

CALL FOR PAPERS

ABIS Colloquium 2023

Navigating Multiple Transitions | 14-15 November 2023, Warsaw

Our world is becoming increasingly complex, putting the resilience of our socio-economic systems and sustainability commitments to the test. Recent events such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine, and energy and cost-of-living crises have highlighted these challenges (Allam et al., 2022). Furthermore, the devastating impacts of climate change on communities and organizations are already evident. As a result, there is a growing commitment among organizations to ensure a sustainable future with a focus on climate protection and climate justice, which will drive significant structural changes in the years to come. This applies to individuals, projects, organizations and cities, companies, including both large corporations and small startups.

We are currently undergoing multiple transitions. These include the transition from sustainability as a voluntary approach to a legally binding framework (Kemfert & Schmarz, 2019) with precise standards, the transition expanding financial reporting to sustainability reporting, and the transition from traditional technology to AI-based solutions that are influencing all organizations, including academia. Another transition is the shift from the old hierarchical system to an ethical, diversified, and gender-balanced organizational culture based on equity and inclusion (Currie et al., 2017). Radical changes are on the horizon in every industry, such as the implementation of circular models in the construction sector, the acceleration of the transition to sustainable energy based on renewable sources, and the ongoing transition towards regenerative agriculture in the farming sector.

These transitions, often seen as two sides of the same coin, present considerable challenges when put into practice. While the twin green and digital transitions proposed by the EU ideally reinforce each other, they can also clash, for example because digital technologies are resource intensive. Decarbonization is urgently needed to tackle climate change, but must be wisely implemented, limiting their adverse impacts. These transitions must happen quickly, but they must also be fair and inclusive. The complex challenges confronting the global communities require profound reflection and purposeful action. How do we manage these multiple transitions? How do we prioritize conflicting objectives, urgent pressures, and long-term ambitions? What kind of future can be created through these multiple transitions? What are the responsibilities and implications for different stakeholders?

The integration of digital technologies into sustainable practices brings forth significant complexities and risks. Effectively managing the digital transition necessitates organizational leadership to demonstrate bold decision-making and implement actions that contribute to attaining a sustainable competitive advantage. In such circumstances, organizational leaders are compelled to make pivotal decisions, taking calculated risks while hoping for favourable outcomes (Rosário & Dias, 2022).

Is it possible to integrate conflicting priorities into a new management system? Some authors propose the integration of sustainability, responsibility, and ethics in managerial practices under the label of responsible management. Research in this field not only focuses on the individual domains of ethics, responsibility, and sustainability but also on the dynamics between them. The aim is to shift the focus away from the human being as the main source of meaning and action towards examining how ethics, responsibility, and sustainability are intertwined in materiality and discursivity of situated practices (Gherardi & Laasch, 2022).

Other researchers have been already exploring innovative solutions implemented by companies navigating multiple transitions within the framework of a regenerative economy. This represents a fundamental shift away from an anthropocentric worldview. Organizations with regenerative business models prioritize planetary health and societal wellbeing. They create and deliver value at multiple stakeholder levels, including nature, societies, customers, suppliers and partners, shareholders and investors, and employees. They do so by promoting regenerative leadership, establishing co-creative partnerships with nature, and upholding justice and fairness. By capturing value through multi-capital accounting, they aim to have a net positive impact across all stakeholder levels (Konietzko et al., 2023).

Transition is important not only from the end point perspective but also from the process perspective. The value of different decarbonization strategies in response to the climate crisis is a topic of significant discussion in academic literature (Emenekwe et al., 2022). Businesses are categorized as adopting either reactive or proactive approaches. However, the factors driving proactivity towards climate action are still subject to debate. Recent research papers have shown that companies in the oil sector are pursuing various decarbonization strategies to address climate change (Boon, 2019). The companies communicate similar goals and intended actions, but their levels of success in implementing them vary. It is important to note that most companies are aware of the pending end of the hegemony of fossil fuels, which will make their businesses increasingly vulnerable to growing governmental and societal pressures (Vieira et al., 2023).

The aim of the Colloquium is to discuss how companies active in the transition process address global ESG challenges and how they cope with transdisciplinary complexity as well as unusually extended time horizons. Facing a transforming financial system and a new paradigm of sustainable value creation with additional physical and transformation risks (Campiglio et al., 2022) on one side, and valuable opportunities on the other side, many new questions arise. How do they go from “inside-out” approach (risk management) to outside-in approach (impact management) taking into account double materiality in the European Sustainability Reporting Standard?

While both the academic literature and business practice offer evidence for conflicting priorities in sustainability actions, the concept of multiple transitions, in particular twin and just transitions, remain the unexplored topic. Furthermore, various organizations, including universities and business schools, shall also undergo a radical education and research transformation in the face of polycrisis (Loorbach et al., 2023). How, then, should the methods and content of teaching change? Will graduates be better prepared to navigate ethically, responsibly and effectively in multiple transitions? Additionally, the inclusion of diverse stakeholders in this discourse is crucial.

ABIS is excited to dive deep into these topics with experts from business, academia and policy from our network and beyond during our 22nd Annual Colloquium on “Navigating multiple transitions”.

Therefore, we invite academic researchers and practitioners to submit papers on:

1. Decarbonization strategies and policies
2. Closing the loop, resource efficiency and just transition
3. Diversity and inclusion within the context of multiple transitions
4. Sustainable finance: from regulation to value creation
5. Industrial Organization (IO) of sustainable manufacturing transition

6. Ethical framework for digital technologies
7. Key AI-driven digital technologies for sustainable transitions
8. Impact measurement and management
9. The use of digitalization and AI-based solutions for sustainability-related goals
10. Transformative education: impacting mindsets and structures

We invite you to join us at the 22nd ABIS Annual Colloquium as we explore these pressing issues and examine the role of businesses and business schools in navigating the complexities of multiple transitions. Together, we can drive meaningful change and contribute to a sustainable future.

Types of Submission

We welcome high-quality submissions which advance our knowledge on the abovementioned topics. We do not favour any special theoretical perspectives or methodological approaches. The types of acceptable submissions include, but are not limited to:

- Theoretical and empirical papers
- Literature and practice reviews
- Qualitative, quantitative, mixed-methods research
- Experimental research
- Single, multiple, large-sample case studies

Publication process

The collected papers will be published in an ABIS Special Issue. ABIS is currently determining the most suited publisher and journal based on impact factors, speed of publication cycle and accessibility.

Submissions

- **Extended paper abstracts of 700-1000 words must be submitted by 15 October 2023** by sending them to contributions@abis-global.org
- All authors will be informed by 25 October on the decision to accept the abstract for the conference presentation
- Authors of selected abstracts will have the opportunity to present their research at the 22nd ABIS Annual Colloquium 2023 on 14 and 15 November at Kozminski University
- The submission deadline for full papers for the Special Issue is 31 January 2024.

Selection process

The selection process will consider both the academic quality of the paper as well as the contribution to the general theme of the Colloquium.

Deadlines

- October 15, 2023: Submission of **paper abstracts**
- October 25, 2023: Response of **acceptance of the abstracts** to the authors
- November 14-15, 2023: Paper presentation at the 22nd ABIS Annual Colloquium 2023
- January 31, 2024: **Submission of full paper**
- February 28, 2024: Response to authors about **acceptance of papers for peer review**

Further information

- Please send your proposals and questions to: contributions@abis-global.org

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