



## Johan Rockström

### SCIENTIST

Climate and nature risk are no longer reputational topics. They are entering disclosure regimes, capital allocation decisions and supply chain liability, and most boards lack a defensible scientific basis for the limits they are being asked to operate within. The question is not whether to commit to sustainability, but how to set targets that hold up under regulator, investor and scientific scrutiny.

Johan Rockstrom is the Earth system scientist who created the planetary boundaries framework and translates it for boards, governments and investors deciding where the real environmental limits sit.

## Johan Rockström's 2026 Biography

### AVAILABLE FOR

- Speaking

### Why organisations work with Johan Rockstrom

- He is the originator, not the explainer, of the framework that now sits beneath the TNFD, Science Based Targets and a growing share of corporate climate disclosure. Organisations come to him for the source, not the summary.
- He connects nine specific Earth systems, from climate to freshwater to biogeochemical flows, to commercial decisions on capital, supply chain and product. Boards leave with a map of which limits actually constrain their business.
- He carries scientific authority that holds in regulator and investor rooms. The 2024 Tyler Prize, the 2009 Nature paper and the directorship of the Potsdam Institute mean his framing survives external scrutiny.
- He has spent two decades inside the policy process at Davos, the Club of Rome and UN climate negotiations. He speaks to executives in their language about decisions, trade-offs and time horizons, not in the language of an academic seminar.

### JOHAN'S SPEAKING THEMES

- Climate Action and Sustainability
- Energy Transition
- ESG Strategy
- Risk Management
- Scenario Planning & Strategic Foresight

### Biography highlights

- Director, Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research (PIK), since 2018
- Professor of Earth System Science, University of Potsdam
- Lead author, "A safe operating space for humanity," Nature, 2009
- Co-founder and former Director, Stockholm Resilience Centre (2004 to 2018)
- 2024 Tyler Prize for Environmental Achievement; German Environmental Prize (2015); International Cosmos Prize (2015); Hillary Laureate (2017); Knight of the Legion of Honour (2016)
- Co-author, Earth for All: A Survival Guide for Humanity (2022), the

### LANGUAGES: English, Swedish

report to the Club of Rome marking 50 years since Limits to Growth

## **Biography**

In 2009, a paper in Nature titled “A safe operating space for humanity” set out nine biophysical systems that keep the planet in the conditions civilisation grew up in. Johan Rockstrom led the team of 28 international scientists behind it. The framework, planetary boundaries, has since become the scientific foundation for the Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures, the Science Based Targets Network and a widening set of corporate and regulatory climate frameworks.

That work is now the working definition of environmental risk in serious institutions. Boards, central banks and investors increasingly need a defensible answer to the question of where the limits actually lie, and his framework supplies it. The 2024 Tyler Prize for Environmental Achievement, often called the Nobel for the environment, recognised the framework as the field-defining contribution.

He directs the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research, one of the leading climate science institutions in Europe, and holds the chair in Earth System Science at the University of Potsdam. Before Potsdam, he co-founded and ran the Stockholm Resilience Centre for fourteen years. He is a co-author of Earth for All, the 2022 report to the Club of Rome that revisits Limits to Growth fifty years on with concrete economic and policy turnarounds.

The room he tends to be most useful in is the one where strategy meets disclosure: where leadership has to decide which targets to commit to, which trade-offs to accept and how to justify both to investors and regulators. He is unusually direct about the scale of action required and equally direct about what is still possible inside that window.

## **Key speaking topics**

- Planetary boundaries and Earth system risk
- Climate tipping points and resilience
- The science behind ESG, TNFD and Science Based Targets
- Food, land and water systems within planetary limits
- Net zero and the energy transition
- Sustainable economic transformation and the Earth for All agenda

## **Ideal for**

- Boards and executive committees setting climate, nature and ESG strategy under tightening disclosure regimes
- CSOs, Chief Risk Officers and Chief Sustainability Officers building defensible science-based targets
- Investors, banks and asset managers integrating climate and nature risk into capital allocation
- Government, multilateral and policy audiences working on energy, food and land system transitions

## **Audience outcomes**

- A working understanding of the nine planetary boundaries and which ones materially affect their sector
- A clearer view of how regulatory frameworks (TNFD, SBTN, EU disclosure) trace back to the underlying science

- A direct read on where global climate and nature trajectories sit relative to scientific safe limits
- Sharper questions for their own strategy and risk teams about which limits the business actually operates inside
- A grounded sense of what credible action looks like at the scale and pace the science requires

## Johan Rockström's Videos

