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## **Special Issue on Networking Stakeholders for Regions**

### **Development: The Role of Industries**

#### **Call for Papers**

The rapid advancements in technology that define our era are predominantly concentrated in developed countries. Many of the significant disparities we observe among countries today can be traced back to the early stages of the first industrial revolution (Lazzeroni, 2016; Scott, 2001). Furthermore, each subsequent wave of progress has contributed to a widening gap between nations, leading to unequal access to products, social services, and public goods. This inequality encompasses areas such as education, healthcare, ICT infrastructure, and electrification (UNCTAD, 2021). However, certain countries, particularly in East Asia, have managed to narrow this gap considerably through processes of technological learning, imitation, and innovation.

The central regions, which possess greater human and material resources, including those for scientific research, experience significant benefits from economies of agglomeration, specialization, and diversification, as well as from knowledge spill-over effects (Leamer & Storper, 2001; Verspagen, 1997). Conversely, peripheral areas, such as developing countries, face challenges in achieving the critical mass required for generating innovation and often miss out on knowledge spill-over effects. In these contexts, the lack of sufficient aggregation, limited economies of agglomeration, and externalities often outweigh the potential returns on high investments in research and development (R&D). This situation leads some researchers to question the viability of investing in R&D in peripheral areas and developing countries (Rodríguez-Pose, 2001; Rodríguez-Pose & Crescenzi, 2008).

However, despite the significant inclination of large urban agglomerations to generate and disseminate innovation, certain companies situated in suburban areas have achieved commendable levels of innovative performance without being part of prominent clusters or having access to substantial research resources (Cucino & Piccaluga, 2021). In some cases, these companies have even turned their peripheral location into a distinguishing characteristic (Fitjar & Rodríguez-Pose, 2011). To attain this outcome, such companies in peripheral areas and developing countries have frequently engaged in collaborations with other actors.

Indeed, numerous studies have examined the strategic role of proactive local stakeholders as drivers that facilitate business development (Goodman et al., 2017). These local stakeholders not only respond to the vision of their region but also actively contribute to shaping it. They seek new perspectives to interpret the local context and create integrated opportunities for intervention (Battaglia et al., 2019; 2020). The establishment and management of partnerships, which involve collaborating with other



entities to achieve shared objectives, form a cornerstone of the UN Agenda 2030 (Battaglia et al., 2020). The private sector is also called upon to contribute to this agenda by aligning its business strategies with the sustainable development goals.

The European Commission, specifically the Directorate General for Research and Innovation, has emphasized the significance of identifying funding opportunities that can facilitate innovation within the agri-food sector and are easily accessible to companies of all sizes (Verbeek et al., 2019). However, it is crucial for the industrial sector's contribution to innovation to consider perspectives of environmental and social sustainability. In the literature, innovation is defined as the introduction of practices and technologies that can reduce the company's and the sector's impact on the three dimensions of sustainability: the environment, society, and the economy (Imaz & Eizagirre, 2020; Varadarajan, 2017; Varadarajan & Kaul, 2018).

In this context, the global priorities defined by the 2030 Agenda promote the mobilization of resources, the participation of all countries and the collaboration among stakeholders. The promoted Global Partnership should be replicated at local scale and should engage the public sector, the academia, the civil society and, the private sector in terms of micro-enterprises, cooperatives, multinationals and other organizations.

Building upon these principles, it is crucial to explore the factors that can guide the collaboration among companies situated in peripheral areas or developing countries towards an evolution that aligns with and incorporates the global sustainable development objectives.

The aim of this special issue is to engage in a discussion and potentially identify the most effective combination of relationships that enables companies in peripheral areas or developing countries to generate sustainable innovation. The enrolment of stakeholder in a network of industries, as well as the stability of the built network of stakeholder or the observed power dynamics among actors are interesting topic to build new "global partnership" for sustainability and sustainable innovation.

In line with the aforementioned principles, several potential research questions could be:

- What is the optimal combination of systematic relationships that companies in peripheral areas should establish in order to introduce innovations that promote sustainability?
- How can companies in peripheral areas or developing countries leverage partnerships with local communities, NGOs, and governmental organizations to drive sustainable innovation?
- What role does collaboration with research institutions and academia play in facilitating sustainable innovation for companies in peripheral areas or developing countries?



- How do companies in peripheral areas or developing countries navigate challenges related to limited resources, infrastructure, and access to knowledge networks while striving for sustainable innovation?
- What are the key success factors and barriers for companies in peripheral areas or developing countries in implementing sustainable innovation practices?
- How can companies in peripheral areas or developing countries effectively integrate sustainability considerations into their business strategies and innovation processes?
- What are the potential economic, social, and environmental benefits of sustainable innovation for companies in peripheral areas or developing countries?
- What are the transferability and scalability aspects of sustainable innovation practices adopted by companies in peripheral areas or developing countries?
- How do cultural, social, and institutional factors influence the adoption and implementation of sustainable innovation by companies in peripheral areas or developing countries?

In this special issue, we intend to invite front-line researchers and authors to submit original research and review articles on exploring **Networking Stakeholders for Regions Development**. Potential topics include, but are not limited to:

- Developing Countries' Innovation
- Knowledge Spillover Effects
- Peripheral Innovation Challenges
- Collaborations for Innovation
- Role of Local Stakeholders
- Sustainable Development Goals
- Environmental and Social Sustainability
- Global Partnerships for Sustainability
- Factors for Sustainable Innovation
- Leveraging Partnerships for Sustainable Innovation
- Challenges for Peripheral Areas in Sustainable Innovation
- Success Factors and Barriers in Implementing Sustainable Innovation
- Economic, Social, and Environmental Benefits of Sustainable Innovation
- Transferability and Scalability of Sustainable Innovation Practices
- Cultural, Social, and Institutional Factors in Sustainable Innovation.

Prospective authors should submit an electronic copy of their complete manuscript through the journal's [Paper Submission System](#).



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Please kindly specify the “Special Issue” under your manuscript title. The research field “Special Issue - **Networking Stakeholders for Regions Development: The Role of Industries**” should be selected during your submission.

Special Issue Timetable:

Full paper - Submission Deadline	September 30 <sup>th</sup> , 2023
Publication Date	December 2023

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