

INVITATION ONLY WORKSHOP

Under the Patronage of the Embassy of Italy in the Netherlands

CASCADE Workshop on Industrial Sustainability and Systemic Transition

From Fragmented Perspectives to Coordination Intelligence



WHEN
11 November 2026

TIME
13:30-17:00

WHERE
WUR Omnia Building-
Spectrum room

About the Workshop

Wageningen University & Research (WUR), in collaboration with leading academic and institutional partners¹, is organizing a CASCADE workshop on industrial sustainability and systemic transition, to be held at WUR on 11 November 2026.

The workshop will bring together Italian companies operating in the Netherlands, alongside key stakeholders from industry, policy, finance and research, to create a structured, high-level interaction space focused on the practical challenges of integrating sustainability while remaining competitive in the market. The workshop is also designed to help the Embassy of Italy identify the structural factors that limit sustainability progress within the Dutch market. The Ambassador of Italy will be present at the session.

SESSION THEME

Resilient and Sustainable Internationalisation: Aligning Global Expansion with Integration into Local Systems

Why Now

Recent discussions, including at the MAIRE / Nextchem Symposium in The Hague, point to a shift in how sustainability and the energy transition are understood in Europe: less an environmental imperative alone, more a comprehensive transformation of industrial systems and economic structures. A critical challenge remains the gap between ambition and implementation, as short-term perceived costs of transition can outweigh immediate benefits and slow decision-making across organizations.

Large Italian companies expanding internationally, particularly in complex and sustainability-driven markets, are increasingly confronted with structural, institutional and value chain dependencies that cannot be addressed

¹Wageningen University & Research (WUR), TU Eindhoven, Tilburg University, Erasmus University Rotterdam, LUISS Business School, and Saxion University of Applied Sciences.

through corporate strategy alone. Many firms are struggling to connect their sustainability objectives with their economic goals, a tension this workshop is designed to help address directly.

Why CASCADE

Across industrial contexts, sustainability transitions are rarely constrained by a lack of technology or ambition. They stall because ecosystems lack the conditions for coordinated action over time: decisions remain fragmented, investments are not aligned, and responsibilities are dispersed across actors and institutional levels.

CASCADE addresses this structural gap by focusing on how interdependent actors can coordinate decisions, resources and expectations, creating the conditions for aligned, investable and sustainable transition pathways. Rather than facilitating open-ended dialogue, CASCADE generates coordination intelligence: a structured, actionable understanding of system-level constraints, interdependencies and pathways for collective action.

Through CASCADE, participating companies and institutions:

- Identify the root causes of systemic, structural challenges
- Map resources and the capacity for coordinated action
- Understand the power relations that shape collective decisions

About CASCADE

CASCADE is the methodology behind STRADA, a research platform at Wageningen University & Research led by Dr. Maria Carmela Annosi. It is developed with five Dutch universities and a broad coalition of government, industry, and civil-society partners, including Rijkswaterstaat, Regio Foodvalley, and the Future Food Institute, spanning food systems, infrastructure, and finance.

How the Workshop Works

The workshop is a structured, invitation-only session (duration to be confirmed, a minimum of two hours is anticipated), embedded within a broader preparation process. Participants do not start from a blank slate or engage in open-ended discussion. Instead, they work within a guided process grounded in a prior analysis of the ecosystem, developed through targeted stakeholder engagement.

- Identifying key coordination barriers and enabling conditions
- Understanding interdependencies across actors and value chains
- Exploring complementarities in resources and capabilities
- Discussing sequencing of investments and commitments
- Identifying opportunities for coordinated action

The Italian Trade Agency Role

The Italian Trade Agency (ITA) will also be present at the event as a key institutional partner, supporting WUR and the Embassy of Italy in fostering connections between Italian companies and the Dutch innovation ecosystem. Through its expertise in international trade promotion and business development, ITA will contribute to enhancing opportunities for Italian businesses exploring sustainable growth in the Netherlands.

Who Should Attend

The workshop targets Italian multinational companies with international operations, particularly those expanding in complex and sustainability-driven markets, such as Maire, Prysmian, and similar firms operating in or from the Netherlands. A small number of institutional actors and academic observers will also be admitted, contributing analytical depth without leading the discussion.

The Diplomatic Dimension

CASCADE operates here as more than an analytical tool for participating companies. Rather than producing abstract recommendations, it generates a structured, evidence-based understanding of how actors within the ecosystem are positioned, what barriers they face, and where coordinated action can be activated, giving this understanding direct diplomatic relevance.

The Embassy of Italy in the Netherlands plays an active role in this initiative, not as a passive convener but as a key institutional partner in the process. The Ambassador's presence at the session reflects that commitment. The structured ecosystem view generated through CASCADE gives the Embassy and its diplomatic channels a concrete basis for understanding where systemic challenges lie in the industrial transition, and where Italian institutional engagement can make a meaningful difference.

For Italian companies operating in the Netherlands, this dimension has direct strategic relevance. Participating in a CASCADE process co-convened with the Embassy means being part of a structured initiative that carries institutional visibility at both the Dutch and European level. The coordination insights produced are not only useful internally; they position Italian industrial actors as coherent, analytically-grounded contributors to a European sustainability transition, rather than isolated individual firms navigating the same challenges alone.

Value of Participation

Participating companies will contribute to a structured strategic assessment designed to identify the underlying factors that limit international collaboration, innovation, and growth.

Through the CASCADE methodology, participating companies will benefit from:

- A structured diagnosis of strategic resource dependencies and coordination challenges affecting their international development
- Identification of the root causes behind collaboration barriers, investment constraints, and missed business opportunities
- Recognition of ecosystem actors, institutional partners, and complementary capabilities that may be critical for addressing these challenges
- Strategic insights that can support future positioning within emerging European innovation and sustainability ecosystems

The aggregated findings will provide the Embassy of Italy in the Netherlands with an evidence-based understanding of common structural challenges across Italian companies, enabling it to prioritize interventions, engage the most relevant institutional and ecosystem stakeholders, and facilitate future coordination initiatives where they can create the greatest impact.

Outputs and Follow-Up

The outcomes of the workshop will be synthesised into a CASCADE White Paper, capturing key coordination challenges, ecosystem interdependencies, and opportunities for implementation. A shorter policy-oriented brief may also be developed for governmental and diplomatic stakeholders. Participants will have the opportunity to contribute to and engage with follow-up discussions and initiatives emerging from the process.

Kindly confirm your attendance by October 9th

As this is an invitation-only session, confirming helps us plan the format and timing. Further details will follow.

Wageningen University & Research, Cascade Consortium and the Embassy of Italy in the Netherlands