

Economics, Management & Societies COLLECTION, PARIS

« Systèmes Alimentaires/Food Systems » Journal (SAFS)

Call for papers
« Governance of sustainability standards in agrifood chains »

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Objectives of the journal

Founded in July 2016, the journal *Systèmes Alimentaires / Food Systems* (*SA/FS*) is a peer-reviewed scientific journal that continues the work of the "Systèmes agroalimentaires" series from the journal *Économies et Sociétés*, which was created in 1944 by François Perroux. It is published in electronic and paper format. It hosts authors from different scientific disciplines (economics, management, sociology, anthropology, history, geography, etc.), interested in a common empirical object, the food system, with the prospect of advancing knowledge and help the decision. This series is referenced in the bibliographic databases "Econlit" and "IBSS" and—for the "Systèmes agroalimentaires" series—categorized under the heading of "Stratégie" by the FNEGE [The French Foundation for Management Education], authorized by section thirty-seven of the CNRS [The National Center for Scientific Research] and the HCERES [The Office for Research and Higher Education Assessment].

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https://classiques-garnier.com/systemes-alimentaires.html

General statement of the call

The Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations have triggered a considerable development of sustainability-oriented standards. This rise of standards is one of the major trends affecting agrifood systems worldwide. The reasons for these trends are well known and include the need for a harmonization of denominations along with development of international trade, combined pressures from public policies and consumers towards sustainability, reduction of information asymmetry, differentiation and marketing strategies of companies, and the development of competing certification schemes based upon sustainability goals (Henson and Humphrey, 2010; Marx et al., 2012).

The development of sustainability standards raises many issues, at an empirical as well as a theoretical level. Some authors have pointed out the controversies in both the definition of sustainability and the interest for some stakeholders to be involved in it (Bennett, 2017; Busch, 2011; Bain et al., 2013). The issues of legitimacy, of transparency of standard-setting organizations have also been acknowledged (Fouilleux, 2012). The shifts between public regulations and private regulations in the governance of agrifood sustainability standards, and of their consequences for agrifood players, is also an important stream of research (Challies, 2013; Henson and Humphrey, 2009).

The governance of agrifood sustainability standards also entails an orchestration deficit (Glasbergen, 2011): fragmentation of standards and respective roles of public vs private (companies, NGOs) in the definition of standards, and the need for coordination mechanisms and institutions (Albareda and Waddock, 2016). The development of initiatives such as ISEAL (International Social and Environmental Accreditation and Labelling Alliance), in order to coordinate sustainability standards at an integrated level, is another area of research interest (Derkx and Glasbergen, 2014). In addition, geographical imbalances between developing and developed countries and the weight of private companies and/or certifying organizations have led to important research results (Schouten and Bitzer, 2015; Gibbon et al., 2010).

An important concern of sustainability standards for agrifood sectors is their relationships with organizational and market issues. The diversity of agrifood chain organizations (Carbone, 2017) may create differentiated positions of stakeholders within agrifood chains (Lee et al., 2012; Challies, 2013) and may affect the roles and autonomy of some players in the definition and content of standards. Standards also impact agrifood markets, both in terms of access or of signalization and credibility (Giovanucci et al., 2014). The recent literature about governance of standards has also shown an important renewal of theoretical approaches (Manning and Reineke, 2016; Tallontire et al., 2011; Fouilleux and Loconto, 2017; De Bakker et al., 2019; Derkx and Glasbergen, 2014).

The objective of this call is to provide an up-to-date investigation of this issue of governance of agrifood sustainability standards, with specific focuses on in-depth case studies, comparative analyses between countries and regions, standard-setting phases, renewed theoretical approaches of multilevel governance, positive and/or negative impacts of these standards for stakeholders throughout the agrifood chains, new roles for certifying organizations, the roles of these standards for market access, credibility, and signalization of standards at a consumer level. Any path-breaking research works will be considered, whether in methodologies, experiences, country and region-based case studies, or in disruptive innovations set up by consumers' group, farmers' groups, and alternative institutions.

Topics of the call

The topics of the call include but are not limited to:

-The covid-19 crisis: new safety standards for agrifood sectors?

-mandatory, voluntary, company-based, sector-based etc.: governance issues coping with the diversity of standard statuses.

-geographical divergence/convergence of agrifood sustainability standards: what trends?

-dynamics of standards, innovative standards in sustainability issues (biodiversity, climate change, territorial aspects…)

-innovation in standard-setting organizations, in certifying organizations, thanks to digital transitions (consumers' platforms…)

-focus on specific sustainability issues: biodiversity, Corporate Social Responsibility, Fair Trade, food safety, organic agriculture, GLOBALG.A.P, RSPO, GFSI…

-the new international guidance set to improve social responsibility in the food chain (ISO/TS 20030 standards): empirical evidence.

-meta governance of sustainability standards through organizations such as ISEAL, Fair Trade (FLO) or IFOAM (for organic products): what effects on organization of agrifood chains and trade of agrifood products?

-controversies concerning the impacts of such standards on organization of agrifood chains: issues of power and of transparency.

-links between governance of standards and organization of agrifood chains: empirical evidence and theoretical development.

-the shift between public and private regulation of sustainability standards: what roles for whom?

-competition, cooperation or coopetition between private and certification-based sustainability standards, visibility for consumers.

-how sustainable are sustainability standards in power-balanced agrifood chains? Evidence from different countries.

-vertical vs horizontal governance of sustainability standards: empirical evidence and theoretical developments.

Review process protocol

The review process of this thematic dossier of SA/FS is two-step.

Step 1: the editors will select extended abstracts through a double-blind process. Extended abstracts should include the following sections: problem description; methodology; results; managerial implications.

Step 2: the selected extended abstracts will enter the SA/FS reviewing process with a double-blind review process and will follow the guidelines of SA/FS issues.

Timeline

Extended abstract (approximately 1000 words excluding references) submission deadline: November 1st 2020 (to be sent to loic.sauvee@unilasalle.fr)

Feedback to authors on extended abstracts: December 1st, 2020

Full paper submission deadline: March 1st, 2021

Feedback to authors on full papers: June 1st, 2021

Complete issue is expected end 2021.

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