

Call for Chapters: The Elgar Companion to Family Business and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

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Introduction

The Elgar Companion to Family Business and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is a scholarly initiative that seeks to explore the nexus between the institution of family business and the ambitious agenda of the SDGs. This volume aims to serve as a seminal reference, providing in-depth theoretical thinking and practical insights into how family firms are uniquely positioned to contribute to the SDGs and how they can navigate the challenges and opportunities these goals present.

Background

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a collection of 17 interlinked global goals designed to be a "blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all." Set in 2015 by the United Nations General Assembly and intended to be achieved by 2030, these goals are part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The SDGs cover a broad range of social and economic development issues, including poverty, hunger, health, education, climate change, gender equality, water, sanitation, energy, urbanization, environment, and social justice. Thus, referring to the SDGs substantially extends the perspective on corporate sustainability, which is currently dominated by ecological issues.

Family businesses, often characterized by their focus on economic and non-economic goals, resilience, long-term orientation, and intergenerational vision, are the backbone of the global economy. Their potential to drive sustainable development holistically is significant yet underexplored in academic research (e.g., Clauss et al. 2022). Family businesses can enforce their sustainability strategy more than non-family businesses due to their particular characteristics (Ferreira et al., 2021). These positive characteristics include their long-term orientation, tendency to preserve wealth, intergenerational perspective, close ties to the community, and patient capital, where stakeholder relationships are crucial (Grissa & Lakhali, 2023; Samara et al., 2022). Recent studies have highlighted the convergence of environmental practices between family and non-family firms, suggesting a gradual alignment with sustainable and responsible business conduct (Doluca et al., 2017). Previous research shows that family businesses benefit from a well-thought-out and implemented sustainability strategy, both on the family and the business side. On the business side, this leads to opportunities to reduce costs, provide better goods and services, mitigate risks

associated with potential environmental issues, increase acceptance in local communities, activate employees, and increase value creation and capture (Sharma & Sharma, 2021). On the other hand, a sustainability strategy on the family side reinforces long-term responsibility as a core value of the family business, which helps the family see the business as both an opportunity and an obligation (Miller & Le Breton-Miller, 2021). Other studies show that the family's religiosity, reputation, and image play an essential role in adopting sustainable practices by family firms. In addition, the decisions of the CEO and his/her successor also impact sustainability. These studies show how family control, family values, and industry influence the adoption of corporate social responsibility (CSR) practices (Mariani et al., 2023; Battisti et al., 2023; Stock et al., 2023). Despite initial results, the extent to which other factors influence sustainability in family firms remains to be seen (Curado & Mota, 2021). However, there is a need to investigate further the mechanisms and strategies that enable this convergence and how it contributes to the broader sustainability agenda.

The awareness and perception of the SDGs among stakeholders, including the next generation within family businesses, are critical for advancing these goals. This presents an opportunity for family businesses to lead by example, integrating the SDGs into their core strategies and operations (Leiva-Brondo et al., 2022). The role of family firms in reporting and contributing to the SDGs also warrants attention. Studies revealed varying degrees of engagement with the SDGs, indicating a landscape of reporting practices that family businesses could learn from and improve upon (Jan et al., 2022). Furthermore, the interlinkages between economic growth, environmental sustainability, financial development, and renewable energy consumption underscore the interconnected nature of the SDGs and the need for a holistic approach to family business practices (Guang-Wen et al., 2022).

Despite these advancements, several critical gaps in the literature warrant further exploration. These gaps are but are not limited to:

- The process and factors influencing the convergence of environmental practices between family and non-family firms.
- Strategies for effectively educating and engaging the next generation in family firms about the SDGs.
- The role of next-generation family members in shaping the sustainability strategy of the family firm.
- The link between product, process, and business model innovation and the achievement of SDGs in family firms.
- Exploring family firm heterogeneity regarding SDG contributions.
- The role of family firms in specific SDGs that have received less attention in the literature.
- Comparative studies on the sustainability reporting practices of family firms across different cultures and regulatory environments.
- The impact of family firm governance on the implementation and reporting of SDG-related activities.

Structure of the Book

Reflecting the triple bottom line approach, the book will be organized into three sections, each dedicated to a dimension of sustainability and associated SDGs:

1. **Environmental Sustainability:** Contributions in this section will delve into the environmental initiatives of family firms, discussing the convergence of environmental practices and the role of innovation in achieving SDGs such as clean water (SDG 6), affordable and clean energy (SDG 7), and climate action (SDG 13). Potential research questions include:
 - How do family firms approach environmental risk and opportunity in the context of their long-term orientation?
 - What innovative practices are family firms implementing to contribute to SDG 13 (Climate Action)?
2. **Social Sustainability:** Chapters will explore the social impact of family businesses, their contribution to community well-being, education (SDG 4), gender equality (SDG 5), and how they can reduce inequalities (SDG 10) within and beyond their organizational boundaries. Potential research questions include:
 - In what ways are family firms fostering social sustainability within their communities?
 - How can family firms integrate SDG 5 (Gender Equality) into their core values and operations?
3. **Economic Sustainability:** This section will focus on the economic strategies that underpin sustainable growth (SDG 8), responsible production (SDG 12), and infrastructure development (SDG 9) within family firms, contributing to a sustainable and prosperous future for all. Potential research questions include:
 - What are the unique challenges and opportunities family firms face in aligning with SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth)?
 - How do family firms balance tradition and innovation to achieve economic sustainability and responsible production?

Call for Chapter Proposals

We invite scholars and practitioners to submit proposals that provide new insights into the intersection of family business and the SDGs. Proposals should be grounded in recent research and contribute to advancing knowledge in the field.

Submission Guidelines

Chapter Proposal

- Max. 1 Page, indicating:
- The main chapter (i.e., current state, theories, or methods) to which the contribution is made
- The primary research question
- The theoretical and conceptual focus of the contribution
- The research methodology/design, if applicable
- The expected results
- The contribution to the discourse on entrepreneurship and innovation in family firms

Full Chapter

- Chapter length max 7.000 words (including figures, illustrations, tables, notes, and references, allowing 500 words for each figure or illustration and 300 words for each table included)
- Abstracts of up to 150 words and up to six keywords for each chapter
- MS Word format, Times New Roman, 12pt, double line spacing
- Any diagrams, charts, illustrations, and maps must be in a form and resolution suitable for reproduction. These must be supplied in grayscale or black and white.
- Mandatory reference style: APA (Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, Seventh Edition, ISBN 978-1-4338-3215-4)
- ORCID identification numbers for all authors if used/applicable/desired.
- All chapters must be professionally proofread before final acceptance.

Important Dates

- Chapter Proposal Submission: July 31, 2024
- Notification of Acceptance: August 30, 2024
- Full Chapter Submission: January 31, 2025
- Review Feedback: March 31, 2025
- Final Chapter Submission: June 30, 2025

Submission Procedure

Proposals should be submitted electronically to sdg.compendium@uni-wh.de. All proposals will be subject to a rigorous peer-review process.

Contact Information

For additional information or queries, please contact the editors via sdg.compendium@uni-wh.de.

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