep, long flow of the research process. One thing that we want to do in the Secretariat is to help share experiences and learnings from different parts of the community about engaging different stakeholders in our work.

Maria Uhle: The Belmont Forum has been issuing calls for proposals on various topics with a focus on transdisciplinary approaches since 2012. The Belmont Forum can help fund engagement with stakeholders. If your national funding agency participates in a call of the Belmont Forum, you are eligible to be part of a consortium to compete within that call for proposals. We, as the Belmont Forum, see the projects and the community that we are building through this transdisciplinary community as also part of the Future Earth group.

How does Future Earth collaborate with WCRP?

Wendy Broadgate: We have a long-standing collaboration with WCRP, primarily through WCRP’s deep engagement in some of the Global Research Projects. For example, the Global Carbon Project, and SOLAS are co-sponsored by WCRP. At a strategic level, Future Earth attends the Joint Scientific Committee of WCRP and WCRP joined this Assembly as a partner. We have a collaboration agreement that outlines our commitment to collaborate strategically. For example, WCRP recently joined the Ten New Insights in Climate Science. Overall, there is a very strong collaboration grounded in the origin of the global change research programs and we are delighted that there is still a deep commitment from the leadership of WCRP to work with Future Earth. It makes us, as a community, very strong and we really appreciate that collaboration.

What are the main provisions that safeguard Future Earth's image as a trustworthy party (free from undue influence from e.g funders, or ideological stances over science)?

Co-design and stakeholder engagement are at the core of transdisciplinary research, so Future Earth basically promotes collaboration with the private sector. At the initiation of a new project, however, it is important to fully discuss the purpose of the collaboration and roles to be shared among the engaged parties, and we usually exchange agreement documents with the collaborating stakeholders. These include privacy policy, funding purposes, sharing principles of the project products, etc.

What has the current governance overhaul revealed about how to improve inter- and transdisciplinary research, and collaboration amongst partners in practice?

Cornelia Krug: There is a clear need to make space for scientific interaction in Future Earth. We need to start with the science/research, and not the processes, and not focus too much on theories of change and how to make transdisciplinary research happen. The GRNs are very varied and diverse, working on a broad range and topics, at various levels of engagement with stakeholders. We need to tap into this variety and diversity, and create the space for the research community (and associated stakeholders) to meet, to discuss ideas, concepts and research questions. We also need to create opportunities that allow for fruition of these ideas - e.g. in the form of seed grants. The assembly needs less of a discussion of governance and procedure, and more of science. We need to make the assembly the science body of Future Earth governance. Creating the space for GRNs to “talk shop” will lead to an improvement of inter- and transdisciplinary research. The desire is there to interact and collaborate, Future Earth is the platform to allow for the interaction, and to foster collaboration.

Future Earth Governance

How does the Assembly reach decisions, by voting or consensus? How does the Assembly ensure compliance with decisions if national Hubs are independent?

Stephanie Burton: The Assembly will reach decisions by voting. There will be a process of voting and representatives of all the different community groups will have opportunities to vote.

Maria Uhle: There are no national Hubs. The Global Secretariat Hubs are part of a larger collective and work with each other. They commit to fulfil their part of a larger role, to be part of the team, and to work and bring their resources and assets to the team. The Secretariat Hubs are therefore not independent in the sense that they work together on implementing the direction set by the Assembly and prioritized by the Governing Council on the basis of the available resources. Having the group of the funders and boards of the Hubs on the Assembly and the Governing Council helps get the direction for the Secretariat actions.

What is the specific role of the Governing Council members? The Terms of Reference explains the role of the Governing Council as a whole, but do individual Governing Council members represent the interests of their group?

Individual Governing Council members are representing their group, but not their entities. For instance, the 3 Governing Council members from the Global Research Networks group are representing and carrying the voice of all Global Research Networks, and not the one of their own Global Research Project or Knowledge-Action Network. Groups of Governing Council members are therefore invited to be in touch with the Assembly group they represent.

Why does the Governing Council endorse the terms of reference for the Global Research Projects and others? Doesn't the Governing Council report to the Assembly, who should endorse?

The Governing Council is the elected, operational decision-making structure of Future Earth. It also oversees the development of Future Earth policies and practices. It supports timely decision processes, in consideration of guidance provided by the Assembly.

If partners are part of the Assembly but not of the Council, how are their voices and priorities heard and considered at the Council level?

Stephanie Burton: Partners are organizations who are not Future Earth entities; they collaborate with Future Earth. Partners are not voting members for the election of the Governing Council but they

participate in the election of the Assembly co-chairs and have the opportunity of sharing their views in the Assembly and can provide strategic and forward-looking thinking about the priorities for Future Earth. In addition, partners can apply to become members of Future Earth and the decision is made by the Governing Council.

Why is the structure so complex? Why is there a need for a Governing Council? It doesn't seem very bottom-up.

Stephanie Burton: Bottom-up does not mean horizontal. Bottom-up means that you draw input and feedback from a very broad community. It needs to feed into a feasible decision-making body while a completely horizontal kind of structure would be very cumbersome because of the complexity of the membership of Future Earth. The recommendations and the proposals that were accepted on the governance structure might look complicated but it is not nearly as complicated as it would be if we had the same input from all of the different members. The emphasis has been placed on representativity. Every group has its membership, and that membership has representation in the Assembly and then in the Governing Council with the goal to feed up opinions, views, and priorities towards the decision making. It is the reason why it is complex but we do think that the representativity is such that all voices can be heard in the Assembly and can inform what the Governing Council makes decisions about.

Can members of the Implementation Team be nominated for the Assembly or Governing Council or there is a conflict of interest?

The Implementation Team's work ended before the Summer 2021. So, there is no conflict of interest and individuals who were members of the Implementation Team can be nominated for the Assembly and Governing Council.

Which actions will be set up to encourage each group of the Assembly to self-organize?

The Future Earth Secretariat will have one liaison for each group who will support its internal organization.

How is the representation and seats of each group in the Governing Council determined?

Maria Uhle: The number of seats of each group in the Governing Council was defined through a process of consultation having in mind that the Governing Council needs to be operational. The Assembly provides a platform to bring people together, to bring the community together and think about where Future Earth needs to go. The Governing Council helps prioritize. We wanted to have representation from all of the different groups in the Governing Council. It is therefore really important that the Governing Council members are willing to represent the voices of their group. We also needed to make sure that the Governing Council could help prioritize the actions based on the available resources. That is why we needed to have the funders of the Secretariat around the table. Overall the Governing Council is predominantly composed of members from the science community and the funders are on the Governing Council to make sure that we can actually implement the decisions and to help open doors for potential expansion of activities by bringing in other funders to help us expand.

Cornelia Krug: I'd like to stress that we had long discussions about diversity as well. We have made space for representatives from lower- and middle-income countries and from the early career researchers to be in the Assembly and in the Governing Council so that we actually have this built-in diversity measure already in our Governing Council and Assembly.

Why are the elections being held very early before we understand the whole new transformed Future Earth?

Maria Uhle: We have thought that establishing the Assembly and the Governing Council as early as possible was the best option to provide a stable structure and move Future Earth forward. Moreover,

there will be elections for the Governing Council every year. So, there is a way to modify and increase diversity in the coming years.

How do we decide the candidates who are going to serve one, two or three years on the Governing Council ?

Clément Brousse: Assembly members do not decide on who is going to serve one, two or three years, but it is the Governing Council members themselves who will discuss their terms among them in each group, who is going to serve for one, two or three years. The persons who are going to serve for either one or two years will have the possibility to be nominated again and to be reelected for a second three-year term.

What is meant by Structures in “national and regional, local committees, and structures” ?

Veera Mitzner: We work with organizations that have a lot of different set ups: National Committees, Regional Committees, Regional Offices, etc. “Structure” is an umbrella term that captures the different ways these groups have been organized.

Can the elected Governing Council change the terms of the Governing Council, for instance, rotate two thirds out after the first two years, rather than one third each year?

Maria Uhle: That is certainly a possibility. However, let’s remember that the Implementation Team did spend quite a bit of time talking about how they wanted to ensure the clean rotation of the Governing Council members. It would be a proposal that the Governing Council would have to present to the Assembly for approval.

Is there a term limit for Assembly members?

Clément Brousse: Assembly members are designated for three-year terms but there is no limit to these terms because some of your groups have too few members and we want to make sure that one group does not lack representatives on the Assembly.

What if none of the elected Governing Council members want to step out after one third of their term?

Maria Uhle: In such a scenario, I would suggest that the group who elected those people makes a decision on who should serve one, two or three years. However, the Governing Council representatives should keep in mind that even if they are on the Governing Council for one year, they can be nominated again and may serve three additional years. It is up to the groups to make sure that their representatives on the Governing Council actually represent them and help the group have a voice within the structure of Future Earth.

Is there a Secretariat budget review scheduled for this year, before the next Assembly, once a Global Coordination Hub is found?

The global Secretariat budget is reviewed and approved by the Governing Council every year, and we plan to do so this fiscal year before the next Assembly, regardless of having the Global Coordination Hub.

Who elects the Future Earth Scientific Advisory Committee? Were these people hand-picked without any consultation in 2018? How long will they serve?

In the new governance structure, there is no Advisory Committee. However, if the Assembly and/or the Governing Council come to the conclusion that a scientific committee is needed, a change in the

Governance ToR to include an Advisory Committee can be decided by the Governing Council and ratified by the Assembly.

How will the diversity of the whole Governing Council be ensured if each group is voting for its own representatives?

Ensuring diversity within each group of the Governing Council (GRN, ECR etc.) contributes to a fairly diverse Governing Council. In future Governing Council elections (every year some members will rotate) it will also be possible to add diversity criteria to the nomination calls to enhance diversity.

Future Earth Secretariat

What are the synergies and overlaps of Global Coordination Hubs and Secretariat Hubs (in terms of activities and functioning)?

Some coordinating functions of the Secretariat, such as external and internal communications and administration may need to be shared and jointly supported between the Global Coordination Hub and Global Secretariat Hubs. Overlaps should be reduced for efficient management, but considering geographical distribution of the Future Earth Secretariat activities, role sharing must be helpful as well.

What are the relationships between Global Coordination Hub and Global Secretariat Hubs and how do they coordinate?

Both types of hubs will take prioritized, separate roles of the Secretariat functions, as presented at the Assembly. Global Secretariat Hubs will provide a fixed annual contribution to the Core fund, which will be managed by the Global Coordination Hub. The entire Secretariat will be led by an Executive Director, who will sit at the Global Coordination Hub. All the hubs will work as a single Secretariat team.

Can there be more than one Hub per country?

Yes, this is a possibility.

How does Future Earth plan to manage the impacts of GDPR legislation on collaborating across regions and sharing various forms of data over borders?

The Future Earth Secretariat has updated the [Privacy Notice](#) to be compliant with GDPR and requires that all staff complete data protection training. The Privacy Notice is included when collecting data (for example: in forms). When sharing personal data with members of the Future Earth network (outside of the Secretariat), collaborators agree to follow data protection procedures.

Do you expect to have a hub per country? How do they relate to other groups belonging to the General Assembly?

We encourage Future Earth communities to promote Future Earth research by developing national and regional structures, though we do not expect to have a hub in each country. As a separate strategy for an empowered Secretariat, we do hope to have an increasingly diverse and well-distributed global Secretariat.

How can Governing Council members interact with different Hubs ?

Each Governing Council group has a liaison who will be able to put each Governing Council member in touch with various Secretariat Science officers, function leads or Directors depending on the topic.

Can you tell us when we will have confirmation about the level of the Future Earth Secretariat support to Knowledge Action Networks and Global Research Networks for 2022?

We have been in close contact with the new hubs as we establish the functioning and support structures of the new distributed Secretariat. We will do our best to confirm the level of support as soon as possible.

How will Future Earth avoid taking the funding out of the mouth of the research and researchers?

The Secretariat of Future Earth receives funding to coordinate, synthesize, convene workshops and conferences and for communications etc. (from ministries, national funding agencies and private foundations). There is a very limited risk of competition with funding of research projects. Moreover, the Future Earth Secretariat uses a part of its funding to support the research community through funding workshops, etc.

Annex 2: List of Assembly members

Global Research Network (GRPs and KANs)

- AIMES
 - Hannah Liddy
 - Mark Rounsevell
- bioDISCOVERY
 - Cornelia Krug
 - Lynne Shannon
- Earth System Governance
 - Gustav Thungren
 - Åsa Persson
- EvolvES
 - Sibylle Schroer
 - Ella Vazquez
- Future Earth Coasts
 - Tim Smith
 - Xiuzhen Li
- Global Land Programme
 - Ariane de Bremond
 - Sharachchandra Lele
- Global Mountain Biodiversity Assessment
 - Eva Spehn
 - Davnah Urbach
- IGAC
 - Langley DeWitt
 - Clare Murphy
- IHOPE
 - Thomas McGovern
 - Ruth Morgan
- iLEAPS
 - Benjamin Poulter
 - Semeena Valiyaveetil Shamsudheen
- IMBeR
 - Carol Robinson
 - John Claydon
- Integrated Risk Governance Project
 - Peijun Shi
 - Qian Ye
- MAIRS
 - Jiaguo Qi
 - Jayes Srinivasan
- oneHEALTH
 - Peter Daszak
 - Catherine Machalaba
- PAGES
 - Marie-France Loutre
 - Michael N. Evans
- Programme on Ecosystem Change and Society (PECS)
 - Maïke Hamann
 - Odirilwe Selomane
- SOLAS
 - Jessica Gier
 - Minhan Dai
- Sustainable Water Future Programme (Water Future)
 - Anik Bhaduri
 - Rabi Mohtar

- Finance and Economics KAN
 - Roger Cremades
 - Masachika Suzuki
- Health KAN
 - Kristie Ebi
 - Anthony Capon
- Natural Assets KAN
 - Unai Pascual
 - Maria Jose Martinez-Harms
- NEXUS KAN
 - Faten Attig Bahar
 - Marja Spierenburg
- Ocean KAN
 - Anna Zivian
 - Linwood Pendleton
- Risk KAN
 - Jo-Ting Huang-Lachman
 - Sirkku Juhola
- SSCP KAN
 - Maurie Cohen
 - Charlotte Jensen
- Urban KAN
 - Kensuke Fukushi
 - Shuaib Lwasa

National and Local Committees / Structures

- Future Earth Australia
 - Joanne Chong
 - Tayanah O'Donnell
- Future Earth National Committee Austria (National Committee for Global Change Austria)
 - Margreth Keiler
- Future Earth National Committee China
 - Wenjie Dong
 - Bojie Fu
- Future Earth National Committee Finland
 - Stephany Mazon
 - Eeva Furman
- Future Earth National Committee for Mongolia
 - Battogtok Dorjgotov
 - Suvdantsetseg Balt
- Future Earth National Committee France (Comité National Français des Changements Globaux)
 - Wolfgang Cramer
 - Thierry Lebel
- Future Earth National Committee Germany
 - Daniela Jacob
 - Sebastian Sonntag
- Future Earth National Committee India
 - Sandeep Tambe
 - Vandana Prasad
- Future Earth National Committee Ireland
 - Diarmuid Torney
 - Mary Dobbs

- Future Earth National Committee Japan
 - Taro Yamauchi
 - Nobuko Saigusa
- Future Earth National Committee Korea
 - Soonchang Yoon
 - Joon Kim
- Future Earth National Committee Philippines
 - Lourdes J. Cruz
 - Rico C. Ancog
- Future Earth National Committee Russia
 - Vladimir Kolosov
 - Evgeny Gordov
- Future Earth National Committee South Africa
 - Coleen Vogel
 - Neville Sweijid
- Future Earth National Committee Spain
 - Luis Santamaria
 - Emilio Casamayor
- Future Earth National Committee Switzerland (Sustainability Research Initiative)
 - Janet Hering
 - Peter Edwards
- Future Earth Local Committee Taipei
 - Yue-Gau Chen
 - Chia-Hsing Jeffery Lee
- Future Earth National Committee UK
 - Philip Lewis
 - Melissa Leach
- Makoto Taniguchi
- Yukari Takamura
- Global Secretariat Hub Sweden
 - Deliang Chen
 - Stefan Claesson
- Global Secretariat Hub Taipei
 - Chao-Han Liu
 - Tzu-Ching Meng
- Global Secretariat Hub USA
 - Maria Uhle
 - Lisa Vaughan

Regions

- Africa Future Earth Committee
 - Chrispin Kowenje
 - Allali Abdelkader
- Asia Region
 - Mohd Nordin Bin Hassan
 - Hein Mallee
- Future Earth MENA Regional Center
 - Manfred Lange
 - Riyadh Y. Hamzah
- Future Earth Regional Office for Southern Africa (FEROSA)
 - Jane Olwoch
 - Belinda Reyers
- South Asia Regional Office
 - Jaanaki Gooneratne
 - Kanupriya Harish

Global Secretariat Hubs Boards and / or Funders

- Global Secretariat Hub Board France
 - Jean-Marie Flaud
 - Stéphane Blanc
- Global Secretariat Hub Canada
 - Rémi Quirion
 - Gordon McBean
- Global Secretariat Hub China
 - Lin Yin
 - Tianjun Zhou
- Global Secretariat Hub Japan

Partners

- START International: Jon Padgham
- Mountain Research Initiative: Carolina Adler
- WCRP: Detlef Stammer
- CCAFS: Bruce Campbell
- STS Forum: Kanji Fujiki

Early-Career Researchers

- Gaby Langendijk
- Meng WANG
- Jay Dean Pocklington
- Giovanni Avila-Flores
- Sally Torres
- Erna Karalija
- Ajibola Akanji
- Rachel Kelly
- Kabir Rasouli
- Mais Aljunaidy

Sustainability Researchers from Low and Middle Income Countries (LICMIC)

- Najet Aroua
- Jurgenne H. Primavera
- Gete Zeleke
- Filipo Zulu
- Yulia Sugandi
- Kalpana Chaudhari
- Eduardo Erazo Acosta
- Leopoldo Cavaleri Gerhardinger
- Joeli Veitayaki