

Countdown to the SDGs: Employing Results, Evidence, and Targeted Investments

This session addressed a number of questions around the value of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for better development. This includes generating ownership, alignment, harmonization, and two other factors not as often discussed, results and mutual accountability.

The event featured interventions from IFAD's Vice-President, Dominik Ziller and Máximo Torero Cullen, Chief Economist at the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO); as well as from other experts from the public and private sector including the Enel Green Power, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

On Wednesday 27 October 2021, IFAD's Change, Delivery and Innovation Unit (CDI) hosted the seventh IFAD Innovation Talk to engage in a dialogue about how tracking results and targeted impact investing can drive the achievement of the SDGs.

Opening the session, IFAD's Vice-President, **Dominik Ziller**, underscored the renewed challenges that we face in our era to meet the 2030 deadline for achieving SDGs. He reflected on the necessity of ensuring that our decision-making, actions and investments are actively contributing towards human development and economic growth in a responsible, environmentally friendly manner. He mentioned two main instruments on which IFAD relies to monitor the effectiveness of its work: the annual Report on IFAD's Development Effectiveness (RIDE), and the Annual Report on Results and Impact of IFAD Operations (ARRI).

Speakers and panellists at the event

Dominik Ziller, Vice-President, IFAD.

Lauren Phillips, Lead Advisor, Operational Policy and Results Division, IFAD

Smita Nakhoda, Senior Results Management Specialist, Strategy, Results and Aid Effectiveness Division, ADB.

Natalia Toschi, Head of the Funding Unit, Treasure Services Division, IFAD

Ruggero Arico, Head of Institutional Affairs for Europe, Africa, Asia and Oceania, Enel Green Power; and Vice President of the General Confederation of Italian Industry Associations for the Development of Italian Businesses in Africa, the Mediterranean and the Middle East (Cofindustria Assafrica & Mediterraneo)

Belissa Rojas, Impact Measurement and Management Lead, SDG Impact Team, UNDP.

Ashley Anne Davidson, Programme and Strategy Analyst, Operational Policy and Results Division, IFAD

Máximo Torero Cullen, Chief Economist, FAO.

The event was moderated by *Gladys H. Morales, Senior Innovation Adviser, CDI, IFAD.*

During the panel discussion, panellists **Lauren Phillips, Smita Nakhoda, Natalia Toschi, Ruggero Arico and Belissa Rojas** responded to questions on the use of results and evidence to better monitor, adapt, and report on interventions to achieve the SDGs, and how this is also helping to shape the innovative public, and private, financing options for sustainable investments.

Explaining how employing results for SDGs can influence coordination across international, national and local stakeholders, **Smita** highlighted that the SDGs provide a common framework to catalyse investment and leverage resources. She explained that multilateral development banks are aligning their results management frameworks with the SDGs, and using the SDGs to display their efforts to deliver effective support. In particular, Smita mentioned that ADB has sought to embed the SDGs in its corporate approach to results management and its strategy 2030.

"We need to move from the current investing system to a world where decisions are made in a way that embed impact considerations, and report on impact practice and impact performance." Belissa Rojas, UNDP.

Natalia emphasised that IFAD is the only development finance institution that is able to report both the direct and indirect contribution to the SDGs, not only at goal but also at target level. She illustrated IFAD's mapping system of the "core indicators" (or results) to SDG goals and targets, and described how it helps to ensure alignment to the SDGs and to other international actors. After that, **Ruggero** analysed the role of the private sector in the achievement of the SDGs. He stated that, by aligning business objectives to the SDGs and

working with governments and development agencies, the private sector influences policy making and sustainable investments that contribute to the SDGs via public-private partnership. Ruggiero also shared that, ENEL Green Power has publicly pledged to implement the SDGs in its own business strategy, and that every project comes with detailed master plan creating long-term shared value initiatives, delivered by collaborating with selected partners. **Belissa** carefully reflected on the importance of preventing impact washing. She presented the work of the SDG Impact initiative at UNDP, and expressed how reporting on impact practices can provide an all-inclusive picture of an organization's commitment and actions to maximize its contribution to the SDGs. Finally, **Lauren** concluded the panel, remarking on the importance of ownership. Indeed, she explained, given the strong alignment and harmonization the SDGs have helped provoke, improving ownership by governments and local actors, as well as the public and private sector actors, is the remaining challenge.

In the Q&A session that followed, speakers gave their views on a variety of topics that focused on capacity building activities (methodology, framework or practical guidance) and on how to perform the evaluation and reporting. (If you are interested in the discussion with the audience, please consult the Q&A report and the event's recording on the [event page](#).)

In his closing remarks, FAO's Chief Economist, **Maximo Torero Cullen**, offered a significant emphasis to the necessity of sharing governance and building institutional capacity. He identified FAO's responsibilities as custodian of the SDG indicators and as contributing agency for five of them. He concluded by arguing that innovation and digitalization are key accelerators towards achieving the SDGs, however for any initiative to succeed, country-ownership and partnerships are key.

Employing Results, Evidence, and Targeted Investments to achieve the SDGs – the background

In recent decades, the world has seen considerable progress towards the achievement of the 17 SDGs. However, since their adoption in 2016, many goals have remained off track; some, including attaining Zero Hunger, have actually reversed in light of conflicts, climate change, and COVID-19. Effective and efficient use of resources, policies and interventions are therefore crucial for enabling the global community to achieve this blueprint for sustainable development. The use of results and evidence to better monitor, adapt, and report on interventions to achieve the SDGs is also helping to shape the innovative public, and private, financing options for sustainable investments.

CDI would like to thank the participants for taking part and for making the event such a success and showing how increasing interest and ample opportunities to create systematic approaches for improve global comprehension of progress.

Missed the event? Watch it online!

A recording of the event can be found [here](#).

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If you would like to skip directly to certain sections of the event, the times are listed below:

Time (minutes)	Section
00:00–01:35	<i>Permission to dance</i> by BTS for the Food Systems Summit 2021
01:36–02:53	Welcome by moderator Gladys H. Morales
02:54–07:44	Opening remarks by Dominik Ziller
07:45–09:14	Panel discussion:
09:15–14:49	Introduction
14:50–20:05	Smita Nakhooda,
20:06–26:09	Natalia Toschi
26:10–31:49	Ruggiero Arico
31:50–36:10	Belissa Rojas
36:11–52:00	Lauren Phillips
52:01–1:01:33	Q&A
1:01:34–1:03:16	Closing remarks by Máximo Torero
	Farewell and thanks