

**2024 ANNUAL REPORT — CENTER FOR
CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY” FOUNDATION**
“TRANSITION FROM INNOVATION TO SUSTAINABILITY” Research Area
(Philippe C. Forêt)

Introduction to TIS Activities at CCRS

In May 2023, Prof. Philippe C. Forêt (University of Chicago PhD) founded a working group at CCRS that is focused on the transition from innovation to sustainability (TIS). The TIS team currently has six members: Philippe C. Forêt, Hans M. Galliker, Jin Wang (an MA student at the University of Amsterdam until October 2024), Neha Yadav (a Swissuniversities Fellow), Prof. Sakshi Chhabra (BML Munjal University, India), and Dr. Sara Massafra (a Swiss National Science Foundation Fellow from the USI University of Lugano). With one exception (Hans M. Galliker), the team is fully supported by external funding. TIS has been instrumental in drafting proposals and submitting applications to Swiss, European, and Chinese research funding programs. Two applications for the Horizon Europe programs were rejected, primarily for administrative reasons. Other proposals in the field of agroecology, which were reviewed in China, are expected to receive final approval. After completing the Innosuisse entrepreneurship training program in winter 2024, Philippe C. Forêt will submit two funding applications to Innosuisse in spring 2025. Outside Switzerland, TIS has collaborated with academic and non-academic partners such as Bard College (New York), the University of Groningen, Hunan University of Science and Technology (HNUST, Xiangtan, China), Swissnex India (Bengaluru), and the Ecosystem Restoration Communities (ERC, Amsterdam). CCRS has signed MoU letters of intent with both HNUST and the ERC to further develop joint projects with these partners. TIS has remained in contact with the UNESCO BRIDGES program for sustainability (presentation at BRIDGES Café in spring 2024), and we will submit an application for ERC’s membership in spring 2025.

TIS Flagship Project:

The “Ecological Restoration Community Financial Instrument” (ERC-FI)

Our goal is to help farming communities that are located in areas with degraded ecosystems find new financing partners. Investments in the natural capital can bring people, water, and life back to abandoned valleys. We all know that farming communities face significant challenges: lack of financing, climate events, poor soils and erosion, disruption of the water cycle, deforestation, biodiversity loss, etc. The ERC-FI project aims to leverage the offset market (carbon offsets and credits) to finance the actions that farmers can take to restore their land and contribute to a healthy environment. Philippe C. Forêt and Hans M. Galliker, in a consortium with the ERC, the University of Groningen, and AI specialist Kyolabs.io, are developing a financial instrument that supports decision-making, blockchain-based settlement, and transparent reporting. With restoration projects in 39 countries, the ERC serves more than 80

communities, who will have access to a comprehensive best-practice database and an AI-powered self-learning predictive model. ERC-FI informs, repairs, measures, assesses, forecasts, and records progress and impacts. In return, investors involved in the development of our instrument will have access to a reporting and certification system. Companies participating in the ERC-FI project will be awarded credits under conditions consistent with the new sustainability reporting regulations of the European Union and Switzerland. We will then be able to adequately finance actions that improve community resilience and environmental health.

TIS Member Achievements

- Prof. Dr. Sakshi Chhabra (TIS Senior Research Fellow): Awarded a seed grant from BML Munjal University — Design patent in the United Kingdom— Presentations at international management conferences — Several research papers on entrepreneurship and innovation in India and Switzerland — New course on AI and design thinking, as well as student activities on innovation, sustainability, and women's empowerment.
- Dr. Sara Massafra (TIS Senior Research Fellow): SNSF-funded postdoctoral research in ecosemiotics — Visiting scholar at the University of Massachusetts Boston — Conference presentations in Massachusetts, California, England, and Germany — Awarded a research grant from the Ragusa Foundation.
- Jin Wang, MA (TIS Junior Research Fellow): Graduated from the University of Amsterdam in October 2024 with an MA in Environmental and Sustainability Management — Completed his internship at CCRS-TIS (a report is available) — Now employed as a carbon sequestration expert.
- Dr. Neha Yadav (TIS Senior Research Fellow): Principal Investigator of the swissuniversities K2A project on mental health in the mountain communities of India — Article publications: “Integrating Local Knowledge in Development Assistance” and “Resilience and Equity in Crisis: Rethinking India’s Food Security Strategies” — Book publication: *The Climate-Health-Sustainability Nexus* (Springer) — International conference grants from IGU, GEF & IAS and from DSA.

Prof. Dr. Philippe C. Forêt
CCRS TIS Director



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