

# ABOUT THE 9 PSYCHOLOGICAL DOMAINS

## Understanding the Psychological Foundations of Transformation

The framework identifies nine psychological domains that influence whether climate and biodiversity transformation succeeds or fails.

Each domain represents a cluster of closely related psychological constructs and processes that shape how individuals, groups, organizations, communities, and alliances understand challenges, make decisions, cooperate, respond to change, and sustain action over time.

The domains are not isolated from one another. In practice, they interact continuously. For example, trust influences cooperation, emotions influence agency, and identities shape perceptions of fairness and responsibility. Together, the domains provide a structured way to understand the psychological foundations of transformation across different contexts and governance levels.

## How the Domains Relate to the Infrastructure Challenges

The Domains complement the six Infrastructure Challenges presented earlier. While the Infrastructure Challenges describe recurring problems and barriers that emerge in transformation processes, the Psychological Domains focus on the underlying psychological dynamics that help explain why these challenges arise and persist.

*A single Infrastructure Challenge may involve multiple Domains, and each Domain may contribute to several Challenges.*

For example, cooperation challenges may be influenced by trust, social norms, identity, and fairness perceptions simultaneously. Understanding these connections helps identify more effective intervention opportunities and leverage points.








## The Purpose of the Domains

The purpose of the Psychological Domains is not to categorize people, organizations, or situations. Rather, they provide a practical lens for understanding the psychological dynamics that shape transformation processes.

The Domains can support diagnosis, strategy development, governance design, leadership development, communication, participation processes, implementation efforts, and institutional learning. Together, they offer a structured foundation for identifying psychological barriers, understanding transformation dynamics, and designing more effective interventions.

## How to Read the Domains

Each Domain is structured around seven elements:

-  **Definition and Why It Matters** – an overview of the domain and its relevance for climate and biodiversity transformation
-  **Insights from Research** – selected findings from psychological research relevant to the domain
-  **Psychological Processes** – the key psychological constructs and dynamics underlying the domain
-  **Breakdown Patterns** – recurring ways in which challenges within the domain emerge in practice
-  **Risks** – potential consequences when the domain is neglected or weakened
-  **Design Mechanisms** – practical approaches for strengthening the domain and addressing related challenges
-  **Diagnostic Questions** – guiding questions for identifying strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for intervention

The goal is not to provide a comprehensive explanation of every transformation process. Rather, the Domains offer a practical lens for understanding the psychological dynamics that shape transformation outcomes and identifying opportunities to strengthen psychological infrastructure across different contexts.