

Institutional Challenges for Transdisciplinary Researchers

Dr. Julia Wittmayer

11-04-2024 | Rotterdam

Transition to Transdisciplinary Science: Solutions for Complex Societal Issues

Steter Tropfen höhlt den Stein



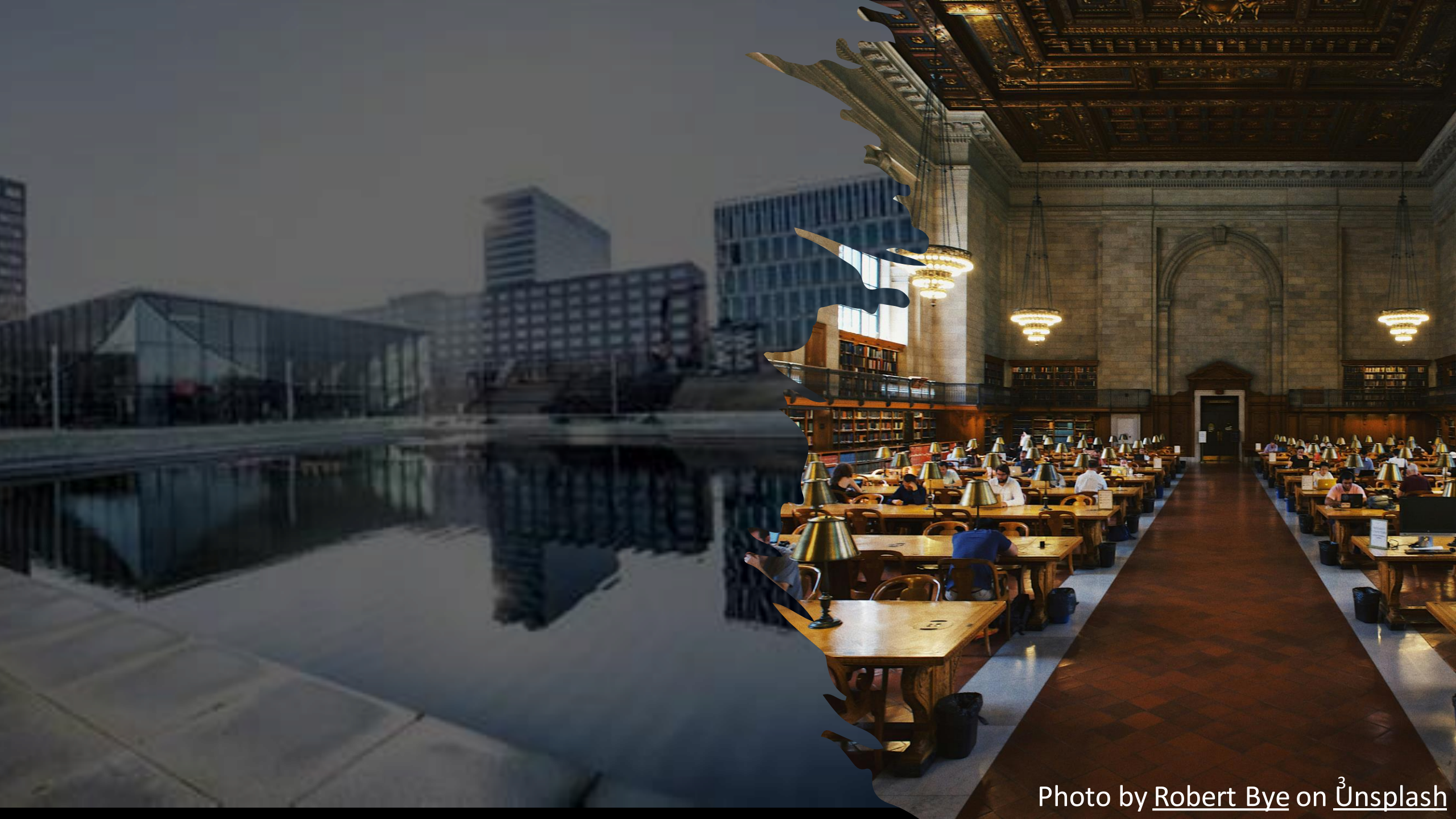
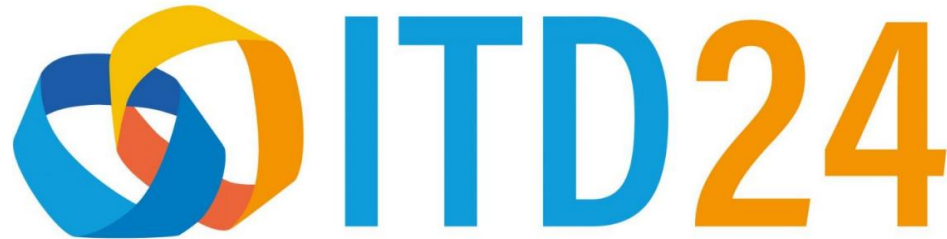


Photo by [Robert Bye](#) on [Unsplash](#)

There are many calls for transdisciplinarity



International Transdisciplinarity Conference



CREATING
POSITIVE
SOCIAL
IMPACT
THE ERASMIAN WAY
Strategy 2024

Erasmus University Rotterdam
Making Minds Matter



Rathenau Instituut

Thema's - Rapporten -

NIEUWS WERKING VAN HET WETENSCHAPSSYSTEEM 11 SEPTEMBER 2017
Evaluatie van transdisciplinaire samenwerking

.... as many as there are hurdles

- Epistemological, methodological,
- But also institutional:
 - Focus on efficiency
 - Narrow (quantifiable) performance metrics
 - Rigid career paths
 - Lack of commitment from key decision makers
 - Strong division between academic and professional staff
 - International competition
 - Disciplinary boundaries, standards and norms
 - Focus on scientific excellence;

Policy brief

**Engaged scholarship at Erasmus University: obstacles
& lessons for change**

Design Impact Transition (DIT) platform

e.g. Kump et al. 2023, Gardner et al., 2021; Vogt & Weber, 2020; Adler et al., 2009; de Jong et al., 2016; Hoffmann et al.; 2017; Bartels et al. 2020, Sauermann et al. 2020, Loorbach & Wittmayer 2023

... and conflicts

- **Role & identity conflicts:**
organizational and personal
- **Goal conflicts:**
universities,
researchers, academic
system

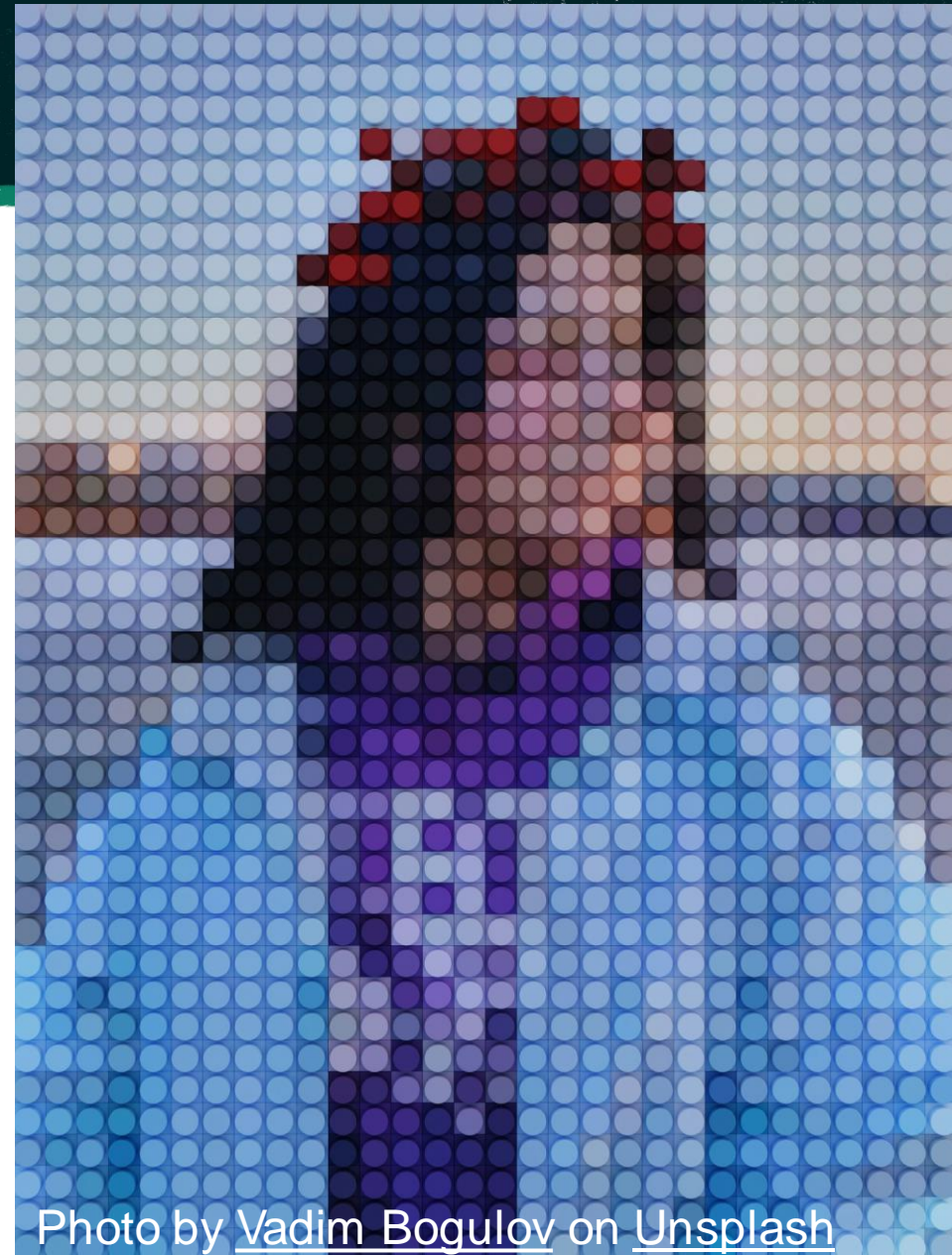
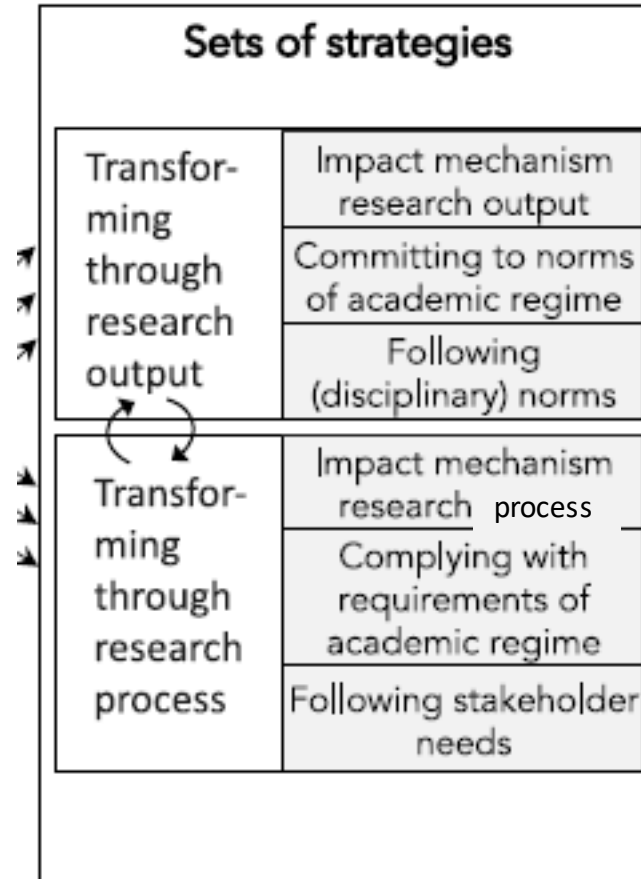


Photo by [Vadim Bogulov](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Erasmus

It is not that we are not dealing with those....

Pursuit of academic excellence with an outcome that serves a societal purpose

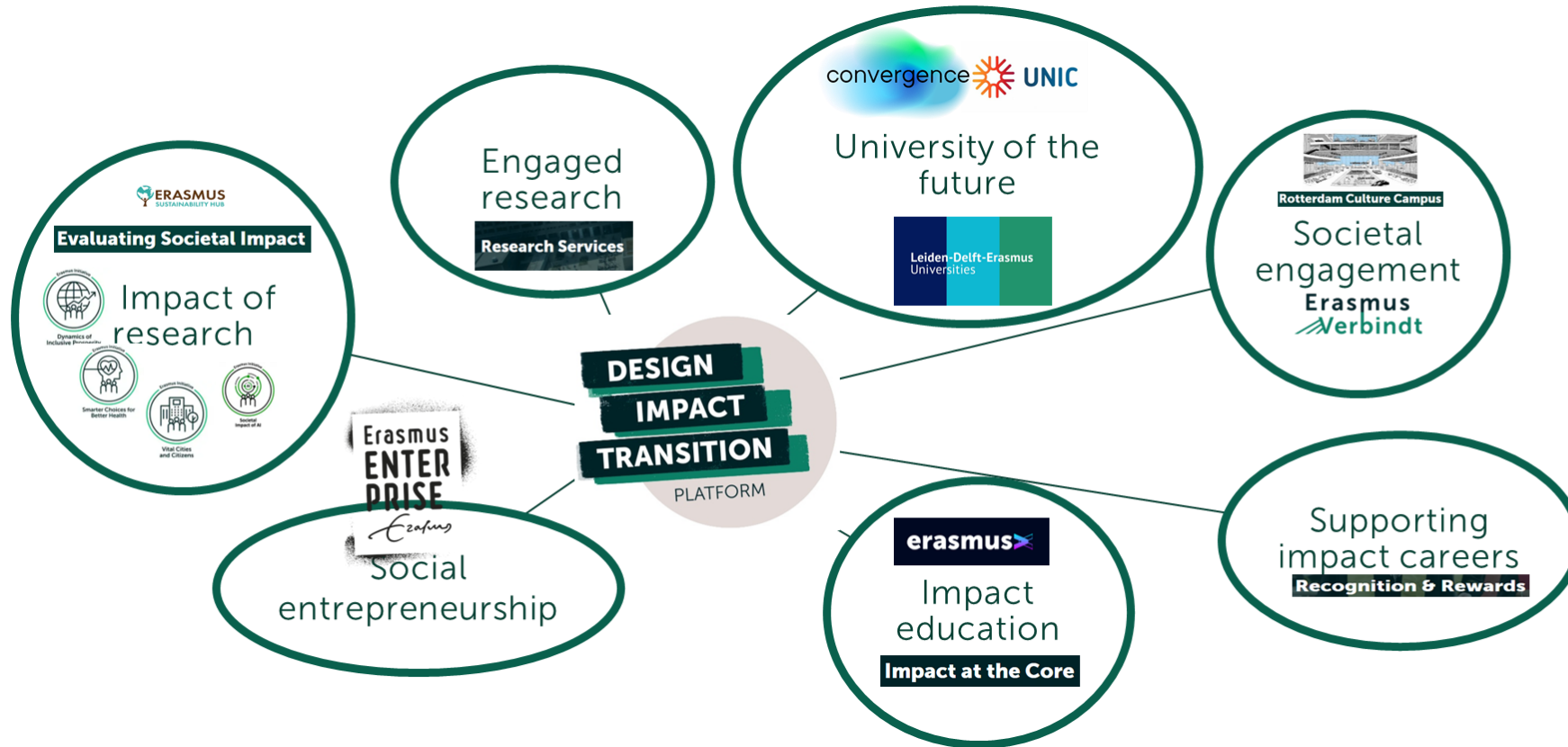


Engagement in societal challenges through scientific knowledge and research methods

Entry points for institutional change for transdisciplinarity

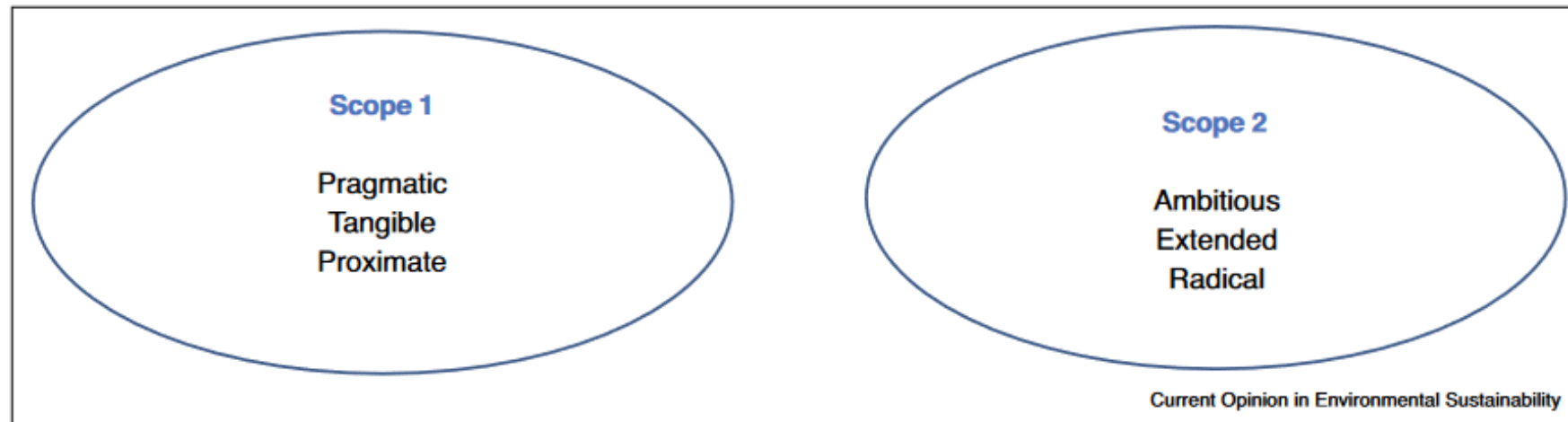
- Organizational values/goals
- Organizational Structure
- Reward Structures
- Leadership
- Training
- Funding
- Inter-organizational Structures

We have started already...



... but we are not there yet!

Figure 1



Two scopes of ambition for co-production — Scope 1 relates to the production and dissemination of knowledge and services. Scope 2 relates to the transformation of norms and institutional structures within science and society. Literature presents both synergies and tensions between these two outcomes.

www.sciencedirect.com

Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability 2020, 42:22–29

Jagannathan et al. 2020

Thank you for your attention



DIT Day 2024: How To Transform A University

A journey in transformative initiatives

Date

Tuesday 4 Jun 2024, 09:30 - 17:30



EUR Sustainability Summit 2024

What can universities do to enable a just and sustainable society?

Date

Thursday 16 May 2024, 09:00 - Friday 17 May 2024, 17:00

Journal of Cleaner Production 412 (2023) 137374

Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Journal of Cleaner Production

ELSEVIER

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/jclepro

Navigating force conflicts: A case study on strategies of transformative research in the current academic system

Barbara Kump^{a,*}, Julia Wittmayer^{b,c}, Kristina Bogner^d, Mayte Beekman^d

^a High-tech Business & Entrepreneurship, University of Twente, Netherlands
^b DRIFT, ESSB, Erasmus University Rotterdam, Netherlands
^c Design Impact Transition Platform, Erasmus University Rotterdam, Netherlands
^d Copernicus Institute of Sustainable Development, Utrecht University, Netherlands



Get in touch:

wittmayer@drift.eur.nl

wittmayer@essb.eur.nl

Consequences of transdisciplinarity

There are different versions of transdisciplinarity.

- From a pre-defined to an emergent research design
- From about society to with society
- From (multi)disciplinarity to inter- and transdisciplinarity
- From description to exploration
- From the primacy of knowledge generation to the importance of action
- From assumed neutrality to dynamic researcher positionalities
- From objectivity to reflexivity