

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

2026 Utrecht Earth-Space Academy

Training School on '*Transformative Governance for Earth-Space Sustainability*'.

October 28–30, 2026

Copernicus Institute of Sustainable Development,
Faculty of Geosciences, Utrecht University



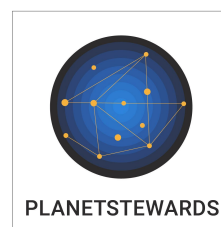
**Utrecht
University**

*By the ERC PlanetStewards Project, co-organized with the Earth-Space Sustainability (ESS) Network
& EU COST Action FOGOS*

Co-organized by



European Research Council
Established by the European Commission



**Earth-Space
Sustainability**



**Funded by
the European Union**

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

Earth-Space sustainability has emerged as a pressing issue of the 21st century, with increasing amounts of space debris falling through Earth's atmosphere, giant mirrors to provide artificial 'sunlight on demand', severe loss of pristine skies, and rocket bodies crash-landing on the lunar surface. Earth and outer space have become intertwined environmentally, politically, and philosophically, leading to an emerging 'Earth-Space systems' paradigm that requires rethinking planetary governance for environmentally sustainable and just futures on Earth and in space. Central to these are the mobilization of interdisciplinary knowledge to address a range of contemporary issues spanning the past and the future: from the inter-generational loss of cosmological imaginaries to the protection of Earth's common skies, and considerations for the ethical obligations and future integrity of other celestial worlds.

To this end, the 2026 Utrecht Earth-Space Academy on 'Transformative Governance for Earth-Space Sustainability' aims to train next-generation scholars and researchers in new conceptual and methodological approaches to address the emerging issues of extraplanetary governance in the 21st century. The Academy will select a cohort of 20 early-career researchers (PhD candidates and post-doctoral researchers) as Academy Fellows to attend the training. From the History of Astronomy to the frontiers of Astrobiology, Anthropology, Space Law, Environmental Policy and Governance, and International Relations, the Academy Fellows will engage with the Earth-Space systems concept from a pluralistic, interdisciplinary perspective to gain a solid overview of the conceptual and methodological tools fundamental to generating new knowledge in the emerging paradigm. By the end of the training, Academy Fellows will be familiar with the concept and meanings of Earth-Space sustainability and with cutting-edge research in the field. They will also understand the importance of transformative change in science and policy for future Earth-Space sustainability.

Selected Academy Fellows will be awarded a scholarship – through a reimbursement procedure after the event – to cover long-distance travel and accommodation to attend the training. Scholarships will be awarded on a rolling basis until 30 September 2026 (or as soon as all scholarship spots are filled), based on the quality and excellence of submitted application letters and CVs. In the application letter, please state your research interest, motivation, and how participation in this Academy may support your research journey.

UTRECHT UNIVERSITY FACULTY MEMBERS & LECTURE TOPICS:

- Dr. Xiao-Shan Yap (Course director), Utrecht University, Earth-Space Governance
- Prof. Dr. Inge Loes ten Kate, Utrecht University, Astrobiology and Planetary Protection
- Dr. Frank van Laerhoven, Utrecht University, Environmental and Commons Governance
- Dr. Jeroen Oomen, Utrecht University, Techniques of Futuring for Sustainability Policy
- Dr. Aditi Saraf, Utrecht University, Anthropological Approaches to Indigenous Cosmologies

INVITED FACULTY MEMBERS & LECTURE TOPICS:

- Dr. John Barentine, Dark Sky Consulting, Science-Policy Interface on Dark and Quiet Skies
- Dr. Katharina Glaab, Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU), Earth-Space Geopolitics and International Relations
- Dr. Chelsea Haramia, University of Bonn, Space Ethics and Environmentalism
- Dr. Christopher Johnson, IIASL Leiden University, Fundamentals in Space Law and Lunar Governance
- Dr. Stamatina Mastorakou, University of Pittsburgh, History of Astronomy and Cosmological Imaginaries
- Dr. Michael Picard, Edinburgh University, Environmental Law in Earth-Space Systems
- Prof. Eduardo Unda-Sanzana, University of Antofagasta, Observational Astronomy and Governing Dark & Quiet Skies from the Atacama Desert

The lecture series will be complemented with interactive sessions and creative dialogues to:

- Approach the concept of Earth-Space systems from diverse disciplines and knowledge traditions
- Rethink human-nature relations in view of the Earth-Space paradigm
- Explore scientific, cultural, environmental, and other values of Earth-Space systems
- Conceptualize transformative governance from a pluralistic and interdisciplinary perspective
- Apply concepts and methods to a range of case studies, including dark-sky governance and lunar governance
- Discuss the role of science-policy interfaces in transformative change towards Earth-Space sustainability
- Discuss your work in terms of concepts, methodology, and potential impact, and receive feedback from the faculty members

Apply [HERE](#) until 30 September 2026 (or as soon as all scholarship spots are filled). The detailed program of the Academy will be posted on the [webpage](#) soon.

For questions, please contact: info@planetstewards.eu.