



Global Green Economy

Issue 25

May 2011

Editorial

A green economy for a cleaner, fairer world

The global economy is almost five times the size it was half a century ago. This rapid economic growth has delivered financial benefits, but it has not delivered them equally: a fifth of the world's population earns just 2 per cent of global income and inequality is higher in the OECD nations than it was 20 years ago. Economic activity has also delivered unprecedented environmental damage: an estimated 60 per cent of the world's ecosystems have been degraded and significant scarcity in key resources – such as oil – could be less than a decade away.

The current economic and environmental crisis tells us that the time is ripe for governments around the world to implement a new kind of economy, which is resilient, sustainable, operates within the limits of our planet's resources and creates a fairer society. This thematic issue covers research which can help policy makers develop this Global Green Economy.

Developing such an economy is a major challenge with many dimensions, but research can provide policy makers with valuable information to assist the process. Two of the most important steps in the transition to a green economy are to establish our resource and environmental limits and to fix the wider economic model, to one that does not stimulate unsustainable consumption. To achieve this we need to be able to measure resources, economic activity and progress, accurately and appropriately.

(Continued on page 2)

Contents

Page

New measures of sustainable progress needed to improve well-being	4
Research concludes that a range of indicators need to be developed for an effective assessment of social progress.	
Beyond GDP: new measures of progress for a green economy	5
A new study suggests alternatives to the Gross Domestic Product as the sole measurement of economic progress and national well-being.	
What are the impacts of zero growth?	6
Research considers the potential effects on economic growth of capping the consumption of resources or capping the creation of wealth.	
Policy support for green transition could create millions of jobs	7
The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) supports policy makers in creating employment opportunities during the transition to a greener economy.	
A global green economy can help meet Millennium Development Goals	8
A new UN report proposes that mechanisms for eradicating poverty and addressing environmental issues need to be considered together.	
Green stimulus packages: a difficult balancing act	9
The short and long-term effects of 'green stimulus packages' are assessed for the economies and environments of developed and developing countries.	
Strong global governance is essential to developing the green economy	10
According to research, the assumption that the environment can be protected whilst prosperity continues indefinitely is historically rooted in the Industrial Revolution.	
Related articles	11
A selection of recent articles from the <i>Science for Environment Policy</i> News Alert.	



Traditionally gross domestic product (GDP) has been used to measure economic success, but this does not take any account of environmental status, health, education or other forms of well-being. Researchers around the world are working on new ways to measure well-being, which will take us beyond the damaging constraints of GDP as a sole indicator. Some of these are explored in the articles '**New measures of sustainable progress needed to improve well-being**' and '**Beyond GDP: new measures of progress for a green economy**'. Both the studies outlined in the articles recommend using a range of indicators to measure different types of progress.

Setting limits entails restricting the damaging levels of growth that our society has undergone over the past 200 years, but how can policy achieve this, and how can it achieve this fairly? 'Zero growth' and 'degrowth' are important concepts in the transition to a sustainable economy that have been proposed by economists, but are not necessarily well understood by the policy community. The article '**What are the impacts of zero growth?**' describes research which explores what is meant by 'zero growth', and how it could be achieved. The study recommends that capping growth in resource consumption is preferable to capping financial growth, as the latter could lead to unintended social hardships, such as unemployment and further public spending cuts.

Fixing the economic model also means that we must maintain full employment and a leading UNEP report, outlined in '**Policy support for green transition could create millions of jobs**', suggests sectors, such as renewable energy and sustainable buildings, could create new jobs for millions of people around the world. This could achieve several key goals, including developing industries which reduce our reliance on natural resources, and alleviating poverty. However, simply because a job is in a supposedly 'green' sector does not make it appropriate for a 'green economy' – take the exploitative, low-paid work in the electronics recycling sector in Asia, for example. The Global Green Economy must contribute to a just and fair society, and a separate UN report, highlighted in '**A global green economy can help meet Millennium Development Goals**' suggests that it could reduce inequality and help halve the number of those living in poverty around the world. It is essential that we address financial, social and ecological challenges together, as they are closely linked.

(Continued on page 3)



Green stimulus packages, or 'green new deals', are being discussed by governments around the world to kick-start a green economy. A recent study by the World Bank has assessed the impacts of different packages, such as investments in pollution control or renewable energy. Its findings highlight the need to weigh up the trade-offs between short-term impacts and long-term impacts very carefully, for example, programmes which promote short-term improvements to the environment and employment, do not have such positive impacts in the long-term. For more details on this study, see the article '**Green stimulus packages: a difficult balancing act**'.

Achieving a green economy raises the question of governance. How can prosperity be shared throughout society? How can the interests of the individual be balanced against the common good? What are the mechanisms for achieving this balance? Successful governance of a global green economy will need institutional change. Since the 18th century and the Industrial Revolution, our institutions and laws have supported unsustainable, unequal economic growth, and a recent study reports that this is why environmental damage continues, despite increased efforts to curb these negative impacts (see: '**Strong global government could help develop the green economy**'). Among its recommendations, the study argues for a 'World Environment Organisation' with legal powers to override the narrow interests of dissenting, individual countries to the benefit of greater, global concerns.

These articles showcase just a tiny handful of the studies in this extremely significant field of research. However, they do illustrate a number of essential roles that research can play in developing a green economy that policy makers should be aware of. Research can help us establish clear environmental and resource limits. It can build an economics fit for purpose, in which stability does not depend on increased material throughput. It can help us design the institutions for a green economy, and to understand the social dimensions of economic transformation. Understanding and addressing these many interrelated dimensions will allow us to develop an economy of sustainability, which produces a cleaner, fairer future for all, the world over.

Prof Tim Jackson

University of Surrey, UK



New measures of sustainable progress needed to improve well-being

New, broader indicators of social progress are needed for a greener economy and more equal society, according to a leading report, which highlights the inability of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to measure sustained well-being. Among the report's recommendations, indicators should be implemented which measure 'stocks' of natural resources, to help ensure well-being for future generations.

Contact: jes322@columbia.edu

Theme(s): Environmental economics, Sustainable development and policy analysis

"The report suggests that GDP has been an 'unreliable compass' that has guided us into the current economic and environmental crisis, with little regard for human well-being."

Statistical indicators, such as GDP, are important for developing and evaluating policies, but if they are flawed or unfit for purpose, then the wrong decisions could be made. GDP has come to act as a measure of political progress, which may not be appropriate when it was only designed to measure a country's production activity.

The report, commissioned by the French Government, suggests that GDP has been an 'unreliable compass' that has guided us into the current economic and environmental crisis, with little regard for human well-being. The report identifies GDP's limits as an indicator of current well-being and sustainability (future well-being) and considers how additional tools for measurement could be developed.

There are many aspects of well-being, including environmental conditions (both current and future), individual income, health and education, which are missed by GDP and which the report suggests should be measured. GDP is a reasonable measure of overall production activity, but is unsuitable for measuring 'economic well-being', i.e. it does not consider real household income or consumption, which are important indicators of living standards. However, although these indicate current well-being, they could be at the expense of future well-being, in that over-consumption depletes resources and increases global warming.

The report states that sustainability is far more complex to measure than current well-being because it involves making many assumptions and choices about an uncertain future. One way of measuring sustainability would be to introduce a range of indicators which reflect the many different types of a country's 'stocks', such as natural resources, greenhouse gas emissions, technological capacity and social capital (for example, citizens' political and community involvement).

Comprehensive 'balance sheets' of a country's stocks can express what can be carried over into the future or how close a country is to environmental problems. Such balance sheets are not a new idea, but they are not widely used or promoted. Stocks could be measured in physical quantities or translated into a common monetary equivalent. However, the report warns that there are limitations to the monetary approach, for example, it is very difficult to calculate future market values for many stocks.

The many dimensions of well-being have knock-on effects for each other and their connections need to be carefully considered when designing indicators. Although it is recommended that they are measured individually, there also needs to be a way of combining them into a single summary measure, as per the UN's Human Development Index.

Source: Stiglitz, J.E., Sen, A., Fatoussi, J-P. (2008). *Report by the Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress*. Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress. Download from: www.stiglitz-sen-fitoussi.fr/en/index.htm



Beyond GDP: new measures of progress for a green economy

Contact: Robert.Costanza@pdx.edu

Theme(s): Environmental economics, Sustainable development and policy analysis

“Using the analogy of an electric meter in a building, the assumption that increased GDP means increased well-being is similar to saying that the more electricity used by the building, the better the quality of life for its inhabitants.”

Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was designed to measure economic activity, yet it is increasingly used as a measure of national well-being. A new report highlights the growing need for alternative measures of progress, appropriate for a greener economy, and outlines current options that better reflect national well-being.

GDP measures the flow of goods and services produced within a market. Economists, politicians and the media regularly refer to GDP as a representation of overall progress, but it is a measure of economic activity not economic well-being. Using the analogy of an electric meter in a building, the assumption that increased GDP means increased well-being is similar to saying that the more electricity used by the building, the better the quality of life for its inhabitants.

There are concerns that this misuse of GDP as a measure for national well-being encourages depletion of natural resources and hides gaps between the rich and poor.

Previous research indicates that, beyond a certain threshold, increases in GDP may have a negative effect on well-being. New research suggests four types of alternative measures of progress:

- **Indexes that correct GDP** - These include the General Progress Indicator (GPI), that is designed to measure the sustainability of income, and the Green GDP, which factors in estimates for environmental degradation and depletion of natural resources, in addition to economic indicators.
- **Indexes that do not use GDP** - Instead of measuring economic activity, these measure environmental, social or human capital. An example is the Ecological Footprint (EF), which is used to assess whether an economy is using ecological assets faster than ecosystems can regenerate those assets.
- **Composite indexes including GDP** - These combine GDP, or variants of GDP, with environmental or social indexes. An example is the Human Development Index (HDI), which combines life expectancy, literacy rate, school enrolment and access to a decent standard of living.
- **Indicator Suites** - These do not attempt to combine different indexes, but instead report a number of indicators and let the user interpret them. An example is the UN Millennium Development Goals and Indicators, which define 48 indicators to measure progress towards its eight goals.

Despite the development of these alternative measures, there are a number of barriers to their use. For example, there are criticisms about their accuracy, the availability of required data, their detail and their scope. More difficult to overcome may be social barriers and the need to change the mindset that economic growth is a universal remedy. This will be particularly difficult for countries where indicators reflect poor progress or worsening standards. For example, China attempted to develop a Green GDP but it was cancelled, in part due to political concerns about how the performance of different regions was portrayed.

The current financial crisis indicates that GDP alone may not be a good measure of national well-being and this could provide an opportunity to reach consensus on which measures to adopt.

Source: Costanza, R., Hart, M., Posner, S. & Talberth, J. (2009) *Beyond GDP: The Need for New Measures of Progress*. Boston University Report. The Pardee Papers No.4. Downloadable from: www.bu.edu/pardee/publications/pardee-paper-004-beyond-gdp/



What are the impacts of zero growth?

A new study has considered the impacts of two zero growth scenarios: capping resource consumption and capping wealth creation. It indicates that preventing growth in the sense of capping the consumption of resources could be achieved without causing major economic problems, whereas capping the creation of wealth may create significant social tensions and hardships.

Contact: Joachim.Spangenberg@gmx.de

Themes: Environmental economics, Sustainable development and policy analysis

“Zero physical growth based on capping resource consumption would mean economic growth could continue whilst environmental problems would be limited.”

“Growth” is a complex phenomenon consisting of economic, political, social and environmental elements. The study introduced three different aspects of growth that are useful to consider in analyses:

- Social discourse of growth – there is a strong public belief that growth creates wealth and therefore social improvements. This co-exists with the need for urgent action to combat climate change. Although these could be mutually supportive, i.e. a green economy could provide jobs and income, the focus of most economic policies, including financial stimulus programmes, is not on investment in green infrastructure.
- Growth policies – growth policy often proposes that sustainability gains will be a side-effect of economic progress and there is no need for eco-taxes or efficiency standards as these disturb the operation of the free market. The vast majority of economic theories assume that the free exchange of goods creates the most efficient economy.
- Impacts of growth - there is the belief that a sustainable no-growth policy will have the same impacts as a recession. This idea has successfully silenced any serious attempts to encourage a transition towards a society that is not dependent on economic growth.

The study investigated two zero-growth scenarios:

Zero physical growth – capping resource consumption. This would mean economic growth could continue whilst environmental problems would be limited because the caps would reduce resource depletion and, indirectly, pollution. It would encourage an efficient allocation of resources ensuring they are available where most productively used, which is what a free market aims to deliver. Firms would no longer be able to increase their profit by increasing input, so they would have to strive for competitiveness by producing better goods more efficiently, instead of more goods. This would encourage greater innovation.

Zero economic growth – capping wealth creation. Any growth of one firm would necessitate the shrinking of another, causing an increase in bankruptcies and frequent bank losses from granting credit. Profits could only be increased by enhancing productivity. Distributing this surplus between salaries, taxes and profits can cause serious tensions and cuts in public services. A shrinking workforce due to productivity gains may cause unemployment unless shorter working hours are introduced. In turn, the workforce is likely to demand better social security systems to cope with these hardships, which may cause increasing tax rates.

The study points out that capping resource consumption would prevent acceleration of environmental problems, but it would not necessarily reduce them overall. Some problems may fade but others would remain and some may even become greater. Furthermore, it states that dematerialisation by a factor of 45 is necessary to achieve a sustainable state with economic growth of 3 per cent per year – a figure suggested to be ‘hardly plausible’. Therefore it appears that capping resource consumption could achieve a degree of relative decoupling of the economy from environmental impacts, rather than absolute decoupling.

Source: Spangenberg, J.H. (2010) The growth discourse, growth policy and sustainable development: two thought experiments. *Journal of Cleaner Production*. 18:561-566.



Policy support for green transition could create millions of jobs

Contact: sniffenj@un.org or nick.nuttall@unep.org
Themes: Environmental economics, Sustainable development and policy analysis, consumption and production

“Sectors, such as renewable energy and sustainable buildings, could create new jobs for millions of people.”

A report commissioned by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) provides recommendations for policymakers designed to smooth the transition to a greener economy and create green employment. The report suggests sectors, such as renewable energy and sustainable buildings, could create new jobs for millions of people.

Already, more than two million people are employed in renewable energy production. Many more are employed in jobs directly or indirectly related to sustainable buildings. Employment opportunities in these areas are predicted to rise in the coming decade. In addition, greening of other industries has the potential to provide new employment opportunities, for instance, in retrofitting vehicles to cut fuel consumption, installation of water-saving equipment and adaptation to climate change.

However, the report says green employment opportunities are not yet growing rapidly enough, particularly considering record levels of unemployment, and that unsustainable business practices are still prevalent. Governments at all levels must establish ambitious and clear policy frameworks in order to create a sustainable economy that will generate the millions of jobs that are required. Governments must also be “prepared to confront” businesses whose practices threaten a sustainable future.

The report makes the following recommendations for policy makers:

- Detailed monitoring of the green jobs market is needed to produce a road-map for policy and investment
- Skills requirements (and shortages) must be mapped and anticipated in order to close skills gaps
- Strong and consistent political support is required to ensure markets thrive
- Private sector investment is crucial but must be backed up by government funding
- R&D resources should be relocated to renewable energies from fossil fuels

Among the regulatory tools that the report endorses in order to drive the development of green technologies, products and thus employment, are land-use policies, building codes, energy-efficiency standards for appliances and vehicles, and targets for renewable energy production.

The report highlights the need to involve workers, employers and Governments in “social dialogues” in order to guide the transition towards fairer, better informed and more integrated policies.

Ideally, the greening of industries would alleviate poverty at the same time as achieving environmental goals. However, the report suggests that for some, jobs with environmental goals come with poor working practices, citing the electronics recycling industry in Asia and biofuel plantations in Latin America as examples of green employment where workers face poor working conditions and poverty as a result of exploitation. Such jobs “can hardly be hailed as green”, it states, and policy measures must be introduced to ensure that green jobs are “decent work” with above poverty level incomes.

Source: UNEP. (2008). *Green Jobs: Towards decent work in a sustainable, low-carbon world*. UNEP/ILO/IOE/ITUC report. Downloadable from: www.unep.org/greeneconomy/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=hR62Ck7RTX4%3d&tabid=1377&language=en-US



A global green economy can help meet Millennium Development Goals

Contact: pavan@unep-wcmc.org
Themes: Environmental economics,
Sustainable development and policy analysis

“Policy makers need to recognise the scale of the environmental challenge and its impact on the most vulnerable and impoverished parts of society.”

A new UN report highlights the integral role of a green economy in attaining the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)¹, especially the goal of halving the number in extreme poverty. A greener economy can provide opportunities for employment and growth, and address the link between environmental degradation and poverty.

In 2012, the UN Conference on Sustainable Development will take place in Rio de Janeiro. One of its key priorities will be to address how a green economy could help eradicate poverty. This report calls for policy makers to recognise the scale of the environmental challenge and its impact on the most vulnerable and impoverished parts of society who are highly dependent on biodiversity and ecosystem services. It proposes seizing the opportunity of the current economic crisis to start the transition by developing effective regulation to encourage investment in a green economy and to acknowledge the value of ‘natural capital’.

Although eradicating poverty and hunger is just one of the eight MDGs, it is intrinsically linked to the others. For example, the provision of sustainable agriculture and safe water are targets of the seventh MDG, but meeting those targets would also reduce poverty and hunger, which is the first MDG. The report outlines the contribution that different sectors of a green economy can make in attaining the MDGs.

Agriculture and Fisheries – sustainable farming practices, such as organic farming, will increase productivity in developing countries and create jobs along the supply chains. Similarly, sustainable fishing practices, such as using maximum sustainable yields to preserve stocks, will protect vulnerable coastal fishing communities in developing countries. The use of current subsidies in both areas should be evaluated as these can sometimes serve vested interests when they are no longer needed.

Buildings and Cities - Constructing new ‘smart buildings’ and retro-fitting existing buildings to make them more efficient could increase well-being whilst also creating new jobs in both developed and developing countries. With more rural residents migrating to cities, an improvement in transport and energy systems will be essential to control poverty and prevent the development of slums.

Energy – Currently 1.6 billion people lack electricity and the ‘energy poor’ spend around US\$17 billion a year on costly inefficient oil-based lighting. If developing countries could rely more on renewable energy, they would have to spend less on importing petroleum and there would be greater reductions in poverty.

Water – Almost half the residents of the world’s developing countries are still without basic sanitation. By reducing water use in agriculture and ensuring a more secure water supply, less time would be lost accessing water and there would be less illness caused by poor water sanitation. In turn this would increase people’s ability to work and alleviate poverty.

Transport – Improving clean public transport and ensuring its affordability will improve access to jobs and increase employment opportunities in the industry.

Waste – Recycling as much waste as possible improves the value gained from resources and creates jobs, both of which help reduce poverty.

Source: Sukhdev, P. & Nuttall, N. (2010) *Green Economy: A Brief for Policymakers on the Green Economy and Millennium Development Goals*. UNEP report. Downloadable from www.unep.org/greeneconomy/portals/30/docs/policymakers_brief_GEI&MDG.pdf

1. See: www.un.org/millenniumgoals



Green stimulus packages: a difficult balancing act

Contact: Jstrand1@worldbank.org
Themes: Environmental economics, Sustainable development and policy analysis

“The ‘green new deal’ would produce a win-win situation in terms of recovery from the crisis, environmental benefits, and significant growth effects over the longer-term.”

The effects of ‘green stimulus’ measures can vary considerably, according to a World Bank study. Overall, the analysis indicated a trade-off between short and long-term effects, where programmes with large positive impacts on short-term employment and the environment tend to have less positive effects on long-term growth.

One solution to the current economic crisis is the ‘green stimulus’ or ‘green new deal’. This describes various activities designed to stimulate the economy whilst also benefitting the environment. Ideally it would produce a win-win situation in terms of recovery from the crisis, environmental benefits, and significant growth effects over the longer-term.

The study analysed available information on green stimulus policies and categorised policies into three types: (i.) quickly implemented labour intensive activities, such as energy efficiency retrofits and environmental clean-up; (ii.) capital investments in resources, such as pollution control/prevention and increased renewable energy production; and (iii.) other programmes with green characteristics, such as congestion reduction measures and recycling systems.

Overall there tended to be more green stimulus policies in industrialised countries. The analysis revealed several trade-offs between effects. Activities with the greatest immediate effects, particularly on employment, often had less favourable long-term growth effects, for example, energy efficiency retrofits. On the other hand, there were several activities, such as power grid expansion, that had long-term impacts on growth and welfare, but limited short-term effects.

Some measures were found to combine positive short-term economic stimulus effects with long-term environmental effects (as measured by reduced greenhouse gas emissions), thus creating a double positive effect. These included environmental clean-up, safeguarding of natural resources and improving energy efficiency. However, there were few triple-win policies that combined these effects with significant longer-term growth effects. Certain labour-intensive renewable energy investments could potentially produce all of these benefits, but may need subsidies or taxes to provide incentives.

Although research on such topics in developing countries is limited, the study suggested that forestry and conservation, the water sector, environmental clean-up, energy efficiency and certain renewable energy sources (such as biofuels) are the most common green stimulus activities in these countries. However, the study indicated that macroeconomic effects in developing countries cannot be measured simply by the number of jobs created since this does not consider the type of job or its value to the economy. For example, although biofuels and solar-thermal sectors might create more jobs than the photovoltaics (PV) sector, the jobs in the latter are highly-skilled, whereas those in the solar-thermal and biofuels are mostly lower-skilled. This suggests that jobs in the PV sector are likely to contribute more to the future technical development of developing countries and learning for individuals.

Evaluations of green stimulus policies rarely consider the impacts on different employment types, and usually fail to consider the secondary employment effects on the delivery and service industries. The type of green stimulus that is most beneficial for different developing countries requires further investigation. This could then inform measures that have both short-term and longer-term benefits for the economy and the environment.

Source: Strand, J. & Toman, M. (2010) “Green stimulus” *Economic Recovery, and Long-Term Sustainable Development*. World Bank Policy Research Working Paper no. 5163. Downloadable from: <http://elibrary.worldbank.org/content/workingpaper/10.1596/1813-9450-5163>



Strong global governance is essential to developing the green economy

Contact: nathanpelletier@dal.ca
Themes: Environmental economics,
Sustainable development and policy analysis

“Many contemporary global environmental policies have a built-in failure as they simply shift the problem, rather than address it head-on.”

Despite the multitude of global environmental agencies and programmes, the environmental commons continue to deteriorate. A recent review suggests the reason for this lies in our historical reluctance to limit growth. For a successful global green economy to develop, a programme overseen by a world environment organisation may be necessary to limit material and energy use and waste streams.

The study considers the reasons why current governance regimes and legal mechanisms are failing to prevent the degradation of the global environmental commons. Since the 18th century and the industrial revolution, there has been an assumption that prosperity can continue to grow indefinitely by reshaping and controlling our environment through science and technology whilst consuming ever greater shares of resources. Our systems of governance have evolved to sustain this and it is reflected in our environmental laws, which tend to support the idea that we can protect the environment without necessarily constraining growth.

The study suggests that many contemporary global environmental policies have a built-in failure as they simply shift the problem, rather than address it head-on. For example, the UN's Clean Development Mechanism allows parties to meet their emission reduction targets by funding environmental projects in other countries. However, this has mainly been used to support projects that capture or destroy gases rather than those that actually reduce them. This shifts the problem to one of disposal. It also contributes to locking developing countries into the same environmentally problematic, western-style paths of development.

Considering the promotion of alternative technologies, especially to improve efficiency, the study warns that the scale of their growth must be simultaneously constrained, otherwise their application could result in 'shifting the problem', since greater efficiency may mean greater demand. For example, as cars become more efficient, it may be that people drive more.

In order to promote a global green economy, the study suggests that policy will have to begin by recognising how much resource extraction and waste production can be accommodated by natural systems, with economic activities restructured accordingly. This requires analysing the scale of emissions and waste streams that natural systems can cope with, and constraining economic activities according to these limits.

To oversee this approach the study suggests the creation of a 'World Environment Organisation' with adequate decision-making and enforcement powers. Currently, global environmental policy tends to be constrained by the narrow, short-term interests of individual countries as opposed to serving collective well-being. Decision-making would need the capacity to trump the objections of a few opposing states through a simple majority process, similar to that used by the Montreal Protocol and the Global Environment Facility.

Source: Pelletier, N. (2010) Of laws and limits: An ecological economic perspective on redressing the failure of contemporary global environmental governance. *Global Environmental Change*. 20:220-228.



A selection of articles on the Global Green Economy from the *Science for Environment Policy* news alert.

Meeting the need for green skills in Europe's job market (6/1/11)

For a new green economy to be successful, governments should support the development of green skills in the labour market, according to a new report. This could be achieved by improving or adding to the existing core skills of workers, whilst mainstreaming environmental awareness into education and training

Call for Natural Capital to be mainstreamed into finance ministries (16/12/10)

Although the value of biodiversity and ecosystem services has been recognised, it is still not fully integrated into policy-making. A new report has developed an action plan that recommends that governments create a "Natural Capital" minister in the Finance Ministry, develop a set of Natural Capital Accounts and form an inter-departmental committee to oversee programmes in this area.

Macro-economic models need to widen their perspective (18/11/10)

The recent recession has prompted the adoption of 'return to growth' policies but the tools used to assess growth often have a narrow economic focus. A new report has assessed current macro-economic models and suggests they need to incorporate the impact that environmental factors can have on the economy, and vice versa, and recommends they should consider limits on resource and material consumption.

Sustainable de-growth: an alternative to sustainable development? (16/9/2010)

Sustainable de-growth is the transition to a smaller economy with less production and consumption. A new study has explored its origins and compared it to sustainable development. The study found that to become a viable alternative to sustainable development, 'de-growth' needs to be more clearly defined, and its implications for employment need to be considered very carefully.

Policies to encourage green industry (30/9/10)

New research has outlined three instruments to encourage green industry: adequate governmental resources, co-operation between interest groups and effective negotiation between state and interest groups. Taking the example of the organic food sector, it explored why Denmark has met these conditions whereas Australia has not.

Updating the monetary value of biodiversity (4/3/10)

New research has updated a major report on the monetary value of biodiversity. The second EU-funded Cost of Policy Inaction (COPI II) report has expanded the existing valuation database to include more regions, more ecosystems and more information on the services they provide and their economic values. The new data could be used to calculate a more accurate figure for the global value of biodiversity and ecosystem services.

To view any of these articles in full, please visit:

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/integration/research/newsalert/index_en.htm, and search according to article publication date.



Science for Environment Policy – A Weekly News Alert

Science for Environment Policy, a service from the European Commission, brings the latest environmental policy-relevant research findings news in 'easy to read' format direct to your email inbox. The free service is designed specifically for policy-makers throughout Europe and includes monthly thematic issues focusing in depth on research findings in key policy areas.

To subscribe, send an email with the subjectline 'Subscribe Env alert' to sfep@uwe.ac.uk or visit:
http://ec.europa.eu/environment/integration/research/newsalert/index_en.htm

Thematic Issues

Global Green Economy is the twenty-fifth in a series of special Thematic Issues of Science for Environment Policy.

All subscribers automatically receive free monthly Thematic Issues in addition to the weekly News Alert. Past Thematic Issues are archived online and are all available to download from:

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/integration/research/newsalert/specialissue_en.htm

The contents and views included in Science for Environment Policy are based on independent research and do not necessarily reflect the position of the European Commission.