Special Issue
Small Business Economics: An Entrepreneurship Journal (SBEJ)

“The antecedents and impact of sustainable entrepreneurship: an international perspective”

The purpose of this special issue is to explore the extent of the economic and social impact that sustainable businesses can have and their role in promoting positive change. By gaining a deeper understanding of sustainable entrepreneurship in different contexts, we can improve the efficacy of entrepreneurs and governmental policies by influencing the actions of other stakeholders, all with the aim of fostering a more sustainable entrepreneurial society.

KEY DEADLINES
Submission of extended abstracts: March 31, 2024
Submission of full papers: October 31, 2024
See page 4 for a complete timeline and submission instructions.

EDITORIAL TEAM
JACOB HÖRISCH, LEUPHANA UNIVERSITY LUNEBURG, Germany.
(jacob.hoerisch@leuphana.de)

IÑAKI PEÑA-LEGAZKUE, DEUSTO BUSINESS SCHOOL, Spain.
(ipena@deusto.es)

ROY THURIK, MONTPELLIER BUSINESS SCHOOL, France, EMERITUS PROFESSOR AT ERASMUS SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AND THE FREE UNIVERSITY, The Netherlands. (thurik@ese.eur.nl)
The field of entrepreneurship and small business research is increasingly recognizing the significance of sustainability-related concerns. International organizations like the UN and the European Commission, along with national governments, have set ambitious targets for 2030 to address challenges like climate change, planetary boundaries, and social issues exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic (Bacq & Lumpkin, 2021; Sanders, 2022; Audretsch et al., 2023). Sustainable entrepreneurship holds the potential to make substantial contributions to achieving these goals (Schaltegger et al., 2018). Sustainable entrepreneurs often identify opportunities within environmentally and socially relevant market failures (Dean and McMullen, 2007). They can play a pivotal role in immediate crisis recovery, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, by creating job opportunities and fostering economic growth (Bacq & Lumpkin, 2021). Additionally, sustainable entrepreneurs can influence policies and regulations related to environmental and social concerns, particularly in emerging economies (Schaltegger et al., 2018). Thus, by collaborating with various stakeholders, sustainable entrepreneurs can create an entrepreneurial ecosystem capable of driving positive change on a broader scale (Pankov et al., 2021; Volkmann et al., 2021; Bertello et al., 2022). Despite the relevance of this topic, there is a lack of research on the factors that enable sustainable entrepreneurial behavior and the contribution of new ventures to sustainable development.

Over the past two decades, there has been a significant increase in research on sustainable entrepreneurship through various special issues. These issues initially focused on the ethical perspective and environmental dimension of entrepreneurship (Harris et al., 2009; Hall et al., 2010; Kickul et al., 2013; Branzei et al., 2018; Demirel et al., 2019). Recently, the SBEJ journal has published several special issues that delve into the relationship between context and entrepreneurship. One of these issues, led by Belitski et al. (2022), investigates how macro- and microeconomic factors from the COVID-19 pandemic impact entrepreneurship. Audretsch et al. (2022) also explore how radical innovation and entrepreneurship can stimulate regional growth. Furthermore, the nexus of contextualization of entrepreneurship and sustainability is examined in the special issue on sustainable entrepreneurial ecosystems by Volkmann et al. (2021), while Audretsch et al. (2023) highlight the interplay between societal values, sustainability, and entrepreneurship in their recent call for an ongoing special issue.

In our proposed special issue, we take a different perspective and focus on the enabling factors of the sustainable orientation of new ventures and the impact that they generate. Recent evidence shows that sustainable entrepreneurs face important challenges such as limitations, trade-offs, and tensions that can cause them to shift their mission and values (Hoogendoorn et al., 2019; Rashid, 2022; Audretsch et al., 2023). The present special issue aims to provide new insights into the antecedents of sustainable behavior of new firms and the economic and social impact that these ventures create in various markets and contexts.
RESEARCH AREAS

To ensure that sustainable entrepreneurship has a positive impact on sustainable development, there must be certain factors in place that encourage sustainable behavior among entrepreneurs. These factors are largely influenced by the institutional environment, which includes both formal and informal rules and norms (i.e., such as the social context, scope of activities, and network of social relationships). While the main unit of analysis and focus of this special issue is primarily the individual firm, it is important to acknowledge that firms interact with other agents in order to transform the context. Institutional Theory provides a valuable framework for evaluating the sustainability orientation of not only new ventures, but also other stakeholders such as industry, government, and educational institutions. In the present special issue, we seek contributions that examine the sustainable practices of new businesses from an international and comparative viewpoint, considering how institutional pressures, national policies, and cultures affect sustainable entrepreneurial behavior (Volkmann et al., 2021; Porter & van der Linde, 1995; Bischoff, 2021).

Since entrepreneurs are often considered to act in their own self-interest, it is crucial to investigate how their self-interest can be reconciled with societally felt sustainability goals. Social Agency Theory may be helpful to give substance to this investigation by a thorough description of the interests, their overlaps and conflicts, and of ways they can be made visible. This is bound to lead to better entrepreneurship strategies as well as to better societal views on how entrepreneurship is crucial to reaching sustainability goals.

POTENTIAL RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Small Business Economics: An Entrepreneurship Journal (SBEJ) is dedicated to publishing original, robust theoretical and empirical research that explores all facets of entrepreneurship and small business economics. Our special issue places a strong emphasis on the practical relevance of research findings for scholars, practitioners, and policymakers, with a specific focus on sustainable entrepreneurship and its role in advancing sustainable development.

Potential topics for contributions may include, but are not limited to:

- The impact of sustainable entrepreneurship on sustainable development, encompassing issues such as:
  - Methods for measuring impact;
  - Strategies for increasing and scaling impact;
  - Contributions to solving environmental challenges;
  - Contributions to addressing social issues;
  - Contributions to regional economic development;
  - Understanding the mechanisms through which sustainable entrepreneurship generates impact;
  - The impact of sustainable entrepreneurs in developing economies.
• An international perspective on sustainable entrepreneurship, exploring topics such as:
  o Cross-country comparisons of the antecedents of sustainable entrepreneurship;
  o Identification of factors that influence sustainable entrepreneurship internationally;
  o Examination of characteristics that distinguish sustainable entrepreneurship in different regions;
  o Analysis of how sustainable entrepreneurship and its contextual factors have evolved over time in various international settings.

• Institutional influences on sustainable entrepreneurship, such as:
  o The increasing sustainability orientation among competitors, government, industry, and customers as antecedents to sustainable entrepreneurial behavior;
  o Normative institutional pressures that impact entrepreneurs' perceptions of sustainable behavior;
  o Cognitive institutional influences on sustainability-oriented entrepreneurial behavior.

• Applying and further developing theories to better understand the entrepreneurs’ motives such as:
  o Social Agency Theory;
  o Existentialism.

COMPLETE TIMELINE

• **March 31, 2024**: Submission of extended abstracts for the early-stage Paper Development Workshop (PDW) to be held in University of Deusto, San Sebastián, Spain. Submissions of extended abstracts (with research question, hypotheses, method, main findings and contribution) to the PDW should be emailed with the subject line “Special Issue on Sustainable Entrepreneurship” to Iñaki Peña (ipena@deusto.es)

• **April 15, 2024**: Announcement of selected abstracts for the PDW after Initial screening by Guest Editors

• **Late July, 2024**: PDW Workshop on "The role of Sustainable Entrepreneurship in shaping a new context" to be held in University of Deusto, San Sebastian, Spain. The guest editors will invite prospective author(s) to join the workshop (Participation in person).
• **October 31, 2024:** Submission of papers to double-blind refereeing for the Special Issue (submissions of scholars “participating” and “not-participating” in the PDW are welcome)

• **December 15, 2024:** Expected decisions on the first submission

• **December 15, 2025:** Expected Final Decisions

**SUBMISSION DETAILS**

The guest editors will manage the editorial and review process of the SBEJ Special Issue submissions. All papers will be subject to the standard referee process of Small Business Economics, and will undergo a final review by the Editorial Board after conditional acceptance by the guest editors. Submissions must be original, unpublished works that are not concurrently under review for publication elsewhere. All submissions should conform to the SBEJ manuscript submission guidelines available at [https://www.springer.com/journal/11187/submission-guidelines](https://www.springer.com/journal/11187/submission-guidelines)

The PDW workshop aims to provide an opportunity to meet the guest editors and potential other contributors to the special issue and present initial ideas and research plans. The workshop will provide an opportunity to gain feedback, refine ideas, and strengthen the theoretical framing of the proposed contributions.

Participation in the PDW does not guarantee publication in the special issue. Also, participation in the PDW is not a requirement to submit a paper to the special issue. The Editor-in-Chief of the *Small Business Economics Journal* will oversee the final set of accepted papers prior to publication.

• **Paper Submission:** Please email your Extended Abstract to ipena@deusto.es (with the subject line “Special Issue on Sustainable Entrepreneurship”) no later than **March 31, 2024.**

**SELECTED REFERENCES**


