

Call for Session Proposals:
**Connected World Winter Conference
2025 for all four profile themes**
Thursday 30 January 2025
Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

Shared Pathways to a Sustainable and Just Future: **Navigating the Anthropocene**

From challenges to solutions, from power to partnership,
from ego to empathy - embracing a new era.

Session
Submission
Deadline:
31-10-2024

Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam warmly invites scholars and societal stakeholders from all disciplines and all four profile themes to contribute to the Connected World Winter Conference 2025. This conference addresses the profound challenges of our time, a time which is colloquially called the Anthropocene — an epoch in which human activity has become a dominant influence on Earth's climate and environment, leading to new problems of social justice and environmental sustainability. As we face urgent, complex and interconnected crises, this event provides a unique platform for developing collaborative and innovative solutions.

Objective

The conference aims to heighten our awareness and understanding of the Anthropocene, and deliver concrete pathways and solutions for the global poly-crisis through multi-, inter-, and transdisciplinary collaboration. The conference is designed by four main conference tracks and cross links between them. This event is designed for academic scholars and their invited guests from the business and policymaking communities.

Conference tracks:

Connected World, Science for Sustainability, Human Health and Life Sciences and Governance for Society

The conference is organised around four thematic tracks, each designed to foster interdisciplinary collaboration in addressing the challenges of the Anthropocene. Each interested researcher invites contributions from their research networks to propose sessions that unlock the intellectual potential of their sector. These themes encompass different problems that are centred around the poly-crises of our society, for example, certainly not limited to, overstepped planetary boundaries, conflicts and inequalities, increasing health costs and polarisation and democracy and addressing sustainable development goals often requiring an integrated approach.

- 1. Connected World** *How can we ensure that digitalisation services society rather than dictates it, particularly for those less digitally skilled? How do we bridge cultural and ideological divides, as well as social and economic inequalities exacerbated by global networks and migration? How can we connect the disconnected and create a truly inclusive society?*
- 2. Human Health and Life Sciences** *With rising populations and healthcare costs, how can we distribute limited healthcare resources sustainably and equitably? How can we support people in leading healthy lives and optimising their well-being? How can we reduce health disparities across social groups, enhance self-reliance, and empower individuals to manage their own health and chronic conditions? How do we ensure future-proof, accessible, and high quality healthcare?*
- 3. Science for Sustainability** *How can we restore balance between people, the environment and the economy? How do we achieve a fair and sustainable world, particularly for the poorest and most vulnerable who are most affected by environmental degradation and climate change? How should we produce and consume energy, food, and water, and how do we protect land, biodiversity and marine life? How can we equitably distribute the benefits and burdens among commercial entities and the population?*
- 4. Governance for Society** *How can we restore a healthy balance between individual freedom and collective interest in society? How can leaders reduce social divides among citizens, employees, patients, or consumers? What freedoms and responsibilities should be entrusted to citizens, and where is a stronger governance needed to protect the vulnerable and strengthen their position? How should society respond to increasing polarisation?*

Cross conference track sessions and questions

After highlighting the themes and angles from the four conference tracks, we can well imagine that interesting themes for proposed sessions could arise from the intersection of these four conference tracks.

For example:

- What does a sustainable lifestyle look like that makes you live healthier for longer and leaves room for the balanced regeneration of our earth's resources?
- How do people stay connected to each other and their environment on a local level, while e.g. individualisation, work pressure and digitalisation seem to promote separateness?
- How do we keep our society liveable when there are not enough people around to provide crucial services for society?
- How do we create greater awareness and decisiveness around the systemic nature of 'all things Anthropocene' and/or 'climate justice'?

We seek contributions on themes including (but not limited to):

We seek contributions that link multiple profile themes or that advance a question from a single conference theme by connecting it to a subset of one of the themes below, or to an alternative sustainability theme or question that may arise:

- Economic paradigms and policy failures
- Political manifestos and ambiguities
- Planetary boundaries and anthropological shifts
- Convivial citizenship and resilient education
- Transitions from possession to usage and political action
- Technological innovations and social responsibility
- Exploring human interaction: from individualistic, matter-based to holistic, heart-based living
- Interdisciplinary research and education addressing global challenges
- Engaging in dialogues and collaborative solutions on sustainability, equity, resilience, health and well-being, and moral responsibility
- Paradigms of autonomy, sharing and connection

Session formats

We encourage innovative thinking and diverse formats to foster meaningful engagement and impactful outcomes:

- **Round table discussions:** In-depth small group conversations on specific topics.
- **PICO sessions:** Rapid presentations followed by dynamic discussions.
- **Poster sessions:** Visual presentations with interactive pitches.
- **Convergence spaces:** Collaborative integration of diverse research.
- **Workshops:** Hands-on, solution-focused sessions on real-world problems.
- **Experiential experiences:** Immersive activities, such as field excursions, simulations, and interactive installations, offering a tangible understanding of Anthropocene challenges.
- **Panel discussions:** Presentations with extensive audience engagement.
- **T-connections:** Bridging deep expertise with broader interdisciplinary insights, facilitating comprehensive understanding and collaboration.
- **Interactive conference sessions:** Presentations with enhanced interactivity.

Conference overview

The conference features dynamic sessions over two days, designed to foster interdisciplinary collaboration and actionable outcomes:

In short – Introduction to the interconnected societal aspects of the Anthropocene, featuring opening remarks, keynote speeches, and sessions exploring challenges and opportunities. Focus on developing concrete solutions and shared pathways through workshops, panel discussions, keynotes, and other creative formats.

Thursday 30 January

09.00 - 10.00	Opening, keynote
10.00 - 10.30	Break
10.30 - 12.00	Session 1
12.00 - 13.00	Session 2
13.00 - 14.00	Lunch
14.00 - 15.30	Session 3
15.30 - 16.30	Session 4
16.30 - 17.00	Break
17.00 - 18.00	Session 5



Deliverables

Each session is expected to produce a concrete solution or pathway for the session's grand challenge. Dialogue in each session will be led by a designated Session Leader or Facilitator, who will guide the discussions, ensure active participation, and help navigate the conversation towards actionable solutions.

Submission requirements

- **Title and abstract:** Submit a title and a 200-word abstract of your session proposal.
- **Session format:** Indicate your preferred session format.
- **Session content:** Specify number of session contributions by profile theme, including the names of the invited speakers.
- **Relevance:** Explain how your (profile theme) contribution aligns with the conference themes and objectives.
- **Deliverable:** Specify the deliverable you aim to produce with the participants.
- Submit your session proposal before 31-10-2024 to connectedworld@vu.nl
- **Important dates:**
 - Submission deadline: 31 October 2024
 - Author notification: 15 November 2024
 - Author registration: 30 November 2024
 - Final proposal submission: 30 November 2024

Additional opportunities for engagement

Participants will have the opportunity to engage with parallel events, including the 7th Conference of the Dutch Academic Network on Circular Economy (DANCE-7), which will run on 31 January 2025. The conference also features a selection of documentaries on the Anthropocene's challenges, curated by external partners, along with musical interventions and outside excursions in urban and nature settings.

Join us

Submit your session proposal and contribute your ideas to make this conference a transformative experience.

Together, we can navigate the Anthropocene and build a sustainable future.

Join us in shaping a sustainable and equitable future!

Submit your session proposal to connectedworld@vu.nl

For more information, contact Sjoerd Kluiving (s.j.kluiving@vu.nl).

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