

# GRAND CHALLENGES IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION: IMPLICATIONS FOR ORGANIZATIONAL STRATEGY AND MANAGEMENT

## CALL FOR PAPERS – AUSTRALIAN JOURNAL OF MANAGEMENT

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**Special Issue Editors: Martina K Linnenluecke<sup>1</sup>, Layla Branicki<sup>2</sup>, Stephen Brammer<sup>3</sup>, Tom Smith<sup>4</sup>**

Grand Challenges are fundamental global challenges that require significant action through coordinated and collaborative efforts across societal stakeholders. The term “Grand Challenges” can be traced back to mathematician David Hilbert, who formulated a list of important unresolved problems in mathematics that sparked important streams of research and innovation in the field. Grand Challenges have also been identified in other fields. In 2003, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation launched a “Grand Challenges in Global Health” program to tackle important advances in preventing and curing diseases in the developing world (Tindana et al., 2007). Other Grand Challenges have been outlined by the United Nations (<http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>) and have been summarised into Sustainable Development Goals, with core themes being the eradication of poverty and hunger, the achievement of equality, as well as the achievement of a sustainable future.

The aim of the special issue is to investigate the implications of Grand Challenges for organizational strategy and management in the Asia-Pacific region. The special issue moves beyond a conceptualisation of Grand Challenges as discrete exogenous change or institutional change (see Ferraro et al., 2015) that can be studied through the lens of longitudinal or event study methodologies (Ball & Brown, 1968). Rather, the aim is to explore how organisations both impact and are impacted by large-scale social and environmental change (e.g., Linnenluecke et al., 2015; Whiteman et al., 2012), and how they can contribute to positive economic, societal and environmental outcomes. A focus of the special issue is to better understand the structures, mechanisms and processes behind large-scale change, innovation and transformation in the face of Grand Challenges, and to explore further the intersection of organisations, management, environment, markets, society and policy.

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The special issue ties in with broader efforts aimed at understanding how individuals, organizations, institutions and communities can contribute to addressing and perhaps even help solving Grand Challenges (see, for example, George et al., 2016; Wright and Nyberg, 2016). The special issue also connects to recent initiatives to fund research on grand challenges in Australia and the Asia-Pacific region, with announcements that eligible researchers will have access to \$3.2 million of new funding opportunities.<sup>5</sup>

In this special issue, we invite both theoretical and conceptual papers that discuss grand challenges in the Asia-Pacific Region as well as implications for organisational strategy and management in the Asia-Pacific context. In particular, the special issue invites papers that promote big and bold ideas, noting that “the fundamental principles underlying a grand challenge are the pursuit of bold ideas and the adoption of less conventional approaches to tackling large, unresolved problems” (Colquitt & George, 2011, p. 432).

We are open to a variety of methodological and theoretical approaches as well as interdisciplinary work, but papers need to extend beyond narrow approaches and small-scale studies. For organisations in the Asia-Pacific region, grand challenges could include (but are not limited to) issues arising from:

- Global environmental change, including climate change, and breaches of planetary boundaries (Steffen et al., 2015);
- Natural resource use and depletion;
- Sustainable development and transitions to clean energy;
- Economic, social and environmental development, especially in developing countries in the Asia-Pacific region;
- Shifts in the geopolitical context, economic dominance, and political stability;
- Biosecurity, food security, national security;
- Migration, refugees and asylum seekers;
- Regional resilience;
- Societal health and well-being;
- Advances in science and future technological breakthroughs (e.g., clean technology, robotics, biotechnology, data sciences).

Contributions in this special issue will focus on addressing how organizational strategy, management and scholarship across disciplines can identify Grand Challenges in the Asia-Pacific region and design response options at multiple levels (e.g., organizational change, industry change, societal change). The aim is to move beyond disciplinary boundaries to understand how organizations and management intersect with global problems. Sample questions are: What are the implications of breaches of planetary boundaries for particular sectors or organizations, and how do they impact organizational assets or profits? How can such challenges be addressed (e.g., through specific investments or managerial actions?), and what are pressing research priorities going forward? What are the structures, mechanisms and processes behind resource use and depletion, and how can organizations contribute to more sustainable development? How can organizations engage with pressing issues such as political stability, food security, migration, refugees? How can organizations ensure to be at the

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<sup>5</sup> See <https://www.science.org.au/news-and-events/news-and-media-releases/australian-and-asia-pacific-researchers-benefit-32-million>.

forefront of technological breakthroughs that have positive social, economic and/or environmental outcomes?

### **Submission Details**

We recognize that research on this topic is novel and that authors may not already be readily working on this topic. As such, the format of this special issue will include several steps to encourage researchers to develop novel ideas and thinking, rather than submit already existing documents.

The first step involves the submission of a research proposal (deadline: February 15, 2018) of no more than 5 pages that outlines the proposed topic, methodology, framework and/or data collection (depending on whether the article is conceptual or empirical in nature), as well as further details regarding the anticipated research design, analysis and interpretation of the results. Submissions need to follow AJM formatting guidelines.

Based on the submitted proposals, the Special Issue Editors will invite selected authors to proceed with a full submission. Completed submissions are due by November 15, 2018 and will undergo a formal review process

### **Submission Instructions**

- Authors should submit the 5-page proposal using the AJM editorial system February 15, 2018.
- If you do not yet have an account in the ScholarOne system, please use the following link: <http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/ajm> and click “Create Account New Users”.
- Once registered, you should be able to login and enter the “author dashboard”. To submit a manuscript, click on the icon “click here to submit a new manuscript”.
- All papers must be submitted via the ScholarOne online system. Please indicate in the appropriate drop-down menu that your paper is a candidate for the special issue and select as special issue: “Grand Challenges in the Asia-Pacific Region: Implications for Organizational Strategy and Management”.
- Authors will receive a decision from the editorial team by March 2018 regarding the proposal acceptance and an invitation to develop the proposal further.
- November 15, 2018: Final submission deadline for full papers.

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