

SDG LABS

Ideas and innovations for breakthroughs to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals

An initiative of Future Earth and Stockholm Resilience Centre

OPEN CALL

Deadline for applications 10 February 2017
Successful applicants announced 20 February
5-7 labs selected
Up to \$5k per lab
Apply [here](#)

Future Earth and the Stockholm Resilience Centre are launching a call for Sustainable Development Goal Labs (**SDG Labs**) in advance of the [Resilience 2017 conference](#) and International Conference on Sustainability Science, which will be held back to back in Stockholm 21-26 August. We are looking for brilliant ideas with potential to make major breakthroughs on the SDGs. The outcomes of the SDG Labs will be presented on 24 August during the joint “Ideas and Innovation” policy day for policymakers, business, researchers and media.



The **SDG Labs** are multi-stakeholder processes to catalyse transformation in institutions, systems and sectors of society, for example the global food system, international governance, inequality and poverty, or ecosystem services. The purpose of the SDG labs is to generate prototype solutions to complex problems. We want to encourage innovative ways to overcome lock-ins and plant seeds of change with potential for transformative impact. By “prototype solutions” we mean innovations that can fundamentally change the systems that created the problem in the first place. This may be social, ecological or technological innovations, or, more likely, a combination of the three.

We plan to provide up to **\$5k seed funding for 5-7 labs**, but if you can run a lab with less or no funding, or if you already have funding for a similar activity - great. We will run more labs.

The labs can take place anywhere in the world but must be held before 21 August 2017. The outcomes of the labs will be presented at a special science-policy session bridging the two conferences in Stockholm on 24 August 2017. Ultimately, our vision is for the labs to feed into the UN’s High Level Political Forum (HLPF) in 2018 which is framed as “Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies”.

The HLPF will specifically focus around the following themes:

- SDG 6 Clean water and sanitation
- SDG 7 Affordable and Clean Energy
- SDG 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities
- SDG 12 Responsible Consumption and Production
- SDG 15 Life on Land

SDG Labs aligned with these themes will be prioritized, but we are open to all ideas.

Given the nature of transformation, and idea generation, we have a flexible approach to SDG Lab design. As a rough guideline, think about a 1 or 2 day activity/workshop/hackathon designed to produce new thinking or prototypes. We would expect, though, that an SDG Lab would engage relevant expertise from, for example academia, policy, private sector, media, technology and innovation to address a specific issue related to the themes above.

To get you thinking, a lab on moving the world to a low-meat diet would be exciting, relevant and essential to achieving SDGs. Or, an initiative to develop new algorithms to measure SDG indicators from satellite data, or other “big data”. Or, how about exploring how the textile industry can meet the SDGs. Or, what are the new financial instruments or economic models that could support transformation.

APPLYING

Online application form [here](#).

When you submit your application include:

- The title of the SDG Lab
- What is the problem/s you are trying to solve and how does it link to the definitions of transformation?
- Describe the co-design process and the intended participants. What sectors or groups do they represent and why are they invited?
- Describe the facilitation of the co-design process. Which method will be used and who will facilitate?
- What are the potential innovations/prototypes and impact of these? Describe how the innovations/prototypes are meant to fundamentally change human-environmental interactions and contribute to large-scale changes.
- What would be signs of success?
- Location (can be anywhere in the world)
- Expected cost (if you require less than \$5k we can sponsor more labs)

We recognize applicants may require additional funding to support activities and encourage you to seek it. We welcome applicants who already have funding for a similar activity/process within our time horizon. And we welcome applicants who don't require funding at all.

Background

In August 2017, Stockholm will host two major conferences back to back: the Resilience 2017 conference (21-24), organised by the Stockholm Resilience Centre and International Conference on Sustainability Science (24-26 Aug), sponsored by Future Earth. These conferences will be linked together with a science-policy-practice day on 24 August. This day will be a dialogue for pathways for sustainable and resilient societies. The SDG Labs will be complemented by SDG sessions organised by Future Earth's Knowledge Action Networks.

The SDG Labs outcomes will form a central part of the policy day. The SDG Lab concept has emerged from the Transformation Labs (T-Labs) pioneered by the Stockholm Resilience Centre for the Transformation Conference series.

The T-Labs are an example of “change labs”. “Change labs” have primarily been used in North America and Western Europe, but the idea is spreading, for example, South Africa’s [RLabs](#).

For more details on the background and a “how to” guide to run these labs see the Waterloo Institute for Social Innovation and Resilience “[Social Innovation Lab Guide](#)”.

We are keen to experiment with different approaches. We expect that the ways in which the SDG-Labs are designed and facilitated will need to differ based on the specific outcomes envisaged by applicants. We hope, however, that the key considerations above, and a focus on the role of innovation in contribution to transformations to sustainability, will be central to work in all hubs.

Apply [here](#).

Any questions, email owen.gaffney@src.se

Additional material and descriptions of the T-Labs included here are based on text from Per Olsson, Francis Wesley and team at SRC.

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