



PRINCIPLES FOR A BIOSENSITIVE SOCIETY

CONTEXT AND INTRODUCTION

Frank Fenner Foundation promotes the transition of human society to one that is '**biosensitive**' - prosperous, cohesive, just and in tune with and respectful of nature and other living beings. This will mean human activities are ecologically, economically and socially sustainable, based on a deep understanding and acceptance of the human place in nature and within safe planetary boundaries.¹

We introduce the term **biosensitive** to describe a society that goes beyond mere ecological sustainability. Of course, society must be ecologically sustainable – otherwise in the long term it cannot continue to exist. But ecological sustainability is the bottom line. To be sustainable, we must aim for a society that positively promotes health and wellbeing across and for all sections of the human population as well as for the ecosystems of the planet. Biosensitivity is a broader and richer concept than sustainability, and provides us with the road map for attaining ecological, economic and social sustainability.

Biosensitivity provides the way forward. It is based on the scientific consensus that the resilience of civilisation and human well-being, including health, is dependent on a “healthy” planet. The biosphere should comprise flourishing ecological systems, a rich variety of plants and animals, fertile soils, pure waters and clean air. Society should be more equal, just and fair. All this requires a fundamental change in attitude towards the biosphere and the unequal distribution of power and wealth within human society.

Turning biosensitivity into action requires principles to help guide decision-making in all sectors – households, businesses and governments – towards practices that protect and enhance natural life processes, at scales from local to global, in human settlements and across landscapes.

BIOSENSITIVITY PRINCIPLES - Humanity through its systems of governance will:

- Put protection of the ecosystem before economic, financial, legal, political and cultural interests
- Promote a just society, foster human wellbeing and health, enable achievement of each person's full potential and manage human conflict peacefully so as to not affect the ecosystem and biosphere adversely

¹ Rockstrom J. et al, Planetary Boundaries: Exploring the Safe operating space for humanity, Institute for sustainable solutions 1-1-2009 the concept of nine planetary boundaries Planetary Boundaries in 2015 Ref Steffen et al.2015 Do you mean Steffen W, Richardson K, Rockström J, Cornell SE, Fetzer I, Bennett EM, et al. Planetary boundaries: Guiding human development on a changing planet. Science. 2015;347(6223):1259855. ?



- Minimise use of materials, energy and resources and, where necessary, dispose of waste within ecosystem replenishment and recovery rates (meaning within the ecosystem's energy, material and nutrient cycle capacity)
- Structure the built environment and manage landscapes to adhere to these principles, and
- Maintain human population in balance with the limitations imposed by environmental and societal capacity

BIOSENSITIVITY FRAMEWORK

A set of biosensitivity tenets frame these Principles, which then define a series of practices which together make the biosensitivity framework.

BIOSENSITIVITY TENETS

The Biosensitivity Principles are framed by the knowledge that:

- Humans are biological organisms who have co-evolved with Earth and billions of other life forms.
- Earth, our home, is alive with a unique biosphere of life and, while natural forces make life demanding and uncertain, Earth provides the only known conditions essential to human life's evolution.
- The resilience of the biosphere and the well-being of humanity depends upon preserving a healthy biosphere with all its ecological systems, such as a rich variety of plants and animals, fertile soils, pure waters, and clean air.
- The Earth with its finite resources is a common concern of all peoples.
- While the Anthropocene means humans are now a global scale force, we have no control over the physio-chemical forces of nature. Despite our technology, we remain totally dependent on Earth's planetary and local life support systems.
- Cultural transformation occurs at individual and societal levels. Action to bring about change needs to be grounded in up-to-date neuropsychological knowledge.

BIOSENSITIVITY PRACTICES

Practices arise from the Principles to answer the question for households, businesses and governments: what will be implementing any particular principle look like?

Practices operate at the macro and micro levels. The macro level is, if you like, the vision for how the world will look and the micro level will be for each



household, business and governments to work out for themselves in their own situation.

Meta practices, applicable to all principles:

- Decisions are made in all sectors of households, businesses and governments democratically, inclusive of stakeholder and citizen participation. Decision making also needs to take account of other species, the ecosystem and future generations.
- Households, businesses and governments foster positive social relationships, equity, autonomy, security, justice, health and wellbeing, and support people's attainment of their full human potential.

BIO-SENSITIVITY FRAMEWORK

Together the principles and practices make the biosensitivity framework

Biosensitivity Principles Humanity through its systems of governance will:	Examples of Biosensitivity Practices
Put protection of the ecosystem before economic, financial, political and cultural interests	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ecosystem functions recognised and their protection prioritised 2. Space reserved for protection / conservation the natural world 3. No use of toxic chemicals which cannot fully recovered in manufacturing processes 4. Reverse global environmental change
Promote a just society, foster human wellbeing and health, enable achievement of each person's full potential and manage human conflict peacefully so as to not affect the ecosystem and biosphere adversely	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Equity of access to resources, energy, means of life and livelihood (clean air, fresh water, food) 2. Positive social relationships, autonomy, security, justice, occupation, conviviality and leisure, access to health and health care, ensured 3. Intra-human conflicts managed in a peaceful, negotiated manner 4. All societal services or functions are internalised and the benefits to society for these rewarded
Minimise use of materials, energy and resources and, where necessary, dispose of waste within ecosystem replenishment and recovery rates (meaning within the ecosystem's energy, material and nutrient cycle capacity)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rapid transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy, improving energy efficiency and reduced energy demand 2. Materials reused/recycled in new production with minimal loss 3. Food production localised and seasonal
Structure the built environment and manage landscapes to adhere to	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Farming practices to protect the biological integrity and health of soils 2. Nature-based rather than engineered solutions used



these principles	
Maintain human population in balance with the limitations imposed by environmental and societal capacity	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Women have access to health care and reproductive services.2. Women and girls have equal access to education as males.3. Women and men have access to the same economic opportunities as each other.4. All people's role in the economic system is fairly recognised and remunerated.