

# Covid-19 changes everything... Can it be a positive catalyst for Net Zero and Sustainable Development Goals?

*An assessment of the persistent socio-economic and environmental impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and strategies for mitigation, adaptation, and adoption of future pandemic and climate change risks - DRAFTiii*

*"When a storm subsides, the air is washed clean of whatever particulate matter has been obscuring the view, and you can often see farther and more sharply than at any other time. When this storm clears, we may, as do people who have survived a serious illness or accident, see where we were and where we should go in a new light. We may feel free to pursue change in ways that seemed impossible while the ice of the status quo was locked up. We may have a profoundly different sense of ourselves, our communities, our systems of production and our future"*

Rebecca Solnit Guardian 7th April 2020

[https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/apr/07/what-coronavirus-can-teach-us-about-hope-rebecca-solnit?fbclid=IwAR3cx0qEfRbgMnFTB4E9kz\\_v4Waf4bz1Rf6C7-oqZflGEzvtN8\\_qjntFaOU](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/apr/07/what-coronavirus-can-teach-us-about-hope-rebecca-solnit?fbclid=IwAR3cx0qEfRbgMnFTB4E9kz_v4Waf4bz1Rf6C7-oqZflGEzvtN8_qjntFaOU)

*The world now faces three overwhelming threats of global disasters – climate change, the Coronavirus pandemic, and unknown, transformative socio-economic changes in its aftermath. Fortunately, some of these socio-economic changes, if sustained, will have positive effects in support of climate change mitigation and adaptation. This proposal describes an eight month study, using existing models, data, and studies to analyse, through a systems approach, what these beneficial socio-economic changes may be under various scenarios to be applicable from December 2020 right up to 2050 and beyond. Further, it will assess whether it is possible, through policy changes, financial and other investments, to leverage these changes in pursuit of reducing the risks of climate change and of future pandemics. The proposed focus will be global, locations and regions chosen by stakeholders,*

*and the results should support and may encourage the development of similar initiatives worldwide.*

## *Executive Summary*

### **The Pivot Project**

This is an 8 month project in which over 100 multi-disciplinary experts, supported by a young team, will use existing models, data and analysis in a systems approach to explore how stimulus funding to support recovery from the COVID 19 pandemic can be targeted at enabling countries to work together to pivot away from the high risk path. The new direction revealed will be an affordable way to reduce and mitigate future pandemic and climate risk while delivering the sustainable development goals. The following countries will be studied with their selected demonstration regions:

Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Russia, South Africa, South Korea, United Kingdom, United States.

### **Approach**

The project will look at the COVID 19 origin, how it spread and what factors drove it in hotspots of high infection and death rate, its impact there and response and what this did to socio-economic and ecological systems. Then it will look at how countries can reduce and mitigate future pandemic and climate risk while creating jobs and alleviating poverty and how this might change the approach to delivering the Paris Agreement NDC's and the Global Goals. Examples will be given of approaches in demonstration regions in the 15 target countries.

### **Unique Methodology**

What is unique about this approach is that work will apply systems thinking and modelling to explore how communities can deal with multiple risks like climate change and future pandemics, to find a way to learn from what has happened and to enable them to unlock value and drive resilient sustainable performance in their city regions. This can be for example through policies, lifestyle choice changes, new business models, technical innovations, new land use and mobility systems and ecological regeneration.

The project is deploying a holistic approach to systems change that can learn from the COVID-19 impact and response. It focuses on improving human, ecological, and resource systems health as a key part of reducing the future

risks of pandemics and climate change. This is a regenerative, resilient development model in which human and ecological systems health are central to resource consumption, land use, and investment decisions and underpin new lifestyle choices.

The project will harness global data and scientific evidence to underpin recommendations and use integrated modelling of social and natural systems and their interlinkages to understand cascading risks and how they can be reduced.

We are mobilising previously disengaged groups through the Faiths, youth and community and arts and culture initiatives which are designed to engage, educate and allow 'bottom-up' behaviour change that benefits long term resilience. Here in particular, we seek to change how we think about the natural environment that sustains human life and to recognise the mutuality in that relationship.

## **Output**

The output will be a white paper and online toolkit for steering stimulus funding to enable countries and regions to take a systems approach to the policy, economics, finance/insurance that will reduce, mitigate and adapt to future pandemic and climate risks. An interim report will be produced in June-July 2020 and a final peer reviewed white paper and online toolkit presented in November 2020 in time for the G20 leaders' meeting in Saudi Arabia and for use at COP26 in Q1 2021.

## **Digital Online Approach**

The study will be carried out online on an innovative digital platform created by Resilience Brokers. Work will be focussed in 15 countries which have been initially selected as being those chosen in the Deep Decarbonisation project of SDSN, that represent 70% of global GDP and have data and systems models available for climate mitigation analysis. These system models and the supporting data will be supported and integrated by a large-scale AI platform that also incorporates large amounts of open data from the Web.

## **Funding Needed**

Funding of £350,000 is needed to pay for a core team, the digital support platform and the design and creation of the published output. Global experts