

Engaging for change: Risks and opportunities

ScienceComm '23
2.11.2023

Presenters
Dr Mialy Rann, Science-Policy Officer
Nicolas Seidler, Executive Director



Geneva
Science-Policy
Interface

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WHAT

Neutral platform that supports engagement at the science-policy interface to promote science-informed solutions on complex global challenges

WHY

A strong partnership between science and multilateral policy is necessary but complex.
Need for specific support

HOW

Supporting professionals from science and policy communities around new opportunities, networks, and skills for science-policy interaction within the Geneva ecosystem

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Science and policy



United Nations

Meetings Coverage and Press Releases

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SG/A/2223
 3 AUGUST 2022

UN Secretary-General Creates Scientific Advisory Board for Independent Advice on Breakthroughs in Science and Technology



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[University of Kent](#) >
 [Durrell Institute of Conservation and Ecology \(DICE\)](#) >
 Charlie Gardner



Dr Charlie Gardner

Conservation scientist, writer and environmental activist

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Much of eastern England is threatened by sea level rise, with the flood risk stretching right into the heart of inland cities like Cambridge and Norwich. Our landscapes will be transformed and tens of thousands of people will I ...see more



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Dr Aaron Thierry
Earth System Scientist



Lucy Hogarth, PhD Student
Astrophysicist



Dr Charlie Gardner
Conservation Scientist



Dr Abi Perrin
Microbiologist



Shana Sullivan, Msc
Physicist and space engineer



Prof Jeff Waage
Ecologist



Pete Knapp, PhD Student
Air pollution



Dr Emily Cox
Social Scientist

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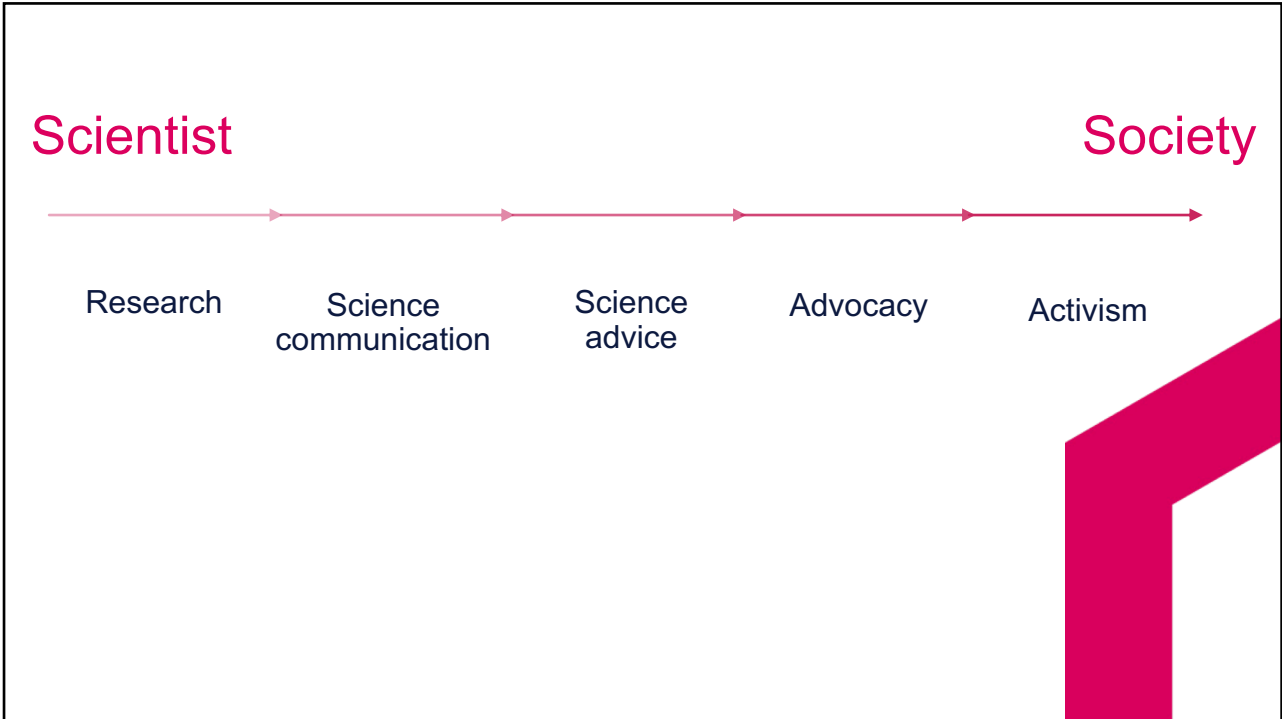
Objectives

1. Explore the different forms of engagement by scientists with policymakers, civil society, the public, and the media.
2. Develop a better understanding of the implications of engaging in science advice, advocacy or activism
3. Learn from the experience and knowledge of experts and of other participants regarding the different strategies to engage at the interface of science, policy and society

Outline

1. A framing presentation
2. Experience of researchers
3. World café discussion
4. Group debrief and conclusion

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Natural and social sciences, etc
Journal papers, citations, conferences

Research

ScienceAdvances Current Issue First release papers

HOME > SCIENCE ADVANCES > VOL. 9, NO. 37 > EARTH BEYOND SIX OF NINE PLANETARY BOUNDARIES

RESEARCH ARTICLE | ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

Earth beyond six of nine planetary boundaries

KATHERINE RICHARDSON, WILL STEFFEN, WOLFGANG LUCHT, JØRGEN BENDTSEN, SARAH E. CORNELL, JONATHAN F. DONGES, INGO FETZER, GOVINDASAMY BALA, [...] AND JOHAN ROCKSTRÖM. +19 authors. [Authors Info & Affiliations](#)

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CLIMATE CHANGE: Radiative forcing, CO₂ concentration

NOVEL ENTITIES

STRATOSPHERIC OZONE DEPLETION

ATMOSPHERIC AEROSOL LOADING

OCEAN ACIDIFICATION

BIOGEOCHEMICAL FLOWS: P, N

FRESHWATER CHANGE: Freshwater use (Blue-water), Green water

LAND-SYSTEM CHANGE

BIOSPHERE INTEGRITY: Genetic, Functional

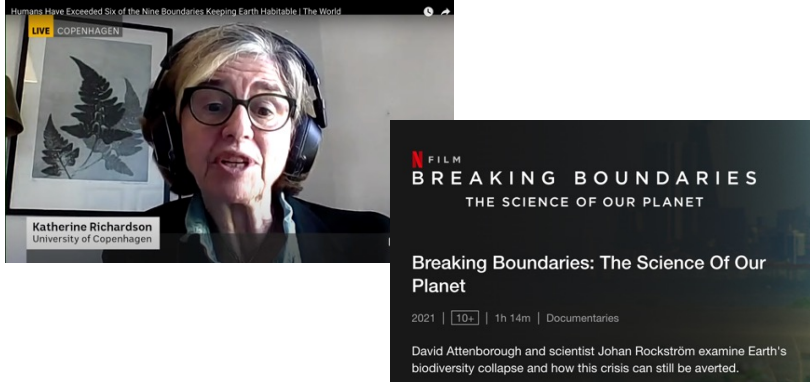
Safe operating space

Increasing risk

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Blogs/vlogs, interviews in the media, photography, infographics, events, networking

Research → Science communication



The image shows a video call window on the left with Katherine Richardson from the University of Copenhagen. To its right is a poster for the film 'Breaking Boundaries: The Science Of Our Planet', which includes the text: 'N FILM BREAKING BOUNDARIES THE SCIENCE OF OUR PLANET', 'Breaking Boundaries: The Science Of Our Planet', '2021 | 10+ | 1h 14m | Documentaries', and 'David Attenborough and scientist Johan Rockström examine Earth's biodiversity collapse and how this crisis can still be averted.'

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Science-Policy panels, advisory boards, expert advice, consultancies

Research → Science communication → Science advice

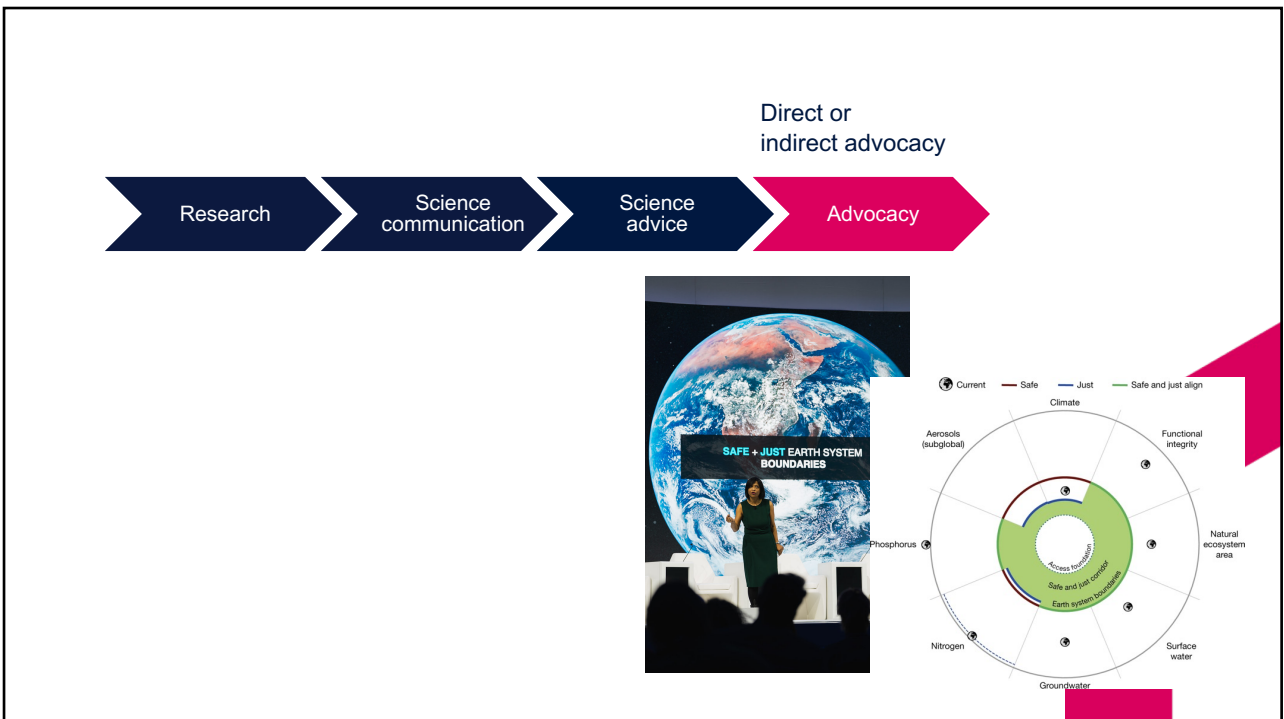


The image shows Prof. Johan Rockström speaking at a podium during the UN Climate Change Conference UK 2021. The podium features the United Nations logo and the text 'United Nations Climate Change' and 'UN CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE UK 2021'. The background includes the UN logo and a globe.

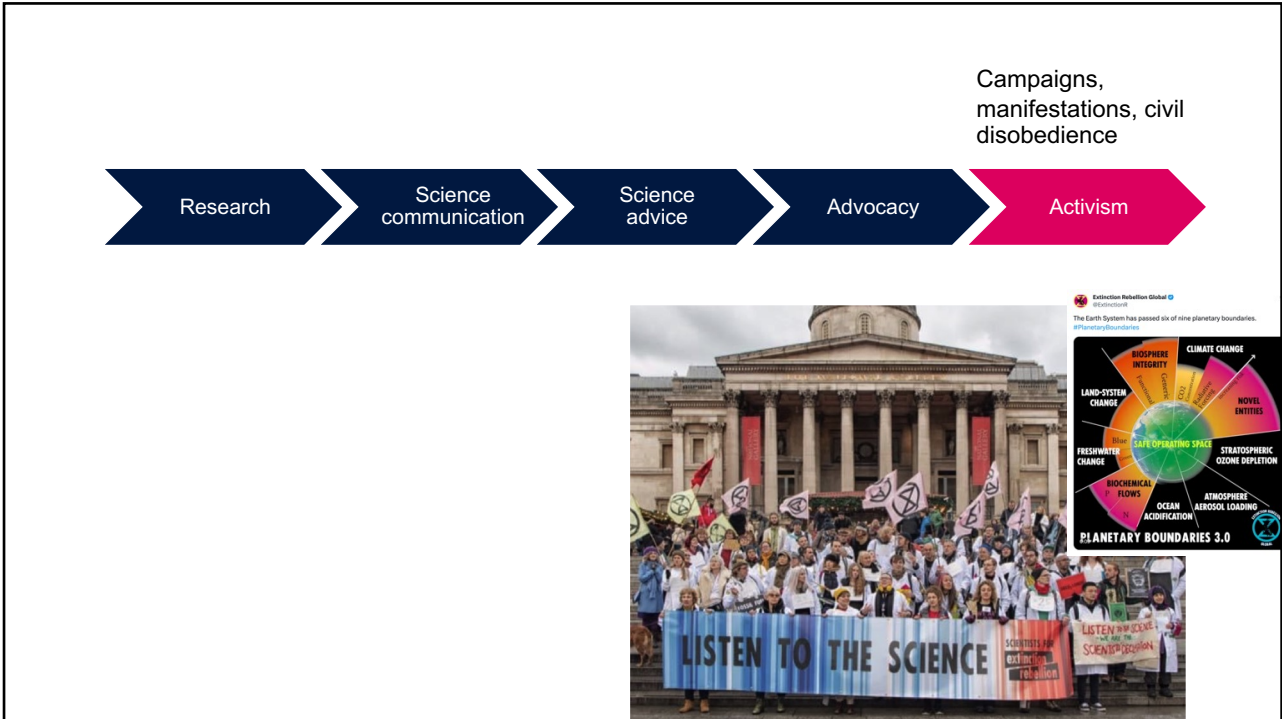
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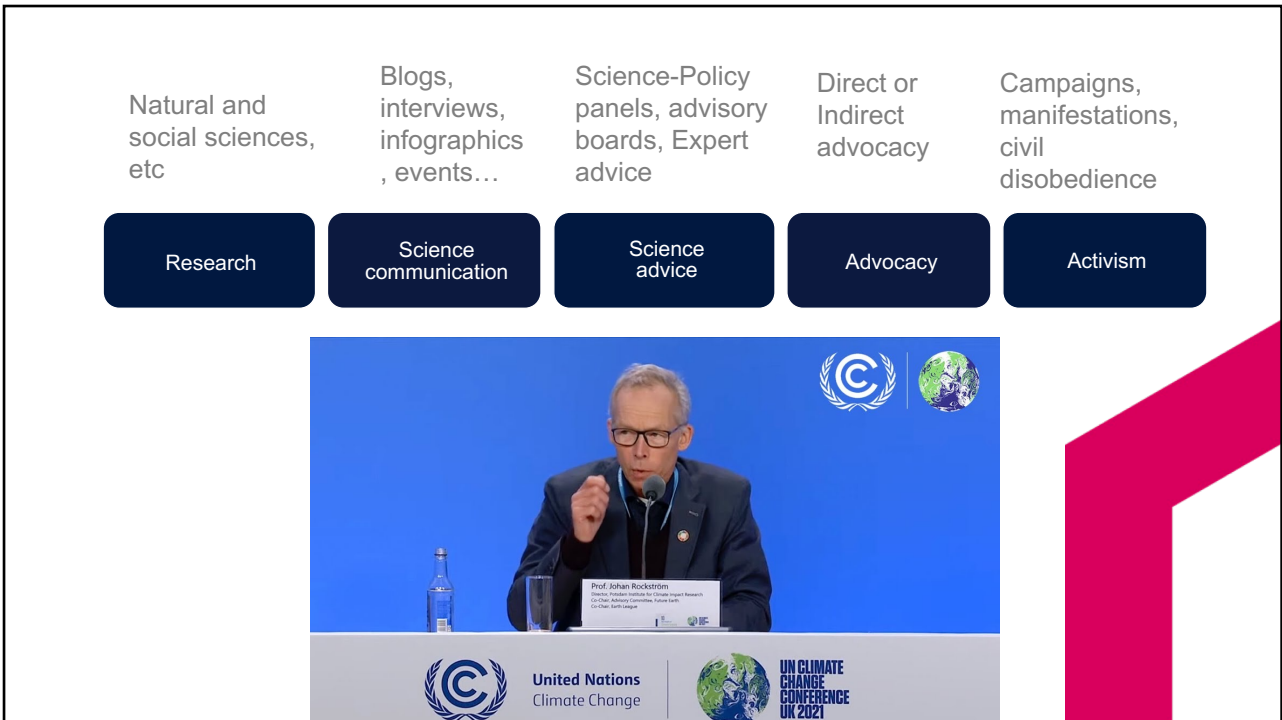
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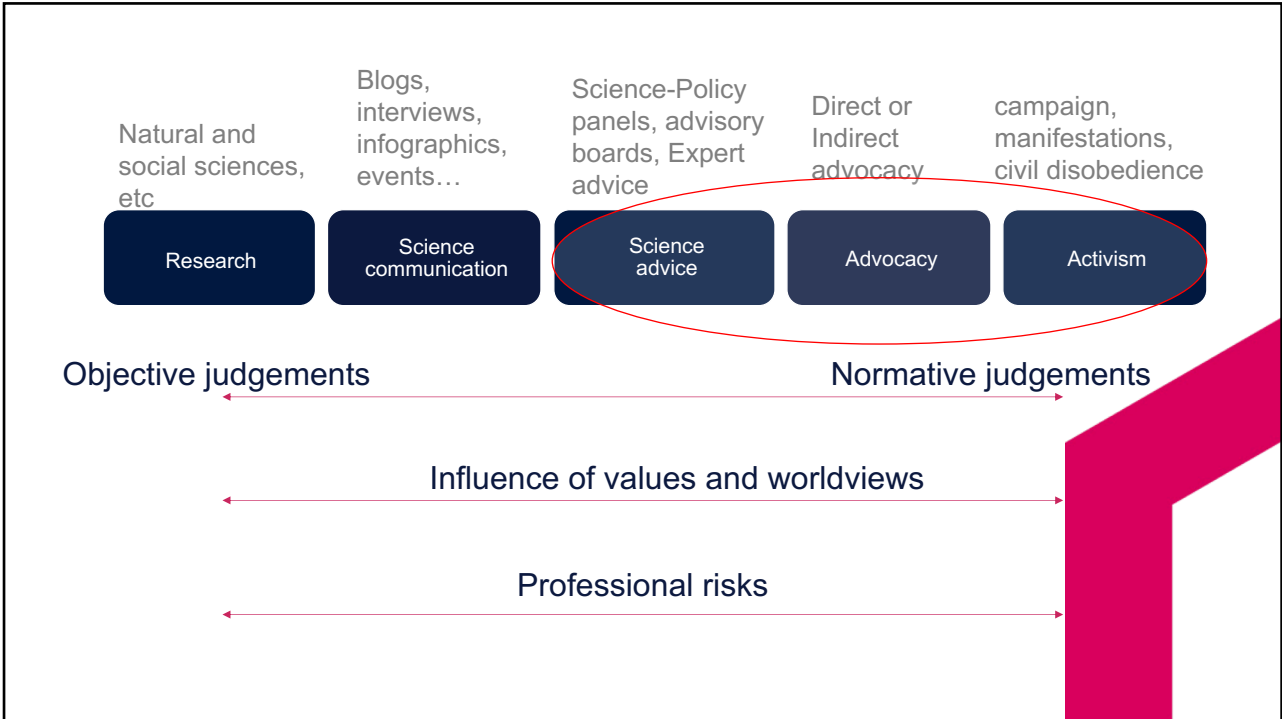
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Experience of researchers



Dr. Fiona Stappmanns
Research Scientist, Policy Outreach
Wyss Academy for Nature



Dr. Jevgeniy Bluwstein
Senior Researcher
Institute for Social Anthropology,
University of Bern

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Breakout group discussion

Part 1: Division into two groups that will address the same questions with one discussant (20mins)

Part 2: Switch of discussant (20mins)

Part 3: Reporting back (3mins per group + feedback from the other group)

Part 4: Conclusions by GSPI (10mins)

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Breakout group questions

Question 1: What are the risks and benefits of scientists engaging in scientific advice, advocacy and activism? (20mins)

Question 2: What should be the principles/rules of engagement with policy and society? (20mins)

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Inputs from the literature

Science
advice

Advocacy

Activism

RISKS	WHY ENGAGE?
Losing scientific credibility or attracting scorn from colleagues (Fischhoff 2007; Lackey 2007; Pielke 2007).	Scientists are citizens first and have relevant knowledge (Nelson 2009)
Conflicts with science's essential nature and being a productive scientist (Gardner 2021, Nelson 2009)	Many roles for scientists in the policy cycle (Meyer 2010, Nelson 2009)
Engagement might be misused by some individuals or groups (Fischhoff 2007)	Engagement does not necessarily affect scientists' reputation (Gardner et al. 2021; Motta, 2018)

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Guidelines from the literature

Science
advice

Advocacy

Activism

- Be **transparent** about your own **values**
- Make **clear** the **role** (researcher, expert, citizen) you are assuming
- Mention your **specialisation** and the **nature** of what is being said (including levels of confidence and uncertainties)
- Be prepared for **potential public scrutiny**
- Spend time finding your own **place on the spectrum**
- Explore **indirect engagement**: through intermediaries, advocacy organisations

(Sources: Gluckman et al. 2021, Jessani et al. 2022, Meyer 2010, Nelson 2009, UNIL 2022)

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More on this subject

Sessions at this conference:

- Dialogue Tomorrow 11:00 | **Science et activisme : quelle frontière ?**
Clara Zemp | Université de Neuchâtel
- Workshop Tomorrow 13:30 | **Wissenschaft vs. Aktivismus: Wo liegen die Grenzen? Ein Diskussionsraum**
Sabrina Heike Kessler, Stefan Schlegel | Swiss Young Academy

Existing online debates on the subject:

- [Quel rôle pour les chercheur·euse·s dans le débat public ? Table ronde](#), UNIL
- [Academics, Advisors, Activists? The role of scientists in politics](#), REATCH

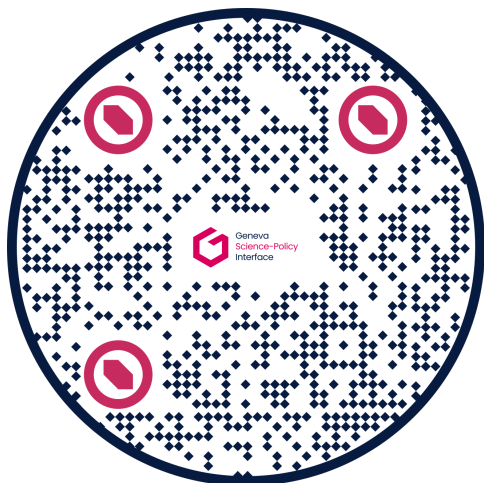
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Stay in touch



 Next call for projects:
8 November 2023

Details  gspi.ch/icp