

futureearth

North American consultation for *Future Earth*

General information

Future Earth is a 10-year international research programme launched in June 2012, at the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) by a broad alliance of partners¹. Future Earth will provide critical knowledge required for societies to face the challenges posed by global environmental change and to identify opportunities for a transition to global sustainability. Future Earth must answer fundamental questions about how and why the global environment is changing, what are likely future changes, what are the implications for human development and the diversity of life on earth, and what the opportunities are to reduce risks and vulnerabilities, enhance resilience, and create transformations to prosperous and equitable futures.

Future Earth brings together the existing Global Environmental Change Programmes – the World Climate Research Programme (WCRP), the International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme (IGBP), the International Human Dimensions Programme (IHDP), DIVERSITAS – biodiversity science, and their projects. It will deliver science of the highest quality, integrating, as necessary, different disciplines from the natural, social (including economic and behavioural), health sciences, engineering and humanities. It will be co-designed and co-produced by academics, governments, business and civil society, encompass bottom-up ideas from the wide scientific community and be solution-oriented.

As Future Earth is in the initial stages of implementation, the United States Global Change Research Program (USGCRP), the National Science Foundation (NSF), the National Academy of Sciences (NAS), the Canadian Climate Forum, and the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC) are organizing, with the support of the International Council for Science, a consultation for North America on Future Earth. Most of the regions have had their own regional consultations in 2012.

The objectives of the consultation include:

¹ Future Earth is established and sponsored by the Science and Technology Alliance for Global Sustainability comprising of the International Council for Science, the International Social Science Council (ISSC), the Belmont Forum of global change research funding agencies, UNESCO, UNEP, UNU and WMO as observer.

- Introduce the Future Earth programme to existing partners and new stakeholders
- Discuss the global agenda of Future Earth and its relevance for North America
- Identify opportunities to implement Future Earth in North America and the added value it can bring to existing endeavours or to addressing gaps

The consultation will be organised around two-webinars and an in-person meeting to allow for discussion and brainstorming as follows:

- **Webinar I: 2 May 2013**, 13:00 Eastern Daylight Time (limit approximately 1000 participants) - **Introduction to *Future Earth*. Registration required.**
- **Webinar II: 30 May 2013**, 13:00 Eastern Daylight Time (limit approximately 1000 participants) - **Co-Designing research across disciplines and sectors. Registration required.**
- **In-person meeting: 26-27 June 2013**, Washington, DC, USA and online – **Towards the implementation of Future Earth in the United States and Canada. Registration required.**

The webinars and in-person meeting will gather (hundreds of) scientists working on global and regional environmental change across disciplines, development actors, educators and capacity builders, funders and individuals working at the boundary between science and policy. They are opened to all interested people working on GEC and sustainability related issues and the participation is free of charge. However, participants are asked to register for each of the events.

Please also note that each step of the consultation will build on the previous one and time for information-giving will be minimised at the in-person meeting to allow for group discussions and interactive sessions.

Among the many questions to be discussed during this 3-stage consultation are:

- What would it take to implement the Future Earth agenda in the United States and Canada?
- What would success for Future Earth in North America look like?
- Who are the key stakeholders that need to be involved?
- What research projects or activities (capacity development, stakeholder engagement, etc.) would you like to see under Future Earth? How would we go about implementing them?
- How can we strengthen the link between researchers and policy-makers, and other stakeholders on GEC and sustainability issues?
- What are examples of co-design of research across disciplines, and with stakeholders from policy or business? What can we learn from these experiences?

The consultation will pave the way for future initiatives in US and Canada on Future Earth and will also provide inputs to the governing bodies of Future Earth (including the Science Committee, Interim Secretariat) as they start operating.

For more information on Future Earth, go to www.icsu.org/future-earth

For any queries, please contact: David Allen at dallen@usgcrp.gov.