The article deals with the general approach to the definition of sustainable development in modern science and reflects the main point of view. In developing the concept of sustainable economic development of the Stavropol Territory, we are faced with the need to study concepts such as "sustainable development of the regional economy" and "sustainable development" as a whole. This term is often used in various fields of science, but understanding which is embedded in a particular concept is different.

The problem of determining the nature of the phenomenon of sustainable development is discussed at various conferences at national and international level, as well as scientific publications. However, there is still no single concept of sustainable development. This is due primarily to the fact that there are different approaches to the interpretation of its content and denotation.

In this paper, considering the term "sustainable development", we are primarily focused on its content. In the analysis of the interpretation of this term, we turned to the works of Russian and foreign authors, despite the large number of similar positions, approaches to the definition were different. We concluded that the sustainable development of the regional economy - it is a combination of legal, economic, social, industrial relations, as well as various resources through which realized the region's desire to return to a state of stability, but at the same time increase the competitiveness, quality of life and balance the ratio government, business, society and the environment.

The result of this study is to validate the concept and essence of sustainable economic development of the region and its components.