Stockholm Resilience Centre



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Wayfinder: a resilience guide for navigating toward sustainable futures wayfinder.earth

Stockholm Resilience Centre Sustainability Science for Biosphere Stewardship







What is Wayfinder?

Wayfinder is a hands-on approach for resilience assessment, planning and action in social-ecological systems. Wayfinder encourages a new generation of resilience practice that will help development practitioners, policymakers and other change makers navigate towards sustainable, safe and just futures.

USING THE WAYFINDER GUIDE, participants work together to strengthen and refine their understanding about the system in focus, the sustainability challenges they face, and to develop innovative strategies for creating adaptive and transformative change. At the same time, they build their own capacity for creating the change they want to see.

Who is it for?

Wayfinder is a free and open online platform that is available for all to use. It has been specifically designed for development practitioners, planners, managers and other change makers who are working with sustainable development challenges around the world. It is an approach that can be tailored to a wide range of contexts and projects.

What will you get out of using Wayfinder?

- Using Wayfinder will generate three main outcomes:
- **1** It will bring people together to form a capable and legitimate coalition for change that can lead the way forward, and make sure the process leads to action.
- 2 Through the Wayfinder process, participants will develop an in-depth understanding of the social-ecological system dynamics at the root of the sustainability challenge they face. This provides an entry point for being able to design effective strategies for change that will have an impact on the system's development trajectory.
- **3** Finally, the process will generate a concrete and plausible change narrative that highlights systemic leverage points, the agency to influence those leverage points in relation to the overall opportunity context that allows or hinders change, summarized in a strategic action plan consisting of a set of strategies for adaptive and/or transformative system change.

How does it work?

WAYFINDER consists of 5 phases divided into 15 modules, within which there are 40 work cards that you work through iteratively.

Wayfinder is not a purely technical exercise. The purpose is to develop sufficient collective understanding and insight into complex system dynamics to allow stakeholders at multiple levels to 'learn' their way towards a more sustainable future together. We constantly ask the Wayfinder user to balance between a fair and legitimate process for knowledge generation and decision making, and a sound





Building a coalition for change

The journey begins by building a committed, capable and legitimate coalition for change that can drive the Wayfinder process forward

and ensure a long-term positive impact.

Phase 2

Creating a shared understanding of system identity



articulating the aspirations for the system, and defining the most pressing sustainability challenges.

Phase 3 Exploring system dynamics



heart of the sustainability challenges people face – what are the feedbacks that keep the system in this situation? understanding of system dynamics in the Anthropocene. Achieving this balance provides the best hope for creating change in social-ecological systems.

Each of the phases has a specific purpose. Starting by building a *coalition for change* that can lead the process forward, you move on to create a *shared understanding of the identity of your system, explore system dynamics, develop strategies for change*, and implement these through a learningby-doing approach that will enable you to collectively *learn your way forward* towards a more sustainable future.





Phase 4 Developing innovative strategies for change

Drawing on the understanding of system dynamics, the focus here is to design innovative

strategies for adaptive or transformative change that address the challenges, while at the same time maintaining long term adaptive and transformative capacity in the system. Wayfinder emphasizes the need for strategies that help break entrenched patterns and "re-wire" social-ecological interactions to open up for sustainable, safe and just development trajectories.



Phase 5 Learning your way forward

At this time in the Wayfinder process it is time to move from assessment and planning into action. The focus is on learning your

way forward by building a 'learning-by-doing' approach to implementation, where actions are implemented that continually test assumptions, fill knowledge gaps and improve understanding while navigating towards a more sustainable, safe and just future.



Why is it needed?

We live in a new era, the Anthropocene, where humans have become the dominant force of change on our planet. While many parts of the world have seen rapid social, economic and technological development, there are still severe problems of poverty and inequity. At the same time, and linked to this, we face challenges of accelerating climate change, biodiversity loss and growing pressures on natural resources, to the extent that we are approaching critical planetary boundaries. Many places and systems around the world, in developed and developing contexts require deep, transformative change if we are to achieve a sustainable, safe and just future for all.

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Find more information at:

www.wayfinder.earth www.rethink.earth/wayfinder www.graid.earth/projects/wayfinder