



# The challenge of using green economy indicators in policy-making

**Vasileios Rizos**

**GLOBE EU High Level Meeting on Resource Efficiency Indicators, Brussels, 18 November 2015**

# Content

---

- Introduction to CEPS
- Main issues related to the use of green economy indicators
- The product: **Measuring-progress.eu**

## CEPS – Who we are?

---

- Independent European think tank based in Brussels, founded in 1983
- Objectives:
  - Policy research
  - Forum for discussion
- Strong in-house research capacity and an extensive network of partner institutes throughout the world

# CEPS – Who we are?

---

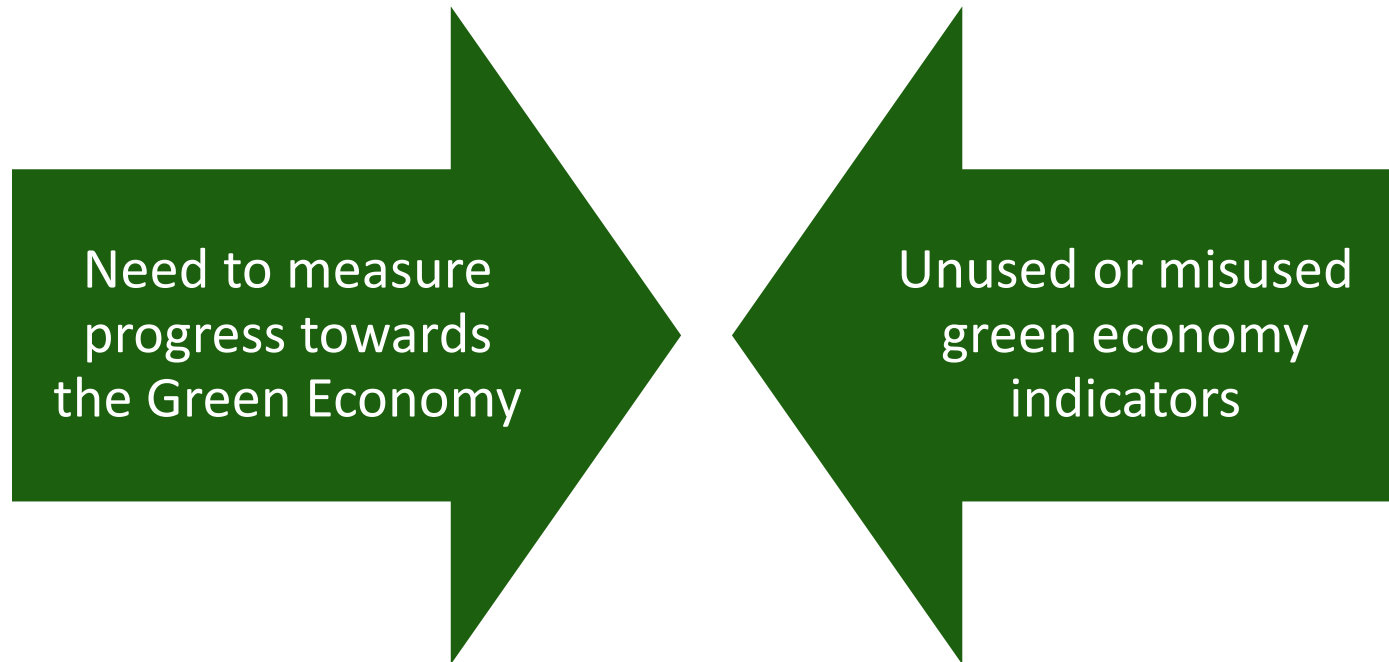


- CEPS recently established an independent centre with focus on energy and climate change
- The Energy Climate House aims at strengthening the CEPS work on energy and climate change
- High level of policy relevance under strict standards of academic excellence and unqualified independence

# The challenge of using green economy indicators

---

- Green economy is a highly complex topic with many definitions and measurement approaches



- A very large number of indicators available that in practice is not used in policy-making

# NETGREEN: Network for Green Economy Indicators

---

- Two-year EU-funded project involving six research institutions
- Take stock of this fragmented body of work
- Develop a product for policy-makers and other stakeholders
- Build a network of people and organisations to:
  - Strengthen the dialogue on green economy indicators



## The work involved

---

- 15 researchers involved
- 85 interviewed experts from the EU and beyond
- About 100 green economy papers/reports consulted
- Around 2000 green economy indicators considered

## Interviewed stakeholders

---

- A group of experts to be interviewed was selected in order to discuss their experience with using indicators
- A particular focus was given in selecting interviewees who are policy and decision makers
- Also people or organizations who want to influence policy-making
- Other relevant interviewees were researchers and statistical officers



## Interviewed stakeholders

---

The following groups of organizations were selected:

- Policy and decision makers at EU and national level
- International organizations
- Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)
- Academic researchers, statistical officers, think tanks
- Business representatives

## Examples of selected organisations

---

- Department for Energy and Climate Change, UK
- UNEP
- European Commission
- Dutch Ministry of Infrastructure and Environment
- German Federal Statistical Office
- Portuguese Governmental Environmental Agency
- Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment, Austria
- University College London
- Stakeholder Forum
- Confederation of British Industry
- Wuppertal Institute
- Friends of the Earth
- Trade & Industrial Policy Strategies, South Africa

# Who produces the indicators?

---

- Intergovernmental organisations
- Statistical offices
- Non-governmental organisations
- Scientific institutes
- Government bodies (national)
- Government bodies (regional)
- Businesses

## Why indicators are not used?

---

- Policy-makers are not aware about the existence of some indicators
- There are divergent views over methodologies or over concepts behind the formulation of the indicators
- Policy-makers are often unwilling to use data if they do not come from official statistics offices
- There are unaware about the relevance of measuring some issues

## Why indicators are not used?

---

- Insufficient or obsolete or low-quality data
- Difficult to collect all information needed in order to use the indicator
- Often there are too many indicators for the same issue which often creates confusion in the policy-making field

# What do policy-makers need?

---

- Transparency
  - Explanation about calculation method
  - Origins of indicator
  - Development stages
  - Data sources
- Information about the methodology of the indicator
- Sound indicators from a data perspective
- Clear description about what does it measure and what it does not

# What do policy-makers need?

---

- Policy and decision makers tend to like headline indicators for public communication reasons
- Indicators that capture information at the regional and local level

## The product develop by the NETGREEN team

---

An **interactive online tool** for policy-makers and the people trying to influence them

Designed to help users **identify and understand** green economy indicators

Supports users in making **the right indicator selection** for a specific policy issue

Helps users **interpret the strengths and shortcomings** of an indicator



# Web tool to facilitate the use of green economy indicators



**MEASURING-PROGRESS.EU**

Explore Green Economy Indicators

Give us feedback!

Username

Password

Create new account

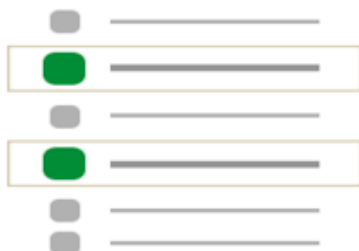
Log in

Request new password

Measuring Progress is an interactive online tool suggesting green economy indicators for policy-making. The tool was designed to help you identify and understand the best indicators to measure progress towards the green economy. It supports you in the search for the right indicators for your specific policy problem, and helps you interpret the indicators' strengths and their shortcomings.

The tool consists of a database of annotated green economy indicators which cover the five main topic areas of the green economy: environmental sustainability, social justice, quality of life, economic sustainability and resilience, and effective governance. The database currently includes more than 200 indicators from over 50 sources including Eurostat, OECD and UNStats among others.

There are three different ways to search the database and receive indicator suggestions:



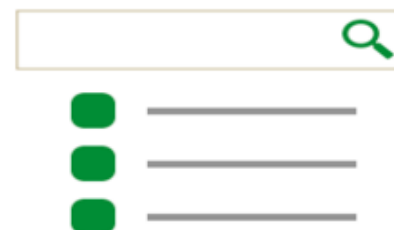
**Keyword search**

Select keywords from our list and receive relevant indicator suggestions.



**Navigate topic tree**

Choose one or several topics from our tree of green economy topics.



**Full text search**

If keyword search and topic tree don't work for you, try the full text search.

# Web tool to facilitate the use of green economy indicators

The screenshot shows a web application interface for searching green economy indicators. At the top, there are three tabs: 'Keyword Search' (active), 'Topic search', and 'Fulltext Search'. Below the tabs is a green header area with a home icon on the left. The main content area is green and contains an 'Add Keyword' input field with a search icon, an 'Add Keyword' button, and a list of instructions: 1. Begin by typing a policy-relevant term (e.g. climate, employment, happiness) and 2. select a proposed keyword from the drop-down menu. You will receive suggestions of relevant indicators. Below this, it states: Multiple keywords can be added to your search. The tool will return indicator suggestions sorted by their combined relevance to the selected keywords. You can use the filters below the search box to narrow down your results. A link 'Learn more about the search options' is also present. Below the green area, there is a 'Current keyword:' field with 'Environmental tax' and a 'Clear keyword' button. Below that, there are filter options: 'Filter results by:' followed by six dropdown menus: 'data quality assesment', 'frequency of updates', 'geographical level', 'methodological transparency', 'type of indicator source', and 'cost of accessing data'. To the right of the filters are 'Print version' and 'PDF version' buttons. Below the filters, it says 'Showing 1 - 10 of 190 results' and a pagination control '1 2 3 4 5 ... >>'. On the right side, there is a 'My Indicator Selection' box with a green bookmark icon and the text 'Your selection is currently empty'. The main results area shows three indicator cards, each with a title, source, and a 'SELECT' button: 1. 'Total environmental tax revenues as a share of total revenues from taxes and social contributions' by Eurostat. 2. 'Environmental protection expenditure by the public sector' by Eurostat. 3. 'Total environmentally related taxes, % GDP' by Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Each card also has a 'Show details' link.

Keyword Search | Topic search | Fulltext Search

1. Begin by typing a policy-relevant term (e.g. climate, employment, happiness) and  
2. select a proposed keyword from the drop-down menu. You will receive suggestions of relevant indicators.

Multiple keywords can be added to your search. The tool will return indicator suggestions sorted by their combined relevance to the selected keywords. You can use the filters below the search box to narrow down your results.

Learn more about the search options

Current keyword: Environmental tax

Filter results by:

data quality assesment | frequency of updates | geographical level | methodological transparency | type of indicator source | cost of accessing data

Print version | PDF version

My Indicator Selection  
Your selection is currently empty

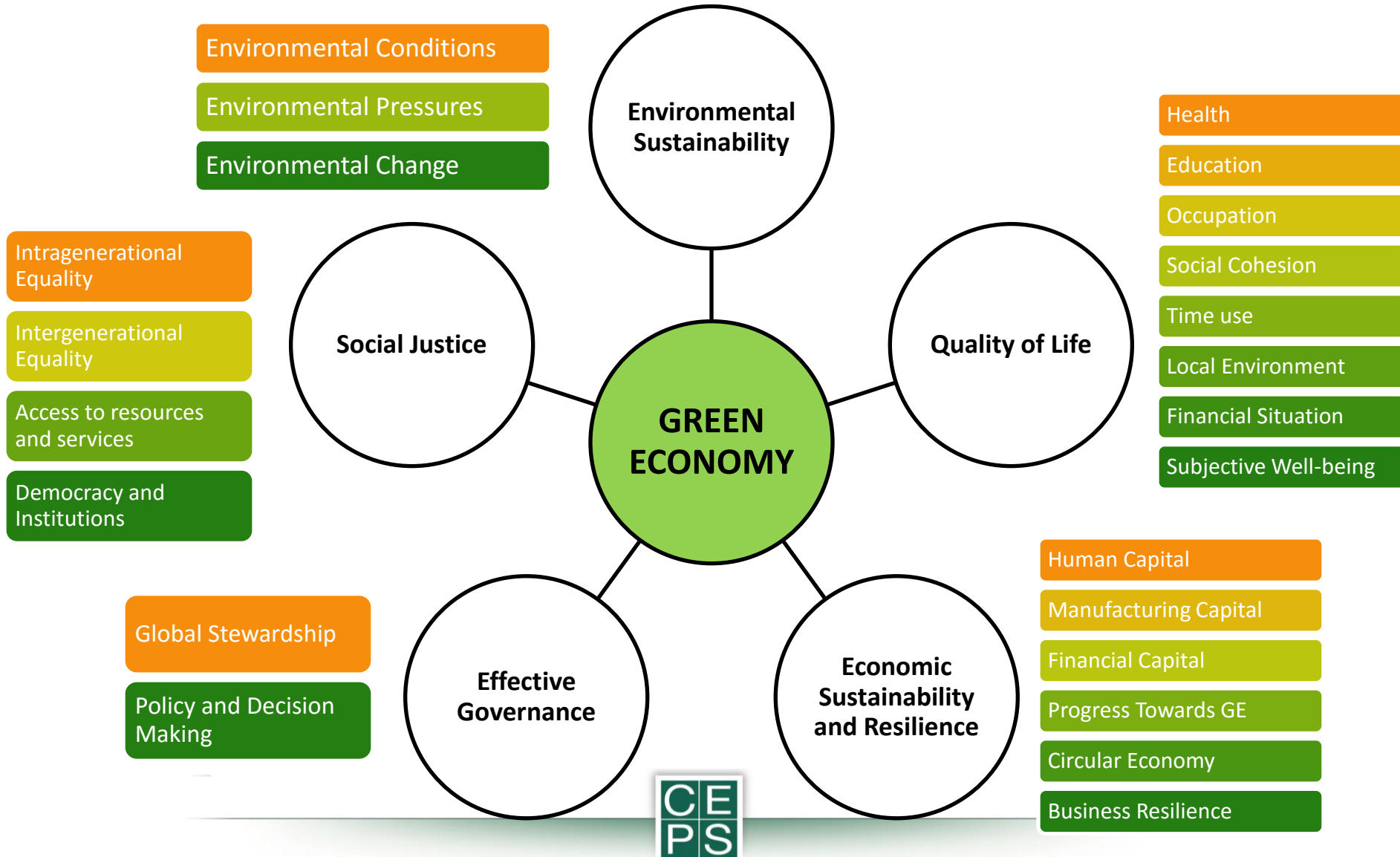
Showing 1 - 10 of 190 results | 1 2 3 4 5 ... >>

Total environmental tax revenues as a share of total revenues from taxes and social contributions  
Eurostat  
  
[Show details](#)

Environmental protection expenditure by the public sector  
Eurostat  
  
[Show details](#)

Total environmentally related taxes, % GDP  
Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)  
  
[Show details](#)

# Web tool to facilitate the use of green economy indicators



# Web tool to facilitate the use of green economy indicators

---

## The **Measuring-progress.eu** web tool features:

- 260 fully described indicators
- Over 500 additional indicators
- Over 900 keywords
- Topic tree with 102 topics

# Web tool to facilitate the use of green economy indicators

---

- **Funding:** We are in talks with organisations on the continuity of **Measuring-progress.eu**
- **Further extensions** to other areas would increase value of the website
  - Other data sources
  - Other indicators and key words
- We are still open for suggestions for potential funders, collaborators or testers

# Using green economy indicators in policy-making

---

## Messages

- Rather than focusing only on developing the perfect indicator or set of indicators perhaps it is more useful to:
  - Educate the public in the use of indicators
  - Start using the available literature more extensively
- Almost any indicator can provide useful pointers for some political questions and misleading signals for others

# Using green economy indicators in policy-making

---

## Messages

- In order to offer added value for policy-making they need to first be identified and then properly interpreted
- Effective green economy policies need to be linked to attractive visions for change and indicators can be used to underpin these visions



# Questions and discussion

**- THANK YOU! -**

Vasileios Rizos  
[vasileios.rizos@ceps.eu](mailto:vasileios.rizos@ceps.eu)

---