Defining and Measuring the governance Aspect of Agrarian Sustainability

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Abstract: Understanding and measuring agricultural sustainability is increasingly justified in academic literature and finds a place in missions of government, international, and private organizations. It isn’t easy to define and assess the governance aspect of agricultural sustainability. This presentation suggests a holistic framework for understanding and evaluating governance sustainability. Interdisciplinary Theories of Sustainable Development and New Institutional Economics are incorporated and: major approaches for learning and assessing governance sustainability discussed; a framework for determining governance sustainability proposed including a system of principles, criteria, indicators, and reference values, and approach for their integration and interpretation; the proposed framework is “tested” in evaluating the governance sustainability of Bulgarian agriculture at national, sectoral, regional, eco-system and farming organization levels; and directions for further research and modernization of assessment practices specified. We need at include missing element of governance in the sustainability of agro-systems of various type. The governance sustainability of Bulgarian agriculture is at a “Good” but very close to the “Satisfactory” level. There is considerable differentiation in the level of governance sustainability of different agro-systems in the country. We find that there are "singular factors" that define the highest and lowest level of governance sustainability of evaluated agro-system. We must consider the holistic aspect of the suggested kind for improving the agricultural sustainability in general, and the governance sustainability, they are to be expended, and their precision increased. Elaboration of an effective framework for understanding and assessing the governance sustainability is far from complete, and all emerging approaches have to be further discussed, experimented, improved and adapted to the specific conditions of agricultural systems and the needs of decision-makers.

Keywords: governance, sustainability, agro-systems