

CALL FOR PAPERS



<http://global-systems-science.eu/gss/content/unpacking-green-growth-%E2%80%93-trans-continental-conference>

UNPACKING GREEN GROWTH, THE III OPEN GLOBAL SYSTEMS SCIENCE CONFERENCE

Hosted by:

Arizona State University <http://www.asu.edu/>

Development Research Center of the State Council
of the People's Republic of China <http://en.drc.gov.cn/>

Global Climate Forum <http://www.globalclimateforum.org/>

And the European Commission via the GSS project cluster (<http://global-systems-science.org>)

October 8-10, 2014

Global Systems Science (GSS) is about providing global systems of interconnected solutions to global problems. This involves not only looking at the whole of our planet and its societies, but also looking at it from a transdisciplinary and transformative perspective that connects all kinds of scientific knowledge, and engaging as many people as possible in collective action. The concept of green growth has been proposed as one of the few globally distributed, innovative and engaging systemic solutions to our current global predicament.

The ICT revolution that is currently ongoing will fundamentally reshape our societies, economies and institutions, as well as our environment. The current moment is therefore the right one to reflect on the kind of future we would like to see ahead of us, and the role of ICT in implementing a vision of a global sustainable society.

The future of global economic growth raises a whole range of questions, including, but not limited to, purely economic ones. Will the successes in reducing global poverty continue? Will inequality within key economies continue to increase? Will global and local environmental disruption continue? In the face of these questions, *green growth* has been proposed as an appropriate strategy. The vision of billions of poor people achieving a decent standard of living while economic activities become a force of environmental enhancement rather than disruption is certainly attractive. But is it feasible? What experiences have been made so far? What obstacles, what risks should be expected? What alternatives do exist? How to validate transformative narratives about global systems?



On October 8-10, scholars and practitioners will meet in the US, China and Europe to share insights and discuss open questions about green growth. The three sub-events will be connected via Internet, and the conference as a whole shall help to develop the research needed to address global challenges like the one of green growth. The American and European sub-events will be held on October 8-9. The Chinese sub-event will be held in a scenic rural region during October 9-10 with a separate one-day sub-event on October 8 in Beijing.

Call for Papers and Posters

The overall conference will be structured roughly according to the following eight topics, each one with two sub-topics. Authors are encouraged to submit abstracts for papers or posters that reflect these topics and offer a significant contribution to the trans-continental discussions. At the present stage, this structure is relatively flexible to accommodate needs and opportunities that may arise in the coming months. Depending on papers and posters submitted and accepted, particular topics will be discussed in one, two or three of the locations of the conference.

1. Environment

- Complexities of climate policy
- Challenges of air pollution

The very notion of green growth answers to the reality of global environmental change and the risks that it engenders for the future. By focusing on climate change and air pollution, the conference shall foster research about the interaction between short and long term and between local and global problems.

2. ITC as a game changer

- Big data and high performance computing
- Social media and civil society

The rise of information technologies is changing the way we process material objects, the way we generate and use energy flows, and of course the way we gather, store and process data about all kinds of situations. Doing so in an effective way can open up major opportunities of green growth, not only in view of resource use, but also in view of making better individual and collective decisions about problems of global relevance. However, there is a great need to explore and realize these possibilities while being aware of the related pitfalls.

3. Green business models

- Material goods and energy
- Information services

Businesses experimenting with or actually implementing green business models find increasing attention in the media. However, little solid empirical evidence about their experiences is available, and theoretical analyses in the literature are full of unresolved conflicts. Clearly, research is warranted on this topic. It is obviously very important for businesses dealing with material goods and energy, but increasingly the role of information services needs to be investigated in view of the possibility of global green growth.



4. Pitfalls of green growth

- Greenwashing
- New inequalities

History is full of failures and disasters brought about in the name of lofty ideals. As with other global problems, we need an open conversation about green growth with plenty of space for critical analysis. Two kinds of critiques may be distinguished: on one hand there are analyses focusing on situations where green rhetoric is used to create mere illusions of sustainability, on the other hand there are those focusing on situations where green growth policies end up – perhaps unintentionally – worsening the situation they were supposed to improve. The latter issue is especially sensitive in view of the dynamics of inequality at different scales.

5. Sustainable finance?

- Measuring systemic risk
- Global financial governance

So far, the conversations about financial risks and the one about sustainability develop largely separated from each other. This is unfortunate for many reasons. E.g., financial risks and the risks usually associated with sustainability show a similar pattern: short-term risks are often addressed by postponing them into a more distant future, often raising the stakes. Against this background, research about how to identify and measure systemic risks on financial markets may be relevant for other kinds of risk, too. And discussions about global financial governance should not be kept separate from the question of what kind of growth the world economy will experience in the 21st century.

6. Theory and models

- Beyond marginalism
- Enhancing the modeling toolbox

The literature on green growth illustrates a point of much broader relevance in the study of global problems: there is no really solid theory about these problems. In view of green growth – and of many other problems – the most influential theoretical approach is the marginalist one. In this approach, one focusses on marginal changes, studies the trade-offs they involve and then extrapolates these to much larger scales. While this is often appropriate, there is an urgent need to go beyond marginal analysis when thinking about such a profound shift as the one implied by the notion of green growth. Given the importance of simulation models for today's policy debates, this is related to the challenge of enhancing the presently available modeling toolbox.

7. Regional dynamics

- Opportunities for rural regions
- Futures of urban systems

Ultimately, the future of green growth hinges on a whole set of global coordination problems. For a start, however, - positive and negative - experiences of green growth seem to be made mainly at the regional level. A key question is whether peripheral, rural, poor regions can realize new opportunities in a green growth perspective, e.g. by combining advanced information technologies with a new valorization of landscapes that inhabitants of urban regions may perceive as precious resources. A complementary question is how the majority of humankind that will live in urban agglomerations in the coming decades can do so in a sustainable and satisfying way. Case studies, broader empirical analyses and theoretical advances are all needed to address these questions.

8. Transition governance

- Governments and international institutions.
- Other actors and transnational complexes

Managing the transition towards a more sustainable pattern of global development is a daunting task. Governments and international institutions formed by them will play an essential, but certainly not sufficient role in this process. Examining their potential and limitations, especially in avoiding major conflicts and securing non-trivial levels of fairness, is a key research task. An indispensable, complementary task is to investigate how other actors - businesses, media, academic institutions, NGOs and many more - can contribute to transnational governance complexes addressing challenges and pitfalls of green growth. This need not be limited to actors existing today; at least as important will be enquires into new kinds of organizations that may contribute to an environmentally, economically and - last but not least - socially successful sustainability transition.

Submission of Abstracts

Electronic submissions of abstracts for papers and posters (300 words maximum) will be through EasyChair: <https://www.easychair.org/conferences/?conf=ogss3>

If you do not already have an EasyChair account, please sign up first at:
<https://www.easychair.org/account/signup.cgi?>

The official language of the conference at all three locations is English. Please submit abstracts in English.

Abstracts will be reviewed and accepted according to their order of submission and relevance to overall conference objectives. Authors of accepted abstracts will be invited to participate at the conference location nearest to their place of work and residence. There will be no conference registration fees for presenters. Presenters will be responsible for their own travel and lodging. There may be a limited number of small travel grants for presenters who express need. Papers at the conference will be presented in a short oral version while the text will be available over the internet at all locations.

Posters at the conference will be presented electronically (pdf file format) and available over the Internet at all locations. Upon acceptance of the abstract, poster authors will be provided additional information on preparation of the poster for electronic presentation. The abstract should articulate the objectives of the presenter, a brief but thorough description of the research, and the expected gain by those attending the talk. When submitting an abstract, please identify your first and second choice of topics that best represent your work from the following list:



Overview of the conference topics:

Environment

- Complexities of climate policy
- Challenges of air pollution

ITC as a game changer

- Big data and high performance computing
- Social media and civil society

Green business models

- Material goods and energy
- Information services

Pitfalls of green growth

- Greenwashing
- New inequalities

Sustainable finance?

- Measuring systemic risk
- Global financial governance

Theory and models

- Beyond marginalism
- Enhancing the modeling toolbox

Regional dynamics

- Opportunities for rural regions
- Futures of urban systems

Transition governance

- Governments and international institutions
- Other actors and transitional complexes.

Important Dates

June 15, 2014: Deadline for submission of abstracts of papers or posters.

July 15, 2014: Acceptance/Rejection notification.

September 15, 2014: Final abstracts due in electronic form. Accepted abstracts will be distributed to the conference participants, as will complete papers if submitted by that date.

September 15, 2014: Final posters due in electronic form. Accepted posters will be available on the Internet to the conference participants.

Review process

All submissions will be peer reviewed by at least two reviewers. Reviewers will be accepting only those abstracts that indicate high quality theory and research and are consistent with the objectives of the conference.



Conference Global Organizing Committee

Zhangang Han (Beijing Normal University)
Guido Caldarelli (IMT Lucca, Italy)
Ulf Dahlsten (former EC Director and Global Climate Forum)
Nigel Gilbert (University of Surrey, UK)
Carlo Jaeger (Arizona State University)
Yanli Lue (Beijing Normal University)
Antoine Mandel (Université Paris)
Diana Mangalagiu (University of Oxford)
Jahel Mielke (Global Climate Forum)
Lyn Mowafy (Arizona State University)
Franziska Schutze (Global Climate Forum)
Gesine Steudle (Global Climate Forum)
Joan David Tabara (Autonomous University of Barcelona)
Sander Van Der Leeuw (Arizona State University)
Saini Yang (Beijing Normal University)
Qian Ye (Beijing Normal University)
Yongsheng Zhang (Development Research Centre, PRC)

Venues

In Europe: European Commission premises at Berlaymont
In the US: Arizona State University SkySong
In China: TBD

If you have questions please contact:

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