

Chapter 7

Green Investments and Food Security: Opportunities and Future Directions in the Context of Sustainable Development

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ABSTRACT

Green investments are the perfect tool to generate complex self-regenerating systems in order to achieve a sustainable development. Even if the burden of transition from high polluting economy to a green economy is high, the cost should be split among all that have interest in achieving this goal. The switch to green is an international current that will ultimately force the change if it is not made willingly. All parties have an interest to promote change before the change gets them on the wrong foot. In this regard, the chapter aims to emphasizing the potential benefits of the transition to a green economy in terms of reducing poverty, enhancing food security, nutrition and health on a sustainable basis while promoting ecosystem stability. Thus, increased green investments throughout the food system are imperatively needed so that changing the way food is obtained could become a powerful force for sustainable development.

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GREEN INVESTMENTS IN THE CONTEXT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Green economy is a new concept related to sustainable development. At Seventh “Environment for Europe” Ministerial Conference held in Astana, 21–23 September 2011, the participants agreed that green economy is a “tool to help achieve sustainable development and eradicate poverty” (UNECE, 2011). Although United Nations member states have not established an agreement on the definition of the green economy, UNEP defines it as “one that results in improved human well-being and social equity, while significantly reducing environmental and ecological scarcities” (UNEP, 2011). As an associated concept, green growth refers to growth that “emphasizes environmentally sustainable economic progress to foster low-carbon, socially inclusive development” (UN DESA 2012).

The greening of the economy is complex process and different from country to country because the particularities of each state must be taken in account. The differences are made by factors like: level of development, natural resource endowments, strength of institutions and laws, nature and size of market failures, public awareness on the green economy (stakeholders like consumers, businessmen, professors or students have their role in the transition to the green economy). The green economy ensures the growth, protects earth’s ecosystems, contributes to the poverty alleviation and offers the right responses to the climate, food and economic crises. So, the green economy is compatible with the older concept of sustainable development (UN DESA, UNEP & UNCTAD, 2012).

Green investments have benefits on many fields: environmental protection, social inclusiveness and economic development. The main consequences of these investments are presented in the Table 1.

Table 1. The benefits of green investments

| Environmental Protection | Social Inclusiveness | Economic Development |
|--|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● decreased air pollution ● decreased water pollution ● decreased soil pollution ● decreased ghg emissions ● decreased biodiversity loss ● decreased natural resources depletion ● increased energy efficiency ● increased water efficiency | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● improved access to goods and services ● improved affordability of goods and services ● improved work safety ● increased green jobs ● strengthened effective public participation in environmental matters ● improved health protection ● improved equity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● increased innovation ● increased technology transfer ● improved infrastructure ● removed barriers ● improved competition |

Source: <https://www.unece.org/sustainable-development/green-economy>

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