



### **Dr. Bert de Vries Prof. Emeritus**

Professor De Vries has a background in theoretical chemistry. He is a co-founder and member of the Institute for Energy and Environment (IVEM) at the University of Groningen, the Netherlands, where he obtained his PhD in sustainable resource use. Since 1990 he has been a senior scientist at the Dutch Environmental Assessment Agency. He has also been actively involved in modelling and scenario development for the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). He is a member of The International Network of Resource Information Centers, better known as the "Balaton Group", an international network of researchers and practitioners in sustainability-related fields. He is the author of the emblematic book "Sustainability Science" (see below) Dr de Vries has

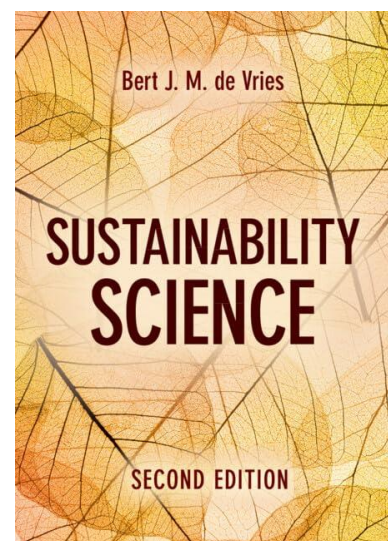
taught a course on sustainability science at Utrecht University for many years, in connection to his research at the Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency (PBL).

### ***The Lecture***

In his *lecture*, Professor de Vries will explain how the Modernity worldview did and does lead to the current sustainability predicament and discuss how explicit pluralism in worldviews and novel methods in complex system science can clarify and instrumentalize the sustainability discourse. He will illustrate this with specific cases around controversial sustainability themes.

### ***Sustainability Science book***

Professor de Vries is the author of the book *Sustainability Science* (1<sup>st</sup> ed. 2013, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 2023). The book provides a thorough account of how sustainability emerged as a guiding principle for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, in the context of the worldview of Modernity. It introduces the worldview framework to explore values and beliefs beyond the confines of Modernity and discusses the ethical implications of the various worldviews. It gives an overview of scientific methods and modelling techniques to address sustainability issues. In a transdisciplinary fashion, it then deals with the latest insights and perspectives on key items in the sustainability discourse: population; health, education and mobility; Nature; fish, forest



and food; water, energy and materials; and a critical assessment of economic theory. In the last chapter, an attempt at probing the future is given.

One of the defining themes explored in the book is what worldviews informed development over the past centuries and what are the values anchoring these worldviews. The prevailing Modernity worldview combines a belief in the existence of a universal objective truth with a material-secular value orientation and cosmology. It is based on the belief that the world can be understood and managed according to scientific and utilitarian principles and the societal objective of “the greatest happiness for all”. Modernity has been characterised by scientific and technological success but at the same time it is also the root of many sustainability problems. It has been challenged since the beginning by undercurrents in Romanticism, anticolonialism and feminism.

More recently, the legitimacy of science and technology and the authority of what has become known as the professional-managerial class (PMC) to provide solutions to sustainability related problems are challenged by changing perceptions within science and society. These include a shift towards more subjective, Postmodern values and beliefs and the recognition of real-world complexity and the development of other methods of inquiry.

The book will be published in Hungarian in 2025 by Ludovika University Press.