

## Workshop

# What can we, the EPOS Community, DO to tackle the causes and consequences of Climate Change?

## Reflections and Actions for us as Researchers, Educators and Practitioners

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### Abstract

Never before have we known with such confidence that many of the planet's species and ecosystems face ecological and social collapse unless action is taken immediately. This is the result of climate change, caused by man-made industrialization, rising populations and on-going resource depletion. Projects will be a key vehicle to tackle causes as well as consequences of climate change. In this document, we propose the development of a workshop at EPOC 2016 to discuss what we as project scholars can DO to support initiatives to tackle the causes and consequences of climate change.

The workshop will be a starting point for the development of a hub of project scholars interested and committed to the topic. This hub will organize the development of joint research proposal, publications and movements to tackle climate change.

## 1 Background understanding on Climate Change

Prediction is always hard, except perhaps when the future is just about to hit you in the face. And this is about to happen to mankind. Never before have we known with such confidence that many of the planet's species and ecosystems face ecological and social collapse unless action is taken immediately. This is the result of climate change, caused by man-made industrialization, rising populations and ongoing resource depletion. Its impact will for many, although not all, be enormous if not catastrophic. Flooding and storm damage, inundation and power outages, loss of biodiversity and changing habits and habitats are inevitable. Yet as a human collective, we seem to be sleepwalking into this new age, the Anthropocene, doing too little, too late.

Climate change can be seen as a particular dimension of sustainability, a term with both physical and social components. 'Sustainable development' became famous as "development that meets today's needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (Bruntland, 1987). In later years it has taken on a more general meaning and, with its 'triple bottom line' – environmental, ecological and economic – has become increasingly popular.

Climate change, as a natural science phenomenon, has clearer goals and metrics than sustainability – preeminently, if simplistically, global temperature rise. The 2010 UN Climate Change Conference agreed that global warming should be limited to a rise of 2°C in the 21st century compared to the pre-industrial era (but was silent on how we are to achieve this goal). We are nowhere near this target; 3 to 4°C looks more likely, which will be disastrous to many but arguably not all. CO<sub>2</sub> is the largest contributor to climate change, with methane and nitrous oxide also contributing. The main sources of these 'greenhouse gases' are electricity generation, transport, land-use changes, and agriculture, with electricity generation and transport growing at the fastest rates. The largest single user of electricity in many countries is the wasteful heating and cooling of buildings.

Projects are a fundamental building block in fixed capital formation and societal change and should therefore be important in tackling the causes and consequences of climate change. Yet strangely there has been little written or said so far on the subject – though there is much more on Sustainability. We need to manage each project effectively and efficiently, and most importantly, we need to develop an enabling context for projects – instigating action (the start of new projects), coordinating multiple projects, exchanging knowledge, managing portfolios, monitoring our progress towards our vision, encouraging 'strategic fit', etc.

Against this background, this workshop will discuss the question: **What can we, the EPOS Community (and the project scholar community in general) do to tackle the causes and consequences of Climate Change?**

## 2 Structure of the Workshop

The workshop is divided into four parts:

- Brief introduction to the current project-related challenges in climate change initiatives and to the structure of the workshop
- Knowledge Café
- Individual reflection on actions
- Open discussion

**Introduction:** Brief introduction to the current project-related challenges in climate change initiatives and to the structure of the workshop [5-10 minutes]

**Knowledge Café:** As we are interested in engaging participants in exploring a complex area, instead of employing traditional workshop methods such as panel discussions, we propose a ‘Knowledge Café’, which “aims to provide an open and creative conversation on a topic of mutual interest to surface their collective knowledge, share ideas and insights, and gain a deeper understanding of the subject and the issues involved.” (Wikipedia).

We will divide the participants in five smaller groups. Each group will be placed at one of five ‘stations’. Each station is devoted to an aspect of climate change and the role of projects in it, as shown in Figure 1:

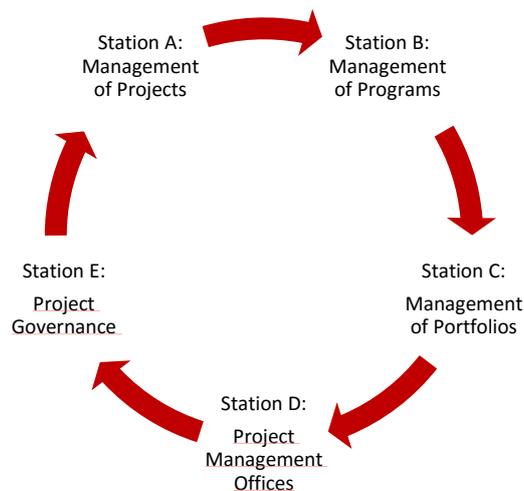


Figure 1: Overview of Stations

In each station from A-D, participants will investigate the potential role of project-focused management and climate change framed by the central questions: What?, How? and Who?

- **What:** What are the challenges and what is the current state-of-play regarding climate change in different countries and industries
- **How:** How can we, the EPOS community, contribute?
  - Theoretically – what are the research issues and opportunities; what concepts should be useful?
  - Educationally – how should our teaching be modified?
  - Practically – what impact should we be aiming for?
- **Who/Contributors:** Who would like to have join us; to whom should we be talking?
  - Researchers – above and beyond, as well as in, the projects community
  - Governments – national, local and supra [e.g. the UN]
  - The professions – PMI, IPMA, national, and other disciplines and countries
  - Funding bodies
  - Thought shapers
  - Practitioners

After 10 minutes, each group rotates to the next station. The process continues until the groups are back to their initial stations [50 minutes]. Each group then has 10 minutes to consolidate their ‘findings’ [10 minutes] and present to all [40 minutes].

**Individual reflection:** each participant will have 3-5 minutes to reflect about the process, and articulate what he or she would like to do (and lead on), to move the ideas forward [10 minutes total].

**Open discussion:** When the process is completed, we will open the discussion to participants. Individuals will be able to share the actions they would like to lead. We will then hope participants will continue the discussions on specific initiatives in coffee break and organise themselves to move the work forward. We will develop a facebook group or similar, to facilitate connection between participants in moving their ideas forward.

Total time of the formal process: 2 hours