Title: Rethinking Science and Tech Entrepreneurship and Innovation as Catalysts in the Transition towards Planetary Health

Organizers details:
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Track description:
Against the backdrop of grand societal challenges, the concept and role of entrepreneurship in (sustainability) transitions is evolving, moving beyond profit-driven ventures to become a powerful force for positive change. This special track seeks to explore the role of science and tech entrepreneurship in the transition towards planetary health.

The emerging field of planetary health offers a fresh perspective, focusing on the health and well-being of both the planet (the earth’s natural systems) and the people who inhabit it, with an emphasis on the interconnectedness between the two. It recognizes that human health is intricately linked to the health of the planet, including its ecosystems, climate, and biodiversity. Safeguarding planetary health values as such contributes to increasing societal resilience. The central theme of this track is to explore how science and tech entrepreneurship can be conceptualized and implemented to contribute to the planetary health mission.

The track focuses on how entrepreneurship can drive this change and highlights the need to reframe classic notions of science and tech entrepreneurship. The demanding nature of the transitions towards inclusive and just objectives require entrepreneurial initiative upfront but also divestment decisions. In this context, there is a need to shift away from a business as usual, disciplinary-driven approaches to organizing knowledge development and education.

Instead, institutes of higher education need to explore an institution-wide approach aiming at transdisciplinary action-based forms of education and knowledge production. This has profound implications for our current way of organizing knowledge infrastructures consisting of a conglomerate of universities, public research institutions and privately funded R&D and scientific research.

We aim to challenge traditional paradigms of entrepreneurship, encouraging participants to discuss innovative entrepreneurship models that align with the planetary health mission. We also welcome discussions on the subsequent transformation of business models, knowledge infrastructures and trans-disciplinary, inclusive forms of education.

Interaction modes:
Our track will embrace different types of sessions to foster diverse and engaging discussions. It will include the following components:

- Paper sessions: these sessions will provide a platform for academics and practitioners to share their latest findings and insights into science and tech entrepreneurship and its connection to planetary health.
- A policy dialogue session: we will include a session where policymakers will engage in discussions with academics and practitioners to explore the role of government policies in promoting and supporting a transition towards planetary health through entrepreneurship.
Expected guests:

In addition to representatives of the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, we have invited representatives of the Copernicus Institute of Sustainable Development (Utrecht University) and Zorginstituut NL. In addition, we are networked with experts from the National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (RIVM), the Netherlands Enterprise Agency (Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy) and the Planetary Health Alliance, whom we will invite to participate in the policy session. From our international networks, we will invite representatives from the ATTRACT EU consortium, whose mission to generate impact with science through entrepreneurship is topically closely related to this session’s theme.