

OECD Forum 2011: Green Growth



The current crisis shows that we cannot afford to go back to doing "business as usual". OECD countries need growth if they are to emerge from the crisis and create jobs.

But where will that growth come from? What role can innovation play in this transition to a greener economy, and how to ensure people have the appropriate skills? What are the barriers impeding the transition? What role can green taxes play in achieving green growth? How to "green" trade and development? And how can people's consumption patterns be changed to achieve greener growth?

By looking at such questions, the OECD can help show the way to make a cleaner low-carbon economy compatible with growth. Policy makers are confronted with record unemployment, unsustainable fiscal deficits and slow growth while environmental and climate concerns are becoming increasingly important.

Green growth is a way to pursue growth and development that are sustainable both economically and environmentally. Green growth identifies opportunities of new green industries, jobs and technologies, while managing the structural changes associated with the transition to a greener economy.

Emerging countries won't become rich by following the same path as countries that industrialised earlier. The environmental costs would be too high for a start. Fortunately, new technologies are enabling developing countries to leap forward in their development, the spread of mobile phones being one example, even if the so-called digital divide remains an issue. All countries are now looking for forms of growth that use resources more efficiently. Energy and transport will be among the earliest drivers of greener growth, and this means changes that will affect everything, such as land values, urban planning, farming and where you live. New technologies will play a role in helping the world feed itself too.

Discovering and developing new sources of growth will depend on developing the intellectual assets needed to create, promote, diffuse and adopt the intellectual and material innovations underpinning them. Policy-makers have to take a lead, by tapping new sources of growth themselves, and setting the regulatory ground to allow new breakthroughs to happen and breaking down inertias, whether institutional or economic, that prevent them. But most of all, they have to invest in innovation and skills.

The OECD will deliver a *Towards Green Growth report* to the OECD annual ministerial meeting taking place alongside the OECD 50th anniversary Forum. This report will elaborate specific tools and recommendations to help governments identify policies that can achieve the most efficient shift to greener growth.