

# Just Transitions to a Net Zero World

## Second Annual International Conference

Jointly convened by Durham University's Centre for Sustainable Development Law and Policy (CSDLP) and the European Center of Just Transition Research and Impact-Driven Transfer (JTC) at Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg

**Thursday 9 & Friday 10 October 2025**  
**Redhills Durham Miners Hall, Durham**





## 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 international, regional, and national environmental legislation.
- Analysing the potential of the emerging digital technologies, including AI, to manage interdisciplinary decision-making under uncertainty and 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, the ITLOS, and IACtHR advisory opinions.
- Mapping the science-policy interface with a view to the scientific production and policy uptake of climate science evidence.

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



# Conference programme

## Day One, Thursday, 9 October 2025

08:30 – 09:00	Registration, coffee & networking
09:00 – 09:15	Welcome from Durham University and Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg <b>Prof Martin Evans</b> , Executive Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences, Durham University <b>Prof Kieran Fernandes</b> , Executive Dean, Faculty of Business, Durham University <b>Prof Christian Tietje</b> , Chair for Public Law, European Center of Just Transition Research and Impact-Driven Transfer, Martin Luther University, Germany
09:15 – 09:20	JusTNOW a Year On & Introduction to Day One - <b>Prof Petra Minnerop</b> , Durham University
09:20 – 10:00	<b>Morning keynote</b> <b>Prof Elisa Morgera</b> <b>UN Special Rapporteur on Climate Change and Human Rights; Professor of International Law and Sustainability at Durham University; and part-time Professor at the University of Eastern Finland</b> Presentation - A Turning Point in the Protection of the Climate System and Human Rights: How Does Legal Clarity Support Transformation?

### Theme 1 - Interdisciplinary Research for Conceptualisations of Just Transitions

Chair: **Prof Petra Minnerop**, Professor of International Law, Director of the CSDLP, Principal Investigator of the JusTNOW Initiative, Durham University

10:00 – 10:20	<b>Prof Rüdiger Wolfrum</b> Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law, Heidelberg, Max Planck Foundation for International Peace and the Rule of Law, Heidelberg Presentation - The Juridical Protection of Issues in the Interest of the International Community: Is the Shift to National Courts an Adequate Solution?
10:20 – 10:40	<b>Dr Kevin Grecksch</b> Associate Professor, School of Geography and the Environment, University of Oxford Presentation - Shaping (Just) Transitions: Historic Narratives and Property Rights
10:40 – 11:00	Panel discussion & questions from the audience
11:00 – 11:30	<b>Morning coffee, networking and posters</b>

### Launch of Poster Exhibition Sessions

Facilitator: **Prof Laura Marsiliani**, Professor in Economics, Faculty of Business Associate Dean for Ethics, Responsibility and Sustainability (ERS), Principal Investigator of the JusTNOW Initiative, Durham University

11:30 – 11:50	<b>Prof Gleider Hernández</b> Professor of Public International Law, KU Leuven Presentation - And now the Hard Part: Taking Stock of the ICJ Advisory Opinion
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**11:50 – 12:10**

**Dr Katalin Sulyok**

Associate Professor in International Law and Sustainability, Durham University

Presentation - Conceptualizing the Desirable Future: Locating and Defining “Just Transition” in International Law

**12:10 – 12:30**

**Dr Amy Elizabeth Walker**

Researcher, Institute of Geosciences and Geography and European Center of Just Transition Research and Impact-Driven Transfer, Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg, Germany

**Felix Schiedlowski**

Centre for Interdisciplinary Regional Studies (ZIRS), Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg, Germany

Presentation - Ethnographic Reflections on the Limits of Just Transition Interventions in the Central German Coal Mining Just Transition Territory

**12:30 – 12:55**

Panel discussion & questions from the audience

**12:55 – 13:05**

Group Photo

**13:05 – 14:05**

**Lunch, networking & posters**

## Theme 2 - Digital and Technical Infrastructures for Just Transitions

Chair: **Danielle Yeow**, Adjunct Senior Research Fellow and Lead, Climate Change Law and Policy, Centre for International Law, National University of Singapore

**14:05 – 14:25**

**Dr Nelly Bencomo**

Associate Professor, Department of Computer Science, Principal Investigator of the JusTNOW Initiative, Durham University

**14:25 – 14:45**

**Prof Einar Broch Johnsen**

Professor, Department of Informatics, University of Oslo

Presentation - Digital Twins and the Natural Environment

**14:45 – 15:05**

**Prof Adrian Friday**

Professor of Computing and Sustainability, Lancaster University

Presentation - Information and Communications Technology (ICT): Benefit or Threat to a Just Net Zero Transition?

**15:05 – 15:30**

**Prof Gordon Blair**

Head of Environmental Digital Strategy, UKCEH

Presentation – A Multi-Dimensional Approach to the Future of Digital Research Infrastructure for Systemic Environmental Science: One Year On

**15:30 – 15:55**

**Afternoon coffee, networking & posters**

**15:55 – 16:15**

**Dr Thomas Hoffmann**

Associate Professor, Tallinn University of Technology

Presentation - e-Estonia in Just Transition

**16:15 – 16:35**

Panel discussion & questions from the audience

- 16:35 – 16:55** **Dr Janine Hauer**  
 Researcher, Institute for Social and Cultural Anthropology, Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg  
 Presentation - When Solutions become Problems: Thoughts on 'Toxic Infrastructures' as Challenge for Just Transitions
- 16:55 – 17:20** Closing remarks Day One - **Prof Petra Minnerop**, Durham University & **Prof Christian Tietje**, Martin Luther University

**Speakers' Dinner venue, Durham Cathedral Prior's Hall (19:00)**

*As a thank you, a dinner has been organised for all conference speakers at Durham Cathedral.*

## Conference programme

### Day Two, Friday 10 October 2025

- 08:30 – 09:00** Coffee and networking
- 09:00 – 09:10** Introduction to Day Two - **Prof Laura Marsiliani**, Durham University & **PD Dr Katrin Seidel**, Martin Luther University
- 09:10 – 09:50** **Morning keynote** (*Introduction by Dr Pia Andres, JusTNOW*)  
**Prof Ralf Martin**  
 Principal Economist (Climate, Natural Resources & Sustainability) &  
 Professor of Economics (Imperial College Business School, London)  
 Economics and Private Sector Development  
 IFC International Finance Corporation, World Bank Group

### Theme 3 - Science for Just Transitions

**Chair: Prof Christian Tietje**, 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

- 09:50 – 10:10** **Prof Friederike Otto**  
 Professor in Climate Science, Centre for Environmental Policy, Imperial College  
 Presentation - From World Weather Attribution to Losses and Damages
- 10:10 – 10:30** **Prof Uwe Schlink**  
 Senior Researcher, Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research – UFZ, Dept. Urban and Environmental Sociology  
 Presentation - Empowering People with Knowledge about their Exposure to Air Pollution
- 10:30 – 10:50** Panel discussion & questions from the audience
- 10:50 – 11:10** **Morning coffee, networking & posters**
- 11:10 – 11:30** **Prof Maurizio Zollo**  
 Professor of Strategy & Sustainability, Imperial College Business School and Scientific Director, Leonardo Centre on Business for Society  
 Presentation - The Evolution of Corporate Sustainability Behaviour and its Systemic Consequences

<b>11:30 – 11:50</b>	<b>Dr John Bothwell</b> Associate Professor (Reader in Bioenergy), Principal Investigator of the JusTN0W Initiative, Durham University
<b>11:50 – 12:10</b>	<b>Dr Stefan Knauß</b> Senior Researcher, European Center of Just Transition Research and Impact-Driven Transfer, Martin Luther University <i>Presentation - Transforming Justice: The Rights and Values of Nature</i>
<b>12:10 – 12:30</b>	Panel discussion & questions from the audience
<b>12:30 – 13:30</b>	<b>Lunch, networking &amp; posters</b>

## Theme 4 - Financing Just Transitions

Chair: **Prof Laura Marsiliani**, Professor in Economics, Faculty of Business Associate Dean for Ethics, Responsibility and Sustainability (ERS), Principal Investigator of the JusTN0W Initiative, Durham University

<b>13:30 -13:50</b>	<b>H.E. Mr Francois Jackman</b> Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Barbados to the United Nations (Barbados) <i>Presentation - Financing Just Transitions: a Diplomatic Perspective</i>
<b>14:10 – 14:30</b>	<b>Prof Petra Minnerop</b> Professor of International Law, Director of the CSDLP, Principal Investigator of the JusTN0W Initiative, Durham University <i>Presentation - The Global Compliance Carbon Market: Illusion or Solution?</i>
<b>14:30 – 14:50</b>	<b>PD Dr Katrin Seidel</b> Senior Researcher, European Center of Just Transition Research and Impact-Driven Transfer, Martin Luther University, Germany <i>Presentation - The Justice Gap in Just Energy Transition Partnerships: Bridging Rhetoric and Reality in Climate Finance</i>
<b>14:50 – 15:10</b>	Panel discussion & questions from the audience
<b>15:10 – 15:30</b>	<b>Afternoon coffee, networking &amp; poster exhibition</b>
<b>15:30 – 15:50</b>	<b>Dr Joseph Kobusheshe</b> Director Environment, Health and Safety, Petroleum Authority of Uganda <i>Presentation - Equity in Just Transitions</i>
<b>15:50 – 16:10</b>	<b>Dr Sandra Batten</b> Senior Economist, Bank of England
<b>16:10 – 16:30</b>	<b>Ingmar Juergens</b> CEO & Founder, Climate and Company <i>Presentation - The Role of the Financial Sector in the Just Transition [Toward a Nature Positive and Climate Neutral Future]</i>
<b>16:30 – 16:50</b>	Panel discussion & questions from the audience
<b>16:50 – 17:00</b>	Closing remarks Day Two – <b>Prof Petra Minnerop</b> , Durham University & <b>Prof Christian Tietje</b> , Martin Luther University

Theme 4 is supported by the Centre for Environmental and Energy Economics



**Durham**  
University

Business School  
Centre for Environmental  
and Energy Economics



# Evening Drinks Reception

17:00 to 19:00

Join speakers and delegates from the day and enjoy refreshments and informal networking.

Registrations for the conference are now open and will be allocated on a first come, first served basis. To register and secure your place, please visit the following link or scan the QR code.

<https://pay.durham.ac.uk/event-durham/just-transitions-to-a-net-zero-2025>



For further information on either the JusTN0W project or the JTC, please email the following contacts in the first instance:

**JusTN0W – Just Transitions to a Net Zero World**

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**Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg**

European Centre of Just Transition Research and Impact-Driven Transfer (JTC)  
Transregional Just Transition Governance: socio-legal and polit-economic perspectives  
PD Dr. Katrin Seidel, [katrin.seidel@jura.uni-halle.de](mailto:katrin.seidel@jura.uni-halle.de)