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UNESCO Chair on Education for  
the Sustainable Development of Cooperatives  
Belgorod University of Cooperation, Economics and Law  
Russian Federation



كلية العلوم القانونية والاقتصادية والاجتماعية - أيت ملول  
FACULTÉ DES SCIENCES JURIDIQUES, ÉCONOMIQUES ET SOCIALES - AÏT MELLOUL



# CALL FOR PAPERS

## THE 1<sup>ST</sup> EDITION OF THE COLLOQUIUM AGRICULTURAL COOPERATIVE MODEL



*Under the theme*

**Agricultural  
cooperatives,  
inequalities and  
sustainable  
development:  
What capacity for  
innovation?**

**25 & 26 March 2020**

**FACULTY OF LAW, ECONOMICS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES  
AIT MELLOUL**



# ARGUMENT

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For more than ten years, the economic and financial crisis has highlighted the limits of the current economic system and the need to rethink it on new bases. In this regard, the cooperative model could provide solutions insofar as cooperatives have been able to demonstrate their resilience to this crisis. Certainly, this type of business has claimed that it has outperformed other business models in many areas: economic, social, financial and organizational<sup>1</sup>.

However, this renewed interest in cooperatives is not only due to economic considerations. The cooperative model today allows, through its mechanisms and capacity for adaptation and innovation, to reconcile economic, social and environmental interests. Knowing that this reconciliation is the cornerstone of sustainable development, we consider that the cooperative model is the best to answer the question of sustainable development. Actually, this model has the specificity of having to manage constraints linked to a compulsory geographic registration while guaranteeing an economic valuation for the production of their members. Based on this observation, three major roles are to be fulfilled by this model:

- ✓ An important role in the local development: In different regions, the promotion of local products known as local products has enabled the development of regions which were isolated economically, culturally and even from the touristic sector.
- ✓ A role of creator of added value: This model is faced with competitive processes requiring them to extract themselves from an upstream positioning of the sectors to descend towards a more profitable downstream in terms of added value.
- ✓ A social and environmental role: Through the values of democracy, solidarity, sharing and mutual aid shared within these cooperatives to develop a healthier culture in society.

In Morocco, a look at the structure of agricultural cooperatives reveals a great diversity of branches of activity, namely cereals and legumes, milk, market gardening, citrus, olive, beekeeping, livestock, fruit and vegetables....

It should be noted that the development of the Moroccan cooperative movement is the result of several factors: spirit of solidarity and mutual aid within Moroccan society, biological diversity with several natural products specific to regions (such as local products:

Argan in south-western Morocco, saffron in Taliouine...), local know-how, dynamism of the local population and government support (INDH, Green Morocco Plan, Handicraft strategy...). Actually, this movement has favored the emergence of economic and social projects that helped to face poverty and exclusion and also contributed to the integration of small producers in the market.

Which leads today into a development sustained on two levels: in terms of the number of cooperatives and their members (10,540 agricultural cooperatives in 2015 with 355,319 members), and in terms of the quality of cooperatives, which are more attracted by the strategies of valuing the production of raw materials, external growth operations and brand policies.

Nevertheless, the Moroccan agricultural cooperative model is today confronted with increasingly complex problems linked essentially to the question of the disruptive change in its environment (internal and external) and to the requirements of economic competitiveness due to strong competitive pressure. These changes are shaking up the cooperative landscape and calling into question its role in the efforts of development. Consequently, the specificity of the cooperative model was depreciated and the competitiveness problems were attributed to the cooperative model itself.

In parallel, in recent years, the Moroccan context has been characterized by low job quality and work vulnerability, especially for informal and rural workers and in particular women. However, one of the most widely proposed solutions within the framework of the INDH program is the cooperative system. This one seeks to resolve the problem of vulnerability which so many Moroccan women suffer from.

In this sense, sustainable development focusing on the economic and social dimension, seeks in addition to maintaining economic development and growth, respect for social equity which implies a reduction in inequality.

Hence is the place of the cooperative to manage the different inequalities within society and thereby participate in sustainable development.

These changes inform us about the responses they bring to bear on the upheavals in their competitive and regulatory environment. *Hence the interest of questioning the capacity for innovation of agricultural cooperatives.*

Facing competitive pressure indeed requires the search for a critical size and increases the requirements in terms of product and process innovation. To meet the challenges, cooperatives have assets linked to their ability to mobilize their members. It should also be noted that, while the notion of strategic independence remains an essential objective, it is important to take an interest in the organizational methods to achieve it. Certainly, the challenge for agricultural cooperatives is to be a privileged interlocutor of operators located on the markets. Thus their action in the implementation of traceability and food safety procedures provides them with a considerable competitive advantage in the production chains. Likewise, they are at the forefront of implementing the quality procedures required by the markets in search of product diversity.

In this context, the Moroccan cooperative model raises the question of its capacity for adaptation and innovation in order to better contribute to sustainable development. Responses concerning management and governance, the choices to be made and the transformations to be performed both upstream of the sectors and at downstream stages represent the main object of this scientific meeting.

## **INTERESTS OF THE CONFERENCE**

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The purpose of this conference is to stimulate a scientific debate around the cooperative model and its capacity for innovation in order to fulfill its potential role in development efforts. We are also seeking to identify opportunities not yet exploited for the development of the cooperative movement with a real contribution to sustainable development.

We hope that this project will encourage the emergence of new thinking by researchers and practitioners in the cooperative field in general and the agricultural field in particular.

# AXES OF THE CONFERENCE

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We invite contributions that address, from a theoretical and / or empirical point of view, the following axes (*List of axes not exhaustive*):

- ✓ Governance of agricultural cooperatives and sustainable development
- ✓ Cooperatives & Innovations
- ✓ Cooperative model & finance
- ✓ The Moroccan cooperative model: Towards an institutionalized reading
- ✓ Collective entrepreneurship & cooperative model
- ✓ Management & marketing of cooperatives
- ✓ Sustainable development & cooperative model
- ✓ Government institutions and policies & cooperative model
- ✓ ICT and cooperative model
- ✓ Agricultural cooperatives and the gender issue

## SUBMISSION

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Both empirical and / or theoretical proposals are sought.

We invite researchers and practitioners in the cooperative field to submit an abstract of no more than 350 words on the aforementioned axes (Proposals related to other axes not mentioned are welcome) written in Times New Roman format, font 12, line 1.5.

**Abstract should follow this format:**

- Title of the communication;
- Names of authors and their affiliations;
- Contact details of the authors;
- Summary (In French in addition to the language in which the full text is written);
- Keywords (5 keywords maximum).

**Full text: 15 pages maximum including**

- Title of the paper
- Names and affiliations of all contributors
- Contact details of the corresponding author
- Main theme / objectives
- Literature review

- Methodological and / or conceptual approach
- Main findings / conclusions
- Bibliography

The text must be written in Word format with a Times New Roman font, a body of text of 12 points, margins of 2.5 cm at the top, bottom, left and right. The titles will be bold and numbered as 1., then 1.1, 1.1.1, etc.

Proposals (Abstract and full text) should be sent to the following two addresses:  
**colloquemca2020@gmail.com**

The file sent must be named as follows: initial (s) of the first and full name of the author or first author in the case of collective work. For example, for **XXXXX YYYYY**, it would be the file **YYYYYYY.doc** (with a number in case of multiple submissions).

## LANGUAGES OF THE CONFERENCE

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- The papers can be written in French or in English or in Arabic.
- The presentations and video projection (PowerPoint) will be written in French or in English or in Arabic.
- Oral presentations and discussions are allowed in French, English and Arabic.

## IMPORTANT DATES

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- **01/02/2020:** Deadline for sending communication proposals (Summary)
- **02/29/2020:** Deadline for receiving the full text
- **07/03/2020:** Deadline for notification of final acceptance
- **26 & 27/03/2020:** Holding of the Colloquium (FSJES Ait Melloul, Morocco)

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