



MISTRA GEOPOLITICS
FINAL REPORT PHASE II 2025



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MESSAGES FROM THE MISTRA GEOPOLITICS BOARD

When the research programme Mistra Geopolitics started eight years ago, the aim was to combine different sides of sustainability and geopolitics. At the time, this framing was new and challenging. Such interdisciplinary work, conducted by PhDs, professors, experts, organizations, companies and governments whose experiences would formulate not only the big questions of our time, but also the answers needed, was met with some scepticism.

Considering the growing climate crisis and its impact on nature, climate, societies and economies, the Mistra Geopolitics team realized that time was of the utmost essence. Therefore two time schedules were introduced – one for the long-term projects, and another for urgently needed reports to guide decision-makers and global negotiators in their work. This proved to be wise, as the chain of global events continued to spiral ever faster.

Together, geopolitics and sustainability have proven to be important in topics such as transboundary risks, food security and the weaponization of food, mineral governance, sustainable oceans, decarbonization, artificial intelligence (AI) scenarios, and many more interesting and important findings.

Outreach, communication, and engagement, another cornerstone of Mistra Geopolitics, has also moved the programme’s aim forward. Discussions, debates and meetings with experts from different fields and different parts of the world have been essential, to both the research and its uptake. The board members generously contributed with personal contacts both in governments and global organizations such as UN agencies, the OECD, the EU, the International Court of Justice, and others.

Through eight years, the extended professional family of Mistra Geopolitics has supported each other, produced excellent research results that have echoed around the world, and delivered advice to decision-makers on all levels.

The foundation of democracy is knowledge and an open and respectful debate. My hope is that all who have participated in Mistra Geopolitics or interacted with this programme will continue this good work on other platforms in the future and that you will benefit from the knowledge and working methods from Mistra Geopolitics. I wish you all good luck! It has been a joy and a privilege to serve as the chair of the Board during these eight years.

*Lena Ek,
Chair of the Board*





Mistra Geopolitics has contributed to addressing global trends by connecting policy responses and shaping how we tackle complex geopolitical shifts. Interdisciplinary research, as exemplified by Mistra Geopolitics, is essential for addressing the multifaceted challenges of our world.



"My engagement with Mistra Geopolitics stems from its transformative potential in shaping sustainable and inclusive global governance and crafting multilateral policies in relation to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Working with this programme has been a privilege, allowing me to contribute to advancing knowledge and policy frameworks for global peace and development."

"Our common future depends on our competence and capacity to address pressing global challenges, particularly climate change and human security. As we mark the 80th anniversary of the UN Charter, a cornerstone of the normative, rule-based world order, we recognise that, while it has shown significant strengths, it also faces crucial weaknesses. The need for further research and collaboration is critical to reinforcing the foundations of multilateral co-operation and developing solutions to these interconnected global challenges."

Henrik Hammargren

Senior adviser and former Executive Director, Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation



Research within the programme has demonstrated how essential it is to address all Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), rather than focusing on just a few, in order to truly transform societies. However, findings have also shown that the countries performing best in fulfilling the SDGs often have the largest environmental footprints. This highlights the urgent need to focus on how to transition toward a more sustainable state for life on Earth.

"Having worked extensively on resource efficiency and circular economy, I am deeply aware of the importance of transforming how we use resources and how we design efficient, sustainable value chains. Integrating sustainable resource use with considerations of geopolitics and human security is fundamental to the welfare and resilience of societies worldwide."

"I greatly appreciate how well the programme aligns with my core view on biosphere, societal and human challenges, and opportunities for a new course for the path towards future societies. I am proud of the achievements of the programme, its research teams and graduate school as a base for this vital field of research."

Caroline Ankarcrona, Board Professional



Mistra Geopolitics research has always been timely. Staying relevant and adapting its research to current developments has been an important strength of the research.

In an ever-changing environment with dramatic shifts in the geopolitical situation, one

cannot just look to a single research discipline for all the answers. When researchers from different streams are interacting, they define problems and challenges differently and co-create answers.

"I have truly enjoyed being part of the very dynamic board of the Mistra Geopolitics program – a board that has been as interdisciplinary as the program itself. I have been very impressed by the PhD students and I strongly believe that the research school has been one of the most relevant and important results of the programme."

Annika Markovic

Sweden's former Ambassador to Austria and Slovakia and Permanent Representative to the UN in Vienna

"The Mistra Geopolitics programme marries two of humanity's greatest challenges."



The long-term commitment to a mutual project enabled by the Mistra Geopolitics programme has not only meant the opportunity to build entirely new research constellations producing new types of question and results, but also the meetings across several disciplines over time has allowed for a "constructive friction" that forces new perspectives and learnings.

"I believe the most important contribution has been the PhD students and research school. They are a generation of interdisciplinary scholars well versed in both the fields of climate and security studies – something that is key for future research."

"The Mistra Geopolitics programme marries two of humanity's greatest challenges that also happen to be the two issues that my own mind is primarily focused on. The interdisciplinary approach in combination to seek serious policy impact has only served to strengthen that commitment and dedication to contribute."

Robert Egnell

Vice-Chancellor of the Swedish Defence University



We often tend to confine ourselves and our work to one area of expertise. Within Mistra Geopolitics the ambition is exactly the opposite.

"This approach has contributed to new knowledge and successfully managed to demonstrate opportunities created by inno-

vation and technological development by bringing experts from fields such as climate change, international cooperation, sustainable development, trade and security."

"I strongly believe in the inter disciplinary approach taken by the programme and I have found that the explicit ambition to be relevant to policy- and decision-makers has helped me incorporating the results of the research into my own work."

Tobias Axerup

Deputy Director-General, Head of Department for Multilateral Development Banks, Sustainability and Climate at the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs

As geopolitical tensions rise and sustainability crises deepen, the kind of integrative, forward-thinking research exemplified by Mistra Geopolitics is more vital than ever. The programme was launched to critically explore the interactions between geopolitics, security, and global environmental change – recognizing that in a world of intensifying uncertainty, research must not only diagnose risks but also identify transformative opportunities through innovation and collaboration. Over the past eight years, Mistra Geopolitics has advanced understanding of how geopolitical dynamics and sustainability transformations are deeply intertwined. As nations grapple with transboundary challenges – climate change, resource scarcity, and technological shifts – geopolitical forces increasingly shape the possibilities for sustainability. At the same time, sustainability efforts – such as decarbonization, circular economy initiatives, and global climate governance – reconfigure geopolitical landscapes, influencing power relations, trade, and peacebuilding.

With its focus on enhancing foresight capacity, the programme has fostered collaboration across disciplines and sectors, generating knowledge that helps societies navigate more resilient and sustainable pathways. It has contributed to the emergence of the geopolitics of sustainability as a vibrant interdisciplinary field, offering conceptual and methodological innovations that bridge critical gaps in research and practice.

Here are 10 key highlights that effectively capture the central objectives of the research programme:

1. Pioneering the geopolitics of sustainability

Mistra Geopolitics has helped establish and consolidate the geopolitics of sustainability as an emerging field of research. By linking societal transformations with questions of power, security, and justice, the programme has offered critical insights into how geopolitical dynamics shape – and are shaped by – sustainability transformations.

2. Shaping policy agendas on climate security

The programme has contributed to framing climate change as a geopolitical and security issue in both Swedish and international policy dialogues, including inputs to national security strategies and multilateral fora such as the UN climate entities and UN Security Council debates.

3. Training a new generation of interdisciplinary scholars

Through its research school and mentorship model, Mistra Geopolitics has fostered a new generation of scholars equipped to tackle complex sustainability and security challenges.

4. Strengthening co-creation across sectors

A hallmark of the programme has been its commitment to co-creation, working closely with policymakers, civil society, and business leaders to ensure that findings are both theoretically robust and practically relevant.



5. Integrating geopolitical risk into sustainability assessments

The programme has developed frameworks that integrate geopolitical risk into climate vulnerability and resilience assessments, enabling better-informed decision-making across sectors.

6. Elucidating climate and security linkages

Mistra Geopolitics has advanced understanding of how climate change interacts with human security in fragile contexts, contributing to conflict, migration, and instability.

7. Charting the geopolitics of green transformations

The programme has delivered forward-looking analyses on how shifts in trade, digitalization, and low-carbon transitions reshape geopolitical alliances and world affairs, emphasizing justice and equity in sustainability transformations.

8. Advancing analysis of human security and planetary risks

It has developed conceptual frameworks that connect systemic risks with people's lived experiences of insecurity, bringing renewed attention to human security in a world marked by environmental disruptions.

9. Enhancing global research networks

Mistra Geopolitics has actively contributed to building international scholarly and policy networks, collaborating with leading institutions in Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Americas. This has increased the global visibility of Swedish research and supported plural perspectives on environmental geopolitics.

10. Producing relevant policy support through synthesis and scenarios

Through scenario exercises, policy briefs, and cross-sectoral syntheses, the programme has supported long-term thinking under uncertainty, helping actors anticipate plausible futures shaped by climate change and geopolitical fragmentation.

In a time marked by war, compounding crises, and deepening geopolitical tensions, research programmes like Mistra Geopolitics are more important than ever. They offer critical yet constructive analyses, foster dialogue, and build the knowledge and institutional capacity needed to navigate a turbulent world. By bridging disciplinary, sectoral, and national boundaries, Mistra Geopolitics has demonstrated the merits of integrative and anticipatory research for informed policy and sustainable peace.

Björn-Ola Linnér
Mistra Geopolitics Programme Director

MISTRA GEOPOLITICS RESEARCH PROGRAMME – NAVIGATING TOWARDS A SECURE AND SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

The Mistra Geopolitics research programme has become one of the largest international research programmes entirely focusing on the interactions between environmental change, geopolitics, and human security. The programme has been organized thematically with three empirical areas, focusing on the geopolitics of food security, sustainable oceans, and decarbonization.

A fourth overarching theme, “Foresight capabilities and emerging technologies”, reflects the programme’s core mission to enhance foresight capacity in a changing geopolitical landscape.

To ensure that research findings would be effectively synthesized and communicated in a clear, accessible, and credible way that engages key audiences, Mistra Geopolitics established a dedicated work package focused on communication, engagement, synthesis, and rapid response. In addition, Mistra Geopolitics offered a four-year research school designed to train the next generation of scholars.

The Mistra Geopolitics research programme consisted of two four-year phases: the first from 2017 to 2020, and the second from 2021 to 2024, extended into 2025. This report focuses on the second phase as the programme comes to a close.

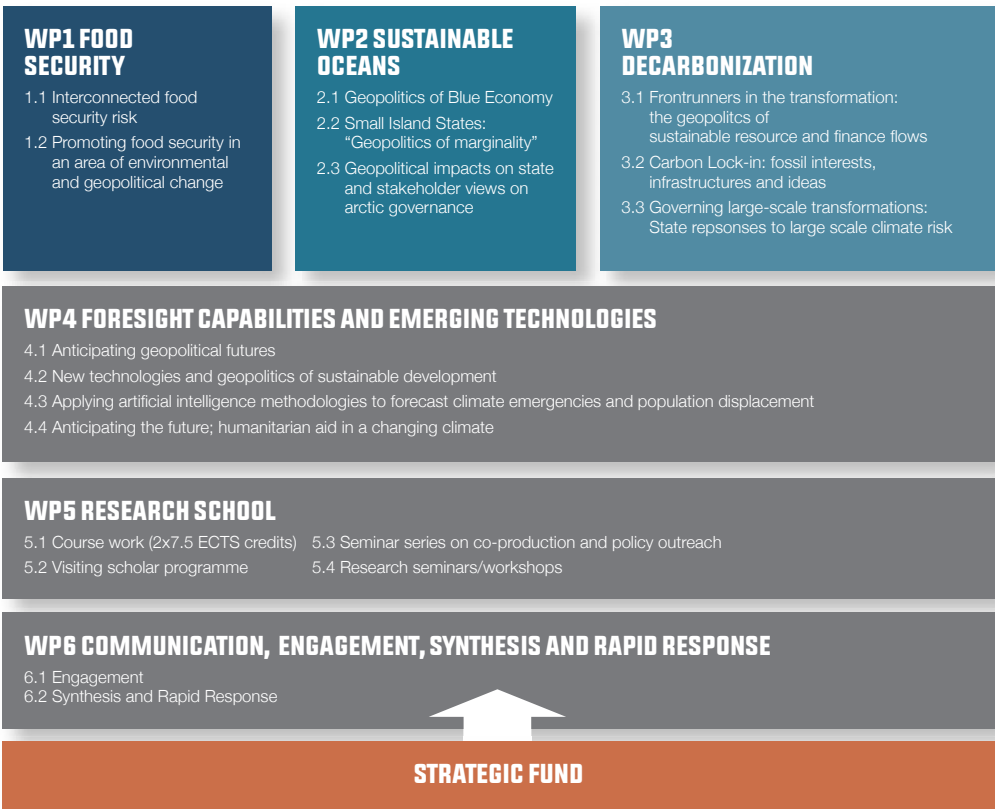


Figure 1: The programme's research structure

INTERNATIONAL AND INTERDISCIPLINARY

The Mistra Geopolitics research programme has taken a truly interdisciplinary approach, bringing together researchers from different fields such as international relations, peace and conflict studies, global environmental governance, geography, and environmental studies, as well as important expertise among our stakeholders, partners, and the practitioners targeted through our engagement activities. Our researchers have been based at academic institutions as well as research and policy organizations.

This interdisciplinary approach has helped foster a more holistic understanding of geopolitics in the context of environ-

mental change. Through our analyses, we have extended foresight on political possibilities for Swedish actors in government, agencies, businesses, and civil society, as well as international organizations, the European Union (EU) and vulnerable groups and regions internationally.

The Mistra Geopolitics consortium consists of eight partners: Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI; host institution), Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), the universities of Linköping, Lund, Stockholm, and Uppsala, and the think tanks E3G and Adelphi. Mistra Geopolitics is funded by Mistra, the Swedish foundation for strategic environmental research.



“It has been of great value for Business Sweden to be a stakeholder partner of the Mistra Geopolitics research programme. We greatly appreciate the opportunity to work closer to research and help ensure that the results become useful and applicable in practice. Only then can research deliver its full value to society.”

Lena Sellgren, Chief Economist and Head of Research Business Sweden

For Futurion, the collaboration with Mistra Geopolitics has been highly regarded. Working closely with the research community has given us both a deeper understanding and new perspectives in our work. When research findings are made accessible and applicable, they not only strengthen policy development but also enhance our ability to navigate a rapidly changing world.”

Ann-Therése Enarsson, CEO Futurion

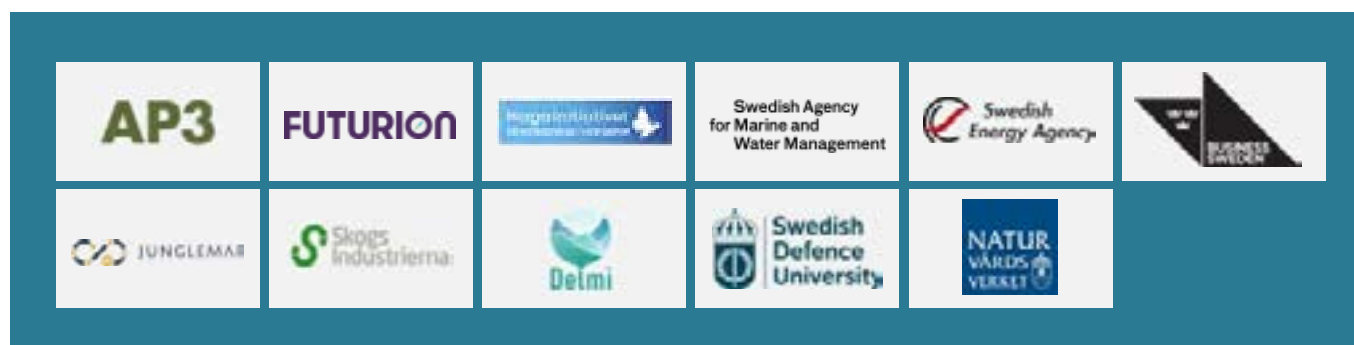
CO-CREATION TO BETTER INFORM POLICY

Mistra Geopolitics has combined theory testing and development with a co-creation approach. A variety of stakeholders from the public, private, and civil society sectors have been actively involved to ensure that the programme's theoretical perspectives and empirical research are relevant for the people who will translate them into policy and action. The programme researchers have contributed to discussions on the European Green Deal, the Paris Agreement, and the work of the UN on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The programme has helped determine the discourse around sustainability and geo-

politics, making major contributions to the emerging field of geopolitical foresight as it relates to the risk and opportunities arising from artificial intelligence (AI).

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Within the Mistra Geopolitics research programme, strategic communication has played a central role in translating complex research findings into accessible, credible, and actionable insights that can inform policy and engage diverse audiences. The Mistra Geopolitics communication and engagement strategy has been designed not only to disseminate research, but



Mistra Geopolitics' formal stakeholder partners.

also to create meaningful engagement and dialogue with stakeholders, decision-makers, and the wider public.

Mistra Geopolitics employed a structured three-level engagement model that has guided its communication efforts: participation, dialogue, and outreach. Through close collaboration with stakeholders, the programme has ensured that the research is co-created and aligned with real-world challenges. Policy engagement has been fostered through over 54 events and targeted dialogues, both in Sweden and internationally, facilitating platforms for researchers and decision-makers to exchange perspectives and jointly address pressing geopolitical and sustainability issues.

Outreach efforts have amplified the programme's visibility and societal relevance. These include a dedicated website showcasing more than 90 research features and insight pieces, quarterly newsletters, over 30 videos and podcast contributions, and recurrent publications such as policy briefs and annual reports. Social media has also been used actively and strategically to broaden the programme's reach and engage diverse audiences. A key focus has been to pitch our research to relevant news media, and Mistra Geopolitics researchers have been active voices in public debate, with their work extensively cited in Swedish and international news media articles. This broad and strategic communication approach helps bridge the gap between research and practice, ensuring that the knowledge produced supports timely and informed decisions.

“Integrating communication and engagement with key stakeholders from the start helps ensure that research outcomes are accessible, relevant, and more likely to inform real-world decision-making. Rather than being an afterthought, communication should be considered a core component of the research process.”

Maria Cole, Senior Communications and Impact Officer at SEI and Communications Lead for Mistra Geopolitics

In an era marked by accelerating environmental, geopolitical, and technological transformations, access to reliable and well-communicated knowledge is essential for navigating complex global challenges. As scepticism toward scientific expertise grows and the interactions shaping the world become increasingly abstract and multifaceted, the importance of strategic communication and engagement has never been greater.



SUSTAINABILITY IN A CHANGING GEOPOLITICAL ERA

From the start of Mistra Geopolitics research in 2017, we have seen the emergence of key geopolitical shifts. The coronavirus pandemic, wars and emerging technologies, both those that are explicitly related to a transformation towards sustainability, such as battery technology, and those more indirectly connected, such as artificial intelligence (AI) – have coloured events of the past near-decade.

New geographies of risk, such as melting glaciers, rising sea levels, rampant wildfires, and climate-induced displacements, are giving renewed energy to state-centric scripts of international relations and more aggressive forms of foreign policy.

“We are in the midst of a period when the dominance of liberal environmentalism is broken and new hegemonic ideas, values and norms are yet to take form. This period in time will, in 10 years, be given a name.”

Eva Lövbrand, Professor, Linköping University

New political alliances, arrangements and vocabularies are gaining ground and gradually altering the global space in which sustainable development will be interpreted and pursued in the decades to come. Mistra Geopolitics has been operating at this critical juncture to clarify how geopolitics affects and is affected by this interconnected and risk-filled world. Given changing geopolitical contexts, we have been agile in our research on subjects that might be seen as moving targets, tweaking our research questions as well as diving into current events.



Photo: Shutterstock/24Novembers

2016	JUNE NOVEMBER	Brexit Referendum – UK votes to leave the EU. Donald J. Trump elected US President. Paris Agreement enters into force – Nations formally committed to limiting global warming to below 2°C in December 2015.
2017	JUNE SEPTEMBER	US President Donald J. Trump announced intention to withdraw from the Paris Agreement. North Korea claims hydrogen bomb test – Raises global security concerns over nuclear proliferation.
2018	MARCH	US–China trade war – Tariff escalations between the world’s two largest economies disrupt global supply chains.
2019	MAY AUGUST DECEMBER	European Parliament elections – Far-right and the Greens gain ground. Amazon wildfires reach crisis levels – International outcry over deforestation under Brazil’s President Jair Bolsonaro. First cases of COVID-19 in China.
2020	MARCH NOVEMBER	WHO declares COVID-19 a pandemic. Joseph R. Biden elected US President – Signals a shift back to multilateralism and climate policy.
2021	AUGUST	Taliban takeover of Afghanistan – US withdrawal leads to a geopolitical power shift in the region.
2022	FEBRUARY MARCH MAY NOVEMBER	Russia launches a full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Western Arctic states suspend cooperation with Russia – Freezes Arctic Council diplomacy. Finland and Sweden apply to join NATO – Reshapes Arctic security dynamics. ChatGPT launched (GPT-3.5) – AI-powered chatbots become widely available. COP27 establishes Loss and Damage Fund – First major breakthrough in climate financing.
2023	FEBRUARY MARCH APRIL JULY OCTOBER DECEMBER	ChatGPT reaches 100 million monthly active users. First Arctic Council meeting without Russia – Marks a major shift, as Western Arctic nations attempt to uphold regional governance and collaboration without Russian participation. Finland joins NATO. Global heatwaves – Extreme temperatures highlight climate risks and spur policy debates. Coups in Niger – Marks another instance of military takeovers in West Africa, shifting regional dynamics. Start of Israel–Hamas war. COP28 calls for fossil fuel transition – First UN agreement explicitly mentioning fossil phaseout.
2024		A year of elections globally – 80 countries representing four billion people held either national, state, or local elections. 2024 was the first calendar year when the global average temperature exceeded 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. MARCH NOVEMBER DECEMBER Sweden becomes a member of NATO. Donald J. Trump is re-elected as US president. Fall of the Assad regime in Syria – Fighting factions take over the government.



Photo: Pexels/Kindelmedia, Shutterstock/ChocoPie, Shutterstock/Wright Studio/

THREE KEY TRENDS IN GEOPOLITICS OF SUSTAINABILITY

The world has changed rapidly since the start of the MISTRA Geopolitics programme in January 2017. Conflicts, a global pandemic, supply chain disruptions, and political shifts in countries of all sizes have shaken the international system. These events highlight both the volatility of world affairs and the fragility of global systems such as food, water, energy and global governance. Thus, they may open new avenues for how states cooperate and compete.

This section reflects on three key trends that became increasingly prominent over the course of the programme. While their future trajectories remain uncertain, these developments highlight broader shifts that are likely to influence the geopolitics of sustainability in the years ahead: a “flexilateral” turn in multilateral cooperation, shifting conceptions of security, and emerging technologies as growing drivers of uncertainty.

These developments carry both risks and opportunities and may at times be in tension with one another. Importantly, developing a clearer understanding of their possible trajectories can strengthen strategic foresight, preparedness, and resilience.

1. A FLEXILATERAL TURN OF MULTILATERALISM

In the past, multilateral cooperation has produced key sustainability agreements, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement. Today, however, the rules-based multilateral system is under growing pressure, and sustainability governance is becoming increasingly pluralized and diffused. “Flexilateralism” describes a strategic approach adopted by states – and, potentially, by non-state actors – to achieve policy objectives through the simultaneous and pragmatic combination of unilateral, bilateral, and multilateral instruments.

The impacts of flexilateral governance on sustainability outcomes remain to be seen and represent an important area for future research. Risks include the possibility that hard-won



Photo: Shutterstock/tomertu

multilateral agreements are undermined, that national governments deliberately bypass multilateral and rules-based cooperation in their engagements with others, that smaller or less powerful states are excluded from selective arrangements, and that pragmatic, flexible approaches prioritize quick wins over the long-term structural transformations needed for sustainability.

However, flexilateral approaches may also enable quicker progress on specific goals, as they are not constrained by the

slow pace of multilateral negotiations. They can foster innovation by allowing states to experiment with tailored, context-specific solutions that can later be scaled up to global frameworks. Combining unilateral, bilateral, and multilateral instruments may also create complementarities, where the overall level of ambition and policy “hardness” is greater in aggregate than when relying on individual instruments in isolation. Finally, if non-state actors are meaningfully engaged, flexilateral governance can broaden participation and draw on diverse capacities, knowledge, and resources for sustainability transformation. The role of non-state actors within flexilateralism remains an important area for future research.

2. RETHINKING SECURITY

We see an increase in violent conflicts around the globe; an accompanying trend is a re-emphasis on traditional security thinking, focused on the territorial integrity of states, increased military spending, and issues around sovereignty and political independence.

With this trend comes the risk that security that includes human, ecological, and relational considerations gets sidelined, despite how vital these considerations are for building positive peace. Human security highlights people’s safety, dignity, and livelihoods; ecological security underscores the resilience of ecosystems and the resources that sustain societies; and relational security, the sense of continuity, belonging, and mutual stability that arises from sustaining meaningful relationships among people, communities, and ecological systems in times of upheaval. The associated risks are multiple, including failure to address root causes of conflict (e.g., water scarcity, inequality, food insecurity, and weak governance), civil–military tension and loss of social cohesion, and missed opportunities for conflict prevention and cooperation around transnational risks.



Photo: Shutterstock/Pixelvaro

In the long run, narrow security thinking might make nations less resilient – and ultimately less secure. Concrete ways to achieve more broadly encompassing and integrated security thinking could, for example, be to include climate and ecological risks in national security assessments and to develop policies that connect food security and environmental sustainability – ensuring that efforts to improve preparedness also protect ecosystems.

Without such thinking, key environmental and social drivers of insecurity may get lost in geopolitical and policy thinking, with implications for the overall resilience of societies. Environmental and social issues also could be captured in the push for securitization, should military security become the main framing, trumping sustainability – with implications across areas such as mineral resources and mining pollution, food chains, and water supplies.



Losing the fundamental ecological, human and community securities will put everyone in harm's way. No nation can be secure without these.

3. EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES AS A DRIVER OF UNCERTAINTIES

The rapid development of emerging technologies has the potential to disrupt societies – including geopolitical dynamics and sustainability trajectories. Some disruptions occur when the incremental development of a technology reaches a critical threshold. For example, when solar energy becomes cheaper than fossil fuel-based energy, investment flows shift dramatically, disrupting global energy markets.

Emerging technologies can also be inherently disruptive, as illustrated by artificial intelligence (AI). Unlike sector-specific innovations, AI cuts across all areas of society, making its impacts on geopolitics and sustainability difficult to predict. Under the right conditions, AI can drive new economic activity, optimize energy systems, and improve resource efficiency. Yet it also risks deepening power imbalances. AI may become the first general-purpose, strategically significant technology in which states are not in the driver's seat – instead, large global tech companies lead its development. Governments now face the challenge of fostering innovation while regulating actors that operate largely beyond national boundaries.

This growing influence of private technology firms represents a new kind of geopolitical tension, distinct from traditional state-centric competition. At the same time, the race for critical minerals and the rise of green industrial policies show how states are strategically positioning themselves in emerging technological arenas. While these efforts can advance sustainability, they may also reinforce existing inequalities, with the benefits of AI and green transitions concentrated among early and wealthy adopters.

Given the current pace of development of AI technologies, as well as associated uncertainties regarding societal impacts, it has become even more difficult – using standard

approaches – to build trustworthy scenarios on time scales relevant for decision-making on environmental change. An interesting and promising line of research here is to use AI technologies for building better future scenarios. As researchers scramble to grasp the development of AI, and the challenge of building long-term scenarios increases, AI could hold potential to aid this process.

PROMISING FUTURES?

The three trends outlined above highlight the growing complexity of the geopolitics of sustainability. Flexilateralism, evolving security priorities, and rapid technological change are reshaping how states and non-state actors interact with each other and the environment. These dynamics make decision-making more uncertain – but also more consequential. In this context, science has a critical role: not in predicting the future, but in clarifying what is known, identifying where uncertainties lie, and supporting decision-makers in developing strategies that are robust under diverse conditions.

Systemic analysis and foresight can help reveal trade-offs, synergies, and unintended consequences before they lock in – for example, how flexilateral arrangements might accelerate progress on specific sustainability goals while weakening global coordination; how rapidly increasing investments in military security could undermine long-term ecological and human security; or how emerging technologies such as AI can simultaneously enable resource efficiency and deepen existing inequalities.

By combining scientific insight with policy engagement, it becomes possible to test assumptions, explore alternative pathways, and identify leverage points where interventions can strengthen both sustainability and security. The ability to generate and apply such knowledge will be central to navigating future geopolitical disruptions – and to ensuring that decisions made today expand, rather than constrain, the space for sustainable action.

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS AND KEY INSIGHTS

The insights presented here reflect some core themes of the Mistra Geopolitics research programme, with a focus on food security, ocean governance, decarbonization, and strategic foresight. This research has been published in peer-reviewed journals and reports, and has also been actively communicated to key stakeholders, policymakers, and the wider public through targeted outreach and media engagements. A comprehensive list of publications is provided at the end of this report.





Photo: I stockphoto: Branex

THE GEOPOLITICS OF FOOD SECURITY

The UN estimates that 733 million people globally do not have access to enough food and another 2.4 billion experience food insecurity. Concerns about food availability are no longer the preserve of developing countries as geopolitical shifts have significantly impacted global food security. Geopolitical shocks disrupt supply chains, impacting food affordability and availability, while geopolitical fragmentation curbs and curtails global trade in goods including food. At the same time, climate change is exacerbating risks to food production and distribution across the world.

A TRANSBOUNDARY CRISIS COMPOUNDED BY GEOPOLITICAL SHOCKS

Through consultation with Mistra Geopolitics researchers from SEI, Sweden has been among the first countries to recognize that the impacts of climate change transcend national borders and spread across countries and continents. Mistra Geopolitics researchers found that traditional approaches to

climate risk assessment provided a reassuring picture for Sweden due to its close trading links with other EU countries. However, more nuanced trade data revealed Sweden's previously hidden links to much more vulnerable countries that play a critical role in Swedish supply chains, particularly emerging economies in Asia and Africa.

The Mistra Geopolitics report *New Risk Horizons: Sweden's*

“Food trade is being used as a means of power (weaponized) in geopolitical conflicts. But collaboration among smaller groups of countries with common goals or shared risks emerges as a potential solution to manage climate risks to food security under increasing geopolitical tensions.”

Sara Talebian, SEI Research Fellow
and Mistra Geopolitics

Exposure to Climate Risk via International Trade has been instrumental in building an understanding of transboundary climate risk for the country and the implications for adaptation strategies. It was presented to the Swedish Parliament and at COP27 and has informed Swedish climate strategy. This work on transboundary climate risk was also incorporated into the IPCC Sixth Assessment report, with Magnus Benzie as a contributing author through Working Group 2, assessing the impacts of climate change and reviewing vulnerabilities and adaptation capacities.

[Adams, K.M., Benzie, M., Croft, S., & Sadowski, S. (2021). *Climate change, trade, and global food security: a global assessment of transboundary climate risks in agricultural commodity flows*. SEI report. Stockholm Environment Institute, Stockholm. <http://doi.org/10.51414/sei2021.009>.

Hedlund, J., Fick, S., Carlsen, H., & Benzie, M. (2018). *Quantifying transnational climate impact exposure: new perspectives on the global distribution of climate risk*. *Global Environmental Change*, 52:75-85.

Lager, F. & Benzie, M. (2022). *New risk horizons: Sweden's exposure to climate risk via international trade*. SEI report. Stockholm Environment Institute, Stockholm. <http://doi.org/10.51414/sei2022.03>.]

THE WEAPONIZATION AND POLITICIZATION OF FOOD

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted food supply chains, causing production delays, higher prices, and reduced availability, especially in vulnerable regions. The Russian invasion of Ukraine further strained food and fertilizer supplies, raised energy prices, and increased costs across the food system. Meanwhile, climate change, extreme weather, water scarcity, and land degradation have continued to threaten food security.

Mistra Geopolitics researchers set out to better understand how food security can be promoted and delivered against this backdrop of global change and to better understand the complex, interconnected nature of food security risks. Multilateral cooperation has often been viewed as a

vital support to global food security. However, as geopolitical tensions increase and multilateralism declines, programme researchers suggest bilateral or plurilateral cooperation as an alternative to deliver food security.

Enhancing domestic capacities for climate-resilient agriculture is also highlighted as crucial for reducing dependency on global food markets and mitigating the transboundary effects of climate impacts and geopolitical disruptions.

[Talebian, S., Lager, F., & Harris, K. (2024). *Solutions for managing food security risks in a rapidly changing geopolitical landscape*. SEI Report. Stockholm Environment Institute. <https://doi.org/10.51414/sei2024.044>.]

FOOD AS AN INSTRUMENT IN GEOPOLITICAL POSITIONING

Mistra Geopolitics researchers from SIPRI have examined how food security is not only impacted by geopolitical shifts but can also in itself drive shifts in power. With reference to Russia, research demonstrated that the cultivation of land for food is used as a means of enhancing the country's geopolitical power. Land viewed as a resource – and decisions made on its use and productivity – can impact state power and impart global influence. As Russian president Vladimir Putin observed in 2015, “with so much land, and such colossal arable land that can still yet increase, in this sense, we are the richest country – not in terms of oil and gas, but in terms of the possibilities for agriculture. And the need for food in the world will only grow.”

[Zhou, J. (2022). *Naturalizing the state and symbolizing power in Russian agricultural land use*. *Political Geography*, 93:102545. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2021.102545>.]



Photo: Mulapwa Mukopole/UNDP Zambia

DEVELOPMENT AID AS A MITIGATOR OF DISASTER IMPACTS

Researchers from Stockholm, Uppsala, and Konstanz universities examined how disaster aid might shape outcomes from disasters, specifically for fatalities in low- and middle-income countries. The findings suggest that greater per capita aid disbursed to a disaster region before a disaster occurs reduces disaster mortality and that development aid indeed matters. Not all development aid may target capacity building for disaster resilience and reduced disaster impacts, but it could still be useful, even as the full potential of development aid to bolster coping capacity might not be reached.

[von Uexkull, N., Bertell, E., Bender, F., Dellmuth, L., & Rao, T. (2025, 27 April–2 May). Mitigating humanitarian impacts of climate-related disasters (conference presentation abstract). European Geosciences Union (EGU) General Assembly 2025, Vienna, Austria. <https://doi.org/10.5194/egusphere-egu25-17551>.]

STRATEGIC DIVERSIFICATION WILL SUPPORT FOOD SECURITY

As well as considering the global policy implications of increased food insecurity, Mistra Geopolitics researchers from SIPRI have investigated the strategies used by individual households to protect themselves from food disruptions. Livelihood diversification is recognized as an important strategy for families in food-insecure, rural environments. Mistra Geopolitics work accounting for the role of gender suggests that women experience the threat of food insecurity in different ways than men do, particularly as heads of households, and that women are differently equipped to respond through livelihood diversification. Policymakers need to understand and acknowledge gender differences and formulate policies to specifically support diversification that is sensitive to gender.

[Hegazi, F., & Seyuba, K. (2024). Gender, livelihood diversification and food security: Insights from rural communities in Zambia. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 109. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2024.103321>.]

“The findings suggest that greater per capita aid disbursed to a disaster region before a disaster occurs reduces disaster mortality and that development aid indeed matters.”

GEOPOLITICS OF PHOSPHORUS

Many farmers struggle to afford sufficient phosphorus fertilizer for their crops, threatening global food security. Meanwhile, overuse of fertilizers results in millions of metric tons of phosphorus being pumped into lakes and rivers each year, damaging biodiversity and affecting water quality.

Mistra Geopolitics researchers hosted a session on the geopolitics of phosphorus at the sixth Sustainable Phosphorus summit, in Brazil in 2018. The session brought together researchers from across the world to discuss different aspects of sustainable global phosphorus management. The research was also acknowledged by policymakers as part of the UNEP Phosphorus Task Team, which was established to consider phosphorus and global environmental governance.

Mistra Geopolitics researchers contributed to a comprehensive global analysis of the challenges and viable solutions to the phosphorus crisis, joining others to call on governments to reduce global pollution of phosphorus and increase recycling of the nutrient by the year 2050.

[Brownlie, W. J., Sutton, M. A., Heal, K. V., Reay, D. S., & Spears, B. M. (Eds.). (2022). *Our Phosphorus Future*. UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology, Edinburgh. DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.2.17834.08645.]



Photo: Shutterstock/Goirnyk Production

THE GEOPOLITICS OF SUSTAINABLE OCEANS

Marine perspectives are increasingly shaping debates on infrastructure, defence, and global sustainability, and there is a need for adaptive and inclusive governance frameworks. Mistra Geopolitics research has explored how geopolitical dynamics influence the legitimacy and effectiveness of ocean governance, focusing on maritime security, resource management, and governance systems globally and in the Arctic and Baltic Sea, and for Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in the Pacific.

THE EU WILL FACE MORE SECURITY CHALLENGES IN THE BALTIC

In the forthcoming book chapter, “Navigating the transformation of built seascapes: security tensions and the role of digitization in offshore monitoring”, Mistra Geopolitics researchers from SEI explore how the Baltic Sea is transforming into a “built seascape” shaped by permanent offshore infrastructure, digital surveillance, and growing security tensions. The chapter examines the civil-military dual-use nature of offshore technologies, the challenges of data sharing and governance, and the need for integrated and resilient policy

frameworks to secure these increasingly complex maritime environments.

Results highlight that while the EU heavily securitizes offshore wind as a geopolitical priority to reduce external energy dependence, Sweden adopts a more risk-based approach, framing offshore wind as a manageable challenge rather than a pressing security issue. The Swedish Armed Forces’ strong influence—evident in the rejection of 13 wind permits on security grounds—exposes tensions between environmental planning, democratic deliberation, and rigid defence mandates. The findings reveal that traditional security actors are

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Photo: Linköping University

playing increasingly central roles in energy transitions, despite institutional norms that prioritize transparency and inclusion. Sweden's cautious, autonomous stance demonstrates the importance of tailoring marine spatial planning (MSP) frameworks to national contexts, while fostering coexistence between security, environmental, and energy objectives.

[Barquet, K., & Sjölander, F. (2025). *Quiet power: How security interests shape offshore wind and marine spatial planning in Sweden*. *Energy Research & Social Science*, 130, 104451. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.erss.2025.104451>]

Security challenges in the maritime domain cannot be addressed in isolation. Policies must balance environmental, economic, and geopolitical factors to ensure sustainable and secure infrastructure development.

To address key challenges, including accidental and intentional damage to marine infrastructure, ecosystem impacts, and building trust for knowledge and data sharing, authors recommend five policy measures for countries in the Baltic region and the EU: address security concerns, strengthen regional implementation of the EU's Blue Growth strategy, enhance regional collaboration, balance data transparency with security, and foster formal and informal dialogues.

[Sjölander, F., Sköld, M., & Barquet, K. (2024). *Navigating security challenges: the future of marine infrastructure in European seas*. Policy brief. *Mistra Geopolitics*. <https://www.mistra-geopolitics.se/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Policy-brief-Mistra-Geopolitics-final-19Dec2024.pdf>]

SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES NAVIGATE CLIMATE THREATS AND GLOBAL POWER DYNAMICS

SIDS face a dual challenge: responding to climate change

impacts while navigating shifting geopolitical pressures and protecting their food source – the ocean. Mistra Geopolitics research from Linköping University examines how these challenges are framed, understood, and represented across academic, policy, and public discourse, with a focus on Pacific SIDS' strategies for resilience and agency.

Pacific Small Island Developing States (SIDS) are often portrayed as vulnerable victims of climate change, yet they are also strategic players in global diplomacy. SIDS actively engage in climate negotiations, build regional coalitions, and advocate for equitable access to climate finance. Rather than passive recipients of aid, these countries assert leadership in shaping international climate agendas.

Although Pacific voices have gained visibility, their climate priorities are frequently entangled in the strategic agendas of more powerful states. Countries like the United States, China, Australia, and France often approach the region through lenses shaped by their own geopolitical and security concerns, which can marginalize or dilute Pacific-led priorities.

[Mikaelsson, M., Wibeck, V., & Linnér B.-O. (2025). *Navigating the waves of change: Framing Pacific Small Island Developing States within a geopolitical and climate context*. *Environmental Development*, 56:101270. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envdev.2025.101270>.]

Pacific Island nations, such as Fiji, have played a key role in global negotiations elevating the issue of climate-related loss and damage on the international agenda. Mistra Geopolitics researchers from Linköping University collaborated with other partners in an international workshop, "Loss and damage and the climate negotiations", in 2022, where policy-makers, researchers, and representatives from regional



Photo: iStock/Mikael Svensson

“Studying Swedish elites, we find that elites’ national security concerns tend to reduce their support for problem-solving through non-security international organizations.”

Lisa Dellmuth, Co-Director of the Stockholm Center on Global Governance at Stockholm University

organizations examined how Pacific actors strategically engage in climate finance and geopolitical negotiations.

THE ARCTIC’S STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE TO THE EU WILL GROW, AS WILL CONFLICT OVER GOVERNANCE

The Arctic has the potential to supply critical materials that are key to implementing the European Green Deal and energy transition, increasing the geographic area’s strategic importance to the EU. Mistra Geopolitics examined how geopolitical dynamics shape the prospects for legitimate and effective governance of the Arctic.

A policy brief by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) explored the EU’s growing interest in the Arctic and its efforts to reduce negative spillovers. Kiruna in Sweden is an example of where interests linked to activities such as mining could lead to local controversy and shared ways to ensure more mutually beneficial outcomes.

The EU needs to have an internal Indigenous people’s policy, to ensure conflicts linked to projects supporting the European Green Deal are addressed and to uphold Indigenous rights while using the best available knowledge for environmental protection, Mistra Geopolitics research suggests. The Saami Council’s 2019 Sámi Arctic Strategy, which encourages human-centred economic development that is respectful of the environment, co-designed and co-produced using Western and Indigenous knowledge, and rights-based, is an example of how to achieve this.

[Broek, E. (2023). *The Arctic is hot: addressing the social and environmental implications*. SIPRI Policy Brief. *Stockholm International Peace Research Institute*. <https://doi.org/10.55163/VJEE5200>]

THE ROLE OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN ARCTIC GOVERNANCE

Mistra Geopolitics researchers: Nicholas Olczak and Lisa Dellmuth, at the Stockholm Center on Global Governance hosted by Stockholm University, have examined how elites perceive the role of international organizations in global problem-solving, with a particular focus on the Arctic. The study, “*Elite concerns and attitudes about problem solving through international organizations*”, draws on a unique dataset of surveys and interviews with Swedish elites, covering both societal and political elites involved in business, civil society, the public sector and research.

The research finds only limited evidence that national security concerns – such as the fear of military conflict involving Sweden – reduce confidence in international organizations overall. However, broader security concerns, such as Arctic militarization, appear to increase elite support for international organizations’ problem-solving, particularly through organizations with a security mandate, like NATO and the United Nations.

This study, published in *Global Studies Quarterly*, is the first to theorize and empirically test the link between elite concerns and their attitudes toward international organizations’, problem-solving, contributing to a deeper understanding of global governance at a time of increasing geopolitical tensions.

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Photo: iStock/ metamorworks

THE GEOPOLITICS OF DECARBONIZATION

Decarbonization and geopolitics are intrinsically entangled. The global energy crisis that followed Russia’s war on Ukraine accentuates different nuances of the geopolitics of decarbonization. Some of the policy responses in Western countries focused on energy affordability and involved reduced energy taxes and increased fossil fuel subsidies, illustrating the difficulties of prioritizing long-term climate goals in times of crises, as well as the stickiness of fossil fuel infrastructures and institutions. Research within Mistra Geopolitics examines such “carbon lock-ins” and how fossil energy becomes entangled with power relations and economic interests, as well as culture and identity.

GEOPOLITICS OF DECARBONIZATION WILL TRANSFORM TRADE

Trade is a key lens to observe the dynamics associated with geopolitics of decarbonization. For the EU in particular, trade is a central element of its external action and decarbonization agendas. In the scoping paper “*A game changing? The geopolitics of decarbonisation through the lens of trade*”, Mistra Geopolitics authors from adelphi and Lund University suggested three dimensions through which geopolitics and decarbonization will affect trade: the substance of trade, institutions governing trade, and transportation enabling trade.

The authors also suggest that decarbonization of trade will

require new global rules and alignment of trade institutions with decarbonization goals. Multi-layered trade regimes could strengthen sustainable trade and reduce the risks of transition. The EU should plan to further integrate the trade agenda with the Green Deal to bring existing and upcoming trade and investment agreements in line with the Paris Agreement and the 2030 milestones of the Green Deal.

[Ivleva, D., & Månberger, A. (2021). *A Game changing? The geopolitics of decarbonisation through the lens of trade. With contributions by Julia Kirr. Scoping paper for Mistra Geopolitics. Berlin: adelphi.*]

NEW RESOURCE POWERS EMERGE AS DEMAND FOR CRITICAL RAW MATERIALS GROWS

With the shift to low-emission economies, demand for emission-intensive commodities such as fossil fuels will decrease, while commodities such as critical raw materials (e.g., lithium, cobalt) and hydrogen will see a significant increase. However, fossil fuels are still more important for states’ economies than critical raw materials.

In most countries, critical raw materials are likely to generate revenues that are relatively small in comparison to the oil revenues in today’s major oil economies. The exception is a handful of resource-rich mid- and low-income countries, such as the Democratic Republic of Congo, Cuba, Madagascar, Chile, and Zambia, where the annual value of the metals extracted may exceed 5% of these countries’ current GDPs. Mineral revenues for renewable energy are therefore unlikely to provide revenue flows on a country level at similar levels as for some of the important oil exporters, such as Saudi Arabia (35% of GDP), Libya (34%), and Iraq (45%), but comparable to oil exporters such as Nigeria (10%).

Given that many raw materials needed for renewable technologies are geographically concentrated, certain countries will become key suppliers in the low-emission transition. This presents opportunities and challenges for international trade.

METAL	MAIN RESERVE HOLDERS		
Cobalt	Congo (DRC) 51.4%	Australia 17.1%	Cuba 7.1%
Copper	Chile 23.0%	Australia 10.0%	Peru 10.0%
Lithium	Chile 50.6%	Australia 16.5%	Argentina 10.0%
Nickel	Indonesia 23.6%	Australia 22.5%	Brazil 12.4%

[Månberger, A., & Johansson, B. (2019). *The geopolitics of metals and metalloids used for the renewable energy transition. Energy Strategies Reviews, 26:100394.*]

INCLUSIVE COLLABORATIONS KEY TO DECARBONIZATION BUT CANNOT REPLACE STATE REGULATION

How and under what conditions can states – in collaboration with non-state actors – govern a societal transformation to achieve deep decarbonization in line with the goals of the Paris Agreement? Sweden’s model of multi-stakeholder participation, including the Fossil Free Sweden multi-stakeholder platform, has been praised for its successes in reducing emissions, particularly in energy and industry sectors. However, challenges remain, including economic and technological barriers and the uneven participation of municipalities, especially in rural and fossil-fuel-dependent regions.

As illustrated by researchers from Stockholm University and Linköping University, examining these structures in Sweden, collaborative governance cannot replace state-led regulatory interventions; democratic legitimacy and inclusive action can ensure a just transition. Innovative governance arrangements remain valuable, while established institutions continue to play a key role in steering transformations.

[Bäckstrand, K., Marquardt, J., Nasiritousi, N., & Widerberg,

O. (Eds.). (2024). *The Politics and Governance of Decarbonization: The Interplay Between State and Non-State Actors in Sweden. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.*]

CRITICAL RAW MATERIALS SHIFT GEOPOLITICAL POWER

Minerals are essential for technological advancement, energy transitions, and military and economic competitiveness. Securing mineral resources has become a key focus of powers such as China, the EU, Russia, and the US. The EU and US focus on critical minerals necessary for advanced technologies, while China and Russia emphasize fuel minerals and bulk industrial materials, reflecting their differing economic and political priorities.

Mineral security is often driven by domestic protectionist measures and can hinder broader goals of a clean energy transition. Geopolitical risks in the pursuit of mineral security can heighten global tensions, especially when developing countries become caught up in great power competitions. However, there is also potential for cooperation. Engaging with developing countries and multilateral institutions could help address environmental and governance risks, ensuring fairer and more sustainable mineral resource use.

[Zhou, J., & Månberger, A. (2024). *Critical minerals and great power competition: an overview. Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). https://doi.org/10.55163/WEMJ9585.*]

CRITICAL RAW MATERIALS AND SUPPLY SECURITY – THE ROLE OF CIRCULAR ECONOMY

The EU is heavily dependent on imports for many of its critical raw materials, which raises concerns about supply security. Mistra Geopolitics’ Månberger has investigated how circular economy measures aimed at reducing this dependency can be leveraged to increase EU strategic autonomy. Different recycling strategies can enhance resilience and reduce pressure on primary extraction, such as using less, using existing materials more efficiently, and extending product life. The full benefit of these strategies is expected to materialize over time.

Improving efficiency and using material substitutes seems to have the greatest impact on demand in the short to medium term, yet the EU does not currently have sufficient recycling infrastructure in place to recover the critical raw material from its waste flows. Reduced use of fossil energy enabled by enhanced circularity and energy transition is likely to have a greater impact on the EU’s security and autonomy than the increased use of critical materials.

[Månberger, A. (2023). *Critical raw material supply matters and the potential of the circular economy to contribute to security. Intereconomics, 58(2):74–78.*]

RESOURCE SECURITY CONCERNS CAN AFFECT PRIORITIZATION AMONG CIRCULAR POLICIES

While Finland, Sweden, Denmark, and Norway have been early adopters of national circular economy strategies, their actual circular material use remains below average. A study by Eugène Petelin, Mistra Geopolitics PhD candidate from Lund University, shows that concerns over resource security have led these countries to prioritize recycling-focused, risk-averse

policies – especially for metals used in electronics, batteries, and cars – while neglecting circular approaches in the production and usage phases. The research emphasized the need for Nordic strategies to consider local ecosystems, material sufficiency, and the broader impacts on developing countries. The findings highlight the influence of security concerns on policy focus and suggest a shift toward a more inclusive circular economy.

[Petelin, E. (2025). *Effects of resource security concerns on Nordic countries' approach to the circular economy of metals. Sustainable Production and Consumption*, 55:420–433, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.spc.2025.03.008>.]

ADDRESSING SOCIAL AND CULTURAL IMPACTS OF DECARBONIZATION

Mistra Geopolitics research examines who will bear the social costs of decarbonization policies and who lives with the side effects of fossil fuel extraction and production. To make the transition to climate neutrality inclusive and just, affected communities must be invited to articulate what is at stake in decarbonization processes and to participate in the remaking of places facing industrial decline.

For Sweden's transition to a fossil-free society, the case of Lysekil is an example of how deep decarbonization policies impact communities where livelihoods and cultural identities are closely tied to fossil fuel production. Mistra Geopolitics researchers from Linköping University and Newcastle University argue that just transition policies need to go beyond economic compensation and address the loss of identity, security, and direction caused by changes to the local environment. They warn against assuming communities affected by industrial decline speak with one voice, urging policymakers to acknowledge internal differences; inclusive, democratic conversations can help communities find ways to reimagine their future and navigate the challenges of decarbonization while preserving their cultural and emotional ties to a place.

[Bohman, A., Evers, C., & Lövbrand, E. (2024). *More than one story: remaking community and place in Sweden's transition to a fossil free society. Local Environment*, 29(4):433-445.]

BARRIERS TO TRANSITIONS AWAY FROM FOSSIL FUELS

Governments endorse the Paris Agreement but still justify fossil fuel expansion. Researchers from SEI and adelphi, examining governmental discourses about oil and gas production in low- and middle income countries, have identified key barriers to transitioning away from fossil fuels. This study explored how national governments in Nigeria and Colombia employ discursive strategies to reconcile their plans for expanding hydrocarbon production with their climate commitments. These strategies, however, make it difficult to break the cycle of carbon lock-in. Through narratives that emphasize fossil fuel production as crucial for development – such as funding public services, promoting economic diversification, and ensuring energy security – governments present fossil gas as a low-carbon solution that can facilitate the transition to renewables.

The authors showed how persistent these narratives are. Changing norms and policy approaches would be required to

support shifting power away from high-carbon industries and their supporters, in order to phase down fossil fuels.

[Strambo, C., Ivleva, D., Bachmann, S., & Arond, E. (2025). *How do governments discursively reconcile plans for expanding oil and gas production with global climate goals? The cases of Colombia and Nigeria. Political Geography*, 16:103243. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2024.103243>]

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FORESIGHT CAPABILITIES AND EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES

The new era of extreme climate risk is reshaping geopolitics, demanding adaptable and resilient strategies. Mistra Geopolitics researchers have contributed to the discourse on preparing stakeholders for future shocks. As the world faces rapid geopolitical, technological, and environmental shifts, Mistra Geopolitics research explored how these forces intersect – and especially how AI can enhance future preparedness.

FORECASTING THE FUTURE – THE ROLE OF AI

Scenarios are widely used in climate change planning to explore possible future pathways and guide decision-making in the face of uncertainty. By modelling various outcomes based on differing assumptions about social, economic, tech-

nological, and environmental factors, scenarios help policy-makers, scientists, and stakeholders prepare for a range of possibilities. Since climate change and its impacts extend far into the future, long-term scenarios have become pivotal in many subfields of climate research and policy.

“As researchers scramble to grasp the development of AI, and the challenge of building long-term socioeconomic scenarios increases, AI could hold potential to aid this process. It cannot be ruled out that AI systems will be better at predicting the future of AI than humans are at predicting the future of humans.”

Henrik Carlsen, Co-Director for Mistra Geopolitics and Senior Research Fellow at SEI

The Shared Socioeconomic Pathways (SSPs) is a set of five global descriptions of how society might develop up to 2100. These broad descriptions of possible societal development are used by many researchers across all three IPCC working groups. In a research paper, Carlsen and colleagues investigate the possible impact of the development of AI systems on those five SSPs. Their analysis indicates that AI could substantially impact all drivers of the SSPs but also has considerable potential for fundamentally changing societies in ways important for both climate research and policy.

[Carlsen, H., Nykvist, B., Joshi, S., & Heintz, F. (2024). Chasing artificial intelligence in Shared Socioeconomic Pathways. *One Earth*, 7(1):18–22. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.oneear.2023.12.015>]

VETTING SCENARIOS BETTER FOR IMPROVED FORESIGHT

Given the importance of scenarios, proper evaluation is vital, especially of those global scenarios that are widely used in the climate research and policy community. Mistra Geopolitics research from SEI identified that while the quality and usefulness of individual scenarios have been extensively examined, standards for the systematic evaluation of scenario sets are only emerging. Methodological advances made within the futures studies community during the last decade have been largely ignored by the climate change research community, including scenario diversity analysis and scenario discovery. Researchers conclude that employing both more quantitative and semi-quantitative approaches when developing scenario narratives could help bridge the methodological gap.

Mistra Geopolitics researchers have also contributed to international organizations’ foresight capabilities, for example when UNEP developed and implemented an overarching framework to enhance its foresight function, including global and regional scenario building.

[Carlsen, H., Weitz, N., Petrova, K., & Kemp-Benedict, E. (2024). A sustainable trajectory for the 2030 agenda: targeting historical lock-ins to accelerate progress on all SDGs. *Sustainable Development*, 32:4738–4747. <https://doi.org/10.1002/sd.2929>]

[Carlsen, H., Talebian, S., Pedde, S., & Kok, K. (2024). Diversity in global environmental scenario sets. *Global Environmental Change*, 86:102839. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2024.102839>.]

PREDICTING MIGRATION FLOWS

Mistra Geopolitics researchers from Uppsala University have investigated how conflict and climate-related hazards influence household migration decisions and overall migration patterns. Including conflict and natural hazards as datapoints improves models predicting household mobility in Bangladesh, capturing interactions between violence, disasters and household characteristics. In this research, machine learning, a sub-field of AI, was used to identify where humanitarian crises may potentially develop around the world. While predicting refugee outflows is inherently uncertain, incorporating conflict dynamics significantly improves the accuracy of these predictions – especially in forecasting future increases in displacement.

[Leis, M. (Forthcoming.) *Assessing the Interplay Between Natural Hazards and Political Instability on Migration Decisions in Bangladesh*. PhD thesis. Uppsala University.]

“Understanding the drivers of distress mobility, including both reactive and anticipatory movement, is essential for improving predictive models and informing humanitarian responses that support populations in vulnerable situations.”

Maxine Leis, PhD candidate, Uppsala University

MANAGING CLIMATE-RELATED SECURITY RISK

Recent advances in AI – largely based on machine learning – offer new possibilities for addressing climate-related security risks. Mistra Geopolitics researchers from Uppsala University and SIPRI argue that AI can support climate security by addressing three main risks: climate hazards, vulnerabilities and exposure, and climate-related grievances and tensions. It is particularly effective in enhancing early-warning systems, modelling climate hazards, optimizing natural resource management, and supporting disaster response. However, its application to monitor social tensions is more complex due to ethical and technical challenges.

The authors recommend policymakers who are active in the field of climate security should improve digital infrastructure and capacity building. They stress the importance of funding simple, mobile-accessible AI tools to collect and analyse climate data in data-scarce regions and ensure tools are widely accessible to local actors. They recommend supporting research on AI for climate security, focusing on ethical, practical, and technical challenges of using AI in this field.



Photo: iStock/RadekProcyk

[Kim, K., & Vincent, B. (2023). *Artificial Intelligence for Climate Security: Possibilities and Challenges*. Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). <https://doi.org/10.55163/QDSE8934>]

BEYOND FRAMING AI AS A TECHNICAL CHALLENGE

Applied AI is changing many aspects of society and there is a strong need for policymakers to understand its potentially far-reaching effects. Mistra Geopolitics research has studied the organizational responses to AI, looking specifically at the UN, EU and the World Economic Forum. These institutions all expect AI to contribute to sustainability and a prosperous future with better data analysis, greater amounts of quantitative knowledge, and by making economic and social activities less wasteful and more energy efficient. While the challenges of using AI were also acknowledged, this framing turns political and structural challenges into technical issues to be solved with more data, greater collaboration, and technical progress.

[Francisco, M. & Linnér, B-O. (2023). *AI and the governance of sustainable development. An idea analysis of the European Union, the United Nations, and the World Economic Forum*. *Environmental Science & Policy*, 150. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envsci.2023.103590>]

The alignment of views between the EU, UN, and World Economic Forum suggests that AI and sustainable development have become institutionalized in global discourse. However, research shows that AI benefits are unevenly distributed, with low-income countries in Africa at risk of being left behind. Pressing needs like education, sanitation, and food security often take priority over digital investment – despite its potential

to address these issues – creating a Catch-22 driven by conflicting demands and limited resources.

[Thorslund, E., & Lindsjö, G. (2023). *Artificial intelligence, sustainable development and geopolitics in Africa*. Mistra Geopolitics Working paper. <https://www.mistra-geopolitics.se/publications/artificial-intelligence-sustainable-development-and-geopolitics-in-africa/>]

CLIMATE SECURITY WILL DEPEND ON CLIMATE DIPLOMACY

The EU has transformed its strategies for climate action, by joining up efforts and using a universal approach that is more palatable than its regional goals and high ambitions on climate action. Mistra Geopolitics authors from Stockholm University traced how diplomatic practices have adapted to changing geopolitical contexts regarding climate negotiations and diplomacy, through narrative, coordination, outreach and mainstreaming, with implications for other arenas, such as the Arctic, or EU engagements with bilateral actors.

The EU has moved to frame climate as a security issue, and Mistra Geopolitics researchers have also examined how international organizations have done the same, in the context of peacebuilding. These organizations set the “discursive framing”, and their institutional design and policy actions have ramifications in practice.

[Bremberg, N., & Michalski, A. (2024). *The European Union climate diplomacy: evolving practices in a changing geopolitical context? The Hague Journal of Diplomacy*, 19(3):506–535. <https://doi.org/10.1163/1871191x-bja10188>]


Bremberg, N., Möbjörk, M., & Krampe, F. (2022). Global responses to climate security: discourses, institutions and actions. *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development*, 17(3):341–356. <https://doi.org/10.1177/15423166221128180>

BRINGING FORESIGHT TO THE 2030 AGENDA


The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all UN members in 2015, included 17 SDGs. These goals make up the parts of an indivisible whole and research on how to manage the interactions between these goals, both synergies and trade-offs, is key for successful implementation. Mistra Geopolitics researchers have assisted decision-makers at different levels (international, national, subnational) to identify and assess synergies and trade-offs using the tool SDG Synergies (www.sdgsynergies.org). This has helped different groups of actors to understand how SDGs or associated targets interact in a given context. It provides a basis for priority-setting by ranking goals as well as cross-sectoral

collaboration by identifying sub-groups of goals. The method looks beyond direct interactions between targets to also include indirect, secondary effects across the whole set of selected goals. [Weitz, N., Carlsen, H., Bennich, T., Nilsson, M., & Persson, Å. (2023). *Returning to core principles to advance the 2030 Agenda*. *Nature Sustainability*, 6:1145-1148. Carlsen, H., Weitz, N., Bennich, T. (2022). *A decision-making tool for systems thinking in SDG implementation: experiences from Sweden's voluntary national review 2021*. In Breuer, A., Malerba, D., Srigiri, S., & Balasubramanian, P. (Eds.), *Governing the Interlinkages between the SDGs: Approaches, Opportunities and Challenges*. London: Routledge. Gottenbuber, S., Carlsen, H., Weitz, N., & Linnér, B.-O. (2025). *Operationalizing indivisibility – synergies and trade-offs in six Swedish municipalities' work with the 2030 Agenda*. *Sustainable Development*, 33(4):5642–5660. <https://doi.org/10.1002/sd.3422>]


RESEARCH TEAM FORESIGHT




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DELIVERING IMPACT



Photo: iStock/Kiangsak Koopattanakij

FROM RESEARCH TO LOCAL IMPACT:
NATIONAL DIALOGUE IN
LYSEKIL TACKLES SWEDEN'S
PATH TO CLIMATE NEUTRALITY

Eva Lövbrand, Professor at Linköping University and Mistra Geopolitics affiliate, hosted a roundtable and panel debate on the theme “A just fossil free transition: what does it mean for Sweden?” in Lysekil in October 2023.

The roundtable dialogue and panel debate were held in the west coast city of Lysekil and involved local actors and representatives from Fossil Free Sweden, the Swedish Climate Policy Council, the Swedish Trade Unions (LO), the Swedish Alliance for Just Transitions, and the climate justice movement. Lysekil is a small coastal city located next to Scandinavia's largest oil refinery, Preemraff. Since the refinery was established in Brofjorden in 1975, Lysekil has struggled with a carbon lock-in that is both materially and culturally entrenched. The city operates in the shadow of the refinery, and many citizens remain locked into carbon-intensive jobs and infrastructures.

Municipal efforts have aimed to bring down emissions in the housing, transport, and energy sectors, and this puts the refinery on the agenda. In the debate over Preemraff's future, local jobs have been pitted against global climate concerns, the socio-economic welfare of fossil fuel workers against the rights of future generations, the fossil-fuelled economy against visions of a fossil-free society. During the roundtable and panel debate, the local and national actors discussed how these tensions can be overcome and what it takes to foster a just transition to climate neutrality that “leaves no one behind”. This theme was also explored in the public art exhibition “Omställning”, co-produced

with the research team and citizen groups in Lysekil, Luleå, and Slite, which attracted widespread attention from local media (*Lysekliposten*), Lysekil's municipality, and local citizen groups.

Lövbrand highlighted that on the basis of Mistra Geopolitics research, these activities created a platform where different stakeholders in society who normally would not meet had a chance to discuss just transitions, as well as foster local capacity building. Citizens felt heard.

"Since our public events in Lysekil, we have seen many positive developments in the city. Lysekil municipality has adopted several new climate targets and set in motion a cross-sectoral process to reach them. Preem has also committed to climate neutrality by 2030 and is now investing in renewable fuel technologies and a pilot project for carbon capture and storage. These developments suggest that climate policy polarization can be overcome through political leadership and inclusive and visionary dialogue.

"I think Lysekil offers a good example of the democratic and political work required to make the transition to climate neutrality inclusive and just," Lövbrand concludes.



Collage from Lysekil cultural week 2023. Collage: Veronica Brodén Gyberg.
Illustration: Camia PIA Boije

SWEDEN'S EXPOSURE TO CLIMATE RISKS: REPORT INFORMS SWEDEN'S CLIMATE ADAPTATION STRATEGY

The Mistra Geopolitics report *New Risk Horizons Sweden's Exposure to Climate Risk via International Trade* has been instrumental in building an understanding of transboundary climate risk for the country and the implications for adaptation strategies. It was presented to the Swedish Parliament and at COP27 and has informed Swedish climate policy and strategy.

The study analysis showed that Sweden's most stable trade relations tend to be with countries that are both close to Sweden geographically and relatively resilient to climate change. However, by adopting innovative data-driven methods, it also reveals the true extent of the country's dependence on more vulnerable countries – particularly emerging economies in Asia and Africa – that play an increasingly critical role in Swedish supply chains. These revelations add up to a new risk horizon for Sweden; global climate change threatens the stability and availability of inputs to

Swedish consumption that first enter our supply chains thousands of miles away in higher-risk countries.

"We are already seeing how the effects of climate change are leading to heat waves, droughts and forest fires, both in Europe and globally. Climate risks interact and are reinforced by other geopolitical risks with broad effects at the societal level. Despite this, climate adaptation is almost exclusively, even in Sweden, treated as something that takes place within the country's borders," says Frida Lager, SEI Research Associate and Mistra Geopolitics project leader.

CONTRIBUTION TO SWEDEN'S CLIMATE ADAPTATION STRATEGY

In 2020 the National Expert Council for Climate Adaptation started an evaluation as part of a process to develop a report to advise the Swedish government on revision of Sweden's national adaptation strategy, preparing for the impacts of climate change. Researchers Frida Lager and Magnus Benzie worked with the Council to bring expertise on various aspects of transboundary climate risk. Through informal conversations and workshops over two years, they provided data, evidence, and examples of the negative effects of transboundary climate risks in Sweden which helped shape the policy recommendations to the government presented in February 2022.

Karin Lundgren Kownacki is a climate adaptation analyst at the Swedish Meteorological and Hydrological Institute (SMHI) and she works in the secretariat for the Swedish Expert Council on Climate Adaptation.

"Quite early on, the Council identified that transboundary climate risk was a knowledge gap, and we contacted Frida Lager and Magnus Benzie. We benefitted greatly from the collaboration with them; they were very influential in the Council's first report to the government. They really helped us when we were formulating policy recommendations," she said.

Peter Alestig is a leading environmental journalist and writer in Sweden. "The research on climate risks embedded in trade has changed the way I look at climate risks for Sweden. It played a vital role in my research for my book *Världen som väntar – vårt liv i klimatförändringarnas Sverige*. The chapter on climate risks in our food system is one that I keep referring to in interviews, seminars and in my continued journalistic work on the topic," he said.



The figure illustrates Sweden's high exposure to climate risk cascading via the pathway of trade, particularly with regard to commodities that are impacted by droughts, such as soy, which is an integral part of the foods consumed in the country. Graphic: Mia Shu/SEI.

"Climate risks interact and are reinforced by other geopolitical risks with broad effects at the societal level."

Frida Lager, SEI Research Associate
and Mistra Geopolitics project leader

I love the quote that Frida Lager gave me: 'I don't think that Swedes are aware of what is happening with our coffee. If that were the case, they would panic.' The climate effects on coffee production may seem insignificant in the bigger picture, but it is through such symbolic and culturally important goods that I as a journalist can catch the reader's attention – and then I can tell the bigger story as well. But without the research, I couldn't tell the story at all, or it would at least be much more challenging."

CLIMATE RISKS LINKED TO GLOBAL TRADE

The report *New Risk Horizons Sweden's Exposure to Climate Risk via International Trade* highlights what climate adaptation should really be about for countries like Sweden, where trade issues, business and international cooperation should be the key components. As similar research results from Germany and Austria show, the impact on trade of climate change in Sweden may be greater than the risks we face within the country's own borders.

Climate risks linked to global trade are a relatively unexplored area of research and countries' climate vulnerability is challenging to map. The report is a significant advance in terms of innovation in methods for evaluating transnational climate risks. It provides new insights of importance for climate adaptation policy and global governance.

Sweden's dependence on soy from Brazil is highlighted as an example of a commodity where climate risks in production (on Brazilian farms) and transport (via Brazilian inland road, rail and shipping networks, and beyond) are expected to drive risks for consumers and businesses in Sweden. The flow of risk from farm to fork is mapped and analysed in the report.

At its launch, *New Risk Horizons: Sweden's Exposure to Climate Risk via International Trade* attracted attention from media and policy circles alike, including coverage in a special issue of *The Economist* in 2022. The report has since been recognized as a significant contribution to the understanding of climate risks that transcend national borders.

[Lager, F., & Benzie, M. (2022). *New Risk Horizons: Sweden's Exposure to Climate Risk via International Trade*. SEI report. Stockholm Environment Institute, Stockholm. <http://doi.org/10.51414/sei2022.033>]

FROM LOCAL VOICES TO GLOBAL POLICY: MISTRA GEOPOLITICS ORGANIZES FIJI LOSS AND DAMAGE WORKSHOP

Pacific Island nations, such as Fiji, have played a key role in global negotiations elevating the issue of climate-related loss and damage on the international agenda. Björn-Ola Linnér, Programme Director at Mistra Geopolitics and Professor at Linköping University, together with Malaika Mikaelsson, PhD student, took part in the “Loss and damage and the climate negotiations” workshop in Fiji in October 2022.

The University of Fiji hosted the two-day workshop in collaboration with local and international partners, including the Ministry of iTaukei Affairs, Pacific Islands Development Forum, Linköping University, Mistra Geopolitics, and the Australian National University Institute for Climate, Energy & Disaster Solutions. Representatives from communities offered comprehensive, nuanced, sensitive and Pacific-relevant interpretations of loss and damage. Honson Chan, a local artist, created live illustrations as the speakers presented,

capturing the daily realities of loss and damage. The Mistra Geopolitics research team had the opportunity to meet Fijian politicians to discuss climate change strategies and their views of the future. Given the preference of Fiji residents to stay on their land, it was seen as essential that global warming be limited to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels by 2030 or 2050. However, then-Prime Minister of Fiji, Frank Bainimarama, expressed his pessimism about achieving this target, saying that there was insufficient commitment.

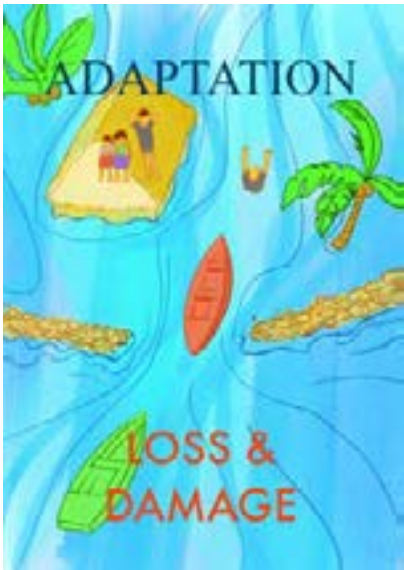


Attendees at the Loss and Damage workshop, 13 Oct 2022. Photo: Darian Singh.

“When considering the strategies being implemented by Pacific states, Fiji is aiming to increase the amount of mangrove trees and to offer residents of Kiribati and Tuvalu the opportunity to relocate to Fiji.”

Malaika Mikaelsson, PhD student,
Linköping University

The dialogue underscored the challenge of ensuring that external funding aligns with Pacific-led priorities, rather than being dictated by donor interests. Interviews with regional stakeholders provided further depth, capturing how government officials and policy experts perceive the opportunities and constraints of geopolitical shifts. By engaging directly with both academic discourses and on-the-ground perspectives, Mistra Geopolitics research in the region contributed to a more nuanced understanding of Pacific SIDS as strategic actors. It underscored the importance of centring Pacific-led perspectives in climate and geopolitical governance, ensuring that their agency as large ocean states translates into tangible policy influence and climate action.



Illustrations: Honson Chan

TOOLS FOR INFORMED DECISION- MAKING IN A CHANGING WORLD

As global geopolitical uncertainty rises, so does the need for tools that help policymakers analyse uncertainties, navigate risks and seize emerging opportunities. The Mistra Geopolitics research programme contributes to this need by developing, applying and supporting innovative tools that integrate systems thinking, scenario planning, and data-driven forecasting. These tools help assess strategic risks, inform sustainable policy decisions, and explore pathways toward the SDGs.

Through collaboration with international partners, local governments, and academic institutions, Mistra Geopolitics has contributed to several high-impact tools now being used in Sweden and around the world.

APPLYING THE iSD MODEL TO SWEDEN

Mistra Geopolitics has co-funded the adaptation of an internationally used tool, the Integrated Sustainable Development Simulator (iSD Model), to the Swedish context with the

specific aim of supporting sustainability policy assessments that take into account geopolitical risks and tensions. This adaptation represents a novel application of the model.

SEI Research Fellow Therese Bennich has contributed to adapting the iSD Model with the purpose to assist Swedish decision-makers in identifying investments and policy actions that both address geopolitical risk and advance sustainability objectives, including the SDGs.

Originally developed by the Millennium Institute, the iSD Model is an integrated systems model designed to support policy prioritization, track progress on national sustainability goals, and manage investments.

Meeting sustainability goals such as the SDGs requires different strategies in different countries. Policymakers must address questions such as: How many resources are needed to achieve the SDGs? What is the best way to distribute investment across different areas? Where should investments be made first? How can such investments be financed? The iSD Model has been designed and developed to help decision-makers address such questions. It integrates key economic, social, and environmental factors, providing a comprehensive platform for systemic policy analysis and strategic planning.

The iSD Model has already been used in over 40 countries. For example, it has supported national governments in preparing strategic development plans in Nigeria and Jamaica, and in testing net-zero scenarios in Germany and Pakistan. *For more information about the iSD Model, visit: <https://www.millennium-institute.org/sustainable-development-simulator> <https://isdgdoc.millennium-institute.org/en/>*

ANTICIPATING CONFLICT: THE VIEWS FORECASTING SYSTEM

During Phase II of Mistra Geopolitics, Håvard Hegre contributed to the further development of VIEWS – the Violence & Impacts Early-Warning System. VIEWS is a state-of-the-art conflict prediction system that provides monthly forecasts of violent conflict up to three years in advance. The VIEWS system currently produces forecasts for state-based conflicts, such as civil wars or interstate wars involving government actors.

Researchers are in the process of expanding the forecasting system to the humanitarian impacts of armed conflict. Mistra Geopolitics has contributed to these extensions in particular through the work on migration prediction modelling in the

dissertation of Maxine Leis, PhD candidate at Uppsala University and part of the Mistra Geopolitics Research School.

VIEWS has become a critical resource for humanitarian actors, policymakers, and international organizations seeking to anticipate and mitigate conflict-related risks.

Learn more about VIEWS: <https://viewsforecasting.org/>

UNDERSTANDING POLICY INTERACTIONS WITH THE SDG SYNERGIES TOOL

Researchers from Linköping University and SEI, working within the Mistra Geopolitics programme, explored how synergies and trade-offs between different sustainability goals appear in local SDG programs. Using the SDG Synergies tool, they examined these interactions and what they mean for local governance, highlighting opportunities, challenges, and possible recommendations. A series of workshops was conducted in six municipalities across Sweden, where local stakeholders scored pairwise interactions between selected SDG targets. The researchers argue that recognizing the interconnectedness of the global goals can guide civil servants and policymakers, not just in prioritizing or reporting on them, but in making more integrated and effective decisions that account for systemic effects.

SDG Synergies is a practical tool for understanding how groups of policy areas and targets interact, based on systems thinking. Originally developed by researchers at SEI to support governments in implementing the SDGs, the tool can be applied both within and beyond the field of sustainability.

[Gottenhuber S., Carlsen, H., Linnér B-O., Weitz, N. (2025). Operationalizing indivisibility — Synergies and trade-offs in six Swedish municipalities' work with the 2030 Agenda. Sustainable Development, 33(4):5642-5660. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/sd.3422>]

For more information about the SDG Synergies tool, visit: <https://www.sdg synergies.org/>



Photo: Shutterstock/Jeppe Gustafsson

BUILDING FUTURES IN SUSTAINABILITY RESEARCH



Photo: iStockphoto/ Larek

MISTRA GEOPOLITICS RESEARCH SCHOOL

Mistra Geopolitics included a four-year research school programme tasked with training the next generation of scholars in methods, theories and data collection for advanced geopolitics and sustainable development analysis. In this second phase of Mistra Geopolitics, 7 PhD candidates have been part of the research school. The first phase of the programme included 11 PhD candidates (5 fully funded by Mistra Geopolitics).

The research school has been a cornerstone in the Mistra Geopolitics research programme, and young researchers have contributed to the programme across a range of geopolitical, human security, and global environmental topics. The research school has served as a dynamic platform for knowledge exchange and capacity building, equipping the next generation of scholars with the tools needed to tackle complex global challenges. By fostering collaboration among early-career researchers, the research school has played a pivotal role in advancing innovative approaches and critical thinking within the field of sustainability and geopolitics.

The heads of the Mistra Geopolitics Research School, Lisa Dellmuth and Niklas Bremberg of Stockholm University, believe that the main success of the research school is that we have trained two cohorts of PhD students to advance knowledge about environmental governance and geopolitics. The cross-disciplinary approach of the research school has allowed for inspiration and insights across projects, and PhD students have learned from each other – and the programme

has learned from them – at various research workshops and conferences. As a result, these PhD students will now have an impact in their various academic disciplines and workplaces, and they themselves will be able to inspire to innovative thinking about how to foster sustainability in times of geopolitical tensions.



Research School Leads: Niklas Bremberg, Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, Stockholm University and Lisa Dellmuth, Professor of International Relations, Stockholm University

IN CONVERSATION WITH THE PHD CANDIDATES: REFLECTIONS ON THE PROGRAMME

Ebba Minas, Stockholm University

Research project – How major geopolitical powers formulate transformative strategies for decarbonization and resilience to large-scale climate risk.

“I think the community that we have from the school is a huge plus, not just within the PhD group but also the external Mistra Geopolitics Community in general and the wider network. And what I think has been a privilege with this program is that it’s been a holistic approach as well because it’s not only been research focused or purely focused on the work but it’s prepared us with different tools for the future”

Rikard Söder, Stockholm University

Research project – Anticipating the future: humanitarian aid in a changing climate

“For me it’s both having the community and this group but also it’s helped me to better understand academia and research institutes like Stockholm Environment Institute. It’s given me insights to the academic culture that go beyond just a network.”

Eugène Petelin, Lund University

Research project – The geopolitical implications of a circular economy, specifically how security discourses shape circular strategies in different regions and what effect circular policies have on security.

“If you come from a master program in a specific University, then you live and work in a bubble. And then this program has actually unlocked the academic landscape in the Swedish academic community so that’s really helpful knowledge going forward in our careers.”

Malaika Mikaelsson, Linköping University

Research project – How geopolitical dynamics impact the climate change responses of Pacific Small Island Developing States.

“This group, this research school, it gives us this sense of an additional layer of community. We have a community in our departments, but this one feels extra special. It’s a privilege to have had access to all of the knowledge and the expertise that we’ve been able to have.”

Maxine Leis, Uppsala University

Research Project – Displacement as a function of different types of violence and natural hazards and disasters and how to estimate and forecast displacement by better understanding the effect of these external shocks.

“I feel like it’s been such a great journey to grow together, everyone in the beginning was a nervous PhD candidate with doubts but now just seeing how much more confident everyone has become, seeing the impressive research we’ve been producing independently and then discussing it together. I’ve felt inspired every time we’ve met or been to a Mistra Geopolitics conference to see how passionate we are about what we do.”

Marie Franscisco, Linköping University

Research project – How artificial intelligence is envisioned by different political actors, and the impact of such technologies on climate security and geopolitics.

“Even though we have different projects, I really feel like we all have these interests between geopolitics and sustainability, which we don’t necessarily have in our department. So it’s like being part of a community of like-minded people.”



Back row: Rikard Söder, Niklas Bremberg. Middle row: Eugène Petelin, Maxine Leis, Malaika Mikaelsson, Ebba Minas, Lisa Dellmuth, Front row: Marie Franscisco. Photo: SEI.



Tanushree Rao, Stockholm University

Research Project: Inequality in numbers: A critical quantitative study of international aid and sociopolitical inequality.

“It has been a privilege to be part of this group of researchers and learn more about topics that the world needs to understand better in order to make positive progress. The research school was highly collaborative and encouraged us all to find synergies between our work as well as to situate our work within streams of research that have emerged in the nexus between politics and the environment, including climate adaptation and global environmental governance. I look forward to maintaining these collaborations and considering how my future research can continue to shed light on global climate-related challenges.”

Dr Kristina Petrova was a PhD student in the first Mistra Geopolitics Research School and is now a postdoctoral researcher at Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research.

How did the Mistra Geopolitics programme support you in the development of your academic career?

It provided me with the opportunity to collaborate on a project that examined the synergies and trade-offs within the SDG agenda. I worked alongside leading scholars from the Stockholm Environment Institute. The experience not only deepened

my understanding but also helped me build a professional profile centred around the SDG 2030 agenda. This collaboration was also helpful in shaping my research direction and enhancing my expertise in sustainable development.



What were the benefits of being part of a cross-disciplinary school with researchers from other fields?

Collaborating with researchers from various disciplines provided me with a broader perspective and a more comprehensive understanding of the complex interplay between geopolitics and environmental changes. This interdisciplinary environment allowed me to explore novel ideas and different research approaches.

How have you built on your time with the Mistra Geopolitics programme in your career now?

I utilized the interdisciplinary approach and extensive network of contacts I acquired to deepen my work on the topic of SDGs. My experiences in the programme have enabled me to contribute to and serve as a co-editor for an upcoming book on the topic of SDGs and Peace, which is set to be published in 2026. These steps further align my career trajectory with the urgent global needs for sustainability and security.

MISTRA GEOPOLITICS WRITES HANDBOOK ON GEOPOLITICS OF SUSTAINABILITY

Environmental change, rapid societal transformations and shifting political landscapes are reshaping global affairs. Understanding the intricate interplay between power struggles, economic asymmetries, technological dependencies, strategic resource control, sustainability governance and peacebuilding is now essential for navigating the politics of our planet. In 2023, the Mistra Geopolitics research programme was approached by Edward Elgar Publishing to produce a *Handbook on the Geopolitics of Sustainability* and delve into these critical issues.

Work began in 2024; prominent researchers working at the intersection of geopolitics and sustainability were invited to contribute a total of 32 chapters, with contributions from over 60 researchers around the world. Through in-person workshops in Sweden and online exchanges, the authors contributed beyond their chapters to the overall framing of the handbook.

The handbook addresses a wide range of issues at the intersection of geopolitics and sustainability. One group of contributions examined how global environmental change is

becoming a decisive factor in geopolitical thinking. These chapters highlight that the scale and speed of human-driven resource use, pollution, and ecosystem degradation pose existential threats to both humanity and the planet. The chapters outline key implications for geopolitical analysis, one of which is the need to rethink security by incorporating ecological, food, human, and ontological dimensions alongside traditional state-based approaches.

A second group focused on the transition away from fossil fuels. These chapters explore how fossil fuel incumbents adopt

strategies to maintain influence and how geopolitical risks affect the supply of critical raw materials. A third set of chapters examines demographic change and migration, including how simultaneous demographic shifts across different regions have the potential to reshape global power dynamics.

Another line of contributions investigated techno-economic drivers of geopolitical change. Topics include the geopolitical and sustainability implications of the AI life cycle, the disruptive impact of AI on global environmental governance, and how remote sensing technologies are transforming the monitoring and regulation of offshore infrastructure.

Several chapters address global cooperation and conflict in the context of sustainability. These contributions cover areas such as the geopolitics of water agreements, ecocide

in international law, the diplomacy of large ocean states, legitimacy in global environmental governance, and the importance of better inclusion of Indigenous knowledge and rights in governance processes.

Finally, the handbook includes contributions on methods and approaches for studying the geopolitics of sustainability. These highlight the importance of interdisciplinary integration, long-term thinking, and more systematic incorporation of risk-based thinking into geopolitical research.

The handbook offers both foundational insights and new analyses for scholars and serves as a practical reference for decision-makers, an essential guide to understanding the shifting geopolitics of global sustainability efforts. The handbook is planned for release in the spring of 2026.

HIGHLIGHTS IN SCIENCE ENGAGEMENT AND POLICY DIALOGUE

As part of its communication strategy, Mistra Geopolitics has engaged with stakeholders and key audiences through seminars, roundtables and workshops. The goal is to facilitate platforms for engagement and collaboration among stakeholders, decision-makers and academia, to better contribute towards policy both in Sweden and internationally.

Throughout the second phase of Mistra Geopolitics, we have worked systematically with seminars, roundtables, dialogue series, and policy engagement in various forms. Several large external seminars were held under the Mistra Geopolitics umbrella, including with high-level Swedish and international policymakers. The Mistra Geopolitics programme has organized more than 50 seminars and round tables. Programme researchers have been actively involved in multiple policy dialogues, providing expertise and insights that have informed and supported key policy processes over the years.

Details and video recordings of public events organized by Mistra Geopolitics can be found at www.mistra-geopolitics.se/events.

MISTRA GEOPOLITICS SHARES KEY RESEARCH INSIGHTS WITH UN AGENCIES

To bridge science and policy, Mistra Geopolitics held high-level talks with key UN agencies and organizations in New York in 2024. The delegation, including researchers and board members, met with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN-DESA), the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the EU delegation to the UN, the Permanent Mission of Germany to the UN, and others to share insights from eight years of research and explore future collaborations.

Mistra Geopolitics organized a seminar at the Permanent

Mission of Sweden to the UN for ambassadors from different national representations in New York. The seminar, moderated by Annika Markovic, former Sweden’s Ambassador to Austria and Slovakia, focused on the geopolitics of sustainability. Programme researchers presented findings on multilateral aid, SDG interlinkages, and the unique challenges facing



From the left: Caroline Ankarcrona, Board Member, Mistra Geopolitics; Maritza Chan-Valverde, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Costa Rica to the UN; Annika Markovic, Sweden’s Ambassador to Austria and Slovakia, Permanent Representative to the UN in Vienna. Photo by Mistra Geopolitics.



UNDP meeting. Photo by Mistra Geopolitics.



Björn-Ola Linnér. Photo by Mistra.

lower-income countries. Research on AI and climate also drew strong interest, particularly on how machine learning can improve crisis forecasting and scenario planning.

These meetings were a significant step in Mistra Geopolitics’ mission to ensure that our research informs global policy and decision-making.

ENGAGING WITH EU DECISION-MAKERS

Representatives from Mistra Geopolitics have engaged with policymakers in Brussels during several occasions. In September 2024, a seminar on green industrial policies and how to build just and inclusive transitions through global partnerships was held to share research findings from the programme with policymakers, feeding into upcoming decision-making processes. The event featured high-level representatives from low and lower-middle income countries, alongside senior officials from the EU Commission, members of European Parliament, EU member state attaches, and business leaders.

Mistra, the Swedish Foundation for Strategic Environmental Research, celebrated its 30th anniversary with a special event on sustainability and democracy in 2025. EU Commissioner Jessika Roswall and representatives from Mistra’s research programmes discussed sustainability, democracy and the importance of research in an era marked by climate change and geopolitical instability.

The event was hosted by the Permanent Representation of Sweden to the EU. Mistra Geopolitics was represented by Björn-Ola Linnér, who spoke about geopolitics as a driver of both uncertainty and opportunity.

Watch the recording here: <https://mistra.org/nyheter/hall-barhet-och-demokrati-i-fokus-pa-mistras-brysselseminarium/>

In the spring of 2022, a Mistra Geopolitics delegation met with the Swedish ambassador to NATO, the European Commission Vice President’s cabinet, the Permanent Representation of Sweden to the EU, and members of the European Parliament. A seminar on food security and raw materials was also held at the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS). The Russian invasion of Ukraine, energy security, the EU Green Deal, and climate adaptation were central topics.

“The war and global crises underline the need for research like ours,” said Programme Director Björn-Ola Linnér.

Key stakeholders showed particular interest in Mistra Geopolitics’ work on food security, decarbonization, and rare metals, and the Mistra Geopolitics programme was able to give timely and policy relevant input to these important issues.

ALMEDALEN – SWEDEN’S DEMOCRACY AND POLITICIANS’ WEEK

Mistra Geopolitics has contributed and hosted more than ten events at Almedalen, Sweden’s political week held every summer in Visby, in close cooperation with key stakeholder partners. In 2022, Mistra Geopolitics hosted an event together with Hagainitiativet, “Backlash on the climate issue”, on how political responses can improve on foresight capacity and how science and policy – and business need to work closely to better navigate an uncertain future.

In the same year, Mistra Geopolitics collaborated with Mistra and several of its research programmes to host a panel discussion focused on security and resources, specifically, how to navigate multiple crises simultaneously.

Mistra Geopolitics Co-Director Henrik Carlsen noted that the current situation is highly complex. Addressing several crises at the same time requires a deep understanding of how they interact, an area where science plays a crucial role.

In 2025, Mistra Geopolitics contributed to three events at Almedalen on the geopolitics of the oceans, including “Regional cooperation in the Baltic Sea in an era of geopolitics”.



Panelists Magnus Demervall, Anders Wijkman, Ulf Wikström, Nina Ekelund, Sofie Eliasson Morsink, Karin Lexén, Malin Fijen Pacsay, Elin Segerlind. Photo by Mistra Geopolitics.



Panelists: Henrik Carlsen, Robert Egnell, Filip Johnsson, Matilda Machacek and Markus Wråke. Moderated by Anna Jöborn. Photo by Mistra Geopolitics.

Researchers engaged with stakeholder partners such as the Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management (Havs- och vattenmyndigheten, HaV) and invited keynotes from Linas Linkevičius, Ambassador of Lithuania to Sweden, and Karolina Ostrzyniewska, Ambassador of Poland to Sweden.

Karina Barquet from SEI and Mistra Geopolitics moderated the dialogue with the ambassadors and actors from Poland, Lithuania, Estonia, Denmark. They explored how regional actors can balance security, sustainability, and cooperation around the Baltic Sea.

Webcast (archived) of “Regional cooperation in the Baltic Sea in an era of geopolitics”: <https://live.mediaflow.com/88GB4XDZSU>

Watch recording of the event “Harnessing science and bilateral cooperation – Sweden’s response to shifting geopolitical dynamics”: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q27uKr683O4&list=PLoJ3pCzMP1srdxBox45xvQi-xJC4JHnb&index=3>

CLIMATE CHANGE NEGOTIATIONS COP “POST-MATCH ANALYSIS” SERIES

Annually, Mistra Geopolitics, in collaboration with Linköping University, organizes post-COP dialogues to analyse the outcomes of the international climate change negotiations. Programme Director Björn-Ola Linnér has chaired these discussions, each time featuring a distinguished panel offering insights into the negotiation processes.



Stakeholder partners from the Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management, Swedish Energy Agency, Junglemap, Business Sweden, and Futurion held a panel discussion on the pace of change towards a sustainable future and the main barriers to change. Panelists discussed what policies were missing for a sustainable transformation and what opportunities they could see for their organizations. Photo by Johan Söderlund.

Notable speakers have included Mattias Frumerie, Sweden’s Climate Ambassador and Head of Delegation to the UNFCCC; Åsa Persson, former Research Director at SEI; Ricardo Marshall, Director of the Roofs to Reefs Programme (R2RP) in the Prime Minister’s Office of Barbados; Emma Modéer Wiking, Global Head of International Sustainable Business at Business Sweden; and Karin Lexén, Secretary-General of the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation.

Over the years, the dialogues have attracted more than 900 participants from diverse geographical regions and sectors of society.

More information on events can be found on: <https://www.mistra-geopolitics.se/events/>

ANNUAL CONFERENCES

Each year since its inception, Mistra Geopolitics has held an annual conference with prominent panelists and invited stakeholders to share research findings. During these conferences, the programme has held scenario workshops with formal stakeholder partners and panel discussions as part of the programme co-creation process.

In February 2025, Mistra Geopolitics hosted its final conference, “Geopolitics of Sustainability”, in Stockholm, marking the conclusion of its eight-year research programme. The event gathered prominent researchers from the programme and other institutions, policymakers, and experts to explore how rising geopolitical insecurity affects global efforts to address urgent sustainability challenges.

In front of a full auditorium, Lena Ek, Chair of the Mistra Geopolitics Board, and Björn-Ola Linnér, Programme Director, made opening remarks that reflected on Mistra Geopolitics’ research journey in a rapidly changing world. Keynote speaker Nick Mabey, CEO and founding Director of E3G, emphasized that geopolitics is entering a period of realignment driven by economic fundamentals and domestic politics. He warned that climate objectives are still not integrated into geopolitical strategies and, that if this continues, it might derail global climate ambitions.

Throughout the day, sessions explored the intersection of sustainability and geopolitical trends and shared research



Robert Watt, Moderator SEI, Lina Kinning, Offshore Wind, Swedish Wind Association, Hans Liwång, Professor in Systems Science for Defence and Security at the Swedish Defence University, Karina Barquet, Team Leader: Water, Coasts and Ocean, Senior Research Fellow SEI, Mattias Rust, Deputy Director, Ministry of Rural Affairs and Infrastructure, Sweden, Magnus Wallhagen, National Hydrographer of Sweden, Sjöfartsverket. Photo by Mistra Geopolitics.



Nick Mabey. Photo by Mistra Geopolitics.

insights from the programme. One panel examined how AI and emerging technologies are reshaping global power structures and influencing progress toward sustainable development. Another session focused on food security, transboundary climate risks, and the weaponization of food. Experts also discussed decarbonization, examining who benefits and who bears the cost in the global energy transition.

Ocean governance and security were key topics as well, with discussions on balancing marine resource management, offshore energy demands, and geopolitical tensions.

A final panel, “Sustainable Visions for the Future”, brought together Robert Egnell, Vice-Chancellor of the Swedish Defence University; Annika Markovic, Sweden’s former Ambassador to Austria and Slovakia and Permanent Representative to the UN in Vienna; Dan Smith, Director of SIPRI; and Bettina Schwalm, an experience designer and lecturer on design strategy and future thinking. Schwalm highlighted how to go from a vision of tomorrow to action of today, and the panel shared their insights on long-term strategies for cooperation and environmental resilience.



Moderator Arati Davis, SEI, Robert Watt Moderator SEI, Annika Markovic, Sweden’s Ambassador to Austria and Slovakia. Permanent representative to the United Nations in Vienna, Dan Smith, Director of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), Robert Egnell, Vice-Chancellor of the Swedish Defence University, Professor of leadership and command and control, Bettina Schwalm, Experience Designer, lecturer on design strategy and future thinking. Photo by Mistra geopolitics.

MEDIA EXPOSURE – HIGH MEDIA INTEREST

During the course of the Mistra Geopolitics programme, we have seen increasing interest from news media in geopolitics and geopolitics of sustainability. As part of the communication strategy, we have worked systematically with pitching news to media to reach out with our research, and we have seen a steady increase in media mentions. Key researchers within the Mistra Geopolitics programme have been frequently cited by international and Swedish news media.

The news reach during these years spanned over 30 countries, with exposure in the *Financial Times*, *The Economist*, *Fiji Sun*, the Swedish news agency TT (Tidningarnas Telegrambyrå), Sveriges Radio and Sveriges Television, *Dagens Nyheter*, *Svenska Dagbladet*, *Expressen*, *Aftonbladet* and many other leading news outlets in several countries, mainly in Europe and Sweden, but also in other parts of the world. A few examples from these four years are featured in this report.

HOW THE WORLD'S SUPER ELECTION YEAR COULD IMPACT THE CLIMATE

Swedish News Agency, TT, February 2024



Björn-Ola Linnér

To reduce the worst effects of climate change, drastic emission reductions are required. And time is running out, according to science.

"This major climate election year will be decisive for the pace at which the climate transition progresses, whether it accelerates or slows down," said

Björn-Ola Linnér, Professor of climate policy at Linköping University to TT. "Many elections can have a major impact on the climate, both positively and negatively."

The future will be determined by the measures taken in the coming years. In 2025, the world's countries will also submit more ambitious climate plans to the UN summit COP30.

The article by TT in *Aftonbladet* can be found on: <https://www.aftonbladet.se/nyheter/a/Xbr4gr/sa-kan-varldens-supervalarsla-mot-klimatet>

CLIMATE-RESILIENT AGRICULTURE AND PLANT-BASED SHIFT KEY TO ADDRESSING FOOD CRISES

Food Ingredients First, December 2024



Sara Talebian

Extreme weather events and increasing geopolitical tensions have heightened food security concerns amid disruptions to global food and beverages supply chains, according to a report by SEI and Mistra Geopolitics. This has resulted in inflationary pressures and reduced food accessibility.

"Climate-resilient agricultural practices at local, national and regional scales ensure a sufficient and stable domestic food

supply and reduce dependency on global food markets, mitigating the transboundary effects of climate impacts and geopolitical turmoil on food security," lead author and SEI Research Fellow Sara Talebian told *Food Ingredients First*. "While bolstering agricultural productivity, these practices minimize the adverse impacts of agriculture to ecological health and environment for the decades to come. Policymakers need to build trust through diplomatic alliances and engage in new forms of collaboration, e.g., cooperation among smaller groups of countries that share values, interests or risks."

Read the news article in *Food Ingredients First* here: <https://www.foodingredientsfirst.com/news/sei-report-climate-resilient-agriculture-and-plant-based-shift-key-to-addressing-food-crises.html>

Read the press release and report: <https://www.mistra-geopolitics.se/news/climate-change-and-geopolitical-division-pose-risks-to-food-security/>

EU WARNED OF RISING RISK OF SYSTEMIC FINANCIAL SHOCKS FROM CONTINENT WARMING

The Financial Times, March 2024



Ronan Palmer

Ronan Palmer, Chief Economist at the think-tank E3G, said to *The Financial Times* that there was a "big message" for EU finance ministers who needed to "think about a plan to keep the economy stable while addressing climate change. There are whole parts of the EU that are just not as liveable for people as they were and they will want to move further north and away from coastlines."

Palmer contributed with his expertise to the Mistra Geopolitics programme with a call to action for financial institutions to tackle the economic fragility of debt-burdened and climate-vulnerable countries, with the report *Breaking the Cycle of Risk: Mapping a Pathway for Climate-Vulnerable Countries to Address Resilience and Debt*.

Read the report and press release by Mistra Geopolitics and E3G: <https://www.mistra-geopolitics.se/news/press-release-breaking-the-cycle-of-risk/>

Read the article in *The Financial Times*: <https://www.ft.com/content/fc8b8cc-ed54-4e11-86ed-ef8e74506841>

HOW THE WORLD'S SUPER ELECTION YEAR COULD IMPACT THE CLIMATE

Tidningarnas Telegrambyrå, TT in Aftonbladet, February 2024

"Many elections can have a major impact on the climate, both positively and negatively," said Professor Björn-Ola Linnér, Co-Director of Mistra Geopolitics and Professor at Linköping University.

When around half of the world's population gets the chance to vote in 2024, it will be in countries and blocks that together account for around 40 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions.

"This climate election year will be crucial for the pace at which the climate transition progresses, whether it accelerates or slows down," said Professor Björn-Ola Linnér.

Read the TT-article in *Aftonbladet*: <https://www.aftonbladet.se/nyheter/a/Xbr4gr/sa-kan-varldens-supervalarsla-mot-klimatet>

UNLEASHING SWEDEN'S INNOVATION POTENTIAL: A BLUEPRINT FOR THE GREEN TRANSITION

Norran Debatt, February 2024



Henrik Carlsen

"With a broader perspective and systemic thinking, Sweden can emerge as a leader in the transition away from fossil fuels," wrote Henrik Carlsen, Co-Director of Mistra Geopolitics and Senior Research Fellow at Stockholm Environment Institute in an op-ed in the Swedish newspaper *Norran*.

Swedish companies possess a unique capacity and ability to develop intricate products by integrating numerous high-tech components into advanced systems. If we use our skills effectively and develop a vision of what we aspire to contribute, it unveils immense potential for the green transition, according to Henrik Carlsen.

Read a summary of the op-ed on Mistra Geopolitics' website: <https://www.mistra-geopolitics.se/comments-insights/swedens-innovation-potential/>

Read the op-ed in *Norran*: <https://www.norran.se/debatt/artikel/bredare-perspektiv-kan-gora-sverige-globalt-ledande/l6gvvg9j>

ECOCIDE SHOULD BE RECOGNIZED AS A VIOLATION OF INTERNATIONAL LAW

Dagens Nyheter Debatt, June 2023



Rinata Kazak

Rinata Kazak, Lecturer at Linköping University, Professor Björn-Ola Linnér and Senior Research Fellow Henrik Carlsen – Co-Directors of Mistra Geopolitics – wrote in an op-ed in the Swedish newspaper *Dagens Nyheter*: "Ecocide – a large-scale, deliberate environmental destruction – must be recognized as a violation of international law."

"Russia's war against Ukraine not only causes enormous human suffering but also has brutal environmental consequences. The flooding after the blasting of the Kakhovka Hydroelectric Power Plant is the worst example so far."

Read a summary of the op-ed on Mistra Geopolitics' website: <https://www.mistra-geopolitics.se/news/ecocide-should-be-recognised-as-a-violation/>

Read the op-ed article in *Dagens Nyheter Debatt*: <https://www.dn.se/debatt/sprangningen-av-kachovka-ska-ses-som-krigsforbrytelse/>

THE WORLD MUST ADAPT TO CLIMATE CHANGE

The Economist special report, November 2022



Frida Lager

The report *New Risk Horizons: Sweden's Exposure To Climate Risk Via International Trade*, written by SEI Associate Frida Lager and Magnus Benzie, was cited in the article "The world has to adapt to the climate change it will not avoid", as part of a special report by *The Economist* published in connection to the international climate change negotiations, COP27.

The launch of the report led to media exposure around the globe. The report addresses an emerging and highly topical global challenge: climate risks via global trade. It analyses Sweden's role in the global trade system and identifies the climate risks Sweden faces due to its international trade relations.

Read the article in *The Economist*: <https://www.economist.com/special-report/2022/11/01/the-world-has-to-adapt-to-the-climate-change-it-will-not-avoid>

LESS TALK, MORE ACTION IN CLIMATE FIGHT

Fiji Sun, October 2022

Loss and Damage has been one of the key issues in the Pacific when it comes to climate change negotiations, wrote the *Fiji Sun* in a two-page news article, summarizing a two-day high-level workshop on climate adaptation held in Fiji, organized by Mistra Geopolitics and national partners.

"In the wake of the [COVID-19] pandemic, we clearly could see how the geopolitical shifts in the world started to also affect the climate negotiations both for the better and for worse. We could see a larger self-interest from countries keeping the vaccine to themselves, which created distrust, but we could also see an emerging focus on what we rebuild and in a way what we can do to achieve the Paris Agreement," said Björn-Ola Linnér to the *Fiji Sun*, which published a two-page news story on the workshop in Fiji.

Read the article in the *Fiji Sun*: <https://www.pressreader.com/fiji/fiji-sun/20221015/281917366989149>

LIST OF PUBLICATIONS PHASE II

During Phase II the Mistra Geopolitics research programme has produced 59 academic and conference papers and 35 policy briefs and reports. In addition, the research school has generated seven completed or forthcoming PhD dissertations. Visit www.mistra-geopolitics.se to find publications from Phase I.

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LIST OF SCIENCE ENGAGEMENT AND POLICY DIALOGUES

Mistra Geopolitics has engaged with stakeholders and key audiences through seminars, workshops and round tables. The table below summarizes the key events formally organized or co-organized by Mistra Geopolitics during phase II, both online and in person. These events represent major milestones for the programme in terms of outreach, visibility, and opportunities to share research findings with high-level audiences. In total, the programme has organized 54 formal events led or co-led by the programme. In addition, programme researchers have regularly shared insights through external conferences, policy forums, seminars, podcasts, and workshops estimated to be over 110 additional events across phase II.

POLICY DIALOGUES	
Karina Barquet (SEI) moderated a high-level dialogue at Almedalen 2025 on the topic “Regional cooperation in the Baltic Sea in an era of geopolitics”. Almedalen 2025: Regional cooperation in the Baltic Sea in an era of geopolitics - Mistra Geopolitics	26 June 2025
Björn-Ola Linnér (Linköping University) was appointed as an expert to the United Nations “Human Security Colloquium: New Horizons in the AI Age” held in New York. The Colloquium featured an interactive discussion geared towards the policymaking community, permanent missions to the UN, academia, and practitioners. This international dialogue led by the United Nations informed the research and writing of the 2025 Human Development Report. https://www.mistra-geopolitics.se/news/linner-invited-as-an-expert-to-undp-in-new-york/	21 Nov 2024
Mistra Geopolitics Director Björn-Ola Linnér spoke at high-level event about “Green Industrial Policies – building just and inclusive transitions through global partnerships” hosted at the Swedish representation to the EU in Brussels, hosted by the Leadership Group for Industry Transition and Mistra Geopolitics.	10 Sept 2024
Karina Barquet (SEI) moderated in a Mistra Geopolitics co-organized high-level dialogue on “Harnessing science and bilateral cooperation – Sweden’s response to shifting geopolitical dynamics” at Almedalen 2024. SEI at Almedalen Week 2024 SEI	25 June 2024
Mistra geopolitics co-organized a high-level session titled “Half time for the government – how is climate policy moving forward?” at Almedalen 2024, with researcher Aaron Maltais as a speaker. SEI at Almedalen Week 2024 SEI	25 June 2024
Karina Banquet (SEI) and Frans Sjölander (SEI) spoke at a Mistra Geopolitics co-organized dialogue on “the future of offshore infrastructure in a changing security situation” at Almedalen 2024. SEI at Almedalen Week 2024 SEI	26 June 2024
Mistra Geopolitic’s Eva Lövbrand, Professor at Linköping University contributed to a dialogue between politicians, industry, and local community representatives at the cultural week held in Lysekil 6-15 October 2023. The panel discussion on just climate transitions included representatives from Fossil-Free Sweden, the Swedish Climate Policy Council, the Alliance for Just Transitions, LO and local community representatives from Lysekil, Luleå and Slite. A just climate transition – Lysekil cultural week – Mistra Geopolitics	6 Oct 2023
Fredrik Heintz (Linköping University) spoke at an event at Alemhalen Political week 2023 on “Regional and municipal governance towards sustainable development with responsible AI as a tool?”. https://www.sei.org/events/sei-experts-in-almedalen-2023/	28 June 2023

Björn-Ola Linnér (Linköping University) spoke at an event at Almedalen Political week 2023 on “How can Swedish companies take responsibility for emissions outside the EU? Is AI an effective tool?”. https://www.sei.org/events/sei-experts-in-almedalen-2023/	29 June 2023
Björn-Ola Linnér (Linköping University) spoke at an event at Almedalen Political week 2023 on “the forgotten opportunities of climate change action”. https://www.sei.org/events/sei-experts-in-almedalen-2023/	28 June 2023
Björn-Ola Linnér (Linköping University) spoke at an event at Almedalen Political week 2023 on “Climate change – consequences and ethical dilemmas in health care”. https://www.sei.org/events/sei-experts-in-almedalen-2023/	29 June 2023
Karina Banquet (SEI) spoke at an event at Almedalen Political week 2023 on “The ocean economy, a utopia? How does aid affect the sea and people?”. https://www.sei.org/events/sei-experts-in-almedalen-2023/	30 June 2023
Karina Banquet (SEI) spoke at an event at Almedalen Political week 2023 on “How do we manage conflicting objectives in Sweden’s blue economy?”. https://www.sei.org/events/sei-experts-in-almedalen-2023/	29 June 2023
Backlash i klimatfrågan – hur kan politiken bli bättre på framsynthet?, Henrik Carlsen (SEI) participated in the panel debate, organized by Mistra Geopolitics and Hagainitiativet in Almedalen, Visby, Sweden.	4 July 2022
Klimat, säkerhet och resurser – hur hanterar vi flera kriser samtidigt?, Henrik Carlsen (SEI) participated in the panel debate organized by Mistra and Mistra Geopolitics in Almedalen, Visby, Sweden.	4 July 2022
Karen Meijer (SIPRI) and Nina von Uexkull (Uppsala University) contributed to the Global Conflict Risk Index workshop on climate, conflict and short-term forecasting in Ispra, Italy.	22 Sept 2022
Henrik Carlsen (SEI) and Nina Weitz (SEI) with the Swedish Government, analysing Sweden’s contribution to UN of their Voluntary National Review of the SDGs.	16 April 2021
PRESENTATIONS	
Mistra Geopolitics researcher Farah Hegazi spoke at a roundtable titled Minorities, Marginalized Populations and Food Insecurity at the Stockholm Forum on Peace and Development.	7 May 2024
Mistra Geopolitics Co-Director Henrik Carlsen (SEI) gave a presentation at the research day of the Swedish parliament (Riksdagens forskningsdag) as part of a seminar about evidence-based policymaking. Henrik Carlsen presenterar på Riksdagens forskningsdag 8 juni – Mistra Geopolitics	8 June 2023
SIPRI researcher Kyungmee Kim participated in a panel discussion and share insights on the potential contribution of AI in resolving international water disputes at the World Water Week 2023. World Water Week: Innovation and the geopolitics of water – Mistra Geopolitics	21 Aug 2023
Mistra Geopolitics Co-Director Björn-Ola Linnér and co-authors presented key messages from a Mistra Geopolitics report on the future of the UN climate diplomacy at a seminar organized by the Swedish Institute of International Affairs, Mistra Geopolitics and Linköping University. Strengthening international climate cooperation in times of crises – Mistra Geopolitics	10 Nov 2023
Nina von Uexkull (Uppsala University) held a lecture on the theme climate and conflict for Framtidsakademin, Sweden.	14 Sept 2022
SEMINARS & ANNUAL CONFERENCES	
Linköping University and Mistra Geopolitics hosted a lecture with Pedro Conceição, Director, Human Development Report Office, UNDP titled “The Human Development Journey: A Perspective on Concepts and Metrics”. This lecture traces the evolution of human development thinking — from the early Human Development Reports to today’s debates on measurement and sustainability. The Human Development Journey: A Perspective on Concepts and Metrics – Mistra Geopolitics	24 Oct 2025

Mistra Geopolitics and Mistra Mineral Governance co-hosted a research seminar in March 2025, bringing together researchers, experts, and stakeholders to explore the challenges and opportunities surrounding critical mineral sustainability, security and competitiveness. Navigating critical mineral sustainability, security and competitiveness – Mistra Geopolitics	21 March 2025
Mistra Geopolitics hosted its final annual conference under the theme “Geopolitics of Sustainability”. The Geopolitics of Sustainability conference explored strategies to address increasingly urgent and complex sustainability challenges more effectively alongside rising geopolitical insecurity, with a range of contributions from programme researchers, the board, and external stakeholders. Conference: Geopolitics of Sustainability – Mistra Geopolitics.	4 Feb 2025
Maria-Therese Gustafsson at Stockholm University Stockholm University spoke at a webinar about the EU’s New Supply Chain Regulations and its implications for sustainability organized by SEI and Mistra Geopolitics. Her presentation focused on How Civil Society in Producing Sites Leverage the HREDD Regime. The EU’s New Supply Chain Regulations: Progress and Peril in Promoting Global Sustainability – Mistra Geopolitics	4 Sept 2024
Mistra Geopolitics researchers from SIPRI, Karen Meijer and Farah Hegazi, presented research at the Third International Conference on Environmental Peacebuilding which convenes leading practitioners, academics, and thought leaders in the field of environmental peacebuilding. 3rd International Conference on Environmental Peacebuilding – Mistra Geopolitics	19–21 June 2024
Mistra Geopolitics researchers contributed to ‘Omställning’, Public art Exhibition at Slite Industry Museum.	26–29 June 2024
Jiayi Zhou, SIPRI, and André Månberger, Lund University, contributed to a panel discussion on “Critical Minerals and Great Power Competition: Interactions and Implications” organized by SIPRI and Mistra Geopolitics.	13 June 2024
Researchers from Mistra Geopolitics hosted a seminar on geopolitics and sustainability at the Swedish Representation to the UN in New York. The event was chaired by Annika Markovic, Sweden’s Ambassador to Austria and Slovakia and permanent representative to the United Nations in Vienna who is a board member in Mistra Geopolitics. Mistra Geopolitics seminar on geopolitics and sustainability – Mistra Geopolitics	14 May 2024
Mistra Geopolitics hosted its annual conference in March 2024. Over two days, the annual conference brought together Mistra Geopolitics Programme Directors Björn-Ola Linnér and Henrik Carlsen, research theme leads, researchers, communication team and PhD students from the Swedish core consortium partners. The objective of the conference was to identify the Mistra Geoplitics legacy story, co-create synthesis research from the programme and prepare for the 50 outputs and the final conference taking place in 2024. https://www.mistra-geopolitics.se/eventer/mistra-geopolitics-annual-conference-2024/	12–13 March 2024
Björn-Ola Linnér (Linköping University) and Priyatma Singh (University of Fiji) both spoke at Online dialogue: COP29 post-match analysis – Mistra Geopolitics organized by Mistra Geopolitics and Linköping University.	9 Dec 2024
Mistra Geopolitics co-hosted a high-level seminar at COP29 on “Restoring Nature, Building Peace: Environmental Reconstruction and Climate-Resilient Development of Ukraine” with Rinata Kazak (Linköping University) as a speaker. Mistra Geopolitics at COP29: Ukraine Restoring Nature, Building Peace – Mistra Geopolitics.	19 Nov 2024
Björn-Ola Linnér (Linköping University) chaired the Online dialogue: COP28 post-match analysis – Mistra Geopolitics organized by Mistra Geopolitics and Linköping University.	19 Dec 2023
Nina von Uexkull participated as a panellist at an event organized by the US National Academy of Sciences in Washington, DC, and online, titled “Cascading Failures, Compounding Risks, and Social Instability: Exploring the Geographical Dimensions of Extreme Climate Change”. Exploring the Geographical Dimensions of Extreme Climate Change – Mistra Geopolitics	8 Dec 2023

Mistra Geopolitics brought together its research team, board members and stakeholder partners for an in-person annual conference in Sigtuna, Sweden, with presentations from different researchers and board members. The annual conference also gathered representatives from Mistra Geopolitics stakeholder partners including AP3, the Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management, the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, the Swedish Energy Agency and Futurion. Mistra Geopolitics Annual Conference 2023 – Mistra Geopolitics	8–9 Dec 2023
Mistra Geopolitics Co-Director Henrik Carlsen (SEI) gave a keynote speech on Climate security and trade in times of multiple crises, during a session at the Think2030 Dialogue Sweden. Think2030 Dialogue Sweden: Navigating crisis through sustainability – Mistra Geopolitics	20 April 2023
Mistra Geopolitics hosted an in-person lecture with Simon Dalby, member of Mistra Geopolitics' Science Advisory Board titled "Rethinking Environmental Security: Firepower, Geopolitics and the Future". Mistra Geopolitics lecture with Simon Dalby: Rethinking Environmental Security: Firepower, Geopolitics and the Future – Mistra Geopolitics	24 April 2023
Malaika Mikaelsson, Björn-Ola Linnér (both Linköping University) contributed to the Online dialogue: COP27 post-match analysis, organized by Mistra Geopolitics and Linköping University.	24 Nov 2022
Priyatma Singh (University of Fiji), Malaika Mikaelsson, Stephen Woroniecki, Björn-Ola Linnér and Victoria Wibeck (all Linköping University), organized and contributed to the Workshop on Loss & Damage and the Climate Negotiations in Fiji and online.	13–14 Nov 2022
During World Water Week in Stockholm, Mistra Geopolitics researchers contributed to: Humanitarian responses to climate shocks in fragile settings.	28 Aug 2022
Fredrik Heintz, Marie Francisco and Björn-Ola Linnér (Linköping University) contributed to the seminar Hur kan AI bidra till hållbar utveckling i Afrika?	10 June 2022
Mistra Geopolitics researchers contributed to a session titled "Governing sustainability transformations" at an event organized ahead of the Stockholm+50 UN international meeting, "Sustainable planet, sustainable health – how science-based solutions can drive transformative change". The event focused on how academia, through research and higher education, can contribute to the transition to more sustainable development. Sustainable planet, sustainable health – how science-based solutions can drive transformative change SEI	2 June 2022
Nina von Uexkull and Maxine Leis (Uppsala University) and Lisa Dellmuth and Maria-Therese Gustafsson (Stockholm University) contributed to the Swedish Climate Symposium held in Norrköping, organized by SMHI.	16–18 May 2022
Climate risks in the mining sector: how to promote local sustainability, launch seminar of the report "Climate risks and community resilience in the mining sector" with Maria-Therese Gustafsson and Isabella Strindevall (Stockholm University). Organized by Mistra Geopolitics.	5 May 2022
Mistra Geopolitics annual conference 2022 was opened by Björn-Ola Linnér (Linköping University) and Måns Nilsson (SEI), followed by keynote speeches from Mistra Geopolitics board members and partnering organizations.	March 2022
Security, Insecurity and the Anthropocene, launch seminar of the book: Anthropocene (In)securities: Reflections on Collective Survival 50 Years After the Stockholm Conference.	15 Feb 2022
Björn-Ola Linnér (Linköping University), Åsa Persson (SEI) and Maria Jernnäs (Linköping University), featured in the "Online dialogue: COP26 post match analysis"	18 Nov 2021
Björn-Ola Linnér (Linköping University) participated in the webinar "Mistra dialogue: Climate adaptation – from COP26 to Sweden's municipalities"	17 Nov 2021
Magnus Benzie (SEI), Maria-Therese Gustafsson (SU), and Frida Lager (SEI) participated in the Mistra Geopolitics event "Webinar series: COP26 – Recognizing the role of trade and the private sector in adaptation".	15 June 2021

André Månberger (Lund University), Daria Ivleva (adelph), Jiayi Zhou (SIPRI), Johan Kuylenstierna (Swedish Climate Policy Council), Karl Hallding (SEI), and Taylor Dimsdale (E3G) participated in the Mistra Geopolitics event "Webinar series: Decarbonization in a new geopolitical landscape – the EU, US and China"	27 May 2021
Björn-Ola Linnér (Linköping University), Robert Egnell (Vice-Chancellor of the Swedish Defence University), Lisa Dellmuth (Stockholm University), Nina von Uexkull (SU) and Maria Jernäs (Linköping University) featured in the Mistra Geopolitics "Webinar series: How climate security risks shape international cooperation"	29 April 2021
Nina von Uexkull (Uppsala University) participated in the webinar "Debunking disaster myths". Co-hosted by main organizer GlobeLife initiative at Uppsala University and Karolinska Institute.	22 March 2021
Karl Hallding (SEI) spoke about China's commitment to become climate neutral by 2060 at the webinar "China's role in climate change – Leading or impeding?", as part of the China 2021 Lecture Series. Hosted by the Institute for Security & Development Policy, ISDP.	12 March 2021

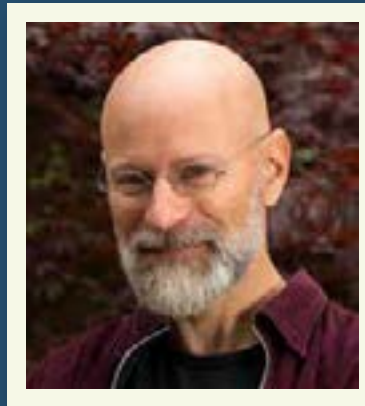
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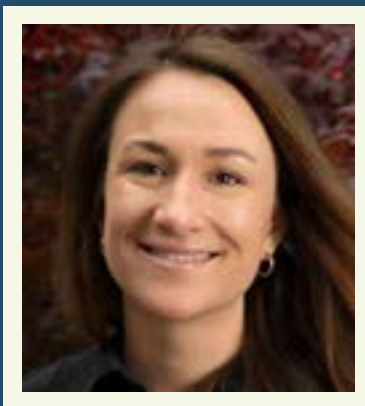
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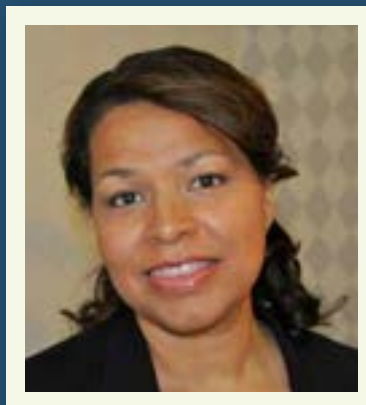
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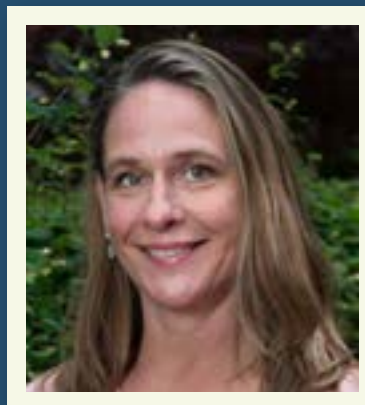
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Mistra Geopolitics examines the interconnections between geopolitics, human security, and environmental change. The programme brings together an interdisciplinary research team from eight consortium partners: Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI; programme host), the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), Linköping University, Uppsala University, Stockholm University, Lund University, E3G, and adelphi. Mistra Geopolitics engages a broad range of stakeholder partners, including Swedish government agencies, businesses, and industry associations and is funded by MISTRA, the Swedish Foundation for Strategic Environmental Research. The year 2025 marks the conclusion of this eight-year research programme.

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