

Workshop

Responsibility for Sustainability. Combining the Perspectives of Economics and Philosophy

June 21–24, 2012 | Camp Reinsehlen, Germany

Sustainability Economics Group, Leuphana University of Lüneburg, Germany
Ecological, Environmental and Resource Economics Group, University of Kiel, Germany

Background

The vision of *sustainability* aims at justice in using natural resources as well as manufactured goods for the satisfaction of human needs and wants over the long-term future. This includes intergenerational and intragenerational justice, as well as justice towards nature. As the future is uncertain, however, a development path that is expected to be sustainable *ex ante* may actually turn out to be unsustainable *ex post*. This raises the question of 'What exactly is implied by and required for sustainability if current actions have uncertain future outcomes?'

Against this background, the workshop explores the hypothesis that the concept of *responsibility* can fill a gap in our thinking of how to define, and operationalize, sustainability under uncertainty. The philosophical concept of responsibility relates an abstract and general norm (e.g. sustainability) to the specific facts of a concrete action context (e.g. ecological-economic system dynamics), to guide action. It applies to actors at all levels of organization, including individuals, corporations, and governments. The concept is especially relevant in situations characterized by limited knowledge about the consequences of actions and asymmetry of agents (e.g. in terms of resource endowment or capacity to act), which typically prevail in decision contexts where sustainability is at issue.

Bringing together the perspectives of economics and philosophy, as well as related disciplines such as political science, the workshop will discuss in particular:

- principles of responsibility,
- limits to responsibility,
- trade-offs between different objectives of justice, other normative objectives and values,
- societal decision-making under uncertainty in view of long-term ecological-economic system dynamics,
- institutionalization of responsibility for sustainability.

Aims and Scope

The aims of the workshop are threefold: (1) Taking stock of the scholarly discussion of responsibility in view of sustainability. (2) Exploring the potential of conceptualizing sustainability under uncertainty as responsibility. (3) Developing new approaches and concepts for future research on responsibility for sustainability under uncertainty.

The workshop brings together a small and focused group of approximately 25 participants, including 10 eminent invited speakers, in a stimulating environment for an intensive and fruitful discussion. Participation is by personal invitation only.

Invited Speakers

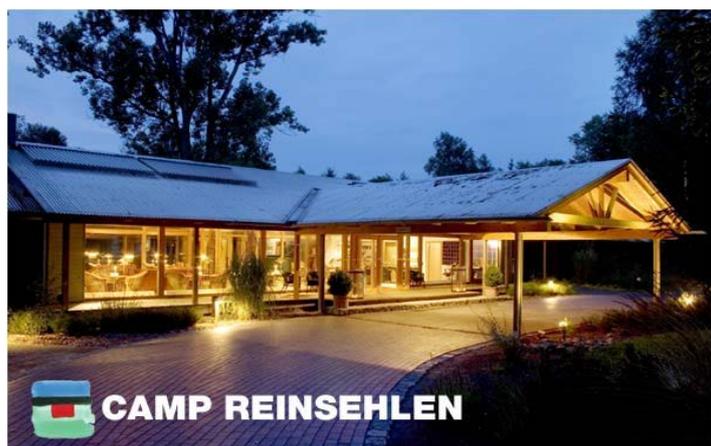
Geir Asheim	University of Oslo, Norway
Christian Becker	Pennsylvania State University, USA
Donald A. Brown	Pennsylvania State University, USA
Patricia Glazebrook	University of North Texas, USA
Frank Krysiak	University of Basel, Switzerland
Jessica Nihlén Fahlquist	Technical University of Delft, The Netherlands
Edward Page	University of Warwick, UK
Thomas Petersen	University of Heidelberg, Germany
John E. Roemer	Yale University, USA
Garrath Williams	Lancaster University, UK

Venue



The workshop will take place at the conference guest house Camp Reinsehlen in the heart of the Lüneburg Heath, just 30 minutes from Hamburg. The quietness and colorful vastness of its traditionally conserved landscape provides a peaceful atmosphere and recreational environment which should build the basis to stimulate fruitful discussions and productive research. The guest house's philosophy to live in harmony with nature and among each other, which serves the topic of the event, is furthered by the cheerful atmosphere and the celebration of the deliberate and exquisite slow food concept. Last not least, the heathlands are a nice example for a strongly coupled ecological-economic system.

<http://www.campreinsehlen.de>



Program

Thursday, June 21, 2012

before 6:00 pm	arrival and check-in
6:30 pm	welcome reception
7:30 pm	dinner

Friday, June 22, 2012

full day	scientific program, hike in the Lüneburg Heath
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Saturday, June 23, 2012

full day	scientific program
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Sunday, June 24, 2012

after breakfast	check-out
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Hosts

The workshop is organized jointly by the *Sustainability Economics Group* at *Leuphana University of Lüneburg* (head: Prof. Dr. Stefan Baumgärtner) and the *Ecological, Environmental and Resource Economics Group* at the *University of Kiel* (head: Prof. Dr. Martin F. Quaas):

<http://www.leuphana.de/en/stefan-baumgaertner.html>

<http://www.bwl.uni-kiel.de/eree/default.html>

Contact

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Local and administrative organizer:

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Travel Information

By plane:

The closest international airport is Hamburg (HAM). There will be a shuttle transfer from/to the airport for workshop participants.

By train:

The most convenient railway station is Wintermoor. The conference venue can be reached from the station by taxi.

Detailed travel information will be provided later.

Acknowledgement

The workshop is funded through a grant from the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research as part of its program *Economics for Sustainability* (www.wi-n.org/en/index.php).

