



## Programme on Ecosystem Change and Society

### Call for PECS Working Groups

The Programme on Ecosystem Change and Society ([PECS](#)) is the coordinating body for an exciting network of social-ecological systems scientists working on place-based research in a variety of locations and scales around the world. PECS is one of 19 [Global Research Projects](#) of Future Earth and aims to integrate research on the stewardship of social-ecological systems, the services they generate, and the relationships among ecosystems, human wellbeing, livelihoods, inequality and poverty.

Now, 10 years since its inception in 2012, PECS is looking to broaden its scope based on the lessons of the past decade. We would like to engage new members and enhance the active participation of existing members. To this end, **we are calling for new working groups** as part of the development and implementation of a new 10-year science plan (2021 - 2030). Working Groups are collaborative initiatives that aim to advance SES science and should align with the new thematic areas of PECS (see below). The themes lay out the broad frontiers for SES science within PECS for the coming decade.

#### Why become part of PECS?

PECS is an exciting network of SES scientists from around the world. By becoming part of PECS, you are able to:

- Share insights and learning within an exciting SES research community worldwide
- Connect your place-based SES research to related research from around the world
- Communicate your research across PECS communication platforms
- Receive information about new funding opportunities
- Receive information about publication opportunities, e.g., special issues
- Organise sessions at PECS conferences
- Gain insights from a like-minded community
- More easily stay up to date with the latest SES research

#### How do PECS Working Groups function?

Working Groups are shorter term (1 – 3 years) collaborative activities that aim to explore new areas of research or synthesise existing knowledge across cases or domains of research. They are typically made up of researchers from at least two institutions, ideally from different countries. They usually have 1-2 leads, and we strongly encourage early career researcher leads or co-leads. We encourage working group proposals from researchers not previously associated with PECS, as well as encouraging existing PECS members to propose working groups around new topics.

Working Groups can self-organize in terms of how they would like to function and how often they meet. The PECS secretariat will facilitate gatherings across multiple working groups (virtually or in person) from time-to-time and will aim to provide partial support for in-person meetings where possible. Working Groups will have an opportunity to present to the PECS scientific committee annually to reflect on progress and insights from their ongoing activities and to help ensure that groups have the support they require. We encourage working groups to be open to new members joining, but they can be open, closed, or in transition, depending on the type and stage of activity.

## **PECS Themes for the coming decade**

In 2021, PECS embarked on a process to update its Science Plan and identify a new set of themes and working groups around which to focus its activities for the next 5-10 years.

Together with the Scientific Committee, we identified four new themes:

- (1) The Dynamics of the Anthropocene;
- (2) Fostering Stewardship in Diverse Contexts;
- (3) Transformations to Sustainable Futures; and
- (4) Mainstreaming Knowledge Co-Production.

These themes are intended to set the broad frame for Working Group activities for the coming decade.

### *Dynamics of the Anthropocene*

The Anthropocene era is characterized by new and unique dynamics that play out at multiple interconnected scales. Global social-ecological dynamics land differently in different local contexts, while diverse local dynamics play into and shape global forces in a variety of ways. What new and unexpected connections exist between places and what are their implications? What feedback, tipping points, and social-ecological system configurations characterize this new era? What are the inequities and differentiated impacts of these dynamics in various places? What processes determine the upscaling of local dynamics into broad-scale dynamics? Who are the main actors shaping Anthropocene dynamics? What are the new and emerging risks to social-ecological systems (SES), societies, ecosystems; and how can we reduce these?

### *Fostering stewardship in diverse contexts*

Place-based social-ecological research is often designed to improve local environmental understanding and governance, but it can also inform decisions at larger scales, or in places other than the original location of the study. What different innovations and modalities of stewardship do we find in different contexts? What unique insights can be gained from studies in diverse contexts and by incorporating other ways of knowing? How can we quickly and effectively scale up place-based research to address broader sustainability challenges without losing the value of its place-based character? What aspects of what we learn in one place can be transferred to other places?

### *Transformations to Sustainable Futures*

Achieving a more sustainable, equitable and resilient world requires deep systemic transformation of interconnected SES, that is sensitive to the diverse contexts and places around the world. How do we nurture diverse imaginations, visions, and option spaces for the future, that draw on this diversity and plurality? How do we sustain and scale (up, in, out or deep) local innovations to sustainability? What are the dynamics, tensions and trade-offs associated with sustainability transformations? What processes and institutions can help us navigate the unknown, uncertainty and risks surrounding the future?

### *Mainstreaming knowledge co-production*

SES research often involves process-oriented approaches to producing knowledge in collaboration with diverse stakeholders, in ways that acknowledge different knowledge types. What principles and practices can best foster knowledge co-production and trans-disciplinarity in different contexts? How do we incorporate diverse intersectionalities? How

can knowledge production processes be decolonized? What is the role of digitalisation in mainstreaming knowledge co-production? What funding options and institutional arrangements can better support transdisciplinary SES research? What role does PECS play in mainstreaming knowledge co-production?

### How to apply

If you are interested to convene a PECS working group, please submit a short proposal (max 1000 words, not incl. references) to [pecs.science@gmail.com](mailto:pecs.science@gmail.com) by between **1<sup>st</sup> October and 15<sup>th</sup> December 2021** with the following information:

1. Name of the working group
2. Name, affiliations, and contact details of the working group coordinators (1-2 people). Participation of early career researchers to lead or co-lead working groups is highly encouraged
3. Names, affiliations, and contact details of the working group participants (5-15 people). Participation of researchers not previously associated with PECS is strongly encouraged.
4. PECS theme(s) to which the working group links
5. Key research questions the working group aims to address (max 3)
6. Motivation (1-2 paragraphs): Explanation of the overarching questions. Why is it a timely and compelling issue? How does it link to the PECS themes? Why is a PECS working group a promising way to address the question?
7. Brief description of the proposed approach
8. What are the expected outputs?
9. Duration of the working group (1-3 years)
10. Is the working group open to new members, and if so, how will they be selected?
11. Together with this 1 pager, the group should submit a list of key publications participants have authored or co-authored that demonstrate their expertise in relation to the proposed working group topic (max 1 page)

If you are interested in submitting a working group application, but are not able to do so within the proposed time (**1<sup>st</sup> October and 15<sup>th</sup> December 2021**), please reach out to us on [pecs.science@gmail.com](mailto:pecs.science@gmail.com) and we can explore a way forward.

### Process for selecting Working Groups

- Submissions will be reviewed by a review committee composed of PECS members.
- The following criteria will apply:
  - Alignment with PECS themes and place-based research
  - Relevance, novelty, and potential contribution of the proposed work - including methods, scholarship in under-represented regions of the world, etc
  - Feasibility of the approach
  - Diversity of the proposed team (geographic, career stage, and institutional). The team can include non-academic members, but this is not a requirement.
  - Profile/track record of the proposed team in the proposed topics
  - Contributions to enriching PECS and expanding the PECS membership
- Successful working groups will be announced in early 2022, and an initial introductory virtual meeting of all working groups will also be held early in 2022

### Other ways of participating in PECS

- Going forward, we plan to have annual call for working groups
- Working groups will mostly be open; you can contact the working group leader(s) to participate
- You can also suggest a [place-based case](#) you are working on, to affiliate with PECS. Contact us for details.

For more information and any questions about the process, please contact us on [pecs.science@gmail.com](mailto:pecs.science@gmail.com)