



## Special Session Proposal

### The impact of COVID-19 on alternative and local food systems (ALFS) and the potential for sustainability transition – case studies and theoretical considerations

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#### Abstract

The COVID-19 outbreak stands out from previous global crises due to the rapidity of its spread and its all-encompassing disruption of supply chains. The agri-food system, in particular, has been impacted from production to consumption both locally and globally. From a sustainability transition perspective, it is important to examine how the innovations and coping strategies adopted by food system actors might facilitate – or hinder – the transition towards more sustainable food chains. Despite its global impact, the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic will likely to affect transition pathways in different ways based on the territorial economic and cultural context. While most research has analysed the impact of the pandemic on mainstream food systems, **we invite presentations for this special session discussing how alternative and local food systems (ALFS) responded during the first year of the Covid-19 crisis and what are the consequences for territorial development, resilience and sustainability.**

We attempt to explore:

- 1) the innovations and adaptations implemented within ALFS in different territorial economic and cultural contexts;
- 2) how these innovations and adaptations are creating or supporting a transition in food production and consumption systems;
- 3) how the combination of social and technological innovation, greater citizen involvement, and the increase in the interest of policy-makers and large retailers in these systems are enabling ALFS to scale up and leading new actors to adopt more sustainable practices.

We invite both, case studies (comparative or dealing with individual countries, regions, localities, sectors, businesses, etc.) and more theoretical papers, perceiving the COVID19 crisis as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to see how different systems embedded in different local contexts reacted to the same challenges and using it to broaden and deepen the theoretical and analytical frameworks for the analysis of ALFS.

As a result of this Special Session, we aim to collect important contributions from food system researchers and organise a special issue discussing this topic, and, hopefully, framing the discourses in a coherent way.