

Regional Science Dialogues for Peace
and Sustainable Development

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Special Session Proposal

Fostering Sustainable Regional Development: The Central Role of Entrepreneurship and Policy

Organisers:

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Abstract

The understanding of the role of entrepreneurship in societal progression has undergone substantial transformation in recent years. While entrepreneurship was for a long time mainly understood as an employment opportunity or an essential vector of innovation, it is nowadays more and more viewed as a key driver in tackling contemporary challenges, with a particular emphasis on fostering sustainable development (i.e. development that cares about people, planet, and prosperity within an intergenerational perspective). This paradigm shift leads scholars and policy makers to question existing entrepreneurial policies and develop new strategies.

Despite the considerable advances in our understanding of entrepreneurship and associated policy measures over the years, the task of utilizing this knowledge to formulate an effective entrepreneurial policy that prioritizes sustainable regional development remains largely unresolved and ambiguous. An example of our ignorance is that even the central question of whether policies should be narrowly targeted or broadly supportive remains a topic of ongoing debate and lacks a definitive resolution. What are the missing pieces that hinder our progress in this area?

In brief, entrepreneurship is supposed to play a key role in the Big Transformation toward sustainable development, but effective policy formulation remains unresolved or ambiguous. By fostering an expansive dialogue and exploring innovative perspectives, we seek to fill existing gaps and pave the way for more effective entrepreneurial policies that align with the imperative for sustainable development.

Notably, the inaugural edition of this special session took place during the ERSA Congress 2022 in Pécs, and we are now proud to present the third edition. Enthusiastically awaiting cutting-edge contributions, we welcome submissions that could be theoretical and/or empirical, positive and/or normative, comparative, or presenting evaluation results of a regional entrepreneurial policy. In emphasizing the importance of evidence-based analyses, we encourage submissions in which the role of entrepreneurship and regional development policy for increased sustainability are central elements in the research question and receive special attention.

Some potential questions include:

- What entrepreneurial policy measures to stimulate regional development are appropriate; under what kinds of regional and framework conditions?
- What might be the principles of an entrepreneurial policy that specifically seeks to address a sustainable contribution to regional development?
- How can policy improve the quality of regional start-ups, considering sustainable development?
- What policies and measures can be designed to foster entrepreneurial behavior of incumbent companies?
- Why is entrepreneurship rather productive and transformative (toward sustainability) in some regions, whereas the transformative effects of entrepreneurship do not work sufficiently well in other regions?
- What is the role of institutional framework conditions for the effectiveness of local sustainable entrepreneurship policies?
- What strategies and measures are effective in developing entrepreneurial ecosystems that are conducive to sustainable regional development?
- How can policy initiatives effectively foster collaboration between diverse stakeholders, including government, businesses, and local communities, to promote sustainable entrepreneurship within a region?
- What are the characteristics of an entrepreneurial ecosystem that promote innovativeness and adaptability of regional businesses?
- What strategies can be implemented in the policy framework to foster entrepreneurship that is not only innovative but also beneficial for sustainability?