



GGKP Knowledge Partners Workshop Report

28 January 2015, 9:00-16:15

Ca' Foscari University of Venice, Italy

1. Background

The Green Growth Knowledge Platform (GGKP) was established in 2012 with the belief that knowledge leads to lasting impact and that investing in its generation and dissemination produces concrete results. The GGKP represents a global partnership of over 35 international organisations, research institutes and think tanks (a full list of GGKP partners can be found at: www.ggkp.org/partners) committed to jointly identifying and addressing major knowledge gaps in green growth theory and practice and to sharing analysis and data in support of a green economy transition.

2. Workshop objective

The GGKP Knowledge Partners Workshop was convened to explore opportunities for maximizing the impact of the partnership by building on the breadth and depth of experience within the partner organizations.

The workshop was held on 28 January 2015 in Venice, Italy, and 29 representatives from across 27 of the GGKP's partner organizations attended. A full list of participants from the workshop can be found in Annex 1.

The workshop was divided into two sessions. The morning session focused on green growth knowledge generation, exploring trends and future areas ripe for collaboration. The afternoon session focused on the use of data and the role of knowledge management in driving policy change. Both sessions featured keynote presentations from outside experts working at the forefront of these issues to help stimulate thinking and discussion.

This report summarizes the key points raised during the workshop sessions, including potential next steps for the GGKP.

3. Knowledge Generation Session

The morning session of the workshop explored how the GGKP and its partners could better leverage their collective expertise and resources to drive forward research on green growth and the green

economy. The GGKP partners are all involved in the active generation, management or sharing of knowledge on green growth and green economy. The partners and networks of experts they encompass represent a wealth of expertise, bridging across disciplines and sectors. The GGKP aims to draw on this expertise to drive forward research where it is most needed and most impactful.

To kick-start the discussion, a keynote presentation on recent trends and areas ripe for collaboration was delivered by Dr. Edward Barbier, John S. Bugas Professor of Economics, Department of Economics and Finance, University of Wyoming.

This was followed by an open discussion during which the GGKP partners exchanged ideas on how to improve their research collaboration and explored topical areas where research efforts could be focused.

a) Dr. Edward Barbier's presentation

Dr. Barbier's presentation, which can be downloaded in full [here](#), focused on the following key questions:

- What key knowledge gaps exist in our understanding of how to transition to a green economy (keeping in mind those knowledge gaps already being addressed by the GGKP)?
- What are some low hanging fruit in terms of research efforts?
- Where should we be focusing long-term research efforts?
- How do we address the key knowledge gaps?

Dr. Barbier's presentation touched on a number of knowledge gaps, including the key policy trade-offs implied by green growth, the role of green stimulus during the Great Recession, the changing composition of green and brown sectors in the green economy and the consequences of the current "policy void".

In particular, Dr. Barbier identified the following three categories of research questions that would benefit from further exploration:

- How do we resolve the macro-economic vs. environmental goals inherent in green fiscal policies? How do we reconcile the policy trade-offs between local and immediate benefits vs. global and long-term benefits? How can research help identify and resolve the political obstacles? Dr. Barbier noted that without resolving these research questions, policies may always be biased towards the policies with less trade-offs and are politically easier to implement: energy efficiency, land-use planning, etc.
- What are the economic implications of green stimulus packages? What was the impact in economies that focused mainly on energy efficiency compared to those that focused more on low-carbon power and pollution control? What were the lessons learned about the macroeconomic vs environmental policy trade-offs? Dr. Barbier noted that addressing these research questions is important for the design and implementation of fiscal instruments.
- What is the current economic impact, in terms of employment, growth and innovation, of green sectors? What is the impact on green growth of the economy-wide persistence of fossil fuel

subsidies and other environmentally damaging subsidies, such as in agriculture, water use and transport? Is the increasing use of environmentally motivated subsidies encouraging inefficiency, lack of competitiveness and overuse? What is the role of R&D and innovation in fostering green growth? Dr. Barbier noted that these research questions are crucial for understanding whether green sectors will remain niche sectors or be a source of innovation, R&D and employment.

The following key points were raised in the follow-up discussion:

- The economic and environmental impacts and trade-offs of green growth policies have not been fully considered and would benefit from further analysis.
- Questions were raised about the social implications of green growth and how trade-offs are made when poverty concerns come into the equation. Future research should address the poverty consequences of the green growth transition (taking into account inter-linkages with natural capital erosion and investment in human capital).
- The green growth dimension of “non-green” stimulus spending was also raised (i.e. if 30 percent of stimulus efforts were green, what was the environmental impact of the other 70 percent of stimulus efforts)? It was also suggested that policy trade-offs within and between different sectors should be examined.
- Green growth is often presented as a win-win option, but the risks and consequences associated with green growth policies are not fully understood. We need more analysis and data in the green growth discourse. Too much attention is focused on specific instruments and sectors, but research should also address the overarching trade-offs and the transaction costs of greening economies.
- As regards the role of innovation, it is clear that greater efforts are needed to increase the flow of investment to green technologies and to ensure that fiscal instruments are created to set the right pricing signals.
- We need to address the urban myths about the green economy, e.g. (i) environmental protection is a luxury good in times of economic scarcity; (ii) taking strong environmental protection measures involves trade-offs for the economy; (iii) generating lasting economic growth requires the dismantling of environmental regulation. These myths must be challenged since they are systematically used by those actors who oppose green growth policies. These myths are also embedded in the underlying philosophies of most economies around the world. That said, there is cause for optimism in light of the traction that fossil fuel subsidy reform is gaining, both in terms of changing perceptions and the growing political will to take action.

b) Group discussion on knowledge generation

Following Dr. Barbier’s presentation, knowledge partners engaged in a group discussion on the following three questions:

1. Are the GGKP research efforts fulfilling its original mandate and objectives?

2. How should the GGKP improve the way it collaborates with its knowledge partners? Specifically, how should the GGKP and its partners better leverage existing resources to identify and address key green growth knowledge gaps?
3. What are the key knowledge gaps and how should the GGKP focus its research efforts?

Question 1- Are the GGKP research efforts fulfilling its original mandate and objectives?

Knowledge partners noted that it is still too early to tell if the GGKP's mandate and objectives are being fully met. While substantial work has been carried out within the GGKP's research committees (e.g. developing scoping studies to assess and prioritize knowledge gaps), committee members are only just now beginning the next step of identifying opportunities to catalyse broader research efforts to address knowledge gaps. As such, it remains to be seen how and whether the GGKP will be successful in triggering broader research agendas on green growth.

Specific comments were raised on how exactly the GGKP measures success, i.e. how will we know when we have fulfilled our mission? It was noted that because the field of green growth is constantly evolving, it is hard to define an end point for the GGKP's work. Determining whether the GGKP is fulfilling its mandate depends largely on the theory of change which is implicit in the GGKP's mandate.

In terms of communicating impact, it was suggested that the GGKP explore ways to demonstrate concrete impact on the ground (e.g. what has the GGKP delivered that would not have happened otherwise). It was also suggested that the GGKP could devote resources to re-package knowledge outputs specifically for policymakers.

Question 2- How should the GGKP improve the way it collaborates with its knowledge partners?

This question stimulated a wide range of ideas on how the GGKP and its partners could leverage new and existing resources to identify and address key green growth knowledge gaps.

Suggestions to better involve relevant experts and stakeholders in the research discussion included:

- Involve policymakers in the identification of knowledge gaps and how best to address them. This will help ensure research developed responds to actual policy needs. Efforts should be made to involve various ministries, allowing for in-depth investigation of policy interactions across sectors (e.g. trade, finance, industry, employment, etc.).
- Leverage international policy processes (e.g. UN SDG negotiations) to provide insights into important areas the GGKP could focus efforts on.
- Engage more with national stakeholders (particularly in developing countries), including by exploring opportunities to provide targeted policy advice to governments. Look into the possibility to do more applied research with potentially interested countries.
- Forge links with more research organisations in developing countries.
- Encourage core research departments (e.g. economics departments) to look into key green growth knowledge gaps, moving beyond units dealing only with environmental issues.
- Harness opportunities for more interdisciplinary collaboration.

- Encourage broader involvement of key experts from the GGKP knowledge partners and promote cross-fertilisation of the GGKP's research committees.
- Explore ways to link the GGKP research committees with other relevant communities of practice.
- Engage with the public to better communicate the implications of policy reform. Explore opportunities for collective advocacy amongst the GGKP knowledge partners, building on a common research agenda.

In deepening collaboration between researchers and policymakers (including across sectors), it was stressed that care needs to be taken to ensure a common language is developed.

A number of suggestions were also raised on specific ways the GGKP could facilitate interaction among green growth experts:

- Investigate low-cost tools to facilitate the sharing of information and data between GGKP partners. Explore opportunities to harness the mechanisms which already exist within the GGKP partners.
- Provide more opportunities for research committees to meet in-person (e.g. workshops).
- Provide more opportunities for the wider green growth community of practice to meet in-person (e.g. similar to the GGKP Annual Conference).
- Provide more opportunities for the GGKP partners to learn from each other and deepen their collaboration. Deeper collaboration will help to ensure partners are not reinventing the wheel and will help to increase impact on the ground.

Question 3- What are the key knowledge gaps and how should the GGKP focus its research efforts?

Knowledge partners identified a number of important green growth knowledge gaps, including:

- The poverty and equity dimensions of green growth, including how it can advance social inclusion and deliver job creation.
- The political economy obstacles and implications of green growth and the policies that are needed to address them.
- The underlying reasons for green growth opposition - especially the perception of the required trade-offs that are required.
- How to address the challenges of fundamentally transforming the brown economy including the fundamental lock-in mechanisms of the current system of unsustainable production and consumption.
- The potential for developing green markets and technologies targeted at emerging and developing countries.
- How best to create a stable policy framework in order to ensure long-term, national-level commitment for change processes.

Specific suggestions on what the GGKP could do to focus its research efforts included:

- Explore how the GGKP and the knowledge it generates can influence policy makers. Take into consideration what policy makers actually need to catalyse change. This is the ultimate impact that GGKP should be working towards.
- Define an overarching green economy framework that would enable GGKP knowledge partners to understand how their work interrelates with other sectors and other disciplines. Within this framework, pinpoint areas where opportunities exist for research and design a comprehensive GGKP research effort among partners.
- Move beyond the identification of gaps to identify possible solutions in terms of policy reform. Engage in scenario planning to help policymakers.
- Finally, it was suggested the opportunities for joint funding should be explored by the GGKP and its knowledge partners.

There was also discussion on what the GGKP's role should be in terms of engaging directly with governments (particularly developing country governments). It was noted however that the GGKP was not established to liaise directly with governments, instead, the GGKP is meant to provide support to its partners who themselves liaise with governments as part of their mandates.

4. Knowledge Management Session

The afternoon session of the workshop stimulated thinking around how the GGKP and its partners can better leverage new and emerging knowledge management trends to help promote the transition to a green economy. The GGKP aims to deepen its partners' impact by collecting and synthesizing relevant green growth research and data, ensuring it is accessible to practitioners and policymakers.

To kick-start the discussion, a keynote presentation on key trends and challenges in knowledge management was delivered by Dr. Hans Bruyninckx, Executive-Director of the European Environment Agency (EEA).

Next, Amanda McKee and Florian Bauer gave short presentations on specific examples of new collaborative knowledge management activities the GGKP and its partners are engaged in.

This was followed by an open discussion during which the GGKP partners exchanged ideas on how the GGKP can improve its knowledge management efforts and what future role it should play in terms of knowledge management.

a) Dr. Hans Bruyninckx' presentation

Dr. Bruyninckx' presentation, which can be downloaded in full [here](#), focused on the following key questions:

- What role can data play in helping drive forward the transition to a green economy?
- What are the key trends emerging which can help us to better harness the power of data?
- How will the field of knowledge management evolve in the future?
- How can the GGKP and its partners better leverage new trends to manage the growing body of green growth knowledge being produced?

Dr. Bruyninckx presented on the EEA's approach to managing knowledge, using it to illustrate key trends and challenges faced in effectively collecting, translating, and acting on the green growth knowledge base.

In particular, Dr. Bruyninckx outlined the key steps in the EEA's knowledge base management, starting with monitoring. The data received from these monitoring processes are next interpreted into indicators (e.g. growth, resource use, efficiency), and the indicators are integrated into assessment frameworks which are key instruments for organizing the knowledge base. From here, policy makers are able to reflect and act to implement the appropriate knowledge, understanding and action. Dr. Bruyninckx noted a few challenges associated with this process including the need to ensure consistency between satellite images and in-situ monitoring and the importance of ensuring cross-sector operability (e.g. urban planning vs. risk management).

Throughout his presentation, Dr. Bruyninckx stressed how knowledge management approaches and investments are ultimately driven by the implementation of policies, outlining key policy developments in the EU.

The following key points were raised in the follow-up discussion:

- Systemic lock-ins have prevented green technology from penetrating the market more effectively, this is a key area which the GGKP could explore.
- What does it mean to fully embrace the limits-paradigm? The 19th century paradigm of 'the good life' needs to be fundamentally transformed.
- The limits to growth paradigm does not work outside the "developed" world where efforts are needed to promote smarter, more energy and resource efficient growth. However, the reality is that human development is necessarily framed by the realities of planetary boundaries. Living within planetary boundaries does not necessarily exclude living well. In fact, human well-being is dependent on the integrity of planetary boundary conditions.
- Investment flows continue to be directed towards unsustainable energy systems. We need to improve our understanding of how these systemic lock-ins can be unlocked.
- What is the knowledge needed to enable policy-makers to bring about the transformative change needed to overcome the obstacles?

b) Presentations of specific knowledge management examples

Amanda McKee, of the GGKP, gave a short demonstration on a selection of key tools available through the [GGKP web platform](#), including:

- The [Resource Library](#) provides access to close to 1000 green growth publications produced by leading experts and organisations. Resources are tagged by country, region, sector and theme, allowing users to easily narrow down their search results and access the publications most relevant to them.
- The ["Insights" Blog](#) provides a forum in which green growth experts are invited to share their perspectives on recent research, upcoming events or newly launched projects. Through weekly posts, the blog helps draw together and promote a flourishing green growth community of practice.

- [Country dashboards](#) for 193 countries present national-level information on projects, resources and policies, providing an overview of efforts to transition to a green economy.

In addition, Amanda presented on two new web features launched in January 2015:

- The [GGKP Data Explorer](#) is a new data visualization tool aimed to help policymakers and practitioners better leverage data to promote the transition to a green economy. The Data Explorer draws together 20 green growth datasets, covering 193 countries over the period 1960 to 2014.
- The [Learning Library](#) is a new database drawing together courses, webinars, multimedia and tools to help policymakers and practitioners apply the knowledge and develop the skills needed to transition to a green economy. Resources are drawn from across GGKP Knowledge Partners.

Finally, to more effectively engage leading green growth institutions and experts, Amanda outlined a new online collaborative workspace which the GGKP is developing. Tools available to registered users include group discussions, message boards, document sharing and virtual meeting rooms. The software and funding for the tool was provided by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ). Knowledge Partners, Advisory Committee members, and members of the GGKP Research Committees will receive invitations to join the workspace.

Next, Florian Bauer, of the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership (REEEP), gave a brief presentation on efforts to improve access to reliable climate information through partnerships and innovative knowledge management tools.

Due to the recent data proliferation in the field of green economy by a growing research community, Florian noted that it is becoming increasingly difficult for people to keep track of what is available and find the best information to suit their needs. While a large amount of information is being generated, it is often stored in “silos”, limiting effective sharing between communities. Responding to this challenge, the Climate Knowledge Brokers (CKB) Group was established to facilitate connections between different sources of knowledge. The CKB Group draws together over 40 different organizations and initiatives, including the GGKP and a number of its Knowledge Partners (e.g. World Bank, UNDP, CDKN, REEEP, WWF).

Florian identified four key areas of work for the CKB in their effort to improve access to information for their users. First and foremost, the CKB aims to highlight the information challenge outlined above and promote linkages between platforms. Second, the CKB helps identify relevant funding opportunities. Third, the CKB draws together its members to create common tools to better manage and share knowledge. And fourth, the CKB facilitates an active community of practice for knowledge brokers.

Florian also presented on the Climate Tagger, an example of a knowledge management tool developed through a joint CKB project. The Climate Tagger aims to help organizations streamline and catalogue their data and information resources, and connect them to the wider climate knowledge community. Once installed on a website (e.g. the GGKP website utilizes the Climate Tagger), the tool automatically

scans data and documents, identifies specific terms and concepts held within the sources and tags the content based on suggestions from the expansive Climate Tagger Thesaurus.

c) Group discussion on knowledge management

Following the afternoon presentations, knowledge partners engaged in a group discussion on the following two questions:

1. How are GGKP knowledge management resources currently being used?
2. What else should GGKP be doing in the knowledge management space?

Question 1- How are GGKP knowledge management resources currently being used?

The GGKP Knowledge Partners identified a number GGKP knowledge management resources which have been valuable in their work, including the resource library which has been valuable in equipping partners in their own research efforts and outreach with policymakers; the “Insights” blog which has been helpful in raising awareness around key issues; the country pages which provide useful data and resources to carry out potential comparative analysis; and the GGKP newsletter which provides substantive updates on recent developments in green growth research. In addition, partners noted that the web platform has been successful in consolidating and sharing a wide array of knowledge resources with the wider green growth community of practice. Linking national studies with broader international audiences was raised as one particular example.

Question 2 - What else should GGKP be doing in the knowledge management space?

A number of ideas were exchanged on how the GGKP could improve its current knowledge management efforts. Ideas proposed encompassed very different levels of ambition for the GGKP. At one end of the spectrum were ideas which involve keeping the GGKP’s current level of ambition (e.g. acting as a “knowledge aggregator”, drawing in and sharing resources through the GGKP resource library, project database, etc.). At the other end of the spectrum, participants recommend pursuing more targeted outreach, narrative development and re-framing of research into policy advice. It was stressed however that high levels of ambition would require more financial resources than the GGKP currently has available. Additionally, it was noted that the share of developing countries currently accessing the GGKP web platform is low, knowledge management proposals should keep this challenge in mind to ensure developing country users are drawn in.

Specific ideas proposed included:

- Develop more comprehensive indicators and analytics to measure impact and success.
- Showcase green growth success stories and enhance outreach and dissemination of best practices.
- Organize knowledge resources around key policy questions (e.g. how to phase out fossil fuel subsidies) as an alternative way for users to access information through the GGKP web platform.
- Enhance relationships with in-country programmes to ensure a better match between the knowledge products available and the problems on the ground which need to be addressed.

- Help developing country partners raise awareness about the importance of green growth (low public awareness and buy-in can pose a challenge to the implementation of green policies).
- Enhance the interactivity of knowledge resources on the GGKP web platform. Explore ways to make resources more usable for wider audiences.
- Develop mutual tagging of resources across partners and increase linkages between partners.
- Explore how the GGKP can add additional value to the data it draws into the web platform.
- Explore how knowledge available through the web platform can be used to influence research agenda setting processes like Horizon 2020.
- Explore ways to link to private sector research efforts.
- Send out targeted newsletters focusing on specific green growth areas (e.g. send out a newsletter covering new research on technology and innovation).

5) Key takeaways for the GGKP

A number of important questions and ideas were shared through the Knowledge Partners Workshop. Some of the key points the GGKP will follow-up on include:

- The GGKP will continue to monitor its progress towards its objective of catalysing research to address knowledge gaps in green growth theory and practice. Given the GGKP will not reach an “end point” in its mission, the GGKP will explore how it can better demonstrate its tangible impact. Better communication of impact by the GGKP Secretariat will also help the GGKP partners to better communicate the impact of the GGKP to their stakeholders. Related to this, the GGKP’s Impact Report will be finalized in March 2015 and will be shared with Knowledge Partners.
- The GGKP will make efforts to involve a wider range of stakeholders (e.g. policy makers, developing country experts, etc.) throughout all stages of the research committee process (e.g. deciding on initial research questions, prioritizing gaps and identifying potential funding sources for wider research efforts). Similarly, opportunities will be explored to harness the progress of other communities of practice and other international processes (e.g. SDN negotiations).
- The GGKP will organize more in-person meetings of the GGKP research committees and facilitate opportunities for collaboration and information sharing across research committees. The GGKP will also promote tools to facilitate information sharing between experts (e.g. the GGKP’s new online collaborative workspace).
- The GGKP will identify opportunities for deeper collaborative research efforts between Knowledge Partners (e.g. jointly authored studies on specific topics) and joint fundraising.
- The GGKP will identify new opportunities to better link knowledge on the web platform with various distinct groups (e.g. individual countries, regions or sectors).
- The GGKP will conduct surveys and interviews to better understand and act on the various recommendations raised by partners, including ways in which it can improve the usability of existing tools on the GGKP web platform and opportunities to develop new tools.

Annex I

Workshop Participant List

	Name	Organization
1	Aage Jorgensen	Nordic Development Fund
2	Achim Halpaap	United Nations Institute for Training and Research
3	Ari Huhtala	Climate and Development Knowledge Network
4	Bernard Bres	International Institute for Water and Environmental Engineering
5	David O'Connor	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
6	Florian Bauer	Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership
7	Gunnar Kohlin	Environment for Development
8	Hussein Abaza	Arab Forum for Environment and Development
9	Ian Parry	International Monetary Fund
10	Isatou Gaye	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
11	James Seong-Cheol Kang	Global Green Growth Institute
12	Joelle Noailly	Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies
13	Jose Palacin	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
14	Joy Kim	United Nations Environment Programme
15	Moustapha Kamal Gueye	International Labour Organization
16	Kookie Habtegaber	WWF- International
17	Kurt Lonsway	African Development Bank
18	Leena Srivastava	The Energy and Resources Institute
19	Marianne Fay	World Bank
20	Martina Bozzola	International Trade Centre
21	Massimiliano Riva	United Nations Development Programme
22	Miguel Breceda	Instituto Nacional de Ecología y Cambio Climático
23	Rene van Berkel	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
24	Steven Stone	United Nations Environment Programme
25	Tamaro Kane	World Bank
26	Tilman Altenburg	Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik / German Development Institute (DIE)
27	Tomasz Kozluk	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
28	Yimeng Liu	Beijing Normal University
29	Zhan Feng Dong	Chinese Academy for Environmental Planning
30	Benjamin Simmons	Green Growth Knowledge Platform
31	Amanda McKee	Green Growth Knowledge Platform
32	Rikkert Maes	Green Growth Knowledge Platform

Invited Speakers: Edward B. Barbier, John S. Bugas Professor of Economics, University of Wyoming; Hans Bruyninckx, Executive Director, European Environment Agency