

Context and objectives

The SAFEMED Project aims to analyse the conditions for international co-regulation of food safety between the northern and southern Mediterranean. It consists of analysing the structure of the competition between supply chains of both sides and examining the possibilities for the coordination of public and private food safety strategies. The project is developing a multi-criteria analysis that makes it possible to conciliate:

(i) The imperative of food safety, to ensure European consumers' health via the provision of safe imports, and, at the same time, the health of southern Mediterranean consumers, taking advantage of the evolution of good agricultural practices at the international level.

(ii) Producers' market access, given that agrifood exports represent an important factor in the economic development of southern countries.

(iii) Safe and fair competition among actors of both the northern and southern sides to avoid 'sanitary dumping' (derived from the heterogeneity of food safety regulations in different countries).

Workplan

Food safety is considered as a public good, in the sense that an under-provision of food safety may be harmful to all stakeholders (firms and consumers) and not only to those responsible for this deficit. The project is built by putting the emphasis on the characteristics of the economies of the two Mediterranean sides (by including three countries from the northern side (Spain, France and Italy) and three countries of the southern side (Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia). An important role is given to commercialisation and intermediate sectors, in addition to the production sector, by focusing notably on empirical works on fruit and vegetable supply chains. The value sharing between intermediate actors localised in importing countries and local stakeholders is taken into account as an indicator of the equity of north/south trade relationships.

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- Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Agronomie, Laboratory of Food Technology, Algeria

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As for the methodology, SAFEMED studies are based on surveys and the creation of databases with the implementation of experimental markets. More specifically, information is collected on production system organisation, food safety investment costs (specific investments, and costs of compliance with food safety norms and private standards set up by importers and retailers), and consumer behaviour towards sanitary crises according to the available information at the time of purchase. Technical-economics studies (integrating microbiological and toxicological analysis) aim at measuring the actual sanitary risk and the related prevention cost, in the framework of cost-benefit analysis. Furthermore, based on the recent developments of the theories of industrial economics, international trade economics and structural econometrics, the aim of the project is to identify the optimal co-regulation policies, taking into account the strategic behaviour of commercialisation and import firms.

