

NEWS RELEASE

Academics, governments and practitioners jointly call for global green fiscal reform

Green Growth Knowledge Platform (29-30 January) triggers major global research push on fiscal policy in support of a green economy transition

More than 200 academics, policy makers and experts came together in Venice, Italy, during the week last week of January to jointly discuss and debate a large emerging body of research on green fiscal policy, triggered by the Green Growth Knowledge Platform (GGKP) for its Third Annual Conference.

Hosted by the Ca'Foscari University of Venice, The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the conference took place on 29-30 January on the theme of "Fiscal Policies and the Green Economy Transition: Generating Knowledge – Creating Impact".

Top academics joined key policy makers on more than 20 panel sessions where they examined newly developed research on the most effective means of introducing and reforming fiscal measures in support of green growth, across various national contexts.

"Properly designed fiscal instruments can be a powerful tool for governments in achieving economic, environmental and social goals," said Ligia Noronha, Director, Division of Technology, Industry and Economics, UNEP. "Through the use of appropriate complementary policies to address distributional and policy implications, governments can use fiscal measures to drive forward the transition to a fair and equitable green economy."

Fiscal measures in the form of taxes, charges, subsidies, incentives and budget allocations can help generate revenue for environmental and social purposes, shift behaviour towards low-carbon activities and stimulate green investment by pricing environmental externalities.

To stimulate much needed debate and understanding in this area, the GGKP commissioned six in-depth scoping studies to be presented at the conference. The development of the papers was coordinated through the GGKP's Fiscal Instruments Research Committee, comprised of leading experts from across the GGKP's 37 partner organizations and Advisory Committee.

In addition, the GGKP received more than 200 submissions in response to its call for research abstracts; the top 25 per cent were selected for further elaboration and discussion at the conference. These papers formed the basis for discussion among experts and policy makers at the conference.

“The format of this Conference is novel in that it illustrates new research, whilst also stimulating the transformation of these findings into useful policy recommendations and blueprints for fiscal policy implementation” said Dr. Carlo Carraro, President Emeritus and Co-Chair of the GGKP’s Advisory Committee. “The papers presented in the various contributed sessions and debates will ultimately serve to improve the way in which governments manage green growth and trigger ideas for new fiscal policy interventions.”

Topics covered by conference include fiscal measures for climate change mitigation and adaptation, sustainable water management, green fiscal reform, transportation systems, environmental taxes in developing countries, incentives for investment in clean energy and more.

The outcomes of the conference will be used by the GGKP and its partners to promote innovative thinking around fiscal policy and to drive forward a global research agenda to address key knowledge gaps identified in the use of fiscal instruments in support of a green economy transition.

“The scope of fiscal instruments should not only include developing incentive and disincentive based Pigovian and Coasean measures in the form of taxes, subsidies or other market instruments. There is a need to revisit the current fiscal decision-making processes for mainstreaming environmental sustainability in development policy through innovative thinking that promotes implementation of green growth initiatives” said Dr. Rajendra Pachauri, Director General of The Energy and Resources Institute. “I am sure the Conference would be an extremely productive forum for providing intellectual direction on fiscal instruments.”

More information on the conference can be found at:

<http://www.greengrowthknowledge.org/conference2015>