



What is Sustainable?

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Topic: [Environment/Sustainability](#)

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We use the term a lot, but what does it actually mean. That depends. Most of us accept that our current lifestyle is not sustainable, with most differences of opinion being over how long a given consumption rate (or growth rate) could be sustained. Some people try to cast "sustainability" as some type of extreme ecotopia with humanity reduced to the lowest forms of hunter / gatherer society. However, there are many paths to sustainability and over a long enough time period, we will either have to consciously choose our own path to sustainability or eventually a solution will imposed on us. In some areas, this may require more technology, like wind, solar, tidal electricity generation. In other areas it may require a return to older low tech ways of production like organic farming.

I have found "Sustainability" to be a good neutral word to use in conversations when talking about a wide range of topics from fiscal policy to fossil fuel consumption. It has an intuitive logic that almost everyone can accept as "good" and everyone that our current consumption levels are not sustainable on many different levels.

Below are some different definitions that I found by doing a google search on the term "sustainable". Find the one that you think best describes sustainability or come up with your own definition.

[being able to continue into the future.](#)

[The using of products of nature in a way that will not permanently destroy them for future use. Sustainable resources allow for the resources to regenerate before being used again.](#)

[An ecosystem condition in which biodiversity, renewability, and resource productivity are maintained over time.](#)

[generally refers to land management practices that provide goods and services from an ecosystem without degradation of the site quality, and without a decline in the yield of goods and services over time.](#)

[A resource or system that meets present needs without compromising those of future generations.](#)

[Able to be continued indefinitely without a significant negative impact on the environment or its inhabitants.](#)

[means meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.](#)

[Meeting present needs without preventing future generations from meeting their needs.](#)

[able to maintain or stay in existence over a period of time; a sustainable population is one that is](#)

able to maintain a healthy number of individuals year after year

The yield of a natural resource that can be produced continually from generation to generation, without depleting the resource.

Coffee which is cultivated, produced and marketed in a manner that respects and preserves the symbiotic balance between ecosystems and cultures." Mark Perkins, Elan.

The Worldwatch Institute defines "sustainable" as "meeting present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." For example, wood harvested from a "sustainable forest" means that the wood is derived from a forest managed in a manner so that the trees harvested will be replaced at a rate that matches the rate of removal. In this regard, the forest will continue producing wood for successive generations.

development : Development which meets the needs of present generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Development which is not detrimental to earth's natural resources, or one which makes the use of renewable energy sources such as wind energy or solar energy.

Using products of the forest in a way that does not permanently destroy them, so that people in the future can also use them.

To keep in existence or to maintain. In terms of resources, this means to use only as much as can be replenished in the long term, such as by not over-fishing or hunting a species to the point of extinction.

something which can be kept in the same or a better condition for the future

capable of being maintained at a steady level without exhausting natural resources or causing severe ecological damage.

material or energy sources which, if managed carefully, will provide the needs of a community or society indefinitely, without depriving future generations of their needs.

capable of being sustained

Sustainable - the ability to maintain into perpetuity.



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