



The Convergent Innovation Webinar Series:

Inventing "One-World" Solutions for Lifelong Wellness and Sustainable Economic Growth

Toward Deforestation Free Commodities: Challenges and opportunities for convergence



Brian King heads up the Digital and Data Innovation Accelerator for the global consortium of agricultural research institutes CGIAR. Previously he led the CGIAR Platform for Big Data in Agriculture, a global program centered on open science infrastructure; partnerships and technical communities of practice; and sourcing, fostering, culling, and scaling transformative digital agrifood innovations. Since the dawn of the commercial Internet, he has designed and led programs leveraging successive waves of digital technologies for the social and economic transformations they can effect, with focus areas including early internet networks and policies, mobile telephony, financial sector deepening, and governance of critical digital infrastructure. Brian has led development of digital strategies for an array of public, private, and non-profit clients. He is a former agriculture extensionist and a California rice farmer.

October 19, 2023

11:00 am EST
(2 hrs in length)

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Chair: Laurette Dubé (Scientific Director of MCCHE)

Co-Chair & Moderator: John G. Keogh (Professor of Practice, MCCHE; Founder, Shantalla Inc.)

ABSTRACT: The recent European Union Regulation on Deforestation Free Commodities (EUDR) is sending shockwaves through global supply chains for soy, coffee, timber, beef, cacao, and palm. Any firm selling these commodities in the EU must comply, or risk significant fines. Full compliance will be required from late 2024, but many questions remain regarding how to proceed. The regulation specifically requires using satellite data for due diligence, yet further guidance is still emerging. Larger actors may be more equipped to comply, which may contribute to excluding smaller actors from the EU market. The risk of unintended impact from EUDR is high. EUDR also represents a significant opportunity for rethinking food systems, working at the intersection of industry collaboration; open standards and solutions, and open science spanning domains including digital methods, information science, socioeconomics, ecology, climate adaptation and more. In this session we will examine these intersections and chart a way forward.

PANEL DISCUSSION: A panel with scientists, business and policy leaders will discuss how scientific and technological developments and ontologies bridging farm, food and human behavior, can accelerate the design and long-term performance of convergence platforms ecosystems targeting achievable and time-bound real-world solutions placing human and environmental health at the core. This will advance the design of integrative digital architecture and governance framework to scale up how real-world data generated by individuals and institutions within and across disciplines and sectors can contribute to a World reset on convergence economy, building upon the challenges and possibilities reviewed above. Capitalizing on digital transformation of science and society, convergence economy takes a person-centered approach to bridging organizations and systems across sectors and jurisdictions, fully acknowledging that developed and developing worlds share the same planet, for world-scale transformation toward sustainable prosperity and affordable nutrition and health.

ABOUT THE SERIES: The **Convergent Innovation Webinar Series** features cutting edge science, technology and innovation in agriculture, food, environment, education, medicine and other domains of everyday life where grand challenges lie at the convergence of health and economics. Powered by data science, artificial intelligence, and other digital technologies, this disciplinary knowledge bridges with behavioural, social, humanities, business, economics, social, engineering, and complexity sciences to accelerate real-world solution at scale, be it in digital or physical contexts. Initiated in the agri-food domain, the series is now encompassing other grand challenges facing modern and traditional economies and societies, such as ensuring lifelong wellness and resilience at both the individual and population levels.

Global Pulse Innovation Platform:



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Chair: Laurette Dubé, initially trained as a nutritionist, also holds degrees in finances (MBA), marketing (MPS), and behavioral decision-making/consumer psychology (PhD). Dr. Dubé is Full Professor at the Desautels Faculty of Management, McGill University. Her research focuses on the study of affects, behavioral economics, and neurobehavioral processes underlying consumption, lifestyle, and health behavior. Her translational research examines how such knowledge can inspire effective interventions. She is also the founder and scientific director of the McGill Centre for the Convergence of Health and Economics, a unique initiative to push the boundaries of science to tackle societal and economic challenges and foster individual and collective health and wealth.



Moderator: John G. Keogh brings over 30 years of hands-on experience in executive leadership roles, mainly in supply chain management, IT, and consulting. Known for his practical, evidence-based insights, John provides strategic advisory and research to government bodies, NGO's and businesses around the world. He's also a frequent speaker and media analyst. At present, John is the founder and CEO at Shantalla Inc., a niche advisory and research firm based in Toronto and Los Angeles. He is a Professor of Practice at the McGill Center for the Convergence of Health and Economics (MCCHE). In addition, John serves on the board of the Canadian Institute of Food Science and Technology, highlighting his ongoing commitment to the field. His current research focuses on the digital transformation of agrifood supply chains, with an emphasis on issues like transparency, trust, and opportunism.

Panellists:



Vaishnavi Ranganathan is a Senior Researcher at Microsoft with the Networking Research Group and Research for Industry. Vaishnavi's research interest lies in applications around sustainability, environment and health. Her current research focuses on traceability and optimization in the Food Supply Chain to help reduce food loss and to sustainably meet the global food and nutrition demand. Vaishnavi graduated with her PhD from the Sensor Systems Lab in the ECE department at UW in 2018. Her graduate research focus was wireless biomedical sensing with a focus on energy harvesting and ultralow power operation for neural implants. Outside of Research, Vaishnavi is a collector of fun hobbies. For more information please visit Vaishnavi's personal website: <https://vnattar.github.io/>



Dr. **Ziwen Yu** earned his B.S. degree in Environmental Engineering from Tongji University, Shanghai, China, in 2005 and received his Ph.D. degree in the same major from Drexel University in 2014. His research focuses on data-driven knowledge generation, emphasizing data management, pattern recognition, predictive analysis, and knowledge extraction. He believes that the accurate representation of physical relationships found in any system of interest is more important than the specification of a given method. His current research explores the ethical implications of data in agricultural and urban natural resource management. He's interested in the legal aspects of data technology applications and their role in shaping various industries, particularly agriculture, and addressing social inequalities within AI ecosystems. Dr. Yu is also investigating emerging digital markets like carbon trading, which rely heavily on data. His research includes: 1. Mapping global carbon markets and stakeholder roles, 2. Creating a data collection system for ecosystem services, 3. Developing a blockchain platform for managing ecosystem service data, focusing on transparency and security.



Eugenio Longo is the Sustainability Director at Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) Europe. In his role, Eugenio leads the TCS European Sustainability Strategy definition and implementation, and provides steering and governance to help the Europe's Management team to define clear and actionable goals and targets. Prior to TCS, he was the head of Sustainability and EU Affairs in the Strategy and Group Development team of Borealis, where he developed a sustainability strategy focusing on Energy and Climate, the Circular Economy, Health and Safety, Sustainable Finance and Industrial Policy. Eugenio is a Subject Matter Expert (SME) in the Circular Economy and in policy shaping to advance sustainability-driven business models at corporate, industry, regional and global level. He played a key role in shaping and advancing Borealis' Circular Economy (CE) strategy and supporting the development of the EU Strategy on Plastics. The Borealis CE strategy was recognized by the front-running New Plastics Economy (NPEC) initiative at the Ellen MacArthur Foundation (EMF) and by the Circular Plastics Alliance. Thanks to his work, Borealis sits on NPEC's Advisor Board. Eugenio holds a Bachelor of Chemical Engineering from McGill University (Montreal, Canada) and a Master from the University of Ferrara (Italy), in Polymer Science and Technology.



Dr. Asim Biswas is a Professor and Graduate Program Coordinator at the School of Environmental Sciences and the OAC Research Chair in Soils and Precision Agriculture. He is also a member of the Royal Society of Canada College of New Scholars. Dr. Biswas specializes in data-driven sustainable soil management. He focuses on enhancing the productivity and resilience of land-based agri-food production systems in an environmentally sustainable manner. His work revolves around utilizing scientific data to inform soil management practices, aiming to optimize agricultural outcomes while minimizing negative environmental impacts. His innovations in precision agriculture are helping producers reduce waste and increase efficiency of crop inputs such as fertilizer, herbicides, pesticides. Dr. Biswas's work advances Canada's efforts toward sustainable and efficient agri-food production systems.



Sean Rudd is the Founder & CEO of Korotu Technology, working to create the tools for land stewards and communities to use nature-based solutions to protect the climate and biodiversity. Sean is an experienced financial technology leader, whose career includes over fifteen years at Accenture leading business and technology strategy in financial services and as global head of payments strategy. He has also worked extensively in the software sector with both startups and established leaders in product management, engineering and client service. Originally from New Zealand, he has a lifelong passion for the outdoors.