



FAI Factsheet G8: A framework for assessing sustainability

The word sustainability has been widely used in recent years and can imply something specific and meaningful when actions are sometimes rather vague and ambiguous. FAI uses a simple framework (compatible with the European definition of sustainability) in order to give structure and credibility to our work. The framework, called the 3es, resonates with all kinds of people and thus has been easy to communicate widely. An example can be seen in the table below when applied to food production. The framework can readily be applied to any activity.

The 3es as applied to food production:

Ethics (Animal and people welfare)	Environment	Economics
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consider all types of animals affected by food production; including wild, working (e.g. sheep dogs, harness animals) and those directly producing our food.• This is measured by assessing the effects on the animals.• Includes all types of people affected by food production including food producers (e.g. farmers, transporters, slaughterers, processors, retailers) and food consumers.• This is measured by assessing the well being of humans.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Includes the care of land, water (sea and fresh) and air. Which are our major resources on the planet.• This is measured by parameters such as greenhouse gases, pollutants, effects on biodiversity and measures of sequestration.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Economics is the study of resource use i.e. what resources do we have and how do we make best use of them?• Major areas to consider are land type and best use, human food and animal feed production and distribution, human and animal population dynamics and nutrition requirements of people and animals.• This is measured by provision of affordable food meeting the nutrition requirements of all humans and animals on the planet.

This simple framework when broadened into all the possible questions an individual, institution or company might ask helps to make sure everything is considered. The process is undertaken transparently and issues are itemised and compiled into a strategy, recognising that some issues might at first seem impossible to tackle unless there is radical change on a wider basis.

When the measures of success are applied to this framework it is found that many measures cover more than one area of sustainability making assessment of sustainability simpler and more efficient than one would at first envisage. The framework is helping us to find practical ways of producing more sustainable food while addressing ethics (people and animal welfare) **and** environmental care **and** economic stability.