

Call for Abstracts for a conference and an Emerging Scholars Forum on: Re-examining the “Green” in the Green Transition: Law, Extraction, and the Limits of Sustainability

We invite abstracts for an international conference on 26-27 November held in conjunction with an emerging scholars’ forum on 25 November 2026. These events will also serve as the basis for a special issue of the *Journal of Human Rights and the Environment*.

The global shift towards a “green transition” is increasingly framed as both an environmental necessity and a pathway to sustainable development. Legal frameworks at international, regional, and national levels, ranging from sustainability taxonomies and climate finance mechanisms to corporate due diligence regimes, seek to define and regulate what counts as “sustainable” economic activity. Yet growing evidence suggests that these frameworks may reproduce, rather than resolve, underlying patterns of extractivism, inequality, environmental harm and human rights violations.

This raises a fundamental question: **what, if anything, is truly “green” about the green transition?**

We invite contributions that critically examine the legal and governance structures underpinning the green transition. In particular, the conference seeks to explore legal concepts such as “do no significant harm,” environmental, social and governance (ESG) standards, and sustainability screening. It aims to understand how these concepts are operationalized in legal practice, whether they effectively constrain environmentally harmful and socially unjust forms of economic activity, and if so, for whom and where. In addition, the conference will examine what these practices mean for the present and future of law seeking to protect the planet.

We welcome critical and interdisciplinary perspectives, with a particular interest in contributions that bridge international law, human rights, environmental law, and EU law. We also encourage a broad range of methodological approaches, including empirical, doctrinal, and reform-oriented work. The conference aims to advance a more integrated and theoretically grounded understanding of how legal norms shape, legitimize, and contest the governance of natural resources, energy transitions, and global value chains within the “green transition”.

Indicative themes include (but are not limited to):

Conceptual and theoretical perspectives

- The limits of sustainability as a legal paradigm: tensions between economic growth, resource extraction, and ecological thresholds and planetary boundaries
- The Anthropocene and socio-ecological disruption: ontological, epistemological, and other limits of law in addressing systemic environmental change
- The conceptual and legal limits of “sustainability,” including the effectiveness of “do no significant harm” and ESG frameworks in light of structural harm and ecological thresholds

- Rights of nature, the status and implications for non-humans, and other alternative legal imaginaries beyond anthropocentric models of the green transition

Governance frameworks and legal instruments

- The European Green Deal, EU Taxonomy, and sustainable finance governance
- Corporate accountability, due diligence, and greenwashing risks in relation to green extractivism, critical raw materials, and environmental harm in energy transition value chains
- Human rights implications of green transition policies, including impacts on Indigenous peoples, land rights, and self-determination

Extractivism and value-chain dynamics

- Green extractivism and critical raw materials: law, legitimacy, and environmental harm in energy transition value chains
- Colonial and neo-colonial extractivism in the green transition: continuities between historical resource extraction and contemporary value chains linking the Global North and South

Submission details

Abstracts (max. 300 words) should be submitted by 1 August 2026 to sustainability@jur.lu.se. Applicants will be notified of the outcome by 10 August 2026.

Selected participants will be invited to present their work at the conference and to submit a draft article in advance of the event (details to follow). Following the conference, a number of contributions will be selected for inclusion in the special issue, subject to peer review.

Participation in the conference is not conditional on submission to the special issue. However, participants are kindly invited to indicate whether they would also wish their contribution to be considered for inclusion in a special issue of the Journal of Human Rights and the Environment.

For the Emerging Scholars Forum

On 25 November 2026, immediately preceding the conference, Lund University will host an Emerging Scholars Forum for doctoral candidates and early-career researchers (within 5 years of PhD) working on issues related to the green transition, environmental governance, human rights, sustainability, and global justice. The Forum aims to provide a supportive and interdisciplinary space for presenting works-in-progress, receiving feedback from senior scholars, and developing international research networks.

Participants in the Forum will take part in dedicated paper sessions, mentoring discussions, and networking activities, and will be encouraged to attend the main conference on 26–27 November. We particularly welcome applications from scholars based in the Global South and from researchers whose work examines the impacts

of sustainability and climate governance on affected communities, environments, and value chains.

Applicants who wish to be considered for the Emerging Scholars Forum are invited to indicate this when submitting their abstract (same submission details apply as above). A limited number of travel and accommodation grants may be available, subject to funding. In your submission, please indicate if you would like your abstract to be considered for the Emerging Scholars Forum.