Sustainable entrepreneurship: internal and external determinants

Thematic Area: Entrepreneurship

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Summary:

This track continues the discussion on entrepreneurial ecosystems, initiated in Valencia in 2024, and continued in Pamplona and Santander ACEDE Conferences. In this edition we turn our focus on how sustainable entrepreneurship can be promoted by both ecosystems and internal factors related to startup and its founders.

Sustainable entrepreneurship has been defined as 'an innovative, market-oriented and personality driven form of creating economic and societal value by means of break-through environmentally or socially beneficial market or institutional innovations' (Schaltegger & Wagner, 2011, p. 226). Increasing attention has been devoted to the role of Sustainable Entrepreneurial Ecosystems (SEE). Cohen (2006, p. 3) defined a SEE as "an interconnected group of actors in a local geographic community committed to sustainable development through the support and facilitation of new sustainable ventures". Recent literature has tried to deepen on the comprehension of SEE, for example, analyzing the factors that facilitate SEE (Ancona et al., 2026; Bischoff, 2021; DiVito & Ingen-Housz, 2021; Pankov et al., 2021), providing a holistic view of sustainability and entrepreneurial research (Fischer et al., 2026; Shepherd et al., 2025; Theodoraki et al., 2022), or examining the opportunities for co-evolution (O'Shea et al., 2021). Beyond ecosystem conditions, sustainable entrepreneurship is also shaped by internal factors (Vlaisavljevic et al., 2026), including founders' motivations, values, knowledge, and competencies (Kuckertz & Wagner, 2010; Patzelt & Shepherd, 2011), as well as startups' organizational characteristics (Parrish, 2010). Understanding how these internal factors interact with external ecosystem conditions remains an important avenue for further research.

We welcome theoretical and empirical papers addressing but not limited to:

- The influence of contextual factors on sustainable entrepreneurship.
- Founders' characteristics, motivations, and capabilities in sustainable entrepreneurship.
- Dynamic interactions and interdependencies among different actors, with special attention to entrepreneurial support organizations, in SEE.
- How social entrepreneurship is fostered by entrepreneurial ecosystems.

- How entrepreneurial ecosystems can contribute to the achievement of the SDGs.
- How different policy frameworks provide support for sustainable entrepreneurship.
- Entrepreneurship research in non-WEIRD contexts.

Keywords:

Sustainable entrepreneurship; entrepreneurial ecosystems; startups; entrepreneurial support organizations; sustainable innovation.

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