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Business models for sustainable innovation: state-of-the-art and steps towards a research agenda

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to advance research on sustainable innovation by adopting a business model perspective. Through a confrontation of the literature on both topics we find that research on sustainable innovation has tended to neglect the way in which firms need to combine a value proposition, the organization of the upstream and downstream value chain and a financial model in order to bring sustainable innovations to the market. Therefore, we review the current literature on business models in the contexts of technological, organizational and social innovation. As the current literature does not offer a general conceptual definition of sustainable business models, we propose examples of normative requirements that business models should meet in order to support sustainable innovations. Finally, we sketch the outline of a research agenda by formulating a number of guiding questions.



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Keywords

Sustainable innovation; Sustainable business model; Business model for sustainability; Literature review; Research agenda

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