

HOW CAN DISCUSSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE BLUE EARTH PROJECT INFLUENCE POLITICIANS AND VOTERS IN DEMOCRACIES?

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The Blue Earth Project (BEP), an initiative led by the Network of Researchers on the Chemical Emergence of Life (NoRCEL) convenes global public forums to explore the guiding question: How can discussions and recommendations from the Blue Earth Project influence politicians and voters in democracies? As climate change, biodiversity loss, and ecological degradation intensify, the need for inclusive, ethically grounded scientific discourse has never been greater. This paper outlines the theoretical basis, public value, and democratic relevance of BEP, making the case for its role in supporting evidence-based, citizen-informed policymaking. By integrating perspectives from science, ethics, and public participation, BEP serves as a model for engaging democratic societies in shaping planetary futures.

Keywords: Science-Policy Interface; Environmental Deliberation; Democratic Engagement; Public Participation; Planetary Governance; Ethics of Sustainability

INTRODUCTION

The 21st century is increasingly defined by a convergence of complex and destabilising forces: accelerating environmental degradation, widening socio-economic disparities, rapid technological advancements, and a pervasive erosion of public trust in scientific and political institutions. Climate change, biodiversity loss, and ecosystem collapse are no longer distant projections but present realities, unfolding unevenly across the globe. Simultaneously, digital technologies have transformed how knowledge is created, shared, and contested—often amplifying misinformation and undermining the legitimacy of expert communities. These challenges demand not only scientific innovation but also a fundamental rethinking of how science interfaces with society, policy, and ethical responsibility.

Conventional science-policy frameworks have struggled to keep pace. As Jasanoff (2003) argues, many institutions fail to meaningfully incorporate public values into scientific decision-making. The Blue Earth Project (BEP) responds to this need by fostering inclusive, interdisciplinary forums that bring together researchers, ethicists, youth leaders, indigenous knowledge holders, and

citizens to co-create dialogues around the future of life on Earth. BEP promotes epistemic diversity and ethical reflection, reclaiming science as a public good grounded in participation, inclusivity, and accountability.

The Double-Blind Format of the Blue Earth Project

The BEP, developed by the Network of Researchers on the Chemical Emergence of Life (NoRCEL), employs a distinctive double-blind forum format designed to promote unfiltered intellectual engagement. In this structure, neither the panellists nor the audience are fully informed in advance of the topic to be discussed. This contrasts with conventional scientific conferences, where presentations are typically pre-circulated, rehearsed, or aligned with institutional messaging.

The purpose of this format is to remove the influence of prior preparation, reduce the risk of strategic posturing, and encourage genuine, unscripted dialogue. It fosters a conversational environment in which participants must respond critically and reflectively in real time, drawing on diverse perspectives and lived experiences. By circumventing pre-established narratives or disciplinary boundaries, the double-blind method enhances epistemic spontaneity, transparency, and inclusivity.

Empirical research into interactive and unmoderated science forums has shown that such formats significantly enhance participants' critical reasoning and conceptual depth (Figure 1), while also broadening public trust and engagement. BEP's adoption of this model positions it as a novel contribution to deliberative science communication, particularly in contexts where ethical complexity and democratic legitimacy are at stake.

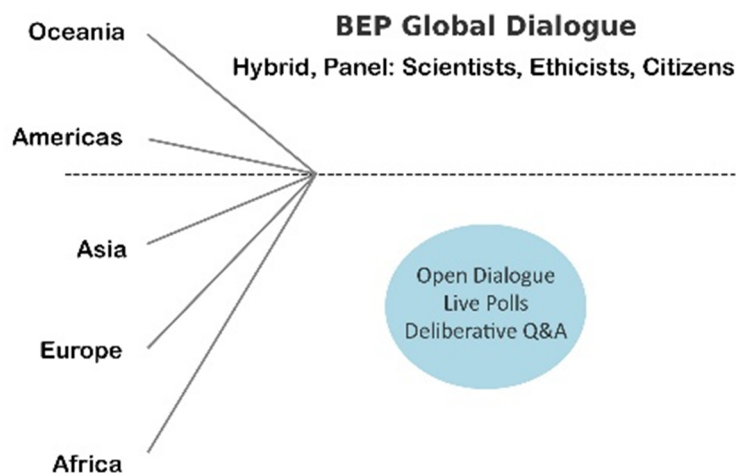


Figure 1. BEP Global Dialogue (Conceptual Illustration): This figure symbolically represents how BEP facilitates global, inclusive scientific dialogue. It shows that participants—from across continents such as Africa, Europe, Asia, the Americas, and Oceania—connect into a hybrid panel composed of scientists, ethicists, and citizens. At the core of the diagram, open dialogue, live polls, and deliberative Q&A are highlighted. These activities are designed to: encourage real-time; unscripted public participation, capture diverse viewpoints; and make scientific discussions more democratic and inclusive. The figure therefore visualises BEP's bottom-up model: science communication that moves beyond expert-driven panels toward global, collective decision-making. It underlines BEP's mission to bridge science, ethics, and public deliberation in addressing planetary challenges.

The Blue Earth Project Forum 2026

BEP provides a public space for critical reflection, inclusive participation, and long-term thinking on humanity's relationship with Earth's biosphere. BEP's participants span continents—Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe, and Oceania—demonstrating a commitment to global inclusivity. The forum's features include open dialogue, live polls, and deliberative Q&A sessions, enabling

scientists, ethicists, policymakers, and citizens to collaboratively explore and address Earth’s futures and ecological responsibility.

Unlike traditional conferences or expert panels, BEP fosters open-ended deliberation not pre-scripted by institutional agendas. It prioritises cross-disciplinary, intergenerational, and cross-cultural dialogue, especially elevating perspectives, often marginalised in science-policy debates. BEP challenges the norms of top-down communication and promotes participatory engagement where public values shape research priorities and political outcomes.

The Role of Public Deliberation in Environmental Governance

Deliberative democratic theory maintains that well-informed, reflective discussions among diverse publics strengthen the legitimacy of policy outcomes (Dryzek, 2000). Forums such as the Blue Earth Project (BEP) serve as critical bridges between scientific expertise and democratic input. The 2021 OECD report on science engagement emphasises that public forums are more likely to influence policy when participants feel a genuine sense of ownership over the ideas presented. Similarly, Howarth et al. (2020) show that citizen assemblies foster trust in climate policy by grounding debate in widely shared public values.

The BEP forum held in March 2025 exemplified this approach (Figure 2), drawing participation from over 200 delegates—including scientists, ethicists, students, and citizens—from across the globe. Europe and Africa each contributed approximately 45 attendees, while South America accounted for 28. The United Kingdom, listed separately to reflect its distinct engagement, contributed 22 delegates. Strong representation also came from Asia, the Indian Sub-Continent, the Middle East, and North America, each contributing around 15 participants. Oceania, though less represented with 7 attendees, remains an important region for future engagement. This broad distribution underscores BEP’s global reach while also pointing to opportunities for further inclusion of underrepresented communities.

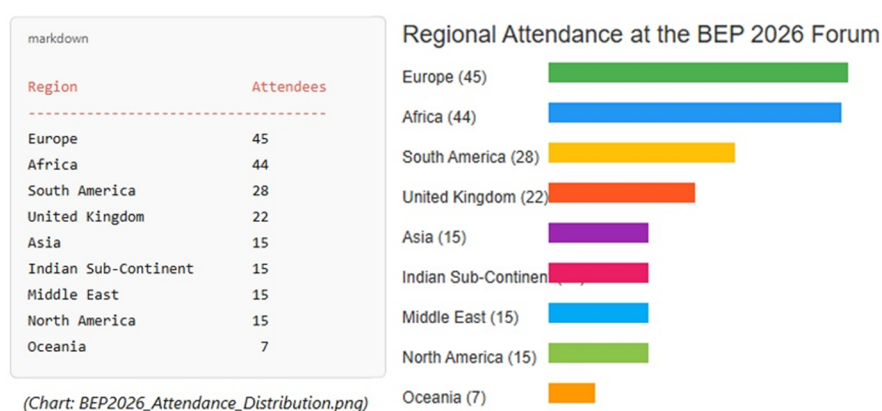


Figure 2. Regional Attendance at the BEP 2026 Forum: This horizontal bar chart shows the distribution of over 200 delegates who attended the Blue Earth Project forum, broken down by region—with the United Kingdom shown separately. Europe and Africa each led with approximately 45 attendees, while the UK alone contributed 22 delegates—a notable turnout considering it represents a single nation. South America followed with 28, and strong participation also coming from Asia, the Indian Sub-Continent, the Middle East, and North America (approximately 15 each), with Oceania contributing 7.

The UK is highlighted independently from the rest of Europe to reflect that NoRCEL, the coordinating body behind BEP, is based in the United Kingdom. This distinction illustrates the central role of the UK in convening and sustaining BEP whilst at the same time showcasing its international reach.

Towards Global Equity in Environmental Dialogue

BEP's commitment to epistemic pluralism ensures that voices from the Global South, Indigenous communities, and youth leaders are integrated into environmental discussions. In doing so, BEP advances the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (especially SDG 13: Climate Action and SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals), while demonstrating that equitable environmentalism must be globally inclusive (UNEP, 2022). In fact, NoRCEL has achieved a total of 7 of 17 UN's SDGs as shown in **Figure 3**.



Figure 3. Alignment of the Blue Earth Project (BEP) with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals since 2015: This diagram illustrates BEP's integration of key SDG targets into its mission. It highlights BEP's commitment to advancing Quality Education (SDG 4), Gender Equality (SDG 5), Reduced Inequalities (SDG 10), Climate Action (SDG 13), Life Below Water (SDG 14), Life on Land (SDG 15), and Partnerships for the Goals (SDG 17). By embedding these goals into its public forums and initiatives, BEP demonstrates a holistic, interdisciplinary approach to sustainable development and environmental governance.

CONCLUSION AND CALL TO ACTION

The Blue Earth Project offers a timely and vital platform for scientific and civic dialogue on the ecological crises of our time. By encouraging both citizens and policymakers to engage in open, reflective debate, BEP promotes a new model of environmental governance rooted in trust, equity, and ethical reasoning. We invite researchers, policymakers, and the public to engage with BEP's ongoing mission to reimagine a sustainable future for life on Earth.

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