
Chapter 1

Evaluating Sustainable Development

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Abstract. *The United Nations' new Sustainable Development Goals provide the international mandate and opportunity for countries to focus on socially equitable and environmentally sustainable growth. There is a growing recognition in countries that the quality of growth signified by inclusion and sustainability is vital for how it affects the well-being of people and the planet, and for continuing economic growth itself. But this broader recognition also raises several tough challenges. An important one is managing actual or perceived trade-offs that occur as countries pursue sustainable and inclusive development. One example is food security, for which there is the need to increase areas under cultivation while at the same time to ensure sustainable forest use and conservation. The pressure to develop fossil fuel energy to power growth is another case in point which conflicts with controlling pollution and minimizing damages to human health and climate change. The pursuit of sustainable and inclusive growth also presents challenges to evaluation. It would be fair to say that evaluative priorities and methods have not kept pace with the needs of assessing outcomes in sustainability. Stepped-up evaluative efforts are necessary at several levels, ranging from sound frameworks and methods of analysis to relevant and practical applications, conclusions, and recommendations.*

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FRAMEWORK OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Three dimensions of sustainable development are economic growth, social inclusion, and environmental sustainability,¹ which align with an ecosystems services approach ensuring that environmental services such as clean air and water and nutritious food remain available for future generations. Past initiatives were largely skewed toward attaining high economic growth. Focusing solely on the pace of growth has contributed to increasing inequality, environmental destruction, and climate change—repercussions that threaten economic growth itself. The challenge for evaluation is integrating the social and environmental dimensions while assessing growth.

The basic framework is one that recognizes that for economic growth to be sustainable, we need to value all three forms of capital—physical, human, and natural (Basu et al. 2017; Thomas et al. 2000). Government spending and private investment have long favored the first two forms of capital, with natural resource management getting short shrift. Yet, a country's natural capital—its stock of natural assets—is essential for the pace and quality of growth. Sustainable land use and agricultural practices, and forest and coastal management, need far greater emphasis.

The fact is that raising economic growth remains the principal driver of policy. Earlier thinking was that social inclusion and environmental sustainability are good to have, but that their pursuit presents unacceptable trade-offs to economic growth. Evaluation results, however, have shown that projects with objectives incorporating inclusive growth and the environment have performed well compared to those that have stand-alone objectives (IED 2014, 2015). These results provide support for building inclusion into the design and implementation of projects intended to help raise economic growth. In this and other instances, evaluators need to put more of such contextual evidence into their evaluations.

The argument in fact goes further. In many settings, growth itself seems to depend on inclusion. The intuition is that when all the people are included in the growth process, the possibilities for growth are that much greater. If so, going forward, not just any growth will do; it needs to be growth that is more inclusive. In this case, there would be a premium on generating growth that disproportionately includes the lower income strata in the growth process.

This line of thinking is just as powerful in the case of environmental sustainability. There is growing evidence that sustained growth will not be possible in the future without tackling environmental degradation and climate change. For example, the costs of climate-related disasters in many disaster-prone countries such as Bangladesh, Cuba, Haiti, the Philippines, and Thailand are staggering, and they weigh on economic growth.

In principle, making growth more inclusive and sustainable is assuring development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. Providing more and better

¹<http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>.

quality of growth for sustainability requires that high growth be accompanied by quality standards that ensure broad-based benefits through gainful and productive employment and access to opportunities in health, education, and social protection while at the same time ensuring environmental quality that supports future growth.

Nevertheless, sustainable development remains a contentious, complex, and dynamic paradigm. There are many considerations to take into account among which are the many trade-offs and policy issues at stake.

METHODS FOR ANALYSIS

On methods for assessing sustainability, there are five strands to stress. First, cost-benefit analysis, a long-standing economic tool of analysis, can be put to better and wider use to assess sustainability. In particular, the frameworks allow the qualification in the use of market prices to account for externalities such as pollution and congestion. The effect of doing so can be enormous, as in the carbon emissions that aggravate global warming. If, based on such analysis, carbon emissions were to be taxed adequately—in contrast to the absence of such taxes, let alone subsidies that encourage the use of polluting fuels such as coal—the result would change the game.

Furthermore, cost-benefit analysis has not been used often for such purposes. Where it has been used, the results were compelling. For example, environmental impact assessment is mostly based on cost-benefit analysis. It has focused mostly on “do no harm” principles and has been instrumental in preventing investments and projects that would have led to environmental damage.

The use of cost-benefit analysis in some of the multilateral development banks (MDBs) has been on the decline (IEG 2010a). Part of the reason is the greater difficulty in applying the technique in social sectors where lending has been on the rise. But that is not a good enough reason to de-emphasize cost-benefit analysis. The tool is potentially a highly effective means to assess the net gains and losses from interventions.

Second, impact evaluation can help to assess the effects of programs that seek to ensure greater social inclusion and environmental sustainability. The much-cited example is the case of social protection programs, in particular measuring the impacts of conditional cash transfer programs. There are also good examples of the effects of forest protection and natural resource management more generally. While there are many counterfactual evaluations that have contributed such insights, many of the useful efforts have not been experimental.

We also see a strong emergence of new forms of evaluation of impact, such as process tracing, systems mapping, and qualitative comparative analysis. They use methods and tools that are rigorous, but not necessarily experimental. Randomized control trials cannot tackle issues like climate change and sustainability over generations.

Third, green accounting methods in principle are available for better valuation of natural capital (Hamilton 2014). Data are usually a constraint in effectively applying such valuation, but it is clear that when the destruction of

natural capital is not accounted for, it results in inflating long-term growth prospects (Dasgupta 2009). Not accounting for the destruction of natural capital sends the wrong signals for pursuing gross domestic product growth at the expense of de-investing in natural capital, which eventually hurts the growth process itself.

Fourth, social impact analysis brings in especially the harnessing power of participatory process in development planning and implementation and is especially relevant where environmental impact is also taken into account. Even if qualitative in many instances, this work shows a direction that should be encouraged, given its relevance for sustainable development. Social and environmental impact assessment includes the processes of analyzing, monitoring, and managing the intended and unintended social and environmental consequences, both positive and negative, of planned interventions (policies, programs, plans, and projects) and any social and environmental change processes invoked by those interventions. Its primary purpose is to bring about a more sustainable and equitable biophysical and human environment.

Fifth, safeguard compliance mechanisms are essential to ensure that development projects do not cause social and environmental harm. Especially where negative externalities are present, desirable regulations designed to avoid harm would not be followed by private or even public agents without environmental and social safeguards. But safeguards have not historically been considered as part of sustainability criteria of projects, and this must change. A subsequent section discusses safeguards in greater detail.

Rather than thinking of these tools as alternatives, one can have a rigorous framework that mixes methods depending on the issues at hand. It is crucial to list the things that are really important. Incorporation of analysis of counterfactuals can be applied more widely than at present, not only in social areas but also in the agriculture, urban, and infrastructure sectors. These are not necessarily experimental, but can integrate with others' regression analysis, counterfactual systems analysis, and cost-benefit analysis.

We must take cost-benefit analysis more seriously and not hide under the premise of unquantifiable aspects or questions about the reliability of economic, social, and environmental modeling, and a suspicion that sometimes there were biases in the assumptions that were incorporated in these models. It is important to always evaluate both benefits and costs so that the evaluation can objectively guide sustainable development.

Underlying evaluation of impact and cost-benefit analysis is green accounting, which can help enormously in the right valuation, especially of natural capital. Data availability and estimation methods remain a barrier, but they must be overcome with continued efforts and financing for such work, which has high payoffs.

Some applications of these techniques have yielded good results (Thomas and Luo 2011). For example, there have been some striking results in assessing the impact of conditional cash transfer programs in the Philippines. There has been a breakthrough in evaluating sustainable use of natural resources, as for example in Brazil's deforestation and biodiversity loss. Remote sensing in monitoring and evaluation in the management of peatlands in Mongolia has been an interesting experience.

In the urban space, there have been evaluations of the value added when bus rapid transit incorporates a clean development mechanism such as clean energy, as has been done in China. Encouraging commuters to use bus transport in Brazil and Korea is another case in point. The full cost of subsidies for fossil fuels and the value of slashing them have also been assessed quite carefully (IMF 2015; Morgan 2007). More work needs to be done in assessing the full benefits of switching to renewable energy. These issues can be best illustrated with specific areas in mind, a few of which are taken up below.

NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Environmental sustainability is heavily dependent on how natural resources are harnessed and utilized. There are a number of perceived and actual trade-offs when it comes to natural resource management, especially as they involve externalities and the public goods nature of some of these resources.

In some cases there are win-win opportunities, where growth and environmental objectives complement each other. Improving energy efficiency and reducing energy losses are a case in point (Petrie and Thomas 2013). There are other areas where costs are clearly involved, and yet there may be net-win opportunities as these costs are more than offset by societal and/or environmental gains. Switching out of subsidies for fossil fuels (where negative externalities are present) and even providing subsidies for renewables (where positive externalities are present) would be a case in point.

One central issue is the question of the carbon content of economic growth. A byproduct of economic growth is the production of greenhouse gases and the resulting climate change. A general observation is that a 1 percent increase in per capita income induces—on average and with exceptions—a 1 percent increase in greenhouse gas emissions. But some exceptions offer opportunities to promote strategies that both promote growth and limit emissions.

Ending encouragement to use fossil fuels is one avenue. Removing fossil fuel subsidies would increase economic efficiency and reduce greenhouse gas emissions (van den Berg and Cando-Noordhuizen 2017). The largest subsidizers in absolute terms were Egypt, India, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, and Ukraine—all with more than \$10 billion a year in subsidies. Subsidies are 2–7.5 times larger than public spending on health in Bangladesh, Ecuador, Egypt, India, Morocco, Pakistan, the Republic of Yemen, Turkmenistan, and Venezuela.

Using energy-efficient instruments can also help (IED 2014; UNDP 2008). Compact fluorescent lamps draw only 20–30 percent as much power and last much longer. Substituting them for all the incandescent lamps in Sub-Saharan Africa would reduce peak power consumption by 15 gigawatts, roughly 23 percent of the installed capacity.

Together, these findings suggest that a win-win strategy could be built around introducing efficiencies while reducing subsidies and better targeting subsidies to the poor. This would simultaneously reduce the strain on government budgets, free resources to allow extension of energy sources to the poor, and promote more efficient energy use.

Another area of concern is the use of water resources (IEG 2010a; Thomas and Luo 2011). For almost a century, water use has been growing almost twice as fast as population. To meet the demand for water, numerous parts of the world have exceeded sustainable limits of water withdrawal from rivers and groundwater aquifer. The level of water in underground aquifers below Beijing, New Delhi, and many other booming cities is falling rapidly. Major rivers such as the Ganges, the Yangtze, the Nile, and the Jordan are overtaxed and regularly shrink for long periods during the year.

Water shortages already loom in many parts of the world. One-third of the world population, concentrated in developing countries, lives in basins where the water deficit is larger than 50 percent. About 700 million people in 43 countries face water stress, unable to obtain the minimum need of 1,700 cubic meters of water per person per year. And climate change aggravates erratic rainfall patterns, compounding the challenges.

The global water footprint reached 9,000 billion cubic meters a year in 1996–2005. Irrigated agriculture accounts for more than 80 percent of water use in developing countries. Yet, feeding more people and coping with the changing dietary demands from a richer population will require more efficient water use. Without sufficient water, future economic progress could be severely constrained.

But water stress is about more than availability. Rapid economic growth increases not only water use but also pollution. It has changed natural water reservoirs—directly, by draining aquifers, and indirectly, by melting glaciers and the polar ice caps. And overexploitation of groundwater results in salinization, while industrial and agricultural waste pollutes water sources.

The economic benefits of better managing water resources are big, as are the economic costs of inaction. Country examples indicate that proper water management could increase gross domestic product by 5–14 percent. In the Middle East and North Africa, where water shortages are most acute, the cost of environmental degradation from water pollution and excessive withdrawals is estimated at between 2.0 and 7.4 percent of gross domestic product.

It may not be just an issue of better managing scarce resources, but one of changing sources to more sustainable ones. Water scarcity should lead to higher prices for water, which will at a certain point make whole-scale desalination of seawater economical, but with a transportation problem—how to get this water to remote regions and landlocked countries. Innovations in filters and other desalination techniques could drive the price of desalination down, which could bring the tipping point for the market in desalinated water closer.

Yet another aspect is the protection of forests (IEG 2009). An evaluation using forest fires as a proxy found that, on average, protected areas significantly reduce tropical deforestation and associated carbon release, thus reducing carbon emissions while preserving biodiversity. The study examined whether areas subject to strict protection—with essentially no use allowed—fared better than those in which some activity was permitted.

The expectation was that, all things equal, strict protection would have the bigger impact on reducing the incidence of fires, considering differences

in deforestation pressures. But the evaluation found instead that the impact was actually greater when the protected areas allowed sustainable use by local populations than when they did not. This finding is true for Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean, when comparing the mean reduction in fire incidence from strict protected areas with that from multiuse protected areas. In Latin America, where indigenous areas can be identified, the impact on fire incidence is extremely large.

Closely related is the protection of the world's precious biodiversity (GEF 2016a). Placing a value on biodiversity loss is not easy, but the high cost of irreversible losses cannot be underestimated. Protecting biodiversity is a critical element for the protection of our planet, and it has been shown to carry with it valuable resources and sources of livelihood, especially for the poor.

NATURAL DISASTERS

Great floods in China and India, superstorms in the Philippines and in the United States, and summer heat waves in Australia and Japan in recent years are manifestations of an alarming trend in the rise of climate-related disasters. The 2010s may well go down as the decade when the trend line of these events headed aggressively upward after a noticeable rise in their intensity and frequency since the 1970s.

Global warming has contributed to warming oceans, more moisture in the air, and higher sea levels, but scientists have been cautious about attributing a flood or storm to climate change. Even so, papers have argued that the intensity of the 2011 Great Flood in Thailand and of Super Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines are owed in part to changing climate. More recent work has been even more pointed: global warming is shown to have made Japan's unusually hot summer this year 1.5 to 1.7 times more likely.

A consensus, too, is building that climate change has roots in human actions (IPCC 2015). We have known for a long time that weather events turn into disasters for human-made reasons. More people are hurt when they are exposed in harm's way, and when they are vulnerable and unable to cope. But now we also know that the intensity and frequency of the hazards themselves are greater because of human-made global warming.

This understanding profoundly affects how countries engage in disaster risk reduction. Economic growth projections are contingent on addressing climate change. Yet few of the forecasts for global and country growth take into account the impacts of climate change that are already evident, or the massive investment and resources that will need to be mobilized for climate action. Such forecasting is missing from the current estimates for growth, for example, of around 3.0–3.5 percent in 2017 and 5.5–6.0 percent for Asia and the Pacific.

Countries and regions need to build contingency plans into their economic programs. Floods and storms in recent years inflicted sizable economic losses in Australia, China, Indonesia, Republic of Korea, Thailand, and Vietnam. After the financial crisis, governments and multilateral institutions intensified their efforts to anticipate future crises, carrying out stress tests of the

vulnerability and resilience of their banking systems. In the same way, we now need stress tests that can reveal how well countries can withstand the impact of rising natural disasters.

In many respects, such country actions bring both global and local benefits (GEF 2016b). Reducing black carbon emissions that blight so many cities (like Beijing and New Delhi) is a case in point. Phasing out the use of fossil fuels that present the greatest danger to our environment is another. India and Indonesia recently slashed fossil fuel subsidies. Investments in solar photovoltaics in China and Japan and in onshore wind across Europe are pointing the way for increased use of renewable energy.

The five cities most vulnerable to natural hazards are all in Asia: Bangkok, Dhaka, Jakarta, Manila, and Yangon. All of them are overcrowded and in geographically fragile settings. Asia's growth has been characterized by increasing urbanization, making it imperative that climate-friendly urban management become a strategic thrust. And because the poor are hit harder by the effects of climate change than the rest of the population, building resilient communities will be an essential element of poverty reduction strategies.

Climate-related natural disasters are no longer one-off occurrences; rather, they are systemic events that need preventive action. Disaster risk reduction needs to be seen as an investment, going beyond relief and reconstruction to a dual approach of prevention and recovery. Japan invests some 5 percent of its national budget in disaster risk reduction, and this has been shown to reduce human and economic losses when disasters strike.

The main message is that to deliver sustained growth and well-being, we need to value natural capital, recognize the human hand in climate change, and take preventive action against climate-related calamities.

THE DANGER OF CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change is the greatest known threat to economic growth and well-being and its impacts go far beyond natural disasters (Stern 2006; Utto, Puri, and van den Berg 2017). To confront this peril, world leaders, especially of the large economies, must commit to much stronger cuts in carbon emissions than currently envisaged at the United Nations conference in Paris. But the challenge is bigger. To bring about lasting change, countries will need to reform the way their economies generate growth.

What makes this difficult is political leaders' differing beliefs about what generates growth. After all, carbon-intensive production created wealth in the past, so many still see a change in this recipe as inimical to expansion. Yet the reality is just the opposite. In the face of mounting disasters linked to human-made global warming, a low-carbon path is the only way to progress.

To appreciate why, note that the current growth path within a quarter century will push carbon concentrations in the atmosphere to the critical 450 parts per million. Beyond this threshold, temperatures will rise above 2 degrees from pre-industrial levels, with catastrophic impact. Just-released data warn that we are already halfway to that dreaded mark. 2016 has surpassed 2015 as the hottest on record. Asia is on the front line of climate-related disasters.

To dodge this dangerous scenario, energy-related emissions alone need to fall by 40–70 percent below 2010 levels by 2050. With energy accounting for two-thirds of emissions today, the required shift from reliance on fossil fuels is huge. Currently, two-thirds to four-fifths of electricity relies on fossil fuels in China, Japan, Russia, and the United States. China and India continue to ramp up coal-fired power stations.

Industrial countries were far and away the main cause of past carbon build-up. But developing countries in Asia is now the origin of some 37 percent of global emissions. Some countries, like Canada, generate relatively low total but high per capita emissions, while others, like India, generate a relatively high total but are low in per capita terms. Among those at the high end in total, Japan is moderate in per capita terms.

Regardless of the historical and current sources, what is clear is that business as usual will sink everyone. We need an economic transformation that is not only in the global interest but also in a country's own interest. Evaluation must take on board this reality, and be especially cognizant of five trends (Office of Evaluation and Oversight 2015; Thomas 2017).

First, renewable energy sources—solar, wind, wave, tidal, geothermal, and biomass—need to expand vastly, supported by research and development and exchange of knowledge. Battery storage, smart grids, and demand measures have to improve. Demand for renewable energy can be augmented by a carbon tax that reduces demand for dirty fossil fuels. Cap and trade schemes can also help, as China plans for 2017. There is a heightened policy debate in Japan about raising the ratio of electricity from renewable and other nonpolluting energy, including the role of nuclear plants.

Second, countries need to move much more quickly out of using polluting fossil fuels. Fossil fuel subsidies in financial terms might amount to some \$550 billion globally. But when their negative effects are incorporated, the effective subsidies are much higher (IMF 2015). These subsidies have to be slashed, as India and Indonesia have started to do. The Obama administration's decision to reduce carbon emissions from power plants by 32 percent below 2005 levels by 2030 is positive, but it now needs to be maintained under the Trump administration. Japan is trying to encourage cleaner energy, including via hybrid and electric engines, and is promoting export of cleaner technology.

Third, dealing with local pollution also helps climate mitigation. Abatement of air pollution is urgent in Delhi and Beijing. Some 3 million people die each year from outdoor air pollution. Urban congestion can be lessened with intelligent transport systems, as in Seoul. Corruption and greed damage developed countries too: Volkswagen's cheating on automobile emissions, for example, is a colossal scandal.

Fourth, to withstand destruction from global warming, we need to strengthen roads and embankments, build in safer areas, and invest in rain harvesting, drainage, and early warning, as Japan has been doing. Countries can tap new financing such as the Green Climate Fund, as Fiji just did. It received a \$31 million Green Climate Fund grant for a project supported by the Asian Development Bank.

Fifth, we need to protect coastal zones, agricultural land, and forests. In Indonesia, haze from slash-and-burn agriculture to clear areas for palm oil

every year spreads through Southeast Asia, ruining people's health, biodiversity, and economic activities. These fires, on the worst days, emit more carbon than the U.S. economy.

Evaluators have been slow to send this message, but it is now urgent that the discipline come to grips with it. It is only with a swift response to climate change that countries can sustain economic growth and well-being. As a major contributor to the discussions of development effectiveness, evaluation should account for climate effects and provide evidence on social, economic, and environmental costs of delayed action.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL SAFEGUARDS

The value of having environmental and social safeguards is a major area of inquiry. Some studies have pinned the cost of having these safeguards as less than 3 percent of the administrative budgets of projects (IED 2016; IEG 2010b), while their benefits in terms of avoided losses have been far higher.

The demand for safeguards (to manage environmental and social trade-offs) emerged in the 1980s in response to a number of controversial projects funded by the World Bank. Two examples of these projects are the Polonoroeste's BR-364 Amazon highway program in Brazil, which affected indigenous communities, and the Narmada Dam in India, which displaced 90,000 people. These resulted in the crafting of environmental and social policies at the World Bank to ensure a "do no harm" approach in its projects. The regional MDBs followed with similar policies.

MDBs' safeguard policies aim to promote the sustainability of projects by protecting people and the environment from the potential adverse effects of development. For example, the Asian Development Bank's safeguard policy lays down key requirements, including: (1) identify and assess environmental or social impacts early in the project cycle; (2) develop and implement plans to avoid, minimize, mitigate, or compensate for the potential adverse impacts; and (3) inform and consult affected people during project preparation and implementation. The crucial question for evaluation is how effective the practices are.

The independent evaluation units of the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank (IED 2016; IEG 2010b) document some successes and important gaps. Both discuss strengths in the design of safeguards that must not be diluted and point out weaknesses in implementation and supervision of safeguards, especially for moderately risky projects. They support the eventual use of country systems when they are more equivalent and comparable to MDB systems, signal the need for great caution in switching to them, and recommend continued efforts to strengthen local capacities.

Evaluation must take on board four principles to govern the use of safeguards.

- Safeguards must be legally binding, and compliance should be enforceable. Standards that are to be met flexibly during a project's life will not suffice in ensuring protection against spillover damages. Sure, flexibility can speed up project approval, but for risky projects, the resulting damages could just delay project completions.

- International policy should govern safeguards, rather than national systems that by law or in practice are not yet equivalent. Recent years have seen several disasters under national systems; for example, the collapse of a garment factory near Dhaka, Bangladesh; a mining disaster involving a dam burst in Minas Gerais, Brazil; and explosions at a container storage station in Tianjin, China.
- It is not enough to have systems in place; implementation and oversight need strengthening. In particular, downstream supervision of how safeguards are being followed on the ground needs to be bolstered, but without weakening upstream regulation. Monitoring of impacts is essential, not by the investor alone but also by an independent party.
- The efficiency with which processes and procedures are followed can usually be improved a great deal. Greater differentiation in the treatment of high- and low-risk projects can help. Project processing can be speeded through such efficiency improvements, and not through a weakening of the regulation.

Effective safeguards are needed more than ever both for the established lenders and the newcomers. How the international banks apply these defenses will be an indication of their true commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris climate accord.

Going forward, MDBs will have to focus more and more on the positive potential of their safeguard policies, i.e., move away from a “do no harm” philosophy to a more proactive stance of harnessing safeguards to “do good” on social and environmental issues. MDBs will also have to support strengthening member countries’ capacity in implementing safeguard provisions.

The tensions raised in considering safeguards also provide one of the most powerful illustrations of trade-offs that evaluators must lay out—but which they often sidestep, at least explicitly. Those who have worked on safeguards over the years naturally recognize the uphill battle involved in taking on special interests who would rather not be burdened with adherence to any safeguards. The Trump administration’s public statements are a case in point. Proponents of safeguards also have anecdotes and stories, if not quantitative evidence, of how much gain to society sound safeguards bring.

But on the other side, some operational staff in organizations, and certainly special interests, use anecdotes, if not quantitative evidence, of how much safeguards weigh down investment operations. They often minimize the gains that safeguards bring as well.

Clearly there are inherent trade-offs and also different sets of interests driving people’s perceptions and even evidence. The role of sound evaluation under these circumstances cannot be overstressed. One way forward is the application of cost-benefit analysis that takes into account both private and social benefits and costs (IED 2016). Data are a constraint in applying such analysis, but where it has been done reasonably well, social benefits of most safeguards (i.e., avoided damages) far outweigh the social costs of having such safeguards (IEG 2010a). That does not mean costs can be reduced further with greater efficiency in executing safeguards. The policy implications

would be to adopt safeguards where net benefits are positive but to continue improving efficiency such that the net benefits are increased further.

CONCLUSION

An overarching implication of all this is the need for an introspective look at evaluation in the context of sustainable development. To remain relevant and effective, evaluation must not favor a risk-averse standpoint of doing what is easy and conventional. Evaluation should encourage innovative thinking and methods that shepherd the dynamics of sustainable development. In addition, systematic identification, analysis, and scaling-up of successful interventions are necessary actions to move forward sustainable development and growth.

Related to this, an equally important activity is developing further evaluation capacity at the country level, as promoted by an increasing number of countries. Implementation is expected to be the key test for the Sustainable Development Goals, and monitoring and evaluation will be an important part given that the development initiatives and related evaluations will be country led.

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