

# Just Transitions to a Net Zero World

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual International Conference

Thursday 9th & Friday 10th October 2025  
Durham University





# **JusTNOW & JTC**

## **Annual International Conference**

9<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup> October 2025, Durham University

The Durham University's Centre for Sustainable Development Law and Policy (CSDLP), in cooperation with the European Centre of Just Transition Research and Impact-Driven Transfer (JTC) at Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg, are delighted to announce their joint International Conference on 'Just Transitions to a Net Zero World' in Durham, 9th-10th October 2025.

The conference will bring together academics, policymakers and practitioners to explore just transition pathways to Net Zero amid climate change, environmental destruction, biodiversity loss, geopolitical shifts, technological disruption, and systemic inequities.

By drawing together interdisciplinary perspectives, we will address the challenges of conceiving and implementing just transitions to Net Zero. We will use an interdisciplinary lens to determine where our research can have the greatest impact and accelerate the speed of transitions.

Please see following pages for further information about the conference including invited speakers.

**Please visit the following link or scan the QR code for registration**

**<https://forms.office.com/e/VCrXeRntWb>**



**For further information about the conference, please contact:**

Kate Morris, [kathryn.l.morris@durham.ac.uk](mailto:kathryn.l.morris@durham.ac.uk)  
Senior Business Development Manager  
Centre for Sustainable Development Law and Policy, Durham University





## Conference Synopsis

The arrival of the concept of Just Transitions at the level of the international climate change regime under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement provides a new opportunity to fundamentally shape the Paris Agreement's preambular imperative of a just transition. Just Transitions entail the transformation of societies towards sustainable ways of life. At the international level, the global stocktake decision of 2023 reaffirmed that "the global transition to low emissions and climate-resilient development provides opportunities and challenges for sustainable development and poverty eradication". Yet one year later, at the 29th Conference of the Parties in 2024, Baku, no consensus between countries could be forged for a substantial decision on the Just Transition Work Programme (JTWP), not even on the identification of elements for dialogue. Proposals so far include to develop stand-alone principles mechanisms and measurements for Just Transitions, or to embed these into national Adaptation plans (NAPs), Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), and Long-Term Strategies (LT-LEDS).

This conference seeks to advance the academic discourse but also the policy and international developments so that the agreed goal of "Transitioning away from fossil fuels in energy systems, in a just, orderly and equitable manner, accelerating action in this critical decade, to achieve net zero by 2050 in keeping with the science" (1/CMA.5 para. 28 d) can move closer to reality. Our interdisciplinary focus acknowledges the international and national contestations of pathways and elements that form Just Transitions, and the need to find implementable solutions that reflect the social, economic, technological, legal and ethical dimensions.

## Objectives:

- Assessing progress on the interdisciplinary research agenda of JusTNOW and the JTC in respect of Article 6 implementation and outcomes of COP29 for the emerging country-to-country carbon trading markets & international and national environmental legislation.
- Analysing the potential of technology and AI to manage interdisciplinary decision-making under uncertainty.
- Investigating the potential of Digital Twins as a supporting technology.
- Understanding how stakeholders are recalibrating just transitions in the changing political world order.
- Comparing developments in international law as they emerge from the ICJ and the ITLOS advisory opinions.
- Mapping the science-policy interface with a view to the scientific production and policy uptake of climate science evidence.

## Panel Themes

**Theme 1 - Interdisciplinary Research for Conceptualisations of Just Transitions** explores how it is necessary to examine Just Transition principles from different perspectives and in light of underpinning justice principles. Amidst geo-political pressures, how can frameworks be developed and maintained that

operationalise equity across and between communities, can we measure the progress of just transitions, and if so, how? What are the levers and barriers to equitable resource distribution and governance of global value chains within a low-carbon economy? At the international level, proposals include “designing a new platform of partnerships between developed and developing countries”, to establish “a JTWP implementation mechanism and/or a knowledge portal”. This theme will evaluate the underpinning justice concepts and pathways to influence policymaking at the national, regional and international levels to nurture the interest in and improve the uptake of Just Transition elements in policymaking.

**Theme 2 - Digital and Technical Infrastructures for Just Transitions** focuses on how AI technology can support the development and improvement of legal instruments, examining how digital and technological infrastructures enable or prevent Just Transitions. An international Just Transition framework must provide tools that facilitate the implementation of climate policy and enhance ambition, and ideally, enable the international community to track progress across a range of policies and instruments. The JusTNOW initiative and the JTC will share their preliminary findings on the infrastructure for Just Transitions that integrates the legal, economic and digital tools.

**Theme 3 - Financing Just Transitions** examines financial and cooperation mechanisms, such as various climate and energy funds, carbon crediting and taxes to mobilise resources and implement decarbonising policies. Governments are increasingly integrating crediting frameworks into their policy mix, and for many countries, this entails the promise of private investments closing the financing gap for mitigation and adaptation projects. While new carbon market approaches are becoming available through the operationalisation of Article 6 instruments under the Paris Agreement, some risks and challenges require interdisciplinary attention, as they pertain to the legal, economic and environmental impacts of projects. This theme also examines green financialisation and public-private cooperation arrangements in climate and energy governance. It also considers the implications of international economic and trade law for equitable technology transfer and access to green finance.

**Theme 4 - Science for Just Transitions**, climate science research generates a wealth of information on the drivers of climate change and on the likely impacts of emissions scenarios and the feasibility of reduction pathways. However, translating such data to effective net-zero policies and actions often proves challenging. The conference sets out to identify various instances where there is a gap between available climate science data, on the one hand, and policies or legal action, on the other hand. In some instances, there may be climate data available but with no corresponding legal action. Whereas in other contexts, there may be an identified need among policymakers and stakeholders for climate science evidence, while the data sets available are still insufficient.

**Conference outcomes** will include content for influencing **UNFCCC submissions** and **reports that feed into regulatory and policy agendas at COPs**.

## Agenda

Day One - Thursday 9th October 2025	
Start	Welcome & opening
	<b>Keynote Day 1</b>
Morning	<b>Theme 1 - Interdisciplinary Research for Conceptualisations of Just Transitions</b>
Afternoon	<b>Theme 2 - Digital and Technical Infrastructures for Just Transitions</b>
Evening	Dinner for Speakers / Fireside Chat / Keynote
Day Two - Friday 10th October 2025	
Start	Welcome
	<b>Keynote Day 2</b>
Morning	<b>Theme 3 - Financing Just Transitions</b>
Afternoon	<b>Theme 4 - Science for Just Transitions</b>
End	Closing remarks & end of conference



## Speakers

- Dr Sandra Batten, Senior Economist, Bank of England
- Dr Nelly Bencomo, Associate Professor, Computer Science, Department of Computer Science, Durham University
- Dr John Bothwell, Associate Professor (Reader in Bioenergy), Durham University
- Professor Einar Broch Johnsen, Professor, Department of Informatics, University of Oslo
- Professor Adrian Friday, Professor of Computing and Sustainability, Lancaster University
- Janine Hauer, Researcher, Centre for Interdisciplinary Regional Studies (ZIRS), Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg
- Judge, Tomas Heidar, President of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea
- Professor Gleider Hernández, Professor of Public International Law, KU Leuven
- Assoc. Prof. Dr. Thomas Hoffmann, Tallinn University of Technology
- H.E. Mr Francois Jackman, Ambassador of Barbados and Permanent Representative to the United Nations
- Ingmar Juergens, CEO & Founder, Climate and Company
- Dr Stefan Knauß, Senior Researcher, European Center of Just Transition Research and Impact-Driven Transfer, Martin Luther University
- Professor Laura Marsiliani, Professor in Economics, Durham Business School, Durham University
- Professor Petra Minnerop, Professor of International Law, Durham Law School, Durham University
- Professor Franziska Müller, Professorship of International Development, University of Vienna, Austria
- Hon. Ruth Nankabirwa Ssentamu, Minister of Energy and Mineral Development, Government of Uganda
- Chidinma Onwubere, Company Secretary, InfraCredit
- Dr Friederike Otto, Senior Lecturer in Climate Science, Grantham Institute for Climate Change and the Environment
- Professor Volker Roeben, Dean of the Durham Law School, Durham University
- Dr Katrin Seidel, Senior Researcher, European Center of Just Transition Research and Impact-Driven Transfer, Martin Luther University, Germany
- Professor Uwe Schlink, Senior Researcher, Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research – UFZ, Dept. Urban and Environmental Sociology
- Dr Katalin Sulyok, Associate Professor in International Law and Sustainability, Durham University
- Professor Dr Christian Tietje, LL.M.; Chair for Public Law, European Law and International Economic Law, Director of Institute of Economic Law, Law School, European Center of Just Transition Research and Impact-Driven Transfer, Martin Luther University, Germany
- Dr Amy Elizabeth Walker, Researcher, Institute of Geosciences and Geography, Martin Luther University, Germany
- em. Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. Rüdiger Wolfrum, Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law, Heidelberg, Max Planck Foundation for International Peace and the Rule of Law, Heidelberg
- Professor Maurizio Zollo, Professor of Strategy & Sustainability, Imperial College Business School and Scientific Director, Leonardo Centre on Business for Society





# JusTN0W – *Just transitions to a Net Zero World*

## Executive Summary

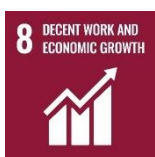
The world is failing to find the just transition pathways to avoid the worst impacts of climate change (IPCC AR6 SYR 2023, UN NDC SYR 2023). Even the Paris Agreement's more ambitious 1.5°C temperature limitation is insufficient to avoid catastrophic sea level rise and increasingly severe extreme weather events. At Durham, we have world-leading expertise in researching the causes and impacts of climate change. Through the JusTN0W initiative, we endeavour to be leading in Just Transition to Net Zero research, to determine if, when, and how we achieve lasting societal well-being for the present and for future generations. JusTN0W therefore identifies a work programme that uses interdisciplinary research to develop sustainable and just solutions to accelerate the decarbonisation of economies. Through investment in JusTN0W, Durham University unrolls a financially sustainable work programme that will last beyond the initial four years of University funding. However, the initial investment enables us to position Durham rapidly and securely at the forefront of a cutting-edge twinning of green and digital transitions. The work will make a distinct contribution to SDG relevant research and Durham's global standing.

## Project Team

Petra Minnerop (Law), Laura Marsiliani (Economics), John Bothwell (Biosciences), Nelly Bencomo (Computer Science), Katalin Sulyok (Law), Pia Andres (Economics), Carsten Meyer (Biosciences), Chien-Yi Chang (Computer Science), Owen Boyle (Project Manager), Kate Morris (Senior Business Development Manager).

## Project co-leads

Adebola Adeyemi (Law), Adefolake Adeyeye (Law), Ashar Aftab (Economics), Amir Atapour-Abarghouei (Computer Science), Smith Azubuike (Law), Ashraf Osman (Engineering), Habib Rahman (Economics), Andrew Russell (Anthropology), Robert Song (Theology), Chris Stokes (Geography), Jia Wang (Law).





# Just Transition Center (JTC)

## Shaping Structural Change through Innovation and Transfer



**The European Center of Just Transition Research and Impact-Driven Transfer (JTC) deals with questions of the day after tomorrow for a just, sustainable and climate-neutral transition.**

Transfer is a two-way process between science, society and business, in which scientific findings are translated into practical innovations and practical experiences are examined in research.

### Objectives

We aim to develop research-based, practice-oriented solutions for the specific challenges and needs of the post-mining region of Central Germany and beyond. Seventeen JTC innovation teams, comprising interdisciplinary members from the humanities and social sciences as well as the natural and material sciences, are jointly researching on pressing issues for ecosocial transformation at Martin Luther University. JTC serves as an incubator, combining scientific approaches with acute social needs to foster future business areas. Research topics include *Just Transitions* for and participation of the local population; demographic change; research into novel materials for plastics, photovoltaic, and bio-based binders as well as the legal tech and digitisation of administrative processes, and into just transition regulations. As a European Union-funded project, JTC also establishes networks with other interregional and international projects and research institutes working on structural change processes. One example is the collaboration between the JTC innovation team A7 'Transregional Just Transition Governance: Socio-legal and polit-economic perspectives' (co-leads Katrin Seidel and Timm Sureau) and the innovation lab C3 'Transformative Learning' (lead Stefan Knauß) with Durham University.

### Research Team 'Transregional Just Transition Governance'

JTC's innovation team examines the legal, political and economic interdependencies that shape transregional (just) transitions governance, focusing on the interplay between legal principles, processes, practices, and conflict regulation. Particular attention is paid to the normative tensions between economic needs and imperatives, climate goals, and social justice.

### Research Team 'Transformative Learning'

JTC's innovation team is guided by the question of what transformative education could look like in times of structural change. It seeks to improve learning in a digitalised world and support people in learning for transformation.