

The Anthropocene – Conceptual Implications for Science Projects and Networks

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It was recently observed that the examination of the Anthropocene reaches well beyond the geological community and expresses the extent to which humanity is driving rapid and widespread changes to the Earth system that will variously persist and potentially intensify into the future. This presentation argues that this message not only amplifies traditional calls by industry, politicians and funding agencies for science to become more societally engaged, it is also particularly poignant since it comes from within the scientific community itself. It is argued here that there are at least two important impacts of this observation on the scientific community. First, it has an impact on science's relations with broader society, especially concerning the implications of scientific knowledge for public policy-making. Second, it has an impact on relations within the broader scientific community itself and the importance of multidisciplinarity. These impacts are particularly strong on science projects seeking to bundle knowledge across scientific institutions. This presentation concludes that if standards such as scientific excellence are to be maintained and the challenges of the Anthropocene addressed, then the above impacts and their implications need to be considered in detail when conceiving and managing new projects and networks.