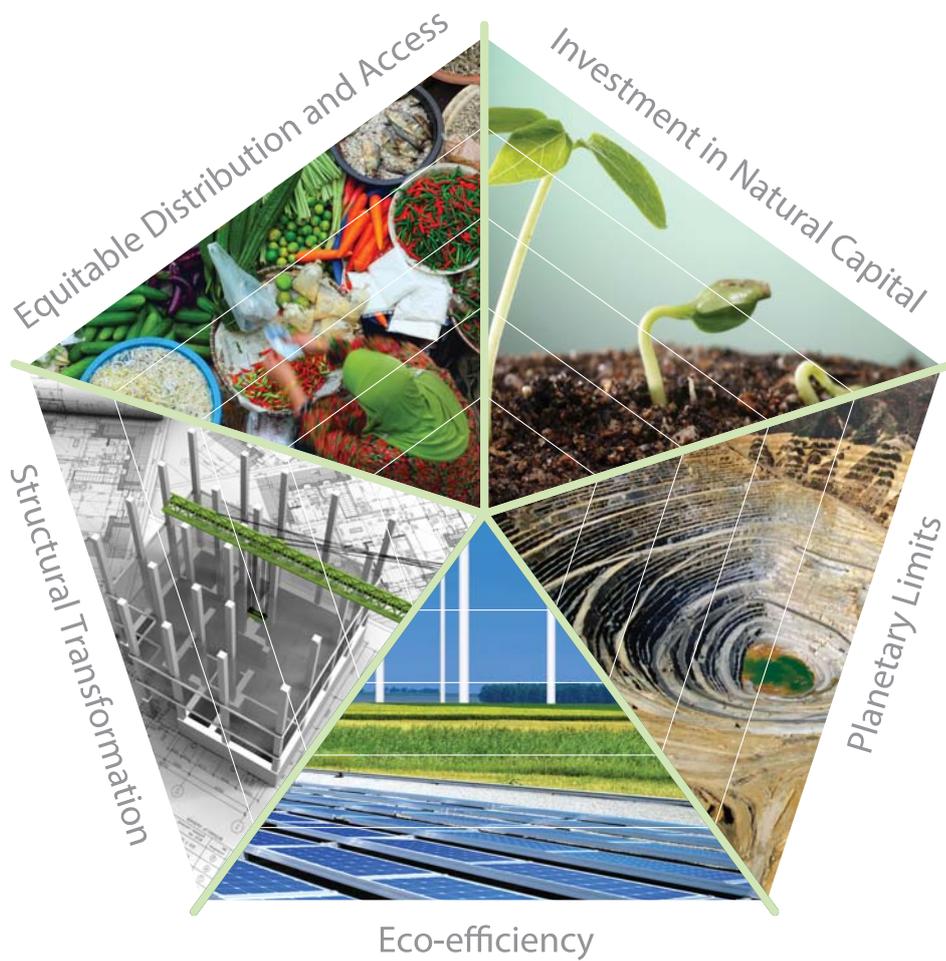




Green Growth Indicators:

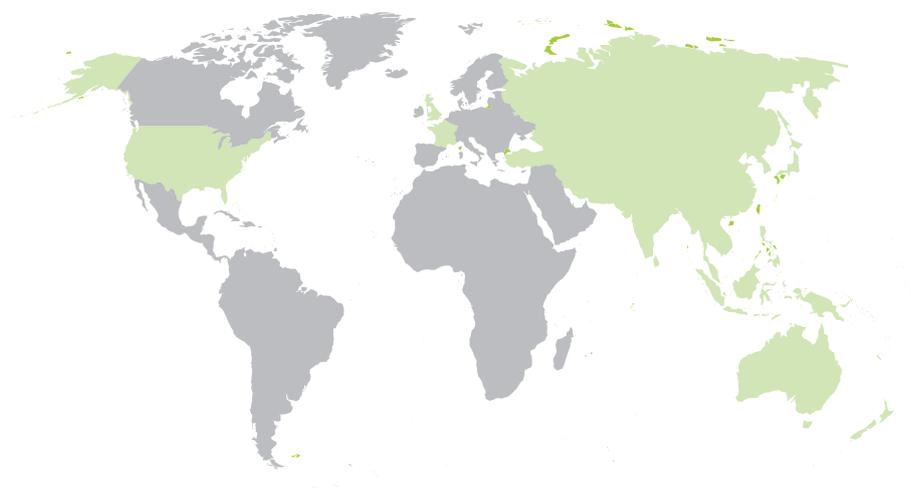
A practical approach for Asia and the Pacific



**Greening of Economic
Growth Series**



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Abbreviations and acronyms

ADB	Asian Development Bank
CSIRO	Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (Australia)
ESCAP	Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GHG	Greenhouse gas
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SEEA	System of Environmental-Economic Accounting
UNEMG	United Nations Environment Management Group
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme

Executive Summary

Several countries in Asia and the Pacific have launched high-level policy initiatives and action plans to promote green growth, and the green economy. As a consequence the demand for indicators of economic growth that supports, rather than detracts from, sustainable development, is growing.

Green growth indicator frameworks developed by international organisations and partnerships of organisations share a focus on a few key dimensions. These include human well-being, resource efficiency and productivity, economic transformation, environmental quality and natural capital, as well as policy responses. A review of the green growth policy priorities of many ESCAP member states shows that the policy context and the specific objectives for green growth in developing countries require closer attention to indicators that explicitly address inequality, access to basic ecosystem services, human capital investments (including traditional knowledge); urbanisation patterns and infrastructure development; governance (transparency, accountability and inclusiveness); resilience and a sectoral perspective (including in particular agriculture).

This publication informs policy makers and practitioners involved in developing and monitoring green growth strategies. It proposes a framework for green growth indicators that seeks to respond to the context of developing countries and their expressed policy needs. It reflects ESCAP's mandate and experience in promoting, analysing and advocating green growth in the context of a broader vision of inclusive and sustainable development. In response to the mandate of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) the proposed framework is based on collaboration at the science-policy interface through the partnership of ESCAP with the Commonwealth, Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation of Australia.

The proposed framework for green growth indicators is based on a wider concept of quality of growth, and puts attention on five main dimensions of economic development - equity and inclusiveness; efficiency and productivity; structural transformation; investment in natural capital; and planetary boundaries. ESCAP's framework aligns with previous work on green economy and green growth indicators with particular attention to inequality and access to basic resources. It recognises the need to assess and mitigate risks – to set targets to ensure that economic activity and its resource use consequences stay within planetary limits. The importance of governance for each element of the framework is also emphasized.

Several indicators are identified - some of which are well-known, widely-accepted and for which data is available, while others require further definition and investment for harmonization of methodology and data collection. The indicators proposed are not intended to be comprehensive or prescriptive - they are intended to assist government agencies and businesses to define indicators that address their particular circumstances, and to adapt them to priority economic sectors and specific geographic circumstances.

Future work will be required to refine the indicators, make data available to strengthen the policy analysis capacity through economic modelling for sustainable development, and support governments that wish to develop their own information base and institutional capacity to measure and model green growth policy alternatives.

The policy challenge – aligning economic growth with sustainable development

A convergence of pressure points including rising prices for food, metals and fuels and climate change has changed the economic context of the 21st century. Policymakers increasingly recognize that achieving sustainability rests almost entirely on getting the economy “right.”

Green growth, or environmentally sustainable economic growth, has been recognized in Asia and the Pacific as well as other parts of the world as a strategy for achieving sustainable development to pursue the dual objective of increased human well-being and environmental stewardship.¹

The 2012 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Rio+20), addressing the theme of the green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, encouraged each country to consider the implementation of green economy policies in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication to drive sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth and job creation, particularly for women, youth and the poor. This is of special importance for Asia and the Pacific, a region of fast economic growth but persistent poverty, rising environmental pressures and increasing dependency on imports of natural resources and high vulnerability to climate change.

Green growth is an approach to economic development that fosters environmentally sustainable, low carbon and socially-inclusive development. Green growth turns resource constraints and the climate crisis into economic growth opportunities through investing in economic growth and well-being while using fewer resources and generating fewer emissions in the important domains of food production, transport and mobility, construction and housing, heavy industry, energy and water.

Green growth is a prerequisite for building a green economy and is characterized by substantially increased investments in economic activities that build on and enhance the earth’s natural capital or reduce ecological scarcities and environmental risks – activities such as renewable energy, low carbon transport, energy- and water-efficient buildings, sustainable agriculture and forest management, and sustainable fisheries.

Several countries have launched high-level policy initiatives and action plans to promote economic growth that supports, rather than detracts from, sustainable development. The Republic of Korea declared low carbon green growth as a national vision and strategy in 2008, and established supportive legislation and a Presidential Committee on Green Growth. Japan has initiated a policy principle to develop a sound material cycle society and China has instituted a law for a circular economy based on resource efficiency and a green economy.

Cambodia has agreed on a National Green Growth Roadmap, and Viet Nam has developed a Green Growth Strategy. Kazakhstan, Malaysia and Mongolia also have significant policy initiatives related to green growth, resource efficiency and a circular economy, and other strategies are in the pipeline in many countries in Asia and the Pacific.

These policy initiatives have identified a need for new and comprehensive policy indicators that enable

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