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RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTIONS (SDG 12) FROM THE MATERIAL SCALE TO THE LANDSCAPE SCALE
Projects, research, synergies, and trade-offs with the 17 SDGs

AGATHÓN is an international, open-access Journal of Architecture, Art, and Design, indexed in SCOPUS and listed by ANVUR as a Scientific and Class A Journal, as well as numerous other international databases. Following up on what has been started with the last volumes, the International Scientific Committee has decided to launch a new call on **on Responsible Consumption and Production (SDG 12), from the material scale to the landscape scale | Projects, research, synergies, and trade-offs with the 17 SDGs**, to select contributions for publication in volume 21, due in June 2027. The theme forms part of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted in September 2015 by the United Nations Member States (UN, 2015) and promoted as a call for urgent action capable of combining prosperity, equitable development, and protection of the planet, while strengthening cooperation and partnerships among countries, between national governments and local authorities, between public institutions and private companies, and between civil society and individuals. However, with just over three years remaining until the 2030 deadline, the call does not appear to have been fully heeded – and may even have been disregarded – and the scientific community therefore cannot and should not refrain from reflecting on 'where we are', 'where we are heading', and 'where we might still be able to go'.

A data-based assessment of progress is provided by the Global Sustainable Development Report which, in two successive reports (IGS, 2019, 2023), called for substantial course correction and urgent acceleration of implementation policies, without which humanity will face prolonged periods of crisis and uncertainty, further jeopardising, at global level, the principle of 'leaving no one behind' and the protection of the entire ecosystem. While the 2019 Report found that the international community needed to accelerate progress on some Goals and that the world was on track for many others, the picture presented by the 2023 Report is markedly different, stating that progress has not accelerated enough on some Goals, while on others – food security, climate action, and biodiversity protection – the world is still moving in the wrong direction. The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2025 (UN, 2025) further notes that, with regard to responsible consumption and production, rising domestic material consumption and the growing material footprint continue to increase environmental pressures, while policy instruments and reporting systems have not yet succeeded in driving a transformation of production systems and consumption patterns.

Against this backdrop, it is more urgent than ever to assess 'what needs to be done and how it can be done strategically', bearing in mind that – as indicated by the United Nations when the SDGs were defined (UN, 2015) and confirmed by the 2019 Report – the Goals are largely synergistic and that social and environmental Goals in particular generate systemic effects that drive overall progress towards achieving the other SDGs. Although the scientific literature on SDG interconnections has expanded rapidly and numerous studies suggest that synergies outweigh trade-offs, considerable potential remains insufficiently investigated and exploited for achieving simultaneous progress across multiple Goals through integrated planning and appropriate strategies. In particular, Goals 1 (No Poverty), 2 (Zero Hunger), 3 (Good Health and Well-being), 4 (Quality Education), 5 (Gender Equality), 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), and 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) have been identified as strategic because of their capacity to generate benefits across many other Goals (Barbier and Burgess, 2019; Randers et alii, 2019; Pham-Truffert et alii, 2020).

Achieving Goal 12 can involve trade-offs that require careful evaluation across the full life cycle and at different scales. Increased efficiency in the use of materials and energy, for example, may be partly offset by rebound effects associated with lower costs and the resulting increase in consumption (SDGs 7 and 13); replacing fossil or mineral resources with bio-based raw materials may shift environmental pressures to land use, water resources, and biodiversity, while also competing with other productive uses (SDGs 2, 6, and 15). Similarly, recycling, recovery, and transformation processes can require significant amounts of energy and water and generate additional emissions (SDGs 6, 7, and 13), while apparently virtuous circular supply chains may transfer environmental and social costs to other territories or segments of the value chain (SDGs 8, 10, and 13).

In the construction sector, the premature replacement of serviceable components, undertaken to achieve higher performance, can generate additional waste flows and new demands for materials and energy, making it necessary to compare in-use performance benefits with the impacts associated with replacement or upgrading (SDGs 7, 11, and 13). These critical issues require the benefits and trade-offs of production and consumption strategies to be assessed in an integrated manner, avoiding situations in which an improvement in a given performance parameter

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or one stage of a process merely shifts impacts across space, time, or the value chain.

Importantly, the nature of synergies and trade-offs among the Goals can vary significantly across the dimensions of space and time, as well as between different income levels and population groups. The scientific literature shows, for example, that reducing poverty generates overall positive effects on the 2030 Agenda in low-income countries, while integrated strategies addressing climate change and inequalities can facilitate the achievement of multiple Goals in high-income countries. The latter, however, appear to face more trade-offs than other countries, which may partly explain their slower progress towards the SDGs (Lusseau and Mancini, 2019; Nilsson et alii, 2022; Kostetckaia and Hametner, 2022).

Nor should the cross-border nature of many interconnections be overlooked: according to the OECD (2019, 2024), 57% of the 169 targets that can be achieved within one country may have consequences in other regions or countries, crossing national borders through flows of capital, goods, and human and natural resources, and positively or negatively influencing their future and development prospects. In this sense, we cannot afford to generate costly negative impacts elsewhere, while at the same time failing to recognise positive spillovers in 'distant' places would represent a missed opportunity.

Taken together, these variables make a careful understanding of synergies and trade-offs essential, both to direct scientific research and to define methods and tools capable of reducing trade-offs, addressing uncertainty, and making the most of context-specific opportunities, as well as to support strategic decision-making and promote 'transformative' interventions. Numerous tools and methods are now available for integrated analysis of the Goals, decision support, and progress monitoring (Barquet et alii, 2022), including, for example, the toolkit and guidance for ex-ante impact assessment promoted by the European Commission (2023). What is required, however, is a greater capacity for systems thinking, that is, the ability to consider the systemic effects of policies, pathways, measures, and actions, which offers the most effective approach to optimising interactions among the SDGs.

Integrating the SDG agenda with the Digital Humanities also opens up innovative perspectives, strengthening synergies between fields of knowledge and helping to limit trade-offs among the Goals themselves. By providing a framework in which digital tools and methodologies are applied to the study of the humanities, the Digital Humanities foster a systemic and integrated approach to global challenges and to the analysis of complex interactions among different Goals; they therefore offer additional ways to monitor, understand, and improve the relationships not only among the Sustainable Development Goals themselves, but also between the Goals, strategies, and actions.

Building on these considerations, **AGATHÓN** addresses the disciplinary fields of Landscape Architecture, Urban Planning, Architectural and Urban Design, Engineering, Architectural Technology and Environmental Design, Design, Architectural Conservation and Restoration, Architectural Representation, and History of Architecture, and proposes the theme **Responsible Consumption and Production (SDG 12), from the material scale to the landscape scale | Projects, research, synergies, and trade-offs with the 17 SDGs**. The Call aims to foster an open debate through essays and critical reflections, research and experimentation, projects and interventions characterised by innovative, multidisciplinary, and multiscalar approaches, capable of applying systems thinking and addressing process-related aspects (design, production/construction, and management), methodologies and ex-ante and ex-post assessment models, as well as strategies for overcoming limits, gaps, and barriers while enhancing synergies and reducing trade-offs with other Goals. The built environment interacts with every Goal and, at the same time, is itself one of the major challenges we face: on the one hand, it is a major consumer of energy and natural resources and a major source of emissions and waste; on the other, design and intervention choices can exacerbate inequalities and affect human health. This is particularly relevant in cities, whose role – in terms both of vulnerability and of opportunities for growth – cuts across all SDGs, especially considering that by 2050 approximately 70% of the world's population will live in urbanised areas (UN-Habitat, 2022). Once again, what is required is strategic action that is carefully planned, designed, and implemented in accordance with as many SDGs as possible, and capable of improving overall quality of life, sustainability, social equity, health, and community resilience.

SDG 12 | Responsible Consumption and Production | SDG 12 calls for a transition in production and consumption patterns towards lower reliance on primary resources, waste prevention, and lower environmental pressures across the life cycle of goods, buildings, infrastructure, and territories. For the architectural disciplines, the issue is directly relevant because the built environment and mobility are among the main drivers of global material demand, while design decisions – from material and resource selection to spatial configuration, from construction systems to use and management – generate effects distributed across different spatial scales, stakeholders, and time horizons. This defines a field of research in which resource efficiency, waste prevention and reduction, reuse, recycling, durability, repairability, and responsible sourcing and production processes need to be considered together. Equal attention should be paid to the social and spatial distribution of impacts, rebound effects, and the potential displacement of impacts to other territories or stages of the life cycle.

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By way of indication rather than as an exhaustive list, one line of research in Landscape Architecture concerns soil, water, and biomass cycles and the ways in which these resources can be retained within or reintroduced into landscape and territorial cycles. This perspective includes the reuse of excavated soil and organic residues, agro-forestry supply chains, productive green infrastructure, and local food systems, together with spatial and infrastructural solutions aimed at reducing losses along production chains and preventing food waste. A further area concerns the development of indicators capable of relating the regenerative capacity of landscapes and territories to the intensity of resource use and ecosystem quality.

For Urban Planning and Urban Design, the theme encompasses urban metabolism and the analysis of material balances and flows, as well as the spatial and organisational conditions that enable reverse logistics, Positive Energy Districts (PEDs), and networks for collection and resource recovery. The same field includes locational criteria for production activities and proximity-based services, to be assessed in relation to their capacity to reduce resource demand and the associated material and mobility flows. Architectural and Urban Design can investigate adaptable spatial configurations capable of accommodating different uses and adapting to programme changes over time, thereby extending the useful life of buildings and community facilities.

For Architectural Conservation and Restoration, conservation, planned maintenance, minimum intervention, compatibility, reversibility, and adaptive reuse provide established principles for extending the service life of buildings, components, and materials, while limiting premature obsolescence and the demand for newly extracted resources. For the History of Architecture, material cultures and economies of construction are of particular interest, together with practices of maintenance, care, reuse, and transformation developed before contemporary linear production and consumption models became widespread; the historical perspective can also reconstruct the evolution of consumption and obsolescence, relating production, techniques, forms of dwelling, and resource availability. Architectural Representation can make otherwise difficult-to-observe processes and relationships intelligible: multiscalar atlases and maps of flows, inventories and digital surveys, visualisations of stratification, and temporal simulations can support knowledge acquisition and interpretation, traceability, communication, and decision-making throughout the life cycle.

For Architectural Technology, Architectural Engineering, and Design, materials, products, and construction systems provide a central field for experimentation. Reducing material and energy footprints can be pursued through the use of secondary raw materials and recycled, renewable, or bio-based materials, the development and strengthening of local and industrial supply chains, the safe management of substances and waste, and the selective recovery of materials from demolition. At the design stage, durability, adaptability, repair, disassembly, and reuse are central concerns, together with dry-assembled, modular, and prefabricated construction systems, components designed for reuse over multiple life cycles, urban mining processes, and product-service models oriented towards sufficiency and sharing. LCA and LCC, circularity indicators, greenhouse gas accounting systems, material and component passports, BIM, digital twins, sensor and monitoring technologies, artificial intelligence, and traceability systems support ex-ante and ex-post performance assessment, planned maintenance, and the management of buildings and products as stocks of recoverable resources over time.

A further strand of research concerns the institutional, regulatory, and cultural conditions needed to enable responsible production and consumption models to be implemented. This includes policies and governance instruments, standards and assessment protocols, procurement policies and practices, and sustainability reporting, alongside education, communication, and the study of behaviours associated with use, purchasing, maintenance, and end-of-life decisions. The Call also extends to sustainable tourism, the valorisation of local production systems and know-how, and the relationship between responsible consumption, place identity, and intensities of use compatible with the resilience of places and territories. Particular attention is given to studies that assess performance and impacts against baseline and alternative scenarios, complemented by ex-post monitoring, explicitly state limitations and conditions for replicability and transferability, and assess the synergies and trade-offs between SDG 12 and the other Goals, particularly in relation to water, energy, decent work and economic growth, innovation and infrastructure, reduced inequalities, sustainable cities and communities, climate action, the protection of ecosystems, and international cooperation.

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GUIDELINES FOR THE PROPOSAL SUBMISSION AND TIMILINE OF THE EDITORIAL PROCESS

Authors are invited to submit an Abstract (max 5,000 characters, spaces included; references are not included in the counting) in Italian, or in English in the case of a foreign contributor, which must mirror the main contents of the article. For the Abstract submission, the Authors will have to use only the downloadable file (Format Abstract_ENG) that can be found on the page 'Information for Authors', without altering its formatting (line spacing, alignment, font size, etc.), and completing all required fields.

The Abstract must be written concisely and clearly, corresponding to the themes of the Call for Papers. The Abstract must be accompanied by: Author's references (name, surname, qualifications, affiliation, telephone numbers, e-mail); the section of the Journal (Architecture, Art, Design) and the typology of article (Essays & Viewpoint, Research & Experimentation, Review Articles, Dialogue) that is submitted for publication; 5 keywords that reflect the contents of the paper; references that will be mentioned in the article.

In particular, the Research & Experimentation proposals have to outline: originality (what is being expressed for the first time and for what target); essay and research references (the background of the study), relevance to the theme, subjects involved, financing; results (analytical aspects and proposals for discussion); limitations of research and significant developments; cultural, practical and/or socio-economic implications, if any.

In the case of Essays & Viewpoint proposals, attention has to be given to: object and aim of the proposed article; originality (what is being expressed for the first time and for what target); methodological approach; essay and research references that reveal the background of the study; analytical aspects and proposals for discussion.

The Abstract submission deadline is **January 10, 2026**, by sending a .docx file to the e-mail redazione@agathon.it. The Authors of accepted Abstracts will receive a communication from the Secretary by January 25, 2027.

Once an Abstract has been accepted, the Authors will be invited to deliver the Paper within the term set, i.e. by **March 5, 2027**. The Paper must respect the number of 25,000 or 30,000 characters, including spaces, excluding abstract, notes, and references. 15 images (300 dpi) must also be sent via 'swisstransfer.com'. For the Paper submission, the Authors will have to use only the downloadable file (Format Paper_ENG) that can be found on the webpage 'Information for Authors', without altering its formatting (line spacing, alignment, font size, etc.).

The Authors of the accepted Papers, having been reviewed by Referees, will know the outcome by April 5, 2027; the final draft of the Paper, adding any integration following the Referees recommendations, must be presented by **April 15, 2027**. Paper, with its abstract and keywords, will be published both in Italian and English while notes, captions of images, texts of any tables and Author's biography will be published only in English. The text, bibliographic references, images and notes, must comply with the Editorial Guidelines for Authors listed on the webpage 'Information for Authors'. On the same webpage, Authors can find the review form that will be used by Referees.

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In order to cover costs of running the Journal and dealing with procedures for assessing papers using a double blind peer-review, AGATHÓN has decided to avail itself of a contribution from the Authors of the articles; they are therefore invited to contribute financially for the editorial services (APC – Article Processing Charge), only if the paper is accepted for publication, after the peer-review process and any potential revision of the paper.

The APC of a single paper is set at € 500.00. In the case of papers written by more Authors, the article publication fee will be increased by € 50.00 for each Author in addition to the first. The fee must be paid in accordance with the guidelines that will be sent to Authors at the same time as the communication of acceptance of the paper for publication.

To encourage the publication of contributions by Authors with primary affiliation to Universities and Research Institutions in countries defined by the World Bank as 'low-income or lower-middle-income economies', AGATHÓN will select a maximum of two papers for publication free of charge, subject to the positive outcome of the double-blind peer review process.