

# Forty Years after the “Imperative of Responsibility”

Ethics of Technology Choice in Times of  
Eroding Planetary Boundaries

**bonnalliance<sup>ICB</sup> lecture series**

organized by the German Development  
Institute / Deutsches Institut für  
Entwicklungspolitik (DIE)

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## Invitation to the **bonnalliance<sup>ICB</sup>** lecture series **Forty Years after the “Imperative of Responsibility” – Ethics of Technology Choice in Times of Eroding Planetary Boundaries**

Forty years ago, Hans Jonas’ main work “The Imperative of Responsibility” (German original: “Das Prinzip Verantwortung”) was first published. Starting from the perspective of moral theory, he develops fundamental thought on a responsible approach to deal with new technologies, and especially “disruptive innovations”, as one would put it today. His work is driven technological progress which has amplified the reach of human action to a degree that calls for a new philosophy of responsibility. With technological progress, actions brought about at a singular point in space and time may have far-reaching or even global consequences.

40 years have passed. Since 1979, the number of people living on the globe has increased by 3 billion and the percentage of absolutely poor people decreased from 40% to 10%. Planetary boundaries are being transgressed not (only) by single catastrophic events in a novel technological system, but (also) by the progressive erosion of ecosystems - in order to satisfy the needs of a growing and increasingly well-off world population. Technologies and innovations play a crucial role in this new global setup. Do we need a new “ethics of responsibility”, new approaches to radical innovations, maybe combined with novel modes of technological impact assessment and foresights?

**You are cordially invited to discuss with us!**

## Lecture Sequence | April to December 2019 | 4-6 pm

- 25 April      The “Imperative of Responsibility”: Understanding Hans Jonas’ main philosophical work
- 22 May        Gene editing – A responsible means to assure food security of a growing world population on limited farmland and under changing climate conditions?
- 19 June       Carbon Capture and Storage – A responsible bridge to a low-carbon future?
- 16 October   Industry 4.0 and Artificial Intelligence – Towards a bright future or mass unemployment and Orwellian societies?
- 30 October   Solar radiation management and Carbon Dioxide Reduction – Necessary instruments to contain global warming?
- 6 November   New societal models as a response to global challenges?
- 20 November Technology Assessment: German and international approaches
- 11 December Stocktaking and lessons learned: 40 years after - What does Hans Jonas teach us today?

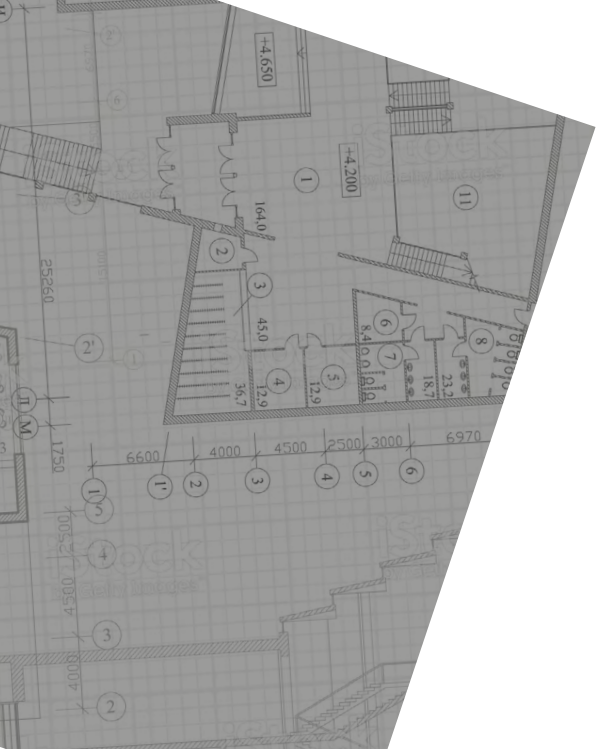
**Our panelists:** <https://bit.ly/2xRnmiK>  
Organized by: Dr. Andreas Stamm, German Development Institute / Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik (DIE)

## **bonnalliance<sup>ICB</sup>**

Sustainability research should take place in a **direct exchange and dialogue with politics, society and economy from the local to the global level.**<sup>2)</sup> **This is the guiding principle connecting the six partner institutions of the Bonn Alliance for Sustainability Research.**

[www.bonn-alliance.uni-bonn.de/en](http://www.bonn-alliance.uni-bonn.de/en)  
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## Contact

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