



Media Release

Dresden,
10 February 2026

4th IOER Conference “Space & Transformation”: Digitalisation meets transformative governance

The fourth IOER Conference “Space & Transformation” with an international Summer School included will take place from 22 to 24 September 2026. It will focus on the relationship between digitalisation and transformative governance in research, policy, and practice. What potential, but also what conflicts, do these two trends hold for the transformative change of cities and regions towards sustainability? All interested parties from academia, politics and practice are cordially invited to submit their contributions until 2 April.

Under the heading “Digitalisation meets transformative governance: Towards urban and regional sustainability?”, the Leibniz Institute of Ecological Urban and Regional Development (IOER) will once again focus on key issues in spatial and sustainability sciences at the fourth edition of the IOER Conference “Space & Transformation”.

Spatial development must grapple with complex sustainability challenges. These range from climate change and biodiversity loss to the restructuring of various regions and economies to growing conflicts over socio-spatial cohesion and democratic stability. All must be addressed simultaneously, while relying on outdated planning systems and governance modes and contending with limited (transformative) capacities.

Of particular importance in overcoming these challenges is the emerging conjunction of two major trends: digitalisation and transformative governance. Both trends have the potential to substantially alter the orientation and dynamics of spatial change, as well as the effectiveness of societal efforts to steer such change towards sustainability.

The 4th IOER Conference “Space & Transformation” aims to further explore the relations between digitalisation and transformative governance in research, policy and practice with a view to the diverse urban and regional sustainability innovations urgently required.

Part of the IOER Conference is the **DLGS Summer School for PhD students**. It is organised by the [Dresden Leibniz Graduate School \(DLGS\)](#) and will take place on 22 September 2026, the day before the IOER Conference. The DLGS Summer

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School is dedicated to the same overall topic: "Digitalisation meets transformative governance: Towards urban and regional sustainability?".

Call for contributions now open – two special formats in 2026

IOER's conference offers ample space for personal interaction and discussion. Interested parties are invited to contribute in a variety of formats. Presentations on planned publications, speed talks on project ideas or research approaches, in-depth exchanges in interactive sessions – there are many ways to get involved. In addition, the IOER Conference 2026 offers the opportunity to participate in two special formats:

- **Digital Tool Slam** – Here, participants have five minutes to present their app, model, simulation environment, or data visualisation in a live and engaging way. The audience votes to award the most innovative tool. This contribution format is therefore similar to a science slam, but specifically focused on digital tools.
- **Sustainability Transformation Hackathon** – This collaborative data challenge begins already prior to the conference in mid-May. Spatial data analysts, planners, and coders can explore more specifically how artificial intelligence can foster participation concerning one of the following topics or their intersections: urban climate resilience, circularity, land use change, material cadastres.

Submissions for the 4th IOER Conference "Space & Transformation" and the DLGS Summer School are now possible. **Submission deadline: 2 April 2026**

More information and detailed call for contributions:

<https://conference.ioer.info/en/>

Contact to the organising team

E-mail: conference@ioer.de

The Leibniz Institute of Ecological Urban and Regional Development (IOER) is a non-university research centre and a member of the Leibniz Association. The IOER develops scientific principles, analytical tools and instruments for the sustainable development and transformation of neighbourhoods, cities and regions. To this end, it conducts cross-scale research into the interactions and feedbacks between the natural environment, people and technologies, as well as options for stewardship and planning.

[<https://www.ioer.de/en/>]