

Critical Transitions: Governing Minerals, Energy Transitions, and Climate Futures

15–16 September 2026, University of Lapland

Day 1: Tuesday 15 September

0900 – **Coffee and Bites***

0945 – **Opening Remarks**, Esko and Asko Hall (F building)

- Welcome
Minna Kimpimäki, Dean, Faculty of Law, University of Lapland
- Conference opening
Sirja-Leena Penttinen, Associate Professor of Law and Sustainability Transitions, Faculty of Law, University of Lapland
Sean Field, Associate Professor of Energy Transition Governance, Faculty of Law, University of Lapland

1000 – **Keynote Session 1**

- Chair: Sean Field, Associate Professor of Energy Transition Governance, Faculty of Law, University of Lapland

Session description:

Recent years have witnessed a significant proliferation of policy and regulatory frameworks, geopolitical competition, strategic partnerships, and soft law initiatives aimed at securing access to critical minerals essential for several critical transitions. At the same time, growing attention has been directed toward the environmental, social, and socio-economic impacts of expanding mineral extraction, particularly for local communities and ecosystems directly affected by mining activities.

Our keynote session (keynote session 1 and 2), delivered by leading authorities in the field of critical minerals governance, is divided into two complementary parts, each examining key developments in minerals governance, highlighting global perspective. Together, these stellar keynote presentations explore the evolving dimensions of critical mineral supply chains, the role of international institutions and governance mechanisms, and the opportunities and challenges associated with the critical transitions. The sessions also reflect on what we know, and what remains uncertain, about the socio-ecological consequences of increased minerals extraction, highlighting the tensions and trade-offs that lie at the heart of efforts to build both sustainable and secure future.

Keynote speakers:

- 'What we know and don't know about the socio-ecological impacts of critical minerals mining'
Susan Park, Professor of Global Governance, Discipline of Government and International Relations, University of Sydney
- 'Governing the transition: mineral policy in the EU, voluntary standards, and the rush for critical minerals'
Cecilia Mattea, Regional Lead (Europe), Initiative for Responsible Mining (IRMA)

1130 – **Lunch and Socialise ***

1230 – Panel Session 1: 'Critical minerals governance: power, institutions, and geopolitics'

Chair: Emilia Taimi, Doctoral researcher, Faculty of Law, University of Lapland

Session Description:

Critical minerals are increasingly at the centre of debates on energy transition, economic security, and geopolitical competition. This panel explores how critical minerals are governed, contested, and secured through narratives, institutions, and international cooperation. These presentations highlight the tensions between supply security, sustainability, and legitimacy in an evolving global governance landscape.

Speakers:

- 'Strengthening Mineral Security in the EU: Legal & Policy Reforms to the EU Critical Raw Materials Act'
Andrei Diaconescu, Doctoral researcher, Faculty of Law, University of Lapland

- 'Clubs Without Charters: The International Legal Character of FORGE and the Accountability Deficit of Plurilateral Mineral Governance'
Phan Ngoc Gia Bao, LLB Candidate, Hanoi Law University
- 'International Agreements as Instruments of Managing Structural Risks to Critical Minerals Supply Chains: implications for EU's clean energy technology measures'
Tade Oyewunmi, Associate Professor, School of Management, University of Vaasa
- 'Whither Deep-Sea Mining? Between Calls for a Moratorium and the CRMA's Push for Critical Raw Materials'
Krittika Singh, Researcher, Arctic Centre, University of Lapland

1400 – **Coffee Break** *

1415 – **Panel Session 2: 'Justice in transitions: communities, ethics, and socio-environmental contestation'**

- Chair: Andrei Diaconescu, Doctoral researcher, Faculty of Law, University of Lapland

Session Description:

Energy transitions are not only technological and economic processes but also deeply social and political ones. This panel examines questions of justice, ethics, and community experiences in the governance of energy transitions, highlighting how competing visions of sustainability can generate new forms of inequality, contestation, and exclusion. The presentations explore whose interests are advanced, whose voices are heard, and whose burdens are borne in the transition to a low-carbon future.

Speakers:

- 'The Green Transition Isn't Green: Governing Critical Minerals, Resource Colonialism, and Climate Justice'
Ahmad Sabirin, Founder & Managing Director, Institute for Climate Law and Sustainable Policy
- 'Making Energy 'Good': The Moral Labour of Energy Elites'
Anna Seeger, Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions Postdoctoral Fellow, Universität Bern
- "'Are we only pawns in this big game?": restless geoeconomics and Sokli mine development within the Kemin-Sompio reindeer herding district'
Kiira Parikka, Junior researcher, LUT University, Business School, Finland
- 'The elements that bind us: critical minerals in transitional times'

Chelsie Yount, Chargé de Recherche, Institut des mondes africains, Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique

Ainur Begim, Associate Professor, NTNU School of International Business, Faculty of Economics and Management

1545 – **Coffee Break** *

1600 – **Keynote Session 2**

- Chair: Sirja-Leena Penttinen, Associate Professor of Law and Sustainability Transitions, Faculty of Law, University of Lapland

Keynote speakers:

- 'Finnish perspective into the changing landscape of critical minerals policy'
Anne Mutanen
Counsellor, Critical Raw Materials, Department for International Trade, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland
- 'From Fragmentation to Shared Responsibility: Emerging Global Governance for Critical Minerals'
Ana Elizabeth Bastida
Associate Professor of Law at the Centre for Energy, Petroleum and Mineral Law & Policy (CEPMLP), University of Dundee; Senior Associate of the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD)

1830 – **Dinner and Networking** *

Sky Kitchen & View, Lapland Hotels Sky Ounasvaara

Day 2: Wednesday 16 September

0900 – **Coffee and Bites ***, Auditorium B126 (building B, on the left from the main entrance)

0930 – **Panel Session 3: 'Regulating transition technologies through acceleration, balance, and circularity'**

- Chair: Krittika Singh, Researcher, Arctic Centre, University of Lapland

Session description:

Transition technologies are central to achieving climate goals, but their regulation raises complex questions about sustainability, security, and implementation. This panel examines how law and governance seek to accelerate the energy transition while balancing environmental impacts, industrial competitiveness, circularity, and community needs.

Speakers:

- 'EU Battery Regulation – Geopolitics, good intentions, and uncertainties for companies'
Jouko Nuottila, Senior Researcher, Faculty of Law, University of Lapland
- 'Repowering the clean and just energy transition through battery repurposing: Challenges and opportunities in EU Law and the case of BatteREstore'
Alba Forns Gómez, Postdoctoral Research, Academic Collaborative Center for Climate and Energy, Tilburg Institute for Law, Technology, and Society (TILT)
- 'Governing Safe Hydrogen Transitions in Arctic and Remote Regions: Balancing Energy Security, Community Resilience, and Net-Zero Ambitions'
Mohamad Mustafa, A6 chair and Professor, Institute of Building, Energy and Material Technology, Faculty of Engineering Science and Technology, UiT the Arctic University of Norway
- 'Battery acceleration for energy transition – considerations on environmental impacts and scale in EU regulation'
Emilia Taimi, Doctoral researcher, Faculty of Law, University of Lapland

1100 – **Panel Session 4: 'Resilience, long-term governance, and intergenerational responsibility'**

- Chair: Ratih Adiputri, Senior Researcher, Faculty of Law, University of Lapland

Session description:

Resilience and sustainability transitions require governance that extends across generations, long time horizons, and deep uncertainty. This panel explores how institutions and technologies can support resilience in the face of environmental and societal change, drawing lessons from water infrastructure and nuclear governance, and highlight the importance of long-term thinking, public trust, and intergenerational responsibility in shaping sustainable futures.

Speakers:

- 'Digital Twins as Instruments of (Climate) Resilience: Legal Frameworks for Water Infrastructure in Finland and the EU'
Beata Mäihäniemi, University Researcher, Docent, Faculty of Law, University of Lapland
- 'Clean Energy's Longest Promise: Ghost Protocols and Deferred Interment in U.S. Spent Nuclear Fuel Governance'
Vincent Ialenti, Senior Research Fellow, Tampere University
- 'Governing in Tandem: What Nuclear's Back End Teaches the Transition About Public Support, Governance and International Cooperation'
Andrew Walters, PhD Candidate, School of Law, University of Aberdeen

1300 – **Lunch and Socialise ***

1400 – **From Global to Local: Insights into the Finnish transitions landscape**

Tour of the Arktikum (transportation to Arktikum provided to all the speakers and chairs)

Session description:

Following discussions on international and transnational dimensions of critical transitions, the afternoon session turns attention to the Finnish context. A visit to the Arktikum will provide participants with an opportunity to explore how global debates surrounding critical resources, climate change, transition governance, security, geopolitics, and societal transformation intersect with local realities in Finland and the Arctic. The session seeks to ground the preceding discussions in place-based experiences and perspectives, highlighting the connections between global challenges and local responses.

1555 – **Closing Remarks at Arktikum**, meeting room Kieppi

*Provided for all speakers and chairs

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BATRACE — Between a rock and hard place in the battery arms race: towards a global governance framework supporting resilience and sustainability of the battery value chain in the realisation of the green energy transition, decision no. 363808;

2IMATCH — Infrastructure/institutions match for resilient & just green electrification, decision no. 366054;

ATLAS — Transformative Law for Sustainability in the Arctic, profi7, decision no. 352881, profi9, decision no. 376380.