

GLAMUR's Main Messages

GLAMUR has examined and assessed the complexity of food chain performance in multiple dimensions to help increase scientific knowledge and improve food chain sustainability.

GLAMUR's Main Messages reveal the complexity of improving sustainability performance in food chains and that thinking must extend beyond simple 'global' and 'local' distinctions.

GLAMUR's key messages are set out below, capturing the main implications of the project findings.

Sustainability performance assessment is a multi-stakeholder concept and a process that is both multidimensional and multi-scale

- 1 Multi-criteria sustainability assessment challenges existing 'sustainability' systems to provide a more integrated framing of their performance using a multi-stakeholder approach.
- 2 Multidimensional and multi-scale performance assessment is a key to sustainable pathways for food chains; its multi-stakeholder approach moves beyond assumptions such as local versus global, and can provide informed reflexivity on narratives used to frame the performance of the food system.

Sustainability performance assessment draws on multiple values and multiple interests

- 3 Sustainability performance assessment combines hard and soft indicators. It acknowledges that current methodologies tend to compartmentalise assessment methods and the dimensions of sustainability; it recognises the value of combining science-led evidence with socio-cultural values.
- 4 Sustainability performance assessment draws on multiple values and multiple interests and for this reason it is subject to contestation. To increase the degree of general validity of sustainability assessment, public institutions should ensure that it is based on participation, on transparency of different positions and distribution of power among stakeholders, and on a dialogue between science and society.

Sustainability performance assessment should recognize difference, but also the complementarities and synergies between 'global' and 'local' food chains

- 5 Disparity of power between actors in 'local' and 'global' chains may affect the way performance assessment methodologies are developed. Sustainability performance assessment can be based on recognition of these differences.
- 6 Sustainability performance assessment needs to detect when coexistence of 'local' and 'global' food chains create complementarities and synergies. Scale matters for some sustainability attributes, not for others. In some cases scale improves performance, in others it is the contrary. A generalized, abstract, comparative assessment of 'local' and 'global' food chains as abstract entities cannot be done.

Sustainability performance assessment can be a tool for encouraging transition to sustainability

- 7 Performance assessment can be a tool for encouraging transition to sustainability along the local-global continuum. In many cases, better performance can be achieved through 'localization' of more global chains or through 'globalization' of more local chains. Performance assessment can capture the dynamics of this hybridity in food chains as actors endeavour to improve sustainability performance with their own solutions.