

International Sustainability Transitions Conference 2017 “Taking the lead in real world transitions”

Call for Abstracts

Year 2050 is just around the corner.

From a transition perspective, three decades is not a long time. Yet, the United Nations sustainable development goals are set for 2030, and the pace of climate change calls for rapid transformation of massive sociotechnical systems. The challenges are enormous.

Reaching ambitious societal targets at local and global levels relies on collective action, but also on private and public agents daring to take the lead in complex and open-ended processes.

Inspiringly enough, some organisations and countries have shown that they want to take the lead in realising more sustainable societal systems. In the months preceding UNFCCC COP 21 in Paris in 2015, an accelerating number of private companies and regions articulated ambitions to become frontrunners in low carbon transitions, and as one example, the government of the host country of this conference has set the bold goal of Sweden becoming the first fossil free welfare state.

However, while taking the lead may offer economic and social rewards, the challenge to follow through is enormous, and actors that take the lead will face specific challenges. **The 8th International Conference on Sustainability Transitions** will devote special attention to problems and challenges for agents that aspire to lead transitions, and to the intellectual challenges of understanding how to lead collective processes that, in one sense, cannot be led.

What type of conclusions can transition scholars bring to the table and what type of new knowledge do we need to develop? What type of theories and methods is required for making transition research a science for not only explaining, but also purposefully supporting, real life transitions?

We therefore invite scholars to submit papers on a broad range of issues and debates in sustainability transitions research, in particular contributions relating to eleven themes:

1. *Leadership and Learning*. The role of leadership and learning to support pro-active real world transitions. What does a transformative leadership entail on an international, national and local level, and what does it mean for business, academy and civil society?
2. *Entrepreneurship and transition*. The role of different forms of entrepreneurship: start-up, academic, corporate, institutional, etc. How can government and corporate policies enable entrepreneurship as a tool for transition?
3. *Micro accounts of collaborative innovation and transition*. In-depth analysis of transformative change processes and initiatives focusing on micro-dynamics such as motivation, social interaction, aspects of empowerment/disempowerment and sense making. In particular we seek contributions that link accounts of micro-dynamics to the broader context of collaborative innovation and transitions. Transition arenas, urban labs and social innovation initiatives are examples of relevant research topics and contexts.

4. *Consumption practices and grassroots movements.* This theme seeks to explore how changing life-styles and consumption patterns, different consumer groups and various social movements shape transition pathways. Are new transition routes imaginable in the age of global social media, prosumers, crowdfunding, open innovation etc.?
5. *Politics and policy in sustainability transitions.* What local, national and supra-national policy portfolios are required to stimulate and govern transitions? How is policy formed and how can advocates of various transition agendas engage with the political dimension? And more fundamentally, how is power and conflict articulated and handled in transitions?
6. *Transformation of cities, regions and industries.* How do regional and urban development pathways co-evolve with global industrial dynamics in greening and making industrial economies more socially responsible? What is the role of regional and urban governance arrangements, including smart specialisation strategies and regional leadership?
7. *Sustainability transitions in low income and developing economies.* The geographical scope of transition studies and location of transition scholars is expanding. This theme seeks to bring together transition studies undertaken in contexts beyond Europe and North America, and explore the theoretical and methodological advances, insights and questions emerging from this body of work.
8. *Sustainability transitions and history.* Socio-technical transitions are by definition historical processes and historical case studies have been instrumental in the development of analytical transition frameworks. Yet the relationship between transition research and history as academic disciplines is not straightforward and entail methodological tensions. What can transitions scholars learn from methods from historical research, and in which ways can transition research be useful for historians?
9. *Theoretical and methodological advances.* This theme focuses on theory-building related to integrative frameworks addressing sustainability transitions such as the multi-level perspective (MLP), technological innovation systems (TIS), etc. Submissions can be conceptual or empirical, but should go beyond telling the story of individual transitions and contribute clearly to the development of new and existing sustainability transitions concepts, frameworks, models and research methodologies.
10. *Modelling transitions and the role of quantitative assessment in transition governance.* This theme explores the power and limitations of quantitative modelling of transitions. What new insights can be gained? What new modelling tools are being developed and, in times of 'big data', what new data repositories can fruitfully be mined? The track is also open for contributions discussing the role of quantitative models and assessment in transition debates and political processes.
11. *New frontiers.* The field of transition studies grows and is enriched by inclusion of ideas from a growing range of academic disciplines and by taking into account a variety of transformation processes in socio-technical space. In this theme we hope to see some exciting new ideas that extend or challenge the existing body of literature.

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We also invite proposals on 'dialog', 'speed talk' and 'poster' sessions (see below) that can tackle an even wider range of questions related to sustainability transitions.

IST 2017 Conference session formats

Across the different thematic tracks, the conference will be structured using different formats:

- Paper Sessions: 90 minute sessions with three full paper presentations and discussion.
- Speed talk Sessions: 45 minute sessions with 4-5 short presentations, where an idea or a central research finding is presented in 4 minutes. The rest of the session is dedicated to interaction between the presenters and other session participants in small group discussions (app. 20-30 minutes) focusing on the individual presentations. We specifically invite contributions from industry and policy actors, as well as PhD students proving an opportunity to discuss ideas at an early stage.
- Dialogue Sessions: 90 minute sessions featuring paper presentations with a specific thematic focus, project presentations, panels, discussions or workshops related to the conference theme. We specifically invite session proposals that include non-academic participants and innovative formats. A dialogue session is prepared and submitted by an external session organiser and does not require the submission of full papers.
- Poster Session: posters will be displayed throughout the conference at a central location. There will also be a time slot exclusively dedicated to poster presentations.

Key Dates

1 November 2016	Abstract submission opens
10 December 2016	Deadline for submission of abstracts and session proposals
28 February 2017	Outcome of review process and acceptance decisions
30 Mars 2017	Draft program
15 May 2017	Deadline for submission of full papers
1 June 2017	Final program
18-21 June 2017	IST 2017

Submission requirements

Submissions should be made electronically via www.ist2017.org between 1 November and 10 December 2016 according to the guidelines below.

- Paper abstracts: 800 word abstracts, which provide information about research question, theory, method and preliminary findings. Note that full papers will be required for Paper Sessions and extended abstracts for Speedtalk Sessions. Failing to submit a full paper before deadline may result in rescheduling or significantly reduced speaking time.
- Dialogue Session proposals: 800 word descriptions of the session (90 minutes), including issues to be covered, participants, chair and format, and how it relates to the conference theme. If the session includes paper presentations, please include 800 word abstracts of each paper. We encourage non-academic session participants and innovative formats. Biographies of all participants and the session chair should also be included (10 lines).
- Abstracts must be written in English
- Please note that abstracts cannot be submitted by fax, hard copy or e-mail.

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- Acknowledgement of receipt of the submission will be sent to the stated e-mail address. If you do not receive the confirmatory e-mail within 24 hours, please contact us at: ist2017@meetx.se
- The presenting author will receive all correspondence concerning the abstract and is responsible for informing co-authors of the status of the abstract.
- Notification on acceptance of the abstracts will be sent to the stated e-mail address by 28th of February 2017.

Personal Page

When your abstract is submitted you can follow the progress on-line by entering your Personal Page for abstract. The presenting author will have access to the abstract after submission.

Your Personal Page for abstracts makes it possible for you to:

- make changes until submission deadline
- read and print your abstract

You will be able to access your Personal Page for abstracts by entering your unique user ID and password indicated in the attached file received in the confirmatory email after submission.

More information

The conference website www.ist2017.org

For personal inquiries please do not hesitate to contact us:

ist2017@meetx.se