



4th International Conference on Global, Sustainable Innovation: *Towards Sustainable Business, Energy and Society*

University of Vaasa, Finland, 9-11 June 2025

In 2022, three innovation research centres – *InnoLab* in Finland, *CIMR* in the United Kingdom, and the *Kogod School of Business* in the United States – established a network to explore recent research and practical insights into the drivers of sustainable innovation. Each year, we bring together scholars and practitioners to gain a deeper understanding of the factors that contribute to the success of collaborative efforts for sustainable innovation. The goal is to provide insights that will assist managers, policymakers, and other societal actors in their pursuit of innovations that promote sustainability. We have now expanded this network to include participants from the HERMES Higher Education network and other external partners.

This year's conference will be hosted by InnoLab at the University of Vaasa. The discussion will centre on sustainability transitions and the role universities and other ecosystem actors can play in preparing and enabling them. We welcome contributions that broaden our understanding of the processes advancing sustainable business, energy, and society. The workshop will contribute to SDG 9—"Industry, innovation and infrastructure", SDG 7—"Affordable and clean energy", SDG 12—"Responsible consumption and production" as well as SDG17—"Partnerships for the Goals", among others. We look forward to welcoming contributors from a wide range of disciplines, including business, technology and industrial management, economics, administrative sciences and communications. Contributors from other fields and domains are equally welcome. We seek to enable inclusive multidisciplinary discourse and sharing. We also hope to welcome practitioner speakers for impulse talks outlining key challenges they face and indicating where input from the world of research would be welcome.

Our aim is to create a multidisciplinary platform for exchanging knowledge and insights on this important topic. We also hope to welcome practitioner speakers to provide impulse talks that outline the key challenges they face, where input from the practitioners and scholars would be welcome.

This year's meeting endeavours to bring together many contributors through a range of special sessions and workshops. *Paper Development Sessions* that benefit from the input of senior scholars and journal editors as discussants, will remain at the core of the conference. In

addition, we aim to innovate by introducing *Proposal Development Workshops* and *Special Sessions* focused on specific themes. An additional day has been added to the meeting to enable participants to explore collaborative opportunities with colleagues at the University of Vaasa and partner institutions.

Confirmed contributors and participants

Practice perspectives

- Representatives from our industrial partners will offer practice perspectives via impulse lectures and a scene-setting panel to open the conference. [Juha Kytölä, Director of R&D and Engineering at Wärtsilä, CTO of the year 2023](#), will share his perspective in the opening session in an interview with our keynote speakers.

Opening and closing keynote speakers

- *Gary Knight*, Willamette University, President, Academy of International Business
- *Helen Lawton Smith*, CIMR, Birkbeck University of London, UK;
- *Darren Dalcher*, Lancaster University Management School, Lancaster University UK; will offer closing remarks to the conference

Plenary speakers and confirmed contributors:

- *Filippo di Pietro*, Facultad de Ciencias Económicas y Empresariales, Universidad de Sevilla, Spain, & *Kevin Campbell*, Stirling Business School, Scotland, "Factors affecting the pace of transition to low carbon energy systems"
- *Jie Wu*, University of Aberdeen, Africa-Asia Centre for Sustainability, "Innovation Strategies for New Capabilities and Sustainability in the Digital Age"
- *Jouni K Juntunen*, University of Vaasa, InnoLab, "Configuring partnership portfolios for enhanced ESG performance: A QCA analysis"
- *Martin Meyer*, University of Vaasa, InnoLab, "Absorptive capacity for international talent – towards a research agenda"
- *Tomasz Mroczkowski*, American University, Kogod School of Business, "The Multipolar world economy of 2035"
- *Tommi Lehtonen*, University of Vaasa, School of Marketing & Communications and InnoLab, "Ethics of genetically modified biofuels"
- *Anupam Dutta*, University of Vaasa, InnoLab, School of Accounting & Finance, and InnoLab, "Climate risk and clean water investments: Implications for sustainable development"
- *Zaheer Khan*, University of Aberdeen & University of Vaasa, "Entrepreneurial ecosystems as boundary spanners in supporting internationalisation"

- *Julio Serrano; Ausrine Šilenskytė, Rodrigo Rabetino, University of Vaasa, School of Management, “Addressing sustainability challenges by utilizing advanced technologies in the era of deglobalization”*
- *Andrius Bartminas & Ausrine Šilenskytė, University of Vaasa, School of Management, “Blockchain-based business models and sustainability in international business”*

Presenters at our last workshop included contributors from the University of Vaasa, as well as the following institutions:

- Centre for Innovation Management Research, Birkbeck, University of London
- Kogod School of Business, American University, Washington DC
- Africa-Asia Centre for Sustainability Research, University of Aberdeen, Scotland, UK
- Durham Business School, University of Durham, UK
- Florida Atlantic University, USA
- Kent Business School, University of Kent, UK
- Lancaster University Management School, UK
- SGH Warsaw School of Economics, Poland
- Stony Brook University & US National Science Foundation, USA
- University of Leeds Business School, USA
- University of South Florida, USA
- Willamette University, Salem, Oregon, USA
- Design Centre Muova, Vaasa University of Applied Sciences, Vaasa, Finland

Paper Development Sessions

Paper development sessions are at the heart of this conference. Speakers and participants will act as discussants in their areas of expertise. We plan to collect contributions for a special issue of a leading journal. The paper development workshops are open to everyone, with a particular encouragement for early-career researchers and doctoral candidates to participate and gain valuable feedback and experience in a supportive and welcoming setting. We welcome work-in-progress papers or publications under review, that are broadly related to these major themes:

- **Society & Systems:** Driving sustainable transitions through public policy and innovation—How macro-level actors seek to orchestrate ecosystems to achieve eco-social transitions and deliver sustainable innovation.
- **Transformational Innovation and Industrial Renewal:** Enabling transformation by, a) Driving sustainable industrial renewal and organisational change—How to organise industrial renewal and drive organisational change; b) Facilitating digital transformation and sustainable innovation – through a focus on combinative, disruptive or radical innovation.

- **Consumer and User Innovation:** Capturing innovation opportunities—How individuals, users, entrepreneurs, and other micro-level actors, ideate, create and innovate.
- **Circular Economy and Resource Efficiency:** Examining innovative circular business models and practices that reduce waste and promote the reuse of resources, contributing to sustainable development.
- **Digitalization and Decarbonization:** Advanced low-carbon technologies and their role in enabling sustainability innovations. Exploring the role of digitalization and advanced technologies—such as AI, blockchain, IoT, digital platforms, and others—in driving sustainability innovations, supporting circular economy models, inclusion, and/or enabling greener business practices across industries and borders.
- **Sustainable and Green Finance, ESG Reporting.** Factors affecting energy transition, climate risk and investments.

We have a broad understanding of these areas, so contributions from all aspects of innovation and entrepreneurship research are welcome. Early-stage doctoral researchers are particularly encouraged and welcome to present their research proposals.

Please use the registration link below to let us know about your tentative titles and co-authors. Registration will close **25 April 2025** and the submission deadline for papers or presentations will be **25 May 2025**, so your discussant can provide effective feedback.

The discussants are editors, associate editors, and editorial board members of the main journals in innovation and entrepreneurship and outstanding scholars who have published in FT50, AJG-4*, and 3* journals. The aim of the session is to offer positive and constructive feedback. Our last meeting in Vaasa was attended by discussants representing, among others, the following journals:

- Academy of Management Journal
- Entrepreneurship Theory & Practice
- Journal of Business Venturing
- Journal of International Business Studies
- Research Policy
- Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal
- British Journal of Management
- International Journal of Operations and Production Management
- Journal of World Business
- Technological Forecasting & Social Change
- Technovation

We aim to bring together a similarly distinguished group of contributors and discussants with an equally broad range of interests and perspectives.

Some of our participating editors will use this space to explore special issues.

Proposal Development Workshop & Dedicated Sessions

We plan also to complement this year's paper development workshops with special sessions and workshops:

Proposal Development Workshop

- We invite participants to not only present their research papers but also to bring forward innovative ideas and proposals for project applications aimed at securing international funding.
- We aim to foster discussions and develop ideas further with support from the research services team, in close collaboration with the University of Vaasa representative in Brussels. We are well positioned to generate and refine project ideas in the run-up to the conference.
- This unique opportunity encourages collaboration and the exchange of groundbreaking concepts. For forthcoming EU funding calls on collaborative research projects, please visit the [EU funding and tenders portal](#)
- **Please flag up your interest when you [register online](#), and let us know what projects or tenders you might be interested in. The registration page includes an optional section. If you are interested, please complete.**

Dedicated sessions and co-hosted activities and events

- **ASAP Session.** Participants in the "Alliance for Socially-acceptable & Actionable Plants" (ASAP) will have the opportunity to gather for an initial meeting to introduce the project and their work packages. The ASAP project is developing genetically modified crops for biofuel production. Genetically modified biofuels are part of the energy transition and the replacement of fossil fuels, but there are many other important issues involved, such as how agricultural land should be used and how to regulate genetic modification. Researchers from the University of Vaasa and the University of Essex are studying how people feel about genetically modified crops and biofuels, as well as the legal issues, ways to reduce risks, and business models that are involved.
- **DEI4SME Session "Framework to manage social sustainability in Europe under political pressures against diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI)".** Sign up to be a part of this focus group discussion:
<https://link.webpolsurveys.com/S/EA0DDE878EEFDD71>

DEI4SME focus group discussion session aims to invite workshop participants to co-evaluate the proposed DEI-management framework, identifying both its strengths and potential shortcomings, particularly in the European and SME contexts. Developed through quantitative (surveys of individuals and SMEs) and qualitative research (case analysis and solution-building in hackathons), the framework to be discussed is based on data gathered from Finland, Lithuania, Austria, and Germany. Participants, including sustainability experts, company representatives, and underrepresented groups, will explore challenges to implementation, suggest improvements to enhance quality, relevance, and cross-country applicability, particularly in the uncertain times filled with political adversity towards DEI and sustainability as well as corporate social responsibility more generally. Conference participants are welcome to join and contribute to the discussion.

ERASMUS Partners Day & Institutional Partnership Discussions

This is a week when we will host both this conference and the Annual Meeting of the HERMES Universities Network. To make the most of both events, we would like to offer an opportunity for our ERASMUS, HERMES and bilateral partners to meet and explore ways to deepen and broaden links. We look to introduce our University of Vaasa, schools and programmes to you and start, continue or further develop institutional partnership discussions, gauging opportunities for collaboration, including Double/Triple/Joint degrees, BIPs, COILs, as well as opportunities for developing shared research and doctoral programmes.

Preliminary Programme

The workshop will be hosted by InnoLab and the University of Vaasa at our Palosaari Maritime Campus. The programme will start on **Monday, June 9th, at 12 noon.**

9 June	
12-1pm	Registration and light lunch
1-2pm	Opening session
2-3.30pm	Paper Development Sessions
3.30-4pm	Coffee
4-5.30pm	Paper Development Sessions
6pm	Reception and Dinner
10 June	
9.15-9.30am	Morning coffee
9.30-10.30am	Plenary Session: Towards Sustainable Business, Energy & Society
10.45am-	Paper Development Sessions
12.15-1.30pm	Lunch
1.30-3pm	Paper Development Sessions and Editor's Perspective Sessions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share insights on publication strategies • Discuss emerging research trends • Guide early-career researchers • Foster international collaboration
3–3.30pm	Coffee
3.30-5pm	Plenary
7pm	Dinner by the Waterfront
11 June	Collaboration opportunities &
9.30-10am	Morning coffee, followed by
10-12noon	Grant and research proposals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposal development workshops • Build research consortia for funding applications • Facilitate special issue discussions
12-1pm	Extended lunch
1-2pm	Introduction to the University of Vaasa – Schools and Programmes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of Schools and programmes offered

2-5pm	Institutional Partnership Opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Double/Triple degree, BIP, COIL Partnership discussions • Open to HERMES members, ERASMUS and bilateral partners
5-6.30pm	Networking Reception

Practicalities

- **Registration fees:** The registration fee is €70. In addition, participants will need to cover travel and accommodation costs. Please use this link to register: <https://crm.uwasa.fi/Events/139/Apply>
- **Accommodation:** Information available at https://www.tripadvisor.com/SmartDeals-g189951-Vaasa_Ostrobothnia-Hotel-Deals.html
- **Travel:** Vaasa (VAA) has an airport with connecting flights offered by Finnair via Helsinki and SAS via Stockholm. It is also possible to travel from Helsinki Vantaa airport to Vaasa by train, changing at Tikkurila, more info here: [Welcome on a journey together with us - VR](#)
- Information about **University and campus** available here: <https://www.uwasa.fi/en/university/welcome>
- **Tourist info:** [Home - Visit Vaasa | Vaasa](#) – Visit Finland [Your Official Finland Travel Guide | Visit Finland](#)
- If you have any questions, please contact the conference organisers: martin.meyer@uwasa.fi and ella.tolonen@uwasa.fi.

Welcome!

Our Trilateral Innovation Research Network



This network, jointly organised by three research teams based at universities across three countries and two continents—(1) Centre for Innovation Management Research (CIMR), University of London, Birkbeck, UK; (2) Kogod Business School (Kogod), The American University, USA; (3) InnoLab, University of Vaasa, Finland—aims to engage in a conversation about the conditions which influence sustainable innovation globally. Each of the network's four themes focuses on a particular aspect of the collaborative efforts needed to succeed in global sustainable innovation. The themes are as follows:

- Universities' roles in driving sustainability transitions
- Innovation clusters as engines of sustainable innovation in the context of global ecosystems
- How to succeed in global sustainable innovation in the context of digitalisation
- Productive interactions for sustainable innovation, at the regional, national and international levels

The goals and objectives of the network are to explore where different types of collaborations aimed at achieving sustainable innovation originate, how they are managed, what drives them, the leverage they create and utilize, and the results they produce. By understanding the factors that make collaborations for sustainable innovation successful, managers, policymakers, and other societal actors can work together to identify more sustainable innovations. Each event will bring together academics, practitioners, and policymakers, drawing on the extensive networks of each team to secure leading thinkers in the field.

HERMES Higher Education Network

HERMES

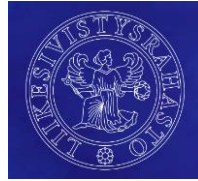
The HERMES network was founded in November 1997 as an initiative of the Ecole de Management Strasbourg (former IECS) of the Robert Schuman University in Strasbourg. Three years later, on March 31st 2000, the HERMES Charter was voted on by the General Assembly in a ceremony at the European Parliament. The participating universities work closely together in defining their study programs, exchanging professors and organising joint research projects. Each year, this network holds an Annual Conference at one of the partner universities, where common programs are defined and achievements are reported.

HERMES brings together academic institutions to create meaningful opportunities for students, researchers, and educators. Core activities include:

- International Exchange Programs: Facilitating mobility for students and faculty members to promote cultural exchange and collaborative learning.
- Joint and Double-Degree Programs: Offering innovative degree programs that combine the strengths of partner institutions, including dual degrees at bachelor's, master's, and doctoral levels.
- PhD and Research Workshops: Hosting workshops to support researchers and foster interdisciplinary collaboration.
- Student Online Workshops: Delivering virtual sessions on cutting-edge topics such as sustainability, business in emerging markets, and digital transformation.
- Research Funding and Grants: Providing seed grants and financial support for collaborative projects across institutions.
- Best Practices and Added Value Initiatives: Sharing innovative teaching methods, administrative strategies, and curricular developments among members.
- Green and Sustainable Initiatives: Encouraging eco-friendly practices such as reducing travel through online events and promoting sustainable management topics.

Thank you!

Liikesivistysrahasto (LSR)



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