

## About This Series

*Analyses on the architecture of food information, trade documentation, and governance*

Food products cross more borders today than at any point in history. The systems that document what those products are – their composition, origin, production methods, and health attributes – have not kept pace. Nutrition labels were designed for domestic retail shelves, not cross-border trade corridors. Certification schemes were built to confirm minimum thresholds, not communicate differentiation. Geographic indication registries protect names but rarely describe practices. Each of these systems was designed to solve a legitimate problem within a specific jurisdiction. None was designed to interoperate with the others.

The result is a global information architecture defined less by what it communicates than by what it structurally cannot. Exporters serving multiple markets navigate incompatible documentation requirements with no coordination mechanism between them. Importers receive products accompanied by credentials that do not translate across regulatory contexts. Consumers encounter labels that compress multidimensional information into formats that reward simplicity over accuracy. And producers – particularly smaller ones operating across traditional and modern supply chains – find that the attributes which distinguish their products have no structured place in the documentation systems that govern trade.

This series examines these structural gaps – not as failures of intent, but as consequences of architectural decisions made under different conditions, for different purposes, at different times. Each paper diagnoses one specific gap: where the information architecture breaks, what is lost in the break, and what structural requirements any alternative would need to satisfy.

The papers draw evidence from a minimum of three continents per topic. They compare systems across jurisdictions rather than describing any single regulatory model in isolation. They are intended to be relevant to trade agency officials, nutrition researchers, policy officers, procurement professionals, and governance analysts – regardless of geography.

The series remains diagnostic in orientation. It analyses information architecture rather than prescribing policy or endorsing particular implementation pathways.



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