



INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

MESD'26

20TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION | 2006-2026

CALL FOR EXTENDED ABSTRACTS

CONFERENCE SCOPE

All topics related to the sustainable development of multinational enterprises

2026 THEMATIC FOCUS

Multinational Enterprises, Sustainability and Responsibility in Times of Crisis

CONFERENCE DATES

Thursday 10 & Friday 11 December 2026

VENUE

ICN Business School - Berlin Campus, Germany

FORMAT

Extended abstract

LENGTH

Maximum 1,500 words

LANGUAGE

English

FULL PAPER

Not required

ABOUT THE CONFERENCE

Twenty years of MESD: a broad international forum

MESD'26 marks twenty years since the first MESD International Conference in 2006. Hosted at ICN Business School - Berlin Campus with partner academic institutions, the anniversary edition welcomes contributions on all topics related to the sustainable development of multinational enterprises while placing special emphasis on sustainability and responsibility under crisis conditions.

CONFERENCE SCOPE

All topics related to the sustainable development of multinational enterprises are welcome.

2026 THEMATIC FOCUS

Multinational Enterprises, Sustainability and Responsibility in Times of Crisis

CONTEXT

Why this theme matters

The contemporary world is characterized by multiple, overlapping crises including geopolitical tensions, armed conflicts, climate change, biodiversity loss, pandemics, energy shocks, and rising social inequalities. These crises profoundly reshape the environment in which multinational enterprises (MNEs) operate and intensify expectations regarding their responsibility, accountability, and contribution to sustainable development.

Since the adoption of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, governments, international institutions, firms, and civil society actors have sought to promote more sustainable, inclusive, and responsible forms of economic development. However, periods of crisis often exacerbate tensions between short-term economic survival and long-term sustainability objectives. Multinational enterprises are thus confronted with difficult strategic choices, ethical dilemmas, and heightened institutional pressures.

The 20th anniversary celebrates the breadth of the MESD research community developed since 2006. Within this broad scope, the 2026 thematic focus examines how multinational enterprises respond to crises, how sustainability and responsibility commitments evolve under pressure, and whether crises become barriers or catalysts for transformation. Special Focus and General MESD tracks ensure that both crisis-related work and the wider MESD field are clearly represented.

2026 SPECIAL FOCUS TRACKS

Crisis-centered perspectives for research and debate

Choose a Special Focus track when crisis conditions, pressures, or responses are central to the contribution. Authors working on the wider MESD field should select one of the General MESD tracks on the following page.

SF1 Multinational Enterprises and Global Crises • Geopolitical instability, sanctions, and international conflicts • Pandemics and health crises • Climate change and environmental shocks • Social crises, inequality, and labor issues	SF2 Sustainability and Corporate Responsibility under Pressure • CSR and ESG strategies in times of crisis • Short-term performance versus long-term sustainability • Human rights, due diligence, and responsible sourcing
SF3 Governance, Regulation and Institutional Pressures • Sustainability regulation and reporting requirements • Institutional pressures, regulatory responses and organizational legitimacy • Role of states, international organizations, and civil society	SF4 Innovation, Resilience and Business Model Transformation • Sustainable and digital innovation under crisis conditions • Organizational adaptation, renewal and transformative capabilities • Circular economy and transformative business models
SF5 Discourses, Practices and Critical Perspectives • Greenwashing and symbolic compliance • Measuring real sustainability impacts • Ethical dilemmas and accountability of multinational enterprises	

GENERAL MESD TRACKS

Broad pathways across the MESD field

Choose a General MESD track for work addressing the wider field of multinational enterprises and sustainable development, whether or not a crisis context is involved. G8 provides an open interdisciplinary route for relevant work that does not fit another track naturally.

G1 MNE Strategy and Sustainable Development • International strategy, FDI, location, and entry choices • Sustainability strategies, competitiveness, and internationalization • Emerging-market MNEs and sustainable development	G2 Global Value Chains, Operations and Sustainable Supply Chains • Global value chains and responsible sourcing • Sustainable production, logistics, and supply-chain management • Circularity, reshoring, localization, and operational transformation
G3 Innovation, Technology and Sustainable Business Models • Digital transformation, artificial intelligence, and sustainability • Green technologies, Industry 4.0/5.0, and sustainable innovation • New and transforming sustainable business models	G4 Corporate Responsibility, ESG, Governance and Sustainable Finance • CSR, ESG, and stakeholder management • Corporate governance, reporting, ethics, and accountability • Sustainable finance, responsible investment, and assessment of sustainability outcomes
G5 People, Society and Sustainable Organizations • Sustainable HRM, work, well-being, and responsible leadership • Diversity, inclusion, inequalities, labor, and human rights • Communities, social entrepreneurship, and societal impact	G6 Climate, Environment and Natural Resources • Climate strategies, decarbonization, and energy transition • Biodiversity, natural resources, and environmental management • Resource efficiency, pollution prevention, and ecological transformation
G7 SDGs, Public Policy and International Partnerships • SDG implementation and measurement • Public policy, regulation, and international organizations • Public-private partnerships, NGOs, development, and North-South cooperation	G8 Open and Interdisciplinary MESD Track • Conceptual, methodological, and interdisciplinary contributions • Emerging topics at the intersection of MNEs and sustainable development • Work within the broad MESD scope that does not fit another track

COMPLETED RESEARCH
 Empirical and conceptual studies

RESEARCH IN PROGRESS
 Emerging findings and designs

PRACTICE & POLICY
 Business, NGO and public-sector insights

SUBMISSION

Submission guidelines

Submissions must be written in English and clearly indicate the intended conference track, or 'G8 - Open and Interdisciplinary MESD Track' for work within the broader conference scope. Only an extended abstract of a maximum of 1,500 words is required; no full paper is required.

The extended abstract should include the title, author information, research context, research questions, methodology, main findings or expected contribution, and references.

Submissions must be original and must not have been previously published, accepted, or presented elsewhere. Research in progress is welcome. At least one author of each accepted contribution must register for and attend the conference.

PARTICIPANTS

Who should participate?

Academic researchers, doctoral students, policy-makers, business leaders, sustainability professionals, representatives of NGOs, and other stakeholders interested in any aspect of the sustainable development of multinational enterprises. Contributions may engage with the 2026 thematic focus, but this is not mandatory.

LEADERSHIP

Conference chairs

To be announced.

SUBMISSION AT A GLANCE

FORMAT

Extended abstract only

LENGTH

Maximum 1,500 words

LANGUAGE

English

REVIEW

Peer reviewed

FULL PAPER

Not required

IMPORTANT DATES

SUBMISSION OPENS

15 August 2026

SUBMISSION DEADLINE

15 October 2026

FINAL NOTIFICATION

By 30 October 2026

CONFERENCE

10-11 December 2026

FIND THE LATEST INFORMATION ONLINE

MESD'26 - 20th Anniversary Edition - Berlin

ICN Business School - Berlin Campus | Alt-Moabit 96, 10559 Berlin, Germany

mesd.org/mesd26/



SCAN FOR UPDATES