Globalisation helped accentuate the major environmental damages we’re experiencing today, even though it’s only indirectly responsible. Some national, regional and international policies have attenuated the negative effects of globalisation on the environment. Some solutions can also be found in the mechanisms of globalisation itself. But while vital, political regulations and incentives are still lacking compared to the breadth and urgency of the challenges ahead.
What is the impact of globalisation on the environment?
By way of introduction...

At the Avoriaz ski station on the border between France and Switzerland, planted between a cliff and a huge rocky outcrop at an altitude of 1,800 metres, winters vary from year to year. Shopkeepers and the tourism office yearn for their increasingly rare white gold. In the 1970s, annual cumulated snowfall was as high as 13 metres. Today, it never goes above 8 metres. So Avoriaz is trying to diversify its activities, investing more in summer tourism and ecology. Part of this strategy involves building a state-of-the-art water sports complex.

The years 1994, 2000, 2002 and 2003 saw the hottest temperatures in 500 years. The 2006 season was even worse. Ski lift orders in French ski stations dropped 22% compared with the previous year. No one is panicking – yet. “The most plausible hypothesis is that temperatures will rise two to three degrees in the years to come”, states Guy Vaxelaire, secretary of the national association of French ski station mayors. “From a statistical standpoint, this would boost the ratio of bad to good seasons from 1 in 10 to 2 in 10, which is still manageable.” Perhaps so, but a general 1° temperature rise would shut down over 160 ski areas out of the existing 666 in the Alps. According to the OECD, German ski stations are even more at risk.

There’s international consensus on the existence of global warming and its increase since the 1980s. The average atmospheric temperature is rising, particularly in the Northern hemisphere. While the scientific community is divided as to exactly how much humans are to blame for global warming, the vast majority nevertheless agree that it’s very real. Most scientists – especially those working in the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) – believe that increases in emissions of carbon dioxide (CO₂) from human activity are the primary cause of global warming.

Yet global warming isn’t the only environmental problem. Industry, mass consumption and the increased energy needs of a growing global population are partly responsible for pollution, resource depletion and species extinction. Globalisation has occurred alongside and sometimes nurtured these developments.

This chapter summarises the main impacts of globalisation on the environment. Awareness has grown in recent years, but is still not
7. What is the impact of globalisation on the environment?

enough. It should be possible not only to reconcile globalisation and conservation of the environment, but also to act so that globalisation becomes a vector of green growth.

Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions have grown 60% in 35 years. Deforestation and burning of fossil fuels are the main culprits.

Globalisation is partly responsible for environmental damage

Globalisation, which is partly synonymous with rising international trade, has fostered the rapid production, trade and consumption of material goods in unprecedented quantities. This has weighted the ecological footprint of human activities around the world. While it’s still difficult to assess the impact of globalisation on the environment, it’s quite obvious in some areas.

By increasing GHG emissions

Climate change is one of the main environmental problems, perhaps all the more worrying because it is impossible to predict exactly how it’s going to develop and what the consequences will be. Its causes, however, are known. Climate change stems mostly from the greenhouse effect – meaning the excessive retention of solar energy in the atmosphere due to an accumulation of certain gases, particularly CO₂.

The main sources of CO₂ emissions are industrial production, transportation and, more indirectly, deforestation. These three human activities exist independently of globalisation, but their considerable development during the 20th century, and in particular in recent decades, is partly linked to accelerated globalisation.

Globalisation promotes CO₂ emissions from transport. As critical drivers of globalisation, transport systems have multiplied alongside international trade. Emissions from road transport (mainly cars and lorries) are of course very high, but more so within national borders. But the opening of some regional areas (such as the suppression of border controls among European Union countries) has given a strong boost to road freight transport. Despite some encouraging recent alternatives such as piggybacking (transporting lorries by train for part of the journey), transnational road transport is an important source of CO₂ emissions.

But the major mode of transport that has characterised globalisation in the past decades is the aeroplane. Between 1990 and 2004, GHG emissions from aviation increased 86%. Aviation is today responsible for 4-9% of total GHG emissions released into the atmosphere. Mean-
while, sea transport swallows 2-4% of all the fossil fuels consumed by the planet every year. Some 70% of international transport of goods towards the EU and 95% of trade towards the United States is by sea. Improved energy technologies aren’t enough to absorb the environmental impact of the 3% annual increase in shipping.

That said, much of the environmental harm from transport is due to the increase in domestic traffic. In the case of aviation, between 2005 and 2007 Indian airline companies ordered a whopping 500 new aeroplanes from aircraft constructors Airbus and Boeing to cover new domestic travel needs. In other words, increased traffic on the highways of international trade, driven by the globalisation dynamic, isn’t solely responsible for increases in transport-related CO₂ emissions.

Globalisation indirectly promotes CO₂ emissions linked to industrial activity and consumption. While the Industrial Revolution was a vector of globalisation (see Chapter 2), the growth in cross-border trade and investment in turn fostered industrial activity. This is often a major source of GHG emissions, as in the case of electricity generation, which still largely involves burning coal, oil and derivates. The intensification of globalisation, then, accentuated the greenhouse effect and global warming.

For decades, developed countries – the pioneers of global industrialisation – were the world’s biggest polluters, responsible for the lion’s share of GHG emissions. Today, the United States is responsible for around 20% of global GHG emissions.

But the very rapid development of emerging countries over the past several years has also led them to become major emitters of GHG. As we’ve seen, these countries developed largely thanks to globalisation, which fostered the industrialisation of the Asian giants – often at the expense of the environment. To quench its thirst for energy, China opens one new coal-fired power plant every week. Yet while coal is the cheapest and most abundant fossil fuel, it’s also the most polluting... Add to that China’s mushrooming transport fleet and galloping urbanisation and it became the world’s largest emitter of CO₂, ahead of the United States, in 2007. Agreed, China has also embarked on drastic renewable energy programmes in recent years. But each day, emerging countries buy a little more into the logic of mass consumption linked to globalisation. This means that they will largely be responsible for rising GHG emissions in the years to come (see the conversation with Brendan Gillespie at the end of the chapter).
Globalisation encourages deforestation. Deforestation is an indirect but very significant cause of the greenhouse effect. Clearing and logging reduce the volume of CO₂ that plants convert into oxygen. This translates into an equivalent increase in the volume of CO₂ in the atmosphere and thus adds to the greenhouse effect. And burning the cleared wood releases vast quantities of CO₂. In total, estimated emissions from deforestation represent some 20% of the increased concentration of GHG in the atmosphere. Between 1990 and 2005, the world lost 3% of its forests. Some 200 km² of forest land – twice the size of Paris – disappears each day.

Globalisation is often an ally of the chainsaw. Deforestation is mainly due to the conversion of forests into agricultural land, especially in developing countries. Take Brazil: for a little over a decade, much of its agriculture was export-oriented. Between 1996 and 2003, Brazilian soy exports to China rocketed from 15 000 to 6 million tonnes. This dynamism involved deforestation and converting part of the rainforest into farmland.

Like much of the damage caused to the environment, the impact of deforestation isn’t only felt by nature itself, but also by people, in particular the most vulnerable. The poorest regions are the most affected by global warming. In the medium term, the UN doesn’t rule out a poverty boom stemming from desertification and increasingly scarce water. By 2060, drought could render 90 million hectares in sub-Saharan Africa sterile. Some 1.8 billion people could lack water in the next 70 years. Central Asia, northern China and the Andes are particularly at risk.

Furthermore, global warming may well be one of the causes of the increase in the number of natural disasters such as hurricanes, storms and floods in recent years. Approximately 262 million people worldwide were victims of natural disasters between 2000 and 2004.

Add to this the fact that 20% to 30% of all living species could disappear if the mean global temperature were to rise by 3 °C and it becomes clear that nature didn’t need this: apart from global warming, 20th-century human activity already left an indelible mark on the world’s ecosystems.

By impoverishing biodiversity

A large number of species have become extinct in recent decades. Again, the link between the extinction of some species and globalisation is indirect. Human activities (particularly industry, because
of its pollution of ecosystems), urban sprawl, farms and mining – which displace certain species – are not in and of themselves the result of globalisation. But globalisation implies the multiplication of distribution channels, creating new needs and new demand for products that are used around the world. It accentuates industrialisation and the quest for and exploitation of new lands, subsoil and resources, thus weakening many ecosystems.

The example of fishing is particularly telling. Overfishing has emptied the oceans of some fish species. Stocks of Atlantic cod – formerly one of the most abundant species in Canadian waters – collapsed in the 1970s, decimated by overfishing and rising global demand. Mediterranean bluefin tuna has met with the same fate. Considered a delicacy in Japan, it’s threatened with extinction from overfishing.

According to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), 22% of the world’s mammals are threatened with extinction today, as well as 24% of the world’s snake species, 31% of the world’s amphibians and 35% of the world’s birds.

Flora are also at risk. Open international markets and lower communications prices have made some exotic raw materials and farm products affordable to consumers of developed countries. Rising demand slowly accentuated pressure on some plants. Take the island of Borneo. Popular taste for exotic wood furniture and other utensils has pushed some kinds of wood, like teak, into the threatened species category. Furthermore, the growing reliance of agribusiness on palm oil and the needs of the paper industry are at the root of the gigantic deforestation of Borneo’s rainforest. Add galloping urbanisation and, at this pace, one-quarter of Borneo’s flora and fauna will be wiped from the surface of Earth in a few years’ time. The forest has retreated more quickly in the past 15 years in the South Pacific and South Asia than anywhere else on Earth. Forests in Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa are also being ravaged.

Like most major environmental problems, this predictable cataclysm of biodiversity has an economic cost. A drop in the pollination of flora (including crops) could cause a fall in yields. Countries will need to invest more in water purification, etc. According to some estimates, the total damages to the ecosystem would result in an annual loss of USD 68 billion to the world economy.

The positive spiral of development, which itself is partly linked to globalisation, is faced with a huge challenge. At this rate, the
World Wildlife Fund for Nature (WWF) predicts that by 2030, if nothing changes, humanity will exhaust annually twice the resources produced by the planet every year.

**Uneven political efforts**

For several decades, we’ve witnessed some degree of environmental awareness among political decision makers. While part of the damage to the environment stems directly or indirectly from globalisation, solutions can also be found in heightened international political co-operation. But all levels of decision making have to be mobilised.

As is the case for development and employment, **it's partly up to national political decision makers to take pro-environmental measures to prevent or repair the environmental damage arising, in part, from globalisation.**

That there has been an increase in awareness of the need to conserve biodiversity can be seen in the growing number of protected natural areas worldwide since the last century. Since the end of the Second World War, the number of reserves and protected natural areas has multiplied almost twentyfold. In 2006, some 20 million km² of land and water were protected – more than twice the size of China. But vast swathes of the globe are still vulnerable and unprotected. Conserving the rain forest remains a challenge in the Amazon (see the conversation with Brendan Gillespie at the end of the chapter). Brasilia has promised to reduce by 70% the impact of clearing the Amazonian rainforest by 2018.

There are many national measures – particularly but not only in developed countries – to combat global warming and limit CO₂ emissions. They include compulsory catalytic converters on automobiles, particle filters for industry, subsidies to insulate buildings and avoid energy loss, etc. It’s impossible to draw up an exhaustive list of all the environmental obligations or incentives aimed at companies and individuals in OECD countries. But there can be no doubt that in the past 30 years or so, domestic measures and campaigns have borne some fruits, at least with regard to raising awareness. In the OECD area, the average citizen has never been so preoccupied as today with preserving the habitat.
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But one of the features of environmental damage is that it doesn’t stop at borders. This means that it’s sometimes necessary to resort to bilateral (between two countries) or regional (among countries of a same geographic area) agreements. This has happened in the past, with some success. For several decades, industrial emissions from US factories created chemical particle clouds that provoked acid rainfalls as they moved across Canadian regions bordering the United States. In 1991, an air quality agreement between the two countries imposed strict controls on industrial emissions. Since then, acid rainfalls have become much more rare. In addition, some bilateral trade agreements now include environmental clauses, such as withdrawing subsidies for activities that have negative impacts on the environment.

Some rules adopted at the regional level are the concrete expression of a desire to protect the environment. One such example is the European Union REACH programme, which aims to limit the proliferation of dangerous or potentially dangerous chemical substances. This programme led to a European directive whose implementation is strictly controlled – sometimes to the chagrin of European industrialists, who bemoan the loss of competitiveness resulting from these regulations compared with competitors from other regions who don’t apply the same restrictions. This argument poses the fundamental question of the usefulness of environmental regulations if they’re limited to a number of world regions. Some environmental challenges, such as global warming, are borderless and cannot be resolved by bilateral or regional agreements alone.

**Some globally co-ordinated actions have positive results.** Several countries have signed agreements restricting nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) emissions, the main culprits of acid rains – which are now considerably rarer throughout the world. The same goes for chlorofluorocarbons (CFC) emitted by refrigeration systems. CFC emissions, which are responsible for a worrying degradation of the ozone layer (which protects Earth’s surface from dangerous solar radiations), have been drastically reduced by the Montreal protocol signed by many governments in 1987. In 2006, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) noted that the ozone layer was reconstituting itself at the poles. When the international community gets going, it can achieve some environmental successes.

But **international co-operation on environmental matters is still insufficient.** Such is the case for global warming. And yet since the
late 1980s, governments have begun to co-operate in an unprecedented manner on this crucial problem. First, the creation of the IPCC within the framework of the UN allowed global scientists to analyse the causes of warming, as we saw in the introduction to this chapter. Then, the 1992 Rio conference enabled over 150 governments to initiate a process whose first concrete advances were enshrined in the 1997 Kyoto Protocol. Through this treaty, each developed country committed to reducing its CO$_2$ emission levels for 2008-12 by 5% on average compared with its 1990 level.

Despite this unprecedented mobilisation of the international community and the proven efficacy of some measures, such as emission rights trading schemes, the Kyoto protocol is not enough. The United States, for example, did not sign it. In addition, the treaty did not bind developing countries, since it focused on the main emitters of CO$_2$. Yet as we’ve seen, emerging countries have also become important CO$_2$ emitters.

Many viewed the Copenhagen conference of December 2009, which was supposed to extend the dynamic of Kyoto, as a failure, mainly because the 180 governments involved did not reach a quantified agreement on GHG reductions. The 2010 Cancun conference and 2011 Durban conference partly remedied Copenhagen’s failings: it set the goal of not exceeding a mean global warming of 2 °C compared with pre-industrial levels and created several tools to orchestrate countries’ actions in this regard, according to development level. The Rio+20 agreement signed in June 2012 did not make any major progress.

Despite being disappointing, the international agreements on climate from Kyoto to Durban had the merit of making sure politicians were aware of the environmental stakes. The simple fact that the heads of state of the most polluting countries meet in the same room to address environmental questions is considerable progress in itself.

The result of the national and international measures taken over the past decades is that for the past 30 years, developed countries have been polluting at a slower pace. Since 1980, the ecological footprint of developed countries has been dissociated from growth in GDP (see graph). As for GHG reductions, these stemmed in part from the passage from an industrial economy to a service economy – by definition less polluting.
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Globalisation is a vector for environmental solutions

As we’ve seen, globalisation is indirectly responsible for environmental damage. As with other areas, such as development, employment and finance, it makes both problems and benefits more apparent. Yet globalisation can also help lessen and prevent environmental damage. For example, international trade can help spread the


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most sophisticated environmental solutions far and wide, particularly with regard to global warming.

**The globalisation of trade and research also applies to green technologies.** Industry, global capital movements, and globalised research and innovation, can help promote sources of “green growth” and are particularly effective instruments to fight pollution and climate change on a global scale.

Public and private international investments in environmental technologies are ever higher. In late 2008, US venture capital funds had invested close to USD 2.8 billion in green technologies around the world – a record, despite difficult market conditions. Biofuels, renewable energy, wind energy and above all solar energy are on a roll. Between July and September 2008, total venture capital invested in solar energy amounted to USD 1.5 billion. In parallel, public investment in environmental technology research increased. The dynamism of “green” research and industry is promising: the quest for environmental solutions fosters new activities and new products, but also new production processes, which globalisation’s trade and production network can help circulate quickly.

**Globalisation can make environmental conservation compatible with development.** International economic competition partly gets in the way of resolving environmental problems. Companies balk at spending money on environmental efforts, which means losing ground in this competition. Developing countries consider that developed countries are the main culprits and view the environmental efforts they are being asked to make as a means for the more advanced countries to maintain their economic head start. Yet environmental solutions must include international market mechanisms.

The CO₂ emission rights trading system set up under the Kyoto protocol is a perfect match for the globalisation dynamic. This system can be implemented among companies in various countries. It can include companies from developing countries and stimulate green investment in developing countries. In addition to the right to trade emissions permits, the Kyoto protocol includes an incentive system to increase developing countries’ contribution to reducing GHG emissions while stimulating their economies: the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) allows companies in developed countries to receive additional emission rights when they invest in less polluting industrial projects in developing countries. There have
been some positive results, especially in China, but the process could be improved by simplifying some procedures and including more developing countries.

Independently of these mechanisms (which require some kind of preliminary institutional framework) corporate globalisation promotes clean technology transfers from developed to developing countries. MNEs, which for a long time didn’t worry much about the environment, can also be precious allies in combating global warming. As they are knowledgeable about environmental standards and practices in developed countries, they are important vectors for transferring green technology and good-practice. Today, major European companies equip Chinese megalopolises with wastewater treatment plants and waste collection and recycling systems using cutting-edge technologies.

Despite their failings, the Copenhagen, Cancun and Rio agreements do stipulate that international aid for development, one of the facets of financial globalisation, shall focus more on economic programmes that promote environmental conservation. In addition, environmental awareness campaigns by NGOs are changing attitudes little by little, in the North as well as in the South.

On the whole, these developments have promoted some environmental awareness in emerging countries. During the Beijing Olympic Games, the Chinese authorities introduced a partial ban on car traffic in the city. Decision makers are increasingly concerned with the environment. The significant increase in pollution-related illnesses and ensuing public health costs are also incentives for political action.

By way of conclusion…

GHG emissions will continue to grow. The planet’s mean temperature will rise, as will the loss of biodiversity. The extent of these increases will depend on the ambition and effectiveness of the measures to be adopted globally. Strong political will could slow down the phenomenon. Governments, companies and citizens must do more in many areas. They must consider all the stakes in order not to waste their energies, and insist on the least costly actions. Better yet, they should conceive, implement and promote actions that both
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It is generally agreed that globalisation has helped protect the environment and create wealth and employment. This is the spirit of “green growth” advocated by the OECD and many international organisations.

Global warming is an urgent challenge to which global decision makers are not paying sufficient attention. Globalisation is compatible with a healthy and resource-rich environment that can sustainably satisfy the needs of future generations – provided it follows a sustainable path.

A conversation

Brendan Gillespie, Head, Environmental Performances and Information division, OECD Environment Directorate

What is the impact of globalisation on the environment?

There’s no single answer to that question. As a growth-stimulating factor, globalisation impacts on the environment. At the same time, thanks to globalised information and knowledge, the public is considerably more aware of ecological issues and this has generated greater mobilisation. Theoretically, resources can be used more rationally because of increased trade and investment. But for the moment, it seems that globalisation’s negative environmental effects are more apparent. For example, increased pollution linked to transport immediately comes to mind.

Is the growing share of transport in total global CO₂ emissions one of the causes of heightened global warming?

Transport’s share in total CO₂ emissions has increased in recent years, but remains weak in absolute terms. There is much talk of “carbon kilometres” to assess international trade’s ecological footprint. Some believe that in order to limit CO₂ emissions, Europeans should choose local wines over Chilean wines and stop buying Kenyan flowers. But these approaches are often short-sighted because they do not take the global picture into account. For example, cultivating flowers in Kenya consumes less total fossil energy than cultivating them in northern Europe, transport included.

Some believe that carbon sequestration technology could be perfected by 2020. At the same time, coal consumption could quadruple in China. Many are betting that improved technologies will provide solutions to global warming that we cannot even imagine yet. Can we afford to wait for these technologies?

True, technological innovation can play a major role in combating climate change. Policies that promote green technologies are multiplying. If the existing clean technologies were more widely available, we would already be seeing drastically reduced CO₂ emissions. A classic example: if all television sets and computers had a switch that automatically turned off the power supply, the energy savings would be huge.

Another example: incandescent light bulbs, which consume more energy and have a shorter lifespan than energy-saving bulbs, are now banned in Australia.

As for water resources, we are seeing huge waste in many developing countries, which use – often not very efficiently – 70% of their available water for agriculture. The problem stems in part from the very low cost of water to users. If these farmers used proven drip techniques more extensively, like in Australia and Israel, they would save millions of litres. Of course, this would require investments, but given the long-term real costs of current consumption modes, the return on investment would be significant.
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A conversation (cont.)

Who should pay for these investments? At the OECD, we have long insisted on the “polluter-payer” and “user-payer” principles. Environmental policies should make product costs reflect environmental costs. At the same time, consumers should pay for some environmental services, such as access to drinking water. Transporting water from a reservoir to a kitchen costs a lot of money. It’s true that the required investments can be so costly that they will only be amortised after 30 or 40 years, so it’s probably preferable to consider water infrastructures as “public goods” and mobilise public funds to finance them. The same goes for health care. Pollution causes many respiratory illness in China. The World Bank estimated that if the country could improve the situation on this front it could gain 3-5% in GDP, thanks to savings in its health care system. Likewise, if we continue to raze the forests and sell off their resources at low cost, we won’t have any forest reserves left very soon. We are mortgaging future gains. Sustainable management, on the other hand, will provide long-term revenues.

The difficulty stems from a lack of control over the criminal organisations that devastate nature reserves. International reports probably do not stress enough the illegal trade in plants and animals. The market is gigantic, and the damages huge. Africa, Indonesia and Russia, among others, suffer greatly from this kind of trafficking and lack the means to control it and stamp it out. A few years ago, some streets of Abidjan in the Ivory Coast were covered in toxic residue from a Dutch ship claiming to carry municipal waste. The risks that polluters run are low. Barring global policies and an international police force with appropriate means of enforcement, they will always win. There has been some progress, for example the collaboration between customs authorities and Interpol, but much remains to be done.

At the international level, investment financing is even more complicated. Historically, developed countries were the most responsible for GHG emissions. But in the future, developing countries will need to reduce their GHG emissions, with important implications for their development. Disagreements between developed and developing countries on responsibilities and cost sharing are major stumbling blocks in discussions about an international agreement on climate change.

Who has the power to turn today’s planetary ecological degradation around? First, the governments, which must take appropriate measures reflecting the environmental cost of the activities of public administrations, companies and citizens. But all the stakeholders must play a role: manufacturers must adopt production methods that are more respectful of the environment and consumers must change their habits, for example by purchasing “greener” products and services. Things are more complex than it seems. For example, encouraging companies or authorities to sell coffee branded “fair trade” may be good for the environment, but will not resolve all the environmental problems linked to coffee production. To have a truly positive impact, a palette of different measures will need to be implemented simultaneously.

How are developing countries raising awareness of environmental challenges? GHG emissions occur in every country. OECD economies have been the main culprits, as well as the richest. In the future, GHG increases will come essentially from BRIC countries. But these will not become as rich as developed countries. We have a common – if deferred – responsibility. Environmental efforts must reflect these developments.

The Chinese authorities are today very aware of the need to act. Chinese industry consumes an abundance of raw materials. Their extreme dependence on external suppliers is a handicap – which is why Beijing has decided to invest in a more efficient production system, especially with regard to energy. Likewise, untreated waste water can be used for agriculture. Finally, the public is increasingly concerned about ecology.
Many Chinese media and households expressed deep displeasure when it appeared that some officials were closely linked to companies that had caused extreme pollution.

*Despite this progress, some maintain that 80% of future increases in GHG emission will come from emerging countries...*

There needs to be some arbitration between economic development and environmental challenges. Things are evolving and some countries are truly concerned. In 2008, the Brazilian minister of the environment quit because she was unable to enforce the Brasilia commitments. She believed that growth was being promoted at the expense of ecology. At the time, that gesture sent a strong message.

*Isn’t that actually a pessimistic signal?*

Protecting the environment has a cost, but also generates often unknown benefits. As the Stern report clearly stated, prolonged inaction in environmental matters will end up costing us more than energetic action. We must identify the most effective instruments. Likewise, we must identify the potential winners and losers of environmental measures and mitigate their negative impacts on the groups suffering the most serious effects. Governments and companies increasingly recognise that respecting the environment doesn’t just create costs, but that investing in it can provide a head start in future markets. The OECD Green Growth Strategy stresses this point.
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Find out more

FROM OECD...

On the Internet
OECD work on green growth: www.oecd.org/greengrowth.
OECD work on the environment: www.oecd.org/environment.

Publications
Towards Green Growth (2011): This report presents the first conclusions of the OECD Green Growth Strategy centred on the synergies between economic and environmental policies. It explains how barriers to trade and investment can hinder the development and circulation of green technologies around the world. It also promotes the role of international financial flows (especially public development subsidies) in driving growth and development and enhancing the quality of public goods globally.

The Economics of Climate Change Mitigation: Policies and Options for Global Action Beyond 2012 (2010): This report explores available solutions for reducing GHG emissions at least cost and makes suggestions for developing a global carbon market.

Invention and Transfer of Environmental Technologies (2011): This report analyses the role of multilateral agreements, environmental policies and international markets in technological innovation and transfers. It notes that most technology transfers are performed through trade, FDI and patents.

Greening Household Behaviour: The Role of Public Policy (2011): This publication presents the main results and policy implications of an OECD survey of more than 10 000 households in 10 countries. It offers new insight into what policy measures really work, looking at what factors affect people’s behaviour towards the environment.

OECD Environmental Outlook to 2030 (2008): This OECD report analyses in depth the environmental challenges governments will face by 2030. It contains many examples and projection tables.

“Innovation, globalisation and the environment”, OECD Observer No. 261, May 2007: In this article, Brendan Gillespie and Xavier Leflaive explain how the dissemination of new green technologies through globalisation networks could provide a partial solution to reducing GHG emissions in the medium term.

... AND OTHER SOURCES

Climate Change 2007, IPCC Fourth Assessment Report: This IPCC report on climate change is the leading reference on global warming.

Exploring trade and the Environment: An Empirical Examination of Trade Openness and National Environmental Performance (2011): This Yale University study evaluates the environmental impact of international trade and investment. It concludes that while this impact is positive with regard to health, it is rather negative for ecosystem vitality. It also highlights the crucial role of good governance in deriving benefits from international trade while reducing its environmental impact. See: http://envirocenter.yale.edu/programs/environmental-performance-management/exploring-trade-and-the-environment.
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