



**CALL FOR PAPERS**  
**9th International Sustainability Transitions Conference**  
***Reconfiguring Consumption and Production Systems***

**11<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> June 2018**  
**Manchester UK**

The Sustainable Consumption Institute (SCI) and Manchester Institute of Innovation Research (MIOIR) will host the 9<sup>th</sup> International Sustainability Transitions Conference at the University of Manchester. Building on past events organised under the auspices of the Sustainability Transitions Research Network (STRN), the conference will provide an opportunity for scholars and stakeholders to exchange ideas coming from the latest research in the field.

**Conference Theme: Reconfiguring Consumption and Production Systems**

A founding assumption of sustainability transitions scholarship was the importance of studying *systemic change across the entire chain from production to consumption*. Over the last decade, academic research has arguably focused more on the emergence of radical innovations than on changes in ‘whole systems’. IST2018 therefore aims to re-engage with this initial agenda. This is timely, because some real-world transitions are moving beyond the diffusion of *single* innovations towards whole system change. In both electricity and mobility, for instance, the simultaneous unfolding of *multiple* technical, social and organisational innovations, across areas of production, provision, distribution, and use (e.g. renewable energy technologies, capacity markets, smart meters, decentralized community energy, ‘prosumption’, grid adjustments, electric cars, car sharing, cycling revolution) are interacting to change entire systems.

These real-world developments pose challenges for prevalent understandings of transitions that focus on *single* disruptive innovations following S-curves. These observations suggest that transitions scholarship may be on the verge of a new

phase, which will require new imageries of transition. The idea of *whole system reconfiguration* captures this ambition, directing attention to:

- The interdependencies between changes in technology, changes in business models and services, and changes in everyday life.
- The *multiplicity* of processes involved in reconfiguring whole systems, which may involve simple *substitution* (one component replacing another), but can also involve other change processes such as *add-on* (new components combined with existing ones), *innovation cascades* where changes in one part of the system (e.g. more intermittent renewables) create knock-on effects in other parts (e.g. grid adjustments, back-up capacity, storage), possibly even leading to changes in the system architecture.
- How system reconfiguration unfolds in different domains (in mobility, energy, housing, agro-food) and how this relates to differences in the structure of the systems (e.g. differential relevance of infrastructures, supply chains, cultural conventions, user practices, industry structures)
- The unfolding of system reconfiguration at different scalar levels (e.g. urban, national, international).

Making whole system change the unit of analysis may also imply rethinking of theoretical repertoires, the refining of methodologies to enable the ‘zooming out’ required to observe whole systems, as well as adjustments in how we consider the implications for sustainability governance to take account of the multiple interacting domains of daily life.

IST2018 will have a plenary programme organised to stimulate debate around the conference theme and we especially welcome submissions that interrogate the issues set out above. We also invite submissions on topics that form the core of STRN research agenda. As such, scholars and stakeholders are invited to make submissions to one of the following conference tracks:

1. Whole system reconfiguration across production and consumption
2. Theoretical contributions to transition frameworks
3. Politics and power in transitions
4. Governance and policy instruments for stimulating transitions
5. Civil society, culture and social movements
6. Organizations and industries in sustainability transitions
7. Transitions in practice and everyday life
8. Local and urban transitions
9. Transitions in low income and developing countries
10. Methodological advances to study transitions, including modelling
11. New frontiers –new directions

## **Session Formats**

IST2018 follows previous conferences by providing a range of formats to stimulate scholarly debate:

Full paper sessions: A 90 minute session for presentation and discussion of 3 original research papers. Acceptance to a full paper session is based on a commitment from authors to submit a full paper in advance of the conference.

Speed talk sessions: A 45 minute session for 3-5 speed talks, which briefly introduce new research ideas, data and analytical insights to provide a basis for collective discussion. We specifically invite contributions from industry and policy actors, as well as PhD students and early career researchers, providing an opportunity to discuss ideas at an early stage. Submission of full papers is not required for speed talk sessions.

Posters: Posters will be displayed for the duration of the conference; there will also be a dedicated poster session in the conference programme.

Dialogue sessions: A 90 minute session which aims to stimulate discussion and debate around a particular thematic focus. These sessions are proposed by an external session organiser / chair, with pre-agreed speakers. Dialogue sessions should be conceived to maximise audience participation. The session organiser should propose the precise format of the session, which could be a panel, a sequence of speakers, a debate or workshop. Proposals for alternative innovative formats are also welcome. Submission of full papers is not required for dialogue sessions.

## **Submission Requirements**

Extended abstracts (max 600 words) for all session formats, with brief biographies of authors and session organisers for dialogue sessions (max 4 lines), should be submitted by 11 January through the abstract system, which can be accessed [here](#). Abstracts for full papers, speed talks and posters should clearly identify the most relevant conference track and should describe the key research questions, theory, method and findings. Abstracts for dialogue sessions should describe the thematic focus, the contributions of speakers and explain how the session will be organised to maximise audience participation.

## **Scientific Review**

All submissions will be reviewed anonymously and outcomes will be communicated by 12<sup>th</sup> March, based on novelty, quality and fit to the conference theme and STRN research agenda. Please note, that depending on the volume of submissions and to ensure we have a viable and lively conference programme, the organisers may choose to allocate submissions to any of the alternative formats set out above.

## **Key dates**

11<sup>th</sup> January 2018 – Deadline for abstracts  
12<sup>th</sup> March – Communication of decisions  
11<sup>th</sup> April - Early-bird registration deadline  
11<sup>th</sup> May – Standard registration deadline  
11<sup>th</sup> May – Submission of full papers  
11<sup>th</sup> June – Conference

## **Organising Committee**

Professor Andrew McMeekin (Chair)  
Professor Frank Geels  
Dr. Mike Hodson  
Dr. Josephine Mylan

Any queries should be directed to [confercare-online@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:confercare-online@manchester.ac.uk) in the first instance.