



# Global Challenges Foundation

**Introduction and overview**

**“The greatest threats we face today transcend national boundaries; they therefore need to be addressed jointly by all countries based on an increased realization of our mutual dependence. That is why I believe a new global framework for managing them must be found.”**

**Laszlo Szombatfalvy**, Founder of Global Challenges Foundation



# Global Challenges Foundation

**The Global Challenges Foundation (GCF)** was founded in 2012 by Swedish financial analyst and author Laszlo Szombatfalvy. GCF's aim is to contribute to reducing the main global problems and risks that threaten humanity. This is done through two parallel pathways:

Increasing knowledge and raising awareness of the greatest global risks and problems among policy makers, thought leaders, businesses, and the general public.

Stimulating debate and thought around new, better and more equitable models for how to manage the greatest global threats and challenges more effectively and equitably.

## BACKGROUND

**The world has changed dramatically** during the past century. In most countries, the average level of standard of living has improved, as has life expectancy. Moreover, technological breakthroughs have made society global, both economically and culturally.

But there is an obvious downside to this fundamentally positive trend. Some problems have grown larger, and new risks that threaten humanity have emerged. The most dramatic change may be that mankind is capable, for the first time in history, of seriously damaging the very ecosystem that we are all completely dependent on – and, in fact, is well on its way to do so.

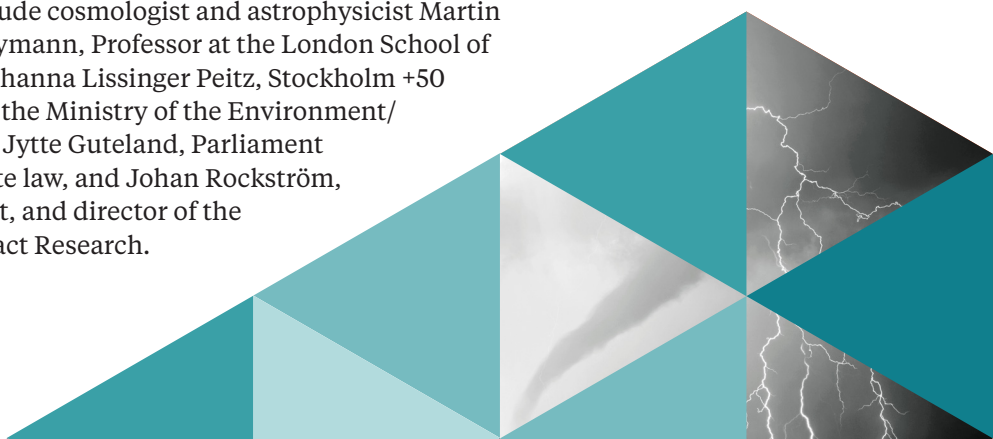
GCF, together with leading researchers, has identified a number of risks that could threaten the existence of at least a tenth of Earth's population. Such risks are referred to as global catastrophic risks. Some of these risks are:

- Climate change
- Other large-scale environmental damage
- Conflicts involving weapons of mass destruction

**The global catastrophic risks** are interdependent and influence each other detrimentally. This means that immediate joint action by the world's states is an absolute necessity. As these risks include the greatest threats to humanity, they should be on top of the international political agenda in order to ensure safety for existing and future generations. However, this is not the case today. There are two main reasons for this: 1) The scope of risks and problems has been underestimated due to an inadequate understanding and lacking or nonexistent risk and problem analysis and 2) The international political system has not yet adapted to today's global community.

## THE NEW SHAPE FORUM

**The New Shape Forum**, held on 12-13 October 2021, convenes over 200 leading thinkers and experts in a blended conference online and in Stockholm. Participants discussed new ideas for improving climate governance. Keynote speakers who attend the event include cosmologist and astrophysicist Martin Rees, Astronomer Royal, David Heymann, Professor at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, Johanna Lissinger Peitz, Stockholm +50 Ambassador and Senior Advisor at the Ministry of the Environment/Swedish Government Offices, MEP Jytte Guteland, Parliament Rapporteur for the EU's new climate law, and Johan Rockström, internationally recognized scientist, and director of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research.





### **GCF'S WORK**

**GCF has strived to achieve** its goals through a multifaceted, comprehensive approach. Examples of this include:

**Knowledge reports.** GCF works with researchers and thinkers from all over the world to present facts and ideas concerning global risks and how they can be managed and reduced. The results are presented in the yearly Global Catastrophic Risks report, and in a series of outlooks examining current ideas.

**Global Challenges at the Stockholm School of Economics.** GCF has made a grant of 40 million SEK (about US\$ 5 million) to create the Global Challenges Track at the Stockholm School of Economics.

**Surveys.** GCF commissions international surveys of how citizens in different countries rank different global risks, perceive current systems of governance for these risks, and what they consider as the best ways forward to manage them.

**Events.** GCF continuously engages in the roles of initiator, participant and sponsor of international meetings and conferences on global risks and global governance. Partners of previous events include Brookings Institution in Washington DC, Chatham House in London, TERI in New Delhi, Tsinghua University in Beijing, the Getúlio Vargas Foundation in Sao Paolo, and SAIIA in Johannesburg.