

Call for “Research Synthesis” Proposals:

“Accelerating Researcher-Practitioner Collaborations in Sustainability Research”

**The Alliance for Research on Corporate Sustainability (ARCS)
and
Society and Organizations (S&O) Center at HEC Paris**

October 11-12, 2019 - Paris, France

Dear colleagues,

HEC Paris Society and Organizations (S&O) Center and the Alliance for Research on Corporate Sustainability (ARCS) cordially invite proposals for a workshop on “Accelerating Researcher-Practitioner Collaborations in Sustainability Research”. All members of the ARCS community and beyond are welcome to submit.

Workshop Description: Collaborations between researchers and practitioners are needed to address sustainability issues at a global scale. This workshop seeks to bring together high-level scholars and practitioners to foster new connections and inspire joint collaborations.

Topics: The S&O team and ARCS invites individual researchers, research teams, and centers to propose research syntheses along the following topics/questions:

- *Governance & Organizational Design for Sustainability:* Which organizational forms are best suited for delivering a combination of economic and social benefits? Are certified B-corporations the right way forward? Are there better alternatives? Should firms use Foundations instead? What are the advantages and disadvantages of these alternative organizational forms?
- *Sustainability and Employees:* Does sustainability help firms attract and retain employees? Are there other effects on employees as well (e.g. motivation, innovation, ...)? Does the mistrust of big firms expressed by Millennials and younger generations drive these large corporations to shift their missions, purposes, and practices?
- *Managing the Sustainable Organization:* How should firms model and assess value-sharing at the organizational and national level? Which labor contracts and employee policies should firms choose in order to create momentum for business sustainability within large and global firms?
- *Sharing Economy and Sustainability:* Is the sharing economy good for sustainability? What are the environmental and social impacts of these new platforms? Do self-employment, platformization

of competencies (expert knowledge offered through platforms), and “uberization” represent threats or opportunities for large corporations in their tackling of sustainability issues?

- *Valuing Social Businesses:* Social businesses generate intangible benefits (e.g., reputation) that are difficult to value financially for a firm. What are the direct and indirect financial effects of social businesses? How can they be measured?
- *Sustainability and the Role of Governments:* What is the role of governments in driving market transformation toward sustainability? Voluntary market-driven measures often attract sustainability leaders, but can voluntary measures improve the performance of the laggards? Does greater transparency around corporate political contributions and lobbying offer an alternative way forward?
- *Financing Sustainability:* A growing number of firms seek to increase their social impact and reduce their environmental footprint. Given that, how should companies finance their social and environmental initiatives? With their own money only? Through agreement with public institutions and creative financial solutions such as Social Impact Bonds, Green Bonds? With which returns? For whom?
- *Communication of Sustainability:* How is sustainability communicated to stakeholders? What role does communication play in influencing product and service consumption related to environmental and social sustainability? How does social media change the way information is communicated?
- *Circular Economy:* Are there effective models of collaborations between stakeholders to favor a circular economy? How can firms partner with consumers or retailers for recycling their products? How can firms integrate sustainability in the design of their products?
- *Experimental Research and Firms:* How does collaboration between firms and researchers work? What are some successful models? How can experimental research help firms?

Proposal Submission Process, Funding, Deadlines, and Deliverables: Each accepted proposal will be funded 7,500 USD (or similar amount for travel/accommodation costs). The S&O Center will compensate the submitting teams for their efforts either in advance or if more convenient after the workshop.

1) 30 April 2019 - Proposal Submission: Each submission should be no longer than 3,000 words and include:

- An “executive summary” providing an idea of the literature review (30-40 references) that will be conducted on the chosen question, and the core messages from research that will be communicated to practitioners during the Workshop. If the proposed issues and challenges

listed above coincide only partially to your expertise domain, feel free to submit a proposal centered on your question and explain how it connects with one of the issues listed above.

- A suggestion for a method/methodology that is useful and relevant for practice in studying the sustainability challenges (e.g., interviews, experiments, fsQCA, matching techniques, etc.).
- Suggestion of a corporate partner who will join the research team and participate in the event in Paris. Please indicate the name of the company and the names of the potential guests and participants to the event.
- Timeline, researchers involved, budget details about how the 7,500 USD will be used.

2) 15 May 2019 – Decision on Research Proposal and Evaluation: A committee composed of key members of the S&O Center and ARCS will evaluate the submitted proposals. Evaluation criteria include; understanding of the proposed topic and knowledge of the relevant literature, appropriateness of proposed research method, involvement of practitioners, and ability to execute rigorous research and provide impactful outcomes.

3) 15 September 2019 - Deliverables: Please note that a representative of the accepted research-practitioner team is expected to be present at the workshop in October and to submit a final research synthesis report. The final report should consist of a 20-page (minimum length) synthesis of stylized facts about the question chosen, and must address practitioners, avoid academic jargon, summarize key lessons, mistakes (conceptual or method) to be avoided, direction and magnitude of key effects. In addition, for the Method session that will take place during the event, a slide deck that presents the method, its interest, its best usages, and its limitations will be required. The final reports will be disseminated worldwide to scholars and managers through ARCS and its partner institutions.

4) 11-12 October 2019 - Workshop, Venue, and Preliminary Program: This workshop will take place on 11-12 October 2019 in the center of Paris. It will start on October 11 with an informal networking lunch, followed by presentations of the various research projects and methods, plenary and breakout sessions, as well as an informal dinner and cocktail networking event. On October 12, the workshop will continue with morning sessions for academics and practitioners to synthesize prior discussions and reinforce new collaborations. Coffee and snacks will be provided.

Workshop Participants and Guest Speakers: We intend to bring together scholars of leading academic institutions and high-level practitioners of Global Fortune 500 firms to accelerate the formation of practical and rigorous sustainability research collaborations. Part of the workshop includes guest speakers from both practice and academia who will share their perspectives on the various challenges as well as best practices in researcher-practitioner collaborations.

Local Workshop Organizers: Headed by Rodolphe (Rudy) Durand (Founder and Academic Director of the S&O Center) and Benedicte Faivre-Tavignot (Executive Director of the S&O Center), the S&O Center is an interdisciplinary organization whose members research and teach on the contemporary societal challenges that organizations face. Since November 2016, the S&O Center coordinates a collaborative researcher-practitioner effort called the *Movement for Business & Social Impact (MS*BI)*. The MS*BI movement consists of research liaisons with firms such as Danone, Schneider Electric, Groupe Renault, Sodexo, and Veolia, to advance sustainability in a scientifically rigorous manner. Building on this experience, the S&O Center is keen to help spread the benefits of this researcher-practitioner collaboration model, produce research targeting leading scholarly journals, and shape practice sustainably.

Contact: Please direct any questions and submit your proposals to Verena (patock@hec.fr).

We are looking forward to receiving your research proposals and putting together a fruitful workshop.

Best wishes,

Rodolphe and Benedicte