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Incentives for Promoting Green Citizenship and Consumerism in the Transition to a Green Economy

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Abstract

We undertake a comparative analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of different policy mechanisms to promote participation in climate change policies at the local level. Through extensive interviews, we assess a range of case study contexts – the UK, Angola, South Africa, Mozambique and Brazil with an explicit focus upon a decentralized framework for community participation. We explore the complex relationship between citizenship and consumerism and assess how our role as consumers can generate increasing resources for green citizenship at the local level. Moreover, we examine how such funds can be used by communities and local governments to determine locally-appropriate climate change policies and initiatives, including examining the potential for a windfall payment to local governments if climate change targets are met. We argue that unless the putative dichotomy between individuals' roles as citizen and consumer is addressed we are at risk from a schizophrenic green economy emerging, where trade-offs between citizen and consumer interests are not addressed. We conclude that it is essential that governments encourage citizenship to address climate change and ensure there are sufficient incentives generated through consumer choices so both roles can work harmoniously in producing actions that drive a green economy.

Introduction

We explore the complex relationship between citizenship and consumerism to determine how our role as consumers can generate increasing resources for green citizenship at the local level. We assess the role of incentives and disincentives in raising resources generated from a tax on carbon-intensive goods and services, whose proceeds communities and local government could access to drive sustainability initiatives (including mitigation and adaptation).

We outline key theories of green citizenship and social capital, and compare them against empirical analysis from case study contexts about the effectiveness of green citizenship. We find that community initiatives to tackle climate change fare best when they have the support of local authorities. However, local government is largely dependent upon national government resources. Central governments need to invest in local government capacity to partner with communities on climate change projects, and they need to provide the infrastructure, legislation and regulation to support this relationship. The UK Transition Town movement illustrates important lessons about community-based sustainability initiatives and the resources communities need to make a tangible difference.

In addition to the UK, we consider the experiences of decentralisation[1] and participatory decision-making in South Africa, Brazil, Mozambique and Angola. In these contexts, decentralisation initiatives have encouraged communities to set priorities, visions and goals in tandem with local authorities. These countries' experiences of decentralisation shed light on how a participatory and decentralised approach can enable communities to address climate change. We then assess how a performance-based fund for local climate initiatives could work in practice, and ask what additional approaches are needed to ensure decentralisation models are suitable for collective decision-making on environmental issues.

Using northern and southern case studies, we hope to underline the importance of developing effective partnerships to create a global culture of learning and innovation.

Methodology

We undertook a desk-based review of literature on green citizenship, social capital, participation and incentives to understand the opportunities for and challenges of ensuring participation in the green economy.

We supplemented our findings with extensive primary research, based primarily on interviews with practitioners, volunteers, policy-makers, academics, NGO and think tank staff in the UK, Brazil, Mozambique, South Africa and Angola. We wanted to determine the key challenges of participation in the green economy on the ground, and how local government can play a role in promoting community action through formal political channels.

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[1] Decentralisation is a process which devolves greater decision-making power to local authorities and their citizens.

We developed an online questionnaire which surveyed respondents' attitudes to involvement in policy-making, and assessed their perceptions about the incentives that are needed to encourage greater action on climate change at local, regional and national levels, as well as in the private sector[2].

Current engagement levels on climate change

Many countries are facing multiple risks. They are currently experiencing a 'hydra headed crisis' of a series of interdependent, systemic challenges: energy and food security, jobless growth, climate change and global governance (Held et al. 2010).

Yet this crisis brings with it an opportunity. Climate change and resource constraints offer us the opportunity to restructure the global economy. This will require more than just 'technological add-ons' – we need solutions that are innovative and engaging, lasting and sustainable (Tanner and Allouche 2011). Today's challenges require a 'global human collective characterised by an outspoken willingness to make behavioural and attitudinal changes' (Jagers 2009). Transforming consumer habits and encouraging action by a range of actors should ensure that our economy, society and political structures are "related, completely coordinated and balanced" (Phra Dhammapiktaka 2000: 68).

There are encouraging signs that business is beginning to take up the challenge of operating in a resource-scarce world, with companies 'greening' their operations. For instance through triple-bottom line corporate reporting on 'people, planet profit', and the steady uptake of sustainable investment indexes, including the Dow Jones Sustainability Indexes[3] and commitments such as the Equator Principles[4].

However, the pressure for the private sector to do more requires consumers to be informed and confident enough to demand change. Similarly, for governments to act on climate change, informed citizens need to demand action. Individuals, as consumers and citizens, *can* mitigate climate change. Yet individuals currently are not motivated enough. According to Boykoff, the public's caring capacity for climate change is "being stretched" (Nieslen 2011). A recent report by Nieslen (August 2011) assessed 25,000 internet users in 51 countries to determine their attitudes towards climate change. It found that interest is waning – or stabilising at the very best – and that more pressing concerns such as job security, the economy and social issues are more of a priority (Nieslen 2011)[5].

In our UK interviews, we found respondents who thought that people were simply 'not interested', while others believed that information on climate change was 'being stuffed down people's throats too much and people are getting fed up with it'. Even those who do trust climate scientists are sceptical – they believe 'the decisions that need to be made won't be in their interest, as they think they are driven by special interests' (interview with Simon Burrell). Many respondents stressed how people are blind to the plight of those who are most at risk of climate change. One suggested that the problem

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[2] In total there were 27 respondents, whose names are listed in Annex 1, except 13 who preferred to remain anonymous

[3] www.sustainability-index.com/, accessed on 9 September 2011.

[4] www.equator-principles.com/, accessed on 9 September 2011.

[5] Not surprisingly, the study found that coastal areas are more concerned about climate change than others.

lies in the way the issue is communicated – a focus on climate change could feed into people's perceptions that what they do as an individual makes no difference, and might actually reinforce their negative behaviour. Others took a more fatalistic approach, suggesting that 'most people don't care about other people and are not interested in working for the greater good and their grandchildren'.

As our findings underline, even among those who are engaged with the issue, action depends on resources and the capacity to act. Simply expecting individuals – as citizens or consumers – to change their behaviour without a formalised and supportive structure will not translate into reduced emissions. Bernard and Young (1997: 14-5) suggest that 'all decision-makers [need] to become ecologically literate'. This paper goes further, and argues that individuals, as both citizens and consumers, should themselves become ecologically literate decision-makers.

The nature of citizenship and participation and their role in the green economy

In this section we assess literature on the values that underpin modern citizenship to determine how citizenship can play a greater role in tackling climate change. We assess the role of social capital in community organisation and empowerment, and how decision-making might be strengthened through access to equitable, representative and formalised mechanisms which afford open and transparent local decision-making. We argue that efforts should be made to engage the most marginalised groups to foster a sense both of collective ownership of a community's contributions towards climate change, and how to address it.

Many societies have seen a decline in confidence in public institutions to deliver results, which Gaventa and Goetz (2001) call 'a crisis in the relationship between citizens and their state'. Ginsborg (2008) suggests that many modern democracies are therefore becoming 'hollowed out', while Bechler (2009) looks to diversity; as modern societies grow more dispersed, citizen participation in decision-making grows more difficult. Trachtenberg focuses on the 'vast scale of modern states [which] makes meaningful participation in self-governance impossible...with its bewildering assortment of options for political engagement' (Trachtenberg, 2010, 344). This is in contrast to many rural areas in developing countries, where communities are more cohesive, there is less movement within communities, and there are entrenched political and social ties among their members.

How can an analysis of citizenship help inform the debate on climate change at a local level, when the composition of communities is so different? On the whole, approaches to citizenship have "depended on normative, half-understood notions of the concept for far too long" (Stubbs 2007). The analysis attempted below looks deeper into the nature of 'the civic', considering how the individual, the market and the state interact (Brannan et al. 2007: 12-13). Policies must therefore also account for local conditions, and devise a way forward that is "gradually negotiated and constructed as a series of specific localised strategies to fit the characteristics of individual neighbourhoods" (Brannan et al. 2007: 12-13).

As Maxwell (2011) argues, the scale and the sheer numbers of winners and losers from climate change make it difficult to create consensus on climate-related topics. For Bernard Williams, however, disagreement does 'not necessarily have to be overcome',

as long as it is taken into account. Williams and Amartya Sen's work strengthens the need to build consensus around environmental policy decisions, emphasising the role of democracy as a form of public discussion (Purnell 2009).

Research from Switzerland backs up this view of engagement. There, cantons (districts) allow varying degrees of popular participation in decision-making. Even when people are unsuccessful in the frequent local referendums, when they find themselves in a minority on a local issue, they tend to be happier with the result than if they had never been consulted (Frey and Stutzer 2000). Deliberative mechanisms also answer Sen's call for a 'more ambitious concept of democracy', understanding that citizens make better decisions about local power generation, for instance, than distant bureaucrats (Purnell 2009). Citizen-led decision-making processes should strengthen the capacity for, though not the certainty of, producing better decisions, because in the course of discussion, problems come to be redefined (Ginsborg 2008: 60).

Social capital plays a fundamental part in the extent to which communities feel capable or motivated to participate in local initiatives and decision-making forums. The higher the levels of social capital, the greater the likelihood they will support actions for the common good (Jones et al. 2009). Yet the level of social capital upon which communities can draw depends upon their existing economic, social and political resources (Phillips 2002: 137). This is not the complete picture, however: civic empowerment creates resource in itself. Society "is made up of connections just as much as it is made up of money, materials and human resources" (Kay 2005: 172) and Amis refers to the "neighbourhood as a factory" (2002: 11). Participation in public forums fosters constructive action, while encouraging others to do the same – a process of learning which can be reinvested in the community (Prayukvong 2005). Especially in times of crisis, social capital is one of the few resources upon which poor people can draw (Phillips 2002).

But to make the most of these benefits, ensuring that mechanisms for engagement in policy-making are as representative as possible is critical. Research in the UK has discovered interesting biases to civic engagement programmes – does the willingness of volunteers to get involved in such schemes, for example, in fact make them unrepresentative (Brannan et al. 2007: 49)? There may even be situations where citizenship involvement creates a perception that environmental problems are being solved, when they are simply being consulted on (Brannan et al. 2007: 66). Transaction costs are high – especially in developing countries, poor people may opt out of participatory processes because they cannot afford to meet reciprocal relationships (Phillips 2002: 137). Moreover, social capital cannot grow in infertile soil. In communities with high levels of crime borne out of economic underdevelopment, or suffering from exploitative social or economic relationships, there is often a significant degree of mistrust which hampers cooperation and opportunities for mutual development (Kay 2005: 167; see also NEF 2000; Amis 2002; Phillips 2002; Kay 2005).

Trachtenberg underlines how public involvement in environmental policy-making has an "essentially public character, so that actions have an inherently civic significance" (Trachtenberg 2010: 344). This can be enhanced through co-management frameworks in environmental policies, which encourage incentives for the common good and a sense of shared ownership of public assets (Bowless and Gintis, 2002; Adger, 2003; Kay, 2005; Jones et al. 2009). For instance, Weber (2003) has described 'Grassroots Environmental Management' (GREM), which includes community-based civil society

initiatives that foster social capital through local partnerships and a shared vision of community priorities (Trachtenberg 2010: 343)[6]. One example, the UK-based Transition Town movement (explored in more detail below), aims to make communities self-sufficient, end their dependence on fossil fuels, and promote community cohesion among its members. This form of citizenship encourages individuals and groups to work on issues bigger than their community (such as climate change and peak oil), yet which they can address locally. GREM thereby "takes people beyond their respective private actions into a common forum shared with others across the community who have disparate interests and values" (Trachtenberg 2010: 345).

However, it is often easier for better-off communities to engage in environmental initiatives – such as many of the Transition Towns – as they are more likely to have established and accessible assets, and the ability to mobilise these assets to meet their needs (Kelly and Caputo 2005: 235). The design of the participatory process should therefore create an enabling environment that addresses structural reasons for the non-participation of some actors or groups (Phillips 2002; Kelly and Caputo 2005; Tanner and Allouche 2011).

Incentivising green citizenship

Citizenship alone cannot fully account for how individuals and society impact upon their environment. Dobson (2003) suggests that it is at the private level that people may realise their public environmental values. In areas such as waste disposal and personal consumption, each of us has an ecological footprint (Dobson 2003). Set against this background, it is important not to try to destroy economic activity (Amis 2002) but rather to change the nature of economic activity to promote certain social and environmental outcomes. This requires reconfiguring the way we perceive growth and consumerism, and the way we think about social capital. According to Kay (2005: 168), "social capital alone cannot build the social economy and develop communities. It has to be used in conjunction with other forms of capital – financial, human, environmental and cultural."

And yet incentives must never undermine civic duty. For many people in modern economies, the private and public spheres have become blurred. As citizens we may voice concerns over climate change, environmental issues and global poverty. But as consumers we often prioritise material advancement, even when at odds with positive environmental outcomes (see Holmes et al. 2011). The risk is that a 'schizophrenic' green economy develops, where individuals' actions as citizens and consumers undermine one another and the low-carbon transition. This doublethink is particularly acute among consumers in the developed world, ignorant of the impacts their consumptive habits have on the most vulnerable, but out-of-sight communities in other countries. In addition, the distance between international climate change negotiations and ordinary people perpetuates the idea that people's own efforts to tackle climate change will not make a difference (see Tanner and Allouche 2011).

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[6] While there are a number of different definitions of social capital, it can broadly be defined as the quality of relationships between individuals within a social group formed in mutual cooperation and a sense of commonality (Kay 2005: 169; Amis 2002). Putnam (1993) argues that social capital can "improve the efficiency of society by facilitating co-ordinated actions" while Bourdieu (1986) believed it to be "a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition." Whatever definition they use, scholars agree that social capital is self-perpetuating: the more it is used, the more is generated (Kay 2005).

Anthony Giddens (2009) has outlined measures for consumer engagement in environmental policy processes. First, if punitive measures are used, they should either supply revenue spent directly for environmental purposes, or be linked in a visible way with behaviour change – and preferably both. For instance, drivers of vehicles that consume more fuel than others should face heavier tax penalties under the 'polluter pays' principle.

Communities also need to be willing to participate in incentive schemes (Jones et al. 2010) – if they distrust the processes through which incentives are disbursed, there will likely be little uptake. Transparency is key; not least because of concerns about free-riding and corruption. One interviewee told us that this was a major disincentive to policy engagement: "corruption is the main obstacle in my country – people need training to stamp out corruption before such policies are introduced and regulated."

Second, 'the positives must dominate'. Behavioural change needs to be sold to consumers. This can be achieved more easily by underlining the benefits of choosing environmental options. Information alone does not change behaviour; however, information should accompany punitive measures to make less carbon-intensive options seem more attractive, such as switching to smaller cars or driving less (Giddens 2009: 106). By encouraging the positive aspects of the incentive or activity, (saving money as well as energy, for instance) consumers are more likely to take up the incentive. Partly this is a framing question: Sweden's government has encouraged the building of homes that are 'snug, protected against the elements and which also save money' (Giddens 2009: 106). Incentives may therefore need to be packaged differently to different people since factors – for example, an individual's education levels – can determine public buy-in to certain incentives, such as a carbon tax (Jager 2009).

Policies to encourage behavioural change – through positive and negative incentives - should therefore be flexible, with reference to local circumstances. Many national economies have already adopted market-based instruments to encourage green consumption. These range from tax rebates, cash-back on efficient white goods and lower rates of VAT (see Stubbs 2008). Central regulation and enforcement mechanisms are critical to upholding incentives, because there needs to be significant institutional trust among citizens or consumers that the incentive is durable, fair and transparent, and that other members of the community will act in tandem (Jones et al. 2009). Incentives need to be permanent, because as our interviews found, if they have a short duration, people will go back to their old habits when the trial or pilot has ended.

Our survey found that only 11 per cent of respondents thought that their local governments were driving the agenda on climate change (see Figure 1, Annex 2). National governments can regulate to ensure localised and appropriate solutions are upheld in a decentralised context – particularly indigenous voices. It is also important that incentives in the green economy support growth in the voluntary sector – and not just the rent-seeking behaviours of investors – or else actions to promote a green economy will become associated with a financial reward. Legislation and resources to ensure community group's functionality include supporting or institutionalising community action plans, savings and credit groups and micro-projects for climate action (Kelly and Caputo 2005). Local governments need the resources and capacity to do this – a critical issue in efforts to encourage the 'Big Society' in the UK, as explored below.

Our online survey showed the most popular types of incentives to be[7]:

Allocation of public funds to local government dependent on meeting sustainability targets	19 (70 %)
Sustainability targets for local government	18 (67 %)
A community fund for local sustainability strategies	15 (56 %)
Establishing a public index ranking of poor and best-performing local governments, based on their meeting climate change / sustainability targets	14 (52 %)

The possible implementation of these incentives is explored in more detail in the case studies below.

Case studies

The UK

The UK has committed to an 80 per cent reduction in carbon emissions by 2050. While there are a range of economic incentives to encourage communities and the private sector to reduce their carbon emissions (see DECC 2011; Energy Saving Trust 2011), they are not reaching their full potential at the local level. Climate change policy-making is difficult in economically straitened times and the UK's coalition government is implementing a series of public budget cuts, to the effect of £100 billion over four years.

At the same time as this retrenchment, the government has launched its 'Big Society' agenda. The thinking behind the Big Society is that communities gain the power to deliver services and support community development rather than "big, bureaucratic government" (DCLG 2011). The Big Society offers a potentially innovative framework for participatory policy-making, but its underlying ideological context – privileging local and voluntary provision at the expense of government – risks undermining some communities' capacity to address local issues.

There is much scepticism about the Big Society among respondents. Many of those interviewed viewed it as an added burden on communities. Others felt that the Big Society masked a neo-liberal agenda: one respondent said it had striking similarities to Ronald Reagan's 1980s drive to cut public spending on the assumption that communities would fill the gaps. Respondents expressed serious doubts about the capacity of civil society and the voluntary sector to answer the challenge. Interviewees used terms such as 'gimmick', 'diversionary', 'fundamentally dishonest', 'a fig leaf for expenditure cuts' and it is 'yet to be defined conceptually'. The transfer of responsibility from the state to the individual risks jeopardising efforts for state-society collaborations on the environment, as one interviewee argued. There were also significant structural concerns, for instance that 'planning systems have been stripped away without leaving anything in their place', leaving 'voids'; and that the Big Society needs 'much more focus on the green economy', though it would only ever play a 'small part' in any shift towards sustainability.

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[7] Figure 3 in annex 2 outlines respondents views to encouraging sustainability in the private sector through incentives, which mirror the set of incentives proposed here. It was beyond the scope of the paper to compare both in detail, but the suggestions warrant further research.

Transition Towns – background and challenges

The Transition Town (TT) movement has been described as "the fastest-growing social movement in the UK"; there are currently over 344 in the UK and 859 internationally (Transition Initiatives Directory 2011). In their emphasis on autonomous organisation at a local level, Transition Towns fit in well with the UK government's thinking behind the Big Society. Our contention is that the experiences of Transition Towns offer important lessons for the coalition government on how well communities can deliver local services, in particular those focused on tackling climate change.

The TT movement started in Totnes (Devon UK) in 2006. Its central objectives are to find alternative solutions to peak oil, promote locally based and organic consumerism, and to become self-sufficient in energy provision[8]. The movement aims to develop parallel public infrastructure, such as local currencies, community allotments and car shares, to help people transition from a reliance on fossil fuels and consumerism.

Transition Towns have met with success in many places. For instance, in Lewes, East Sussex, the Transition Town has created a company called OVESCo. It utilises government low-carbon incentives such as the feed-in tariff (FIT), where producers are paid to generate renewable electricity which can also be sold back to the grid. The company sells shares to community investors, which they then use to install renewable energy projects in the town; any profit is distributed to shareholders and reinvested in other projects. To date OVESCo has raised £400,000[9].

However, the rapid growth of the movement has created a huge expectation about its potential to effect change. A lot depends on the resource each group has to become self-sufficient. One of our interviewees related how an analysis of the Transition Town in Hackney, London, suggested that there is not enough land in the community for 25,000 people to achieve self-sufficiency.

Further, the TT approach is usually to work with those who 'get it', and only those who really want to be part of the movement, as explained by one member of the movement. This means, interviewees said, that it does not engage directly enough with poorer communities. While each Transition Town has a different membership composition, typically members are 'green', female and middle class 'with time on their hands', according to interviewees. One Transition Town member stated 'the transition is not going to happen if you knock on the doors of council estates'[10]. Another respondent underlined that the Transition Town in Totnes has made no efforts to engage with its poorer neighbour, Plymouth, just 22 miles away, because 'the Transition Town movement is a depoliticised movement unconcerned with social justice'. As suggested by our literature review, some poorer groups with less social capital may shy away from actively participating in the movement.

In their current form TTs are limited in their potential impact, in part because they are community-focused. One respondent argued that Transition Towns 'are good at getting something moving and starting local initiatives, but not for serious action'. The movement mainly relies on volunteers and some members reported feeling the strain from a lack of fully paid staff members to administer their activities. Many voluntary

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[8] For more information, see www.transitionnetwork.org/ ,accessed on 9 September 2011.
[9] For more information, see www.ovesco.co.uk/, accessed on September 2011.
[10] Typically poorer communities where a high proportion of housing is provided by the local council.

groups do not have the resources to organise themselves effectively, especially in the face of increasing cuts.

Moreover, in some communities the Transition Town model works better than others. In Tonbridge, Kent, a Transition Town was set up but did not achieve much impact. Our research found this was because the town lies in the commuter belt – many residents are too busy or uninterested in engaging in community work (similar results were noted in Billericay, Essex, another commuter town). The question is again one of context – some community initiatives may not be transplanted directly from one context to the other, and some activities and approaches may be more suitable for smaller or larger communities[11].

Some Transition Towns have discovered that, to be effective, community-led initiatives need to work with existing authority structures. The TT in Tunbridge Wells, Kent, is working in partnership with the local council to improve the energy efficiency of the council's public buildings. In Somerset, the TT movement worked with the local council which, in 2008, after developing a joint action plan, declared it was the UK's first 'Transition Town Council'[12]. The Transition Town movement in one town said that 'in order to get anything strategic done we have to work with the council, who as locally elected, are responsive to our needs and it has been easy to put pressure on them'.

However, there needs to be more structured engagement between citizens and local government. One Transition Town member said that the district council 'likes to engage with us but is under no obligation to take the agenda forward'. By working in formalised, decentralised planning and engagement structures, community groups like the Transition Towns could participate in setting an agenda for their community's development and work in partnership with the local council to realise their objectives.

The Localism Bill, which, for one respondent, is the 'only real policy' to emerge from the Big Society, provides an opportunity for communities and local governments to work together to devise appropriate policies. The Bill – published in December 2010 – is designed to strengthen decentralisation in the UK. It is expected to bring about a more adaptive planning system that reflects local circumstances, as well as a more effective delivery of services by bringing communities into the centre of local decision-making processes (DCLG 2010, 2011). However, it has been criticised by the Planning and Climate Change Coalition (PCCC[13]) for not integrating climate change. Some respondents questioned who exactly are the local communities that the Bill focuses on? It is easy to determine community groups in more rural, homogenous contexts, but in urban areas it is hard to work out where the 'community' begins and ends.

For communities to focus on climate change initiatives in local plans, our research found they need clear and practical messages about how to develop concrete projects, and their importance. Education and training can equip community groups to get involved in local climate change and environmental initiatives. 'People have amazing capacities if given the opportunity', suggested one private company specialising in community-based micro-generation of renewable electricity. The use of maps and visuals to inform planning and awareness of existing incentives and grants and how to

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[11] For instance, in Billericay, Essex a model that had worked in smaller, close-knit communities had not worked well in a larger town.

[12] However, interest has begun to wane in this initiative see Transition Culture a)

[13] For more information please see www.tcpa.org.uk/pages/climate-coalition.html, accessed on 9 September 2011.

access them are also essential for community-based development planning[14]. Other suggestions were that engagement spaces are 'fun' and involve people's friends and family to foster a sense of cohesion.

One interviewee argued that 'mediocre engagement is worse than no engagement' and suggested that people's views are acknowledged and an attempt is made to act on their suggestions; failure to do so breeds distrust towards government and the value of participatory processes (Simon Burrell, interview). Continued resourcing for this process is essential. However, in the design of local plans, the voice of the expert must not diminish, and be carefully factored into the framing of community plans.

In terms of how a performance-related fund could work in the UK to fund community engagement in climate change and sustainability initiatives, our research found some potential innovations. Publishing private sector carbon targets in the public domain (such as the Carbon Reduction Commitment in the UK's privates sector[15]) helps to drive change as companies do not want to be perceived as 'ungreen'. Moves to extend this to local councils could also compel action to drive energy efficiency reductions because 'if a council feels it hasn't done its duty it feels embarrassed', as one UK interviewee argued. With a transparent, democratically elected council, the information could be used by local citizens to advocate for change. For instance, local businesses who do not meet efficiency targets – monitored in conjunction with communities - could also be compelled to contribute to a fund that is reinvested at the local level to support community innovations.

One respondent suggested that financial drivers and incentives work if they are there for long enough, and when the grassroots can use them to drive change. There were calls to promote incentives for community-community learning and mutual support. For instance, schools in the UK could support schools in Africa by using profit from the FIT to buy solar panels and establish an internet connection between schools, so they become aware of energy usage in different contexts. In this vein, a Transition Town member suggested that Transition Towns in the UK could be twinned with other TTs in developing countries to facilitate an exchange of information and provide support in the transition to a low-carbon economy. The localism bill, if communities are given sufficient resources to organise themselves and participate in local planning policies, offers an opportunity for such community-orientated initiatives to develop with funding from government.

South Africa
South Africa has a comprehensive planning system – the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) – which is used to set interlinked sectoral objectives. However, there are gaps in the processes' current ability to engage communities to their fullest potential. We suggest that the country's proposed carbon tax could be earmarked to support local initiatives to address climate change through the IDP process.

South Africa is responsible for 39 per cent of emissions on the continent (UNECA, 2002, 33), and according to UNDP (2008), carbon dioxide emissions per capita in South Africa in 2004 were 9.8 tons, equivalent to Germany's. While there have been efforts in South Africa to devise a national renewables strategy, respondents claimed there is still

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[14] For more information, please see www.carbonvisuals.com/, accessed on 9 September 2011.
[15] For more information please see www.carbontrust.co.uk/policy-legislation/business-public-sector/pages/carbon-reduction-commitment.aspx, accessed on 9 September 2011.

'limited ambition' for increased renewable energy infrastructure and the economy still has a huge appetite for coal (see Department of Energy 2011[16]). IISD (2010: vi) argues that a lack of "a coherent vision that includes all government departments results in fractured policies on energy and climate change." Moreover, the country experiences difficulties with managing industrial environmental pollutants[17], suggesting that managing climate change at the local level may also prove challenging.

In the South African context, respondents said, 'more sticks than carrots' should be used to effect sustainable behaviour. One of those 'sticks' is a carbon tax – a policy yet to be finalised – to make the greatest industrial producers pay a tax on their carbon emissions. Industry (including the mining and minerals sectors), consumes more than 51 per cent of the country's total energy and twice that of the household sector (IISD 2010). Creamer (2011) argues that the carbon tax "would be both feasible and appropriate to achieve the desired behavioural changes and emissions-reduction targets".

However, in its current form, the carbon tax is not earmarked for any particular investment. One respondent suggested that 'the current thinking hasn't thought how carbon tax revenue can be reinvested to incentivise positive behaviour, investment in communities, or green electricity'. We suggest that funds should be earmarked as a 'carrot', both to encourage companies to make the shift in their environmental behaviour and to contribute to a community investment fund that will ensure benefits are passed to poorer consumers, through the IDP process.

In South Africa, ensuring locally appropriate climate change solutions on the ground requires a critical assessment of local governance and its capacity to work constructively with communities. The Integrated Development Plan (IDP) process is a means to plan local projects and priorities on a yearly basis. However there are some key challenges in ensuring citizen participation. For instance, communities are often invited to comment only when sectoral business plans (designed by bureaucrats) have been approved and already integrated into the IDP[18], and often in a rushed fashion with little room for deliberation.

The IDP is a competitive process where sectors and groups compete for resources. Unfortunately, climate change illustrates the challenge of 'essential needs competing with long-term needs'. There is a need, as one respondent from Save the Children South Africa argues, 'to educate people to have a sense of outrage and shared responsibility in addressing climate change'. Communities would need information about who to lobby to achieve environmental results. They need to know the activities that are being undertaken, and they need to be empowered to play a role in holding governments to account.

South Africa's performance-based management culture represents an opportunity to encourage buy-in into a distributive climate change fund. Performance-based payments, as one respondent claimed, can act as 'an incentive rather than a punitive measure which may actually influence meeting local targets'. For example, if there were a

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[16] Critics point out that the Integrated Resource Plan makes coal look cheap as they do not consider the externalities on the environment and society due to pollution (IISD 2010).

[17] From its polluting energy and mining industries which primarily impact upon the environment of poorer, township communities. In a context where cyanide, arsenic and radiation flow into poorer, typically black, communities led one respondent to say 'the spatial dynamics of apartheid still live on'.

[18] However, ward councillors are meant to provide a permanent link between the community and the local government. Community concerns are integrated into ward plans, which are then fed into the municipal IDP. Whose views are indeed integrated, and whether they are taken into account, is a different matter.

naming and shaming element through public indexing, this could be used to leverage action by local governments. While the culture of performance-based management has been criticised for taking the creativity out of government, this could be addressed if communities were more involved in the setting and monitoring of performance targets based on participatory, consultative plans. Setting climate change targets in the IDP process means that everyone has to work to meet them, 'establishing high administrative and political will. But the capacity involved in making it happen is a different story', as one respondent argued.

Angola and Mozambique

The experiences and potential for utilising the IDP process for locally-determined climate change policies implemented together with communities has implications for other African contexts. Angola and Mozambique are both currently scaling up decentralisation and participatory initiatives. These two countries are explored together as they share a similar history of Portuguese colonialism, civil war and a potentially promising future based on principles of inclusive participatory local governance, which are currently being piloted in both countries[19].

Where decentralisation is unfolding, efforts should be made to use IDP-type processes to enable communities to set local priorities and targets on climate change and to access funds, transparently managed and monitored jointly by central and local governments, NGOs, civil society and cooperatives or community-based groups.

The likelihood of Angola and Mozambique implementing a carbon tax and an increased tax on green consumption in the near future is remote. In these contexts, climate finance from the private sector and multi-lateral donors can play an important function in establishing such a fund and supporting not only community initiatives, but also policies that encourage and establish local revenue-raising and taxation to foster their sustainability.

Findings from Mozambique

UNDP Mozambique stressed to us that financial incentives should not be provided at the expense of community responsibility and stewardship. Above all, incentives should focus on institutionalising behaviour and practice and examining the sustainability of what they fund. However, in Mozambique one respondent exercised caution about using financial incentives since 'a reliance on enticing people with money can mean some beneficiaries get canny with how to draw down resources and say the right things. It needs to be for everyone's benefit'.

Incentives also need to be given to those who can be the 'movers and shakers' on climate change. Local government should be accountable for ensuring these targets are met, and therefore the incentive needs to be directed at this level – not at communities – to ensure the incentive improves local governance.

Incentives could also influence greater participation if targets for local-level community participation in decision-making processes were factored into the disbursement of

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[19] For instance, see the Municipal Development Program (MDP) in Angola www.mdp-angola.org and UNDP/Ministry of Planning and Development's National Programme of Planning and financial decentralisation in Mozambique.

funds. Also necessary to take into account are the extent to which communities' views are acted upon and acknowledged with shared community-local government responsibilities for monitoring and implementing adaptation projects[20].

Findings from Angola

In Angola, ensuring action at the local level that is both representative and meets the needs of communities requires greater attention to improving community and local government capacity to respond to climate change and raise awareness. Climate change discourse has barely entered the country's social-economic psyche[21]. For instance, regular regional and national civil society conferences do not address climate change, and there is no active environmental network to advance climate change sensitisation among communities.

While a government representative recognises that climate change responses need to start from the local level, what is lacking is an approach that uses innovative and participatory mechanisms to institutionalise a locally-driven response to climate change that mainstreams environmental management. Respondents called upon donors to place greater focus on funding participatory environmental projects to drive localised solutions to climate change and increase awareness of the topic.

In Angola, many NGOs and donors[22] are pulling out of the country as it is deemed to have sufficient resources to develop, and many agencies struggle to operate in Angola's expensive context. However, if this trend continues, oil companies could pay a proportion of their profits as a penalty for their environmental impacts into a fund administered in partnership with central government, NGOs, civil society and local government[23]. This fund could build the necessary community awareness of how to address climate change at the local level, train local government officials on climate change and project management and provide funds for micro-projects which could complement and be incorporated into municipal plans[24].

Brazil – Deepening REDD+'s incentive structure through municipal governance

Reduction of Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD)+[25] is a form of environmental governance that provides a 'set of social norms and political assumptions that will steer societies and organizations in a manner that shapes collective decisions about the use and management of forest resources' (Thompson et al. 2011: 100). The incentive structure around REDD+ is based on payments that are conditional upon the outcome of REDD+ actions (avoided carbon emissions). Its rationale is that 'linking

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[20] For instance, UNDP Mozambique has established thematic 'partner networks' which coordinate and harmonise local planning, in collaboration with communities.

[21] Though the private sector is slowly paying attention to renewable energy and the environment as evidenced by a conference in Luanda on 26-27 May 2011 demonstrates. Moreover, the utilisation of environmental impact assessments is a growing trend.

[22] It is worth bearing in mind that the resource-rich Angolan government is, not as susceptible to donor influence as many other developing country governments.

[23] Respondents did not favour using cooperatives to disburse funding since o since 'they barely function in Angola'

[24] Including practical activities to reduce and reuse waste, and funds for the necessary infrastructure to do this, with a revenue-generating income stream for households.

[25] Which incorporates forest conservation, sustainable forest management and the enhancement of carbon stocks as defined by the '+'.

incentives as directly as possible to problems will be most effective' (Wertze-Kanounnikoff and Anglesen 2009: 18). Moreover, REDD+ can be a trigger to help change the perception among governments that conservation has a cost, or at least that there are benefits to protecting forests.

Although the financial compensation for participation in REDD+ is a huge incentive to motivate behaviour change, money alone cannot prevent deforestation (Blom 2010; Skutsch 2010; Unemiya 2010; Toni 2011). As Wertze-Kanounnikoff and Anglesen (2009) argue, countries participating in REDD+ – including Brazil – need to develop or reform institutions to manage information and incentives. We agree with Toni (2011) that working through existing decentralised REDD+ processes could lead to a "more participatory decision-making process, improve local democracy, improve efficiency and equity of service delivery and strengthen local government".

We suggest that two significant and landmark planning processes in Brazil be utilised to improve REDD+ governance and participation – participatory planning and participatory budgeting (PB). Working together, these could create a structured approach to participation, allowing communities to influence and decide on the allocation of REDD+ funding at the municipal level[26]. This would help to ensure the realities of communities, indigenous and forest populations are reflected. Community priorities would then be embedded into the REDD+ process in a mutually exclusive sub-national, federal and international context, helping to align local concerns with national objectives (Skutch 2010).

REDD+ highlights how the role of incentives are proving essential in the fight against deforestation. However, the role of disincentives is equally important. Brazil has introduced municipal deforestation hotspots (*Presidential Decree 6321/07*) which have shed light on deforestation at municipal levels, by indexing the worst performing municipalities in relation to deforestation levels.

A similar index to rank the degree to which community concerns from PB and participatory planning are being met could also prove to be a useful motivator for behaviour change at municipal level in REDD+ project sites and across Brazil. Using the REDD+ principles[27] and Climate, Community and Biodiversity (CCB) standards[28] as indicators could enable communities to hold their local government to account on the impact of REDD+ in their communities, municipalities or indigenous territories if published publicly. Communities could also be involved in the monitoring processes of such indicators[29] and discuss their findings in thematic and district forums to ensure a triangulation of data. These could be fed into a national accounting system that measures and values the rights of indigenous populations and natural capital[30] (Azqueta and Sotelsek 2007; CONAFLOR 2010; Ghazoul 2010) and allow voters to choose governments who uphold key environmental and social policies.

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[26] However, in Brazil the constitution allows for indigenous territories that are not subject to the same rules as other parts of the country. In such cases these participatory tools could work in conjunction with traditional governance arrangements that feed into formal political channels. See Shankland and Haseclever (2010) for more information on indigenous participation in Brazil

[27] Designed primarily by civil society in 2010. For more information, visit http://reddsocioambiental.org.br/, accessed on 9 September 2011.

[28] For more information, see www.climate-standards.org/, accessed on 9 September 2011.

[29] For instance, in Mato Grosso and Rondonia Surui tribes have handheld devices that link to locally-managed databases.

[30] Essentially the value of a stock of natural resources

In terms of raising revenues for REDD+ we argue that rather than relying solely on international financial flows, a more encompassing approach to revenue generation can have wider impacts upon forests and forest communities. In contrast to Skutch (2010), we suggest that how REDD+ funds are raised can have important implications for environmental and social outcomes.

We propose that *Forest Capital* to complement REDD+ funding to prevent deforestation and promote behaviour change. Forest Capital is raised when consumers purchase commodities from uncertified forest sources by increasing the cost of less sustainable products through increased taxation[31]. Brazil's economy has a high proportion of domestic wood and beef consumption; Forest Capital could be funded by an increase in taxation on uncertified wood products, dairy products and commodities responsible for emissions from land-use change. This will complement Brazil's Climate Fund, partly funded through an increased tax on petroleum products to promote a low-carbon economy based on sustainable forest management.

Funds raised could compensate communities for the costs of participating, and enhancing their participation in, REDD+ activities and supporting community-led initiatives. Which communities get the highest share of Forest Capital could be linked to how well municipalities or territories perform under the municipal index whereby the best performers would be rewarded with extra dividends weighted to their performance.

However, to ensure Forest Capital did not drive wood and dairy commodities onto the black market, there would need to be a widening and institutionalisation of certification standards on a number of commodity products – at the national as well as the international level. In particular, Forest Capital should be incorporated into the international REDD+ architecture to prevent leakage[32] and global illicit trading of forest goods.

Conclusion

In an age of financial austerity and increasingly dispersed, disenfranchised or disempowered communities, new and innovative means to raise resources for climate change that that put people at the centre of solutions are required. We have found that by generating funds through consumption and then using formal political channels for their disbursement, consumerism can directly feed into strengthening local capacities to devise and implement local initiatives and address climate change.

By working through existing formal channels of participation, a system of incentives and rewards might encourage local government action on climate change, particularly if these payments were linked to their performance in meeting targets. We suggest that there should be provisions for communities from developed countries or neighbouring communities to invest some of their resources in developing country contexts to ensure community-community support. This approach would allow aid to be more community-led, rather than delivered primarily through formal development processes and allow communities to feel they can make a tangible impact on the lives of others.

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[31] The Cancun agreement states developing countries should address the real drivers of deforestation but ignores the role of consumers in developed countries in driving deforestation (Fernanda Gebara)
[32] Leakage refers to the fact that while deforestation might be avoided in one area it may be displaced to another

Our findings encourage a closer examination of the relationship between citizenship and consumerism, and how both can mutually support the other, if sufficient redistributive and sustainable criteria are applied. Incentives are a great motivator for action, but a great deal of care needs to go into their design. The value of civic duty and stewardship should not be undermined by viewing money as the sole determining factor for action. Moreover, green consumers should not be duped into thinking that changing their consumption patterns is the only role they can play in realising a green economy. Because each individual, community and country is motivated by different factors, a range of incentives need to be applied to different groups and actors.

If communities are to play a greater role in the green economy, government needs to play a fundamental responsibility in providing or facilitating access to resources to ensure people can play their part. It is critical that local authorities foster an environment in which social capital can flourish, since the success of community organisation and participation is often conditional upon the flexibility of delivery by government agencies (Amis, 2002: 104; Jones et al. 2010). Failure to support communities to play their part can mean that only those with resources are able to carry out their initiatives and perpetuate feelings of disenfranchisement and disempowerment to act over climate change. A fund that changes consumers' behaviour while distributing funds for communities and their local government to design and implement their own projects on climate change is, we argue, a significant step towards realising the green economy.

Lastly, incentives need to be permanent. In an age of uncertainty about where the global economy is heading, the best way to ensure permanence and sustainability is by shaping the economy and influencing consumers to use fewer resources through positive economic distortions and through this process generate resources to strengthen the capacity of people and government to work together to find collaborative solutions.

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Annex 1

List of those interviewed

	Name	Organisation	Function	Country
1	Chris Church	Mapping for Change UK Low carbon Communities Network	Director Chair	UK
2	Anthony Turner	Carbon sense; Carbon visuals	Director	UK
3	Chris Rowland	OVESCo, Lewes	Director	UK
4	Andrew Pratt	Tamar Grow Local	Director Green campaigner in Plymouth, Devon	UK
5	Yael Rosenfild	WWF UK	Campaigner	UK
6	Steve Dawe	Kent Green Party	Press and Local Branch Support Officer	UK
7	Richard Watson	Positive Energy Sussex	Director	UK
8	Piper Terret	Energy Saving Trust	Green Voice of the UK Freelance writer and author	UK
9	Brian Whitlington	Sustainable Communities (formerly Sustainable Schools)	Director	UK
10	Trevor Watson	Lewes District Council	Recycling and Sustainability Manager	UK
11	Matthew Bird	Lewes District Council	Sustainability and Energy Officer	
12	Adrienne Campbell	Founded of Transition Town Lewes	Founder and member	UK
13	Matthew McLuckie	Sustainable Carbon Solutions	Director	UK
14	Melita Steele	Greenpeace	Campaigner	South Africa
15	Lisa McNamara	Climate and Development Knowledge Network	Africa Knowledge Management and Partnerships Coordinator	South Africa
16	Saliem Fakir	WWF. South Africa	Head of Living Planet Unit	South Africa
17	Karen Allan	Save the Children UK, South Africa	Communications Officer	South Africa
18	Tristen Taylor	Earthlife Africa	Director	South Africa
19	Dulce Chilundo	National Disaster Management Institute INGC	Director	Mozambique

20	Joao Albino Bobotela	CARE	CLaSP Project Manager	Mozambique
21	John Barnes	UNDP/Ministry of Planning and Development	Technical Advisor	Mozambique
22	Dr. Alex Arnall	University of Reading	Lecturer in Agriculture and Development	Mozambique/ UK
23	Felizarda Mangoele	Ministry of Environment – PECOA		
24	Fernanda Teixeira	Red Cross/Independent	Independent consultant ad former head of the Red Cross, Mozambique	Mozambique
25	Francisco Sambo	Ministry of Environment, REDD+		Mozambique
26	Clara Landeiro	UNDP/Ministry of Environment	Chief Technical Advisor, African Adaptation Program	Mozambique
27	Sophie Chotard	Save the Children	Programme Manager, Floodplain Management, Projecto Galamuka	Mozambique
28	Abias Huongo	Ministry of Environment	Angolan representative for UNFCCC	Angola
29	Joao Neves	JMJ International	Independent consultant	Angola
30	Nadia Marques	Eco-visao	Project manager	Angola
31	Jonathan Cox	Citizens UK	Lead Organiser, New Citizens Organising Team	UK
32	Les Gunbie	Hanover Action for Sustainable Living	Volunteer	UK
33	Mark Williamson	Young Foundation	Director	UK
34	Rianne C. ten Veen	Green Creation	Islam & Environment Specialist	UK
35	Yuyun Ismawati	BALIFOKUS Foundation	Co-founder and Advisory Board	Indonesia
36	Paul Rainger	Forum for the Future	Head of Sustainable Bristol City-Region Programme	UK
37	Markku Lehtonen	SPRU – University of Sussex	Research Fellow	UK
38	Dr. Christophe Rynikiewicz	SPRU – University of Sussex	Research Fellow	France
39	William Bradley	Demos	Researcher	UK

40	Dr. Richard Pagett	Future Sales (Global) Limited	Director	UK
41	Professor Jake Chapman	Demos	Associate	UK
42	Jamie Audsley	London Citizens		UK
43	Mandeep Hothi	Young Foundation	Senior Associate	UK
44	Natan Doran	Fabian Society	Researcher	UK
45	Ben Ross	Forum for the Future	Senior Sustainability Advisor	UK
46	Reg Platt	IPPR	Researcher; founder, Transition Town Brighton	UK
47	Stephen Whitehead	New Economics Foundation	Researcher	UK
48	Simon Burall	Involve	Director	UK
49	Julia Slay	New Economics Foundation	Senior Researcher and Social Policy Programme Coordinator	UK
50	Mariana Christovam	Amazon Environmental Research Institute (IPAM)	Researcher	Brazil
51	Fernanda Gebara	Centre for International Forestry Research	Researcher	Brazil

*Plus 23 respondents who did not want their name to appear

Annex 2– online survey responses

Fig 1: Who do you think is driving the debate on climate change and sustainability in your country?

Non-governmental organisations / civil society organisations	23 (85 %)
Think tanks	14 (52 %)
Private sector	7 (26 %)
Lobby groups	17 (63 %)
Central government	13 (48 %)
Regional government	1 (4 %)
Local government	3 (11 %)
National parliament / assembly	3 (11 %)
Researchers / scientists	16 (59 %)
Media	16 (59 %)
Citizens' groups	6 (22 %)
General public	2 (7 %)
Schools	1 (4 %)
Faith-based groups	5 (19 %)
Other, please specify: protestors, farmers and donors.	5 (19 %)

Fig 2. In your opinion, which of the following policies would encourage more sustainable local government policies in your country?

Climate change targets for local government	11 (41 %)
Sustainability targets for local government	18 (67 %)
Allocation of public funds dependent on meeting climate change targets	12 (44 %)
Allocation of public funds dependent on meeting sustainability targets	19 (70 %)
A community fund for local climate change strategies	10 (37 %)
A community fund for local sustainability strategies	15 (56 %)
Central government projects can only be approved if they meet minimum environmental standards (i.e. through the supply chain)	14 (52 %)
Economic incentives to encourage greener consumption (e.g. tax breaks, reduced costs for certain products, money back when purchasing certain products)	13 (48 %)
Social rewards to encourage greener consumption (e.g. funding for green community projects)	12 (44 %)
Establishing a public index ranking of poor and best-performing local governments, based on their meeting climate change / sustainability targets	14 (52 %)
Other, please specify	5 (19 %)

*'Other' includes: consistent messages from central government to local government, that do not change with each election cycle, and which are not just based on targets: 'if central government doesn't keep their targets, there is little incentive for local government to do so'; rewards to the best performers; stopping harmful subsidies to unsustainable consumption patterns (fossil fuels, tax breaks), and stop funding motorways and local airports; the key concerns were the way in which these policies would be implemented and as part of which kind of policy package;

eradication of corruption and law enforcement.

Fig. 3: In your opinion, which of the following policies would encourage more sustainable practices by the private sector in your country?

Climate change targets for private sector companies	10 (37 %)
Sustainability targets for private sector companies	13 (48 %)
Private sector projects or products would only be approved if they met minimum environmental standards (e.g. avoiding adverse environmental impacts and encouraging waste reduction)	15 (56 %)
Establishing a publicly-available international index ranking of poor and best-performing companies, based on their meeting climate change / sustainability targets	16 (59 %)
A system of penalties for poor-performing companies, based on their meeting climate change / sustainability targets	15 (56 %)
A system of rewards for well-performing companies, based on their meeting climate change / sustainability targets	18 (67 %)
Better environmental regulation by government	18 (67 %)
A points-based system for products to determine how 'green' they are	10 (37 %)
More information for citizens to enable them to monitor green private sector choices	14 (52 %)
Increased funding for green technologies	17 (63 %)
Sustainability training for workforces	14 (52 %)
Other, please specify	7 (26 %)

*'Other' includes: government procurement being dependent on green standards for products; ensuring green skills and sustainability form a core part of all MBAs and other business-relevant degrees or vocational courses; more useful information for investors to enable them to monitor all private sector choices; greening the supply chain; strengthening regulation and enforcement; long-range certainty about government policies to give business confidence to invest for the long term; operating within ecological limits of resource production and consumption.