



Future Earth regional workshop for Africa: 31 October – 02 November 2012

Cape Town, South Africa

General information

Future Earth is a 10-year international initiative on Earth system research for global sustainability. The goal of Future Earth is to provide the knowledge required for societies in the world to face risks posed by global environmental change and to seize opportunities in a transition to global sustainability.

While the scope of Future Earth is global, a number of issues require region-specific approaches and alliances to provide robust observation and forecast of regional environmental changes, assess potential impacts and vulnerabilities, explore mitigation and adaptation pathways, etc. Regions, as early witnesses of environmental changes, have therefore a critical contribution to make in assessing global environmental change and building a global picture for transitioning towards sustainability. Regions have also shown that they have a fundamental role to play in implementing sustainability research and facilitate its application, through identifying needs and priorities from researchers and practitioners, including at the national level, stimulating cooperation and partnerships, and promoting institutional coherence.

This underpins the commitment to develop distributed knowledge nodes and regional initiatives, within the global framework of Future Earth, which can deliver the knowledge needed to address real world problems at local and regional scales, from the interconnected perspective of global environmental change.

As Future Earth is at an early stage of development, ICSU, on behalf of a broad Science and Technology Alliance for Global Sustainability - which also includes ISSC, the Belmont Forum of global change research funding agencies, UNESCO, UNEP, UNU and WMO as observer - wishes to engage regions in shaping the initiative. To this end, a set of regional workshops sponsored by the Swedish International Development cooperation Agency (SIDA) is organized as a first step in what we hope to be a long and successful engagement with the region in developing and delivering Future Earth.

The workshop will be held over 3 days with a number of interactive sessions in plenary and in sub-groups to discuss, challenge, regionalize and specify the initial design options on the global research framework for Future Earth and the governance structure that an international Transition Team of experts have been working on. The workshop will gather 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.

The workshop will discuss the present vision and recommend further developments for the design of Future Earth, including:

- What are your views on the current draft research framework and the governance structure outline proposed by the Transition Team?
- What are the development challenges in the region for which integrated and solutions-oriented research is needed?
- What does it take to deliver Future Earth research in the region? What are the needs to enhance global environmental change research and ensure effective knowledge users participation in defining and delivering that research?
- Given existing activities and networks, what form and function could the Future Earth regional node take? What are the opportunities to deliver Future Earth in the region?

Relevant documentation will be sent prior to the meeting to the participants who have confirmed their attendance.

The workshops will feed into the recommendations, currently prepared by the Transition Team, to the governing bodies of Future Earth that will start its interim operating phase from 2013 onwards.

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