

Bendell, Jem, Collins, Eva and Roper, Juliet (2009) Collaborative engagement for sustainability in the Asia Pacific region: call for papers. *Business Strategy and the Environment*, 18 (6). pp. 415-416.

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‘Collaborative Engagement for Sustainability in the Asia Pacific Region’

Call for Papers

A Special Issue of the Journal

Business Strategy and the Environment

Edited by Jem Bendell, Eva Collins and Juliet Roper

Deadlines:

Abstracts: 31 July 2009

Full papers: 31 October 2009

The formation of strategic alliances between companies for mutual commercial benefit is a widely used approach by contemporary business. The development of such alliances with non-commercial organisations, such as government agencies and voluntary associations, to deliver social and environmental outcomes, is a more recent phenomenon. In the past decade such cross-sectoral strategic alliances have become a key mechanism for pursuing corporate sustainability and responsibility. By bringing together their respective competencies and resources for the greater good, people in governments, business, civil society and multilateral agencies have sought innovative ways to respond to many contemporary sustainable development challenges: climate change; human security; the prevention and treatment of major diseases; ethics, governance and responsible investment; entrepreneurship and employment; pension and superannuation funds management; and, sustainable financing for development. Globally, the appetite for such strategic alliances and stakeholder engagement appears strong. Over 90% of corporate executives responding to a World Economic Forum survey felt that in future ‘partnerships between business, government, and civil society would play either a major role or some role in addressing key development challenges.’ This interest is paralleled by an expanding literature on inter-organisational relations in management, organisation and international development studies, among other disciplines.

Although closer stakeholder engagement and new strategic alliances may hold considerable potential for promoting sustainable development, participants from the different sectors recognise that there are considerable inherent risks. Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and UN agencies are concerned that participation in consultations and alliances with business could threaten their integrity and independence. Businesses fear that too much time and money spent on stakeholder dialogue and alliances with not-for-profit organisations might divert them from their ultimate aim of producing goods and services as profit making enterprises in order to benefit their owners and workers. Governments often raise important questions about the legitimacy, governance, and accountability of cross-sector alliances, particularly those that exclude or undermine public sector interests. As strategic alliances have become more widely used mechanisms for policy development and implementation, these questions about their effectiveness and accountability become more important.

In the Asia Pacific region (Asia, Australasia and the Pacific) the nature of societal challenges, the level of business interest in corporate responsibility, the capacity of civil society, and existence of good governance, vary greatly. The relevance and risks of cross-sectoral strategic alliances for sustainable development therefore also vary.

This special issue of the journal *Business Strategy and the Environment* aims to bring together perspectives on the nature of stakeholder engagement and strategic alliances in the Asia Pacific region, to add to the international debate and practice of alliances for sustainable development, while also ensuring that insights are relevant to the specific contexts of practitioners, policy makers and educators in the Asia Pacific.

Call for Contributions:

We invite interdisciplinary papers on the topic of ‘Collaborative engagement for sustainability in the Asia Pacific region’.

Interdisciplinary papers that tailor their research questions and analysis to the needs of identifiable user groups, whether in business, government or civil society will be particularly welcome. In particular, we invite papers that explore any of the following issues:

- The nature and impact of strategic alliances and stakeholder engagement on responsible investment, financing and sustainable development across the Asia Pacific region.
- The characteristics of sustainable strategic alliances (e.g., aims, structure, decision-making, financing, communication) and how they influence performance.
- The strengths/weaknesses, and costs/benefits, of various types of strategic alliances and stakeholder engagement and how their performance could be improved.
- The role of government and public policy in shaping business involvement in strategic alliances with the private sector and civil society across Asia Pacific.
- The personal competencies required for effective inception, management and scaling of strategic alliances and stakeholder engagement.
- The likely future of strategic alliances and stakeholder engagement in the Asia Pacific region, given current trends in the economy, politics, ecology and technology.
- The environmental, social and governance challenges and opportunities facing corporations and how their responses provide contexts for sustainable development and stakeholder engagement.
- Case studies relevant to the conference theme.
- Critical perspectives on the relevance or performance of cross-sectoral collaborations.
- Pedagogical and or curriculum initiatives surrounding teaching of strategic alliances in the area of sustainability.

Submission Procedures:

This special edition of *Business Strategy and the Environment* is closely linked to the annual conference of the Asia Pacific Academy of Business in Society (APABIS), 5–6 November, 2009 to be held at **Griffith University Business School** in Brisbane. Abstracts (2–3 pages to a maximum of 1,000 words) can be submitted either for consideration for the special issue alone, or for both the conference and the journal.

The deadline for submission of abstracts for consideration for the conference is **30 June 2009**.

Please submit conference abstracts to Chris Auld c.auld@griffith.edu.au. All abstracts submitted for the conference will be reviewed and authors notified of acceptance by **31 July 2009**.

Abstracts for the journal but not the conference should be submitted to Eva Collins at evacolln@mngt.waikato.ac.nz by **31 July 2009**.

If invited, full papers (6000 words max) must be submitted for review by **31 October 2009**.

Please visit <http://www.apabis.org> for further details on the APABIS conference.