



NETGREEN Thematic Policy Workshop - Proceedings

“Maximizing resource efficiency throughout the EU economy”

Brussels, 11 March 2015

Venue: CEPS, Place du Congrès 1, 1000 Brussels

NETGREEN, short for “Network for Green Economy Indicators”, is an EU-funded project designed to facilitate the adoption of policies that will advance progress towards a green economy. The key output of the project is an open access, interactive website providing information on indicators that can be used to measure progress towards a green economy

Resource efficiency has been identified by the EU Commission (2011) as one of the seven flagship initiatives that are part of the “EU 2020 strategy aiming to deliver smart, sustainable and inclusive growth”. This thematic NETGREEN workshop will focus on how Europe can boost resource efficiency through the use of effective policy instruments and appropriate indicators. The workshop will cover issues such as which are the major drivers and barriers to resource efficiency and what is the role of indicators in measuring progress towards more efficient use of material resources. The discussion will start with a presentation of NETGREEN, demonstrating how it supports policy makers and other stakeholders in measuring progress towards resource efficiency. The event will feature a panel composed of experts from policy, research, academia business and NGOs.



AGENDA

- 10:00 - 10:30 Arrival & registration of participants
- 10:30 - 10:35 Welcome by **Arno Behrens**, Head of Energy and Research Fellow, Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS)
- 10:35 - 10:40 Welcome by **Wanda Gaj**, Project Officer, DG Research & Innovation, European Commission
- 10:40 - 10:50 Presentation on how the NETGREEN website can support policy makers in measuring progress towards resource efficiency by the project coordinator **Lucas Porsch**, Senior Fellow, Ecologic Institute
- 10:50 - 11:05 **Barbara Bacigalupi**, Policy Officer on Resource Efficiency and Indicators, DG Environment, European Commission
- 11:05 - 11:20 Q & A Section
- 11:20 - 13:00 Discussion panel on enhancing resource efficiency throughout the EU economy**
- Which policy tools work best to enhance resource efficiency?
 - Which are the best indicators to measure progress towards resource efficiency?
 - Which are the main challenges?
- 11:20 - 11:25 Introduction by the chair **Charles Seaford**, Senior Advisor, New Economics Foundation (NEF)
- 11:25 - 11:35 **Stephan Lutter**, Research Fellow, Institute for Ecological Economics - Vienna University of Economics and Business (WU)
- 11:35 - 11:45 **Evi Ford-Alexandraki**, Statistical Officer on Resource Efficiency Indicators, Eurostat
- 11:45 - 11:55 **Janneke Van Veen**, Coordinator Resource efficiency/Circular economy, Government of Flanders
- 11:55 - 12:05 **Loredana Ghinea**, Executive Director, A.SPIRE - Sustainable Process Industry through Resource and Energy Efficiency
- 12:05 - 12:15 **Carsten Wachholz**, Resources use and Product Policy Officer, European Environmental Bureau (EEB)
- 12:15 - 12:55 Discussion
- 12:55 - 13:00 Concluding remarks by the chair
- 13:00 - 14:00 Networking lunch**

This project has received funding from the European Union's Seventh Programme for Research, Technological Development and Demonstration under Grant Agreement No 603877

About NETGREEN

The workshop was organised as part of the NETGREEN EU-funded project, aiming to facilitate the adoption of policies that will advance progress towards a green economy. The NETGREEN team has developed an open-access, searchable web tool, named measure-progress (<http://measuring-progress.eu/>)¹, that will provide to stakeholders involved in the policy making process with a unique point of entry in the huge landscape of green economy indicators, including **resource-efficiency** indicators.

The beta version of the online platform (<http://measuring-progress.eu/>) contains at the moment more than 200 indicators from various sources (Eurostat, OECD, World Bank, NGOs, etc.) including information about the EU and beyond. Most importantly, the tool provides to the users with several unique features, such as suggestions on similar indicators, potential misinterpretations, keywords, policy outcomes and others. Thus, <http://measuring-progress.eu/> enables policy makers and other users to quickly identify the most relevant indicators that would help them measure the success of green economy policies and understand the key implications and challenges of the transition.

RESOURCE EFFICIENCY

The presentations and discussion during the workshop focused on the following issues:

1. Definition of Resource Efficiency
2. Current Policy Framework
3. “You cannot manage what you cannot measure”: the EU resource efficiency scoreboard
4. Examples of resource efficiency in action

1. Definition of Resource Efficiency

The most common definition of resource efficiency is “*doing more with less*”. It is important both environmentally and economically. Besides living within the planetary boundaries, resource efficient development reduces resources costs for existing businesses and creates opportunities for new business models, such as waste management, for instance. In other words, resource efficient development allows us “*Living well within the limits of our planet*”.

2. Current Policy Framework

Resource efficiency is a key strategy in the EU policy agenda since 2011. The current 7th Environmental Action Programme (7 EAP) sets several actions that will help transforming the EU into a resource – efficient and low carbon economy: full delivery of 20-20-20 Climate and Energy Package, more efficient use of resources, turning waste into a resource and improvements of the environmental performance of

¹ <http://measuring-progress.eu/> will be online by the end of April 2015.

products over their life cycle. Resource efficiency should remain an integral part of the revised “Circular Economy Package”, that the European Commission is expected to propose by the end of 2015.

3. “You cannot manage what you cannot measure”: the EU resource efficiency scoreboard

The speakers have emphasised that measuring resource efficiency throughout the EU is indispensable for the EU resource efficiency policy. The EU’s Resource efficiency is measured by the Resource Efficiency Scoreboard - a three-tier system of 32 indicators based on statistics from Eurostat, the European Environment Agency, the Joint Research Centre and other internationally recognized sources. It has the following structure:

- Lead indicator (resource productivity)
- Dashboard indicators (materials, land, water, carbon)
- Thematic indicators
 - Transforming the economy (waste, eco-innovation, taxes)
 - Nature and ecosystems (biodiversity, air, land and soils)
 - Key areas (food, buildings, mobility)

The indicators set is a flexible tool and reflects newly available relevant indicators. Eurostat hosts the [EU resource efficiency scoreboard](#) and updates it regularly. The reference period of the scoreboard consists of 8 non-consecutive years over the period 2000–2014 (2000, 2004, 2006, 2010-2014). Users can select the presentation of the indicators for the EU-28 aggregate or for individual Member States.

But in order to understand the bigger picture, measurements should account not only for the direct resource inputs but also for the environmental footprint along the supply chain of goods and services consumed in a country. Therefore Eurostat is investigating an alternative formula for the lead indicator “Resource productivity”². Further analysis of Eurostat’s indicators by NGOs and research institutes is also important for understanding the progress towards resource efficient economy.

4. Examples of resource efficiency in action

Resource efficient development in the Flanders region of Belgium

Some elements of resource efficiency are local by nature; municipal waste recycling and re-use is one of the best examples for that. For a long time the Flanders region of Belgium has had one of the leading household municipal waste recycling rates across the EU. In order to move beyond waste management that focuses on end-of-pipe solutions, in 2012 the government of Flanders introduced new legislation

² From the ratio of GDP and Domestic Material Consumption (GDP/DMC) to the ratio of GDP and Resource Material Consumption (GDP/RMC)

For more details please consult: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/enveco/resource_efficiency/pdf/RMC.pdf

(Materials Decree) and initiated the Flemish Materials Programme, involving various types of stakeholders – knowledge institutes, universities, civil society, businesses and government. These two actions need to bring about a paradigm shift that facilitates the transition to a circular economy. A paradigm shift has to happen in which waste is no longer seen as waste, but as a valuable resource. At the same time, work is being done to develop a new executive plan on municipal waste. Also, Flanders is currently in the process of developing new indicators that will be published by the summer of 2015. These indicators cover loss of materials, dependency on materials from outside the EU and resource efficiency within SMEs.

SPIRE – Sustainable Process Industry through Resource and Energy Efficiency

An additional model of “resource efficiency in action” was presented in the workshop which foresees cross-sectorial industry cooperation towards a more resource efficient Europe. It enables sharing best practices and creating synergies and partnerships in research and innovation, and beyond.

