

Contents

Contents

- 3 Contents
- 5 About us
 - 6 Welcome
 - 8 Strategy Board

10 Research and Impact

- 11 Overview of our research and impact work
- 12 GSoS priority research theme 1: Creating Sustainable Finance and Business
- 14 GSoS priority research theme 2: Generating Sustainable Growth
- 16 GSoS priority research theme 3: Mobilising Political, Legal and Governance Systems
- 18 GSoS priority research theme 4: Protecting and Enhancing Nature and Biodiversity
- 20 GSoS priority research theme 5: Building Sustainable Societies
- 22 The Global Impact Group
- 24 Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment
- 25 TPI Global Climate Transition Centre
- 26 Centre for Economic Transition Expertise
- 27 LSE Generate x GSoS
- 28 Global Climate and Nature Barometer with the Gallup World Poll

30 Student Engagement, Scholarships and Education

32 Overview of our student engagement, scholarships and education work

34 Convening

36 Overview of our convening: visitors, publishing, events and communications work



About us

Launched in January 2025, the Global School of Sustainability (GSoS) is the interdisciplinary centre for sustainability expertise and impact at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE). This report covers our "startup" phase from January to August 2025, and illustrates some of our key achievements in this relatively brief period.

At GSoS, we advance pioneering sustainability research and focus in particular on global policy engagement. Our activity is centred around partnerships across the LSE community and beyond.

Our vision is to shape a sustainable world that is resilient, hopeful, prosperous and inclusive. Our action is focused where the obstacles to a sustainable future are deep-rooted, expansive and complex. Drawing on LSE's world leading interdisciplinary excellence across the social sciences, our global networks collaborate to address the most pressing economic, political, social and behavioural challenges to sustainability.

We are a place for bold ideas, rigorous research and meaningful collaboration.

Our values:

- Ambition There are viable responses to the critical issues in fostering and delivering the transition to global sustainability, which we will advance through thought leadership, policy-shaping and partnerships.
- Impact Our outputs are planned and delivered to drive results for transformational change in communities across the world.
- **Collaboration** We are committed to open, collaborative action through our activities, networks, outputs and work environments.
- Interdisciplinarity Understanding and tackling complex, structural and systemic issues in sustainability requires multidisciplinary expertise, analysis and critical thinking. Our work is grounded in the longstanding tradition of excellence in the social sciences and interdisciplinarity at LSE.
- Rigour Underpinned by LSE's commitment to world-leading research and education, our methods, approaches and outputs are responsible, robust and independent.

Welcome

Our Co-founders, Professor Lord Nicholas Stern and LSE alumnus Lei Zhang, provide reflections on their motivations for setting up GSoS, supported by words from our outgoing Acting Dean, Professor Elizabeth Robinson, and visions for the future from our incoming Inaugural Dean, Dr Jonathan Pershing.



Professor Lord Nicholas Stern Chair and Co-founder

The world is on an unsustainable path of growth and development. There is an intense urgency to act to avoid the huge risks we face from the crises of climate change, biodiversity loss and environmental destruction. There are great opportunities in a new and different path, very different from the dirty destructive models of the past. The potential rewards are immense but the challenges of creating that new way are difficult and deep.

The actions now necessary require fundamental structural systemic and technological change; it will be a profound transformation, in many ways a new industrial revolution. The obstacles lie in large measure in the economics, the politics, and society. The challenges are inescapably international. Thus, LSE is surely the right place for the crucial academic work, policy analysis, and vital interactions to take place.

The vision and generous support from Lei Zhang, our Co-founder, have enabled us to establish the Global School of Sustainability at LSE as a place for bold ideas, rigorous research, constructive engagement, collaborations across disciplines and nations, and real impact.



Lei Zhang Co-founder

At the Global School of Sustainability, we embrace the philosophy that "sustainability is the new prosperity." This belief drives our mission to foster economic and social innovation that benefits all of humanity.

Through rigorous research and meaningful collaboration, we aim to develop solutions that not only address environmental concerns but also promote inclusive growth and resilience.

The establishment of GSoS at LSE serves as a beacon for bold ideas and transformative action. Together, we can navigate the complexities of systemic change and pave the way for a sustainable and prosperous future for all.



Professor Elizabeth Robinson Acting Dean

LSE is unique in its dedication to the social sciences and has a reputation for successfully convening scholars and policy makers to focus on the world's most complex challenges. We have a track record of innovation – of changing the way organisations, institutions, countries and global communities function – and of incubating the ideas and entrepreneurialism of our brilliant faculty and students. In all we do, we draw on the breadth of experience of our staff, alumni and partners to ensure our thinking is grounded in real-world knowledge and activity.

Many colleagues across LSE have for a long time been working on topics that can be considered part of the broad "sustainability" sphere, not least in the Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment (GRI), which for over fifteen years has been at the forefront of research and policy work focused on tackling climate change through a just transition to a resilient and prosperous netzero world.

On 2 January we officially launched the new Global School of Sustainability at LSE. That we have achieved so much in less than a year reflects tremendous effort and commitment from people across LSE, including staff in our Philanthropy and Global Engagement division and the dedicated professional services colleagues now working in GSoS to help deliver our mission. I am truly honoured to have played a part in setting up the foundations of GSoS. As I return to my role as Director of GRI, I look forward to working closely with Dr Jonathan Pershing as he takes on the role of GSoS Inaugural Dean.



Dr Jonathan Pershing Inaugural Dean

I am enormously excited at the prospect of joining the new Global School of Sustainability and becoming part of LSE's illustrious and influential community as our work continues to address the critical sustainability agenda.

The progress that GSoS has already made in this arena reflect the ambition, commitment and teamwork of both our Co-founders, Nicholas Stern and Lei Zhang, as well as of Elizabeth Robinson, who as Acting Dean has helped steer the programme from its inception along with a host of others at LSE.

GSoS's collaborative approach will continue to be essential if we are to successfully tackle the most pressing challenges to sustainability. After all, our challenges are not rooted in a single discipline but emerge at the intersection of deep-rooted local and global systems of economics, politics and society. Solutions will come from pioneering and innovative research, cutting-edge education programmes and active efforts to exchange knowledge and ideas for good practice between academia, policymakers, the private sector and civil society.

Through that collaboration, coupled with extraordinary academic rigour and a deep understanding of the drivers and solutions for sustainable change, GSoS will further cement its place as a world-class hub for sustainability research, education, understanding, and policy impact, uniquely harnessing the social sciences to shape the future of people and the planet.

Strategy Board

Our strategy board consists of both external and LSE members. It is a body of global leaders committed to GSoS and a sustainable future for all.



Professor Lord Nicholas Stern is IG Patel Professor of Economics and Government and Chair of both the Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment and the Global School of Sustainability at LSE.



Lei Zhang is Founder and CEO of Envision, one of the world's leading renewable energy companies, and Co-chair of the GSoS Strategy Board.



Professor Susana Mourato, an environmental economist, is LSE's Vice President and Pro Vice Chancellor (Research).



Dr Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala is the Director General of the World Trade Organization, having served in a number of other public roles, including two terms as Finance Minister of Nigeria.



Professor Elizabeth Robinson has served as the Acting Dean of the Global School of Sustainability and will return to her role as Director of the Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment at LSE in September 2026. Dr Jonathan Pershing, the GSoS Inaugural Dean, will take up his role in January 2026, at which point he will join the Strategy Board.



Professor Amartya Sen is an economist and philosopher who was awarded the Nobel Memorial Prize for Economic Sciences for his contributions to welfare economics.



Lord Adair Turner has served in a number of prominent public roles in the UK, including as Chairman of the Financial Services Authority and of the Committee on Climate Change.

Research and Impact

Sustainability is not just a scientific or technical issue – it is a profound social challenge.

Through the Global School of Sustainability, we are harnessing the full strength of LSE's social science leadership to understand and reshape the systems of finance, economy, politics and society that stand in the way of change. From tackling climate change to protecting nature and biodiversity our goal is clear: to

biodiversity, our goal is clear: to turn world-class research into global impact.

Professor Susana Mourato, LSE Vice President and Pro-Vice Chancellor (Research)

Overview of our research and impact work

As we scale up our ambitions, the Global School of Sustainability is making significant investments in a wide range of research and impact activities.

As will be seen in the pages that follow, much of our work is organised around five central themes that relate to the key sustainability challenges we face - such as how to generate sustainable economic growth and how to protect and enhance nature and biodiversity. Under each theme, a substantial programme of work has been developed, always underpinned by rigorous academic research with a clear potential to generate actionable results.

We have also launched a Global Sustainability Research Fund that seeks to fund ambitious, creative and impactful research activities across LSE drawing on our world-leading expertise in the social sciences and bringing disciplines together in new ways.

Under the leadership of Nicholas Stern and GSoS Professor in Practice, Sir Andrew Steer, we have meanwhile established a Global Impact Group that is specifically designed to take new ideas from within GSoS and LSE and introduce them into the highest levels of global policy making.

As we take this work forward, we are collaborating closely with three impactful research and policy centres at LSE that are independently funded but are now integral to the wider GSoS ecosystem: the Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment, the TPI Global Climate Transition Centre (TPI Centre) and the Centre for Economic Transition Expertise (CETEx).

Finally, we will be supporting a range of **special activities** of a broader kind. The example given in this section is the Global Climate and Nature Barometer undertaken in partnership with the Gallup World Poll.

GSoS priority research theme 1:

Creating Sustainable Finance and Business

Overview by Professor in Practice Tom Gosling, Director of the GSoS Initiative in Sustainable Finance

Too much of the sustainable finance debate is shaped by either wishful thinking about win-wins or cynical denial of the need for change. In a world of competing pressures on policymakers and business leaders, we need rigorous, grounded analysis of the realistic role that finance and business can play in addressing sustainability challenges. The GSoS theme of Creating Sustainable Finance and Business will fulfil this need.

Finance determines the direction of economic activity. If we want to transition to a sustainable future, we need to understand the incentives that drive capital flows towards or away from sustainable outcomes. This means identifying where market forces can help, where they fall short, and what policy interventions are needed to close the gap.



Theme lead:
Professor Amil Dasgupta,
Department of Finance,
and Director, Financial
Markets Group.

Objectives

We have two core goals for the theme, which will be delivered through the GSoS Initiative in Sustainable Finance. First, to establish sustainable finance and business as a vibrant, enduring research area across LSE's academic departments. Second, to use LSE's convening power and research excellence to generate practical, evidence-based insights that help solve real-world sustainability problems.

Ultimately, we want to be a trusted bridge between academia, finance, and business – bringing clarity to complex issues and helping decision-makers navigate the sustainability transition.

There is a clear appetite among market participants to engage seriously with the role of finance and business in sustainability. Despite the recent ESG backlash, the underlying challenges, such as climate change and biodiversity loss, haven't gone away. What's changed is the recognition that we need to move beyond simplistic narratives and towards more grounded, durable approaches.

Achievements

A standout moment in our work has been the overwhelming response to our new Blended Finance Lab. We've also launched impactful research collaborations, such as our project with the Investor and Issuer Forum on pass-through voting. These initiatives show the value of our approach: rigorous, relevant, and rooted in real-world challenges.

GSoS has created a step-change in how sustainability research is supported and connected across LSE. It has enabled us to collaborate across academic departments, including Finance, Law, and Geography and Environment, and to build partnerships with research centres such as the Financial Markets Group, the Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment, TPI Centre and CETEx.

The dedicated resources and institutional backing provided by GSoS have opened up new research opportunities and amplified our impact. It's allowed us to move faster, think bigger, and build something that wouldn't have been possible through organic growth alone.

Theme 1 highlight: The Blended Finance Lab

Under our Creating Sustainable Finance and Business theme, the Blended Finance **Lab** is a practitioner-driven initiative focused on developing practical solutions to scale blended finance. It brings together investors, policymakers, development banks and academics to strengthen the blended finance marketplace, enhance practices and education, and generate more investable opportunities. It is a hands-on platform dedicated to addressing the real-world barriers that prevent blended finance from reaching its full potential.

Although blended finance is widely recognised as a critical tool for achieving sustainable development and climate goals, the current ecosystem remains small, fragmented and inefficient. The Lab was established to change this. Rather than publishing more reports or repeating known diagnostics, it brings together key actors to co-design solutions, build trust, and accelerate learning across sectors. Its work is focused on four core activities:

- + Create a forum for practitioners to work in a practical way on analysing and finding solutions to the blockages;
- + Act as a conduit between other blended finance initiatives;
- + Raise the profile of blended finance within the City of London;
- + Support research and teaching in blended finance.

Global Sustainability Research Fund Recipients

The selected projects under the theme of Creating Sustainable Finance and Business are:

Principal investigator	Project title
Swati Dhingra, Associate Professor, Centre for Economic Performance	Weathering the Waste: Climate Adaptation and Food Loss Among Urban Street Vendors
Xi Li, Associate Professor, Department of Accounting	Evaluating ESG commitments in the asset management industry
Amil Dasgupta, Professor of Finance, Director of the Financial Markets Group	Delegated Sustainable Investing

GSoS priority research theme 2:

Generating Sustainable Growth

Overview by Professor Robin Burgess and Dr Eugenie Dugoua

Pathbreaking economics research is vital to rebalance human activity and the natural environment in the face of climate change. As the discipline pivots toward sustainable growth, the central question becomes: how can we drive economic progress without deepening environmental harm? The urgency and complexity of this challenge demand fresh ideas and robust evidence to shape policy at scale. At LSE, the Generating Sustainable Growth theme will be the driving force behind this transformation – accelerating research, funding and action toward a more resilient future.





Theme co-leads: Professor Robin Burgess, LSE Department of Economics, and Director of the International Growth Centre (IGC); Dr Eugenie Dugoua, LSE Department of Geography and Environment.

Objectives

Under the Generating Sustainable Growth theme, we're focused on driving action at scale. Through the unique co-generation model adopted in partnership with the International Growth Centre (under IGC Executive Director Jonathan Leape), we will collaborate directly with governments to inform critical decisions with rigorous evidence and technical support. Our goal is to see research translate into real policy change that balances economic growth with environmental sustainability. At the same time, we're helping lead a movement to bring environmental economics into the mainstream — mobilising top researchers and emerging talent to unlock innovation and accelerate impact.

Achievements

The Generating Sustainable Growth theme has launched with strong momentum, building on solid foundations to accelerate impactful work. A key highlight is the Green Innovation and Growth Initiative, developed with LSE's Suntory and Toyota International Centres for Economics and Related Disciplines (STICERD) and involving deep engagement in the COP30 process. This includes contributing to a report for the COP30 President on reforming international carbon markets, supported by meetings at major global events.

Another key focus is evaluating how poverty reduction programmes, like the international development organisation BRAC's graduation initiative, can protect vulnerable households from climate shocks. Early findings show promising resilience benefits, and the team is now working with stakeholders to integrate these insights into COP30 discussions and national rollouts.

The Climate and Growth Initiative at IGC has expanded research and policy engagement in climate-critical countries such as Indonesia. Collaborations with STICERD and the University of Indonesia have led to high-level dialogues and a Memorandum of Understanding, paving the way for a full-country programme focused on sustainable growth.

Finally, the theme is nurturing future talent through initiatives like the "Environment Camp" for PhD students, which saw notably strong participation and engagement this year. This commitment to developing expertise in environmental economics promises long-term impact in both research and policy.

Through this theme, we're driving large-scale sustainability impact by connecting wide-ranging expertise across LSE to apply our collective efforts to real-world challenges. This cross-disciplinary approach is sparking innovative solutions and transforming the research environment from within.

Theme 2 highlights: The Green Innovation and Growth Initiative and the **Climate and Growth Initiative**

Under our Generating Sustainable Growth theme, a Green Innovation and Growth Initiative (GIGI) is being established in partnership with STICERD to generate frontier research on clean energy; jobs and climate resilience; investment and climate change; and green innovation. GIGI will also establish key data labs to support research generation more broadly in this area. Bringing together faculty, students and external partners GIGI will transform research and global policy impact of work on innovation and sustainable growth.

Also, a Climate and Growth Initiative (CGI) is being established by the International Growth Centre (IGC) to promote sustainable growth in developing countries. CGI's agenda is built jointly with policy partners in IGC's embedded in-country teams across Africa, South Asia and the Middle East. CGI will engage at the heart of governments to jointly generate innovative ideas and evidence on green industrial policy; climate change and trade; energy markets; redesigning social protection; and climate finance.

Global Sustainability Research Fund Recipients

The selected projects under the theme of Generating Sustainable Growth are:

Principal investigator	Project title
Gharad Bryan, Associate Professor, STICERD	Climate Security and Informal Settlements: Evidence from Sierra Leone
Francisco Ferreira, Amartya Sen Professor of Inequality Studies; Clare Balboni, Assistant Professor of Economics, International Inequalities Institute	The Economics of Environmental Inequality
Shefali Khanna, LSE Fellow in Energy Economics and Policy, Department of Geography and Environment	Plug Adoption and Use for Smarter Energy (PAUSE) Demand

GSoS priority research theme 3:

Mobilising Political, Legal and Governance Systems

Overview by Dr Joana Setzer and Professor Veerle Heyvaert

In the face of escalating climate change and biodiversity loss, the role of law and governance in sustainability has never been more critical. While scientific innovation and technological breakthroughs often spring to mind in discussions around sustainability, it is the legal and political frameworks that determine whether these advances can be embedded into society and scaled for real-world impact.

Legal systems provide the structure to create stability, enforce commitments, and support long-term transitions. Effective regulation creates incentives and disincentives for sustainable behaviour, enforces environmental targets, and provides the predictability businesses need to invest in low-carbon technologies and retraining. In politically volatile contexts, legal systems offer a vital safeguard – allowing courts, NGOs, and individuals to uphold long-term commitments even amid policy rollbacks.





Theme co-leads: Dr Joana Setzer, Associate Professorial Research Fellow; Professor Veerle Heyvaert, Associate Dean of LSE Law School.

Objectives

Recognising the global challenges, GSoS has launched the pioneering theme focused on mobilising political, legal, and governance systems.

Anchored by two flagship initiatives – the Sustainability Regulation Observatory (SRO) and the Sustainability Law Clinic – the theme aims to embed stability and long-term thinking into governance utilising cutting-edge research and expertise from across the social sciences, including political science, law and social geography.

The SRO will foster joined-up thinking among policymakers, governments, and private sector actors, integrating regulatory changes into broader frameworks like climate impact disclosure. It will provide cohesive understandings of the drivers and challenges in legal and regulatory transitions to support more effective policymaking.

Meanwhile, the Sustainability Law Clinic will provide expert legal support in climate litigation, offering direct advice, amicus curiae briefs, and guidance to small and medium enterprises navigating sustainability compliance. Importantly, it will engage students from across LSE, ensuring multidisciplinary perspectives in tackling real-world cases.

Achievements

Since January 2025, the theme has made significant strides. It has built a cross-departmental governance structure, recruited strategic leadership, and launched initial projects that align both the SRO and Law Clinic.

A growing network of over 120 LSE academics has been mapped and brought together through two well-attended engagement meetings, fostering collaboration and knowledge-sharing across LSE.

GSoS serves as a central hub, accelerating and amplifying sustainability efforts across LSE. By connecting researchers, policymakers, businesses and legal bodies, we are enhancing visibility, reducing duplication and professionalising impact. Through this theme, LSE is not only advancing academic excellence but also shaping the legal and political foundations of a more sustainable world.

Theme 3 highlights: The Sustainability Regulation Observatory and the **Sustainability Law Clinic**

Under our **Mobilising Political**, **Legal and Governance Systems** theme, co-led by the LSE Law School and the Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment (GRI), two major initiatives are being launched:

- + The Sustainability Regulation Observatory a new, high-profile initiative advancing understanding of the regulatory foundations of sustainable societies. The Observatory will critically assess the effectiveness and unintended consequences of sustainability regulation worldwide, develop a cross-LSE database of expertise, publish accessible reports and academic research, and convene policymakers, business, civil society, and regulators to translate findings into impact. Students will play a central role through research assistantships and applied projects.
- + The Sustainability Law Clinic the Clinic will provide pro-bono legal advice and support on sustainability issues, including amicus briefs and OECD complaints. Closely connected to the Observatory's work, the Clinic will serve individuals, community groups, and SMEs, while also advancing research and policy engagement.

Both initiatives will focus on three priority areas:

- 1. Protection of nature and biodiversity aligned with the *Protecting and Enhancing* Nature and Biodiversity theme.
- 2. Sustainable finance and business aligned with the Creating Sustainable Finance and Business theme.
- 3. Energy and climate change building on GRI's Climate Change Laws of the World and governance research.

Together, these initiatives will create an integrated hub for research, teaching, and real-world impact at the intersection of law, governance, and sustainability.

GSoS priority research theme 4:

Protecting and Enhancing Nature and Biodiversity

Overview by Professor Giles Atkinson

Tackling today's sustainability challenges demands urgent attention to the nature crisis – not just as a companion to climate change, but as a critical issue in its own right. We need nature for climate mitigation and adaptation options, and we are facing biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation.

For this reason, nature is essential for climate resilience, but it also underpins the health of our economies and societies. GSoS has established a dedicated theme driving research, policy and action to address this foundational challenge across all areas of sustainability.





Theme co-leads: Professor Giles
Atkinson, LSE Department of Geography
and Environment, Acting Director, the
Grantham Research Institute on Climate
Change and the Environment; Professor
Nicola Ranger, Professor in Practice,
Grantham Research Institute on Climate
Change and the Environment.

Objectives

The first aim of this theme is to unite and elevate nature and sustainability research across LSE. We are connecting long-standing work with emerging ideas across departments, institutions and research centres to build a stronger, more visible community.

Externally, we are ensuring that LSE is recognised globally as a leader in nature-focused sustainability research, just as we are in climate research through the Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment. We are aiming for diverse impact – across geographies like Europe, Africa, and Southeast Asia, and across topics beyond terrestrial geographies, extending to the blue economy, blue finance and blue legal action.

By growing our network of researchers and accelerating our impactful outputs, we're helping shape a more inclusive and influential movement for nature and sustainability.

Achievements

In the first six months of our launch, we have initiated research projects not only closer to home, such as our partnership with the Oceano Azul Foundation based in Lisbon, which will broaden our network of external experts, but across the world.

We have recently published a paper on the economic values of forests in the Congo Basin, involving studies from across Cameroon, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Republic of the Congo, and Gabon. This project breaks new ground in the empirical analysis of the distribution of wealth amongst people who manage the land within these ecosystems to anticipate and mitigate wealth ownership issues.

Our work under the new Financing the Blue Economy (BluFinPlan) programme includes research on Mangrove habitats in the Philippines. Through this programme we are working with local communities, NGOs, researchers and policymakers through equitable partnerships to harness international sustainable blue finance for inclusive and resilient coastal communities in Low and Middle Income Countries (LMICs), whilst also contributing to global carbon mitigation goals, through an improved understanding of the economic case for mangroves.

GSoS has become a powerful catalyst for collaboration, accelerating connections and uncovering expertise across LSE that might otherwise remain siloed. For our theme, it is helping to build a shared vision, foster interdisciplinary partnerships, and shape a compelling, unified narrative of LSE's impact. It's not just a hub – it's a launchpad for transformative research and global recognition.

Theme 4 highlight: **Financing the Blue Economy**

Under our **Protecting and Enhancing Nature and Biodiversity** theme, the Financing the Blue Economy (BluFinPlan) programme – co-hosted by the Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment works with local communities, NGOs, researchers, and policymakers through equitable partnerships to determine how best to harness international sustainable blue finance for inclusive and resilient coastal communities in LMICs, whilst also contributing to global carbon mitigation goals.

Insufficient regulation and under enforcement of regulations are critical root causes of mangrove loss, leading to underinvestment in their protection and restoration. We focus particularly on addressing financing gaps in blue carbon through an improved understanding of the economic case for mangroves and improved policies for marine protected areas, to ensure a just and equitable transition towards protection and restoration of mangroves that also results in sustainable fisheries management with higher fish stocks and fish harvests.

Global Sustainability Research Fund Recipients

The selected projects under the theme of Protecting and Enhancing Nature and Biodiversity are:

Principal investigator	Project title
Tommaso Palermo, Associate Professor, Department of Accounting	Translating nature into risk: The role of financial disclosure frameworks in shaping nature-related risks
Thomas Smith, Associate Professor (Education), Department of Geography and Environment	Seeing is Believing: From Screens to Reefs – How VR Bridges Valuation Gaps
Frank Venmans, Associate Professorial Research Fellow, Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment	Minimizing Species Extinction Risk (MSER)
Camila Cristancho-Duarte, Policy Officer, Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment, and Giles Atkinson, Acting Director, Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment	Paying Nature: Mobilising financial resources from private sector for biodiversity

GSoS priority research theme 5: Building Sustainable Societies

Overview by Liam Delaney

Communities around the world are already feeling the effects of climate change, biodiversity loss, and the degradation of nature. Tackling these challenges will require more than single-issue public campaigns or siloed thinking – it demands a deep and far-reaching transformation at the core of how societies think, behave and function.

Our theme, Building Sustainable Societies, is grounded in social science research from disciplines such as behavioural science, social psychology, philosophy and economics to explore what sustainable futures might look like and how we can reshape our world to achieve lasting change.





Theme co-leads: Professor Liam Delaney, Head of Department, LSE Department of Psychological and Behavioural Science; Professor Elizabeth Robinson, Acting Dean, GSoS.

Objectives

This theme will shape global conversations and advance real-world changes in public policy that spark positive social tipping points.

We aim to produce and support cutting-edge research across the most pressing areas, such as food insecurity, particularly in the global south, attitudes towards labgrown meat, climate narratives, environmental justice and sustainable consumption. We will convene thought leaders through symposiums and workshops – leveraging LSE's diverse, international community to foster collaboration and innovation.

Achievements

Our first workshop on 10 June 2025 brought together faculty members, students, and staff to share their latest research and insights and to shape the theme's direction. We shared updates on funding and support, spotlighted aligned research and encouraged collaborative input. The response was overwhelmingly positive, with strong enthusiasm for future events.

While growing our research networks, our first PhD student Marie Stege has been granted funding to examine climate change adaptation with the LSE Department of

Psychological and Behavioural Science. Additionally, three projects directly related to our theme were selected for funding in the Global Sustainability Research Fund competition, covering low-carbon transport, broad societal narratives, and deliberative democracy in climate change contexts.

Another major milestone is the launch of our Climate Food (In)security Lab, led by Professor Elizabeth Robinson with visiting Senior Fellow Dr Shouro Dasgupta, focused on improving food and nutritional security in Low and Middle Income Countries (LMICs) in an increasingly climate-insecure world. Dr Lucy Kanya, a nutrition and policy expert, has joined the team as impact lead.

Building Sustainable Societies helps position GSoS as a hub for understanding and enabling the social transformations required for sustainability. By connecting insights from behavioural science, philosophy, psychology and economics, the theme is uniquely placed to address the human and institutional dimensions of climate action. This includes advancing research on sustainable consumption, food systems, and societal narratives, while also developing the evidence base for resilience and adaptation in the face of climate insecurity.

Theme 5 highlight: The Climate Food (In)security Lab

Under our Building Sustainable Societies theme, the Climate Food (In)security Lab asks how countries can improve food and nutritional security in an increasingly climate-insecure world.

Climate change is recognised as the greatest threat to human health in the 21st century. And in many LMICs this will in part be manifested in increasing food insecurity and under-nutrition. Heat, heatwaves, and drought, are increasingly affecting both food production and food systems, and people's ability to afford a balanced and nutritious diet, and to utilise nutrients effectively.

Building an evidence base through analysis of high-quality secondary data and working closely with experts and policy makers in LMICs, we are determining "what works" with respect to enhancing food and nutritional security, and how to implement equitable and high-impact potential interventions.

Global Sustainability Research Fund Recipients

The selected projects under the theme of Building Sustainable Societies are:

Principal investigator	Project title
Jenevieve Treadwell, Policy Fellow, School of Public Policy	Al-Driven Risk Mapping for Safer Cycling in London
Tim Forsyth, Professor and Head of Department, Department of International Development	Analyzing culture war climate politics
Marion Dumas, Assistant Professorial Research Fellow, Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment	Deliberating Food Consumption Choices: A Field Experiment

The Global Impact Group

The Global Impact Group (GIG) was established in 2025 as part of GSoS and the Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment (GRI) at LSE.

The GIG convenes a select group of senior policy, academic and institutional leaders to advance analytically sound and practical responses to global challenges. With Professor Lord Nicholas Stern as Chair and Professor Sir Andrew Steer as Executive Director, the GIG draws on LSE's deep academic talents, practical experience and its networks across governments, multilateral institutions, the private sector and civil society. It works to help shape perspectives, dialogues and decision-making, and to deliver high-impact outputs on development, sustainability and resilience across the world.

Engagements with multilateral institutions, the private sector, governments and civil society are rooted in careful analytical work on the imperative and opportunity for a major push on investment and how to deliver and finance that investment. Investment and innovation must be centre stage in driving the new ways forward, including fundamental structural, systemic, and technological change. Conditions for that investment require clear strategies and sound policies and institutions. And crucially, that investment requires finance.

The GIG's structure supports the ambition of GSoS, GRI, and LSE as a whole, to lead globally on sustainability and development through strategic collaboration and influence. Its effectiveness flows from analytical strengths and experience in decision-making across the world.

Professor Lord Nicholas Stern is Chair of the GRI and of GSoS and a world leader on the economics of sustainable development. Professor Sir Andrew Steer has a lifetime of experience leading development, strategies and programmes. The other members, separately and together, bring exceptional international experience.



Nicholas Stern and Lei Zhang, Co-founders of the Global School of Sustainability at LSE

The members of the Global Impact Group are:



Nicholas Stern (Chair)



Andrew Steer (Executive Director)

Professor in Practice at the International Growth Centre and Global School of Sustainability at LSE: founding President and CEO of the Bezos Earth Fund and former President of the World Resources Institute



Bob Ward (Deputy Director)

Policy and Communications Director at the Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment; climate communicator and policy expert



Amar Bhattacharya

Senior Fellow at Brookings Institution; expert in global finance, sustainable development, and G20 processes



Nick Godfrey

Distinguished Policy Fellow for the Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment, helping to lead its work to support the Coalition for Finance Ministers for Climate Action



Hans Peter Lankes

Former Vice President at the International Finance Corporation (IFC) / World Bank Group; leader on climate finance policy and multilateral reform; Managing Director, Overseas Development Institute



Nicola Ranger

Executive Director of Earth Capital Nexus and Professor in Practice of Natural Capital, Risk and Finance in the Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment



Mattia Romani

Partner at SYSTEMIQ and former Managing Director at EBRD; specialist in transition economics and sustainable finance



Vera Songwe

Former Country Director at the World Bank; former UN Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of UNECA; Senior Fellow at the **Brookings Institution**



Josué Tanaka

Formerly a Managing Director at EBRD with decades of leadership in sustainable infrastructure finance

Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment



The Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment (GRI) was established at LSE in 2008 to create a multidisciplinary centre for policy-relevant research and training on climate change and the environment, bringing together international expertise, including on economics, finance, geography, the environment, science, law, international relations, development and political science. It has a global reputation and a remarkable track record of delivering real world impact related to some of the most pressing issues of our times.

GRI will continue to engage in its world leading research and impact activities as an externally funded research centre at LSE while also collaborating closely with the new Global School of Sustainability.

Among other things, a number of GRI colleagues are directly involved in – in some cases helping lead – the GSoS work on our five priority research themes. The new Global Impact Group (GIG) is a shared enterprise between GRI and GSoS, under the leadership of Nicholas Stern, Andrew Steer and Bob Ward.

Moreover, we have set up a new GRI Global Sustainability Fund scheme whereby GSoS will directly support projects led by a range of staff members in GRI. In the first year of this scheme, eleven projects were selected – ones that align with the strategic goals of both GRI and GSoS, and that were chosen for their high academic and impact potential, alongside originality and feasibility.

The funded projects are:

- Assessing the Environmental Impact of Trade Wars
- Retrospective corporate accountability for historical emissions: International taxation of high-emitting sectors towards financing climate reparations – a policy-focused assessment of possible approaches
- Warming planet, chilling activism? Studying the effects of climate change litigation amidst rising backsliding and obstruction
- Forward-looking climate litigation: scientific evidence, financial risk, and corporate governance
- Green Skills Lab
- Adaptation finance: mobilising GRI's capacity for long-term, integrated impact
- Multi-Actor Behaviour Journey (MABEJ) A Novel Tool for Behavioural Mapping and Diagnosis of Complex Policy Processes
- Integrating Gender Equality and Poverty Considerations into Fiscal Policy for Climate Action
- Building evidence and capacity for effective climate governance: Understanding impacts of climate laws and governance innovations in the Global South
- Towards a practical theory of strategic sustainability transition planning: a seed project
- Designing a Net-Zero Compatible UK ETS: Pathways for Carbon Dioxide Removal Integration

As can be seen from this summary list, the projects focus on a wide range of critically important topics – and are very much aligned with GSoS and GRI priorities.

TPI Global Climate Transition Centre



The TPI Global Climate Transition Centre (TPI Centre) was established at LSE with external funding and will collaborate closely with GSoS by providing independent, rigorous, forward-looking research and data on the progress by corporates, banks and sovereigns in the transition to a low-carbon economy.

In short, the TPI Centre develops bespoke assessment methodologies to determine whether the pace of entity decarbonisation and targets align with the Paris Agreement goals. It also assesses if these entities have put in place the governance mechanisms and transition planning necessary to implement those targets. Transparency is a core principle of our work: all entity assessments are based on publicly available information to encourage accountability, and, together with its methodologies, are published online.

The TPI Centre's outputs inform investors, enabling them to encourage and support the netzero transition, through investment analysis and engagement activities. The Centre has a unique close relationship with the financial sector: it is the academic partner of the Transition Pathway Initiative (TPI) – an asset owner-led initiative, with a global network of over 150 investors and US\$85 trillion in combined assets under management¹ – and works with London Stock Exchange Group (LSEG), TPI's data partner. Case studies available on the Centre's website and integration into key investor practices, including the IIGCC Net Zero Investment Framework, are testament of the TPI Centre's impact.

Importantly, over \$100 billion in invested funds are tracking the FTSE TPI Climate Transition Index series that incorporates TPI company data. The TPI Centre is also recognised as a leading, authoritative source on climate performance assessments by investee entities (for benchmarking), regulators and multilateral organisations.

The TPI Centre's work is integral to the delivery of GSoS's strategic commitment, particularly through the thematic areas that focus on creating sustainable finance and business, as well as mobilising political,

legal, and governance systems for sustainability. More broadly, it contributes to LSE's reputation as a research institution that bridges theory with practice and application. Whilst continuing to expand its assessment universe, going forward, new research areas will focus more on the evaluation of the credibility of entity transition plans and their implementation, as well as more analytical regional contextualisation, particularly relevant in emerging markets. The Centre's 25-strong research team is currently financially supported by philanthropic funds and a research collaboration with LSEG.



¹ This figure is subject to market-price and foreign-exchange fluctuations and, as the sum of self-reported data by TPI supporters, may double-count some assets.

Centre for Economic Transition Expertise



The Centre for Economic Transition Expertise (CETEx) was established in 2024 as a specialised research and policy unit to support the ambitious reforms required to deliver sustainable, inclusive and resilient economies and financial systems. Now collaborating closely with GSoS, CETEx serves G20 central banks, finance ministries, regulators and related international bodies to advance climate and nature transitions to more resilient financial systems and sustainable economies.

To achieve its mission, CETEx is committed to providing cutting-edge research, actionable policy analysis and strategic guidance, convening and capacity-building to support ambitious reforms. In this context, CETEx aims to contribute to and build on the academic research developed in departments and centres within GSoS, to provide more integrated and targeted sustainability recommendations to policymaking institutions and international organisations.

Within its mandate, CETEx will support the GSoS mission by actively contributing to four of the thematic topic areas. CETEx research and policy work supports more sustainable financial systems and economies that are better equipped to support resilient, low-carbon growth over the long term.

Also, it provides policy guidance on legal and governance systems to support the transition to resilient economies, including bank supervision,

market regulation, and legal risks from climate events. Moreover, the Centre will build on its nature-related work to develop policies to promote and finance nature-based solutions, including how to identify and assess biodiversity risks.

CETEx has received significant grants from philanthropic foundations to increase its presence across G20 countries. In order to support the work, CETEx is currently in a scaling up phase through hiring of staff with dedicated monetary, prudential, fiscal, and sectoral expertise with respect to climate and nature transitions. We are also expanding our global networks of in country partner institutions and consultants and hosting a number of visiting fellows.



LSE Generate x GSoS



LSE Generate is LSE's home for entrepreneurship, supporting students and alumni to develop entrepreneurial skills as they build businesses and innovate in the UK and around the world.

LSE Generate's Sustainable Entrepreneurship Hub leverages LSE's world-renowned global network to gather the best and brightest talent across entrepreneurial startups, academia, global corporations and policymakers to develop cutting-edge sustainability solutions. The portfolio covers a wide range of solutions, including circular economy, waste reduction, emissions management and biodiversity conservation and regeneration.

The Long Life

LSE Generate has launched The Long Life, the world's first global venture builder dedicated to tackling challenges around healthy ageing and longevity, with a special focus on the future of work and loneliness. In partnership with Google Cloud and the Ashoka Foundation, students and alumni from six international universities will collaborate over a three-month period to develop sustainable solutions. working alongside businesses and governments to build a more resilient and age-inclusive society.

As part of the initiative, 15 selected students will take part in a one-week research sprint in Japan, a global leader in sustainable ageing. This hands-on experience will allow students to contribute to realworld research on ageing societies, with their findings directly feeding into the LSE Longevity Venture Builder.

Additionally, LSE Generate has launched a new alumni community cluster for those aged 60 and above, supporting their entry into the startup and innovation space - marking a bold step toward inclusive entrepreneurship across the lifespan.

The Nature Tech Unconference

The Nature Tech Unconference, held on campus on 28 March 2025, was a collaborative, participant-driven event focused on the emerging field of nature tech technology designed to support nature conservation, biodiversity, and sustainable ecosystems.

Organised by LSE Generate in partnership with the Nature Tech Collective, the event brought together over 180 innovators, researchers, technologists, and environmental practitioners. Using an unconference format, attendees shaped the agenda themselves, proposing and leading sessions on topics they were passionate about, rather than following a fixed programme.

The event aimed to spark cross-sector collaboration, foster innovation, and grow the community working at the intersection of nature and technology. It formed part of a broader initiative called Nature Tech Week, which highlights the potential for digital tools such as AI, sensors, data platforms, and remote sensing to accelerate nature-positive solutions. By encouraging open dialogue, shared learning, and grassroots-led problem-solving, the unconference served as a space to generate ideas, build partnerships, and push the boundaries of how technology can help restore and protect the natural world.

Global Climate and Nature Barometer with the Gallup World Poll

How people around the world perceive climate change and environmental issues remains underexplored. To address this gap, GSoS is partnering with the Gallup World Poll to gather internationally comparable data that will shed light on how citizens view climate and nature both now and over time.

Together with Gallup, GSoS has designed a new survey module that captures public perceptions of environmental change, its economic and health impacts, and the extent to which individuals are willing to take action or support collective efforts. This module will be embedded within the Gallup World Poll, one of the most comprehensive and globally representative surveys available.

Launching in 2025, the survey will reach citizens in 13 countries, including the UK, India, the United States and China, offering a rich and diverse dataset. By integrating this module into the Gallup World Poll, researchers will gain access to a broad spectrum of contextual information, enabling deeper insights into how public opinion is shaped and why it matters.

This initiative marks the beginning of an ambitious research programme aimed at tracking shifts in public sentiment over time. As the survey is repeated, GSoS will be able to monitor changes in attitudes and expand the scope to include additional countries, leveraging the World Poll's extensive global reach to obtain a fully global picture of how people perceive the environment and willingness to support public action.

With this project, LSE positions itself at the forefront of international efforts to understand and respond to public views on climate and nature. The work is being led by Professor Susana Mourato, LSE Vice President and Pro-Vice Chancellor of Research, Professor Sir Tim Besley, W. Arthur Lewis Professor of Development Economics in the Department of Economics, and Professor Giles Atkinson, Acting Director of the Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment. Their combined expertise anchor this pioneering collaboration.







The Global School of Sustainability has ambitious and innovative plans to enhance sustainability education at LSE, to develop professional training and outreach programmes on topics related to our key sustainability challenges, and to convene students and other stakeholders for dialogue and collaborative learning. This is an incredibly exciting addition to LSE's already world-leading

Professor Emma McCoy,
LSE Vice President and
Pro-Vice Chancellor (Education)

educational offering.



Overview of our student engagement, scholarships and education work

GSoS is exploring and developing a wide-ranging programme of initiatives that will not only enhance sustainability education and student experience at LSE but also open up new opportunities for lifelong, professional and executive training that will be available to a wider audience.

Curriculum enhancement and new opportunities

We are working to enhance sustainability education within existing degree programmes at LSE, including through interactive workshops and research collaborations that will provide new opportunities for students on degree programmes at all levels.

As an illustration of this: in June 2025, LSE's annual Knowledge Beyond Boundaries interdisciplinary student research conference was delivered in a collaboration between GSoS and LSE100, which is our flagship interdisciplinary course for all undergraduate students.

The conference was part of the LSE Festival, which this year carried the theme "Visions for the Future". There were over 100 presenters from a wide range of backgrounds – undergraduates, postgraduates, recent LSE alumni and students from across CIVICA partner institutions – and over 350 people in attendance.

The conference included sustainability-related panels chaired by GSoS Professor in Practice, Sir Andrew Steer, and by Professor David Kershaw, a key figure in setting up the GSoS priority research theme, Mobilising Political, Legal, and Governance Systems.

Scholarships

Since our launch in January 2025, we have already made over £400,000 of awards under our Global Sustainability Scholarship scheme at undergraduate, MSc and doctoral levels. More specifically:

- At undergraduate level, we have made awards available for students registering on the BSc Environment and Sustainable Development; BSc Economic History and Geography; and BSc Environment and Sustainable Development with Economics.
- At MSc level, we have made awards available for students registering on the Double Master's Degree in Environmental Policy, Technology and Health (with Peking University); MSc Culture, Justice and Environment; MSc Environment and Development; MSc Environmental Economics and Climate Change; MSc Environmental Policy and Regulation; and MSc Societal and Environmental Psychology.
- At PhD level, we have made four awards in partnership with the Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment. These include PhD projects on "Improving Long-term Sustainability and Economic Development by Enhancing SEEA EA Framework Ecosystem Assessments" (Geography and Environment); "Climate Change Adaptation in Vulnerable Agro-Pastoral Communities" (Geography and Environment); "Information Frictions, Social Learning, and Aggregate Adaptation: Structural Evidence from Trade in Agriculture" (Economics); and "Exploring the sociology of environmental grief: What are the socio-cultural impacts of ecological loss within interspecies kinship networks?" (Sociology).

Sustainable LSE Living Lab

GSoS is collaborating with the LSE Sustainability Team who work hard to improve the environmental performance of LSE, as a campus and a community, through championing sustainable practices. LSE was ranked as the UK's top university in "environmental sustainability" in the 2024 QS Sustainability Rankings (and second worldwide) and building on this track record of sustainable practices, we are going to establish a Sustainable LSE Living Lab in the upcoming academic year.

This will provide opportunities for students to develop sustainable solutions that further LSE's progress on its organisational sustainability journey, turning campus into an experimental space where sustainable practices can be tested and implemented.

Looking ahead

Beyond enhancements to education and student experience within LSE, GSoS aims to develop learning opportunities for a wider range of stakeholders - and we are exploring what we can offer as part of LSE's lifelong learning as well as professional and executive training provisions. This is part of our mission to engage with a global network of stakeholders, including those who currently work in policy or practice roles in the private and public sectors.

Convening

A key element in our ambition with GSoS is to 'convene the world' – that is, to bring together a broad range of global stakeholders to discuss and address the key challenges that we face with regard to sustainability. By means of events, academic exchanges and publishing activities, we seek to enable and amplify what is the most necessary and pressing discussion of our times: the one around creating a sustainable future for humanity.

Professor Charles Stafford Acting Executive Director, Global School of Sustainability



Overview of our convening: visitors, publishing, events and communications work

LSE, based in the heart of London, is a uniquely global institution in terms of its staff, students and alumni and our wider networks of collaborators around the world. Drawing on this, "convening" in a broad sense is a central part of our mission, including via academic exchanges, public events and publishing.

Academic visitors

As part of the GSoS strategy to engage with research experts and thought leaders, we have developed two strands for hosting visiting professors – both within GSoS centrally, and to enhance sustainability expertise in departments and institutes across LSE through joint invitation.

GSoS itself will host a select group of Visiting Fellows, Visiting Senior Fellows, Visiting Professors and Visiting Professors in Practice – individuals whose work aligns closely with our mission and who are recognised as thought leaders in their fields.

We are inviting visionary figures whose ideas and experience can help shape our work and inspire our community. Our first visitor under this scheme, Jayant Sinha, is a distinguished Indian policymaker and investor. He joined us in January 2025 as a Visiting Professor in Practice in collaboration with the Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment. More recently, we have invited Christian Kroll, Professor of Sustainability at the International University of Applied Sciences, Berlin, to join us as a Visiting Professor.

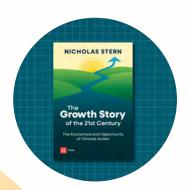
In addition, to foster meaningful connections across LSE, all of our academic departments were this year invited to nominate leading sustainability thinkers, both scholars and practitioners, whose work resonates with the GSoS priorities and themes. These collaborative visits are designed to be impactful: visitors are expected to deliver public seminars and/or events, and to engage with a range of staff, students, and alumni.

Diversity and geographical representation are central to the selection process, ensuring a wide range of voices and perspectives are heard. This initiative is more than a series of visits, it is a way to embed the GSoS agenda across LSE, sparking dialogue, collaboration and innovation. To date, GSoS has already approved visitors in a wide range of departments, including Economic History, the European Institute, Gender Studies, Geography and Environment, International Relations, Management, Media and Communications, Philosophy, Logic and Scientific Method, Social Policy, Sociology, and Statistics.

Publishing

The Global School of Sustainability is collaborating with LSE Press on an exciting new book series on sustainability. The first volume, by Professor Lord Nicholas Stern, will be published in November 2025 and will be accompanied by a major launch event. This book is entitled: The Growth Story of the 21st Century: the economics and opportunity of climate action.

A fundamental feature of our approach is that the GSoS series is open access so as to be available to the widest possible audience, including general readers beyond academia. In this way, we intend to further the GSoS aim of convening and engaging the world as we collectively seek to address the sustainability challenges that we face.



Events and communications

At GSoS, events - amplified through our communications channels - are designed to foster cross-community collaboration and accelerate the impact of sustainability research through action and education. We bring together experts from academia, policy and industry to raise the profile of cutting-edge sustainability work but also in order to build transformative networks that drive real-world change.

Whether through global summits, interdisciplinary workshops, or thought leadership forums, GSoS is committed to connecting diverse voices and catalysing solutions for a more sustainable future.

We began a series of launch events by bringing together Nobel Prize winner Amartya Sen and World Trade Organization Director-General Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala to talk with GSoS Co-founder Nicholas Stern on the topic of "building sustainability in a turbulent world". Next in the series we will in October 2025 host an event with Nobel Prize winner Juan Manuel Santos, former president of Columbia, on "sustainability, peace and development" and in November there will be the launch of Nicholas Stern's new book. There will be an ambitious schedule for 2026, including a series on sustainability delivered by Lord Adair Turner.

We have to date hosted or co-hosted twelve other events with a large number in the pipeline for the coming academic year, including one in September 2025 on the topic of the role that blended finance has to play in the sustainability agenda. A full list of past and scheduled events is available via our website.





Shaping the World

The launch of the Global School of Sustainability has been made possible by a visionary philanthropic commitment from an LSE alumnus.

Now, we need ongoing support to train future social science leaders and bring our vision of a more sustainable world to life.

Contact us at shapingtheworld@lse.ac.uk to learn more about how you can support GSoS and help shape a more sustainable world.





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