



Gulf Research Centre Cambridge
Knowledge for All

Workshop 6

Green Economy in the Gulf Region

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Abstract

Green economy (GE), a concept of environmental economics that aims to combine economic development and environmental sustainability, is gaining increasing prominence on the global sustainable development agenda. First introduced as an economic recovery strategy that creates green jobs for economic growth post-2008, it became one of the major themes of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development organised in Rio de Janeiro in mid-2012, figuring prominently in the conference outcome document ‘The Future We Want’ and later on in the post-2015 development agenda.¹ Given its recent introduction into international development debates, GE has no globally accepted definition but is most commonly understood as an economy that results in ‘improved human well-being and social equity, while significantly reducing

¹ “Green Economy in the Context of Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication,” in UN General Assembly (UNGA), *The Future We Want*, A/RES/66/288 (11 September 2012).

environmental risks and ecological scarcities.’² Arguably, the main aim of the different GE agendas is incorporating the full environmental costs in the economy and recognising the value of natural capital in a way that benefits the economy and society and the environment.³

In the Gulf, issues of GE have risen to prominence as a consequence of the fast, partly uncontrolled growth in the economy, population and natural resource demand during the last decade. These pressures have accelerated the governments’ interest in a range of technologies, policies and tools formerly associated with the needs of energy-poor and importing countries, including: alternative energy, resource and energy efficiency, energy savings, and pollution and emission control. Some Gulf States have even gone further, with the United Arab Emirates (UAE) currently expected to launch a national medium-term green growth plan by the end of 2013.

The focus of this workshop will be on understanding these domestic and international developments and their broader implications for the Gulf. More specifically, the workshop offers a forum for discussing various aspects related to GE in the GCC countries such as:

- Green economy policies, strategies and tools
- Shifting towards a green economy (implementation and implications)
- Financing green economy transitions
- Opportunities, challenges and obstacles to implementing a green economy
- ‘Beyond GDP indicators’ for green economy
- Green economy sectors, such as green cities, and green economy themes, including renewable energy
- Regional cooperation in areas relevant to green economy, and
- Gulf States’ engagements with the international green economy agenda, including negotiations, institutions, and cooperation.

Description and Rationale

The workshop offers a forum for presenting original and high-quality research on the previously-described aspects of the green economy (GE) approach in the Gulf, both examining current developments and plans as well as looking at the likely future course. The scope of the workshop therefore includes various stages of policy and implementation, including formulation, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. The workshop welcomes papers examining individual country case studies, comparative studies, and regional-level studies. Studies examining specific green sectors, such as energy, industry, transport, waste, agriculture and tourism, and thematic issues related to GE, such as renewable energy, water, climate change and the politics of GE,

² UNEP, *Towards a Green Economy: Pathways to Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication* (UNEP 2011), 16.

³ UNEP, *Towards a Green Economy*, 18; World Bank, *Inclusive Green Growth: The Pathway to Sustainable Development* (Washington, D.C., World Bank, 2012), 7.

will also be examined. The workshop is also interested in future-oriented studies that focus on policies and scenarios for a green economy in the GCC countries and their effects on sustainable development.

The workshop departs from the assumption that, given its rising global relevance, shifting towards a green economy should receive more attention from all relevant stakeholder groups in the Gulf, including the decision makers, private sector, experts and civil society. Of particular relevance will be to understand: how the global push towards GE will impact on production and consumption patterns; what the potential opportunities, synergies, and challenges of implementing a GE are domestically; and what environmental, social, economic and political dimensions a shift to GE would entail. Arguably, increased, region-specific knowledge on these aspects can help inform better policies, improve their successful implementation and, this way, enhance the capability of the Gulf States to achieve their sustainable development goals, and to pursue environmentally sustainable development that guarantees human well-being for present and future generations.

Contribution to Gulf Studies

This workshop will contribute to Gulf Studies literature by bringing together a collection of high-quality original research on the topic of GE in the Gulf region. Given the concept's recent introduction into the global mainstream development agenda, existing literature on green growth/economy currently largely comprises technical manuals and some single-country case studies only. Academic studies on GE in the Gulf are absent, and policy-relevant research is scarce, with few scholarly works touching upon the opportunities, challenges and developments relating to GE in the Gulf Studies literature. While there have been a number of recent contributions on related issues, in particular in the energy sector – including energy intensity, efficiency and savings;⁴ demand side issues;⁵ and renewable energy⁶ – no publication to date has systematically examined GE in the Gulf, including an analysis of key sectors and cross-cutting issues, such as investment, policy, regulation and job creation. This workshop aims to fill this gap by bringing together a rich compilation of studies examining the issue from multiple angles and disciplinary approaches and publishing these as an edited and peer-reviewed volume.

⁴ Glada Lahn, Paul Stevens, and Felix Preston, *Saving Oil and Gas in the Gulf*, Chatham House Report (London: Chatham House, August 2013).

⁵ Laura El-Katiri, "Energy Sustainability in the Gulf States: The Why and the How," Working Paper (Oxford: Oxford Institute for Energy Studies, 2013); Jim Krane, "Energy Policy in the Gulf Arab States: Shortage and Reform in the World's Storehouse of Energy," conference paper presented in the International Association for Energy Economics Conference), November 4-7, 2012, Austin.

⁶ IRENA, *Renewable Energy Country Profiles: Middle East* (Abu Dhabi: IRENA, November 2012); EU-GCC Clean Energy Network and Masdar Institute, *Renewable Energy Readiness Assessment Report: The GCC Countries. Executive Summary. 2011-2012* (2013); Imen Jeridi Bachelier, *Renewable Energy in the GCC Countries: Resources, Potential and Prospects* (Gulf Research Center, 2012).

Anticipated Papers

Scholars and participants from all over the world are invited to submit paper proposals and participate in this workshop. Albeit the main focus of the workshop is on the Gulf region, studies from other countries and regions (especially in the MENA) that are of relevance or provide examples or lessons for GCC countries will be considered. In addition to scholars working on the various aspects of GE in the Gulf region, we seek to encourage the participation of interested scholars, practitioners, civil society experts, and decision makers from the countries of the Gulf

Papers presented to the workshop may cover country, comparative, regional or thematic studies. The workshop welcomes papers on all countries of the Gulf region, as well as papers from other countries in the MENA region, or outside, that are of relevance or can provide lessons for the Gulf.

Country, comparative and regional studies deal with how the region or individual countries are – or could be – formulating and applying GE policies and tools, and examine associated benefits and challenges.

Sectoral and thematic studies examine relevant aspects of GE, including tools and policies, for specific sectors, such as energy, industry, and buildings, and thematic areas, including renewable energy, water, biodiversity and climate change. Questions examined include what has been achieved and what is still needed. Studies focusing on: the interlinkages between various sectors, policies, or tools; GE indicators going ‘beyond the GDP’; and green policies that aim at correcting market and regulatory failures to improve environmental quality are especially welcome.

Workshop Director Profiles

Dr Mari Luomi holds a Ph.D. in Middle East Politics from Durham University. She specialises in the environmental and natural resource politics of the Gulf, with a particular focus on climate change, as well as the international politics of climate change. In the past, she has worked as researcher for the Finnish Institute of International Affairs, post-doctoral fellow for the Center for International and Regional Studies of Georgetown University in Qatar, and research associate for the Georgetown University School of Foreign Service in Qatar. Dr Luomi has also worked as senior researcher and advisor for the State of Qatar, supporting the Qatari Presidency of the 2012 UN Climate Change Conference and as an advisor to the Qatar National Food Security Programme. Currently, she is research associate at the Oxford Institute for Energy Studies and writer for the International Institute for Sustainable Development Reporting Services (Earth Negotiations Bulletin). Dr Luomi’s publications range from academic books and peer-reviewed articles to reports, essays, and policy briefs. Her book “The Gulf Monarchies and Climate Change: Abu Dhabi and Qatar in an Era of Natural

Unsustainability” (London: Hurst), based on her Ph.D. thesis, came out in 2012, and her articles have appeared in Middle East Policy and Journal of Arabian Studies.

Dr. Mohamed Abdel Raouf is Research Fellow, Environment Research Programme at the Gulf Research Center. He has a doctorate in environmental sciences (environmental Economics) from Ain Shams University in Egypt and has participated in advanced courses in environmental management at Augsburg University, Germany. He has been a lecturer of Environmental Accounting and Economics, has worked on several sustainable development plans and been a consultant for the Egyptian Ministry of Industry, Red Sea Sustainable Tourism Initiative in Egypt, DANIDA and Federation of Egyptian Industries for the Clean Production Seed Project, the National Environmental Action Plan of Egypt, Egypt’s CDM Strategy, the Socio-Economic Study of Al-Luhaia Fishing Port project in Yemen, the Badr Petroleum co-budgeting team and the Bapetco-Shell Egypt Sustainable Development Team. In addition, he was also a part of the project team which prepared the Green Gulf Report (2006). He authored three books: *Environment in the Age of Revolution*, Dar El-Maaref, August 2013, Cairo (in Arabic); *Green Policy to balance energy and environment needs- the Case of UAE*, The Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research (ECSSR), May 2013, Abu Dhabi (in Arabic); *Economic Instruments as an Environmental Policy Tool: The Case of GCC Countries*, Gulf Research center, Dubai, November 2007 (in English and Arabic) March 2008.

Selected Readings

Abdel Raouf Abdel Hamid, Mohamed, “Green Economy Challenges in the MENA Region.” In *Green Economy: Turning Over a New Leaf Towards Sustainable Development, Perspective*, eds. Nina Netzer and Judith Althaus G (Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2012), 21-26.

AFED, “The Green Economy in a Changing Arab World.” AFED Fourth Annual Report, Beirut, Lebanon, November, 2011 (in Arabic).

Azaba, Hussein, Najib Saab, and Bashar Zeitoon (eds.). “Green Economy: Sustainable Transition in a Changing Arab World.” *Arab Environment 4* (Beirut: Arab Forum for Environment and Development, 2011).

Hultman, Nathan, Katherine Sierra, Jason Eis, Allison Shapiro. *Green Growth Innovation: New Pathways for International Cooperation* (Global Green Growth Institute and Brookings Institution, 2012).

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