



Tackling Transparency

the Methodological Challenges of Research on Disclosing Sustainability

Machiel Lamers
Sanneke Kloppenburg
Hilde Toonen
And others

June 21-25, 2016

Registration deadline:
April 1, 2016 (extended deadline)

**Course organised by the Environmental Policy group (ENP) in collaboration with
Wageningen School of Social Sciences (WASS) and SENSE Research School for Socio-
Economic and Natural Sciences of the Environment
Wageningen University**

Introduction & objectives of the course

The Summer School will be organized in conjunction to the International Conference “Disclosing Sustainability; The Transformative Power of Transparency?”. The Summer School participants are therefore able to generate expert insights and experiences for operationalizing research on the presented themes in the International Conference which takes place on June 24 and June 25, 2016 in Wageningen. The Summer School is scheduled from June 21 to June 25, 2016.

The aim of the Summer School is to explore the methodological challenges of operationalizing research on disclosing sustainability. The Summer School will highlight a number of themes and contexts in which these challenges manifest themselves:

- Analyzing the role of information in sustainability practices
- Using big data and social media in research
- Developing and analyzing sustainability indicators
- Involving and analyzing citizen science approaches

More specifically, the Summer School will address the methodological challenges that researchers encounter in operationalizing their research and in facing the following questions, among others:

- What are fundamental concepts in researching transparency?
- What basic research skills do I need, and do these differ from the ones I already have?
- Do I need to use new methods, why and which?
- To what extent can or should I be engaged, for example when using social media?
- How do I deal with representativeness of my research population, should I be happy or worried about citizens who are eager to participate in my study?
- What about ethics in transparency-research: how do I deal with privacy-issues and with availability and accessibility of data gathered and stored by private companies?
- Are there specific biases and pitfalls I should be aware of, in terms of the reliability and validity of my research?
- What does transparency mean for the role of science in society?
- What are useful and fun ways of disclosing my own research findings?

Target group and learning outcomes

The Summer School is open to an international group of PhD candidates and Postdocs, who embark on, or are already involved in researching transparency, accountability and empowerment in the broad realm of sustainable development. The group may include PhD candidates, in any phase of their research, from the field of social sciences, such as political sciences, sociology, geography, and economics. It should be noted that PhD students and Postdocs whose paper has been accepted by the International Conference committee are invited to participate in the Summer School, but this is not a prerequisite for participation.

Assumed prior knowledge

No specific prior knowledge is assumed, although a keen interest and aspiration to gain insight in methodological considerations about assessing transparency challenges is expected. Students are expected to prepare themselves by reading and analysing a selection of key literature prior to the Summer School provided by the organisation. It is assumed that Summer School participants are able to reflect on their own role as researcher, willing to actively contribute to discussions and debates, and open to giving and receiving feedback.

Course fees

The Summer School fee is 500 euros. This fee includes food, drinks, course materials, the conference fee and accommodation for four nights (Tuesday until Saturday).

PhDs registered with WASS and SENSE pay a reduced fee of 250 euros.

Session Times

This Summer School takes place from June 21 to June 25, 2016, in Wageningen and includes participating in the two-day conference (June 24 and 25). All participants will be accommodated together in group accommodation. The Summer School will start on June 21, early afternoon, with a welcome lunch. Participants to the Summer School should prepare for an intensive programme, i.e. full working days and some additional evening activities. The last session is scheduled for Saturday afternoon, which is after the closing session of the International Conference. A detailed timetable with the scheduled indoor and outdoor activities will be made available at a later time.

Outline of the Course in Hours

Estimation:

- Preparation: 16 hours
- Participation/attendance Summer School (including International Conference and some evening activities): 44 hours

Teaching methods

In-house lecturers and experts attending the International Conference are invited to give a lecture and afterwards to participate in discussions with the participants of the Summer School. The format of the lectures and discussions will vary, yet some discussions will have a workshop-like character. Targeted reading is a part of the Summer School, to provide all participants a common knowledge base. It is expected that students will have read the assigned literature prior to the Summer School. There will be small group assignments during the Summer School, including an assignment which needs to be carried out during the International Conference. Gained knowledge will not be tested in a written examination, yet, during the final session on Saturday afternoon insights are discussed. Active participation in this final session is obligatory.

Requirements and ECTS

- PhD candidates and Postdocs, who embark on, or are already involved in researching transparency, accountability and empowerment in the broad realm of sustainable development.
- Five-days intensive and internal programme.
- Motivation letter and 2 page CV
- 2.2 ECTS

Course Schedule

To be announced later

Location

The Summer School takes place in the beautiful rustic and woody setting of estate "Hoekelum". Our accommodation is located in the forest near the castle of Hoekelum. This accommodation will be based on shared male or female bed rooms, with self-catering option (kitchen) and a shared living room. The shared living room, as well as the outside area, will serve as class room. The conference sessions will take place in the hotel *De Wageningsche Berg*. Transportation from/to the conference venue will be arranged.

Registration

Registration is possible electronically via the SENSE courses page until **April 1 2016 (extended deadline)**: http://fd8.formdesk.com/wageningenuraltterra/Tackling_Transparency2016

The maximum number of participants is set at 25, the minimum at 15.

In the registration button you will be asked to upload a motivation letter and a 2-page CV, and possibly your request for financial support (should this be required for overseas candidates). We also ask you to provide additional data necessary for organising the logistical part of the Summer School. Please make sure that you provide the most recent contact details so that in case of any changes you will be notified promptly. After your internet registration you will receive a short notification that your name has been registered. Around mid-April you will receive a confirmation, including the location and the schedule. We will send an invoice to the address indicated in the registration form.

Cancellations

Cancellations may be made free of charge until 1 month before the start of the course. Cancellation fee of 100 % applies if participants cancel the course less than 1 month prior to the course. The organisers have a right to cancel the course not later than 1 month before the course starts. The participants will be notified of any changes at their e-mail addresses.

Further information

For further information please contact the course organiser, Machiel Lamers, Environmental Policy group. He can be reached by email: machiel.lamers@wur.nl, or telephone: (+31) (0)0317 484274

Transportation

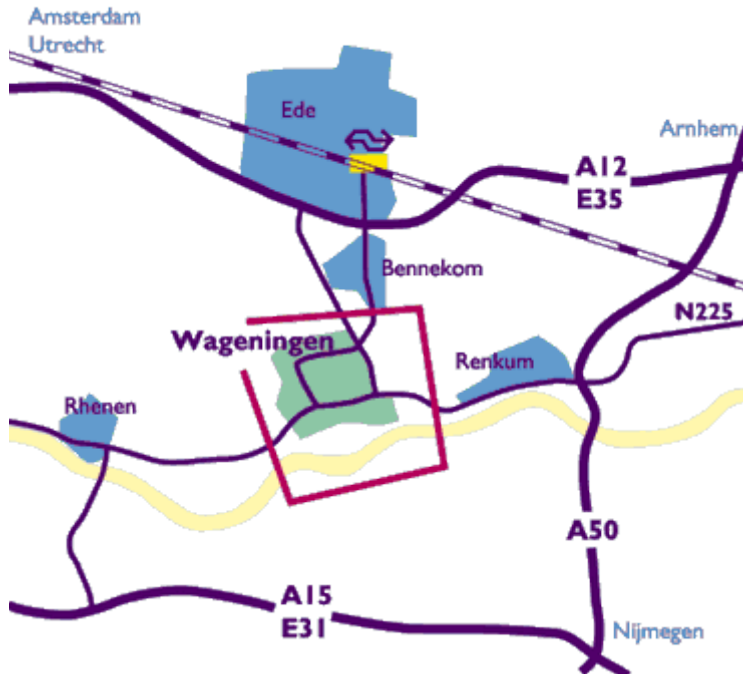
From Schiphol Amsterdam Airport to Wageningen

At the Airport you can buy a train ticket in the 'arrivals' area by the baggage claims. You will see the sign "Train tickets" near the exit. Then follow the signs 'Nederlandse Spoorwegen' (NS) or 'Trains and busses' to the railway station.

Purchase a one-way ticket to the Ede-Wageningen train station, this will cost € 14,10 (plus a service charge if you buy the ticket at the ticket counter). It is also possible to buy the ticket from the ticket vending machines in the station.

There are direct connections from Schiphol Amsterdam Airport to Ede-Wageningen every 30 minutes. Additionally, twice an hour there is a connecting service from Schiphol to Ede-Wageningen where you have to change trains in Utrecht. The destination boards on the platform will indicate the different stations where the train will stop. Check for the names Ede-Wageningen or Utrecht and board the train and when necessary change in Utrecht. The trip from Schiphol to Ede-Wageningen takes you a bit more than one hour.

For Dutch train connections use www.ns.nl, www.thalys.com, www.db.de



The train station is not located directly in Wageningen. This lack is fully compensated by fair means of transportation by buses and taxis. From railway station Ede-Wageningen you can take a taxi (approx. 15 min.). Taxis leave at the north side of the station. You can also come by bus: line 52 (direction Wageningen/ Arnhem) departs from the north side of the station or bus line 88 (Valleilijn, direction Wageningen) leaves from the south side of the station. You have to purchase a ticket from the driver in the bus, which will cost about 2 euros. Detailed travel details are dependent on the final programme and will follow.