

Paper and Idea Development Workshop – Call for Submissions

**Unlocking pathways for a sustainable future:
How can firms effectively transition to socially and environmentally sustainable practices?**

Thursday, March 21st, 2024

Centre for Sustainable Business, King's Business School,
King's College London

*We are inviting submissions for a **paper and idea development workshop** in celebration of the launch of the **Centre for Sustainable Business at King's Business School**. The aim of the workshop is not only to have the opportunity to **receive feedback** on ongoing work but also to **develop new ideas** for future research about unlocking pathways for a sustainable future. Participants will receive in-depth feedback from their peers to further develop their research papers for publication and meet new potential co-authors to develop future research ideas.*

The aim of the Centre for Sustainable Business is to address questions around *how* businesses can forge effective pathways to a sustainable future. We have now reached the point where our economic activities have done so much damage to the planet that the detrimental impacts of the climate emergency and biodiversity loss seem irreversible. Recent evidence shows that we have exceeded six of the nine planetary boundaries and are putting the future of our planet as a well-functioning system at risk.

The business world has woken up to the need to act. Across sectors, firms have made bold sustainability commitments, ranging from becoming net zero, climate positive, circular, to regenerative. While such ambitions are praiseworthy, there is still the question **how firms can develop and effectively implement transition pathways to socially and environmentally sustainable practices**. The aim of this paper and idea development workshop is to find answers to this pressing question.

We welcome conceptual and empirical papers that create novel insights into the following transition pathways for businesses:

- **Business model and ecosystem innovation**

A move to sustainable technologies is considered a key step in any transition pathway. However, firms will only make this move if they have the business models at hand that allow them to create and appropriate value from adopting these technologies. How effective are firms in innovating their business models and creating change in their ecosystems when implementing sustainability?

- **Behavioural change**
Sustainable business requires a change in mindset from all stakeholders involved. Leaders need to create a new purpose for their business, employees need to be (re)trained to acquire green skills, and consumers need to rethink their buying behaviour. How do firms with ambitious sustainability commitments create behavioural change among these important stakeholder groups and help them rethink their consideration of sustainability in their decision making?

- **A just transition**
Any transition is a bumpy road full of obstacles and twists which creates winners and losers along the way. A transition to sustainable practices will not be effective unless all parts of society see the benefits. Currently, sustainability is seen by some as a luxury for the well-off, though. How can businesses make sure that their transition is not only profit-driven but also addresses ethical considerations and is tailored to the specific needs of people across all parts of society, including the Global South?

- **A digital transition**
Digital technologies such as (generative) AI and data analysis have great potential to complement or even accelerate a transition to sustainable practices. While this concept of the twin transition holds much promise, there is far less insight into how effective the digital route is in practice. How are businesses effectively using digital technologies to develop solutions for sustainability problems? How do they ensure the accuracy and integrity of data and its use? Besides, what are the risks of adopting digital technologies in terms of creating new problems such as privacy concerns and bias and discrimination in decision making?

To apply for participation in the workshop, please submit a short work-in-progress paper by sending it to sustainablebusiness@kcl.ac.uk, before the deadline of **January 31st, 2024**. Only submissions meeting the following criteria will be considered for the workshop:

- Short papers must be work in progress, focus on the ‘how question’ of transition pathways to sustainable business, and fall broadly within one of the four themes.
- Paper length must be between 3,000 and 5,000 words, including references, tables, and figures.

The workshop will consist of two parts. In the morning, participants will work in groups and receive feedback on their short papers from their peers. Instead of standard presentations, the workshop will adopt a format that maximises receiving constructive feedback. In the afternoon, participants will take part in an idea-generating workshop where they can meet new co-authors and develop exciting new research ideas.

There is no workshop fee and lunch will be provided. There is also the opportunity to attend the official launch event of the Centre of Sustainable Business in the evening. Costs for travel and stay is for participants’ own expense. Please note that due to space constraints and the aim to stimulate feedback, discussion and creativity, there will be limited spaces available.