

## NESS Workshop: **Governing Low Carbon Sustainable Urban Transformation**

### **Workshop chairs:**

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Transforming cities to meet climate mitigation and adaptation goals in a sustainable manner hinges upon the practices, decisions, routines and the systematic nature of solutions encompassing governing action. Cities concentrate more than half of the world's population simultaneously constituting the core-contributing site to human related climate and sustainability disruption and the core-opportunity site for production and consumption systems transformation toward sustainability. Governing for low carbon sustainable transformation is posing identified challenges to existing governance practices such as silo thinking (knowledge), level of policy decision-making (city vs state); deficit in democratic practices (inclusion), and solution implementation possibilities (acceptability).

The overarching question that informs this workshop is: How these sets of scholarly identified challenges for urban transformation toward low carbon sustainability are being addressed in concrete cases? What innovative practices in urban governance are facilitating advances toward goals for a transformation? Is it possible to attain transformative results while keeping same governing practices?

Existing overarching normative goals such as Agenda 2030 and climate temperature targets, have stimulated a number of cities to adopt commitments to facilitate action towards sustainability transformation, e.g., towards the goal of carbon emission reduction and just transitions. The fact that decisions in urban governance are made on multiple levels and for different sectors that often have competing goals and objectives, present a serious challenge. In this context, urban governance needs to adequately reflect and address the complexity of multiple sectors and levels of decision making as well as be highly coordinated and integrated if we are to take steps towards transformation for sustainability.

This workshop welcomes papers that present ideas, projects in progress and/or finished studies related to governing and planning for transformation towards environmentally sustainable cities/urban areas, particularly in the Nordic countries. We welcome studies of both sector-specific and cross-sector issues, for example within transport planning, housing, (green/blue and other) infrastructure development etc. Comparative studies across sectors and countries are especially welcome.

The following more specific questions and themes guide this workshop:

- How goals defining urban transformation towards sustainability are set and implemented?
- How and to what effect different decision-making levels converge in sustainable transformative policy and in practice? (complexities of interaction local-regional-national)
- What is “transformative” about practices and policy efforts? How do cities know there is a transformation happening? (beyond having a vision or commitment proclamations towards changes in normative action and actual decision making).

- How are motivating governments in the Nordic countries carrying efforts for transformation, what differentiates current practices from transformative sustainable one? Is it goals, targets, objectives, urgency or other processes and factors that contribute to change?
- What are successful/unsuccessful examples of urban transformation – sector and cross-sector studies, e.g., transformation towards sustainable transport systems, housing or transport/housing; integrated interventions.
- What is the role of knowledge production and use for systemic and integrated urban governance towards transformation?

The workshop invites scholars from multi-disciplinary backgrounds employing different theoretical lenses.

As an outcome of this workshop there might be an opportunity to contribute to a special issue in an international academic journal, e.g., *Frontiers in Sustainable Cities*.

The NESS workshops follow a standing session format (similar to ECPR), which allows for substantive discussions on research in progress. The conference invites scholars from multiple disciplinary backgrounds in environmental social science. The overall **objective** of the **workshop** is to facilitate and encourage participation, equality and collaboration between younger and more established scholars. Each paper is expected to relate to the theme of the workshop, and the participant submits and presents a paper (or work in progress) for the discussion. Workshop participants will be asked to comment on at least one other paper in the respective workshop and participate in the general discussion of the other papers presented. Participants should only choose and attend one workshop for the duration of the conference. The ambition with this format is that the workshops allow for in-depth and coherent discussions of the respective themes and provide opportunity for potential joint publications or other continuing collaborations between the participants.