



**Walter J.V. Vermeulen, President of ISDRS**

**ISDRS as network society working  
towards clear SD Goals**

**24<sup>th</sup> ISDRS Conference,  
June (12 +)13-15, 2017, Messina, Italy**



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**Benvenuti a tutti per  
conto dell'ISDRS**

***Welcome to all on  
behalf of the  
ISDRS***

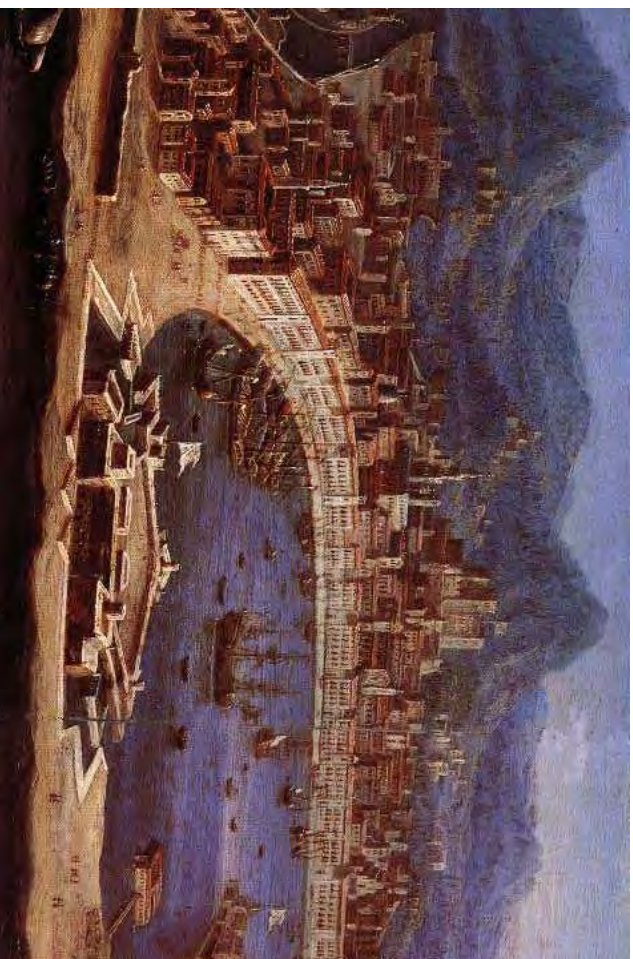
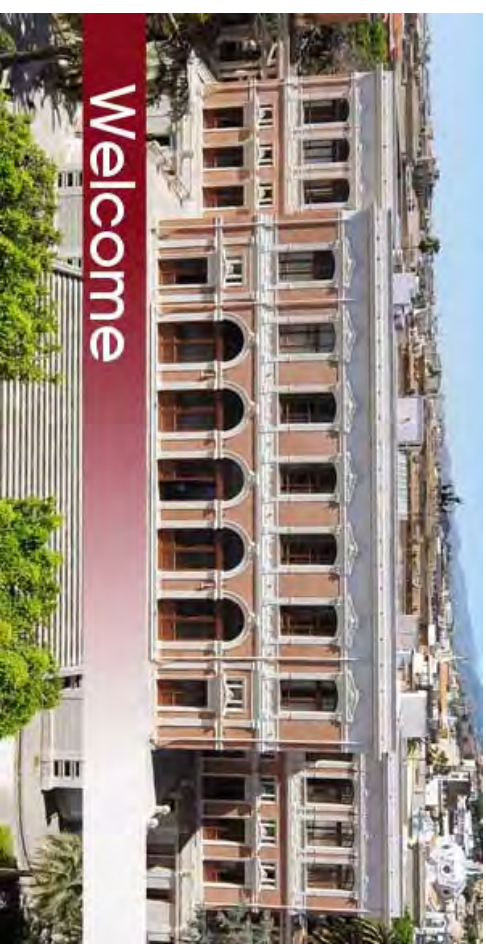






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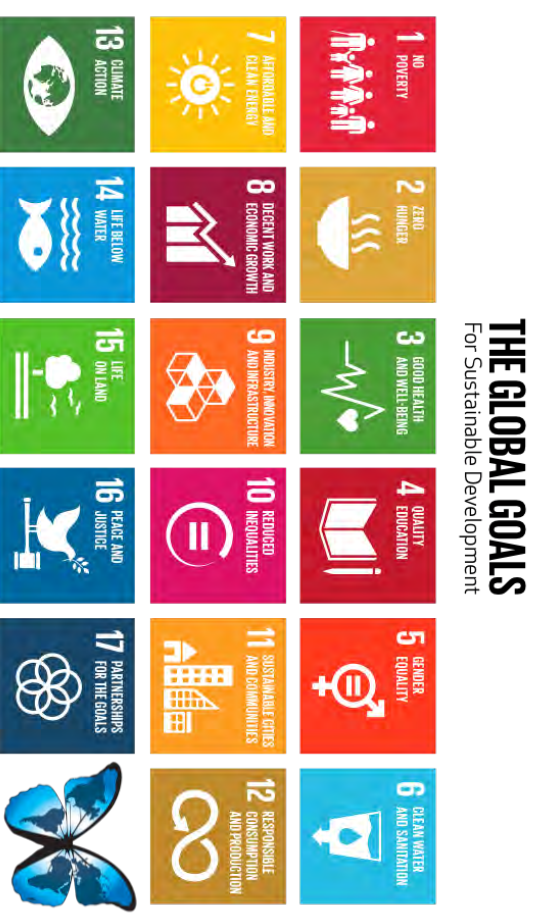
# Thanks organisers!!





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# ISDRS: Researchers with ambitions



**Messina Theme:**  
*Actions for a Sustainable World: from theory to practice*



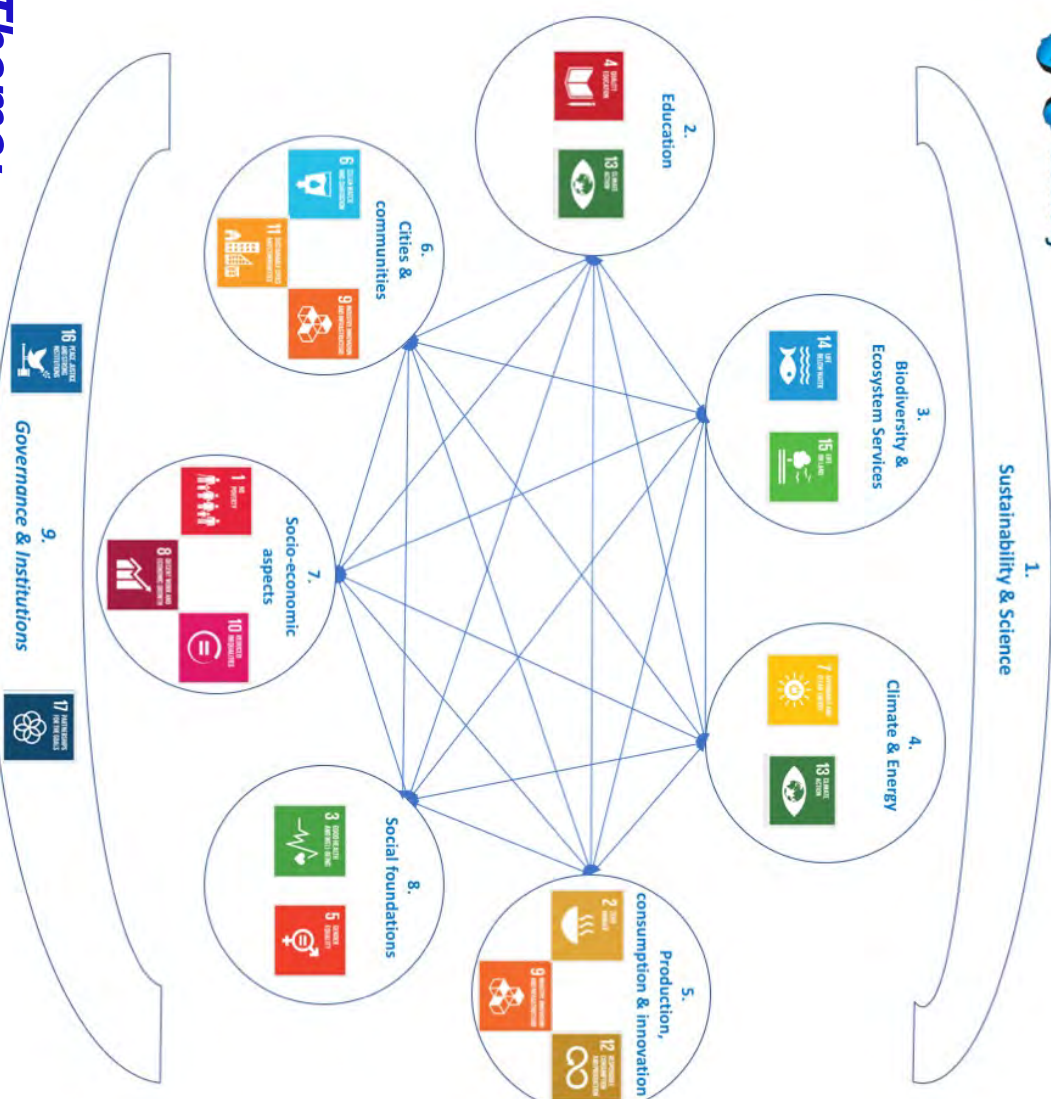


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# ISDRS Topic Groups convening



ISDRS Topic Groups & UN SDG's



**Messina Theme:**

***Actions for a Sustainable World: from theory to practice***





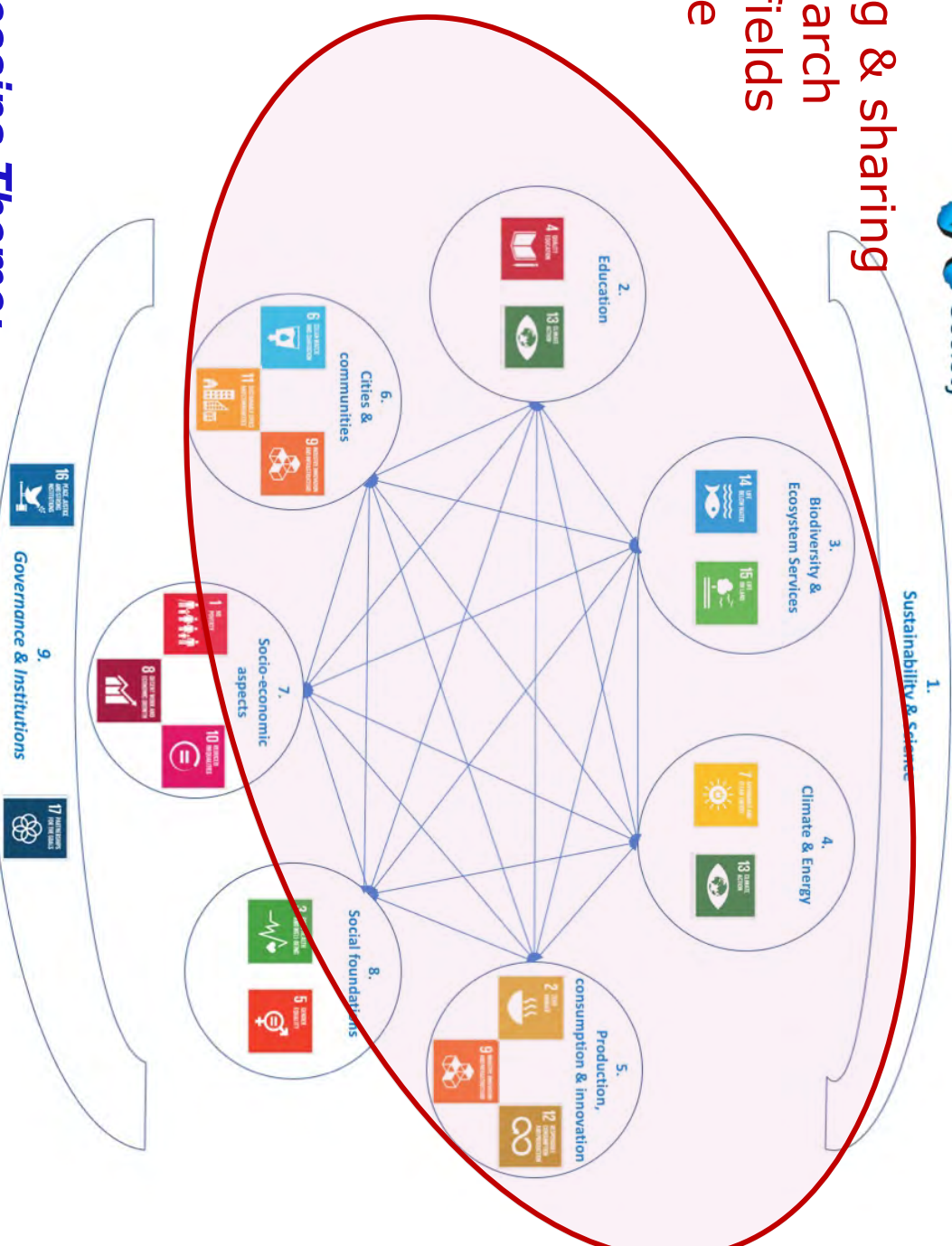
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# ISDRS Topic Groups convening



ISDRS Topic Groups & UN SDG's

Discussing & sharing  
your research  
in many fields  
of practice



**Messina Theme:**

***Actions for a Sustainable World: from theory to practice***



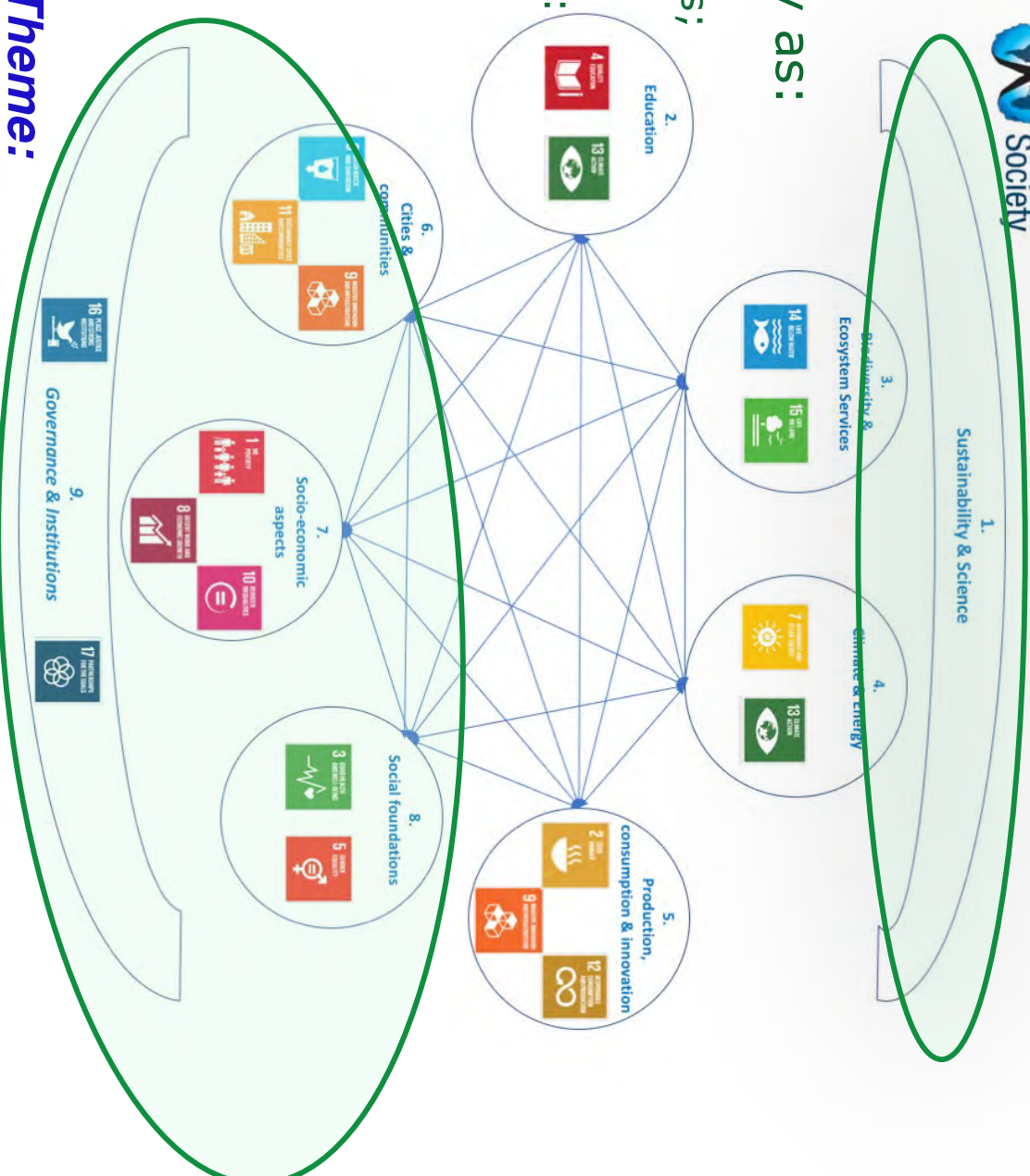




# ISDRS Topic Groups convening



ISDRS Topic Groups & UN SDG's



## Connecting it to Sustainability Theory as:

- inclusive, holistic;
  - respecting interlinkages;
  - transition oriented;
  - inclusive governance.
- With specific methodology:
- full system modelling;
  - forecasting and back;
  - transdisciplinary;
  - ...



**Messina Theme:**

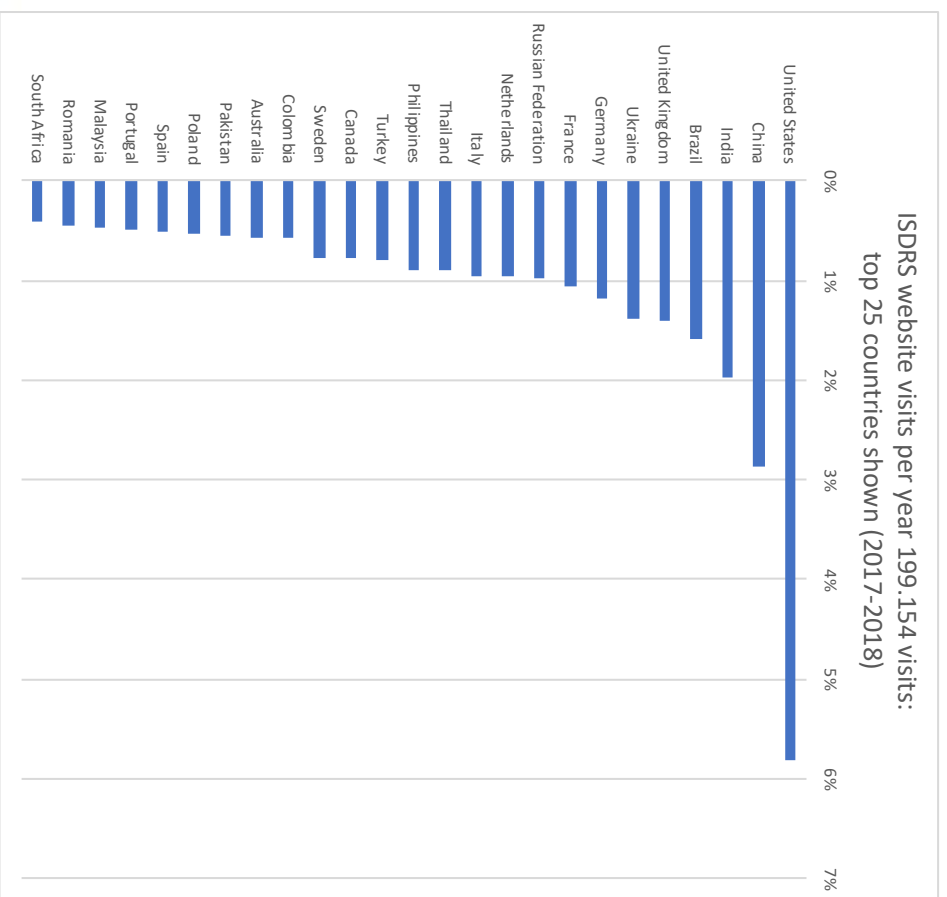
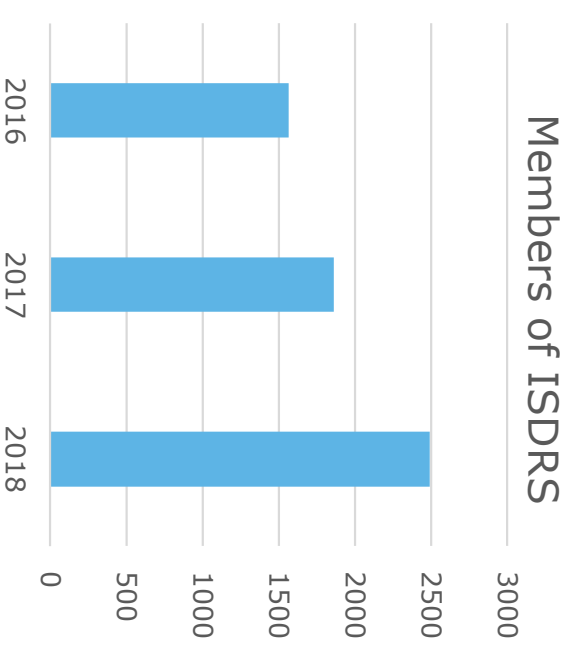
***Actions for a Sustainable World: from theory to practice***



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# ISDRS as researcher's platform

**Growing membership:**  
**2490 members**  
**85+ countries**



**Growing readership**  
**199.000+ hits**  
**202 countries**  
**quarterly newsletter**







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Institutional  
Member ★★★

# ISDRS Institutional Members

Sustainable Europe Research Institute  
SERI Deutschland e.V.



**PUSKAPENA**  
Bucakı Köylere Barınma Kurumu Proje ve Araştırma Birimi



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Copernicus Institute of Sustainable Development



Universidade  
Nova de Lisboa



UNIVERSITAT POLITÈCNICA DE CATALUNYA  
BARCELONATECH  
University Research Institute  
for Sustainability Science and Technology



**AUSTRIAN MARKETING  
UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES**  
Network-Partner FH Wiener Neustadt



<http://isdrrs.org/institutional-members/>



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# ISDRS partner organisations



International Society for Industrial Ecology







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# ISDRS Themes and Topic Groups

ISDRS as source of information:

- ‘State-of-the art’-information via website;
- *call for papers* annual conference;
- Organize the tracks;
- Special issues / Book in new Routledge ISDRS Series;
- Forward discussions in conference track
- Contribute quarterly **ISDRS Newsletter**
- Discussions with ISDRS members via ISDRS social media;



## Topic Group Sc Circular Economy, Zero-waste and Innovation

### News

As our institutional member, **RTTU** is currently one of the 2018 Material Change winners.

**Sustainable Innovation and Shared Value Creation in Norwegian Industry**

Project at HUI University

**Resource recovery and reevaluation of alkaline wastes**

If you know of any interesting projects or news to provide here, please get in contact (lastname@isdrs.nl)

### Next Conferences Topic Sc

Please look for more information on the MQA at the 2018 Material Change winners here.



### Past Conferences

**2017 Belgium, Ghent**  
**Circular Economy & Industrial Ecology**

Crucially cannot be a figure, which might not be the best strategy for achieving resource efficiency or sustainable development. CE needs to be considered within the broader perspective of Sustainable Development. A common framework for CE and SD is not available yet...

**Read more here**

**2016 Lisbon, Portugal**  
**Circular Economy & Industrial Ecology**

**2015 Guelph, Australia**  
**Industrial Ecology, Innovation for the next generation**

**Read more here**

### Knowledge Resources

**State of the Art**  
**Getting beyond the messy concept of circular economy**

In a just published article in *Resources, Conservation and Recycling*, we discuss and synthesize the diverse inputs from a range of academic disciplines into the discussion. We analysed 60 scientific articles that explicitly referred to a waste hierarchy, and found that 25% of them **did not** mention it.

**Read more**

**Recommended resources**

- The top useful resources are the following:
  - 1) Look at the **UN Sustainable Development Goals** and **SDG 12** (Responsible Consumption and Production).
  - 2) Useful resources available at the **UN SDG Academy**, see for example "Globalization past and future".
  - 3) Current policies: European Union Circular Economy
  - 4) Circular Economy accord to the Ellen MacArthur Foundation
  - 5) ISDRS based book: **International Perspectives on Industrial Ecology**



### Partner Organizations

LinkedIn Discussions in our Topic group Sc

Recent documents on the ISDRS LinkedIn discussion group:

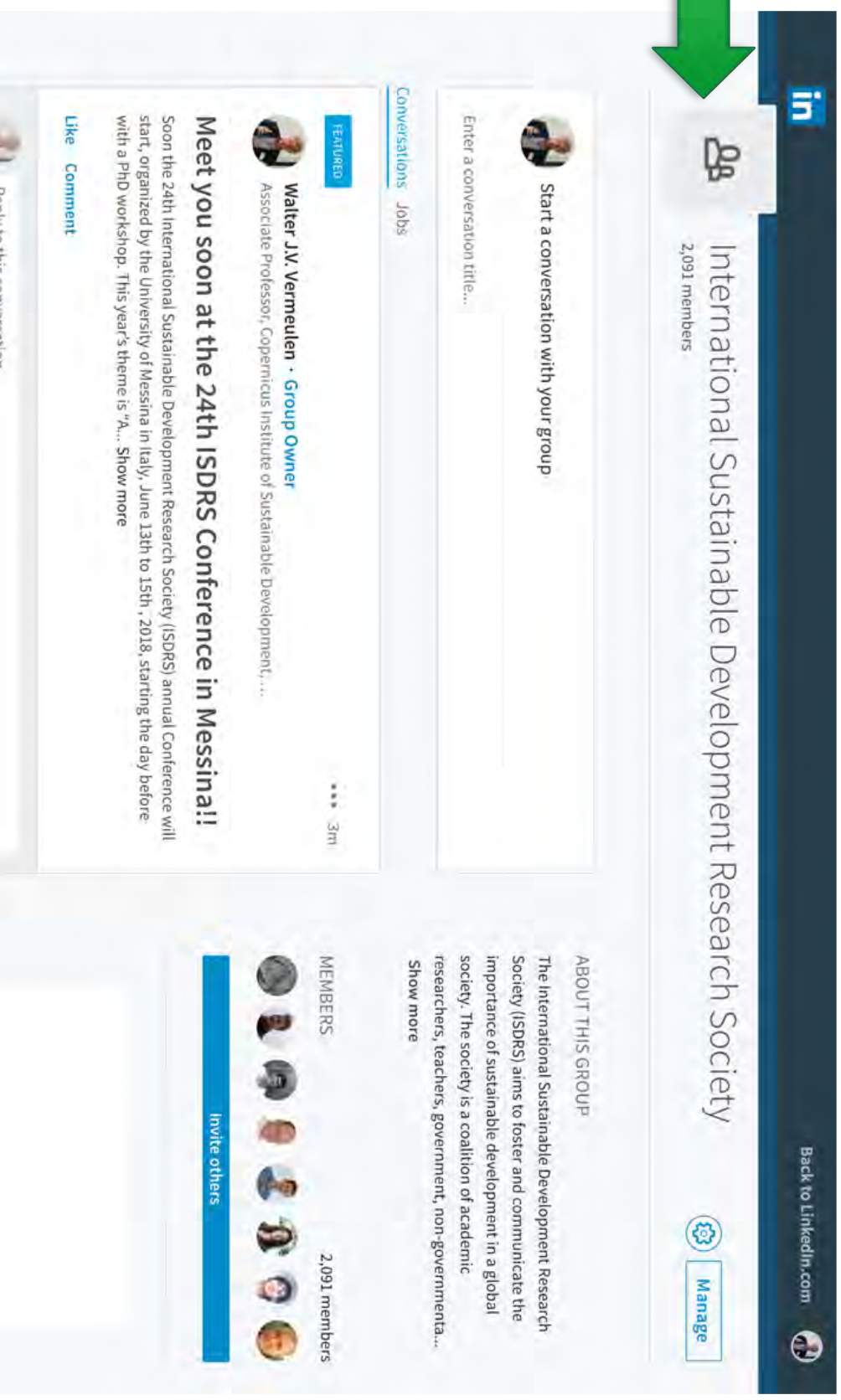
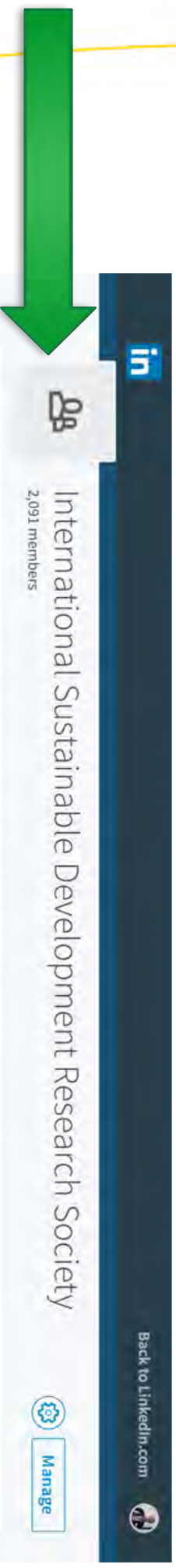
- July 2017 Jane Vennart's post: **Circular Economy Defining International Sustainable Development Research**
- June 2017 Unida Truchet post: **Open Innovation workshop invitation** (German Speaking)
- May 2017 John McDonald post: **MyCircularEconomy: a revolutionary, bio-inspired platform to enable every person to thrive**
- April 2017 Roby Koeijl post: **Call for Papers - Green Innovation**





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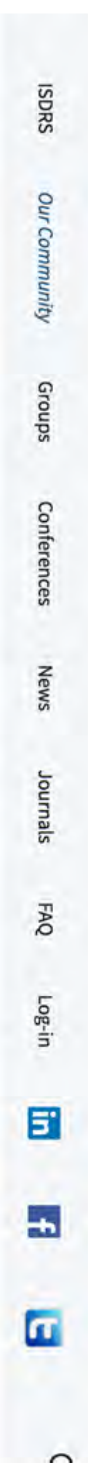
# Go to LinkedIn discussion group







# Follower? / Green(+) member ??



## Follower

Free

For those who want to participate in the social media networking activities of ISDRS (like LinkedIn).

To become a Follower, register below. Once registered, you can upgrade to a Green membership at any time.

## Green Member

(OECD country @ €95/year)  
(non-OECD country/PhD student @ €55/year)

Paying members with additional benefits, like reduced fee for conferences, access to journals and access to more information on the website.

## Green Plus Member

Same prices as Green membership

By renewing your Green membership you will automatically become a Green Plus Member. This gives you the additional benefit of eligibility to vote in elections for the board and to stand for election yourself.

**Institutional Membership:** For institutions in the sustainability field we offer an institutional membership with more relevant benefits. [More info!](#)

## Register

**Already a Follower or Member? Please log in.**

**Not yet? Join ISDRS now! You can sign up for one of our membership options below.**

We collect payments securely using PayPal. PayPal is a free and secure service. All membership options (except Follower) are for the duration of one (1) year.

If you have any questions please contact us at [information@isdrsfollowers.nl](mailto:information@isdrsfollowers.nl)



# isdrs.org



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# Engage on our social media

Twitter:

Conference ISDRS2018 ( *use @ISDRS2018* )

Facebook:

ISDRS Conference 2018 ( *use @ISDRSConference* )

LinkedIn:

*discussion group*: "International Sustainable  
Development Research Society"





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# Members' meeting

Discuss your suggestions, intended commitment and experiences with any of the board members

and during ISDRS member meeting:

Date: Thursday June 14th, 17:30 - 18:30

Venue: Rectorate - Aula Magna - First floor



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# ISDRS as SD knowledge hub

Topic groups – Institutional members - Partners

Additional activities:

- Routledge ISDRS book series;
- Discourses on 'transdisciplinarity'
- Discourses on 'sustainability indicators'
- Support development of review books:

*Simon Bell and Steve Morse: Sustainability Indicators*







# ISDRS: Show progress in discourses

Discourse before and during this conference:

Transdisciplinarity:

- essential research approach for SD
- what is it?

various approaches

‘central European’

‘north American’

‘(south) African’

- what work when and where?
- which are the key actors in it: and their limitations..
- implications for funding agents?





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# **ISDRS: Show progress in discourses**

Discourse before and during this conference:

Transdisciplinarity:

- to be discussed in Track 1b
- initiated by Sjors Witjes with
- the New Professionals Group







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# ISDRS: Show progress in discourses

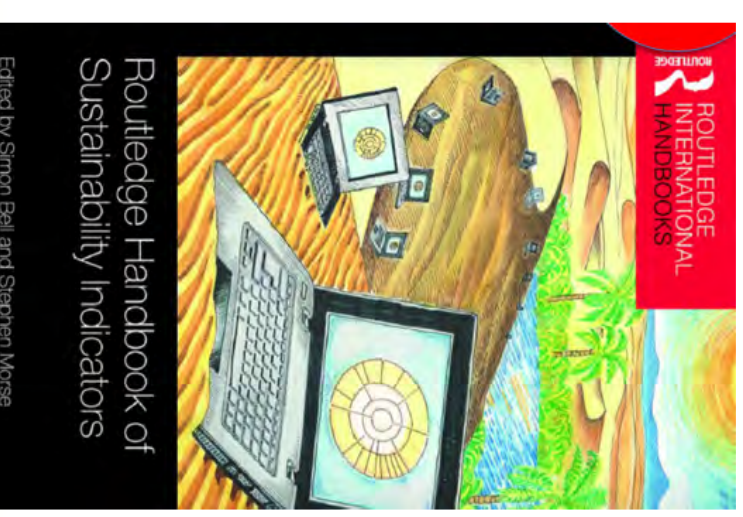
Just published at Routledge:



Handbook of Sustainability Indicators  
*Simon Bell and Stephen Morse (eds.)*

34 chapters by the world experts in  
the field, including:

Pinter	Hueting
Esty	Hsu
Boulanger	Ramos
Chernoweth	Reijnders
Costanza	Sayer
Dahl	Spangenberg
Gallopin	Wackernagel





# ISDRS: Show progress in discourses

Available since this week at Routledge:

My input Chapter 4:

*Substantiating the rough consensus on the three-dimensional concept of sustainable development as point of departure for indicator development*

**Key points:**

- SD is not vague
- some scientists mess up
- global rough consensus
- separate means / end-outcomes
- 3 major misunderstandings







# Can we see a rough consensus?

Concept of “Sustainable Development”  
(especially in business context)

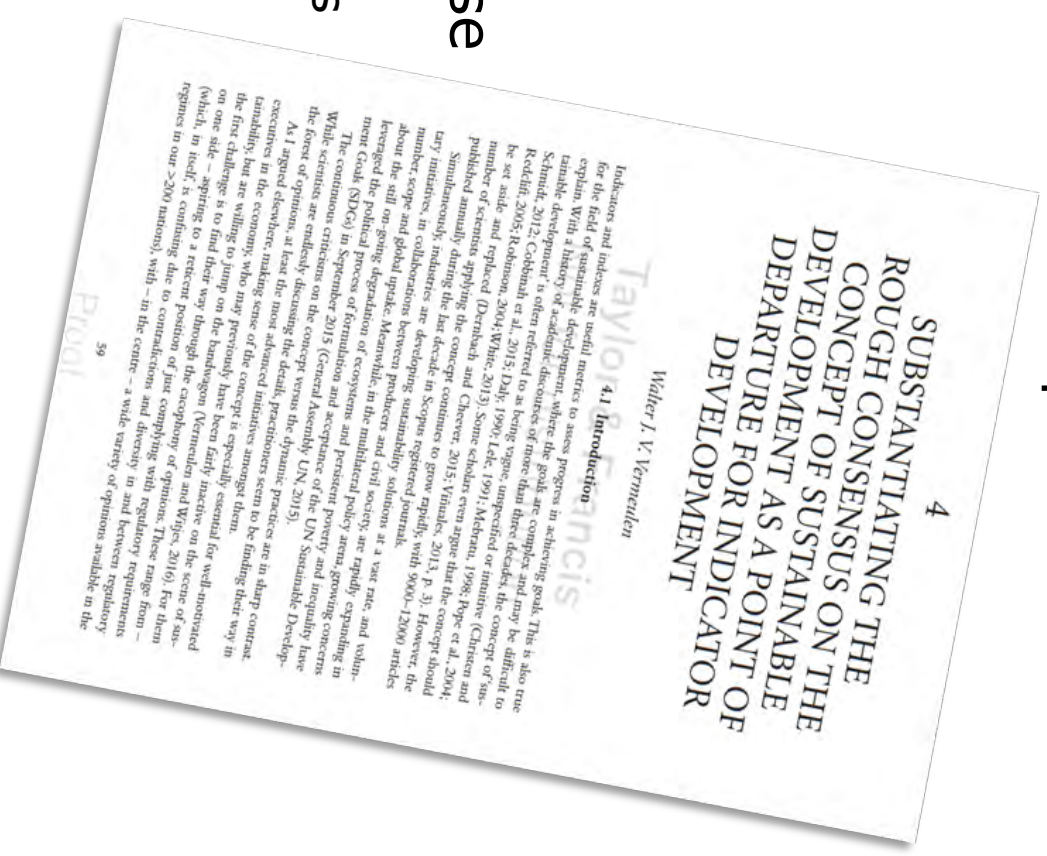
- Is it really vague, multi-interpretable, open for adjusting to your needs??
- 3-fold tendency to disagree .... in open society
  - Pitfall of social constructionist approaches
  - Result of neo-liberal “let (weak) bottom-up forces flower” approach (weak government)
- Result: persistent major misconceptions & blind spots



# Can we see a rough consensus?

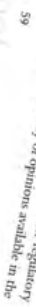
## Global dynamics in discourse on concept of SD

- Scientific discourses
  - (s)LC(S)A community
  - Resilience
  - ....
- Global political discourse
  - Review of UN debates
  - Self governance networks
  - UN SDG's



# Global dynamics in discourse on concept of SD

- What is the 3<sup>rd</sup> P?
- What can be 2<sup>nd</sup> P?
- What makes sense as LCSA?







# Understanding sustainable development

1<sup>st</sup> major misconception: what is the 3<sup>rd</sup> P?

Increasingly communicated in publications, consultancy to business advice, business documents, governments documents:

SD = Planet People Profit?

Look in key readings again: ***Supra-national authorities***

from "Our Common Future" to UN SDGs Declaration of September 2015

→ Balancing joint ecological and societal fairness!!

Discourse-analysis (Hadden and Seybert, 2016, p. 246):  
some pendulum swinging in attention either two,  
but always back to combining.



# Understanding sustainable development

1<sup>st</sup> major misconception: what is the 3<sup>rd</sup> P?

SD = Planet People Profit ?

Look in key readings again: *Supra-national authorities*

UN SDGs Declaration of September 2015



## 17 UN SDGs as PPP

Means (what where?) versus Ends (no – impacts)





# Understanding sustainable development

1<sup>st</sup> major misconception: what is the 3<sup>rd</sup> P?

SD = Planet People Profit ?

Look in key readings again: **Scientific discourses**

Red tread in abundance of academic contributions:

SD combines 2 major ambitions:

ecological precaution + fair and equitable societal development

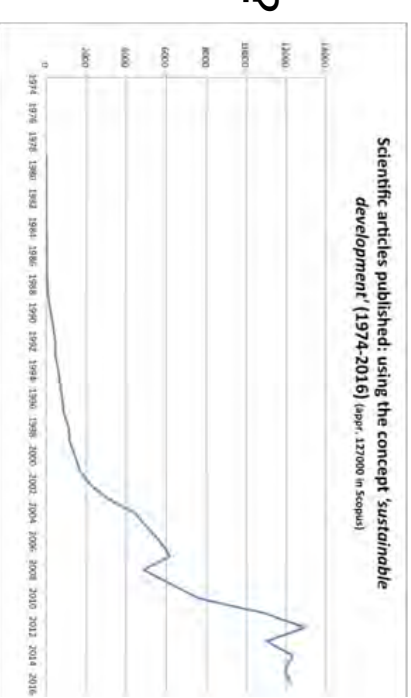
SD = response to

connected mutually reinforcing tendencies in human societies:

tendency towards **extractive practices**:

both **ecological** system and the **societal** system

an integral ecological and societal fairness agenda







# Understanding sustainable development

1<sup>st</sup> major misconception: what is the 3<sup>rd</sup> P?

So why: SD = Planet People **Profit?**

Where does it come from?

And the introduction of Triple Bottom Line (TBL)



Yes, makes sense: ..... for business level decisions

Yes: have positive impact on Planet & People, but still be profitable

→ business level  $\neq$  societal level

→ business efficiency = (Planet & People) / Profit



# Understanding sustainable development

2<sup>nd</sup> major misconception: What can be 2<sup>nd</sup> P?

More recently communicated in publications, consultancy to business advice, business documents:

SD = Planet **People?** Profit

We do well as company because . . . . .

. . . . . we make medicine = health = SD

. . . . . we make safety belts = saves lives = SD

"Through sport, we have the power to change lives."

"Our brands aim to make life a little easier, healthier and more affordable for everyone, to build a better future for our businesses and their communities."

"We create everyday essentials to make people's lives more liveable and inspiring."

"Our products and solutions contribute to conserving resources, ensuring nutrition and improving quality of life."

Reasoning is "*we make things good for people,*  
*so we are socially sustainable . . . . .* "



# Understanding sustainable development

2<sup>nd</sup> major misconception: What can be 2<sup>nd</sup> P?

SD = Planet **People?** Profit

*"we make things good for people, so we are socially sustainable"*  
Major consultancies measuring it for them ("social capital")

## ***Where is the fallacy?***

In principle: companies sell what people (or customers) want, need.

The problem is in the externalities (ecological & social).

Selling something wanted / needed  $\neq$  never SD

Only ***minimizing externalities***

(that what is not included in the transaction)

can be seen as a companies contribution to SD





# Understanding sustainable development

3<sup>rd</sup> major misconception: What makes sense as LCSA?

Combining 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> misconception, scholars come up with

$$\text{LCSA} = \text{eLCA} + \text{sLCA} + \text{LCC} \quad ?$$

Bringing SD = Planet + People + Profit to product or service assessment level

*Assessing efficiency and feasibility of improvement options: OK!*

BUT

- Does not include firm's profit, or costs as the SD element
- 'total sustainability improvement' (as planet, people, prosperity) per unit  
'total life cycle costs' per unit
- Many indicators incorrectly include "profits" to numerator



# Understanding sustainable development

So, three major mis-understandings:

- 3<sup>rd</sup> P is not Profit → but prosperity!
- 2<sup>nd</sup> P → can only be about externalities!
- LCSA should assess

Planet + People + Prosperity impacts

*(Not convinced about banning the 'profit' word?*

*Do search & find in UN SDGs Declaration of September 2015.*

*Tell me when you found it.)*

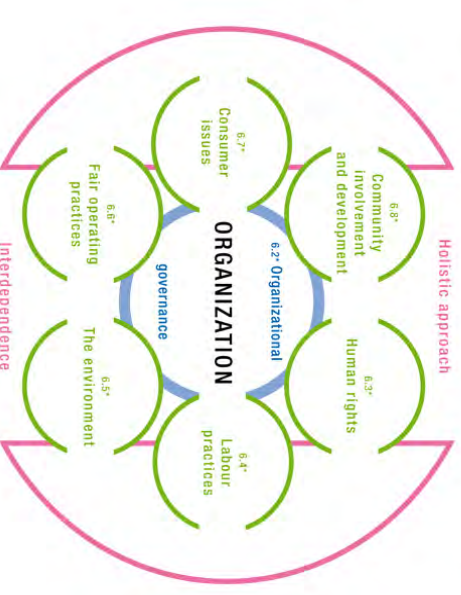


# 2015: 17 UN-SDG's = clear enough



ISO 26000 topics:

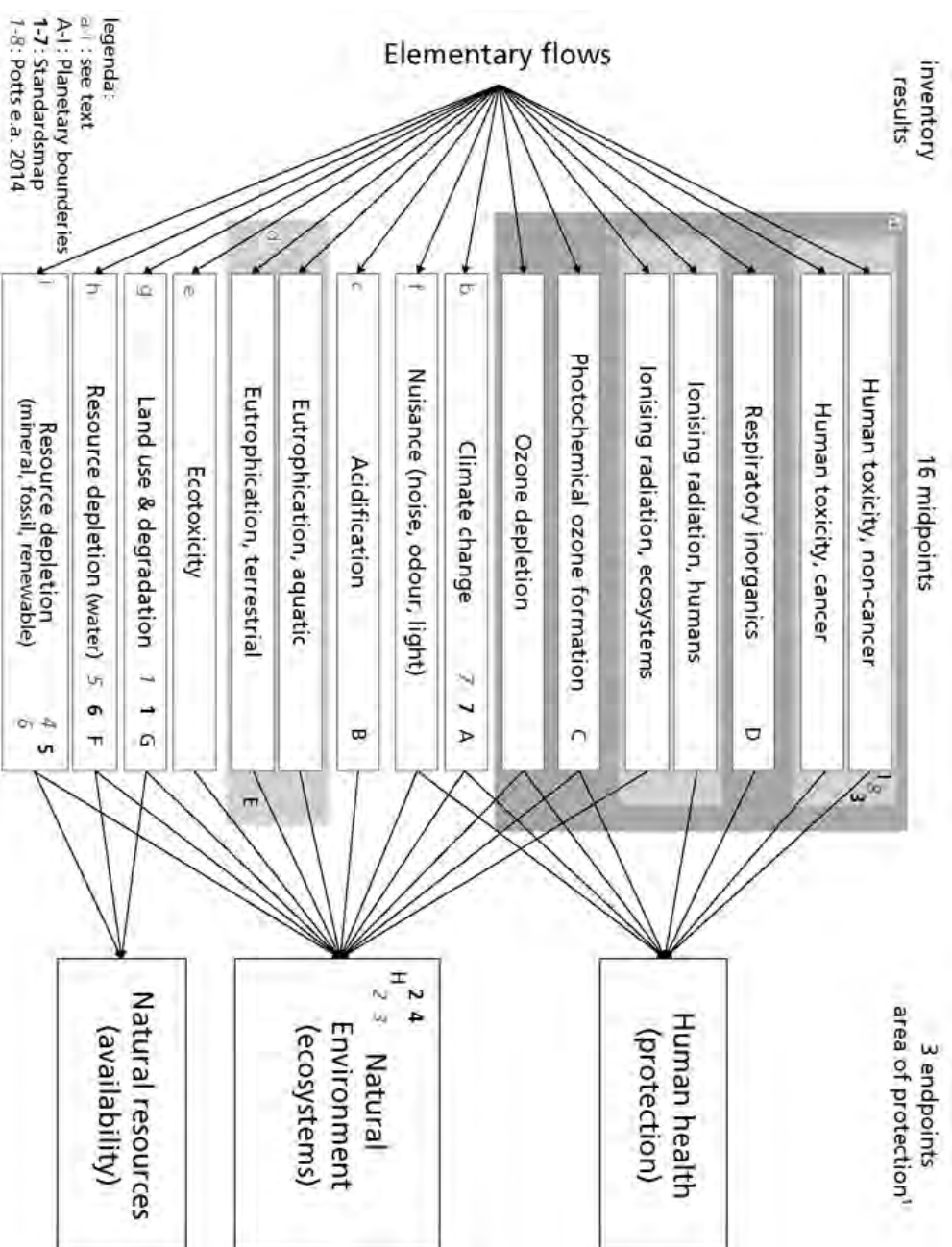
Social responsibility: **7** core subjects





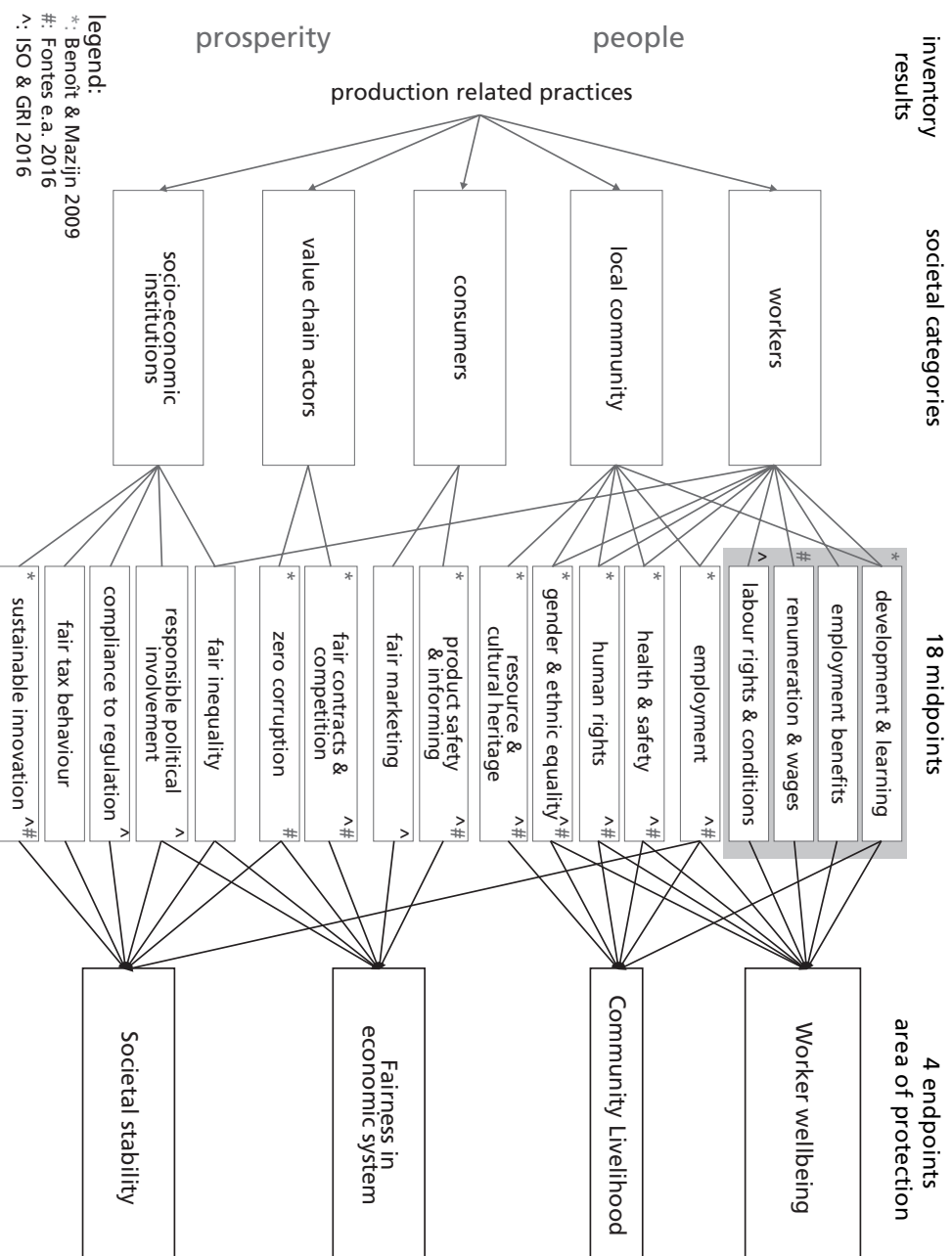


# We can show them more systematically: Planet



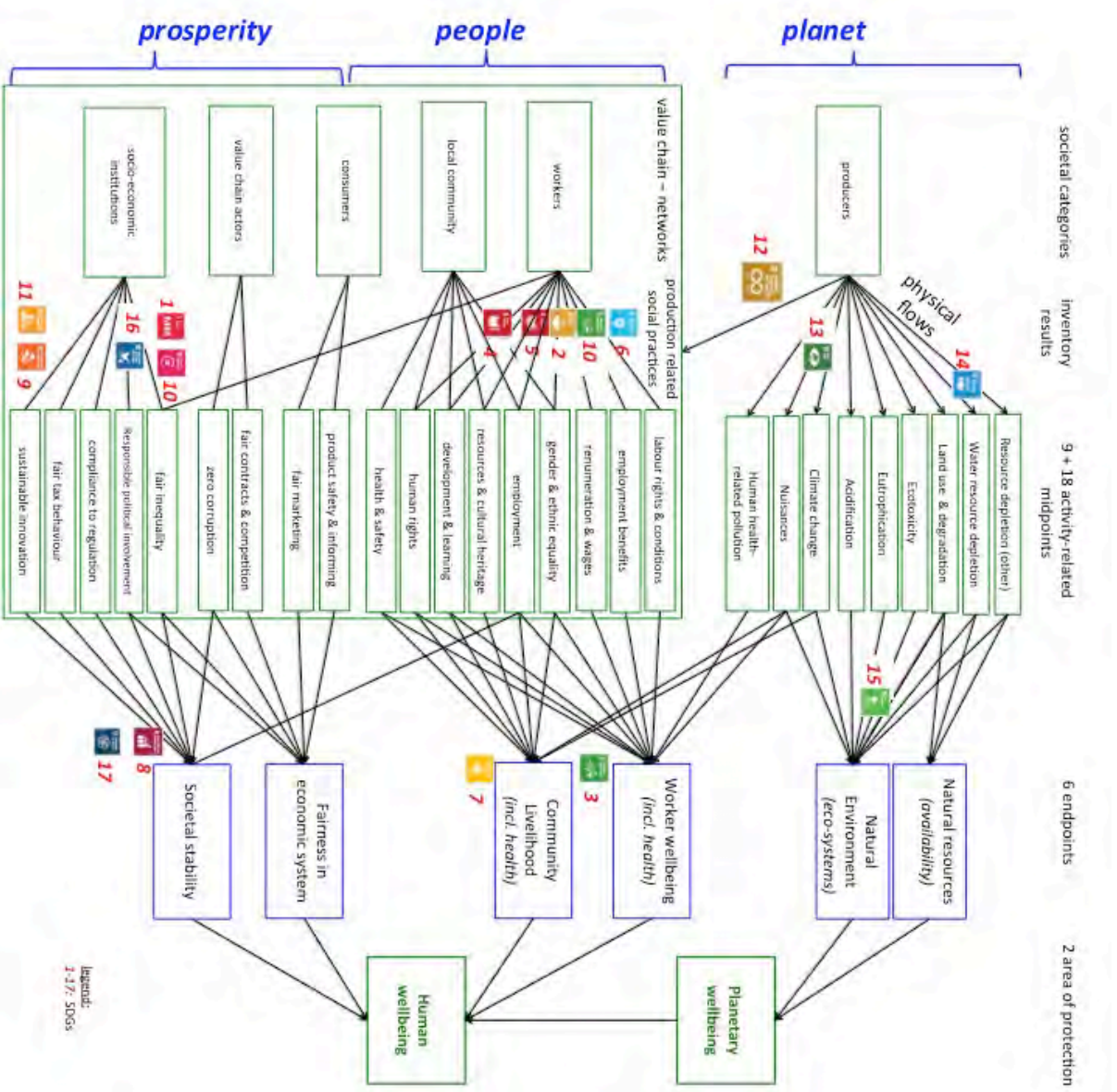


# We can show them more systematically: People & Prosperity





# We can show them more systematically: Planet, People & Prosperity







# Getting beyond

Global dynamics in discourses on concept of SD

- Scientific discourses
- Global political discourses

Poly-centric

but trends towards harmonisation

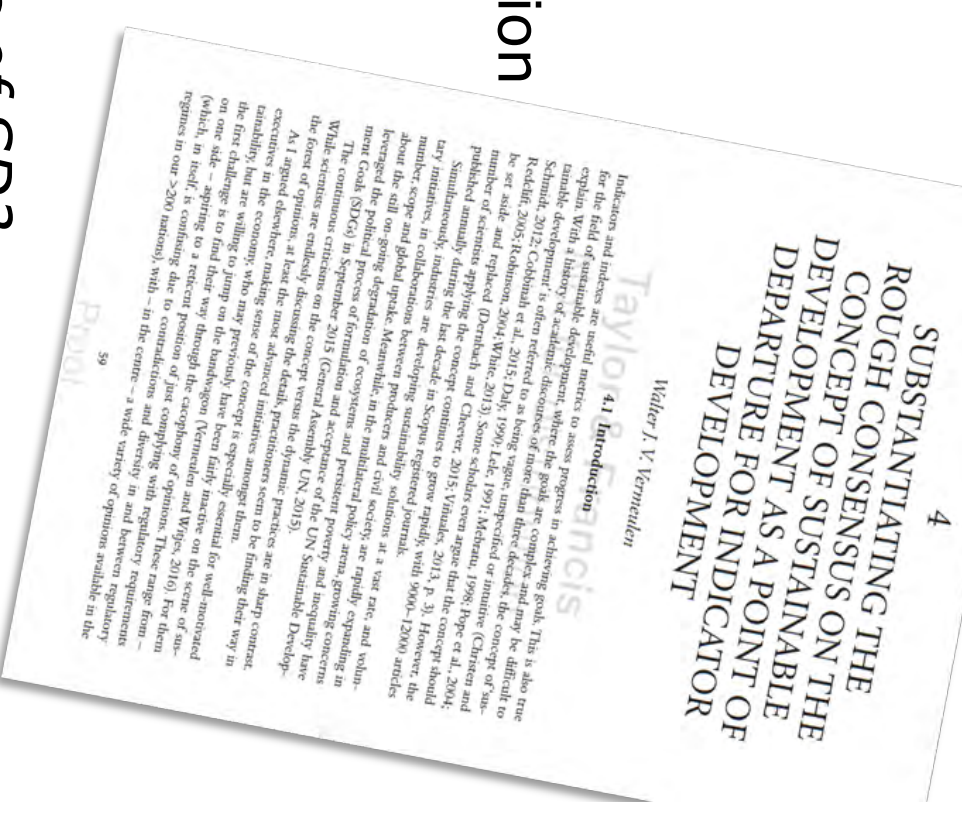
versus

Strong forces of bottom-up

framings

*Should we as ISDRS play a*

*guiding role here: do's & don'ts of SD?*







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# ISDRS as SD knowledge hub

Topic groups – Institutional members - Partners

Additional activities:

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- Discourses on 'transdisciplinarity'
- Discourses on 'sustainability indicators'
- Support development of review books:

*Simon Bell and Steve Morse: Sustainability Indicators*

Can we take a stronger role:  
guidance and separate chaff of corn

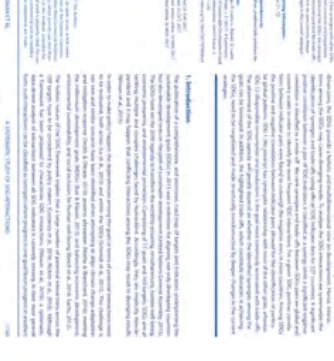
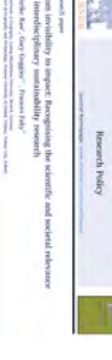
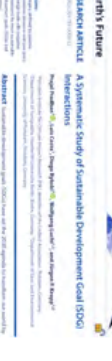
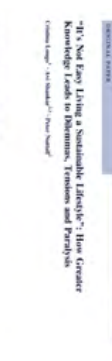
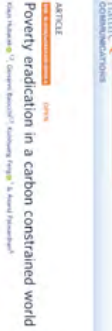
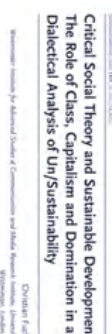
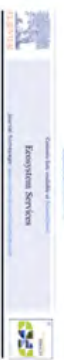
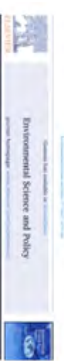
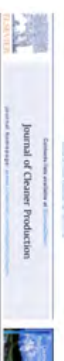
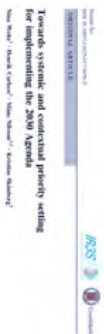




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# Various way to do so

Awards: showing the best outputs: top-10









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# Various way to do so

Welcoming new partners in our network







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# ISDRS partner organisations



International Society for Industrial Ecology





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Thanks!!



- Hadden, J. and Seybert, L. A. (2016) 'What's in a norm? Mapping the norm definition process in the debate on sustainable development', *Global Governance*, 22(2), pp. 249–268. doi: 10.1007/s13398-014-0173-7.2.
- Vermeulen, W. J. V. (2018) 'Chapter 4 - Substantiating the rough consensus on the concept of sustainable development as point of departure for indicator development', in Bell, S. and Morse, S. (eds) *Handbook of Sustainability Indicators and Indices*. Routledge, pp. 59–92.