

The Green Growth Manifesto – FAQs

Frequently Asked Questions

Isn't growth the problem?

There is an important argument against green growth, for example, we could have prosperity without growth and we could do more with less. We agree with these ideas in principle, but at the same time think it is important to contextualise these ideas. For example, in wealthy countries and households, we can have prosperity without growth and could do more with less, but in countries where large numbers of people lack improved water supply and sanitation and have crowded housing, more resources and economic growth are essential.

Why green growth?

We need to have growth in the size of the green economy relative to the rest of the economy (i.e., lifting the ceiling) and once all of the economy is green we can still have growth through innovation and improvements in sustainable technologies and practices (i.e., raising the roof). Given that we have such a long way to go before the entire economy is green, I think there is a strong case for green growth and lifting the ceiling. Maybe one day we can consider whether we need to raise the roof, but that is likely to be a decision made by future generations.

Existing certification systems seem to tackle green or social issues, but miss when they try to do both - how will you address green and social issues together?

This is an important challenge. To some extent environmental issues are easier to address, for example using eco-labelling. What is socially acceptable is highly subjective and as such more challenging. There are some red lines for example when it comes to human slavery, but what about inequity? Poverty? Living wages? We are not sure how these issues will be addressed, but will follow a process with Green Data Classification Committees (GDCCs) developing criteria that are nationally appropriate, taking into account local context.

Note: GDCCs are expected to have a central role in the implementation of The Green Growth Manifesto and The Green Economy Architecture, with members from government, business, civil society and academia, presenting evidence and deciding what criteria should be used to decide if economic activities “do no harm” or “do no harm over time” and should be included in official statistics on the green economy.

What if a business, industry, or area is already doing no harm – do we need certification?

No, certification is not always necessary. Certification is just one way of being assured economic activities are doing no harm. However, activities that are not certified (by reliable certification schemes) need to be verified as doing no harm or no harm over time, if they are to be recognised as being part of the green

economy. For example, if a regulatory regime is effective and can be shown to ensure an industry is doing no harm, then the entire industry could be included in the green economy. But this will require robust evidence and research.

How can we build the green economy?

Great question... and that is why we need The Green Economy Architecture.

What is The Green Economy Architecture?

The Manifesto provides the vision, but The Green Economy Architecture provides a blueprint for building the green economy starting with building blocks that already exist (e.g. green certification schemes). Figure 1 below provides a quick summary of The Green Economy Architecture, with green certification and verification as foundations, then institutional pillars related to the economy, which are required to ensure we “do no harm” and have restoration where harm is done. If we achieve this, we literally achieve sustainable development that “meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”¹.



Figure 1: Summary of The Green Economy Architecture.

For more information on The Green Economy Architecture, please see our short video on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8qaRQqCNwSI>

Will restoration include swapping “like for like” and “off-sets” or will restoration be site specific?

The criteria for deciding what counts as restoration is yet to be determined, but for now the working assumption is restoration should be site specific in most

¹ World Commission on Environment and Development definition from 1987.

cases i.e., harmful activities are followed by restorative activities at a specific location. Locations are important when it comes to environmental harm, as most harms are localised i.e., within the immediate, nearby or downstream physical surroundings. In the case of greenhouse gas emissions, this is not the case as the impacts are global. Hence greenhouse gas emissions offsets in other locations are likely to be acceptable.

Social restoration has to involve aggrieved parties and needs to consider issues such as climate justice and just transitions.

How does the Manifesto align with sustainable finance taxonomies?

From what we have seen thus far, sustainable finance taxonomies align well with the principle of “do no harm”. If this proves to be the case in practice, then sustainable finance taxonomies may be an important part of defining the green economy, making it easier to identify green economic activities. It is important to note, the Manifesto includes restorative “do no harm over time” activities as well as much wider “do no harm” activities. Some taxonomies and green classifications focus more on restorative activities, hence include less economic activities than the Manifesto or The Green Economy Architecture.

Is there proof of principle, using green certification to define and measure the green economy?

Yes, Marcel de Vries (from the Tiaki Institute) prepared a green Food Price Index for New Zealand using select certification schemes as a basis for deciding which foods are considered green. At a minimum we can measure the prices of green certified goods and services and measure inflation for these products. We are also investigating whether we can apply similar approaches to measure green domestic green production, green jobs and other important metrics.

Will the Taiki Institute become a certification body?

No, the Tiaki Institute believes there are many other organisations better placed to provide certification services for example members of the Global Ecolabeling Network (<https://www.globalecolabelling.net/>). The Tiaki Institute will work with certification bodies and others organisations capable of verifying economic activities “do no harm” or “do no harm over time”. The Tiaki Institute is simply providing the vision in the Manifesto, and the blueprint in The Green Economy Architecture, and will work with others to realise green growth and economic development.

Note: For a comprehensive list of ecolabeling schemes, see the Ecolabel Index: <https://www.ecolabelindex.com/ecolabels/>

What next?

We are working with partners on The Green Economy Architecture which shows how to build the green economy, starting with the building blocks that already exist. If you want to get involved, please contact us at the Tiaki Institute (jeremy.webb.15@alumni.ucl.ac.uk).