



1. EXPLORING THE SYSTEM LEVEL

1.2 ECOSYSTEMS IN SUPPORT OF SUSTAINABILITY

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The ecosystem concept has gained a lot of popularity in the last decade (Audretsch et al., 2018). Ecosystem thinking provides insights on how different stakeholders can be aligned, interact and collaborate to gain competitive advantage, boost innovation and increase business productivity (Adner, 2017; Jacobides et al., 2018). Ecosystems also support business growth thanks to the variety and complementarity of actors, their interactions and coordinated efforts to mobilize multiple resources (Neumeier & Corbett, 2017; Roundy, et al., 2017; Spiegel & Harrison, 2018). Although ecosystems still lack conceptual and theoretical clarity (Wurth et al., 2021), ecosystems are an ideal unit of analysis to answer sustainability questions, due to their holistic and systemic properties (Henriques et al., 2022).

The new decade is continuing in an unprecedented way due to the strikes of different conflicts (i.e. Ukraine, Israel), and the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, which creates a lot of uncertainty, high level of inflation and more inequalities. World leaders

advocate for more coordinated efforts to rapidly address these challenges. Several organizations, like the World Economic Forum (World Economic Forum , 2020), have started to create supportive structures and programs to support entrepreneurs around the globe with financial and non-financial support to develop their businesses and increase their impact. Yet, such efforts seem to be insufficient, and more support and cross sectoral partnerships are urgently needed.

In efforts to tackle sustainability problems, on one hand we are looking to create sustainable ecosystems (Theodoraki et al., 2017). And on the other hand, well-functioning ecosystems get tested in their capacity to react to the next global crisis and continue addressing sustainability challenges (unemployment, hunger, health crisis, exacerbation of poverty, among many others). Ecosystems, therefore, need to prove efficient by mobilizing flexible and complementary resources (funding, infrastructure, knowledge) but also by self-adapting their governance (Acs et al., 2017), policies (Stam, 2015), boundaries (Audretsch et al., 2019), interrelationships (Stam & van de Ven, 2021), and their own ecosystem culture and resilience capacity (Roundy et al., 2017). Despite the hit, we are already seeing how entrepreneurs, for example, are using their innovations to alleviate the pandemic effects and supporting locals to adapt to the new situation. Some of these entrepreneurs are benefiting from support provided by multiple actors working across different ecosystems.

This session aims at attracting scholars to discuss their current research on how to build ecosystems in support of sustainability. We will focus our discussion on how to build supportive ecosystems for the new business models, including their new challenges global pressing challenges (such as geopolitical conflicts, wars, COVID19 Pandemic and natural disasters). We welcome papers from the different methodological background - including literature reviews, theoretical-, conceptual- and empirical papers. These papers can address one or more of the following topics, which is not an exhaustive list:

- What type of support activities have we seen in well-functioning ecosystems during this global crisis?

What are the key success factors observed in well-functioning ecosystems?

- How do we build more supportive ecosystems for sustainability?

- What are the most prominent actors in Ecosystems to support sustainability during the post-pandemic era?

- How do government and other public institutions influence the ecosystems in support of Sustainability?

- What are the main lessons learnt from the different ecosystems around the globe in response to the current crisis?

- Do we need to rethink on a new ecosystem structure (or framework) including new actors, attributes or ecosystem dynamics that are emerging now?

- How are the ecosystem boundaries redefined during this global pandemic?

- What role do universities assume in the ecosystem to support sustainability in the post-corona time?

- How can ecosystem actors support entrepreneurs to build resilience and increase their impact in this new era?

This track seeks to involve in the discussion papers developed by senior and young academics, students, entrepreneurs and practitioners. Such a variety of profiles and backgrounds will be a good mix in the audience to open a dynamic discussion and to provide relevant feedback to the ideas and work of all presenters.

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