

CSEAR ITALY and GBS

29th November 2019,

**Department of Management, Economics and Quantitative Studies, University of
Bergamo**

Research Conference on ‘Sustainable Development Goals’, ‘Governing’ and ‘Accounting and Accountability’: unfolding the inter-connections

Introduction

Within the ongoing debate concerning the negative outcomes generated by the still dominant economic growth-based model (e.g. climate breakdown, irresponsible use of natural resources, increasing inequality and social instability, biodiversity loss), the concepts of sustainability and sustainable development have increasingly gained central consideration. A growing awareness about the need to challenge and change the current existing production and consumption patterns has emerged. This has led to envisage alternative and less-unsustainable ways of understanding and organizing socio-economic activities and business life. Amongst these alternative ways, the so-called United Nations ‘Sustainable Development Goals-Agenda 2030’ (hereafter SDGs) is considered to be one of the most holistic and encompassing framework. The Agenda, which was signed in 2015 by 193-member countries, is comprised of 17 SDGs structured in 169 targets.

The SDGs provide an evaluatory framework for understanding, designing and implementing, even with limitations, organizing principles for achieving a sustainable model of development. The growing debate about SDGs has involved many actors, including academics, practitioners, companies, public sectors organisations, communities and collectivities. Increasing scholarly attention has been devoted to the role of accountability mechanisms and accounting-like practices and in particular, to their role in the effective achievements of the SDGs. In particular, these accountability and accounting practices for SDGs are considered to play a pivotal role in the process through which SDGs are governed. For example, accounting and accountability for SDGs

are effective mechanisms for accounting for, controlling, monitoring and reporting the SDGs-related initiatives and for comparing the expected and actual outcomes. However, what these accounting and accountability for SDGs look like, and how and to what extent they will operate, requires further consideration and investigation.

Objectives of the Research Conference

The main objective of the Research Conference is to provide a space for interdisciplinary, cross-party and engaging dialogue for unfolding the conceptual underpinnings, practical implications and critical aspects about the SDGs and their integration in society and business policies and practices. The purpose is to generate and disseminate knowledge, to build research capacity and practical capabilities about the understanding and implementation of an SGSs-based society. Among others, the following aspects will be the focus of the discussion

- What are the SDGs and where does the framework come from?
- How could the SDGs contribute to the achievement of Sustainable Model of Development;
- What are the actual and potential impacts that the SDGs-framework have in society and business policies, strategies and practices?
- What role accounting and accountability could play in making the SDGs framework operable and governable?
- What would accounting and accountability for SDGs look like?

The Conference is organized in two main sections. The morning, which is guided by international and national scholars, is more research-focused and involves discussion/participation of all the attendees. The activities would include plenary sections, roundtable and groups' discussions. The afternoon section is more practice based and organised as a forum for engagement and discussion between practitioners, academics and business actors.

Keynote speakers: Massimo Contrafatto (University of Bergamo), Alberto Brugnoli (University of Bergamo), Matias Laine (University of Tampere), Salvatore Piccolo (University of Bergamo), Ian Thomson (University of Birmingham) and Helen Tregidga (Royal Holloway, University of London).

Practise-based section: - Chiara Mio and Andrea Venturelli (GBS);
- Andriani Spa (Business Actor)

Scientific Committee

Massimo Contrafatto, University of Bergamo, Italy

Matias Laine, University of Tampere, Finland

Ericka Costa, University of Trento, Italy

Andrea Venturelli, GBS group

Chiara Mio, GBS group

Ian Thomson, University of Birmingham, UK

Carlos Larrinaga, University of Burgos, Spain

John Ferguson, University of St Andrews, UK

Laura Mazzola, University of Bergamo, Italy

Helen Tregidga, Royal Holloway University of London, UK.

Organizing Committee

Massimo Contrafatto

Laura Mazzola

For attending the Research Day participants are required to register via Eventbrite, please refer to the the following link: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/sdgs-governing-accounting-accountabilityunfolding-theinterconnections-tickets-62939239961>.

For information about the conference: massimo.contrafatto@unibg.it

For information about the organization of the conference: csear.italy@unibg.it