CALL FOR PAPERS

"Working & Networking"
on Climate Change and Innovation for Sustainable Agrifood Systems

PALERMO, JUNE 26–28, 2023

Organizing Committee

* Sabrina Auci (Università degli studi di Palermo, sabrina.auci@unipa.it)
* Manuela Coromaldi (Università degli studi di Roma Niccolò Cusano and Università degli studi di Roma Tor Vergata, coromald@uniroma2.it)
* Giuseppe Maggio (Università degli studi di Palermo, giuseppe.maggio12@unipa.it)

Venue

Department of Political Science and International Relations, Via Amico Ugo Antonio, 2, 90134 Palermo

Collaborators

IFAD and FAO

Objectives

The 3-day event, jointly organised by the University of Palermo, the Niccolò Cusano University of Rome and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and with the support of the Centre of Sustainability and Ecological Transition of the University of Palermo, has a threefold objective.

1. First, it aims to deepen the knowledge on climate change and innovation for sustainable agrifood systems.

2. Second, it intends to increase interactions between junior scholars, lead academics and international experts to give the opportunity to participants to receive constructive feedback on the work they are conducting and to make it relevant for evidence-based and informed decision making.

3. Third, participants will be able to attend sessions with the United Nations Agencies based in Rome (IFAD and FAO), during which they will learn how these institutions promote the use of data and evidence for decision making for food system transformation. This will help to strengthen partnerships for knowledge generation and capacity development with the representatives of the International Organizations.

Format

The workshop will be organized as follows:

1. 3 plenary sessions with keynote speeches of Hossein Azadi, Professor at the Department of Economic and Rural Development, Gembloux Agro-Bio Tech, University of Liège, Belgium; Salvatore Di Falco, Professor and Vice Dean for Research, Institute of Economics and Econometrics, Geneva School of Economics and Management Universitè de Genève, Switzerland; and David Zilberman, the recipient of the 2019 Wolf Prize in Agriculture, Professor and the Robinson Chair at the Department of Agricultural Economics, University of California, Berkeley.

2. Parallel sessions in which participants present their work and have the chance to receive feedback from lead academics and senior international experts.

3. **"Working & Networking"** sessions organized by the International Organizations to showcase their work in the area of impact, knowledge and evidence generation to support decision making in policy formulation. These sessions will aim to increase participants' knowledge on how to produce and use evidence for policy-making. They will use interactive presentation techniques and involve hands-on exercises and case studies in breakout sessions.

Both scholars and policy-makers with expertise in the field will participate in the workshop to create inspiring interactions between students and experts. Workshop participants will deepen their knowledge of sustainable production and the impact of climate change on agricultural yields, climate resilience and food security. In addition, individual (i.e. individual farmers) and collective (i.e. public and private institutions) capacity for innovation will be examined and explored.

4. At the same time, **"Working & Networking"** sessions organized by the International Organizations will help participants to increase their understanding of the strategic benefit of evidence-based decision making in policy formulation, program design, and budget allocations; the role of impact assessments of agricultural interventions; and capacity for evidence generation and uptake. Participants will attend sessions to understand how the institutions analyse and interpret data for informing policy decisions, thereby strengthening state capacity for evidence generation and uptake.

Indeed, the main objective of the workshop is to present the latest scientific and policy developments on environmental sustainability in agriculture for food security to all those interested in the field, in particular students from different disciplines. The workshop will focus on the relationship between climate change and innovation to produce agricultural goods in a sustainable way, both in Europe and in developing countries.

Paper submission
Extended abstracts (minimum 1.000 words) or full papers should be submitted by May 15th, 2023. Submitted contributions are expected to be work in progress, at a reasonably advanced stage but still unpublished. Only .pdf files in English are accepted. All submissions will undergo the regular peer review process.

To submit your application please use this link: Application Form

Registration and Fees
The regular participation fee amounts to 100€ for the entire workshop and social dinner included (50€ without social dinner). Reduced fees apply for Master/PhD students 70€ with social dinner (20€ without social dinner). To this aim, participants must apply and provide proof of their full-time student status.

Certificates of attendance at the working sessions will be issued.

Grant
Within the partnership framework between IFAD and the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation for a Programme of collaboration with the Italian universities, IFAD will assign small grants of $500 each to refund costs of travel and participation to the workshop. Grants will be assigned only to early career professionals associate d with an Italian university (max 3 years since finishing PhD or current PhD student). The following criteria will be applied: i) regional focus; ii) rigor of the analysis; iii) relevance for IFAD's overall strategy and operations; iv) policy impact.

Selection Process
Preference will be given to Master or PhD Students. The selection committee will select the most suitable candidates for the workshop. Basic knowledge of environmental economics and econometrics will represent an advantage. Requirement for Basic English level to attend the sessions.

Università degli Studi di Palermo

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

IFAD
Investing in rural people

"Working & Networking" Sessions with IFAD

IFAD proposes three working sessions related to "Generating Evidence for Policy"

Description: As an international financial institution, IFAD provides grants and low-interest loans to projects in low- and middle-income countries. These projects aim at empowering rural people to increase their food security, improve the nutrition of their families, and increase their incomes. IFAD's Research and Impact Assessment (RIA) division produces rigorous evidence in the form of methodological and applied research with the potential to inform project design, project implementation, and future investments. These three working sessions showcase RIA's work on generating evidence for policy. All sessions will be interactive and include both presentation and discussion parts as well as hands-on exercises and case studies to be solved in breakout sessions.

Session 1: *"The Role Of Data in Decision-Making"*
RIA funds agricultural research and innovation, conducts impact assessments of agricultural projects funded by IFAD, and promotes the use of data and evidence for decision-making. In this session, participants will increase their understanding of the strategic benefit of evidence-based decision making in policy formulation, program design, and budget allocations. They will learn why knowledge, data and evidence are important for decision-making, and what the challenges are for evidence uptake. Participants will be introduced to the different ways of how RIA promotes evidence-based decision-making: rigorous evidence through impact assessments, knowledge products and tools, the Data Use component of the 50x2030 Initiative to Close the Agricultural Data Gap, and the policy engagement component of Agricultural Research for Development. Facilitators aim at having an open discussion on how to further promote the use of evidence for policy.

Session 2: *"The Role of Impact Assessments of Agricultural Interventions"*
Participants will learn about how to conduct impact assessments using IFAD's approach to measure results at the project and corporate levels. IFAD's approach is to conduct ex-post quasi-experimental impact assessments that, first, allow for the estimation of projects' impacts that are then, second, aggregated through meta-analysis and extrapolated to the entire portfolio of projects. This session combines theoretical knowledge and methods of impact assessment with their applications in real world situations. Specifically, participants will learn about the difference between contribution and attribution, main methods of conducting impact assessments, and the different steps involved in doing impact assessments. The session provides an easily accessible introduction to these topics using realistic examples and engages participants with previous minimal to no practical experience of conducting impact assessments in the field.

Session 3: *"Using GIS Data in Impact Assessments"*
Geographic information system (GIS) data, obtained from multiple open-source databases containing, for example, satellite data, remotely sensed data, or digital terrain models, is often employed to map socio-economic data with a spatial component. GIS data can be integrated into impact assessment workflows, which have traditionally relied on survey data, sometimes combined with key informant interviews and focus group discussions, to add value and improve rigor. In this session, participants will learn how IFAD uses GIS data in its impact assessments. Using real-world examples, it will be demonstrated how GIS data are used for constructing a counterfactual, i.e., choosing a group of non-beneficiaries against which project beneficiaries can be compared, and for assessing the indirect effects of IFAD's interventions.

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"Working & Networking"
Sessions with FAO

FAO proposes three working sessions related to "From Data to Actions: Understanding the complexity and acting on climate change to build sustainable and food secure agrifood systems."

Description: These three panel sessions provide a platform for sharing evidence and insights to build sustainable and food secure agrifood systems in the context of climate change. They seek to promote the sharing of best practices, novel empirical findings, and innovative approaches on the intersections between climate change, food security, and rural development, and to foster collaboration and knowledge-sharing among researchers, practitioners, policymakers, and other stakeholders. The sessions will feature discussions and presentations from FAO experts who will share their experience and insights on topics such as climate-smart agriculture, sustainable food systems, and the use of data and technology to address climate-related challenges. The overarching focus on inclusivity and systemic approaches is expected to spark dialogue on evidence gaps, methods, and policy needs to shape the direction and outcomes of agrifood systems in the context of climate change.

Session 1: *"Impact Evaluations to Brave the Elements: Challenges, Innovations and Opportunities to Design Rigorous and Feasible Impact Evaluations in the Context of Climate Change"*

The session focuses on the FAO experiences in designing and implementing impact evaluations to assess the effectiveness of programme, innovations, interventions, and policies in the context of climate change. It also explores the challenges faced including issues related to data collection, sample selection, and the identification of causal relationships. The panelists will discuss FAO's experience in addressing these challenges, including the use of innovations such as remote sensing data, machine learning techniques, and other advanced technologies. Overall, the panel will aim to provide insights and recommendations to researchers, policymakers, and practitioners on how to design and implement rigorous and feasible impact evaluations in the context of climate change to inform policy and decision-making.

Session 2: *"Data Matters: Improved Data And Metrics to Lower the Vulnerability and Build Resilience to Climate Change"*

The session would aim to provide insights and recommendations to researchers, policymakers, and practitioners on how to improve data and metrics related to climate change, and how to use such information to build resilience and lower vulnerability in the face of climate change impacts. The panelists will discuss FAO experience in producing and using data and for climate change metrics (including the use of remote sensing, satellite imagery) as well as the challenges and opportunities in improving the collection and data analysis in logistically complex time & resources bounded research settings. Additionally, the use these data and metrics to inform policy and decision-making related to climate change, including the identification of vulnerable populations, the evaluation of adaptation and mitigation strategies, and the tracking of progress towards climate-related goals will be also discussed.

Session 3: *"It is All Connected: Inclusive Climate Adaptation Strategies and Innovative Agricultural Value-Chain Interventions"*

The session focuses on the interconnections between climate change, agriculture, and economic development to transform agrifood systems. The panelists will present the evidence produced by FAO highlighting the role of different policies and approaches to support inclusive climate actions (including social protection, value chain interventions, and digital technologies, among others). The importance of addressing employment, gender equality, and inclusivity issues in climate adaptation and agricultural development, and how inclusive strategies can lead to more resilient and sustainable outcomes will be at the core of the discussion. The final objective of the session is providing insights and recommendations to researchers, policymakers, and practitioners to address the complex and interconnected humanitarian and development challenges in the context of climate change.

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