
Summary

The Wageningen Institute for Environment and Climate Research (**WIMEK**) was founded in 1993. It currently coordinates the education and research activities of PhD candidates and postdocs of sixteen chair groups of Wageningen University. WIMEK participates in the Netherlands Research School for the Socio-Economic and Natural Sciences of the Environment (SENSE). To this national network of graduate schools WIMEK contributes as one of the schools, to the network for PhD candidates, postdocs and staff, and to the bridge-to-society for the Dutch sustainability sciences.

The main **aims** of the WIMEK Graduate School are:

- 1 To perform high quality scientific research for impact in the global scientific forefront of environmental and climate research
- 2 To provide an inspiring tailor-made in-depth and skill oriented training programme for PhD candidates and postdocs
- 3 To form an internal WU interdisciplinary network and social community of staff, postdocs and PhD candidates on environmental, climate and related sustainability sciences
- 4 To work transdisciplinary, by exchanging emerging insights, recent research results and novel technological & policy approaches in an interactive way to companies, public institutions, regulating authorities and other parties in society.

The WIMEK Graduate School aims to provide optimal support and **training** for talented young researchers to develop themselves as independent scientists at the highest international standards who have the potential to contribute to solutions for emerging environmental and sustainability problems and can become future scientific leaders in academia, and in public and private sectors in this field. Currently, about 370 PhD candidates are enrolled in the WIMEK Graduate School. In the past seven years, on average 47 (36-61) PhD candidates graduated per year at the WIMEK Graduate School. For a large majority (92%) of those, the PhD degree included a SENSE Diploma of specialized PhD training in sustainability sciences.

WIMEK combines fundamental, strategic and participatory **research** in environmental, climate and sustainability sciences, from both a natural as well as a social sciences point of view. The research focusses on pressing environmental problems and related sustainable solutions from local to global scale within the following three Grand Environmental Challenges:

- Climate action: Towards fair and effective solutions for climate change mitigation and adaptation
- Managing our future biosphere: Developing strategies for the sustainable use of soil, water, atmosphere, biodiversity, ecosystems and landscapes
- Advancing circular systems: Inclusive innovation towards closed water, nutrient, and material flows

Research output and impact: WIMEK's publications over the past six years are well cited. The average Field Weighted Citation Impact is 2.42, which is over two times the world average. Of all publications, 26% belong to the top 10% most cited publications (field weighted). Moreover, WIMEK publications were frequently mentioned in the news or in policy documents, and contribute to the public debate on planetary boundaries, sustainable food production, ecosystem services and clean healthy air, soil and water systems. Among the organizations that use WIMEK research output are international institutions such as the FAO, WMO, EU, UNEP and IUCN, as well as national institutes such as RIVM and PBL. WIMEK also excels in public-private-science & technology partnerships for instance through WETSUS and the large mission driven research programs of NWO, the Top Sector Research of Dutch Ministries and the RTD programs of the EU. These programs generate integrated technological-social solutions based on novel scientific insights and are widely used for upscaling societal transitions to sustainability in the Netherlands, Europe and world-wide. In the period 2014-2020 a number of WIMEK researchers received prestigious grants, namely for NWO Veni (13 researchers), Vidi (3), Vici (1), and ERC consolidator (1) and advanced (1) grants.

In the coming six years WIMEK's **outlook** is to further advance the high quality of the research and the PhD program, and to address the weaknesses identified in this review. WIMEK aims to harvest the opportunities occurring in society, i.e. the rising awareness among policy makers, corporate leaders and youngsters around the globe on the vital importance of tackling the grand environmental challenges of the world. WIMEK will nourish and advance its current collaborations in Netherlands, EU and the North Atlantic and will invest in stronger collaboration with Asian (including China), African and South American countries. Major challenges for global sustainability are awaiting there and need to be resolved in science-society collaboration, to which WIMEK can greatly contribute. WIMEK aims to further its internationally well-respected reputation as front runner school of environment. We will provide to researchers from diverse backgrounds in discipline, culture, and gender a secure home to excel in inter- and transdisciplinary research for the environment. Thus we continue to provide top research findings and scientifically trained leaders to the public and private sectors of society thereby contributing to make our future world sustainable.