



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations



# FACT SHEET: RESPONSIBLE INVESTMENT IN AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SYSTEMS

Understanding responsible investment in agriculture and food systems (RAI) – an increasingly critical concept.



# WHAT IS RESPONSIBLE INVESTMENT?

Responsible investment in agriculture and food systems refers to investments that (1) contribute to sustainable development, (2) improve food security and nutrition, and (3) respect human rights, while (4) ensuring a return on investment for the investor.

Thus, responsible investment contributes to addressing various challenges:



**Environmental:** reduced carbon footprint and greenhouse gas emissions; improved energy efficiency, water and waste management, resilience; etc.



**Social:** fostering decent work through training of employees; ensuring equal pay for men and women; creating decent job opportunities for young people, women and disabled people; enhancing women's capacity to access leadership positions; etc.



**Governance:** enhancing transparency on remuneration, including of executive staff; increasing the share of women on boards of directors; fight against corruption; etc.

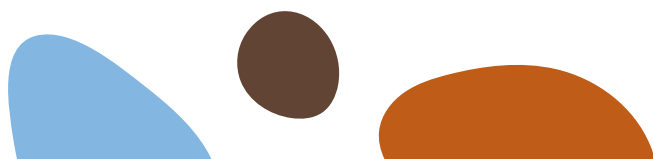


**Ethical:** fight against poverty, malnutrition and hunger; supply of food of appropriate quality and at affordable prices, etc.



**Cultural and territorial:** Promoting and valorising cultural heritage and traditional products through branding, certification and marketing to increase the attractiveness of rural territories and act as a lever for territorial development.

A responsible investment (RI) hence generates a **triple "P" performance** in terms of: **profits** (for the investor), **people** (positive socio-economic impact), and **planet** (protects and uses natural resources in a sustainable way). Responsible investment creates financial and non-financial value.



# RESPONSIBLE INVESTMENT TRENDS GLOBALLY

Globally, investors, enterprises and governments increasingly adopt responsible investment principles and practices promoted by the United Nations and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). To date, more than 5 000 investors have signed up to the Principles for Responsible Investment. At another level, more than 90 second generation international investment agreements consider the importance of transiting from traditional investment promotion towards a responsible investment centred approach by incorporating socioeconomic and environmental requirements.



## WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN “RESPONSIBLE INVESTMENT” AND “SUSTAINABLE INVESTMENT”?

Responsible investment is necessarily sustainable, but its scope exceeds that of sustainable investment. The latter refers to investments that integrate social, environmental and governance elements. Responsible investment aims to generate triple bottom line performance, as well as financial and non-financial value creation through a holistic integration of RI principles into every aspect of the company and its investments: mission statements, corporate principles and policies, due diligence practices, as well as the project’s actual impacts.

## THE LINK BETWEEN RESPONSIBLE INVESTMENT AND RELATED CONCEPTS:

Responsible investment actively contributes to achieving the sustainable development goals. It fosters an inclusive and sustainable economic transformation by injecting capital into new economic systems (social and solidarity economy, circular economy, blue economy in particular).



**To find out more, please visit:**

Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture  
and Food Systems

<https://www.fao.org/3/au866e/au866e.pdf>

Principles for Responsible Investment:

<https://www.unpri.org/download?ac=10948>

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