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**21st RURAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP CONFERENCE (REC):**

**Leeds, England, June 5th to 7th.**

The Rural Entrepreneurship Conference (REC) gathers a range of national and international academics, practitioners, public servants and other stakeholders who, while developing networks, discuss different aspects of rural development, and share new knowledge informing research, policy and practice. The 21st Rural Entrepreneurship Conference will be held from June 5th to 7th 2024 on the University of Leeds campus. The event will take place in person and on campus.

Conference theme: Empowering Rural Futures: Unleashing Entrepreneurial Potential in a Net-Zero Era

This year's theme, 'Empowering Rural Futures: Unleashing Entrepreneurial Potential in a Net-Zero Era', focuses on driving sustainable entrepreneurship in rural areas, considering global Net-Zero commitments. The conference will explore the intersection of rural entrepreneurship, sustainability, and innovative strategies to overcome barriers in rural settings.

This theme encapsulates the dual aspects of addressing the challenges and barriers that rural entrepreneurs face (constrained entrepreneurship) and the strategies to support and empower them (conducive entrepreneurship). Moreover, it weaves in the critical element of sustainability and environmental responsibility, aligning with UK Net-Zero goals.

The theme suggests a forward-looking, solution-oriented approach, focusing on empowerment and potential. It highlights the goal of not only navigating but also thriving in the current era, where sustainability and environmental consciousness are increasingly pivotal.

In 2024, we want to reflect on this dynamic and highly unpredictable environment, and explore its impact on farmers, rural businesses, community-led social enterprises as well as wider rural communities. How can rural businesses not simply survive, but how can they thrive in these incredibly constrained contexts?

To address this and other relevant questions, and to encourage debate about drivers and impacts of rural entrepreneurship, we welcome presentations that focus on, but are not limited to, the following themes:

* Opportunities and challenges for rural development
* Resilience of rural businesses in times of crisis
* Technology, digitalisation and innovation in the rural economy
* Farming, land-based entrepreneurship and the natural environment
* Tourism, heritage and culture in the rural economy
* Migration and rural development
* Communities and land
* Rural policy, support and investments in rural entrepreneurship
* Regional and international dimensions of rural entrepreneurship
* Entrepreneurship and public service co-production
* Social entrepreneurship and community enterprise
* Social innovation and sustainable development
* Innovative approaches to rural entrepreneurship research and practice
* Critical perspectives and approaches informing rural theory
* Open stream

The call for papers and abstract template can be requested from [p.gittins@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:p.gittins@leeds.ac.uk)

A maximum of two abstracts may be submitted per presenter (joint papers to be presented by co-authors will also be considered). The deadline for abstract submissions is **1st March 2024**

To submit your abstracts or panel proposals, please email Peter Gittins at: [p.gittins@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:p.gittins@leeds.ac.uk)

**Important deadlines:**

* Abstract submission: 1st March 2024
* Registration opens from: December 2023
* Notification of acceptance: 15th March 2024
* Final registration: 19th April 2024
* Full papers submitted for consideration in best paper awards due: 15th April 2024

**Rural Entrepreneurship Conference 2023 Organising Committee:**

*University of Leeds, CEES - Dr Peter Gittins, Dr Deema Refai,*

*Keele University - Dr Pattanapong Tiwasing*

*Northumbria University - Prof Gary Bosworth and Prof Robert Newbery*

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