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

**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 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 learning-by-doing approach that will enable you to collectively learn your way forward towards a more sustainable future.

**What will you get out of using Wayfinder?**

Using Wayfinder will generate three main outcomes:

1. **Building a coalition for change**
   - 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. **Creating a shared understanding of system identity**
   - Together with a wide group of stakeholders, the focus is on the system of interest, articulating the aspirations for the system, and defining the most pressing sustainability challenges.

3. **Exploring system dynamics**
   - The main objective is to deepen the understanding about how the system works, and to tease out the system dynamics at the heart of the sustainability challenges people face – what are the feedbacks that keep the system in this situation?

**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.
**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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