

Working Group 1 (moderated by Elisabeth Freytag, ESDN Steering Group):

Opportunities:

- Using the crisis as an opportunity for change and transition
- Greening traditional sectors (e.g. construction sector)
- Use the momentum of general societal and academic consensus to create a more sustainable economy
- Developing integrated strategies that develop a coherence between policy sectors
- Discussion with stakeholders and using current international organizations, e.g. OECD
- Supporting competitiveness
- Clarifying the role of society and consumers

Challenges:

- Growth acceleration laws (e.g. in Germany)
- Legal framework and commitment of private sector
- Green growth vs. sustainable development – conflict or integration?
- Intellectual capital
- Integration into policy sectors, sectoral ministries and sectoral strategies
- Capital markets

Working Group 2 (moderated by Michal Sedlacko, ESDN Office):

Opportunities:

- Sound sustainability assessment / EU's Integrated Assessment
- EU 2020 strategy framed in the context of EU 2050
- Crisis recovery
- Rethinking and stronger political will of key leaders for sustainable economy
- Commitment to reflect and learn – political momentum (e.g. restructuring the financial sector)
- Proper measurement tools and indicators: developing a small set of core indicators that have a policy relevance

Challenges:

- Sustainable development is redefined (or 'downgraded') as "green jobs" and "eco-innovation" – only quick fixes rather than strategic orientation
- Difference between crisis recovery and transition - challenge to clarify the link between sustainable development and green growth at the political level
- EU 2020 has strong economic orientation – how will the relation to the EU SDS be defined: missing hierarchical linkage and integration
- EU SDS should be translated into EU roadmap for 2050
- Policy relevant monitoring reports are largely missing
- How to define the social pillar of sustainable development: is it only about jobs?
- Degradation of capital

Working Group 3 (moderated by Gerald Berger, ESDN Office):

Opportunities:

- Innovation
- Energy savings and resource efficiency
- Developing a “toolkit” (similar to the OECD toolkits) with instruments for implementation, but flexible enough to be adopted to specific national circumstances
- Economic crisis should be taken as chance to foster transformation of the basis of the current economic system
- Definition of product standards in order to enhance the regulatory environment
- Job creation – awareness raising and social innovation
- Eco-system services
- Shift taxation from labour towards resource consumption
- Concepts already exist (positive) – need to translate them into practical action (opportunity)

Challenges:

- Finding concrete and clear definitions of a sustainable economy
- Defining criteria and binding targets
- Carbon taxation framed as EU-level decision creates “front runner problem” and may be used for filling budgetary gaps only
- Radical change, paradigm shift
- Formulating concrete alternatives and visions
- Avoiding unsustainable subsidies and incentives
- Green or Sustainable Public Procurement
- Stakeholder involvement: how to deal with vested interests
- Clarifying budgets for the long-term & regulations for the banking sector