

Call for Papers for the Special Issue on:

Our House is on Fire!
The Role of Business in Achieving the
2030 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

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With this call for papers, we invite research that advances knowledge on the role of business in meeting the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) on time. In 2015, the UN launched the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which consists of 17 goals and 169 related targets aimed at tackling the global grand challenges of our era, including poverty, climate change, biodiversity loss, and inequality (see Figure 1). These 17 SDGs were the result of cross-sector collaboration among multiple stakeholders from 193 countries, including representatives of governments, companies, and civil society. The ultimate objective of the Agenda is to motivate immediate action to protect our planet and ensure a more sustainable future for all (Lu et al., 2015). According to the UN, the 17 SDGs are all interconnected (Sachs et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2019), such that simultaneous and urgent action is required on all of them (UN, 2015). For example, the loss of biodiversity cannot be reversed—if we fail to protect endangered species now, they will disappear forever (WWF, 2018).



Figure 1: The 17 UN SDGs for 2030

Source: <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/envision2030.html>

Even though the SDGs were launched as a call for action at the country level, the agenda recognizes that achieving the SDGs requires not only governmental intervention but also collective

action among a number of different actors, including businesses and civil society. According to the Head of the UN Development Programme, “the new sustainable development agenda cannot be achieved without business” (UN News Centre, 2015). However, business scholars have only recently begun to acknowledge the crucial role of businesses in efforts to fulfill the SDGs (e.g., Buckley et al., 2017; George et al., 2016; van Zanten & van Tulder, 2018).

We know very little about how businesses can either help achieve the SDGs or delay progress and even exacerbate global grand challenges. Research at the intersection of business and SDGs is still rare. This is due, in part, to the novelty of the SDG framework (Howard-Grenville et al, 2019; van Zanten & van Tulder, 2018) and the lack of understanding of how to operationalize the SDGs (Sachs et al., 2019). Van Zanten and van Tulder (2018) offer an exception that provides interesting evidence of multinational enterprises’ engagement with the SDG framework. They argue that the degree of actionability of an SDG target, the approach to engaging with those targets (e.g., “doing good” versus “avoiding harm”), the home-host country context, and the industrial sector influence corporate engagement in the SDGs. Recently, Dror et al. (2019) examined the development of new financial instruments aimed at promoting the SDGs, while Rousseau et al. (2019) analyzed the role of nonprofit environmental organizations in the formation of sustainable cities and communities.

In sum, with this call for papers, we hope to motivate business scholars to conduct research that not only improves our understanding of how and when business can engage in SDGs but also provides solutions to pressing global grand challenges. We believe that an understanding of the business-SDG interface requires cross-disciplinary and multi-method research and, above all, thinking beyond established theoretical boundaries. Therefore, we invite papers that adopt different research approaches, both conceptual and empirical, and draw from different theoretical perspectives.

Possible research areas include but are not limited to:

- New organizational theories and approaches to understanding the role of business in SDG implementation,
- Time and space challenges in articulating firms’ integration of the SDGs,
- Paradoxes and tensions in tackling SDGs simultaneously,
- SDG greenwashing—rainbow revolution or rainbow wash?,
- Cross-sector partnerships among different stakeholders (e.g., governments, businesses, international organizations, NGOs) aimed at advancing SDGs,
- Regenerative organizations—how organizations embedded in society help advance the pursuit of SDGs,
- Emotions and sustainability—compassionate organizing and venturing and SDGs, and
- The translation of SDGs into actionable business practices.

Submission Guidelines and Deadlines

The deadline for submissions to the Special Issue is **January 31, 2021**. The review process will begin immediately after a paper is submitted. Full papers should be submitted via the journal’s online submission system at <https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/brq>. Please follow the manuscript submission guidelines for *BRQ Business Research Quarterly* at: <https://journals.sagepub.com/author-instructions/BRQ>.

- Manuscript submission opens: October 1, 2020
- Manuscript submissions closes: January 31, 2021
- Publication of the Special Issue: Spring 2022 (tentative)

Information about *BRQ Business Research Quarterly*

BRQ Business Research Quarterly is a peer-reviewed, open-access journal that focuses on management topics. The journal is included in the following abstracting and indexing databases: Journal of Citation Report (Social Sciences Citation Index, impact factor: 3.250), the ANVUR ranking, General (Italy), Australian Business Deans Council (ABDC), Clarivate Analytics: Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI), Comité National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS; France), Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), Norwegian Register for Scientific Journals, NSD (Norway), and SCOPUS.

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