



## Background

The buzzword of our time, “sustainability”, is closely related to a book published 40 years ago, in 1972: “The Limits to Growth” written by an MIT project team involving Donella and Dennis Meadows. Using computer models in an attempt to quantify various aspects of the future, “Limits to Growth” has shaped new modes of thinking. The book became a bestseller and is still frequently cited when it comes to analyzing growth related to finite resources.

It seems that since then few things have changed. Stagnant growth in some countries, exponential growth in others, finite resources, and an unbroken depletion of the environment still pose pressing questions and should be issues of great concern for everyone. Again the various developments in different societies call for new matching modes of thinking that promise a secure future for everyone. Major questions are: Is there good growth? What are the limits of the future? Why are so many findings of the report still unresolved? Will there be solutions? And which would that be?

Limits to Growth Revisited

## Call for Applications

Volkswagen Foundation Winter School

Hanover, Germany

November 24 to December 1, 2012

## Objectives of the Winter School

In order to give fresh impetus to the debate, the Volkswagen Foundation aims to foster new thinking and the development of different models in all areas related to the “Limits to Growth” study at the crossroads of natural and social sciences. The Winter School “Limits to Growth Revisited” is directed specifically at 60 highly talented young scholars from all related disciplines. The Foundation intends to grant this selected group of academics the opportunity to create networks with scholars from other research communities.

At the end of the Winter School shall stand a position paper along with system models containing new hypotheses, ideas, and questions. These results will be presented at an international conference on “Limits to Growth” in Hannover held by the Volkswagen Foundation and Dennis Meadows together with high-ranking international experts from all disciplines on the “Limits to Growth” topics. Members of the Winter School will be presenting their ideas either as a group, as panel discussants, as chairs of a session or during Q&A sessions.

### The following themes will be the starting point for discussion at this Winter School:

- a) What questions have not been resolved since 1972?
- b) What are new questions that are not in the book?
- c) How should one rewrite the “Limits to Growth” study at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century?

## Winter School “Limits to Growth Revisited”

The Volkswagen Foundation invites applications from young scholars of all related disciplines who wish to attend the Winter School and are dedicated to working together and giving significant input for and during the Limits to Growth conference.

### Date

November 24 - December 1, 2012

### Participants

60 Ph.D. students and postdoctoral fellows

### Deadline and Application

Applications are to be submitted as a pdf file **before April 30, 2012** to [ltg@volkswagenstiftung.de](mailto:ltg@volkswagenstiftung.de).

The application should be written in English and should not be longer than three pages containing:

1. name, address of applicant and institution
2. short CV, short list of publications
3. short description of own research focus
4. statement about the motivation to participate in this Winter School
5. answers to the following questions (one page)
  - a) What questions have not been resolved since 1972?
  - b) What are new questions that are not in the book?
  - c) How should one rewrite the “Limits to Growth” study at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century?

### Selection

Participants will be selected by the three coordinators and an interdisciplinary steering committee. Acceptance will be based on qualification of the applicant as well as originality and potential of the answers to the questions above.

### Venue

Winter School:  
Sonnentau Academy, Visselhoevede, Germany  
nearest airports: Hanover (HAJ) and Hamburg (HAM);  
transfer will be arranged

Conference:  
Hanover, Herrenhausen Castle, Germany

### Funding

Travel expenses and accommodation will be fully reimbursed to invited participants by the Volkswagen Foundation.

### Coordinators

Anorthe Kremers, Dr. Henrike Hartmann,  
and Dr. Matthias Nöllenburg  
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### Queries

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