



Summary of Green Growth Consultation

A Green Growth Definition for the STRING Region

This Briefing Paper proposes a working definition for 'green growth' in the STRING Region based on consultations with representatives from the five regional partners (Region Hovedstaden, Region Sjælland, Hamburg, Schleswig-Holstein & Region Skåne). This paper presents the working definition and the rationale behind its development for review and agreement by key policy-makers within participating regional administrations. The proposed definition is as follows:

"The term 'green growth' recognises the need for economic growth that is balanced with environmentally and socially responsible economic development. Within the STRING Region, this means putting in place policies and strategies in identified economic sectors that address climate change by reducing harmful emissions, using energy and resources efficiently, and supporting business and industry in innovating and implementing green, low carbon approaches."

WHY DEVELOP A GREEN GROWTH DEFINITION?

A green growth definition that can be used by regional administrations and inter-regional associations within the STRING Region is important from numerous perspectives. Developing a clear definition helps to summarise the core issues that green growth aims to address, to set the scope for what is to be achieved and to communicate these objectives to stakeholders. More generally, the definition is intended to clearly set out the strategic policy directions that the regional administrations plan to undertake in order to realise green growth.

However, to be successful these policy directions must be aligned with existing policy objectives at EU, national and regional levels, as well as with the goals of relevant inter-regional bodies. Fortunately, political will to incorporate green growth objectives already exists at these levels. Sustainable growth, smart growth and inclusive growth are central priorities of Europe's "EU 2020" growth strategy, and these priorities are clearly aligned with green growth. Nationally, Denmark, Germany and Sweden already prescribe to an agenda that, directly or indirectly, aims to achieve aspects of green growth within their economies. Further, each regional administration within the STRING Region is tasked at the national

level to pursue growth, and these administrations have indicated in strategic documentation that environmentally and socially responsible growth is central to their economic objectives. Lastly, both STRING and the Oresund Committee aim to implement green or climate-friendly growth within their respective regions.

APPROACH

The following approach was adopted in developing a green growth definition:

1. Identify green growth definitions in the literature and distinguish key concepts from the definitions.
2. Consult Regional Partner representatives on which key concepts are relevant to each regional administration.
3. Synthesise the results and determine which key concepts are of common interest to the Regional Partners to warrant inclusion in a green growth definition.

The following page summarises the key findings from the development of a green growth definition. A more detailed description of the approach and findings will be provided in the forthcoming "Preliminary Framework for a Green Growth Strategy" document.



DEFINITIONS AND KEY CONCEPTS IN THE LITERATURE

It is generally agreed in the literature that green growth requires a set of targeted government policies which promote environmentally-sound growth while discouraging environmentally-damaging growth. Nonetheless, no universal definition for green growth exists that can be directly utilised. Various definitions have been developed by international organisations such as the OECD and UNEP. Although the use of an existing definition is possible, initial discussions with Advisory Group representatives identified the need to take into account the unique conditions present within the Regional Partners, and to solicit wider stakeholder views on green growth.

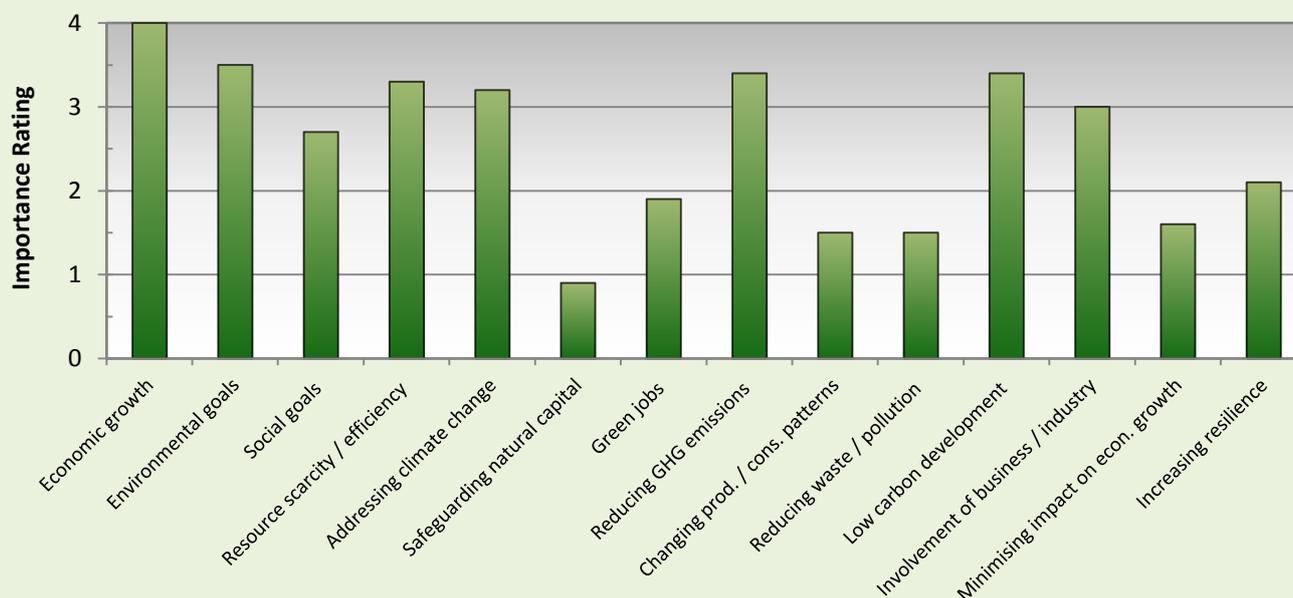
To facilitate this, existing green growth definitions were deconstructed into the 'key concepts' that could potentially be used in a definition for the STRING Region. Ten definitions for green growth were identified in the literature, from which 14 key concepts were distinguished (see graph below).

CONSULTATION WITH REGIONAL PARTNERS

The Regional Partners were asked to rate the identified key concepts in order to determine the perceived relevance and policy priority of each key concept within the context of the STRING Region's overall policy objectives. The rating scale was based on the relative importance of each key concept as follows:

| Rating | Rating Description | Explanation |
|--------|----------------------|---|
| 0 | Not important | Concept is not addressed in policy currently nor in the near future |
| 1 | Dormant issue | Concept has been noted previously but not much has been done to implement |
| 2 | Of some interest | Concept is addressed in policy but is usually side-lined by other policy |
| 3 | Frequently addressed | Concept is often considered and implemented in regional policy |
| 4 | High priority | Concept is considered one of core aspects of regional policy |

The below graph presents the results of the consultation based on the averaged ratings across the Regional Partners.



Key concepts and their average ratings, drawn from the individual ratings provided by each Regional Partner during the consultation.

SYNTHESIS OF RESULTS

Clearly, the three 'pillars' of sustainability (economic, environmental and social issues) were considered important by the majority of participants. Social issues were prioritised lower on average as social issues are not specifically addressed within regional policy and development plans. Although the regional partners indicated that many important social issues (such as gender equality) are considered well addressed from both national and regional perspectives, participants generally recognised a need to incorporate social goals as part of green growth.

Other more specific key concepts that were judged to be of importance to the Regional Partners included resource scarcity and efficiency, addressing climate change, reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, low carbon development and the involvement of business and industry. Consequently, each of these key concepts has been included in the proposed green growth definition for the STRING Region.

NEXT STEPS

The next step in developing a Green Growth Strategy is to come to a consensus regarding the proposed green growth definition. Each of the Advisory Group members is asked to review the green growth definition from the context of individual regional objectives, and provide comments if there are any concerns or overlooked issues that should be considered.

Advisory Group members are also asked to identify the importance of various economic sectors within which green growth may be pursued. This will be carried out through consultation with nominated representatives to confirm their policy and strategic documentation, and a simple survey. The Preliminary Framework document shall contain a summary of the key issues already addressed to date and the sectors to be examined in the strategy, for review and approval by the Advisory Group. After this, a plan for wider consultation with stakeholders in the region shall be developed, and finally work shall begin on the Green Growth Strategy.