

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON MANAGEMENT OF INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Conference Theme

PARALLEL TRANSFORMATIONS:

Responding to the AI Revolution and Global Crises through innovation and Entrepreneurship

Special Track Proposal

Track Title <i>Please provide a concise and engaging title for the proposed track</i>	Open Innovation and Entrepreneurship: rethinking “openness” in entrepreneurial firms and ecosystems
Track Description <i>Please provide a detailed description of the proposed track (approximately 800–1,000 words), outlining:</i> • Motivation and relevance of the track; • Key research challenges and emerging issues addressed • Track's contribution to the conference theme • Examples of topics and research questions that would fit within the track	<i>The call is promoted and supported by the Open Innovation Special Interest Group (SIG) of the Italian Association of Management Engineering (AiMG). It welcomes broad participation and is open to all researchers and scholars interested in the topic.</i> Since its conceptualization, the open innovation (OI) paradigm has fundamentally shifted attention toward the purposive management of knowledge flows across organizational boundaries (Chesbrough, 2003). Yet, the intellectual development of OI research has been strongly shaped by the organizational context in which the phenomenon was first observed: large, established firms (Bogers et al., 2017). Early studies and managerial models examined how firms could search for external ideas and integrate external knowledge into R&D processes, as well as how they could exploit internally generated knowledge through new paths to the market (Chesbrough and Bogers, 2014). Research on OI in SMEs and entrepreneurial firms developed only later and, largely in parallel with this dominant stream. Early work showed that SMEs adopted OI for different motives and faced distinct managerial challenges compared with large companies (van de Vrande et al., 2009). Subsequent research reinforced this distinction, showing that resource scarcity, dependence on external innovation assets, and limited managerial and organizational culture fundamentally alter how openness is organized and managed in smaller firms (Vanhaverbeke, 2017; Usman et al., 2018; Livieratos et al., 2022, 2026; Marullo et al., 2018a). The distinction becomes even more significant when moving from the broad category of SMEs to entrepreneurship. In new ventures, technology-based start-ups, academic spinoffs, and other entrepreneurial firms, external actors and knowledge flows may be constitutive of the venture itself. Entrepreneurial firms may develop around one focal technology or opportunity while the venture, its business model, and even its target market are still being constructed (Albats et al., 2023). Under these conditions, external knowledge actively shapes opportunity discovery, technology development value creation and value capture, and ultimately whether and how entrepreneurial entry occurs. OI may therefore represent a qualitatively different phenomenon under entrepreneurial conditions rather than a smaller-scale version of OI in established firms (Vanhaverbeke, 2017). Entrepreneurs use external knowledge to identify and test opportunities, obtain market feedback, access complementary assets and resources, build legitimacy, and shape an emerging business model. These activities unfold iteratively through experimentation and learning (Contigiani & Levinthal, 2019; Contigiani, 2023). While openness to external knowledge can influence new venture creation and survival (Eftekhar & Bogers, 2015; Marullo et al., 2018b), OI in early-stage ventures also highlights a distinctive tension with

appropriability (West, 2006), that becomes particularly salient when opportunities are being tested (Marullo et al., 2020; Contigiani, 2023). Openness may thus have different functions and consequences across the entrepreneurial process, from opportunity identification and experimentation to new venture creation and development, while also generating potential tensions.

At the same time, entrepreneurial firms should not be viewed merely as resource constrained recipients of external knowledge. They can themselves provide technological novelty, new ideas and applications, and complementary capabilities to other actors. This role becomes particularly relevant within innovation ecosystems, where value creation depends on the interdependent contributions of heterogeneous actors (Radziwon & Bogers, 2019). While a significant body of literature has investigated how firms generate and exploit value through interdependence in multi-actor innovation ecosystems (Adner, 2017), the role of entrepreneurship in shaping, populating and transforming innovation ecosystems remains comparatively under-explored. New approaches are needed to understand how entrepreneurial firms benefit from openness and how they contribute to innovation ecosystems (Barile et al., 2026; Barile & Secundo, 2026). Particular attention should be given to the structure and composition of the external knowledge networks in which entrepreneurial firms are embedded, including their ties with universities and research organizations (Gustina et al., 2024; Perkmann, 2024; Perkmann & Walsh, 2007). Understanding when these relationships trigger joint value creation and when they reinforce asymmetries requires connecting the OI paradigm with emerging theories in the field of entrepreneurship and ecosystems (Marullo et al., 2020; Ritala et al., 2015; Radziwon & Bogers, 2019).

The proposed track invites theoretical, empirical, and methodological contributions at the intersection of OI and entrepreneurship, aimed at developing a more contextualized understanding of openness in entrepreneurial firms and ecosystems. A central research challenge is to establish when theories, constructs, and managerial frameworks originating in mainstream OI research remain applicable to entrepreneurial settings, when their underlying assumptions need to be adapted, and when entrepreneurial conditions require different theoretical explanations altogether. Rather than treating firm size as the primary contingency, we encourage research proposing new perspectives on the OI paradigm in entrepreneurship.

These questions are particularly relevant to the MINE 2027 theme. Emerging technologies and major societal transformations increase uncertainty while making knowledge, technologies, capabilities, and complementary assets more widely distributed across organizational boundaries. Entrepreneurial firms are particularly exposed to these conditions because they need to manage distributed resources while simultaneously defining the opportunity and building the organization through which it will be exploited. OI may therefore constitute not simply an innovation strategy, but a fundamental mechanism through which entrepreneurial firms and other ecosystem actors mobilize complementary knowledge to address technological and societal transformations. Its timeliness is also reflected in current scholarly conversations, including recent World Open Innovation Conference calls and Academy of Management discussions in Open Innovation Community PDWs calling for stronger theorizing across previously siloed research communities.

Potential contributions may include empirical, methodological, or conceptual studies addressing, among others, the following research questions:

- How does “openness” differ when the organization, opportunity, technology, and business model are still emerging?
- Which assumptions and mechanisms of established OI theories remain valid in entrepreneurial contexts, and which require reconceptualization?
- How do search, experimentation, and collaboration shape opportunity development, entrepreneurial entry, and new venture evolution?
- How do founders and entrepreneurial teams shape the governance of external knowledge networks?



	• How do entrepreneurial firms contribute to innovation ecosystems? • How do emerging technologies and societal challenges alter the benefits, risks, and forms of openness in entrepreneurial firms and ecosystems? • What are the processes through which entrepreneurial firms' "openness" becomes constitutive of ecosystem-level dynamics, rather than simply a response to them? • How does the structure and composition of external knowledge networks influence the development of capabilities in entrepreneurial firms?
Keywords <i>Please provide 4–6 keywords that best characterize the proposed track. Separate keywords using a semicolon (;)</i>	Open innovation; Entrepreneurship; Entrepreneurial firms; Start-ups and SMEs; Innovation ecosystems; External knowledge networks
References <i>Please include the key references supporting the relevance and positioning of the proposed track</i>	Adner, R. (2017). Ecosystem as structure: An actionable construct for strategy. <i>Journal of management</i>, 43(1), 39-58. Albats, E., Podmetina, D., & Vanhaverbeke, W. (2023). Open innovation in SMEs: A process view towards business model innovation. <i>Journal of Small Business Management</i>, 61(6), 2519–2560. Barile, D., De Lorenzi, M. C., Latino, M. E., & Secundo, G. (2026). A critical review exploring the interplay between advanced technologies and innovation ecosystems in industry 5.0 scenario. <i>Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management</i>, 33(4), 5672-5690. Barile, D., & Secundo, G. (2026). Digital innovation ecosystem: a systematic mapping to understand how digital technologies are transforming innovation ecosystem. <i>Technovation</i>, 155, 103573. Bogers, M., Zobel, A.-K., Afuah, A., Almirall, E., Brunswicker, S., et al. (2017). The open innovation research landscape: Established perspectives and emerging themes across different levels of analysis. <i>Industry and Innovation</i>, 24(1), 8–40. Chesbrough, H. W. (2003). <i>Open Innovation: The New Imperative for Creating and Profiting from Technology</i>. Harvard Business School Press. Chesbrough, H., & Bogers, M. (2014). Explicating open innovation: Clarifying an emerging paradigm for understanding innovation. In H. Chesbrough, W. Vanhaverbeke, & J. West (Eds.), <i>New Frontiers in Open Innovation</i> (pp. 3–28). Oxford University Press. Contigiani, A. (2023). Experimentation and appropriability in early-stage ventures: Evidence from the US software industry. <i>Strategic Management Journal</i>, 44(9), 2128–2174. Contigiani, A., & Levinthal, D. A. (2019). Situating the construct of lean start-up: Adjacent conversations and possible future directions. <i>Industrial and Corporate Change</i>, 28(3), 551–564. Eftekhari, N., & Bogers, M. (2015). Open for entrepreneurship: How open innovation can foster new venture creation. <i>Creativity and Innovation Management</i>, 24(4), 574–584. Flamini, G., Pellegrini, M. M., Fakhra Manesh, M., & Caputo, A. (2022). Entrepreneurial approach for open innovation: Opening new opportunities, mapping knowledge and highlighting gaps. <i>International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research</i>, 28(5), 1347–1368. Gustina, A., Nurmasari, N. D., & Liu, J. S. C. (2024). Open innovation between university/industry: A review of research trends and practices. <i>Journal of Open Innovation: Technology, Market, and Complexity</i>, 10(4), 100419. Livieratos, A. D., Tsekouras, G., Vanhaverbeke, W., & Angelakis, A. (2022). Open Innovation moves in SMEs: How European SMEs place their bets? <i>Technovation</i>, 117, 102591. Livieratos, A. D., Tsekouras, G., Vanhaverbeke, W., & Tsiliki, G. (2026). Unlocking SME innovation success through sequenced collaboration. <i>Small Business Economics</i>, 66, 1605–1633. Marullo, C., De Marco, C. E., Di Minin, A., & Piccaluga, A. (2018a). The "hidden costs" of open innovation in SMEs: From theory to practice. In W. Vanhaverbeke, F. Frattini, N. Roijakkers, & M. Usman (Eds.), <i>Researching Open Innovation in SMEs</i> (pp. 37–68). World Scientific.



	Marullo, C., Casprini, E., Di Minin, A., & Piccaluga, A. (2018b). 'Ready for Take-off': How Open Innovation influences startup success. <i>Creativity and Innovation Management</i>, 27(4), 476–488. Marullo, C., Di Minin, A., De Marco, C., & Piccaluga, A. (2020). Is open innovation always the best for SMEs? An exploratory analysis at the project level. <i>Creativity and Innovation Management</i>, 29(2), 209–223. Perkmann, M. (2024) Dimensions of Openness: Universities' Strategic Choices for Innovation, in Chesbrough, H. et al.(eds), <i>The Oxford Handbook of Open Innovation</i>, 438- 454 Perkmann, M., & Walsh, K. (2007). University–industry relationships and open innovation: Towards a research agenda. <i>International journal of management reviews</i>, 9(4), 259–280. Radziwon, A., & Bogers, M. (2019). Open innovation in SMEs: Exploring interorganizational relationships in an ecosystem. <i>Technological Forecasting and Social Change</i>, 146, 573–587. Ritala, P., Olander, H., Michailova, S., & Husted, K. (2015). Knowledge sharing, knowledge leaking and relative innovation performance: An empirical study. <i>Technovation</i>, 35, 22–31. Usman, M., Roijakkers, N., Vanhaverbeke, W., & Frattini, F. (2018). A systematic review of the literature on open innovation in SMEs. In W. Vanhaverbeke, F. Frattini, N. Roijakkers, & M. Usman (Eds.), <i>Researching Open Innovation in SMEs</i> (pp. 3–35). World Scientific. van de Vrande, V., de Jong, J. P. J., Vanhaverbeke, W., & de Rochemont, M. (2009). Open innovation in SMEs: Trends, motives and management challenges. <i>Technovation</i>, 29(6–7), 423–437. Vanhaverbeke, W. (2017). <i>Managing Open Innovation in SMEs</i>. Cambridge University Press. West, J. (2006). Does appropriability enable or retard open innovation? In H. Chesbrough, W. Vanhaverbeke, & J. West (Eds.), <i>Open Innovation: Researching a New Paradigm</i> (pp. 109–133). Oxford University Press.
Track Chairs <i>Please identify between 2 and 5 Track Chairs. For each Track Chair, provide:</i> • Full Name • Affiliation • Country • Email address • Research interests (optional)	Cristina Marullo Associate Professor of Innovation Management and Entrepreneurship Politecnico di Torino, Department of Management and Production Engineering (DIGEP) Italy cristina.marullo@polito.it Domenica Barile Research Fellow and PhD in Management Engineering LUM Giuseppe De Gennaro, Department of Management, Finance and Technology Italy barile@lum.it Maria Chiara De Lorenzi PhD Candidate and Research Fellow of Management Engineering University of SalentoDepartment of Innovation Engineering Italy mariachiara.delorenzi@unisalento.it Clio Dosi Assistant professor, Management Engineering University of Bologna, Department of Management clio.dosi@unibo.it
Short biography of each organizer	Cristina Marullo is Associate Professor of Innovation Management and Entrepreneurship at Politecnico di Torino. She holds a PhD in Management of Innovation, Sustainability and

Please provide a short biography for each
Track Chair (maximum 200 words per
biography)

Healthcare from Sant'Anna School of Advanced Studies (Pisa) and an MSc in Economics from the University of Florence. She is a faculty member of the Entrepreneurship and Innovation Centre (EIC) at Politecnico di Torino and Affiliate Professor at the Institute of Management, Sant'Anna School of Advanced Studies, (Pisa). She serves as associate editor of BRQ - Business Research Quarterly and Creativity and Innovation Management. Her research and teaching activities cover the fields of economics of innovation, R&D and technology management, and entrepreneurship. Her research has been published, among others, in Technovation, Industrial and Corporate Change, Technological Forecasting and Social Change, Business Strategy and the Environment, R&D Management. She has been awarded the Academy of Management best paper proceedings in 2019 in the Technology and Innovation Management (TIM) Division with co-authors at KU Leuven (BE). She leads the Special Interest Group on Open Innovation within the Italian Association of Management Engineering (AiIG).

Domenica Barile, PhD, is a Researcher and Knowledge Transfer Manager at the Knowledge Transfer Office of Università LUM Giuseppe Degennaro, within the DISCOVER NEXTT project, funded by MUR–NextGenerationEU. She holds a PhD in Economics and Management of Sustainability and Innovation from LUM University, with a visiting research period at the KTH Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm, hosted by Prof. Mats Magnusson. Her research focuses on digital innovation ecosystems, knowledge management, artificial intelligence, technology transfer and university–industry–government collaboration. She is the author of numerous articles published in leading international journals, including Technovation, Journal of Knowledge Management, Management Decision and the European Journal of Innovation Management. She regularly presents her research and chairs thematic tracks at international conferences such as IFKAD, the R&D Management Conference and AiIG. Alongside her research activity, Domenica teaches Digital Transformation, Digital Transformation and Industry 5.0, and Project Management across several Bachelor's, Master's and postgraduate programmes at LUM University. She is actively engaged in Third Mission initiatives, supporting technology transfer, entrepreneurship and public engagement activities across the Apulian innovation ecosystem.

Maria Chiara De Lorenzi is a PhD Candidate in the 39th cycle of the "Complex Systems Engineering" program at the University of Salento with core topic on Business Model Innovation and Innovation Management as a convergence in turbulence scenario of Twin Transition. She is also a research fellow in the field of management engineering. Her research focuses on Innovation Management, Impact of advanced technologies in the era of twin transition and Digital Transformation, Business Model Innovation, Technology transfer, Open innovation, Entrepreneurship and innovation ecosystems. She has published eight scientific papers in respected journals, one of which was recognized as a runner-up paper by AiIG. Regular participant in international conferences as Track Chair, Presenter, and Co-author: R&D Management Conference, IFKAD, PLM Conference, AiIG Scientific Conference and IDE. She has experience in the design and management of research and innovation projects, with most recent experience as Technical Project Manager for Aradeo 5.0, awarded funding in 2026 by the Consorzio Universitario Interprovinciale Salentino, as well as coordinating the transition of the Museum of Radioactivity towards an Immersive Museum Experience. She has been Visiting Researcher at Erhvervshus Sjælland – Business Hub Zealand, Denmark, within the Horizon 2020 MSCA project "Entrepreneurial Management for Fostering Innovation and Talents".

Clio Dosi is Assistant Professor at the University of Bologna and a Faculty member of Bologna Business School, where she teaches Organization and Innovation Design. She is part of Oper.space, the Innovation Factory of the University of Bologna, where she coordinates Oper.lab (Open Innovation Observatory). She holds a PhD in General Management from the University of Bologna. She has been a visiting scholar at Cass



	Business School (2014), HPI Hasso Plattner Institute (2020), Esade Business School (2022) and CERN Ideasquare Fellow (2014-2020), where she contributed to the development of Ideasquare and innovation-related programmes. Her research focuses on the organizational dynamics that enable innovation, mainly at the group level and at the level of processes and competencies. She is passionate about understanding how organizations manage and design innovation, with an interest in tool selection (e.g. prototypes as boundary objects and simulation) and innovation design methodologies (e.g. design thinking or proof of Concept development). In her research, she collaborates with knowledge-intensive companies, research centres and public institutions. She is a member of the AilG Italian Association of Management Engineering, Associate Editor of The CERN IdeaSquare Journal of Experimental Innovation (CIJ) and fellow of Attract and Design factory global network.
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