

For each criterion, we list our principles, followed by an explanation of how the design attends to the criterion.

Core Values

- Making the system work for the least powerful, the most powerful, and all life
- Convergence through engaging dialogically with diversity and with dissent
- Interdependent, deliberative decision-making
- Respect for the commons and the earth, caring for effects on the 7th generation
- Alignment of process and product, means and ends

Our first principle is core to our approach and is our reframe of the core-values criterion. In addition, it highlights significant practical and political realities.

Any global governance model must work for the most powerful. Otherwise, they simply won't play. No design would translate into a functional model without including their needs, or if the design required eliminating existing power structures, such as nation states and corporations.

Any global governance model must work for the least powerful because this is the only way to address the root causes of global challenges. For thousands of years, wealth and decision-making power have been concentrating in the hands of fewer and fewer people. In the absence of a clear voice for the overwhelming majority of the world's population, decisions can only prioritize short-term gains for the few at cost to the many, to other life forms, and to the regenerative capacity of the earth. Elites, on their own, are not able to solve this persistent problem; all of us are needed.

Here's how we address this challenge:

- Group decision-making requires finding unanimity, integrating the needs and perspectives of all who participate. Toward that end, the most abundant resource within the proposed model is trained facilitators. Their significance will be most paramount early on and might diminish as collaboration "muscles" regenerate.
- The Local-to-Global Coordinating Circles (LTGCC) component ensures that everyone in the world can participate in decisions that affect them. Beyond that, everyone can participate indirectly in other decisions by selecting representatives to widening circles, by engaging with regional decisions and beyond as needed, and through mechanisms that hold such representatives locally accountable.
- The Ad Hoc Random Sample Circles (AHRSC) component provides a chance for everyone in the world to be selected to participate in bodies convened to deliberate on and make more complex decisions. Given how small the population of the truly powerful is, these bodies will most likely be composed of ordinary citizens representing the full diversity of a population.
- The Ad Hoc Multi-Stakeholder Circles (AHMSC) component provides an opportunity for the most powerful to participate, alongside those with far less power, in controversial decisions, or when their role is uniquely relevant. Because of extreme polarization and low trust, we anticipate this body to be the most prevalent in the early phases of transitioning.
- In all circles, ensuring that everyone can be heard, regardless of how much power they have, is core to the success of the system.

To summarize: We make the system work for both the most and least powerful by setting up active roles for all in the decision-making structures, and through the stringent requirement of unanimity supported by innovative processes and skilled facilitators. Such breakthrough convergence is possible when individuals come together to solve their own practical problems and when they have authority to make decisions.

Decision-Making Capacity

- Relying on true dialogue and integrating dissent rather than negotiation
- Multiple paths to decision-making
- Non-ideological, non-partisan institutions
- External support to decision-making bodies

Because our model relies on unanimity, it is vulnerable to the familiar challenges that usually lead groups to resort to majority vote or complex, layered power structures (e.g. the Security Council). In our assessment, current models of decision-making are limited because of ideology, positioning, and debates. Polarization and obstruction are the baseline, with concessions and “deals” the best anyone hopes for.

Such models perpetuate rather than transcend the threats to our continued existence. To address the challenges facing humanity, nothing short of jump-starting our collective functioning to the level of care for the whole will do. Accordingly, we sought to attend to the vulnerability of unanimous decision-making while preserving its unique and irreducible benefits. We do this by providing reliable expert facilitation everywhere within the system and by creating different structures for different types of decisions. We also call attention to a reported case study in which collaborative decision-making significantly reduced total decision-making time relative to non-collaborative decision-making, particularly when taking into account reduced need to revisit decisions. (Ref#39)

Instead of the current win-lose (domination) or lose-lose (compromise) models, we propose a win-win (integrative) model that combines efficiency with care for the whole. The core aspects of such a method are:

- Attending to who’s needed to make a wise decision that can be trusted by all.
- Empowering circles to make decisions rather than recommendations.
- Supporting participants in recognizing their own and each other’s unique wisdom, and committing to a decision that works for all.
- Allowing wisdom to emerge through participants engaging interactively, influencing each other and being influenced at the same time.
- Using trained facilitators to support participants to hear themselves and each other; to identify together what’s most important and relevant to the decision at stake; and to find solutions that will attend to all that’s important.
- Engaging effectively with dissent to integrate *all* concerns.

Our model includes three structures for decision-making. Simpler, routine decisions occur within the first structure: ongoing groups in which members know and trust each other so that decisions are

made with ease and clarity. More complex decisions are given to the second and third structures: ad hoc groups of two kinds that focus on only one issue in an intensive, thorough manner. If an issue proves “too big” for a circle, it can be separated into sub-problems, and new ad hoc circles can be created to address each of them, allowing the system to address any global issue, however massive.

Effectiveness

- Robust decisions that attend to many variables
- Local involvement integrated with global care
- Non-ideological, non-partisan institutions
- Moral authority as a core factor in implementation

Our model rests on the understanding that decisions are most likely to be implemented when those who are asked to carry out and abide by them genuinely agree with them. For example, when a decision is made through majority vote, those in the minority are far less likely to implement the decision than those in the majority, and majority rule is enforced through punishment of non-compliers. We eschew this practice because it is ineffective and contributes to the crises at hand.

Many decisions in our model will be carried out by Local-To-Global Coordinating Circles, which deal with decisions they have full authority to implement. For other decisions, our design calls for issue-based, ad hoc groups that convene for specific challenges and then disband. Those groups either represent the population because they are randomly selected from within it, or they represent the diversity of perspectives because they include all relevant stakeholders. In either case, they carry a significant moral authority bound to affect every human being who is part of the domain.

In the beginning, when low trust still prevails in the world, most decisions will be made within multi-stakeholder circles. Anyone with the power to prevent a decision from being implemented would be invited into the circle. The commitment to attend to everyone’s needs without coercion is likely to help those with power tolerate, if not initially actively support, this system. We anticipate that the system will acquire power organically, as trust is built and as inspiring decisions acquire broad support.

What if a decision is subverted by a powerful player who doesn’t respond to invitations to dialogue? Depending on the circle’s members and allies, the response could be moral pressure, a nonviolent resistance campaign, government regulation, or other mechanisms. Such struggles would be no worse than those we have today, with the potential to be dramatically better.

If the UN adopts our model, all decisions made by any global ad hoc circle are likely to be formally ratified by the UN. If not, then only the persuasive power of unanimity across diversity will support implementation. This model has the potential to restore faith in our collective ability to make decisions that truly support life. Such faith, as yet untested on a global scale, is the required antidote to forces of coercion and conquest that put humanity’s future in peril; an evolutionary leap designed to sustain life on Earth.

Resources and Financing

- Voluntary participation and funding

- Implementation dependent on sufficient funding at each step
- Self-management and resource independence within each component of the system allowing for self-responsibility and flexibility
- A shift from artificial surplus and manufactured scarcity toward natural abundance as resources flow from where they exist to where they are needed

Resources needed include: material support enabling circle participants and facilitators to do their work; personnel and infrastructure for building, operating, coordinating, and communicating about the system; and resources that circles use to implement their decisions directly, where possible.

Our adopted principles resulted in the following considerations:

- For the Coordinating Circles, we anticipate that as each part of the world joins the system, available funding will become an aspect of assessing readiness. Funding could come from a variety of sources, including a universal basic income, crowdfunding, institutional support, support from other regions, religious groups, and more.
- For each ad hoc circle, we anticipate the inviting entity selecting a project manager and generating seed funding until the project manager creates a budget and identifies funding sources. We anticipate that all expenses will be covered until the circle disbands.
- For the creation of a permanent lean infrastructure, we foresee a budget being created and funding sources identified for such things as technology, system maintenance, feedback, training (e.g. massive training of facilitators), translation, and more.

We anticipate that the possibility of finally having a global governance system that can transcend and transform the self-destructive path we've been on will generate immense excitement and generosity on the parts of individuals, organizations, and governments.

Trust and Insight

- Full transparency across the system
- Voluntary participation in processes and in funding

The proposed model increases trust by the same mechanisms that generate the moral authority: the involvement of all, the reality that decisions are made by those affected directly or indirectly and include those with expertise or experience that are relevant to the decision, and the commitment to unanimity.

In addition, to counter the prevalent hopelessness and cynicism regarding governance, we follow the principle of full transparency, compromised only to attend to imminent threats to life. This level of transparency, to the best of our knowledge, has never existed on such a scale. Where it has been tried, mostly in organizations that have adopted principles of self-management as described in *Reinventing Organizations* [Ref#9], the results have been dramatic improvements in function, effectiveness, and motivation. Our model calls for such transparency from everywhere in the system: the coordinating circles, the ad hoc circles, and the permanent infrastructure.

Continental circles, for example, actively share information with all local circles and passively with anyone else who is interested through online information. Overall, information is shared in multiple ways, including written, verbal, visual, theatrical, and more.

Flexibility

- Ongoing feedback and learning
- Using conflict creatively
- Sufficient structure and sufficient flexibility

Because shifting to a collaborative and inclusive global governance model is such a profound departure from centuries-old human practices, we will be on a steep learning curve. As such, our proposal establishes extensive processes for receiving and engaging with feedback and for conflict resolution. This allows for integration of new information without enforcement and rules.

Feedback from participants, stakeholders, and anyone else is built into every step of the transition phase (estimated to take between 10 and 20 years) as well as the eventual full implementation. This includes both internal feedback within circles, as well as external feedback from the population served by any given circle, both solicited and unsolicited. This information, together with the self-reliance of the circles, enables adaptation to changing conditions.

In addition, because feedback often shows up as conflict, conflict resolution that is fully restorative and designed to convert conflict into feedback and learning is included throughout the system.

Accountability and Protection against the Abuse of Power

- An interconnected whole
- Non-coercive, restorative responses to conflict and challenges
- Extreme care in designing protective measures for limited cases
- Lean infrastructure to prevent ossifying bureaucracies
- New opportunities for collaboration without *new* threats

Our model operates in parallel with both the UN and nation-states, and we expect the relationships between decision-making circles and other entities to evolve somewhat unpredictably. Notably, we do not provide circles with enforcement powers such as taxation or police. By design, if circles do not reach solutions that include or inspire the affected actors, they will be motivated to solicit and integrate feedback from these actors.

Within the circles, the first lines of defense against one member abusing another are the requirement of unanimity and the support of facilitators. Extensive ongoing feedback, including for the facilitators themselves, and transparent decision-making further protect against destructive power dynamics developing, as does local accountability. Everyone working in the Local-to-Global Coordinating Circles system remains directly accountable to a local circle where they live, composed of neighbors who may recall them from other circles (regional to global). No “organization” or “governance” is separate from people and localities.

To prevent the accumulation of power, everyone rotates out of their positions. The wider the scope of the circle, the more frequent the rotations to prevent the potential for power accumulation.

Additional accountability is provided by facilitators who call circle members to stretch toward a solution that works for all, and by feedback and conflict resolution processes that continuously inform them of their impacts on others. These feedback and conflict resolution mechanisms attend to the repair of harm and to systemic learning rather than to punishment.

Another prevention mechanism is the establishment of an extremely lean permanent infrastructure that also includes staggered rotations. Most work will be done in a project-based way to prevent accumulation of power and ossification.

We cannot predict how the world will unfold. For example, we don't anticipate that nation states will *necessarily* continue indefinitely, nor do we anticipate that our model, if adopted, will *necessarily* continue indefinitely. We trust that once any global, collaborative governance mechanism is in place, humanity can choose, collectively, how best to attend to the needs of all life.

Conclusion

To the explicit task of making decisions that attend to the challenges humanity is facing, we've added an additional requirement of our own: that the root causes of the issues we face will not be recreated. The principle of making the system work for the most and least powerful emerged from this requirement. Even if it were possible, for example, to make the system work for the least powerful at the expense of the most powerful, we know that such attempts only result in changing who's in power without changing the fundamental ways of functioning. Our intention is nothing short of changing the way we attend to power and exercise it.

The new framework we see as necessary is hinted at in the description of the prize: a deep reverence for life and the interconnection of all, along with care for the whole and for part of the whole simultaneously. The appeal of the system is that while it is designed to no longer be the game of the powerful, nothing will be imposed and everyone's needs will be on the table.

Clearly, the transition process we have described is not only a technical transition; it's also a transition of values and a new way of relating to self, others, and life itself.

We accomplish this transition by engaging as many people as possible from the global population in identifying issues and setting up multi-stakeholder circles to find collaborative, creative, and voluntary ways of responding. With each iteration, more collective experience accrues of how to foster collaboration and care for the whole that can solve problems. This is our best hope for re-learning to live within the means of our one beautiful planet, in care for each and all, with respect for all life.