

International Conference

SOCIO-ECOLOGICAL
SYSTEMS AND AGRO-
PASTORAL RESOURCES IN
CHALLENGING RURAL
AREAS

3-4 October 2024
Universitas Mercatorum
Rome, Italy

International Conference

SOCIO-ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS AND AGRO-PASTORAL RESOURCES IN THE CHALLENGES OF RURAL AREAS

3-4 October
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The conference aims to facilitate the dissemination of research findings, experiences and local practices related to conservation, governance and management of SES, with a focus on farming and pastoral systems in rural areas, particularly in marginal ones. A panel discussion is scheduled to explore the state of the art and challenges for policy and planning instruments to address conflicts, mitigate risks and meet challenges.

Call for paper

Social-ecological systems (SES) constitute a dynamic interaction between human and natural resources, developing across various temporal and spatial scales. Preserving functional elements and processes within SES is crucial for their conservation. Climate change acts as a catalyst, intensifying pressure factors and risks. Management strategies require analysis at both the farm as well as territorial and governance levels. Adaptation, learning, and negotiation remain continuous processes in managing SES, necessitating a social learning environment and systemic thinking.

Peripheral rural areas play a crucial role in achieving conservation objectives, facing socio-economic changes linked to demographic decline and depopulation, abandonment of agricultural activities, reduction of essential public services, and low diversification of economic activities. The theoretical discussion on remote areas recognizes the role of rural innovations to address climate change and ecological transition. The processes taking place in rural areas related to the innovation of governance models, re-territorialisation experiences, the production of public goods, co-production in agri-food chains, and the agro-ecological updating of production techniques and processes, require the analysis of the pathways through which farms and communities develop and implement innovative projects. Agricultural and pastoral systems, as a unique manifestation of SES, address environmental and socio-economic issues in marginal areas. Despite being adaptive networks of biophysical and social flows, these systems are globally declining for multiple reasons. Their flexibility allows adaptation to climate variations and resource uncertainty, demonstrating efficient and sustainable management of resources and land, even in semi-arid contexts. Changes in agricultural and pastoral farms in the Mediterranean struggle with climate change, intertwined with complex interactions between social, economic, cultural and political factors.

Tacit knowledge of farmers, pastoralists and communities plays a key role in the management of livestock, land, forests, water resources and natural hazards.

Disparities in the contribution of pastoral practices underline the need for region-specific research and the design of appropriate policies and governance models. Transhumance, recognized in the Intangible Cultural Heritage list, serves as a platform for the exchange of models, practices and knowledge between participating countries.

The conference aims to facilitate the dissemination of research findings, experiences and local practices related to conservation, governance and management of SES, with a focus on farming and pastoral systems in rural areas, particularly in marginal ones. The overall conference theme has a focus on, but is not limited to, the following topics:

- Farming, Pastoral and Forest Systems and SES drivers: governance, management and practices.
- Landscape change and land use.
- Business networks, co-production and innovative markets: food, energy and wood.
- Awareness-raising on the management of farming and pastoral systems among non-farming communities.
- Young people in rural areas.
- Recognizing and rewarding farmers for ecosystem services.
- Managing conflicts in commons.
- Enabling factors for revitalization and ecological transition in rural areas: policy issues.
- Advice and support for agricultural practices for the transition
- Social innovation in rural areas: governance and practices.
- Living conditions and quality of life in rural areas.
- The role of UNESCO recognition for Transhumance.
- Best practices, case studies and experiences.

Keynote speakers

- **Teresa Pinto-Correia** (University of Evora, Portugal).
- **Mélanie Requier-Desjardins** (CIHEAM-IAMM - Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Montpellier, France).
- **Daniel Martin Collado** (Centro de Investigación y Tecnología Agroalimentaria de Aragón, Zaragoza, Spain).

Scheduled deadlines

- Abstract submission by authors: 31 May 2024.
- Notification of acceptance to authors: 30 June 2024.
- Authors' registration deadline: 31 July 2024.

Registration

Participation in the conference is free. However, registration is mandatory by filling out the form: <https://forms.gle/CbZWnYmxbKGBvcku7>

Submissions

Contribution proposals should be submitted in English to sesagrop@unimercatorum.it. Participants wishing to submit a contribution will be asked to submit an abstract (minimum 200 words, maximum 500 words). The abstract should briefly state the aim of the research, the main findings and conclusions. Therefore, the abstract should include an emphasis on the paper's potential to generate discussion at the conference and a list of a few essential references. The abstract will be subject to a standard review process.

A selection of accepted papers will be considered for publication in a special issue of an international journal indexed by WoS or Scopus.

Scientific Committee

- Aurora Cavallo, Chair (Universitas Mercatorum, Rome, Italy)
- Maria del Mar Delgado-Serrano (Universidad de Córdoba, Cordova, Spain)
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- Francesco Di Iacovo (University of Pisa, Italy)
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- Daniela Storti (Council for Agricultural Research and Economics - CREA, Italy)
- Frederic Wallet (National Research Institute for Agriculture, Food and the Environment – INRAE, France)
- Georg Wiesinger (Federal Institute for Agricultural Economics, Rural and Mountain Research, Wien, Austria)

Local Organizing Committee

- Francesco Maria Olivieri, Chair (Universitas Mercatorum, Italy)
- Maria Vittoria Castori (Universitas Mercatorum, Italy)
- Benedetta Cesarini (Tor Vergata University, Italy)

Information and contacts

For updated information and contacts, please refer to: sesagrop@unimercatorum.it.