



Evaluation and sustainable development

EVALUATION ADVISORY PANEL OF IOE

Seminar Series [\[video\]](#)

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Evaluation



Sustainability



Sustainable Development



Investment

The issue



Sustainability is the key issue for humanity's future on planet Earth. There is solid scientific evidence that our current trajectory of unbound economic growth based on non-renewable resources and social and economic exploitation is unsustainable in the longer run. This is abundantly clear for climate change, which will affect the poor of the world the hardest. The rural poor will be of special concern for IFAD, and the sustainability of their livelihoods, their health and food security. "Business as usual" needs transformational change in order to go for and support a sustainable world.



The status quo

Sustainability is subject of major research programmes and transdisciplinary work in universities, think tanks and research institutes, in civil society organisations and the private sector. Much of this work has been inspired by climate science and focuses on Earth systems, ecological systems and interaction of the social, economic and environmental domains. Findings tend to be characterised by focusing on how systems operate and interact and on complexity in development and interaction of systems. A fundamental insight is that sustainable development is a different kind of development – a paradigm shift from unbound neoliberal economic growth to sustainable development that is based, amongst others, on heterodox economic science.

The horizon

For both development investment and evaluation the major challenge is the shift from sustainability as "sustainable growth of benefits" to sustainability as "an adaptive and resilient balance between the social, economic and environmental domains". The new OECD/DAC criterion on sustainability goes in the right direction, but has not yet transformed to the new paradigm. The question is whether IFAD is ready to incorporate the new perspective of sustainability in its investment decisions and programmatic approaches and whether it is ready to evaluate the sustainability of rural development from the new perspective.

Literature

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