



# SustainERA

## ERA CHAIR IN SUSTAINABLE FUTURES

The deteriorating state of the environment is an increasing concern. Growing interest in alternative models (e.g., degrowth, green growth, post-growth) challenges the dominant focus on economic growth and instead prioritises ecological sustainability, social justice, and well-being. However, transitioning to sustainable and non-growth futures is challenging due to the deeply ingrained belief in economic growth as a symbol of success and societal well-being.

Governmental and international strategies often emphasise technological progress (e.g., digital and green twin transitions), but these approaches may have unintended environmental consequences, complicating sustainability efforts. While many solutions centre on technological innovation, achieving genuine sustainability also requires fundamental changes in mindsets and daily habit.

### Main Goals

**Capacity Building.** To strengthen interdisciplinary research excellence, capacity, and capability at Tallinn University (TLU) by establishing a high-level research group in Sustainable Futures, with a focus on sustainability and post-growth development.

**Research Excellence.** To create an Open Lab for Sustainable Futures Research, fostering collaboration across various TLU Schools and with external private and public partners. This initiative aims to enhance interdisciplinary research excellence and support evidence-based interventions and policy development in sustainability.

### Partners

**The Green Tiger Foundation, Tasaarengu Eesti MTÜ,  
The Centre of Excellence for Well-being Sciences**

### Our Project Directors

**Anu Realo** – Research Professor of Sustainable Future Studies, School of Educational Sciences

**Kai Pata** – PI of the project, Professor of Adult Education and Non-Formal Learning, School of Educational Sciences

### Project Co-ordinator

**Riin Ehin**

This is where the social sciences and humanities play a crucial role. Disciplines such as psychology, education, behavioural studies, political science, and communication studies offer valuable insights into how people think, learn, and behave. SustainERA integrates knowledge from these fields to address sustainability challenges from multiple perspectives.

Identifying barriers to sustainable practices is essential for creating effective solutions. Factors such as lack of knowledge, a weak sense of personal responsibility, time constraints, limited resources, political attitudes, and accessibility to eco-friendly options all influence behaviour. By addressing these obstacles, SustainERA seeks to design culturally and socially appropriate incentives that drive lasting change.

### Our Senior Research Team

**Grete Arro** - Research Fellow, School of Educational Sciences

**Mari-Liis Jakobson** - Associate Professor of Political Sociology, School of Governance, Law and Society

**Leif Kalev** - Professor of Political Studies, School of Governance, Law and Society

**Katrin Männik** - Visiting Research Fellow in Sustainable Education, School of Educational Sciences

**Tarmo Pikner** - Associate Professor, School of Humanities, Centre for Landscape and Culture

**Jaanus Terasmaa** - Professor of Ecohydrology, School of Natural Sciences and Health

**Terje Väljataga** - Associate Professor of New Learning Environments and Technologies, School of Educational Sciences

Running from 2025 to 2029, SustainERA will combine high-level research with the development of innovative solutions to promote sustainable mindsets and practices. By integrating expertise from multiple disciplines and fostering international collaboration, the project also aims to enhance the university's research excellence and capacity.

The SustainERA project NUMBER 101186958 is funded by the European Union HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-TALENTS-01. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.

The ERA Chair in Sustainable Futures (SustainERA) project at Tallinn University is supported by a €2.5 million grant from the European Commission's Horizon Europe ERA Chair initiative (ID: 101186958, DOI: 10.3030/101186958).



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*Advancing a more sustainable future through interdisciplinary research, policy development, and a focus on individual practices*

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