



# The Infrastructure Sustainability Learning Model: Building Capacity for the Next Generation of **Sustainable Infrastructure**

12 JUNE 2023 | 13:00–14:30 CEST | IEH II & ONLINE



# UNEA RESOLUTIONS ON SUSTAINABLE AND RESILIENT INFRASTRUCTURE

UNITED  
NATIONS



**United Nations  
Environment Assembly of the  
United Nations Environment  
Programme**

United Nations Environment Assembly of the  
United Nations Environment Programme  
Fourth session  
Nairobi, 11–15 March 2019

EP

**UNEP/EA.4/Res.5**

Distr.: General  
28 March 2019  
Original: English

## **Resolution adopted by the United Nations Environment Assembly on 15 March 2019**

### **4/5. Sustainable infrastructure**

*The United Nations Environment Assembly,*

*Recalling* the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled “The future we want”, endorsed by General Assembly resolution 66/288 of 27 July 2012, which recognized the importance of investing in and developing sound, effective and efficient economic and social infrastructure and productive capacities that support sustainable development and create jobs,

*Recalling also* General Assembly resolution 69/313 of 27 July 2015 on the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, which recognized that investing in sustainable and resilient infrastructure, including transport, energy, water

**UNEP/EA.4/RES.5**

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# **AGENDA**

## **Opening**

- Laura PLATCHKOV | Senior Policy Advisor, Federal Office for the Environment, Switzerland
- Rowan PALMER | Programme Management Officer, Resources and Market Branch, UN Environment Programme

## **Infrastructure Sustainability LEarning (ISLE) Network: Exchanging Knowledge among Experts and Practitioners**

- Elizabeth LOSOS | Executive in Residence, Duke University
- Rowan PALMER | Programme Management Officer, Resources and Market Branch, UN Environment Programme
- Sara MASON | Senior Policy Associate, Duke University
- Mira PIEL | Junior-Advisor, GIZ

## **Q&A**

## **Closing**

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## **Networking**



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By order of intervention.



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Senior Policy Advisor, Federal Office for the Environment, Switzerland



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Executive in Residence, Duke University



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Junior-Advisor, Deutsche Gesellschaft für  
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Programme Management Officer,  
Resources and Market Branch, UN  
Environment Programme



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Senior Policy Associate, Duke University



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- Throughout the event, you may raise your questions in the Q&A box
- Automatically translated subtitles in many languages are available through the captions button on the bottom left of your screen
- The recording, summary and documents will be made available on the event's website

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**Laura PLATCHKOV**

Senior Policy Advisor, Federal Office for  
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**Rowan PALMER**

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# The Infrastructure Sustainability Learning Model: Building Capacity for the Next Generation of **Sustainable Infrastructure**

## **INFRASTRUCTURE SUSTAINABILITY LEARNING (ISLE) NETWORK: EXCHANGING KNOWLEDGE AMONG EXPERTS AND PRACTITIONERS**

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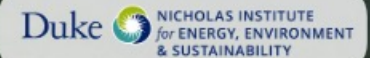
**Rowan PALMER**

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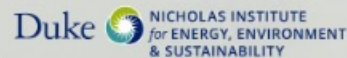
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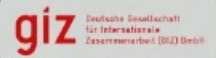
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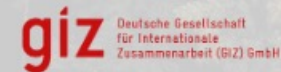
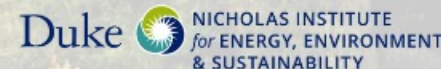


**Mira PIEL**

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# Infrastructure Sustainability LEarning (ISLE) Network

**Exchanging Knowledge  
among Experts and Practitioners**





# **Definition:** **Sustainable Infrastructure**

Systems are those that are planned, designed, procured, constructed, operated, maintained, and decommissioned in a manner that ensures economic and financial, social, environmental (including climate resilience), and institutional sustainability over the entire infrastructure life cycle.

*UN Environment Programme 2022, adapted from  
Inter-American Development Bank 2018*





# The Need: Building the Capacity to Create Sustainable Infrastructure

- Coming infrastructure boom
- Lock-in effect of infrastructure investments
- Existing resources are underutilized

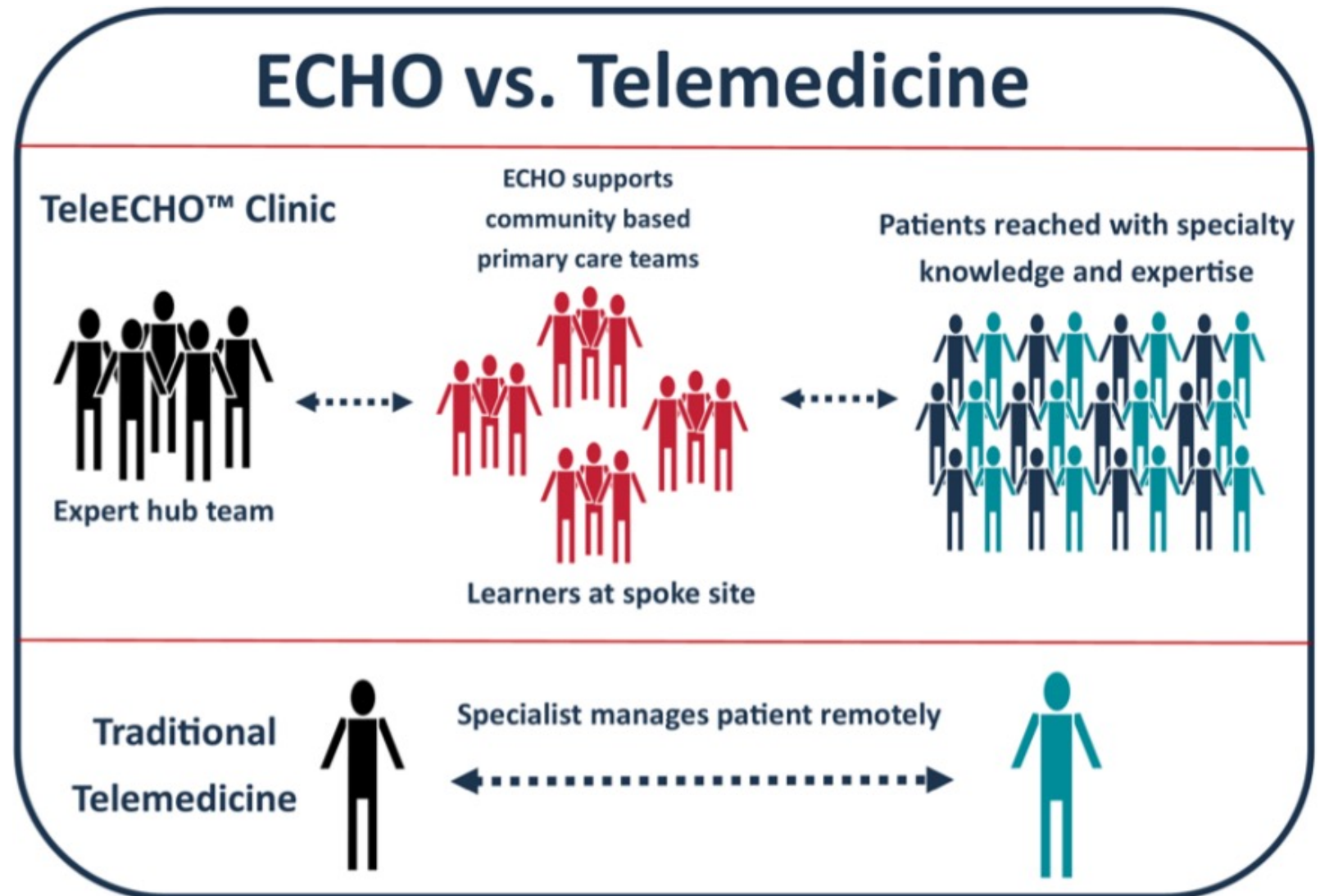




# The Model:

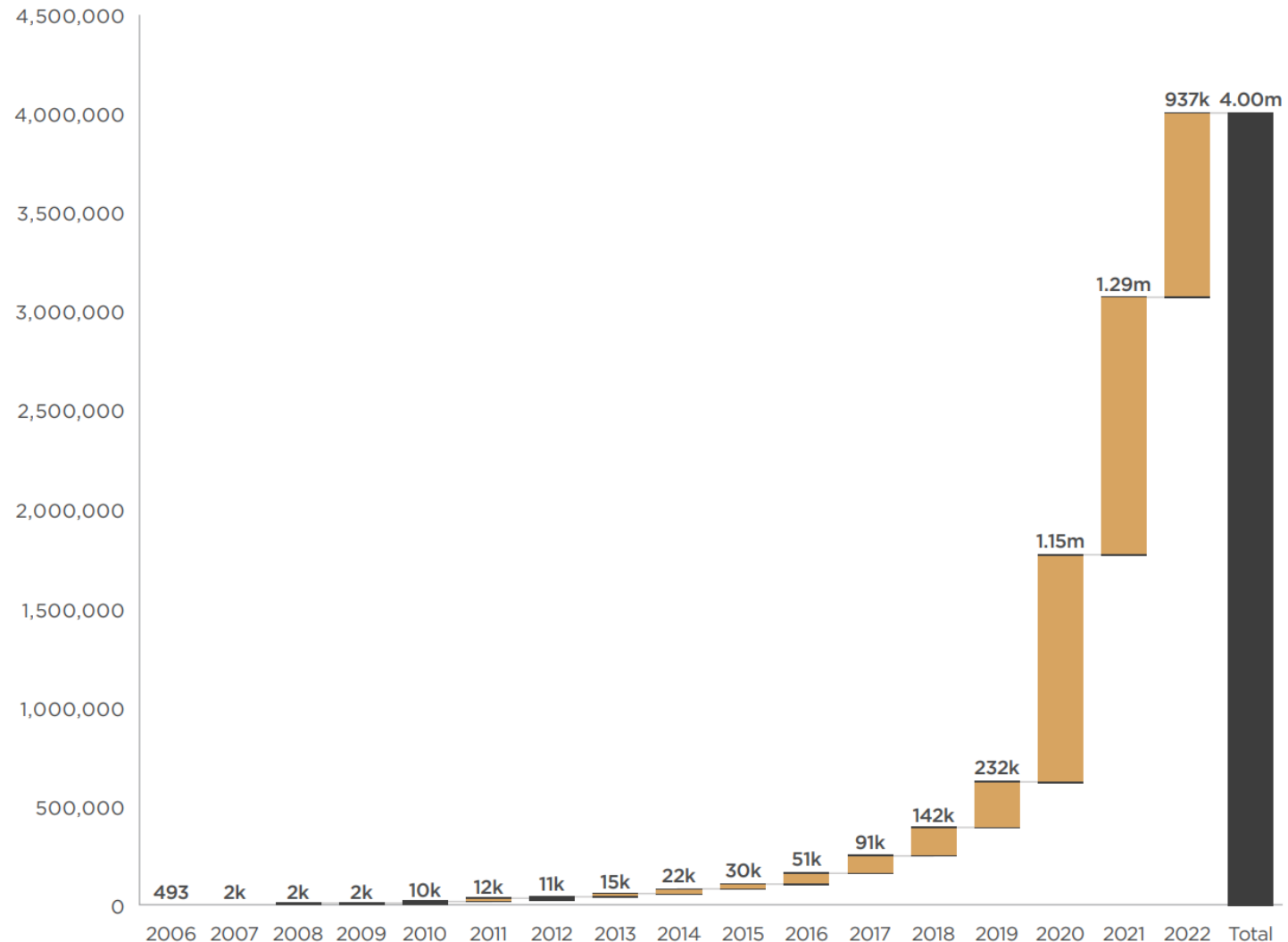
## Project ECHO Virtual Learning Hubs

Project ECHO Learning Hubs are virtual communities of practice that build capacity by bringing together practitioners and experts to share knowledge and problem solve.





# Model Uptake: Project ECHO Attendances



The Project ECHO Model has now been adopted by more than 500 ECHO hubs in every continent except Antarctica. The model has proved so effective and scalable that during the COVID crisis, the networks were used to address all aspects of COVID care.



# Translating the ECHO Model to Infrastructure: Infrastructure Sustainability Learning (ISLE) Hubs

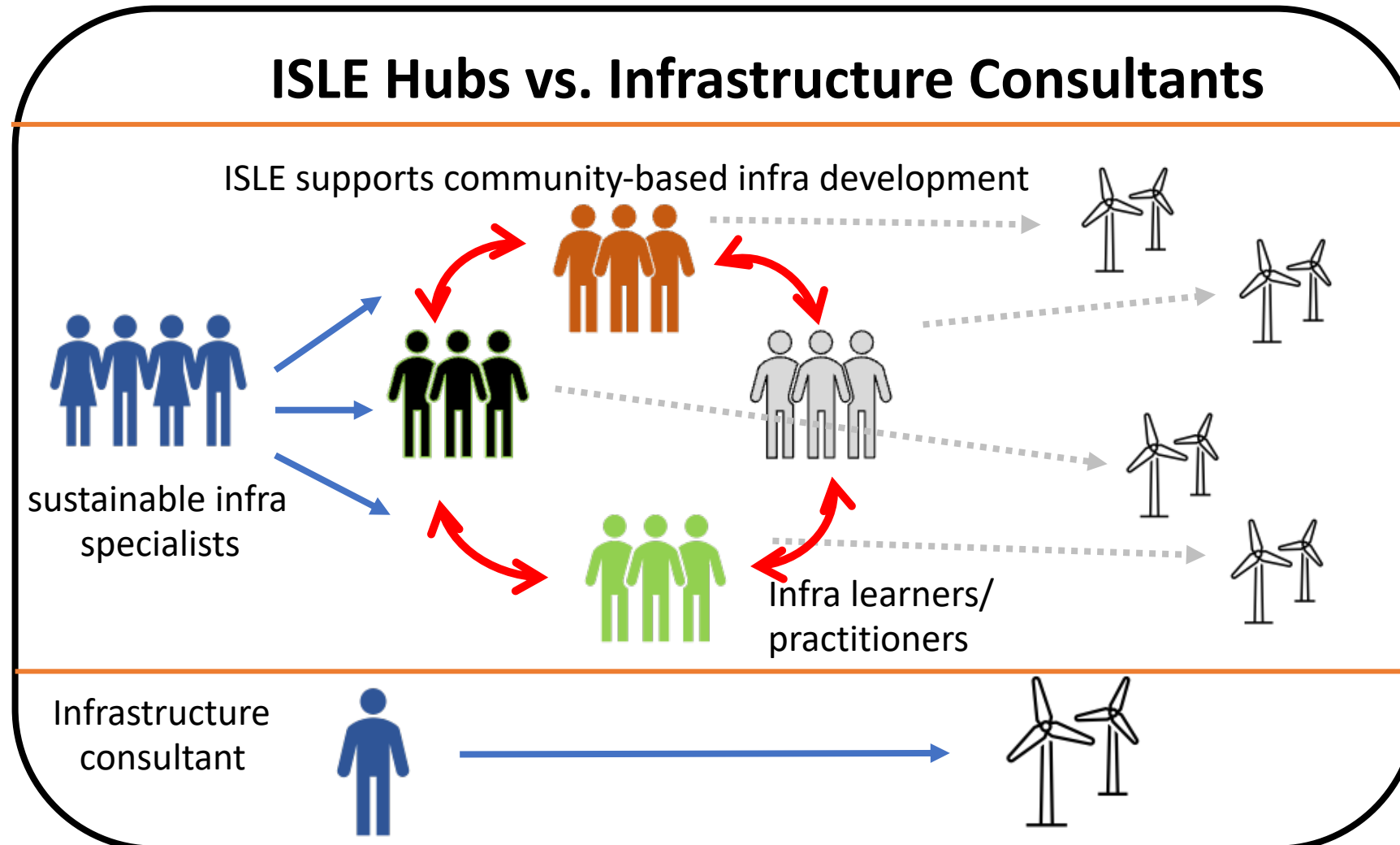
## ISLE Hubs vs. Infrastructure Consultants

Infrastructure  
consultant





# Translating the ECHO Model to Infrastructure: Infrastructure Sustainability Learning (ISLE) Hubs





## The Evidence:

### Pilot Hub: *Sustainable Infrastructure Putting Principles into Practice*

- Monthly [interactive Virtual Learning Hub](#) series  
May 2020-May 2021
- Each session focused on applications of the UNEP International Good Practice Principles for Sustainable Infrastructure
- 642 individuals participated online from 71 countries
- Created global community of practice that included engineers, planners, conservationists, policymakers
- Follow up surveys and focus groups called for hubs targeted on geographies, sectors, and specific challenges







**1. STRATEGIC PLANNING** to ensure the alignment of infrastructure policies and decisions with global sustainable development agendas and to strengthen the enabling environment.



**2. RESPONSIVE, RESILIENT, AND FLEXIBLE SERVICE PROVISION** to meet actual infrastructure needs, allow for changes and uncertainties over time, and promote synergies between infrastructure projects and systems.



**3. COMPREHENSIVE LIFE CYCLE ASSESSMENT OF SUSTAINABILITY**, including the cumulative impacts of multiple infrastructure systems on ecosystems and communities over their entire lifespans, to avoid “locking in” infrastructure projects and systems with various adverse effects.



**4. AVOIDING ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS** of infrastructure systems and investing in natural infrastructure to make use of nature’s ability to provide essential, cost-effective infrastructure services and provide multiple co-benefits for people and the planet.



**5. RESOURCE EFFICIENCY AND CIRCULARITY** to minimize infrastructure’s natural resource footprint, reduce emissions, waste and other pollutants, and increase the efficiency and affordability of services.



**6. EQUITY, INCLUSIVENESS, AND EMPOWERMENT** through a balance between social and economic infrastructure investment to respect, protect and fulfil human rights and promote well-being, particularly of more vulnerable or marginalized groups.



**7. ENHANCING ECONOMIC BENEFITS** through employment generation and support for the local economy.



**8. FISCAL SUSTAINABILITY AND INNOVATIVE FINANCING** to close the infrastructure investment gap within the context of increasingly constrained public budgets.



**9. TRANSPARENT, INCLUSIVE, AND PARTICIPATORY DECISION-MAKING** that includes stakeholder analysis, ongoing public participation, and grievance mechanisms for all stakeholders.

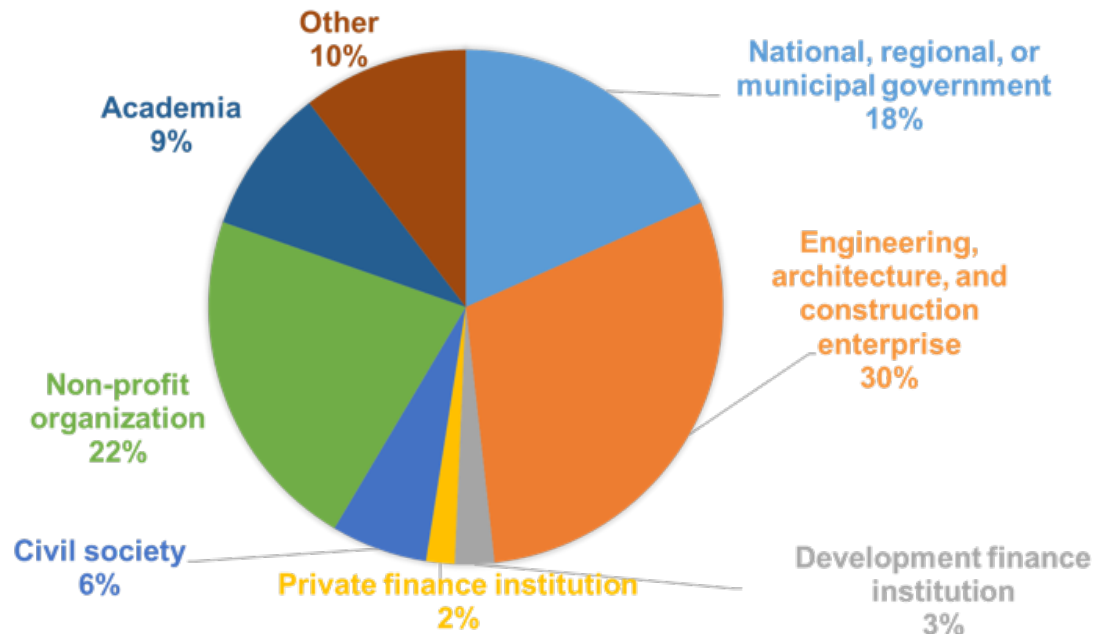


**10. EVIDENCE-BASED DECISION-MAKING** that includes regular monitoring of infrastructure performance and impacts based on key performance indicators and the promotion of data sharing with all stakeholders.

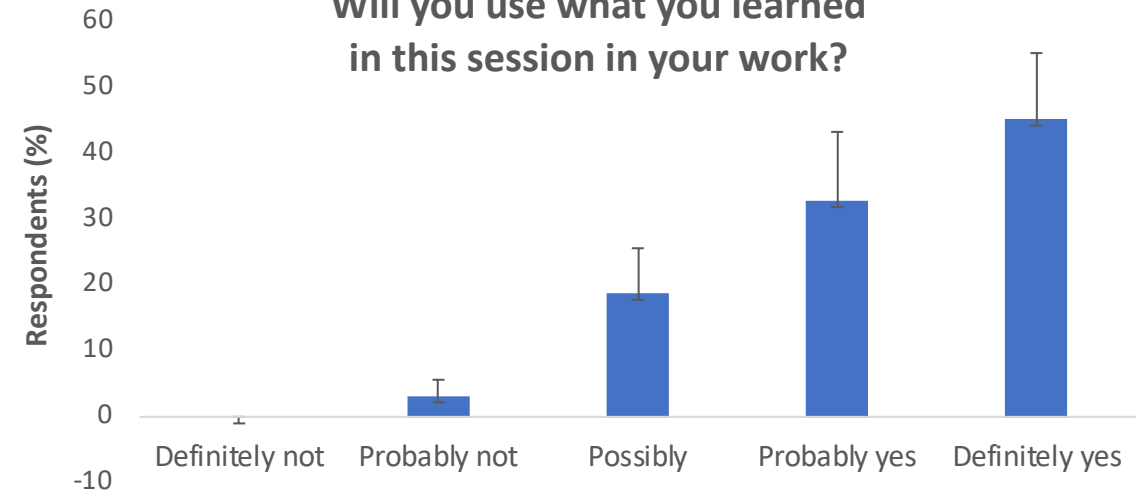


# Results from Pilot

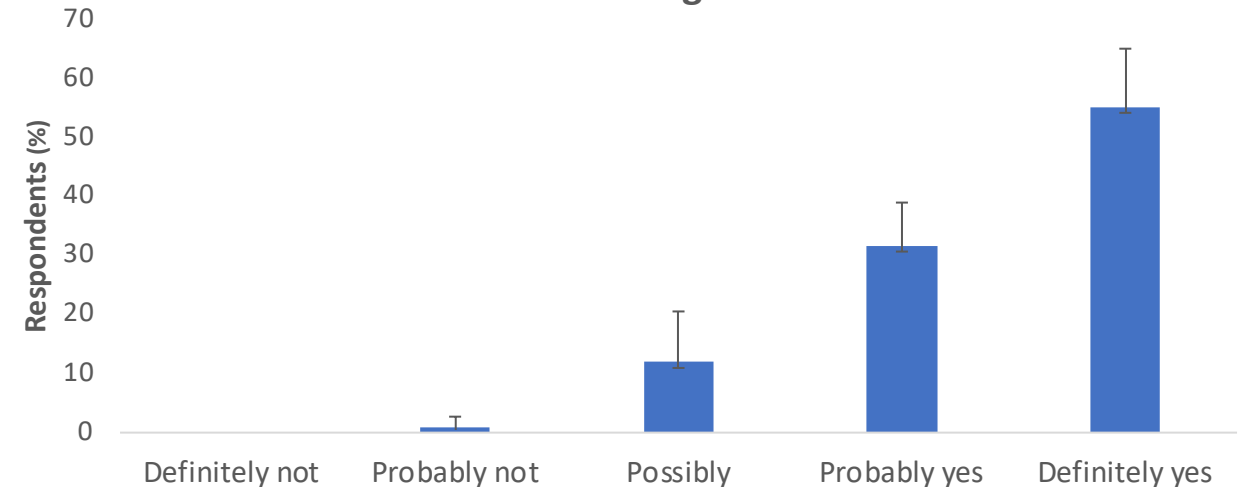
Participants Professional Association



Will you use what you learned in this session in your work?



Would you recommend this webinar series to a colleague?





# **Virtual Learning Hub:** **Under development: Sustainable Rebuilding in Turkey**

- Potentially hosted by Eskişehir Technical University with support from the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Türkiye
- Focusing on rebuilding infrastructure within Turkey after 2023 earthquake
- Connecting policy makers and local officials in earthquake-affected municipalities with each other and with sustainable infrastructure experts in Turkey and across the globe





# **Virtual Learning Hub:**

## **Launched: Green-Gray Infrastructure Hubs**

- Hosted by Green-Gray Community of Practice and Conservation International
- Practitioners share green-gray infrastructure implementation challenges with each other and with experts
- Topics include Nature-based Solutions for urban coastlines, best practices for national-level policies to support green-gray infrastructure solutions
- One hub for Americas and one hub for Asia-Pacific





# **Virtual Learning Hub:**

## **Under development: Transportation and Biodiversity**

- Potentially hosted by EU's BISON and WWF/GEF
- Focused on impacts of transportation on biodiversity and solutions to help abate them
- Connecting practitioners to each other and to the research findings, policy recommendations, and experts working in these fields
- Geographic focus on Europe and Southeast Asia





# **Virtual Learning Hub:**

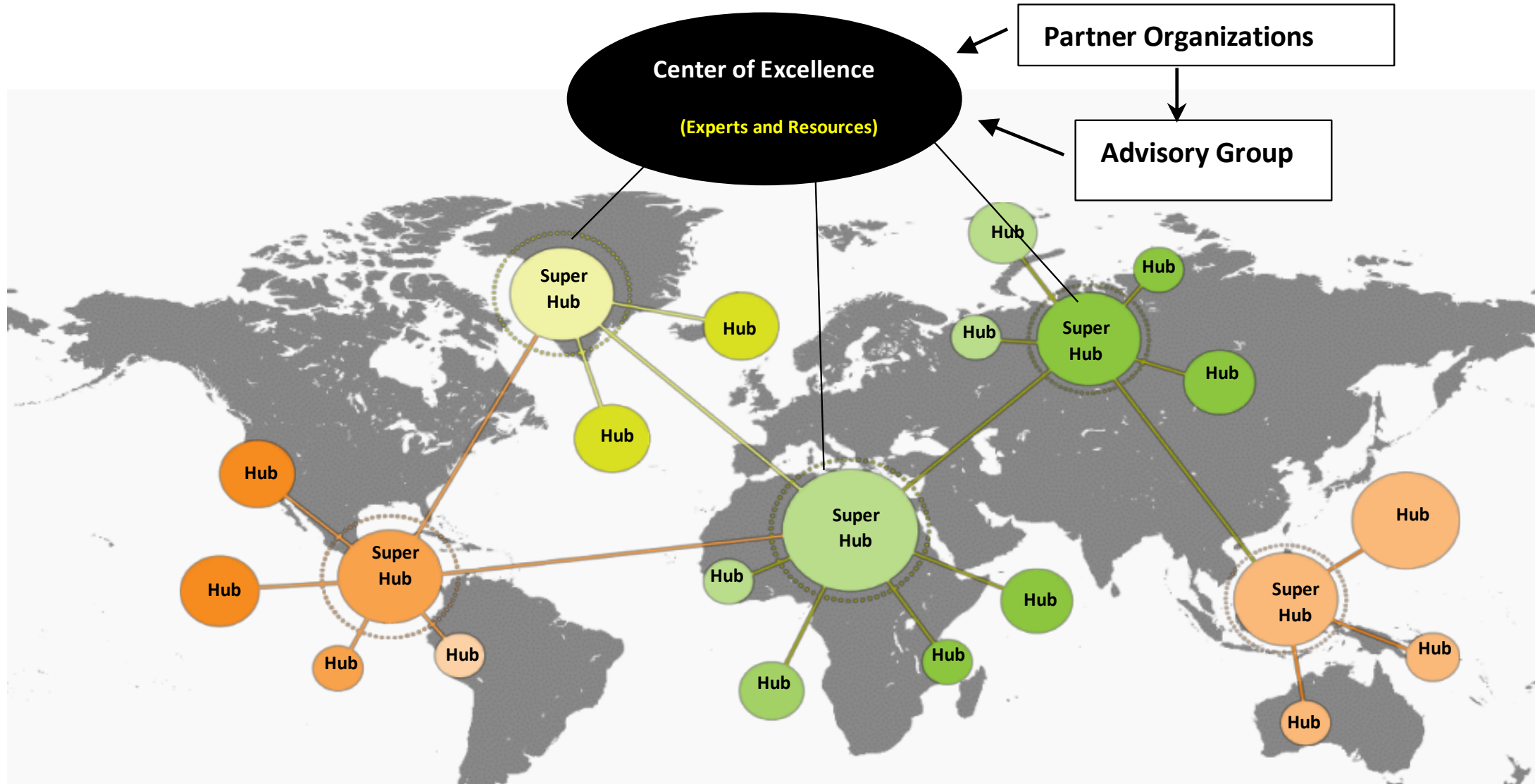
## **Under development: Engineering Curricula**

- Potentially hosted by Duke University, ICSI, and IFEEES
- Addressing need to train next generation of engineers to holistically incorporate sustainability into infrastructure design at all phases of the project cycle
- Connecting engineering school deans for shared learning about how to design, run, and improve sustainable infrastructure educational programs
- Geographic focus on the Americas





# The Vision: Global Network of ISLE Hubs and Superhubs

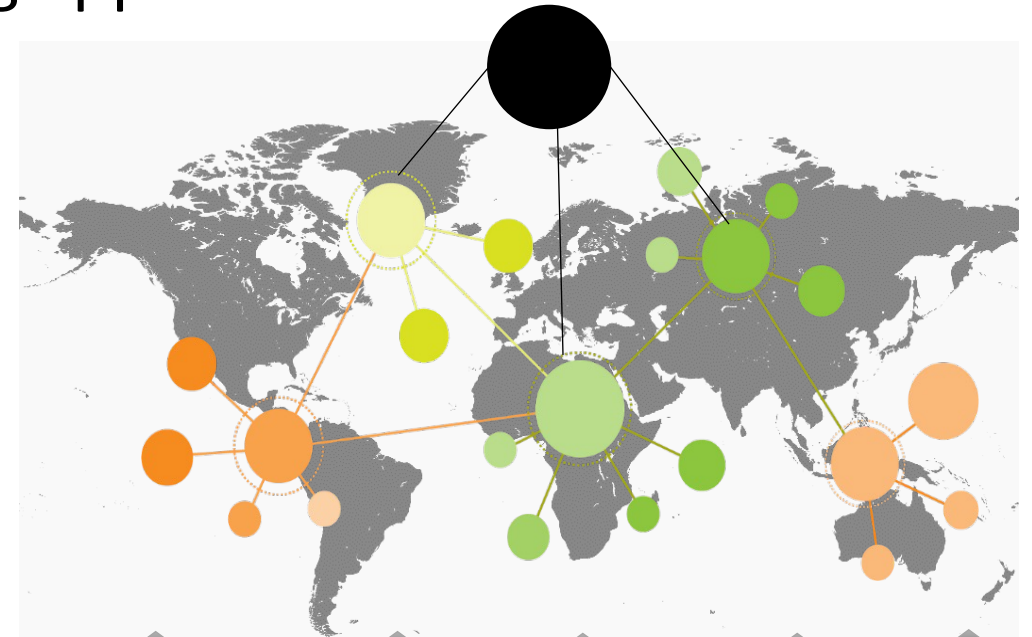




## **ISLE Hubs:** **Building a Global Community of Practice**

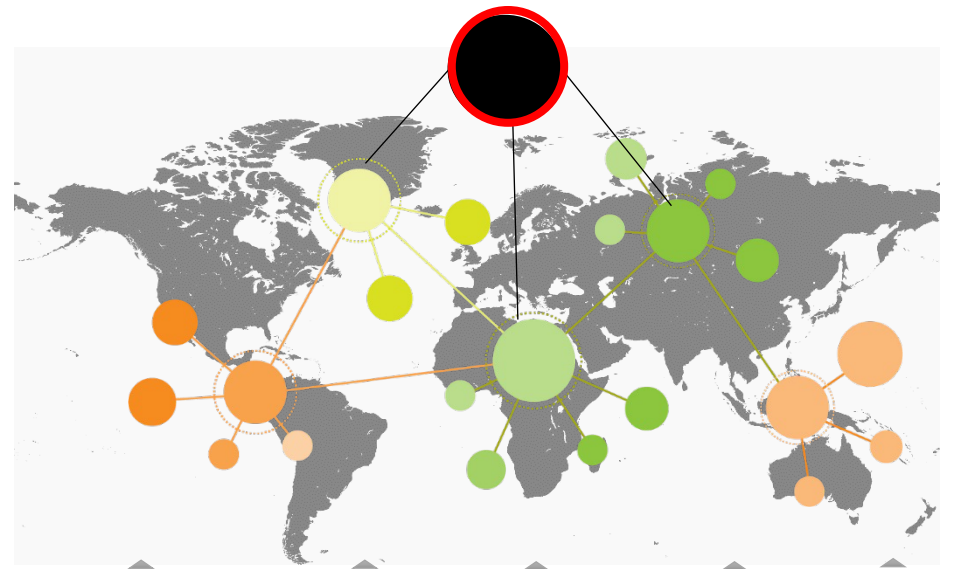
ISLE Hubs have the potential for high impact and efficiency due to their:

- Demand-driven topical, sector, or geographic focus
- Case-based learning and problem-solving approach
- Virtual connectivity
- Access to clearinghouse for resources and expertise
- Capability to easily scale and replicate
- Ability to facilitate knowledge exchange at a global scale





## ISLE Center of Excellence: Directing the Network



- Administrative support for hubs
  - Offer templates, tools, resources, and guidance for ISLE Hub curriculum development
- Provide training to ISLE Hub leaders and facilitators
- Connection to global experts
- Create resources helpful to hubs
- Advisory group would provide feedback on learning priorities and ensure participatory/responsive approach
- Library of resources





# **GIZ Infrastructure Solutions Incubator**

Integrating sustainability along the infrastructure lifecycle



# Infrastructure development is an important vehicle to reach the Sustainable Development Goals and the 1.5°C-Target of the Paris Agreement!

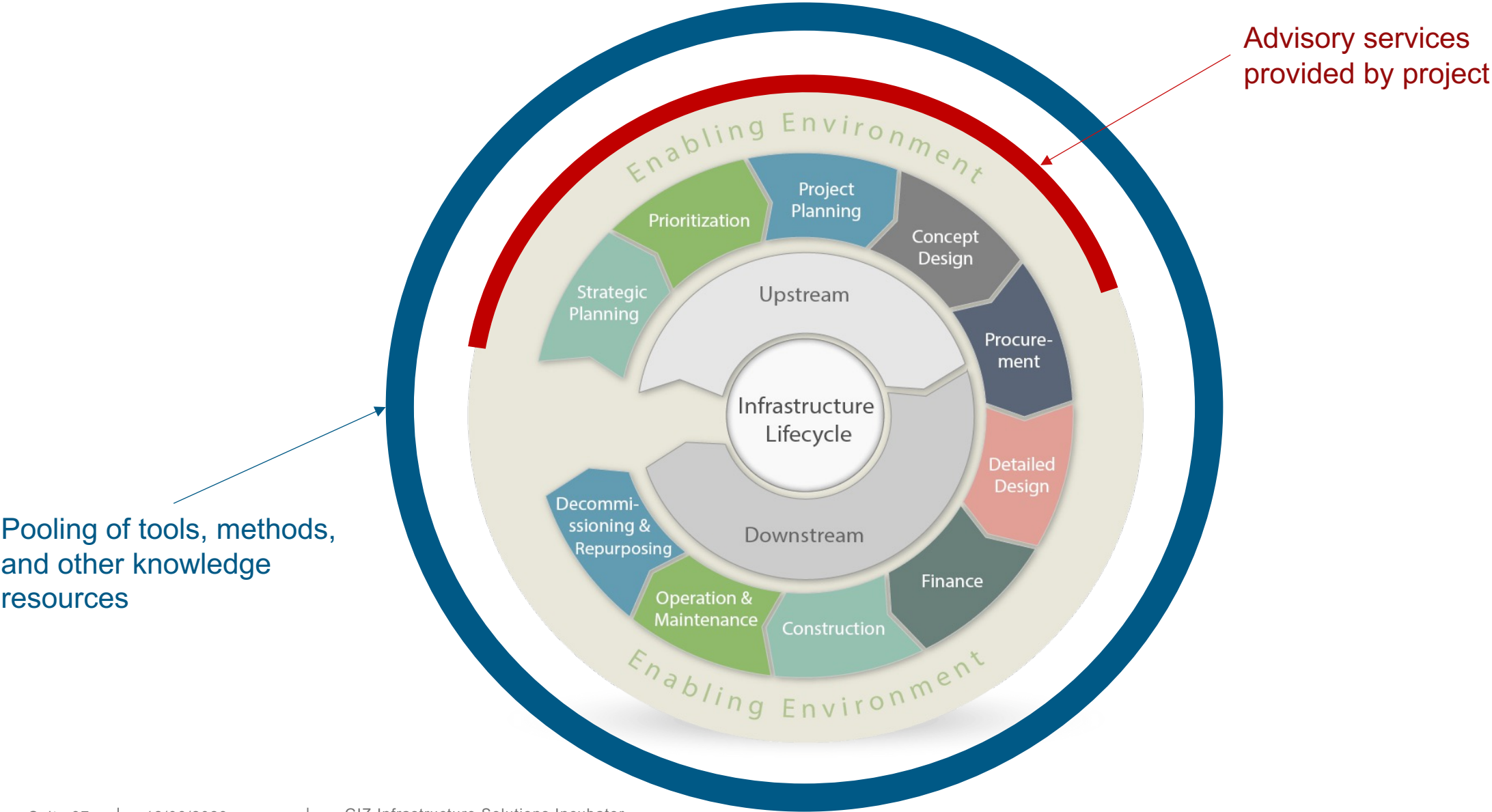
- It is expected that **88% of climate adaptation costs** will need to be invested in infrastructure
- Infrastructure is responsible for **79% of global greenhouse gas emissions**
- **92%** of the **169** SDG-targets are related to infrastructure

→ A **whole-of-sustainability approach** is important to make infrastructure systems fit for the future and ensure that infrastructure development **benefits society as a whole**.





# Areas of work of the GIZ Incubator project





## (1) Upstream support

- Progress on SDGs and Paris Agreement is impossible with project-by-project logic to sustainability

- What are the needs?

Definition of sustainability in infrastructure

Considering sustainability strategically across sectors

→ With the right **framework conditions**, more impact can be generated across infrastructure projects and sustainable development systems.





## (2) Pooling of knowledge resources: How can we put sustainability principles into practice?

- Many organisations have developed tools (including standards and guidelines) to help plan and execute infrastructure projects more sustainably
- Yet there is insufficient application of tools, partly due to a lack of information as well as insufficient knowledge about the benefits and ways of application

→ With the **Sustainable Infrastructure Tool Navigator**, GIZ and UNEP developed a database of more than 100 tools and makes information on these tools easily accessible.



### Performance Standards

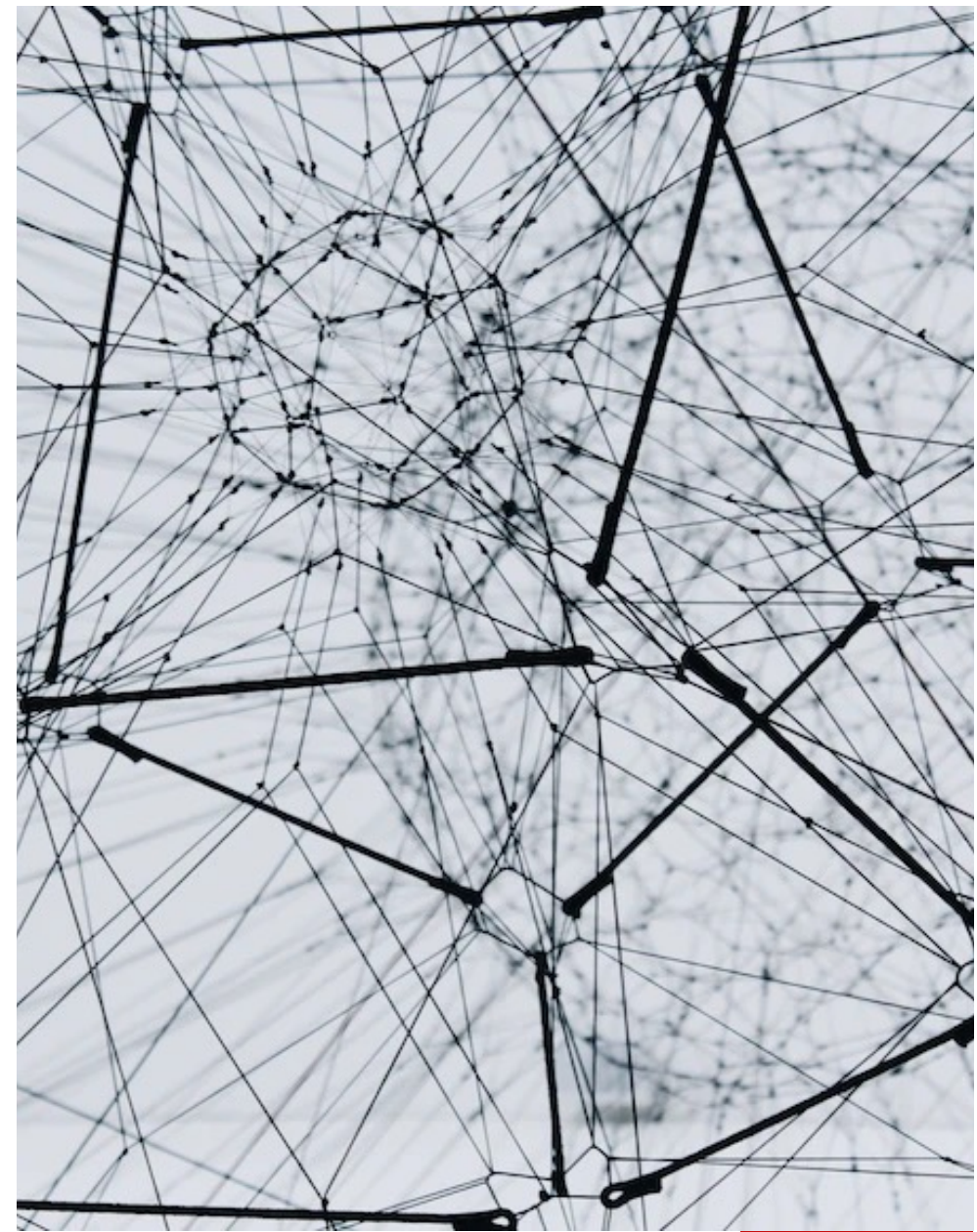


**FAST-Infra**  
SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE



# The ISLE Network offers a venue to share experiences and learn from each other

- Opportunity for infrastructure practitioners to engage in a **community of practice** and learn about existing challenges and solutions from other people working on similar topics
- Complement other technical assistance, training, or capacity building by providing **on-going support and continued engagement**
- Integrate Tool Navigator and other available resources into different thematic hubs: **Dissemination of good practices** and opportunity to make knowledge resources available to a wider audience; facilitate cross-institutional learning



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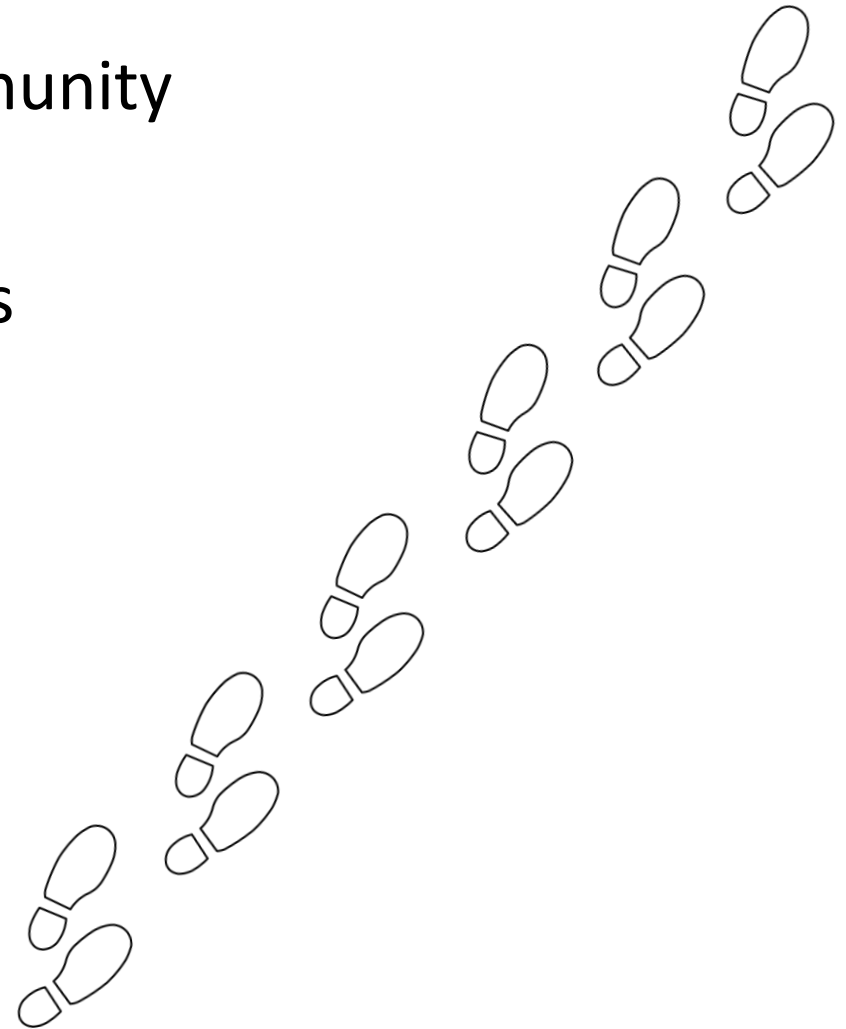
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I [www.giz.de](http://www.giz.de)

# Moving Forward

- Consult broadly with infrastructure community
- Launch series of ISLE Hubs
- Build administrative support for ISLE hubs
- Develop partnerships and advisory group
- Obtain resources to support activities

Contact the team by sending an email to [sustainable-infrastructure@duke.edu](mailto:sustainable-infrastructure@duke.edu)







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**12 JUNE 2023 | 13:00 - 14:30 CEST**

**The Infrastructure Sustainability  
Learning Model: Building  
Capacity for the Next Generation  
of Sustainable Infrastructure**

## AGENDA

### Opening

- Laura PLATCHKOV | Senior Policy Advisor, Federal Office for the Environment, Switzerland
- Rowan PALMER | Programme Management Officer, Resources and Market Branch, UN Environment Programme

### Infrastructure Sustainability LEarning (ISLE) Network: Exchanging Knowledge among Experts and Practitioners

- Elizabeth LOSOS | Executive in Residence, Duke University
- Rowan PALMER | Programme Management Officer, Resources and Market Branch, UN Environment Programme
- Sara MASON | Senior Policy Associate, Duke University
- Mira PIEL | Junior-Advisor, GIZ

### Q&A

### Closing

- Elizabeth LOSOS | Executive in Residence, Duke University
- Rowan PALMER | Programme Management Officer, Resources and Market Branch, UN Environment Programme

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## CLOSING

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# The Infrastructure Sustainability Learning Model: Building Capacity for the Next Generation of **Sustainable Infrastructure**




**Elizabeth LOSOS**

Executive in Residence,  
Duke University

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& SUSTAINABILITY

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**Rowan PALMER**

Programme Management Officer, Resources  
and Market Branch, UN Environment Programme



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## The Infrastructure Sustainability Learning Model: Building Capacity for the Next Generation of **Sustainable Infrastructure**

# THANK YOU!



**Laura PLATCHKOV**



Senior Policy Advisor, Federal Office for the  
Environment, Switzerland



**Rowan PALMER**



Programme Management Officer,  
Resources and Market Branch, UN  
Environment Programme



**Elizabeth LOSOS**



Executive in Residence, Duke University



**Sara MASON**



Senior Policy Associate, Duke University



**Mira PIEL**



Junior-Advisor, Deutsche Gesellschaft für  
Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)



## WHAT'S NEXT?

 [genevaenvironmentnetwork.org](https://genevaenvironmentnetwork.org)




### CONFERENCE


#### **Chemicals and Waste Issues of Concern: Tackling Future Priorities**

**15 JUN 2023 13:00 – 14:30**

International Environment House II &  
Online

UNEP Chemicals and Health Branch, GEN

 Chemicals and Pollution

 SDG3 | SDG12



**08 JUN 2023**

#### **Environment @ 53rd Session of the UN Human Rights Council**

 Human Rights and Environment | Climate

 SDG13



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