

GAIA Training of Trainers strengthens transdisciplinary capacity across Asia



Participants and facilitators of the GAIA Training of Trainers on Transdisciplinary Approaches in Bangkok, Thailand.

Bangkok, Thailand, 7–10 September 2026 — The GAIA Training of Trainers on Transdisciplinary Approaches brought together a dynamic cohort of researchers, educators, and practitioners from across Asia at the Rembrandt Hotel Bangkok for a transformative four-day capacity-building programme focused on strengthening the region's ability to design and deliver transdisciplinary training. Transdisciplinarity is an important approach if we are to solve complex environmental challenges.

The activity was organized under the GAIA Project, (Gearing up and applying Inter- and transdisciplinary skills in Asia), funded by the Asia-Pacific Network for Global Change Research (APN), and hosted by the Research Institute for Humanity and Nature (RIHN), in collaboration with Future Earth Asia and the [Asia Science Mission for Sustainability](#). The project aims to equip trainers and educators with practical skills for leading transdisciplinary capacity-building programmes, while ensuring that these approaches remain responsive to diverse institutional, cultural, and local contexts across Asia.

Led by Dr. Ria Lambino (RIHN), with facilitation by Kate Nairn (Asia Science Mission) and Prof. Hein Mallee (Kyoto Prefectural University), the training combined conceptual grounding with intensive hands-on practice. Rather than treating transdisciplinarity as a theoretical concept, the ToT focused on the real-world art of collaboration—bridging different forms of knowledge, power dynamics, and lived experience.



Clockwise from top left: Participants present group outputs, share visual reflections, work through collaborative exercises, and discuss training design during the GAIA Training of Trainers on Transdisciplinary Approaches in Bangkok, Thailand.

A central emphasis of the programme was moving beyond understanding transdisciplinarity as a concept toward developing the practical capabilities needed to facilitate collaboration among actors with different forms of knowledge, interests, authority, and lived experience. Through simulations, participatory exercises, peer feedback, and iterative design work, participants tested how TD principles could be translated into their own training and institutional settings.

Participants developed and refined their own transdisciplinary training plans throughout the programme, incorporating lessons on learner needs, inclusive participation, power dynamics, knowledge integration, facilitation, adaptation, evaluation, and follow-up. The training also created opportunities for peer learning and strengthened connections among emerging TD trainers across the region.

The Bangkok ToT contributes to GAIA's broader goal of building capacity for scientists to be an active agent for transformation and to drive science missions for sustainability. The workshop also set the beginnings of a regional network of trainers and educators capable of advancing context-sensitive transdisciplinary learning in Asia. The next phase will focus on translating the training into locally relevant programmes and continuing peer learning and mentoring beyond

the workshop.

