

Green Transition and Global Complexities: The strategic role of actors, institutions and ecosystems

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Keynote Speakers

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Today's environmental, social, and governance (ESG) challenges are driving profound transformations in how multinational enterprises (MNEs), domestic firms—including SMEs—and institutional actors organize and sustain international business. This workshop focuses on the systemic and multi-level complexities of transitioning toward circularity within global markets.

The path toward circularity is highly uneven across geographies. Diverse regulatory frameworks, industrial structures, and institutional capacities necessitate strategies that are responsive to local conditions while aligned with broader sustainability goals (Chabowski et al., 2023). Several governments are promoting the circular economy through a mix of incentives and regulations (Goerzen et al., 2025; Kanda et al., 2025) yet the multilevel and asymmetrical nature of the institutional environment may impede the adoption of circular innovations across borders (Benito et al., 2019; Borrero & Yousafzai, 2024)

At the same time, global value chains (GVCs) are undergoing structural changes, particularly a trend toward regionalization. The reconfiguration of material, energy, and resource flows within geographically bounded networks aims to reduce leakage and enhance local value creation (Ito et al., 2023; Kano et al., 2020; Pederson et al., 2025). Firms are increasingly expected to redesign their value propositions to separate business growth from environmental degradation while navigating volatile international markets (Geissdoerfer et al., 2023; Santa-Maria et al., 2022; Zahra, 2024) and complex institutional settings (Howard et al., 2022).

To address these challenges, this workshop brings together scholars and practitioners to explore how international firms, both large and small, are leading, resisting, or adapting to the pressures of circularity in an increasingly fragmented global business environment. We aim to stimulate a conversation grounded in strategy, innovation, and international business theory. We welcome conceptual, empirical, and methodological contributions from researchers at all career stages, including applied work with clear managerial or policy relevance. Contributions may employ qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods, and we particularly encourage interdisciplinary submissions that connect international business research to innovation management, entrepreneurship, or operations.

GUIDING QUESTIONS AND KEY THEMES

We encourage submissions that address, but are not limited to, the following questions: *How is circularity influencing the strategic orientation and organizational design of international firms? Which organizational capabilities and inter-firm partnerships support—or limit—circular innovation in international settings? How do firms manage tensions arising from institutional heterogeneity and regulatory fragmentation? How can firms and ecosystems be assessed in terms of their cross-border circularity?*

Accordingly, contributions might address, but are not limited to, the following key themes:

- Circular Business Models and International Business Strategy: How are MNEs redefining their value propositions and growth models in response to circular imperatives?
- Global Value Chains and Sustainable Innovation: How are firms redesigning their GVCs for sustainability, resilience, and circular outcomes?
- Institutional and Market Complexity: How do firms navigate diverse formal regulations and informal norms in implementing circular practices?
- SMEs and Entrepreneurial Ecosystems: What roles do SMEs and place-based ecosystems play in promoting circular innovation on a global scale?
- Measuring and Managing Cross-Border Circularity: What tools and performance metrics can evaluate circularity across various regions?
- Institutions, Policy, and Governance for Circular Transition: What institutional frameworks facilitate or obstruct circular economy transitions in international business contexts?

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

We welcome both extended abstracts (“SMS-style” submissions – 5-7 pages) or full papers. Authors of accepted abstracts are required to submit full papers upon registration. Please submit your abstract or paper via email to both of the following addresses: mariacristina.cinici@unime.it and alba.marino@unime.it.

Submission deadline: September 7th, 2025

Notification of acceptance: September 22nd, 2025

Registration (with full papers or revised manuscript): October 20th, 2025

FEE AND LOGISTICS

The participation fee is **150 euros**. This fee will cover coffee breaks, lunches, and the social dinner during the workshop. Participants are responsible for their own hotel accommodations and travel arrangements.

For further information and updates, visit our website www.ggt.unime.it or send us an email convegnoggt@unime.it

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