

Case Studies on Urban Entrepreneurship: Empowering the SDGs

Context

The issue of sustainability is not new, and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) only reinforce its importance. It is equally apparent that addressing sustainability issues and mitigating the impacts of climate change are becoming particularly important in urban centres, as they are the concentration hubs of people, their communities, and businesses. However, the challenge lies in adapting to the new paradigm of sustainable entrepreneurship, where environmental and social sustainability become equally (if not more) important than the economic aspect of business. The potential to scale the business, achieve economic efficiency, and expand into new markets are no longer the only measures of success, although this change is occurring very slowly. On the other hand, in contexts not readily associated with entrepreneurship, such as urban and social activism for environmental issues or reducing social inequalities, the ability to think outside the box may allow more effective methods of action or influencing policies. These moments are where entrepreneurship and urbanity encounter intersect. In practice, this means that business models and ways of running companies or ventures need to be revised. Cities and their various actors play a crucial role in this revision, as urban transformation and sustainability goals should go together. “From Idea to Viable Urban Transformation: Entrepreneurial Case Studies Empowering the SDGs” is an anthology that presents case studies, each illuminating a unique entrepreneurial story aimed at tackling one of the SDGs and presented from the urban transformation perspective.

The aim and scope

The book aims to bridge the realms of entrepreneurship, urban studies, and sustainable development by presenting a comprehensive examination of real-world entrepreneurial ventures that contribute to the achievement of the SDGs through urban transformation. By selecting diverse case studies from different territorial and cultural contexts, the book aims to inform and inspire both current and aspiring entrepreneurs, policymakers, educators, urban activists, and other stakeholders about the transformative power of entrepreneurial action in addressing pressing urban, societal, and environmental challenges.

Invitation to submit abstracts

The scope of this book encompasses a wide array of entrepreneurial ventures, ranging from small-scale startups to established enterprises, across various industries and sectors. It can also apply to public or non-governmental activities that demonstrate entrepreneurial actions and attitudes. Each case study offers a unique narrative, shedding light on the innovative strategies, business models, and initiatives employed by entrepreneurs to create positive social, environmental, and economic impacts while advancing progress towards the SDGs and urban renewal.

Key themes explored include but are not limited to:

- Entrepreneurial solutions to poverty alleviation and economic empowerment (SDG 1, SDG 8)
- Sustainable agriculture, food security, and responsible consumption (SDG 2, SDG 12)

- Clean energy innovation and climate action (SDG 7, SDG 13)
- Access to education, healthcare, and technology (SDG 3, SDG 4, SDG 9)
- Gender equality, diversity, and inclusive entrepreneurship (SDG 5, SDG 10)
- Examples of successful entrepreneurial innovation in saving water, strengthening the circular economy, decarbonising power sources, and reducing energy poverty (SDG 6, SDG 7, SDG 8, SDG 9)
- Conservation of biodiversity, land, and urban ecosystems (SDG14, SDG 15)
- Peace, justice, and strong institutions (SDG 16)
- Partnerships for the goals, including new forms of participation and citizens' empowerment (SDG 17)

The structure

It is important to maintain a similar structure for each case study. Creating a consistent structure is crucial for maintaining coherence and facilitating comparison across different ventures. The suggested structure of the case study includes the following (although variations are acceptable):

- Introduction: a brief overview of the entrepreneurial venture and the specific SDG that the venture aims to address.
- Context: the socio-economic, environmental, territorial, and cultural context in which the venture operates and the challenges and opportunities faced by the community, if relevant.
- The urban dimension of a case study and its role in urban transformation.
- Initial Concept: the initial idea behind the entrepreneurial venture.
- Opportunity Process: the process of opportunity identification (discovery/creation) and validation; how did the founder(s) identify the market need or social problem.
- Action Model and Strategies: the business model adopted by the venture and innovative strategies or approaches employed by the venture to achieve its goals.
- Challenges and Lessons Learned: the key challenges and obstacles encountered during the venture's process; the lessons learned from overcoming these challenges.
- Relevance to SDG: how the venture contributes to the specific SDG it addresses and its impact on relevant urban, social, environmental, and economic indicators.
- Conclusion: the key insights and findings from the case study and the broader implications for urban transformation, sustainable development, and the pursuit of the SDGs.

The manuscript

Each chapter shall be approximately 5000-7000 words. Additionally, up to 150 words abstract is required. Please use British English.

Submission deadlines

- Announcement of the call for chapters: 24 September 2024 (UNIC Conference, Oulu)
- Collection of initial interest from potential authors (extended abstracts, up to two pages): 30 December 2024
- Information about acceptance of the abstract: 30 January 2025
- Full chapter submission: 30 June 2025
- 1st review completed: 15 October 2025
- Submission of the revised chapter: 15 December 2025
- 2nd review completed (if necessary): 31 March 2026
- Final version of the manuscript sent to Edward Elgar Publishing: 30 May 2026

Selection of contributions to the book

The contributions are selected based upon the extended abstract (max two pages). The abstract submission should include:

- Title of the proposal,
- Extended abstract: description of the case, with a clear indication of which SDG it refers to and how it relates to urban and entrepreneurship contexts (with references),
- Author(s)' details, including 150–200-word bio.

Editors

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We look forward to receiving your abstracts!

If you require any additional information, please contact:

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