

## The Nexus Network: new connections in food, water, energy and the environment

**Date: 23rd June 2014**

**Time: 14:00 - 15:00hrs**

**Venue: WBS Teaching Centre**

**Speaker: James Wilsdon, Professor of Science & Democracy at the University of Sussex**

Interested parties should email Farat Ara at [Farat.Ara@wbs.ac.uk](mailto:Farat.Ara@wbs.ac.uk) by 18th June to register.

### ABSTRACT:

Over the past five years, there has been a surge of interest in the idea of the 'nexus' as a way of analysing and addressing the interdependencies, tensions and trade-offs between food, water and energy security. The concept gained particular currency in the lead up to the Rio+20 Summit in 2012, and continues to attract the attention of a range of influential players in international science, business and environmental policy.

The social sciences have a particular role to play in advancing the integrated, interdisciplinary modes of thinking and practice that will be required to address linked nexus challenges. As the 2013 *World Social Science Report* puts it: 'The social sciences must help to fundamentally reframe...global environmental change from a physical into a social problem.' Reflecting this, here in the UK, the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) is spearheading efforts to support research and cross-sector collaborations which can improve decision-making across nexus interdependencies.

The Nexus Network ([www.thenexusnetwork.org](http://www.thenexusnetwork.org)) is the first of a series of linked investments by ESRC in this agenda. Led by a team from Sussex, Cambridge and UEA, the network will be launched in June 2014. In this talk, James Wilsdon will outline plans for the network's first year, explain how it fits within ESRC's wider strategic plans, and describe ways in which researchers from Warwick might like to get involved, including through small grants for pilot projects that the network will support.

### BIO:

James Wilsdon is Professor of Science & Democracy in the Science Policy Research Unit ([SPRU](#)) at the University of Sussex. From June 2014, he will be Director of the Nexus Network, an ESRC-funded initiative which aims to foster joined-up thinking, policy & practice on food, energy, water and the environment. He is also Chair of the [Campaign for Social Science](#), which works to make the case for UK social science with the public, policymakers & the media, and he was recently appointed by HEFCE (Higher Education Funding Council for England) as the Chair of an [independent review of the role of metrics in research assessment](#), which will report in 2015. More details on the review can be found [here](#).

From 2008 to 2011, he was founding Director of the [Science Policy Centre](#) at the Royal Society, the UK's national academy of sciences, where he coordinated a series of influential studies on topics such as geoenvironment, food security, and international scientific collaboration. He also led the Royal Society's evidence gathering and advocacy for investment in research through the 2010 UK General Election and Spending Review. Prior to this, he spent several years at the public policy think tank [Demos](#), first as Head of Strategy (2001-04), then as Head of Science and Innovation (2004-08). From 1997 to 2001, he was Senior Policy Adviser at [Forum for the Future](#).

He has researched and written widely on science and innovation policy, and his publications include [China's Absorptive State: research, innovation and the prospects for China-UK collaboration](#) (Nesta, 2013); [Future Directions for Scientific Advice in Whitehall](#) (CSaP/Alliance for Useful Evidence, 2013); [The Scientific Century](#) (Royal Society, 2010), [New frontiers in science diplomacy](#) (Royal Society, 2010), [The Atlas of Ideas](#) (Demos, 2007), [China: the next science superpower?](#) (Demos, 2007), [The Public Value of Science](#) (Demos, 2005), [See-through Science](#) (Demos, 2004) and [Digital Futures](#) (Earthscan, 2001). He writes regularly for the Guardian's ['Political Science' blog](#), and you can find him on twitter [@jameswilsdon](#)