

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Climate and biodiversity transformation is one of the defining challenges of the 21st century. Despite growing public awareness, scientific consensus, technological innovation, financial commitments, and political ambition, many transformation efforts continue to struggle with implementation, coordination, legitimacy, and long-term effectiveness.

This report introduces the concept of **Psychological Infrastructure**: the structures, processes, cultures and norms, relationships, and institutional conditions that shape how people and organizations understand challenges, make decisions, cooperate, build trust, sustain motivation, and translate intentions into action.

The report argues that many transformation efforts fail not primarily because of insufficient knowledge, technology, or ambition, but because the psychological conditions required for effective transformation are weak, fragmented, or absent. Psychological infrastructure influences whether systems can navigate complexity, coordinate collective action, manage conflict, maintain legitimacy, and sustain implementation under conditions of uncertainty and pressure.

To better understand and strengthen these dynamics, the framework introduces three interconnected layers:

Key Components of the Framework

- **6 Infrastructure Challenges** identify recurring system bottlenecks that constrain transformation capacity.
- **9 Psychological Domains** explain the underlying psychological constructs and dynamics that contribute to these bottlenecks.
- **5 Cluster of Design Mechanisms** provide practical approaches for strengthening psychological infrastructure and supporting transformation.

Key Insights

- Transformation capacity depends not only on technology, finance, policies, and institutions, but also on the psychological conditions that enable people and organizations to use them effectively.
- Many recurring challenges in climate and biodiversity governance can be traced to common psychological dynamics such as sense-making, cognitive dissonance, identity, fairness, social norms, trust, emotions, agency, and implementation gaps.
- Psychological dynamics are not merely individual phenomena; they are embedded within teams, organizations, alliances, governance systems, and societies.
- Effective transformation requires strengthening not only mindsets and skills, but also the psychological infrastructure that allows them to spread, endure, and scale.
- Psychological mechanisms should complement, rather than replace, structural, technological, financial, and regulatory interventions.

Intended Use

The framework is designed as a practical tool for diagnosis, strategy development, governance design, leadership development, coalition-building, implementation support, institutional learning, and systems transformation. It is intended for practitioners, policymakers, funders, researchers, civil society organizations, businesses, and international institutions working on climate and biodiversity transformation.

By making psychological infrastructure visible, understandable, and actionable, the framework aims to strengthen the capacity of transformation systems to navigate complexity, build cooperation, and deliver lasting change.