

## Call for Contributions

# GRONEN Conference 2022

## Theme: Sustainability in context

May 31 – June 2, 2022  
Amsterdam, Netherlands



The Group for Research on Organizations and the Natural Environment (GRONEN) is an open and international network of engaged scholars focused on innovative thinking in order to generate transformative ways of protecting the natural environment and contributing to societal progress in a world of rapid, complex and non-linear environmental change.

For the GRONEN Conference 2022, we invite submissions in **all areas relating to organizations and the natural environment**. In line with this year's conference theme, we particularly encourage submissions that address sustainability in context.

### Conference Theme: Sustainability in Context

Organization and environment scholarship has recently emphasized the importance of embedding organizations in their biophysical environment, adopting a systems perspective, and emphasizing the impact of organizations on their surrounding environments (see Grewatsch, Kennedy & Bansal, 2021; Jarzabkowski, Dowell & Berchicci, 2021; Mair & Seelos, 2021). This move requires that even large-scale global problems must be contextualized to be studied and understood. Climate change, for instance, is a global challenge but its manifestations vary markedly from one place to another—rendering some 'global' solutions maladaptive to specific locations. Moreover, addressing climate change is a moving target: actions that could have been sufficient to decelerate the climate crisis a few decades ago are no longer enough. Other global sustainability challenges—including planetary boundaries, poverty, inequity and exclusion—also need to be considered in context.

Context has a significant impact on how we perceive the world (Mazutis, Slawinski & Palazzo, 2021) and can include among others the location itself, human experiences of the place, but also local resources and the broader array of local institutions, stakeholders, and ecosystems. The local context, which has always had a central role in the study of organizations and the natural environment (Carson, 1962; Ostrom, 1990), is especially important in the context of sustainable organizing. Recent work has highlighted, for example, that regional values supportive of sustainability enable the founding of organizations that align with these values (Tilleman, Russo & Nelson, 2020), that local social movements motivate investment in moral markets by companies with resonant identities (Georgallis & Lee, 2020; Sine and Lee, 2009), and that local institutional mechanisms shape the perceived trade-offs and strategic orientations of dual-purpose organizations (Battilana, Obloj, Pache & Sengul, 2020).

Context is not limited to place but it also relates to time, a dimension that is critical for sustainability. In fact, some scholars have argued that it is specifically the notion of 'time' that separates sustainability from other similar concepts (Bansal & DesJardine, 2014). Many sustainability initiatives—ranging from social 'issue selling' by individuals within organizations to adoption of sustainable lifestyles by consumers, and from organizational change initiatives by companies or cross-sector sustainability partnerships to collective market-building efforts—often involve in one way or another intertemporal trade-offs.

Place and time are particularly important when it comes to successful scaling, transfer or adaptation of sustainable ventures, and the expansion and diffusion of markets that contribute to sustainability. Insofar as organizations use resources from the local context, rely on employees

or consumers who espouse resonant values, and benefit from institutions that support sustainable enterprising, scaling beyond the local context can be challenging. Nongovernmental organizations' or grassroots organizations' deep knowledge of the local context sometimes makes them attractive partners for multinational enterprises, but partnerships may fail depending on where local initiatives must be transferred or scaled. Moreover, heterogeneous contexts render the benefits to scaling more uncertain, raising the question of whether, and when, expanding geographically is preferable to 'deep' local scaling (Kim & Kim, 2021). The question of when to scale is also critical. Introduce a radically sustainable product to consumers who are not ready yet and consumption may never take off. Attempt to scale a sustainable enterprise too soon and it may bust; wait too long and it may be too late to address the underlying social problem. At the market-level, the formation and expansion of moral markets requires coordination among multiple actors, but market-building is a nonlinear process characterized by path dependency and tipping points (Lee, Georgallis & Struben, 2022) that make the timing of each actor's intervention crucial.

Ultimately management research and its knowledge sources badly need to be contextualized (Filatotchev, Ireland & Stahl, 2021), its foundations questioned (Banerjee & Arjaliès, 2021), and its contextual explorations broadened (Pisani, Kourula, Kolk & Meijer, 2017). We call for papers that revisit the local and temporal context in the study of organizations and sustainability. We invite contributions that address context and local sustainability efforts where organizations or organizing play a role, or where time is a central theme. Actors and sustainability initiatives under study can include but are not limited to large multinational firms, local businesses, social or sustainable enterprises, nonprofits, public sector organizations, social movement and grassroots organizations, as well as multi-stakeholder initiatives and moral markets.

## Details

While monitoring the developments regarding the COVID-19 pandemic, we are currently planning for a mainly in-person conference to take place in Amsterdam. GRONEN 2022 will combine a range of session formats to provide a suitable platform for academic exchange on research at different stages. All sessions will be chaired by members of the GRONEN scientific committee and other thought leaders to facilitate active discussion and idea development.

Submissions will undergo a double-blind review process prior to acceptance. The scientific committee will review all accepted submissions and prizes will be awarded for the **Best Conference Paper** and the **Best PhD Student Paper**.

## Doctoral Consortium

A doctoral consortium limited to approximately 15-20 PhD students will take place right before the main conference, starting 30 May early afternoon CEST. The doctoral consortium offers a platform for PhD students to discuss their projects and concerns openly with each other and with more senior researchers in the field. Participants can expect an inclusive atmosphere and opportunities to interact more informally with members of the GRONEN community. In

addition to ensuring valuable feedback and career advice, participation in the consortium is a great way to meet fellow conference attendants already before the official conference starts.

The doctoral consortium is open to PhD students at any stage. For students who cannot travel to Amsterdam, remote online participation will be possible for most of the doctoral consortium program. Hence, all applicants should be prepared to commit fully to the program and participate actively either on-site or online. PhD students must apply separately for the doctoral consortium; the application deadline is the same as for the main conference but early applications are strongly encouraged! Applications must include a full paper or research proposal, a current CV, and a filled-out form. Instructions for how to apply will be made available on the conference website.

### **Key dates**

A link to electronic submission system will be posted on the conference website. The selection process, notification of authors, and registration of participants will follow the schedule below:

January 7, 2022	Submission system opens
January 27, 2022	Deadline for submissions
March 15, 2022	Notification of acceptance
April 30, 2022	Deadline for registration
May 30, 2022	Doctoral Consortium & Get together
May 31- June 2, 2022	GRONEN Research Conference

### **Conference web page and details regarding the call for papers:**

Please check the conference website for more information and subsequently regular conference updates: <http://www.gronenonline.com/gronen1/gronen-conference-2022/>

For any questions, please contact: [conference@uva.nl](mailto:conference@uva.nl)

### **We look forward to welcoming you to Amsterdam in 2022!**

*The local organizing committee:*

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