

ORGANIZATIONAL EVOLUTION TOWARDS THE SUSTAINABLE ENTERPRISE

With this track, we would like to focus on the following research question: **How do firms learn to integrate and manage sustainability in their enterprise model?**

The notion of sustainability has taken meanings related to the capacity of business organization to serve purposes that includes not only the maximization of shareholders' wealth, but also the minimization of the negative environmental impacts and the contribution to the improvement of the quality of life in the communities in which they operate. What is less and less debatable is the positive correlational link between the economic, the environmental and the social dimensions of performance and positive effects of highly developed sustainability practices on long-term economic performance. However, the characterization of the defining traits of a sustainable enterprise model is still an open question. An *enterprise model* goes beyond the usual notion of business model and includes organizational dimensions like shared purpose, shared values, and culture. This distinction is important because it highlights the complexity of the challenge involved in integrating principles of sustainability in the "softer" elements of the enterprise model, in addition to the changes in their "harder" counterparts. It requires also the identification of the inhibiting and the enabling factors, and the assessment of the relative effectiveness of alternative approaches to pursue the integration of sustainability in all the foundational aspects of the enterprise. Even the companies that have invested significant resources and efforts in the integration of sustainability issues into their enterprise models find it increasingly difficult to manage the learning and change processes necessary to tackle the challenge. Beyond the conceptual development challenges, we are also missing empirical evidence on the internal and the external dynamics that influence the ability of firms to adapt the core elements of their enterprise models towards sustainability to respond to stakeholder expectations.

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