

Proposal special track IMP 2026

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Network effect on sustainability, the role of actors and legislation.

Business relationship (in networks or ecosystems) are grounded in the economic principles like independency or transaction cost economics (Williamson, 1986). Together with a dominant 'lineair' flow of goods and services from upstream producers to downstream end-users, actors are dealing with 'sustainability' and 'circularity' from their own (selfish) perspective in the network. Currently, building a sustainable world means doing better in your own silo. In this special (2026) track, we like to specifically address the network effect on environmental issues and improvements.

Initiatives like (amongst many others) the butterfly diagram (MacArthur, 2019) try to enhance the network perspective, in order to encourage circular interactions and interventions. Next to that, legislation (including directives, like the EU Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive, CSRD) tries to stimulate the exchange of information (and responsibility) amongst network partners. These stimuli could on the one hand beautifully contribute to actual improvement of the environmental effects in the network and on the other hand build a solid foundation for real network thinking in the business models of the partners in the network. This could lead to new dynamic approaches to economic exchange in the network and inter-organizational collaborations, resulting in positive effects on sustainability.

This special track invites researchers to present their work on the network effect on building a sustainable world. We prefer research that includes the effects of actors and legislation in the business network.

The proposed themes include (but are not limited to) the following:

- ☺ Sustainable network thinking versus actor's financial optimization (TCE)
- ☺ Lessons from sharing economy initiatives
- ☺ B2B service networks, including Servitization
- ☺ Alliances, co-operatives, other formal forms of collaboration
- ☺ Mobility networks (incl. aviation)
as transportation is inherently contributing to pollution, how can interactions in the network contribute to reducing the collective footprint

References:

MacArthur, E., (2019) Circular Economy Systems Diagram, www.ellenmacarthusfoundation.org
Williamson, O. (1986) Transaction-cost economics: The governance of contractual relations. In J. Barney & W. Ouchi (Eds.), *Organizational economics* (pp. 98–129). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.