



Innovation Track

Track Chairs

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Track description:

The overall conference theme identifies the major challenges we face in achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals, suggesting that these will not be attainable without comprehensively reimagining business and management. At the heart of this is a concern with the guiding purpose of business, but also the wider activities of the multiple organisations that constitute our societies - government at different levels, civil society organisations, charities, social enterprises, NGOs, community groups, educational establishments, etc. - as not all management is about business. The study of innovation is centrally placed to understand the multi-level and systemic processes of transformation that are needed to achieve change. However, the purpose and wider outcomes of innovation have typically not received the same amount of attention as the process. This is despite definitions of innovation long acknowledging a value dimension - innovation is not just about imagining and implementing change, but crucially generating and capturing value from that change. However, value has tended to be equated mainly with financial value, providing a rather narrow prism through which to judge the benefits or otherwise of innovation. Innovation can certainly be a force for good, as exemplified by the rapid development of effective vaccines for COVID-19, advances in renewable energy, or increases in living standards. It can also be more destructive, directly so in the case of military technologies, but also more indirectly, through the negative side-effects of innovation-driven production and consumption growth. There are also crucial issues about the distribution of the costs and benefits of innovation. These make straightforward evaluations of the wider value of innovation difficult. For example, the successes of COVID-19 vaccine development have been accompanied by 'vaccine nationalism' and unequal availability and the benefits are not uniform. In short, the outcomes of innovation are often complex and ambivalent, and we need a suitable focus and vocabulary to deal with this.

To help understand and promote the role of innovation as a force for good, it is important to have a more developed value framework that considers not only financial, but also social and environmental dimensions. There have been crucial steps in this direction in innovation studies, with a broadening out of the focus from business to encompass a wider range of organisations and settings shaped by different decision-making and incentive structures. This further highlights the importance of understanding the different institutional and governance

arrangements shaping innovation and their implications for overall outcomes. A key question is whether existing arrangements are able to support sustainable and inclusive development and manage the tensions between growth and sustainability. If not, what are the conditions able to promote their required transformation and help system-level innovations that are more closely linked to positive outcomes? We are keen to establish productive dialogue in the track about these issues and consider the part innovation scholars, through their research, learning, and teaching activities, can play in identifying and promoting such change?

We invite papers from all perspectives, including those that are optimistic about the capacity of innovation to effect positive transformation, as well as those that are more sceptical or critical. We welcome contributions across the range of innovation types and activities, from the technological to the organisational, as well as those driven by different value frameworks, not only economic, but also political, social, and environmental. We also encourage studies focusing on a range of geographical locations and scales. Papers may be empirical or theoretical and a range of methodological approaches are encouraged.

Possible and by no means restrictive themes are as follows:

- The socio-economic shaping of innovation
- The implications of innovation for social and economic development and the generation and distribution of wealth and wellbeing
- Innovation in the digital economy and the post-COVID organisation
- Innovation in high-tech or high-growth industries and (large or small) firms
- Innovation in low- or medium-tech sectors and (large or small) firms
- Innovation in services, knowledge intensive services and creative industries
- Open Innovation in both large and small firms
- Social innovation and innovation in social enterprises and other not-for-profit organisations
- Innovation and entrepreneurship: management practices and policy challenges
- User-led and community-based innovation and crowdsourcing and crowdfunding activities
- Eco-innovation and the environmental challenge
- Intra- and inter-organisational networks and collaborative innovation
- University-industry links and innovation
- The role of groups and peer-to-peer interaction in innovation
- Innovation in Strategic Alliances and Joint Ventures
- 'Illegal' innovation such as cyber-crime and hacker innovations
- Practice-based theories of innovation, knowledge, and learning
- Innovation, dynamic capabilities and routines
- National and regional innovation systems
- Policy experimentation and accountability – false failures and false successes
- Innovation metrics and indicators
- Innovation in newly emerging and developing economies