

Editorial

*Salvatore Esposito De Falco**

The journal issue that concludes 2023 is truly unique as it starts from a common element, the economic and financial sustainability of businesses (a topic very dear to our journal). On one hand, it features specialized contributions on the general theme of sustainability and, on the other, it focuses on businesses in the soccer sector with a preview of the Special that we will dedicate in 2024 to “*The football industry between governance, management, and sustainability*”, curated by myself and Professors Rosario Faraci (University of Catania) and Daniel Torchia (Bocconi University).

The papers received for the Special Issue, in particular, were more than thirty. The great success encountered by this topic is such that, even after the deadline, other contributions were received which, for now, we have not been able to consider. A first necessary consequence of this numerous and enthusiastic participation has been the need to distribute the selected papers over several issues. The contributions are so interesting that the Editorial Committee could not help but reward them in some way. Thus, the publication of the various interventions has been spread both in this issue and in the other two issues of 2024.

Moreover, as this is a topic that has so far been little addressed in the literature, it has been more than satisfying to verify that this gap is to the detriment of scientific journals, and not due to a lack of willingness on the part of authors to engage with this theme. Quite the contrary! In this issue, therefore, we will give a taste of what will be in the next Special Issue, starting from a more general discussion on economic and financial sustainability. This theme, on the other hand, is becoming increasingly crucial in the con-

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temporary world. In an era marked by rapid climate change, growing inequalities, and unprecedented global challenges, it is essential to rethink our approach to the economy and finance. Economic sustainability is not just about protecting the environment. It involves creating economic systems that promote social equity, financial resilience, and environmental responsibility.

In this issue, we will explore various strategies to achieve economic and financial sustainability, ranging from territorial development through research and innovation (*Marco Savastano, Irina Gorelova, Francesco Bellini, Fabrizio D'Ascenzo*), to the spread of blockchain technologies in businesses (*Huma Sikandar, Nohman Khan, Muhammad Imran Qureshi, Sabeen Bhatti*), and a more general discussion on climate policy for decarbonization in Europe (*Cristina Simone, Sara Diana, Silvia Scardini, Marcelo Enrique Conti*).

The theme of financial sustainability will then intersect with the football business sector, which moves at a breakneck pace, both on and off the field, towards a more financially sustainable and responsible future. Football, a sport loved and followed by millions of people around the world, has experienced exponential economic growth in recent decades. However, this development has brought significant challenges in terms of financial sustainability. Historic clubs have found themselves in economic difficulties, while the gap between the richest teams and the less fortunate ones has widened. In this context, the need for change emerges.

In this perspective, one of the central aspects of this issue is the adoption of sustainable business models in football. Prudent management of financial resources is crucial for ensuring the longevity and long-term success of a club. This will be explored in detail in the paper by *Francesco Laviola, Fernando Camastra, Annabella Conturso, and Roberto de Renzi*. By examining how clubs can balance sporting ambitions with financial responsibility, avoiding over-indebtedness and investing intelligently, the discussion will be broadened to a more general regulation of the football industry (*Filomeno Rocco Fimmanò*). Finally, focus will be given to the importance of financial education within the football industry, from a Risk Management perspective (*Antonio Renzi, Pietro Taragoni*).

Our hope is that the issues raised provide useful food for thought and discussion, offering an in-depth view of how businesses in general, and those in the football sector in particular, can evolve towards more sustainable and responsible practices.