

PREFACE

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Since 2020, IRD has embarked upon a process of reflection on sustainability science and how it might serve as a unifying and collective approach to IRD's research themes and activities carried out in partnership with academic communities and research institutions in developing countries and French overseas territories. Placing sustainability science at the heart of scientific policy will enable IRD and its partners to produce the knowledge required for a holistic understanding of the challenges facing the Earth's habitability in the Anthropocene Era, to position their research within the 2030 international development agenda, to clarify their contribution to scientific diplomacy, and to reflect on the way their research is produced (carbon footprint, equitable partnership, etc.) and its impact on the societies of partner countries and territories. All these objectives are an integral part of our 2021–2025 Contract of Objectives, Means and Performance (COMP), signed last year with our two supervisory ministries.

However, the practice of sustainability science is not something that IRD's governance dictates. In line with the philosophy of the Knowledge Communities (CoSavs), the interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral collective intelligence platforms launched in 2020, our aim is to encourage IRD staff to reflect on their professional purpose and practices in a changing social and academic world. This reflection process is relevant to all IRD staff, who must work collectively and effectively to achieve the Institute's missions and the objectives set out in the COMP. It is also relevant to colleagues throughout the IRD world, in the countries and territories of the South but also in our joint research units, and more generally in the world of research and development (donors, NGOs, diplomats, etc.). It was with this aim in mind that we created the "Sustainability Science Reference Articles", which are published by IRD Éditions each year in a booklet and for which I have the pleasure of writing the preface.

The 2023 edition of the *Sustainability Science* booklet contains 42 articles written by almost 100 co-authors. It highlights the vibrancy of this multi-faceted approach, its influence throughout the IRD world, and the involvement of our colleagues in the Global South. I have personally reviewed each of these articles with care and interest. I have been able to gauge and assess the extent to which the conceptual and methodological frameworks of sustainability science are being strengthened and consolidated within our community, and how they are bringing together the different disciplines, research subjects and fields that make up the great diversity and distinctiveness of our Institute. The intercultural reflections of our IRD community are a rich source of information for any reader seeking a better understanding of the challenges of sustainability science, based on real-life experiences and examples of projects centred around the three pillars of “Understand”, “Co-construct” and “Transform”. These reflections come from authors with diverse profiles – PhD students, post-doctoral and young researchers, representatives, co-directors of international joint laboratories and administrative staff.

I am very grateful to all the authors and editors of these texts for their contributions. Thank you.

SUSTAINABILITY SCIENCE

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