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# Mainstreaming Sustainability Science in Research

**Mathieu Denis**

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# Creating the conditions of possibility for doing effective sustainability science

Complex, inter-related sustainability challenges

Global problems but context-specific solutions



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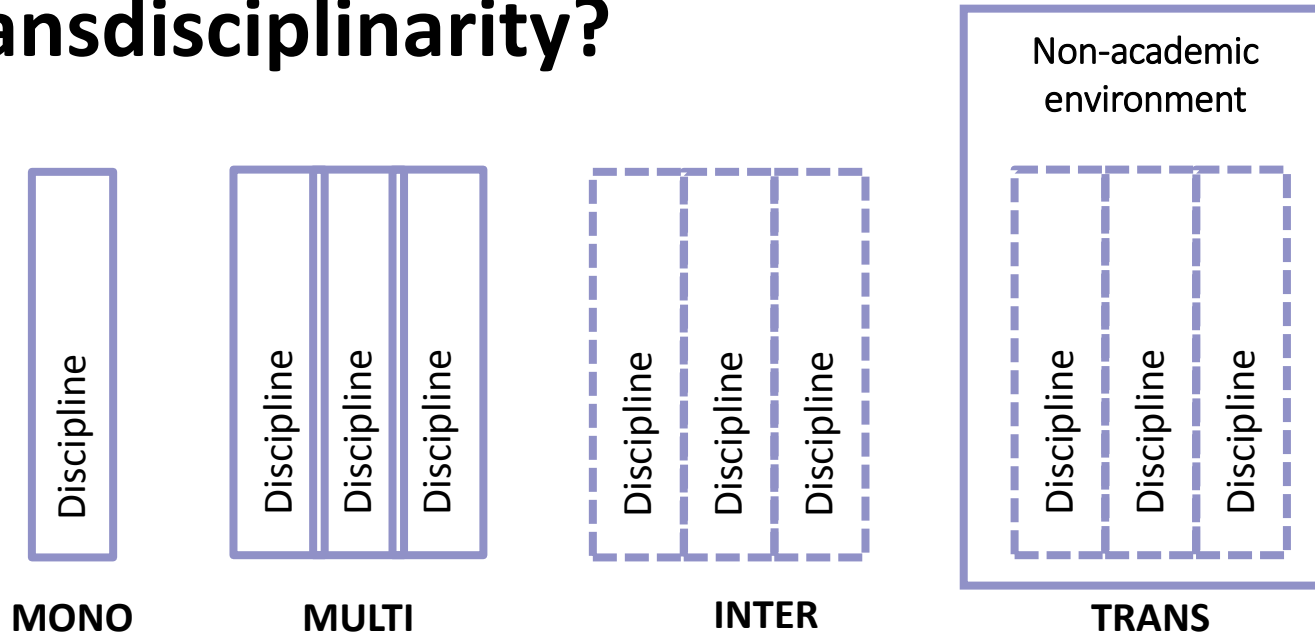
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# Presentation Outline

- 1- Some key concepts
- 2- Establishing an adequate institutional framework



# What is interdisciplinarity? What is transdisciplinarity?



Source: Bunders et al., 2009



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The call for more research on sustainability has focused sharply on the social sciences:

**Social science knowledge is  
indispensable knowledge**

But what can social science contribute?





08 June 2017

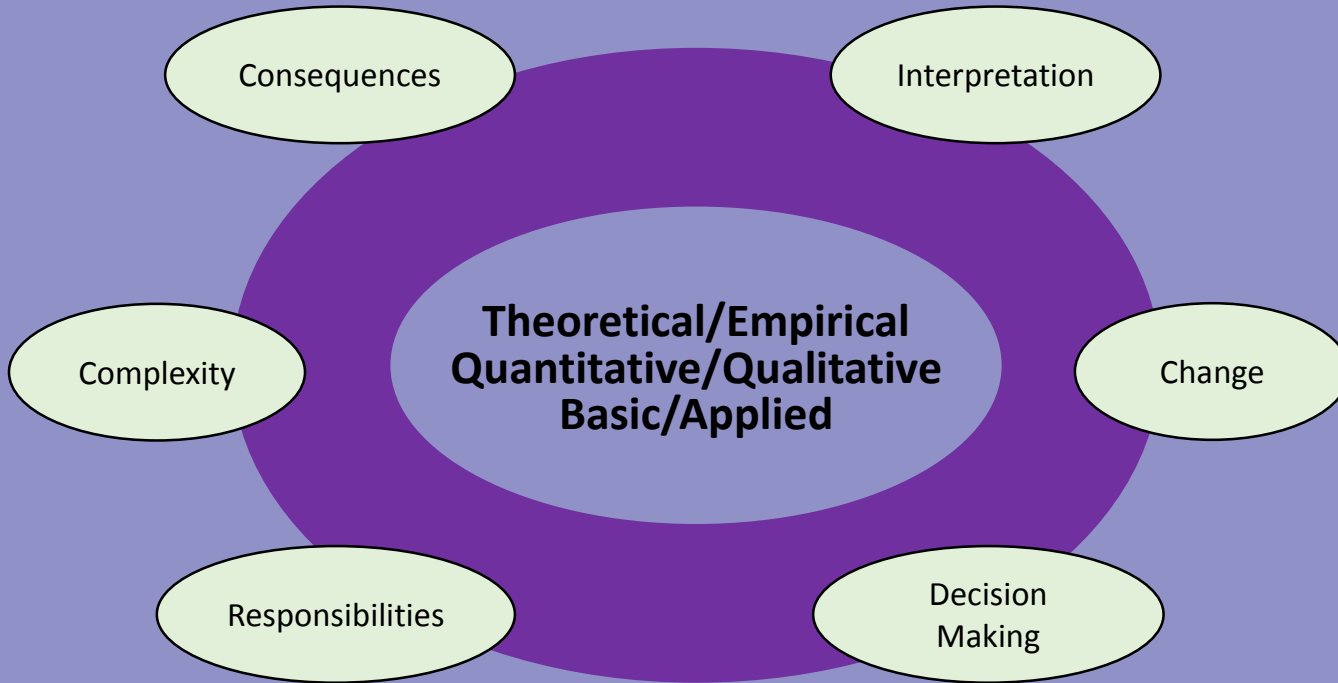
# Transformative Cornerstones of Social Science Research for Global Change



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# Sustainability Science – an approach to knowledge production

- Beyond disciplines
- Problem-solving
- Participatory
- Process-oriented
- Implementation

Klein, 2004



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**Taking the sustainability challenge seriously,  
means doing science differently**

# **Sustainability science requires interactions at every step!**

- **Joint design of the problem to tackle**
- **Joint production of knowledge**
- **Joint implementation of solutions**





## Sustainability requires adequate institutional framework:

- Time to ensure projects meet the real needs of stakeholders and to ensure their participation



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Photo: Ashish Kothari

## Sustainability requires adequate institutional framework:

- Funding streams
- Capacity to use research funds with non-academic stakeholders



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## Sustainability requires adequate institutional framework:

- Incentives
- Capacity building



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# Developing capacity building in sustainability science

Skills building initiative:

- Development of core training modules, incl. methods, case studies, exercises, M+E component
- Adaptable to context, topics, and audiences
- Trainings in different countries and regions
- Development of an international pool of trainers
- Web-based platform of resources

Led by ISSC, ICSU, Future Earth, START, TD-NET



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## Sustainability requires adequate institutional framework:

- Developing adequate indicators to assess and monitor progress and value
- Involving non academic stakeholders in the evaluation and steering of research



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# *Transformations to Sustainability* programme

Steering Committee:

- Chair (ISSC President)
- 3 social scientists
- 1 natural scientist
- 1 humanities scholar
- 3 stakeholder/user group representatives (e.g. business, civil society, policy, practitioners)
- 1 science-policy expert (researcher or practitioner)
- 1 representative of UNESCO's SHS sector
- 1 representative from Future Earth
- ISSC Executive Director (ex officio)



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## Sustainability requires adequate institutional framework:

- Adequate interfaces between science and policy



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# Thank you

**Mathieu Denis**  
**mathieu@worldsocialscience.org**



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