

## THE INSTITUTE

*The IASS is funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research and the Ministry of Science, Research and Culture of the Federal State of Brandenburg.*



Air quality is one focus of research at the IASS. © Rolf Schulten

### Employees

Approximately 160 people from around the world currently work at the institute - including about 120 researchers.

### Research Disciplines

The researchers at the institute represent roughly 30 different academic disciplines.

### Fellows

Up to 40 researchers from across the globe undertake fellowships at the institute each year.

### Events

The institute organises and hosts up to 100 events each year - from workshops and expert discussions to academic conferences.

## CURIOUS?

### Scientific Management

**Prof. Dr Mark G. Lawrence** Managing Scientific Director  
**Prof. Dr Patrizia Nanz** Scientific Director

**Prof. Dr Ortwin Renn**  
Scientific Director

### Get in touch with us

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ViSdP: Prof. Dr Mark G. Lawrence,  
Managing Scientific Director

### The location of the IASS in Potsdam



Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies



## RESEARCH AND DIALOGUE FOR SUSTAINABLE SOCIETIES



## THE FOUNDING

*“We are standing at a moment in history when a Great Transformation is needed to respond to the immense threat to our planet. This transformation must begin immediately.”*

This call for urgent action was articulated by leading international researchers and decision-makers in the so-called Potsdam Memorandum, which was adopted at the 2007 Nobel Laureates Symposium “Global Sustainability: A Nobel Cause” in Potsdam, Germany. The memorandum called for a global initiative to promote research for sustainable development.

Just two years later, the Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies was founded with the aim of advancing this transformation through excellent research and strategic dialogue with partners from academia, policy-making, administration, business, and civil society.

Taking its cue from the Potsdam Memorandum, the institute taps into “all sources of ingenuity”, gathers together different forms of knowledge, and works to forge a new contract between science and society.



The office building on Helmholtzstrasse. © Rolf Schulten



## OUR PURPOSE

*The IASS conducts research with the goal of identifying and advancing transformation processes towards sustainable societies in Germany and abroad. What factors determine the success of such transformation processes? And how can – and should – they be designed? These are the questions that preoccupy IASS researchers in their work on different aspects of sustainability.*



Is CO<sub>2</sub> recycling a feasible option for society? © Rolf Schulten

### Our Mission

is to develop robust knowledge that will pave the way towards sustainable societies. Our research is transdisciplinary and is conducted in cooperation with partners from science, policymaking, and society in order to devise solutions for pressing sustainability challenges and to support national and international decision-making processes.

### Our Approach

is solution-oriented and collaborative. We strive to develop new and effective ways to bridge the divide between society and science. In order to enhance the impact of our work, we work closely with our partners and other societal actors to develop research activities together from the ground up. This collaborative approach fosters debate, generates innovative ideas, and promotes transformation processes towards a more sustainable society.

## OUR RESEARCH AREAS

Research conducted at the IASS addresses three political processes that are crucial to our future: the implementation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, the global energy transition, and the fulfilment of the Paris Climate Agreement. These transformation processes require bold action on the part of the global community to create more sustainable economies and societies.

### Implementing the Sustainable Development Goals

The Science Platform Sustainability 2030 is hosted by the IASS in cooperation with several partners in order to support the implementation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals in Germany. Research conducted under its auspices also supports the Sustainable Development Strategy of the German government.

### Creating Low-Carbon Energy Systems

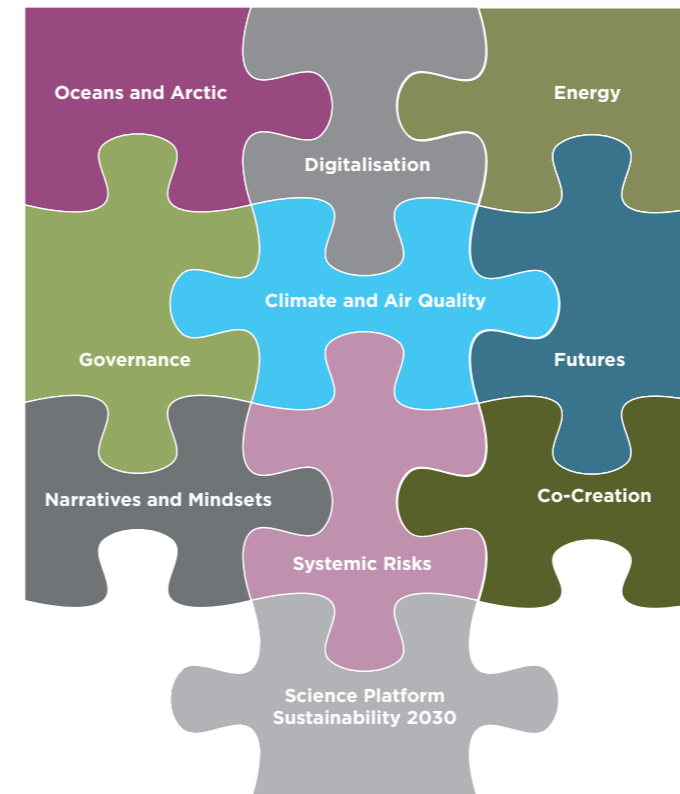
The social sustainability of the energy transition in Germany is a central focus of our research on the future of the national and international energy systems. A social sustainability barometer currently being developed at the institute will be used to gather and analyse empirical data on the impacts of this transformation.

### Implementing the Paris Agreement

Urgent action is required if we are to achieve the goal of limiting the rise in global temperature to 1.5 to 2 degrees Celsius. As a result, targeted interventions in the climate system have become the subject of increasing debate. However, these interventions harbour risks and raise questions that cut across science, technology, policy, culture, and ethics.

## OUR RESEARCH PROJECTS

The IASS has developed 20 research projects that address our core topics and related fields for the funding period through to mid-2021. Our researchers are also engaged in approximately 20 third-party funded projects at present. Close links exist between these diverse research efforts.



## OUR RESULTS

**The IASS generates knowledge for a changing world. Our research produces different forms of knowledge to foster sustainable development.**

### Systems Knowledge

How do complex systems operate? What are the impacts of interventions in the environment and society? Addressing these questions requires both subject-specific expertise and interdisciplinary cooperation.

### Orientation Knowledge

Which sustainable development goals matter the most? This ethical issue is critical to efforts to guide change processes, yet it is often neglected in research relating to sustainable development.

### Transformation Knowledge

How can sustainable development be translated into concrete action? Fostering change calls for in-depth knowledge of political and societal processes.

**The IASS fosters active knowledge transfer.**

#### ■ Publications:

IASS publications span a range of formats, including policy briefs, studies, discussion papers and fact sheets.

#### ■ Website and blog:

Our website [www.iass-potsdam.de/en](http://www.iass-potsdam.de/en) hosts a wealth of information and blogs by our researchers.

#### ■ Fellowship programme:

The IASS invites researchers from around the world to work on developing new solutions for a sustainable future.