

We received a few questions regarding the original announcement – please see some further clarifications below (original post can be found at the end):

Q1. What exactly does it mean to “invite the operations management community to identify and articulate the major challenges our field should tackle over the next 5–10 years,” organized around the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

This initiative asks OM scholars to propose and lead SDG-focused efforts that surface the most consequential, tractable operations problems for the next decade—and to show how core OM concepts can materially advance those goals. “Organized around the SDGs” means each team anchors its work in one SDG (and specific targets/indicators) and connects those targets to operations decision levers such as capacity, inventory, network design, scheduling, contracting, queuing, workforce management, supply chain contracts, logistics, process improvement, etc..

For each relevant SDG, each team/submission should consist of one (or more) academic and relevant practitioner(s). Working with industry, public-sector, and/or non-profit partners, each team will develop a concise set of Grand Challenges grounded in current practice, informed by practitioner conversations, and oriented toward actionable solutions and research directions.

Example – SDG 12: Responsible Consumption & Production. OM has well-developed tools in reverse logistics, waste reduction via Lean/Inventory Management both of which map naturally to SDG 12’s emphasis on responsible production and waste minimization. A strong submission would:

- **Map** specific SDG 12 targets/indicators to a coherent and inclusive body of well-established OM concepts (e.g., how lean waste elimination and closed-loop logistics reduce material waste and improve resource productivity).
- **Synthesize** what the academic literature already knows about these various mechanisms.
- **Assess the state of practice** through practitioner input (e.g., adoption barriers, data and capability gaps, policy constraints).
- **Propose a forward-looking agenda** that identifies research opportunities—models to build, data to collect, pilots to run, and metrics that translate OM improvements into SDG outcomes.

Importantly, prior work within OM need not have been framed explicitly in SDG terms. This initiative is an opportunity to surface and formalize those connections, incorporate practitioner perspectives on what actually works, and chart a targeted research program through which the OM community can make measurable contributions to the SDGs.

Q2: Do I need to address the entire SDG or can I focus on one target/sub-domain?

Focus is encouraged. Choose one primary SDG (e.g., SDG 3.8 universal health coverage; SDG 12.3 food loss), explain the target/indicator linkage, and show how your sub-domain illuminates broader dynamics.

Q3: May I span multiple SDGs?

Yes—cross-SDG proposals are welcome. Declare one primary SDG and explicitly map connections to secondary SDGs.

Q4: Must my team include practitioners?

Yes—substantive practitioner engagement is required. The goal is to ensure that the identified grand challenges are grounded in real operational problems, informed by current practice rather than idealized models, and relevant to decision makers operating within the constraints of the SDG context. Co-authorship is optional, but proposals should list named partners and a plan for structured interviews/site engagement (industry, public sector, NGOs).

Q5: Are all methods welcome?

Yes—analytical modeling, empirical (observational/causal), field or lab experiments, simulation/digital twins, qualitative/embedded fieldwork, design science, mixed methods—so long as they illuminate OM mechanisms with measurable SDG impact.

Q6: Who is the intended audience of this initiative?

We expect the primary audience of this initiative to be the OM academic community. Based on the submissions and interest, we will work to explore additional outlets to reach a broader practitioner-based audience.