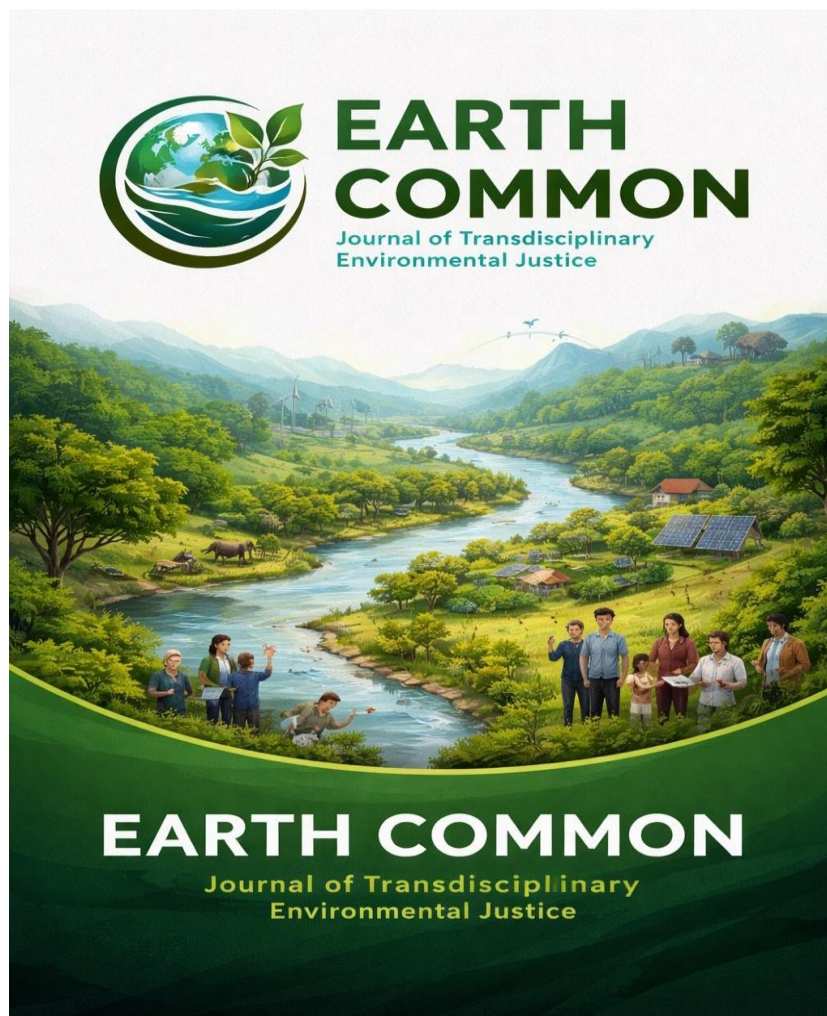


ESTABLISHING A GLOBAL ACADEMIC JOURNAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENTAL COLLECTIVE CONCERN (ECC)

Journal Title

Earth Commons: Journal of Transdisciplinary Environmental Justice



The establishment of the ECC academic journal represents a strategic intervention to strengthen environmental scholarship, advocacy, and policy engagement in across the world including Africa. With a clear governance framework, strong ethical standards, an open-access model, and institutional hosting by Grundtvig Africa House, the journal is positioned to emerge as a credible and influential platform in regional and

global environmental governance debates. The journal's proposed title signals a global platform grounded in environmental justice, equity, and sustainability, establishing a clear and coherent intellectual identity. The journal operates as a transdisciplinary, scholarly, and policy-oriented forum that integrates environmental science, the social sciences, the humanities, and practice-based knowledge systems to address the complexity of contemporary environmental challenges. It serves as a bridge across continents, institutions, and disciplines while advancing justice-centred approaches to sustainability.

1.0 Introduction

This concept paper is developed to call for the establishment of *Earth Commons: Journal of Transdisciplinary Environmental Justice* by the Environmental Collective Concern (ECC), in partnership with Grundtvig Africa House. It proceeds from the urgent recognition that global environmental scholarship remains deeply shaped by enduring epistemic asymmetries that privilege Northern knowledge systems while marginalising Southern, Indigenous, and locally situated forms of knowing. These imbalances persist despite the increasingly global and unevenly distributed nature of socio-ecological crises.

The proposed journal is situated within the context of an escalating planetary emergency characterised by accelerating climate breakdown, widespread biodiversity loss, intensifying extractivism, and deepening ecological dispossession. These are not merely environmental phenomena but historically and structurally produced conditions embedded within unequal geographies of power, capital, and knowledge production (Agyeman, Bullard & Evans, 2003; Escobar, 2018; IPCC, 2022). As such, they demand analytical frameworks that move beyond disciplinary fragmentation and epistemic exclusivity.

1.1 Background

The Environmental Collective Concern (ECC), in partnership with Grundtvig Africa House, will establish *Earth Commons: Journal of Transdisciplinary Environmental Justice* as a peer-reviewed, open-access scholarly platform responding to entrenched epistemic asymmetries in global environmental knowledge production and the escalating planetary socio-ecological crisis. The journal will be grounded in the recognition that contemporary environmental challenges climate breakdown, biodiversity loss, extractivism, and ecological dispossession are structurally produced within uneven geographies of power and knowledge (Agyeman, Bullard & Evans, 2003; Escobar, 2018; IPCC, 2022).

Contemporary environmental challenges including climate disruption, biodiversity collapse, land dispossession, extractive exploitation, and governance failures are complex socio-ecological phenomena that transcend disciplinary boundaries. Yet much of the existing scholarly infrastructure remains fragmented across disciplines and geographically concentrated in institutions of the Global North. As a result, research agendas, theoretical frameworks, and methodological standards often insufficiently reflect the lived realities, epistemologies, and institutional contexts of the Global South.

Earth Commons responds to this gap by positioning itself at the forefront of transdisciplinary environmental research. The journal will provide an academically robust forum for integrating insights from environmental science, political ecology, law, governance studies, development studies, economics, philosophy, public health, and the humanities, alongside practitioner and community-based knowledge systems. It will prioritize methodological pluralism, theoretical innovation, and empirically grounded research that advances scholarly debates while remaining attentive to questions of justice and institutional transformation.

Central to the journal's academic contribution is the recognition that environmental justice is not solely a normative or activist concept, but a critical analytical framework for examining power, distribution, participation, and recognition within socio-ecological systems. By foregrounding environmental justice as both a research paradigm and evaluative lens, *Earth Commons* will deepen scholarly engagement with issues such as climate adaptation and loss and damage, resource governance, biodiversity conservation, urban transitions, Indigenous land rights, and post-extractive futures.

The title *Earth Commons* signals a commitment to advancing scholarship that interrogates prevailing extractivist and market-centric paradigms while exploring alternative governance models grounded in collective stewardship, democratic participation, and intergenerational equity. The journal will cultivate intellectual space for rethinking property regimes, ecological citizenship, global environmental governance, and South–North knowledge asymmetries within a coherent, analytically rigorous framework.

ECC's institutional and collective experience in environmental advocacy, civic engagement, and knowledge co-production shall provide a strong normative and practical foundation for the journal. Grundtvig Africa House, with its intellectual emphasis on dialogue, democracy, and African thought leadership, shall strengthen the journal's scholarly anchoring within African and broader Global South intellectual traditions. Together, the two institutions are well positioned to convene an international editorial board, establish rigorous peer-review standards, and attract high-quality submissions from established and emerging scholars worldwide.

Through strict editorial standards, double-blind peer review, and adherence to international indexing criteria, *Earth Commons* aims to achieve recognition within major scholarly databases and contribute meaningfully to global academic discourse. Its open-access model will ensure accessibility and citation visibility while removing structural barriers that often limit participation from scholars in resource-constrained settings.

2.0 Aims

Earth Commons: Journal of Transdisciplinary Environmental Justice aims to advance critical, transdisciplinary scholarship on environmental justice in the context of accelerating global socio-ecological change. The journal will respond to persistent epistemic inequalities in environmental knowledge production and to structural drivers of ecological crises, including extractivism, climate change, and biodiversity

loss (Escobar, 2018; IPCC, 2022).

The journal will position environmental justice as both an analytical and normative framework for examining distributive, procedural, and recognition-based inequalities within socio-ecological systems (Schlosberg, 2007; Agyeman, Bullard & Evans, 2003). It will seek contributions that critically engage with power relations, political economy, and governance structures shaping environmental change.

Earth Commons will adopt a transdisciplinary scope, welcoming scholarship from environmental science, political ecology, law, development studies, economics, sociology, anthropology, and the humanities, alongside Indigenous, local, and practice-based knowledge systems (Max-Neef, 2005; Polk, 2015). It will particularly encourage methodological pluralism and epistemic diversity in addressing complex environmental challenges.

The journal will prioritize research on climate change, biodiversity loss, land and resource governance, extractivism, energy transitions, and socio-ecological transformations, with a strong emphasis on justice, equity, and sustainability.

It will aim to amplify Global South scholarship and foster equitable North–South and South–South knowledge exchange through rigorous peer review and open-access dissemination.

3.0 Scope

The journal shall accept

- *Original research articles*
- *Policy analyses*
- *Case studies*
- *Review articles*
- *Short communications*
- *Book reviews*
- *Practitioner reflections*

Focus areas may include

- *Climate change and adaptation*
- *Environmental justice*
- *Natural resource governance*
- *Biodiversity conservation*
- *Green economy and sustainable development*
- *Community resilience*
- *Environmental law and policy*

4.0 Methodological approach

4.1 Transdisciplinarity

The journal shall adopt a transdisciplinary methodological framework grounded in environmental justice theory, political ecology, and decolonial thought. The journal will operationalize environmental justice as a multi-dimensional analytical lens encompassing distributive, procedural, and recognition-based inequalities within socio-ecological systems (Schlosberg, 2007; Martínez-Alier, 2002). This foundation will guide the journal's editorial orientation and knowledge production processes.

Methodologically, the journal will advance transdisciplinarity not only as an intellectual approach but as an organizing principle for scholarly practice. It will promote the co-production of knowledge across academic disciplines, policy domains, practitioner fields, and Indigenous and community-based knowledge systems (Max-Neef, 2005; Polk, 2015). This approach will deliberately challenge disciplinary fragmentation and epistemic hierarchies that privilege Northern theoretical paradigms, while fostering plural, situated, and context-sensitive forms of knowledge production.

The journal will institutionalize a publishing model that enables integrative and multi-scalar environmental inquiry. It will actively solicit contributions that bridge environmental science, political ecology, law, development studies, governance, economics, and the humanities, alongside empirically grounded local and Indigenous epistemologies (Latour, 2004; Nightingale, 2017). This integrative orientation will support methodological pluralism, encouraging qualitative, quantitative, participatory, and mixed-methods research designs.

Operationally, the journal will be governed by an international, interdisciplinary editorial board to ensure epistemic diversity and academic rigor. All submissions will undergo a double-blind peer-review process aligned with international scholarly publishing standards to ensure quality, validity, and methodological robustness. The journal will adopt an open-access dissemination model to reduce structural barriers in global knowledge circulation and to enhance accessibility, visibility, and citation equity, particularly for scholars in the Global South (Suber, 2012).

Through this methodological architecture, *Earth Commons* will function as a transdisciplinary intellectual platform that integrates theory, empirics, and practice in ways that advance environmental justice scholarship and reshape dominant paradigms of environmental knowledge production.

5.0 Rationale

The establishment of the journal will respond to the persistent underrepresentation and marginalisation of African and Global South scholarship within global environmental studies by providing a dedicated, high-quality platform for researchers, practitioners, and policy actors. It will strengthen ECC's intellectual leadership and visibility while contributing to more robust, inclusive, and evidence-based environmental policy discourse and advocacy. In addition, the journal will foster interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary collaboration, thereby supporting the advancement of critical theoretical approaches to socio-ecological governance and environmental justice across diverse contexts.

In the longer term, the journal will seek to reshape global environmental knowledge regimes by challenging extractivist and historically dominant epistemologies and advancing plural, justice-oriented frameworks for sustainability transitions (Tuck & Yang, 2012; Swyngedouw, 2011). Through this orientation, it will contribute to the production of more inclusive and transformative environmental scholarship that integrates African and Global South perspectives into global debates on sustainability, governance, and ecological futures.

6.0 Institutional Hosting and Management

6.1 *Grundtvig Africa House* To ensure institutional credibility, operational sustainability, and administrative robustness, it is proposed that Grundtvig Africa House (GAHO) serve as the formal host and managing institution of the journal on behalf of the Environmental Collective Concern. This arrangement will provide a stable institutional anchor capable of supporting the journal's long-term development, visibility, and compliance with international academic publishing standards.

Institutional hosting by GAHO will strengthen the journal's eligibility for indexing, strategic partnerships, and academic recognition, while also enhancing trust in its governance and editorial processes. GAHO will provide essential administrative and financial management functions, including transparency and accountability mechanisms required for reputable scholarly publishing. In addition, it will support the development and maintenance of digital infrastructure, including website hosting, journal management systems, and DOI registration and coordination. Its established institutional networks will further facilitate the recruitment of a credible international editorial board, peer reviewers, and high-quality contributors.

Within this governance model, ECC will retain full intellectual leadership and responsibility for thematic direction, conceptual framing, and scholarly vision, while GAHO will provide the operational and institutional infrastructure necessary for effective journal management and continuity. This division of roles will ensure both academic integrity and institutional stability, safeguarding the journal's long-term sustainability beyond leadership transitions within ECC.

7.0 Budget and Resource Framework

The establishment and operation of the journal will require modest but strategic investment. Costs will include administrative coordination, website development and maintenance, journal management software, DOI registration, plagiarism detection services, copyediting, typesetting, and promotional activities.

Editorial meetings and reviewer support may also require limited financial allocation. A contingency provision should be included to address unforeseen expenses.

Funding may be sourced from institutional support, modest article processing charges (introduced gradually and only after acceptance), donor grants, partnerships with academic institutions, and thematic sponsorships.

8.0 Publication Model

The journal will operate as a biannual, online open-access publication to ensure broad accessibility and international visibility. It will initially publish two issues per year (biannual model), an approach recommended for new journals to maintain quality control and ensure operational stability in the early stages. It will adopt an online, open-access model to maximize visibility and accessibility, particularly for researchers and practitioners in resource-constrained environments. The journal will implement a rigorous double-blind peer-review system and uphold high standards of academic integrity through comprehensive plagiarism screening and clear conflict-of-interest policies.

8.1 Submission Guidelines

- Original, unpublished work
- 5,000–8,000 words (research articles)
- APA/Chicago (to be specified)
- Double-blind review process
- Plagiarism threshold: Maximum 20%

8.2 Key Dates

- Submission Deadline: [TBD]
- Review Feedback: [TBD]
- Publication Date: [ITBD]

Submissions should be sent to: gahokenya@gmail.com

8.3 To meet international scholarly standards, the journal will:

- Secure an International Standard Serial Number (ISSN).
- Assign Digital Object Identifiers (DOIs) to each published article.
- Establish a dedicated website and official email address.
- Use plagiarism detection software to screen submissions (with an acceptable similarity threshold of 15–20%).
- Implement a strict double-blind peer-review system.
- Develop clear publication ethics and conflict-of-interest policies.
- Apply for indexing in recognized academic databases after publishing initial volumes.

Authors will retain copyright under a Creative Commons license, reinforcing the journal's open-access commitment while maintaining proper attribution standards. After initial volumes are published, the journal will apply for indexing in recognized academic databases to enhance visibility and impact.

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ANNEXURES

ANNEX 1:

Proposed Governance and Editorial Structure

The journal will operate under a robust international governance framework designed to reflect both global diversity and academic excellence. It will function under a structured governance framework to ensure academic integrity, transparency, and sustainability.

An Editor-in-Chief will provide strategic leadership and uphold academic standards. A Managing Editor will oversee daily operations, coordinate submissions, manage peer review processes, and ensure timely publication. An Editorial Board composed of subject experts will support quality control and policy direction. An Advisory Board made up of senior academics and practitioners will provide strategic guidance and enhance the journal's credibility and international reach.

A pool of independent reviewers will conduct double-blind peer reviews. Every manuscript that passes initial screening and plagiarism checks will be evaluated by at least two qualified reviewers. Final publication decisions will rest with the Editor-in-Chief, based on reviewer recommendations and editorial assessment.

1. Patron (Optional)

Naomi Klein, George Monbiot or John Snow.

(Or any other Senior respected figure in environmental or academic leadership).

2. Editor-in-Chief

Travis Gray

The Editor-in-Chief will provide strategic leadership, ensure academic integrity, and represent the journal internationally.

- Provides strategic leadership.
- Ensures academic integrity.
- Represents the journal publicly.

3. Managing Editor

Ronald Elly Wanda

The Managing Editor will oversee daily operations, coordinate peer review, manage publication timelines, and supervise editorial workflow.

- Oversees daily operations.

- Coordinates peer review.
- Manages publication timelines.

4. Editorial Board (5–9 members)

The Editorial Board will include distinguished scholars and practitioners from across the world, reflecting North–South collaboration and intellectual exchange.

An Advisory Board of senior international scholars and policy leaders may also be constituted to provide strategic guidance and enhance global credibility.

- Subject experts from diverse disciplines.
- Assist in policy, review selection, and quality control.

The Editorial Board will

- Provide academic oversight.
- Support peer-review coordination.
- Assist in attracting high-quality submissions.
- Contribute to thematic direction and special issues.

Proposed members

1. Charles Barber (USA)
2. Travis Gray (USA)
3. John Obonyo (Kenya)
4. Ronald Wanda (Kenya)
5. Charles Onyango (Kenya)
6. Fedinand Owegi (Kenya)
7. Bill Young (USA Citizen)
8. Steve Sherman (USA)

Additional qualified individuals may be included based on expertise, availability, and willingness to serve. The Board will be expanded strategically to include representation from other regions of the Global South, including Africa, Latin America, Asia, and the Pacific, to reinforce global inclusivity.

5. Reviewers Pool

- Independent academics and practitioners.
- Engage in double-blind peer review.

6. Journal Secretariat (Hosted by GAHO)

- Correspondence
- Record keeping
- Website management
- Financial administration

ANNEX 2:

THREE-YEAR IMPLEMENTATION ROADMAP

In the first year, ECC will establish governance structures, secure technical requirements (ISSN, website, email), develop editorial policies, recruit reviewers, and publish the inaugural issue.

In the second year, the journal will consolidate operations, publish two issues, strengthen quality assurance systems, and apply for initial indexing platforms.

In the third year, the journal will expand partnerships, introduce DOIs for all articles, pursue broader indexing opportunities, and develop long-term sustainability mechanisms.

Year 1: Foundation and

Launch Quarter 1

- Approve journal name
- Define aim and scope
- Constitute Editorial and Advisory Boards
- Develop policies (review, plagiarism,

ethics) Quarter 2

- Secure ISSN
- Develop website (via GAH)
- Establish official email
- Recruit reviewer pool

Quarter 3

- Release Call for Papers
- Begin submission and review

process Quarter 4

- Publish Volume 1, Issue 1
- Promote journal widely

Year 2: Consolidation

- Publish two issues
- Improve editorial workflow
- Strengthen reviewer database
- Apply for Google Scholar indexing
- Seek partnerships and grants

Year 3: Expansion and Indexing

- Apply for broader indexing platforms
- Introduce DOI registration for each article
- Explore special thematic issues
- Build regional and international collaborations
- Develop sustainability funding model

By Ronald Elly Wanda, Grundtvig Africa House, Nairobi.