



The Academy of Business in Society

Highlights Report 2020



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Introduction



Dr. Ivo Matser EMP
Chief Executive Officer



Prof. Dr. Baback Yazdani
Chair of the Board of
Directors

Dear ABIS Partners and Members,

It is a great pleasure to share with you our main activities of the last year 2020, even when they were held in a much different context than we all expected.

The health of our societies has become very close to us as individuals during the pandemic. Some of us have experienced or threatened by what many people in the world endure in their daily life. We sincerely hope that this pandemic is a wake-up call to all of us and that it fosters responsible behaviour towards the big challenges in our world, which are clearly pointed out in the 17 SDGs of the United Nations. It is good to realize that we are only visitors of Earth and not the owners.

This elevates the relevance of the core business of **ABIS - Business in Society** - to an urgent one. Being involved in conversations, discussions and think-tanks is not sufficient. Action is highly needed, practicing what we preach, executing our ideas and taking our personal and professional responsibilities. That is what true leaders should do.

Even under tough circumstances, we did not cancel any of our flagship events in 2020, but adjusted and built on the current possibilities delivering the first **ABIS virtual Knowledge Into Action "Towards a Circular Economy in Business Practice and Education"** and later the **19th ABIS Annual Colloquium "Coming full circle? Sustainability and future-proof global recovery"**.

To support our members with the realities of remote working and distant learning, we created a **Toolkit for effective virtual communication** with practical tips to boost your virtual communication, event organisation and teaching.

We also started developing a digital version of our **Scenario Exploration System Workshops**, to allow you to integrate sustainability in your classes and trainings in an innovative and fun way. Together with our members, we successfully organized tailor made events and courses – the **Value Creation Roundtable** with Antwerp Management School and the **NN Investment Partners Responsible Investing Summer Course**, which gained a lot of interest and involvement of our business-academic network.

In terms of research and innovation activities, we continued to be active in EU projects by organizing the **ReTraCE Roundtable for Industry and Policy Makers** and working on several proposals on circular economy and green decision-making. In light of the new EU Research and Innovation Framework Programme, Horizon Europe, we organized two highly valued webinars on **"Introduction to Horizon Europe"** and **"Fundamentals of a successful project proposal"**. Finally, thanks to our guest editors and reviewers, we were able to finalize the **ABIS Special Issue: "Business in Society – Measuring impact and Creating Change"** which will be published in the Emerald journal Corporate Governance: The International journal of business in society in February. We hope you will enjoy this Highlights report to understand better how you can engage with us and our network and leverage these connections and activities into actions!

In 2021, you can expect from ABIS that we will accelerate our strategy to get more into action. Moreover, we will broaden our geographical scope to create a higher impact and results of the meaningful work in our network

We are looking forward to seeing you and working with you at one of our ABIS initiatives!

Dr. Ivo Matser EMP
Chief Executive Officer

Prof. Baback Yazdani
Chair of the Board of Directors

About ABIS

Who we are

Our mission is to advance the role of business in society through research and education. Every day, we focus on:

- accelerating the movement towards a sustainable, inclusive and circular economy
- empowering and mobilizing sustainability change agents in academia and business
- developing and supporting the spaces and practices that equip current and future business leaders with the knowledge, skills and mindsets they need

Our story

ABIS was founded in 2001 and launched at INSEAD in 2002 with the support of the leading Business Schools in Europe (INSEAD, IMD, London, ESADE, IESE, Copenhagen, Warwick, Vlerick, Ashridge, Cranfield, Bocconi) in partnership with IBM, Microsoft, Johnson & Johnson, Unilever and Shell. This initiative was driven by a shared belief that challenges linked to globalization and sustainable development required new management skills, mindsets & capabilities. ABIS developed a strong role in responding to this need and it focused on integrating sustainability at the heart of business curricula, corporate policies and business strategies by providing knowledge and capacity building.

Our network

As one of the very few existing business-academic networks, we nurture a unique experience. We believe that research and business have a role to play and we trust that academia and business can work together for a more sustainable world. Our network is big enough to always have new knowledge and ideas flowing, but also small enough to build unusual and strong connections and to create intimate spaces for brave discussions. We care about our network priorities and needs. Our members are willing to openly share their progress, challenges and dilemmas to learn and further improve. This creates an inclusive community and environment where individuals feel safe to share and value each other's insights and experiences. This contributes to develop and scale up their sustainability efforts in research, education and responsible ways of doing business.

We believe that the value is in the network and we achieve it with and for our members through:

3 main engagement areas

Knowledge Productivity



ABIS facilitates your access to academic & business experts, peer-to-peer sharing on specific and multidisciplinary issues and an increased impact and results of your work.

Learning & Development



ABIS allows you to gain the latest knowledge as well as the skills and mindsets to develop your sustainability change agency and leadership, within and outside your organization.

Communication & Dissemination



ABIS helps to increase the visibility of your activities and results and to learn about new initiatives, funding and collaboration opportunities, projects and latest developments from our network and beyond.

Knowledge Into Action Forum



"Towards a Circular Economy in Business Practice and Education"

On May 13, 2020 ABIS hosted its first virtual Knowledge Into Action Forum: **"Towards a Circular Economy in Business Practice and Education"**.

As the whole world was hit by the Covid-19 pandemic and most of the countries literally shut down all of their operations, instead of cancelling our event, we decided to offer a virtual platform for our members to come together, share knowledge and learn from each other. We ensured quality debates and progress among our network by bringing a positive outlook and highlighting arising opportunities, innovation and necessary transformations towards more circular business models.

The circular economy vision has been gaining more and more traction in the past decade and has come to the forefront of policymaking, business and higher education priorities. The transition to a circular economy and society will require new ways of thinking, creating the conditions for change to happen at scale and the involvement of everyone: businesses, governments, academia and individuals. We will also need new kinds of expertise, co-operation between silos, systemic thinking and innovation in business and education.

To spur innovation and learning, we welcomed high-level voices from policymakers, business and academia to share and discuss:

- The current context and the recent developments aiming to support the uptake of circular economy
- What can be done to incentivise the implementation of circular economy
- The EU policy framework and Circular Economy Strategy
- The emerging trends from academic and business community
- Models and circular economy approaches undertaken by businesses and start-ups

We were able to discuss and gain relevant insights during the **panel "Making Circular Economy work"** with speakers from the **European Commission, WBCSD, University of Hamburg** and **Nottingham Business School**. The panelists agreed that the playing field is still biased towards linear thinking and to encourage more circular solutions we need stronger policies and regulations and to increase collaborations across sectors and value chains.

We were very pleased to provide space for individual sessions, going deeper in the **Circular Economy approaches** of businesses with **Patagonia, Interface, Danone** and **Sulapac**.

In connection to KIAF, we organized the **ReTraCE Roundtable for industry and policy makers** right before KIAF on 11 - 12 May (see later in this report).

[CLICK HERE](#) for the full KIAF report where you can find the summaries of the sessions, recordings and further resources for learning.



The 19th ABIS Annual Colloquium 2020



"Coming full circle? Sustainability and future-proof global recovery"

On 24-25 November 2020, ABIS convened its **19th Annual Colloquium** during which speakers and participants engaged in panel discussions, keynote speeches and interactive sessions on the timely, overarching theme **"Coming full circle? Sustainability and future-proof global recovery"**.

The Covid-19 outbreak has put sustainability into sharper focus than ever before. It has affected our daily lives, exposed the vulnerabilities across governments, industry, and the entire socio-economic system. It represents for many **a true wake up call for urgent action**, an unprecedented opportunity to move away from unmitigated growth at all costs and deliver a lasting balance between people, prosperity and our planetary boundaries. Against this backdrop, the event aimed to discuss the potential of the Covid-19 crisis to be a watershed in shaping a sustainable future and a **catalyst for more responsible actions at systemic, organizational and individual level**.

We welcomed 70 participants from 40 organizations in 20 countries, consisting of sustainability change agents in business, academia and NGOs. On the first day, we focused on the academic world highlighting the emerging changes and best sustainability teaching practices. During **the panel discussion: "The role of business schools in the global recovery"**, speakers from **World Economic Forum, Nottingham Business School NTU** and **Turku School of Economics, University of Turku** presented the COVID-19 crisis as a moment of deep reflection and thinking on change and innovation in business schools. The discussion moved towards the possible futures and consequences on young generations that this crisis will bring and what role business schools need to take on. We also discussed the importance of **change agency, the creation for the appetite for change** and accepting the fact the **education does not happen in a political vacuum**.

The second day was opened with a keynote speech by **Otto Scharmer, Senior Lecturer, Sloan School of Management MIT & Co-founder, Presencing Institute** who explained the U-theory and the possibility how to transform the rules of our collective behaviour. The keynote was followed by a **panel discussion on "Exploring systemic, organizational, and individual resilience"**. The experts from the **European Commission, Port of Antwerp** and **She Leads Change** approached resilience from three interrelated angles: with an overview of the EU framework on resilience and strategic foresight (systemic perspective), insights from Europe's second-largest seaport (organizational perspective) and a serial social entrepreneur creating communities for change (organizational and individual perspective). The day ended by a closing panel **"Movements for change"**. The session welcomed voices from **business (NN Investment Partners), academia (Turku School of Economics)** and **civil society (Collaboratio Helvetica)** to share some of the actual changes that are happening on the ground to tackle our global challenges and that have been initiated or have accelerated during the Covid-19 crisis.

Access the full REPORT on Colloquium [HERE](#).



The 19th ABIS Annual Colloquium 2020



"Coming full circle? Sustainability and future-proof global recovery"

Best Sustainability Teaching Practices

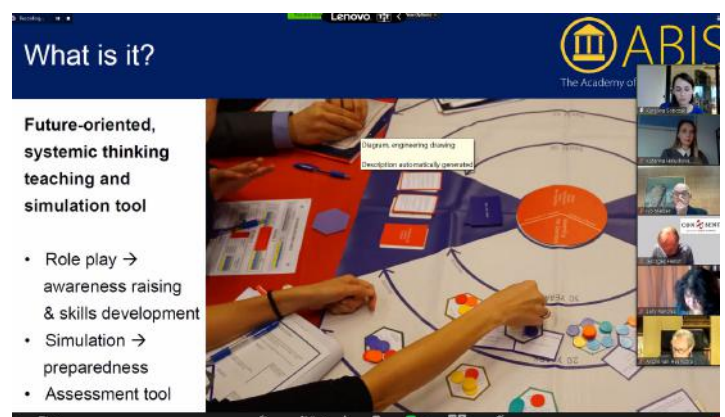
From the results of the ABIS 2020 Survey that aimed to find out the priorities of our members, **sharing best practices and making high-quality teaching resources accessible** to all, came as one of the most important support needed to face current challenges.

In order to respond to this need and support our members and business education in general in stepping up their game, we collected innovative, high quality resources, cutting-edge business cases and the best pedagogical methods to teach sustainability in business schools. This initiative is designed to help our members to gain and access relevant insights to accelerate sustainability uptake, learning capacity and improve the development of more sustainable business education.

The call for best sustainability teaching practices launched in September 2020 generated great interest and, based on our selection criteria, ABIS selected 12 best practices which were presented by their authors at the Colloquium in 3 tracks:

- **Sustainability programmes** – featured methodological and practical insights from a geographically and topically diverse sustainability programs
- **Creative Teaching Practices** – showcased experimental and unconventional approaches in teaching sustainability in business schools
- **Business Cases and Industry Engagement** - presented a variety of ways in which business cases and involvement of industry experts can support the effectiveness of sustainability teaching.

The authors will have the possibility to submit their full papers in the **ABIS Special Issue** with the collaboration of Emerald **Journal of International Education in Business**. ABIS will fully coordinate this process from finding expert guest editors, inviting reviewers, finalizing double-blind peer review to a successful publishing at the end of 2021/ beginning of 2022.



Horizon Europe Funding Webinar Series

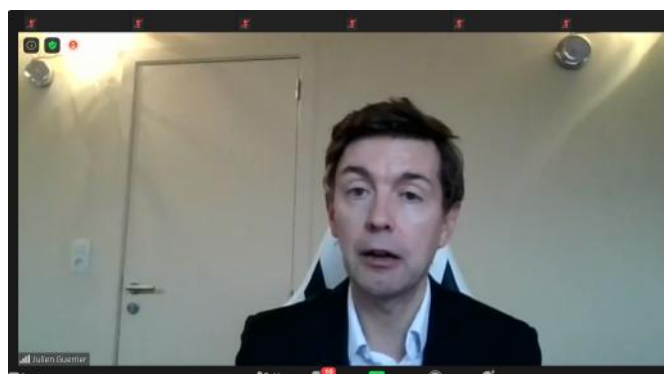


"Introduction to Horizon Europe" & "Fundamentals of a successful project proposal"

Based on the ABIS survey that we conducted early 2020 to find out the priorities of our network, the results pointed out that our academic members see **research funding and collaboration** as **one of the top three challenges** they are facing.

To support our members in their continuous efforts in obtaining European funding we have planned the **ABIS Horizon Europe Funding Webinar Series**. These webinar series aim to exchange knowledge and inform our business-academic network about the EU funding and provide practical insights and tips on how to submit a winning project proposal. So far, we have brought to our network 2 sessions:

- **Introduction to Horizon Europe** with **Julien Guerrier**, Director of the European Commission's Directorate-General for Research and Innovation's Policy and Programming Centre
- **Fundamentals of a successful project proposal** with **Anita Tregner-Mlinaric**, Vice Chair of the MSCA Advisory Board at the European Commission, Senior EU Affairs Expert and Programme Manager, META Group



In the first session, our expert speaker introduced **the new research and innovation framework programme, Horizon Europe**, its structural changes and new features. During the Q&A session we discussed how these new changes will affect the proposal development.

The second session, which was took place one week after, went deeper into the general insights and **tips on the necessary elements** to keep in mind when applying for European funding. We discussed the importance of building a strong consortium, structuring and phrasing and the importance of project management.

During these two sessions, we have been collecting feedback and information on what are the biggest challenges throughout the process of obtaining EU funding and we will be bringing you even more tailored topics in the upcoming months in 2021. We are also preparing a special toolkit with the condensed insights from the sessions, other available resources and our experiences with EU projects.



Scenario Exploration System Workshops



Building Leadership for Sustainability

The **Scenario Exploration System** is a **serious gaming platform** developed by the **European Commission's Joint Research Centre** to facilitate the practical use of scenarios from **foresight studies**.

The "Building Leadership for Sustainability" version developed by ABIS engages learners in a role-play simulation to develop mindsets and skills required to thrive in an increasingly complex business environment, while simultaneously contributing to long-term social, environmental and economic goals. The methodology of the game enables the acquisition of a solid understanding of sustainable development through an interactive process that integrates sustainability into the long-term strategies of different stakeholders.

The purpose of each workshop is to enable participants to experience and act through plausible sustainable alternative futures, by thinking and conversing outside of their usual frame of reference. The aim is not to play a game and win, but rather to promote a constructive conversation among key societal actors and to promote integrated long-term thinking in a spirit of collaboration.

The workshop has been increasingly popular among the ABIS network and beyond. Throughout the year 2019 we delivered 8 workshops at Cranfield School of Management, Brussels School of International Studies - University of Kent, JEE Europe Spring & Summer Conference, Westminster University, Politecnico di Milano, Politecnico di Torin and ESADE Business School. In 2020 we have been able to carry out the workshop for Henley Business School and Kent Business School. Unfortunately due to the pandemic, we had to stop and postpone our planned workshops. Nevertheless, we started to develop the SES workshop digitally in order for our members and clients to integrate sustainability in an even more innovative and fun way.

We offer to our members the opportunity to co-design a workshop session and to use the Scenario Exploration System as part of teaching modules, training activities and other relevant events. The Westminster University with their junior enterprise Westminster Business Consultants co-developed a Scenario Exploration System workshop as an assessment tool for their future consultants.

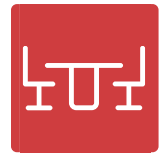
Besides enabling a better understanding of sustainable development and the complexities of socio-economic systems, this game-based methodology requires participants to use soft skills that are considered critical for responsible leaders such as negotiation, creativity, emotional intelligence, problem solving and critical thinking.

We were able to collect data from 110 participants of our workshops, who filled in our carefully designed two-part survey. The respondents were asked to fill in one part of the survey before the start of the workshop and one afterwards. In the order to assess their perception of used and developed skills throughout the workshop.

The findings provide important insight into how learners perceive their soft skills development and the overall perception of the workshop. The findings showcase that the students perceived to use and develop each of the soft skills mentioned as a result of engaging in discussions and systemic thinking during the game. When asked which of the skills they used during the workshop the most, critical thinking and creativity were the most frequently mentioned.

[Read more about the Scenario Exploration System.](#)





Sustainable transformation entails a systemic transformation of entire value chains, covering design, production and consumption phases, increasing material productivity, etc. Such a deep transformation is unlikely to happen suddenly. Various models have been developed by a variety of academic voices and businesses to steer business's contribution to society, and while a sustainable transformation is under way, challenges and resistances remain. Understanding, in critical and thoughtful way, the implications of sustainable transformation and its positive and negative implications on people, organizations and society, will be important for the development and adoption of sustainability integration approaches, including the design of well-targeted transformation policy measures.

For these reasons, ABIS and **Antwerp Management School** collaborated together to bring a critical review on existing value creation approaches and sustainability integration models. The roundtable was a unique moment for an exchange of knowledge among thought-leaders and practitioners on how we can reconceive business's value to society.

The roundtable featured two sessions on **value creation concepts** and **methodologies**. First, the concepts originators **Jed Emerson, Mark Kramer, Stuart Hart, Robert Phillips** and **Wayne Visser** steered their discussions around:

- Which approaches on value creation lead to sustainable transformation?
- To which extent do change processes (management) facilitate the decision and implementation of sustainability integration?
- Does the integration of sustainability practices lead to value creation?

The following session on **Value Creation Methodologies** explored the frameworks developed by professional services and consulting companies **PWC, EY** and **Impact Institute** in order to help their clients to create value for their stakeholders.

Due to high interest and great success of the first Value Creation Roundtable, we decided to organize together with AMS the second round of the roundtable where we will continue the dialogue with companies **Port of Antwerp, Johnson & Johnson, ABN Amro, BASF** and **the Value Balancing Alliance** on value creation applications and round up with another round of reflections with the value creation concepts originators.

You can **watch both sessions** on our **Youtube channel** [HERE](#) and [HERE](#).



NN IP Responsible Investing Summer Course



We have collaborated with our member **NN Investment Partners** to offer a global digital **Responsible Investing Summer Course** - a learning series on the impact of Covid-19. The series took place between **29 July and 22 September 2020** featuring leading academics around the world delivering online professional lectures to NN IP's global audience and investment professionals.

The summer course explored whether the COVID-19 crisis is increasing the speed at which we are moving to a more sustainable world or not. A total of nine academic scholars from leading universities and business schools were providing their insight on the impact of COVID-19 on **sustainability, consumer behaviour and sustainable finance**. The lectures focused on **three key stakeholders – governments, corporations and individuals**. Key underlying questions were:

- Will governments use their nuance and fuel this change globally?
- Are companies moving from shareholder to stakeholder value?
- What positive changes in end consumer behavior we will retain?

The Summer Course aimed at understanding the COVID-19 impact on the macroeconomic and social levels combined with the shift to where responsible investing becomes the new normal.

We were very pleased to receive 1500 registrations in total and to have on average 200 participants per each lecture.

The whole list of themes and speakers:

- Responsible Investing: The New Normal with **Alex Edmans, London Business School**
- The 2020 Consumer with **Emma Macdonald, University of Warwick**
- Change agency for a sustainable future with **Satu Teerikangas, Turku School of Economics**
- How China is stimulating the transition to a more sustainable society post Covid-19 with **Cary Krosinsky, Yale University**
- Corporate Social Responsibility & Responsible Investing: an accelerated convergence after the crisis? with **Nicolas Mottis, École Polytechnique**
- Moving towards transformative resilience, **Enrico Giovannini, Tor Vergata University of Rome**
- Strong Institutions for Responsible Investing: Business Integrity in ASEAN (Spotlight on SDG16) with **Lawrence Loh, National University of Singapore**
- Green recovery and circular economy with **Fenna Blomsma, University of Hamburg**

Read the whole **Activity report** [HERE](#).

To watch all the sessions online [click HERE](#).

"Sustainability will only be reached by putting many different solutions into place"

Fenna Blomsma,
Junior Professor at Hamburg University.



"By applying a radically different approach, companies can create profit for investors and value for society"

Alex Edmans, Professor of Finance and Academic Director, Centre for Corporate Governance at London Business School



"While the urgent dilemma for firms is how to weather the crisis at least financially, there should not be a let-up in the continuing quest for sustainability"

Lawrence Loh, Professor and Director, Centre for Governance, Institutions and Organisations at the National University of Singapore Business School.



"Successful transformations are only possible when countries collaborate and are economically vibrant"

Cary Krosinsky, Lecturer and Faculty Advisory Committee Member, Energy Studies, Yale College and Yale School of Management.





Business in Society: Measuring Impact and Creating Change

ABIS Special Issue



The amount and quality of information provided by companies, the difficulties in measuring and externalizing impact and the variety of existing reporting frameworks, tools and indicators represent some of the challenges businesses are facing in maximizing their positive impact on society. Advancing the role of business in society requires more relevant research, knowledge and new management and leadership skills, mindsets and capabilities.

To tackle these challenges, ABIS convened the **18th Annual Colloquium on “Business in Society: Measuring Impact and Creating Change”** hosted by **ESMT Berlin** on October 29-30, 2019. The conference provided a platform for high level discussions where the ABIS business-academic network reflected on the **importance of measuring impact**, shared the challenges that academia and business are facing in doing so and showcased best practices.

Stemming from the conference, the ABIS Special Issue: *Measuring Impact and Creating Change* combines research papers addressing three dimensions:

- **Enablers and barriers in change for sustainability** i.e. actual and potential driving forces and challenges in integrating sustainability into business practice and implementing the SDGs
- **Existing models and examples of business impact measurement** as well as their current use in practice and potential developments
- **Emerging, innovative approaches** in which businesses and organizations - startups and business schools in particular - are taking on more responsibility and contributing to solve social problems while pursuing their organizational purpose.

Thanks to the work of our **Guest Editors: Ivo Matser, ABIS; Yury Blagov, St. Petersburg University; Thomas Osburg, Fresenius University of Applied Sciences and Boleslaw Rok, Kozminski University**, we collaborated with the **Emerald journal: Corporate Governance, the International journal of business in society** and finalized the publishing process of the ABIS Special Issue. All of the submitted papers underwent a thorough double-blind peer review from carefully selected ABIS academic professionals who accepted the role of the ABIS reviewers.

9 papers were accepted and will be published in our Special Issue in February 2021.

The papers in this Special Issue are pertinent and topical in the sustainability discourse, focusing on some of the fundamental issues in measuring impact and systemic change and impact on macro and micro level. The papers provide a state-of-the-art overview on the current related developments and challenges that academia and businesses are currently facing.

We would like to congratulate our authors and co-authors for their hard work.

Our authors:

- Kalika, Michel; Shenton, Gordon, EFMD
- Rok, Boleslaw; Kulik, Monika, Kozminski University
- Kowszyk, Yanina Mariel; Vanclay, Frank University of Barcelona
- Diener, Joel; Habisch, Andre, Catholic University of Eichstaett-Ingolstadt
- Perrini, Francesco; Costanzo, Laura A.; Karatas-Ozkan, Mine, SDA Bocconi School of Management
- Blagov, Yury; Petrova-Savchenko, Anastasia A., GSOM St. Petersburg University
- Gring-Pemble, Lisa; Perilla, Germán, George Mason University
- Visser, Wayne, Antwerp Management School
- Veselova, Anna; Aray, Yulia; Knatko, Dmitri; Levchenko, Anna GSOM St. Petersburg University

Other ABIS Publications & Resources



ABIS Special Issue: Best Sustainability Teaching Practices

Integrating sustainability into curricula and equipping future leaders with the mindset and skills needed for a sustainable future and resilient society is an ongoing and topical discussion arising from all our academic and corporate partners. From the results of the ABIS Survey 2020, **sharing best practices and making high-quality teaching resources accessible to all, is considered one of the top resources and support needed to face current challenges.**

In order to respond to this need and to support our members and business education in general in stepping up their game, we collected innovative, high quality resources, cutting-edge business cases and the best pedagogical methods to teach sustainability in business schools.

This initiative is designed to help our members to gain and access relevant insights to accelerate sustainability uptake, learning capacity and improve the development of a more sustainable business education.

17 authors and co-authors presented their best teaching practices at the 19th ABIS Annual Colloquium and throughout 2021 ABIS will be coordinating the publishing process.

We will be publishing the Best Sustainability Teaching Practices as an ABIS Special Issue in the Emerald Journal of International Education in Business.



Toolkit for effective virtual communication

In March 2020 we found ourselves in a situation that needed radical change of the way we were used to work. We have produced a toolkit to provide an easy to use and **experience-based resource** to increase the effectiveness of **internal and external virtual meetings, online teaching and organization of virtual events.** It offers practical support and tips to our community of business professionals, researchers, teachers, and students who might use some help in adapting quickly to the new realms of working, communicating and connecting with others.

Click [HERE](#) to access the file



European Green Deal Report

We published a special **European Green Deal report** to bring our network the information about **the initial roadmap of the key policies and measures** on the EU's strategy to implement the United Nation 2030 Agenda and reach the Sustainable Development Goals. The report was also presented at the Antwerp Management School for the MBA program in the beginning of the year 2020.

Click [HERE](#) to access the file



EU Research and Innovation Projects



ReTrace: Realizing the Transition to the Circular Economy

Since 2018, we are part of a consortium **led by University of Sheffield** in **EU Horizon 2020 project under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA)** called **"ReTrace" - Realizing the Transition to the Circular Economy**. The consortium is composed of University of Sheffield, Università Degli Studi di Napoli Parthenope, Universitaet Kassel, SEERC, ABIS, Hogskolan Dalarna, University of Kent, TATA Steel UK, Olympia Electronics and Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam. The partners also include University of Exeter, Leeds University Business School, University of Ulsan and Shanghai Jiao Tong University.

The main aim of the ReTraCE project is the **creation of a cohort of professionals capable of driving the transition towards the Circular Economy** and employable not only by research institutions, but also by public sector bodies (e.g. local authorities and national agencies) and manufacturing and service sectors including: metals industry, electric and electronic equipment manufacturing, construction materials and waste management. The consortium delivers world class multidisciplinary training to 15 Early Stage Researchers (ESRs) offering them an extended and valuable program of international exchanges and secondments through the wide network of partner organisations from public, private and third sectors.

One of these 15 researchers is Josep Pinyol, who is hosted by ABIS since May 2019. He is also enrolled in the PhD programme in Sustainable Futures at the University of Exeter Business School.

In 2020, we organized a **project meeting with industry and policy experts - ReTraCE Project Roundtable for industry and policy makers**. The event took place just before the **ABIS Knowledge Into Action Forum** in May. This way, all the participants could benefit from free attendance to both events. The aim of the roundtable was for the 15 Early-Stage Researchers (ESR) to present their research activity and receive feedback and practical insights from practitioners, industry and policy-makers.



CESIGE: Circular Economy Scenarios for the Implementation of the EU Green Deal

In 2020 we have worked on preparing first and second stage proposal for a funding call: **Greening the economy in line with the SDGs**, addressing the EC's topic - **Understanding the transition to a circular economy and its implications on the environment, economy and society**. After the proposal successfully passed the first phase evaluation, **Antwerp Management School (AMS)** as the academic lead of the project together with ABIS as an administrative lead put together 11 academic partners with which we discussed the roles and possible future tasks on how to understand which combinations of key factors can stimulate the transition to a Circular Economy, identify the key transition factors leading to creation of scenarios - different "realities" of how the transition might happen. Even though our partner AMS decided to not put this project forward due to lack of time and resources, we have strengthened our partnerships and learned many valuable lessons.

GREENNORMS

We were invited to join the **project coordinator University of Graz** to lead two work packages for a project proposal on **"Understanding the emergence of green-decision norms and their impact on the prospect of achieving the European Green Deal objective."** The aim of the proposal is to develop an online accelerator that will host large cross country data-sets, case-studies, and tool-kits to accelerate the emergence of green decision-norms among consumers and in different forms of public and private organizations. The green decision-norm accelerator will also serve as a hub for building a trans-disciplinary network of researchers, professionals, public and private organizations, and policymakers. ABIS' role is to build this platform and ensure its longevity even after the project will end. Moreover, ABIS will oversee the communication and dissemination of the project activities and results.

RRInGD

ABIS was further invited to be involved in the **RRInGD project** led by **ICORSA - International consortium of research staff associations**. The overall aim of RRInGD (Responsible Research and Innovation Network in Green Deal) is to facilitate implementation of the European Green Deal as a Responsible Green Deal - meaning working towards environmental targets in a framework of Responsible Research and Innovation, with citizen deliberation and participation at the heart of strategic development. ABIS' role will be to advise and review selected tools for civic participation, supporting case studies and involvement in industry policy areas.

ABIS Participation & Engagement



JE Europe Winter Conference

For the second year in a row we took an active part at the **Junior Enterprises Europe (JE Europe) Winter Conference**, a flagship annual event for around 400 junior entrepreneurs and young leaders taking place in Brussels. The main theme of the event was **"Change Beyond Limits"** which was addressed by our CEO Ivo Matser at his **keynote speech** at the opening ceremony on February 27. He talked about the need for paradigm shift for future businesses that can only be achieved through learning and exploring. On February 28, the ABIS team hosted a **SDG Exploration Game Workshop** for 42 junior entrepreneurs, where they engaged with foresight scenarios and took on 7 societal roles that contribute to achieving a more sustainable future. Moreover, we took part in a jury and awarded the **Best Sustainable Junior Enterprise**. We were honored to hand over a trophy at the Closing Ceremony on February 29 to LisbonPH which is ensuring diversity, equality, sustainability and making a positive impact while growing their business.

BSIS Virtual Symposium

EFMD and BSIS team bring the **2020 BSIS Virtual Symposium** that aimed to dig deeper into some of the strategic challenges of business schools, such as re-discovering the roots and immediate environment, ensuring the societal impact of research and how to balance the assessment of a positive impact with an evaluation of the school's footprint. Our CEO, Ivo Matser was a speaker at a session on **"The Future of Impact Assessment: Impact Leadership, Future Generations and a Business School's Footprint"** on 12 May 2020 together with Dan LeClair, CEO, GBSN-Global Business School Network and Julie Perrin-Halot, Associate Dean/Director Quality, Strategy, International, GEM-Grenoble Ecole de Management.

During the session, speakers shared their views on what impact assessment means for them, and how they see the importance of impact with the Business Schools' strategies evolving in the future.

AACSB EMEA Annual Conference

The main aim of the **AACSB EMEA Annual Conference** is to address a wide range of the most pressing challenges that business schools are facing, sharing successes and dilemmas with peers including the still-emerging impacts of the COVID-19 in order to embrace agility and create solutions for those challenges. Our CEO Ivo Matser hosted a session on **"Corporate Engagement"** on October 28, where following questions will be discussed:

- What challenges exist for maintaining and developing relationships with industry?
- Will corporate engagement become 'local' as students are restricted in travelling internationally?
- Can we learn from the current experience of industry leaders in equipping students for the future?

7th International GSOM Emerging Markets Conference 2020

GSOM Emerging Markets Conference has been organized by **Graduate School of Management of St. Petersburg University** since 2014 and has become a unique platform for discussing and sharing research ideas and experience in a wide range of topics and joined together more than 1600 leading scholars and business practitioners from all around the world. ABIS co-organized and co-chaired a track on **Business in Society: Changing Paradigm and a New Reality** by Ivo Matser, CEO of ABIS and Yury Blagov, Director of the PwC Center for Corporate Social Responsibility at the GSOM and the ABIS Board of Director in November.

WBC Conference "We are actors of change"

The ABIS team delivered a presentation at the flagship **Westminster Business Consultants (WBC) Conference "We are actors of change"**. The aim of the event was to empower junior enterprises and students to become "the actors of change" by promoting eco-friendly values and helping them become more aware of what can be done at an individual level to help the planet. We discussed the dynamics and visions for change from the observations of our business-academic network and our own ABIS change.

ABIS Team and Board



ABIS Team



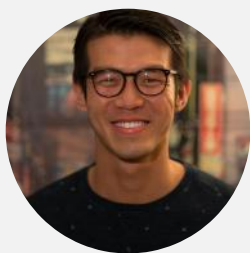
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Chief Executive Officer



Karolina Sobczak
Knowledge Manager



Katarina Haluskova
Project Communication Specialist



Jason Chang
Innovation and Business Development
Specialist



Mafous Lassissi
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Josep Pinyol
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ABIS Board of Directors



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Chair of the Board of Directors &
Dean of Nottingham Business School



Manuela Brusoni
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SDA Bocconi School of Management



Yury E. Blagov
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Graduate School of Management,
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