

## Special Session proposal

# Transforming regions towards sustainable development – the role of networks, innovation and policy

Submitted to:

**The 5<sup>th</sup> Geography of Innovation  
29<sup>th</sup> – 31<sup>st</sup> January 2020, University of Stavanger,  
Stavanger, Norway**

### Short description of the special session:

Many regions are still characterized by a dominance of unsustainable production and technology patterns, even though more sustainable alternatives are available today. Recently, we can observe dramatic rethinking of firms in this business practices. Reasons for this are manifold, ranging from increasing competitive pressure, to political imperatives derived from the long-term international climate policy agenda, and increasing demand for sustainable goods and services. To withstand this pressure, firms and regions are forced to adapt to new regulatory requirements and demand patterns by re-organizing internal processes and business models in order to provide innovative and sustainable solutions and outperform competitors. In such increasingly competitive environments, firms' R&D cooperation and network positioning strategies provide key advantages such as access to new knowledge stocks, costs and risks sharing in uncertain technological environments.

In this special session, we would like to focus on the role that R&D cooperation and innovation networks play for sustainable economic development at the regional level, i.e. the advancement of environmentally friendly technologies, innovative products and services, production processes and new organizational structures. At the same time, many open questions arise when looking at appropriate policy design strategies for sustainable regional development. We particularly welcome submission in the following exemplary research strands:

- The role of entrepreneurs in innovation networks for sustainable regional development
- Eco-innovation in regional innovation networks
- Regional change agents and change management towards sustainability
- Drivers of sustainable transition in regional innovation networks
- Sustainability focused transition processes at micro, meso and macro levels
- Innovation networks and sustainability transitions in different sectors, e.g. bioeconomy, energy, mobility, etc.
- Impact of sustainability transitions on regional development
- Innovation policy as a tool for sustainable regional economic development – smart specialization and beyond

Further topics related to these issues are highly welcomed as well.

## Session organizers:

**Muhamed Kudic** currently holds a position as senior research associate at the University of Bremen, as an external scientific advisor at the Stifterverband, and as a "research area coordinator" for the RA-X ("networks") at the European Association for Evolutionary Political Economy (EAEPE). He received his PhD from the University of Hohenheim in 2012. His main fields of occupation are economics, geography and management of innovation drawing on microeconomic estimation approaches and stochastic simulation techniques. His research focuses on causes and consequences of network change processes, the evolution of complex adaptive systems and determinants of innovation processes and technological path evolution. He has published in peer-reviewed journals, such as *Regional Studies*, *Industrial and Corporate Change*, *Journal of Economic Interaction and Coordination*, and *Annals of Regional Science* and he frequently presents his latest research at cutting-edge conferences in the field of innovation research, such as DRUID Society Conference and International Schumpeter Society Conference.

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**Daniel Schiller** is Professor of Economic and Social Geography at the University of Greifswald, Germany since 2016 and head of the Steinbeis Research Centre on Regional Economics and Innovation Systems. His main research interests include knowledge-based regional development, sustainable regional development, global transformation processes, and public finance. He has worked and published extensively on topics such as university-industry linkages, regional innovation systems, global value chains, foreign direct investment, and researcher mobility. He has worked on regions in East and Southeast Asia as well as Europe. Recently, he is principal investigator of several research projects with a particular focus on the transformative potential of the bioeconomy for regional development.

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