

Partners

Civil Society Organizations

- Centre for Science and Environment, India
- Centre pour l'Environnement et le Développement, Cameroon
- Acción Ecológica, Ecuador
- Ecological Society Endemit, Serbia
- A Sud - Ecologia e Cooperazione, Italy
- Vlaams Overleg Duurzame Ontwikkeling, Belgium (Flanders)
- SUNCE, Association for Nature, Environment and Sustainable Development, Croatia
- Instituto Rede Brasileira Agroflorestal, Brazil

Research Institutions

- ICTA, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain
- IFF, Universität Klagenfurt, Austria
- GEPAMA, Universidad de Buenos Aires, Argentina
- Foundation of The Faculty of Sciences and Technology, New University of Lisbon, Portugal
- Université Libre de Bruxelles, Belgium
- SERI Nachhaltigkeitsforschungs und Kommunikations GmbH, Austria

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CEECEC

Civil Society Engagement with Ecological Economics



Learning and teaching
Ecological Economics with
Civil Society Organizations



An EC FP7 Project
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Background

Ecological Economics (EE) is a science of sustainability that views the economy as embedded in the greater biophysical ecosystem. Through a transdisciplinary approach, it emphasizes the social, economic, biophysical, cultural and ethical issues at stake in the management of human economies and their interactions with the natural world. EE provides tools and methods with a potential for wide impact in environmental policy-making at a European and global level.

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) have a large stock of environmental knowledge gained from their grassroots experience and activism. Yet there is a growing demand from CSOs for access to expertise and practical methods for applying EE to their work, for instance, to assess the liability of companies in oil extraction conflicts, to evaluate plans for palm oil plantations for agro-fuel exports, to “deconstruct” cost-benefit analysis of dams, or to establish alternative energy plans at the regional level. Meanwhile, EE will benefit from CSOs knowledge, learning and improving the disciplinary approaches and its accessibility to the public at large.

Objectives

CEECEC aims to enable CSOs to engage in and lead Ecological Economics research through a number of coordinated activities.

The overall focus is not on theory but on **case study learning** whereby CSOs and academics will identify and explore key issues for research in areas such as water management, mining, energy, and forestry and agriculture, **based on CSO needs and interests**.

The end result will be online materials and a handbook in several languages explaining the principles, the tools and the methods of Ecological Economics for CSOs and the general public.

Bridging the social gap between CSO knowledge and academic research poses significant challenges, including the concern from the international research communities that the principles and tools of Ecological Economics remain rather inaccessible to the general public.

Some case studies

In Ecuador, in the context of a proposed moratorium on oil extraction in the ITT-Yasuní National Park, site of the country’s most pristine forests, the government is considering *not* to exploit the oil and fixing a sum as international compensation for keeping the oil in the ground. In this case, Ecological Economics could help provide the tools for calculating the avoided environmental and social costs of oil extraction. Acción Ecológica, major partner in our project, is promoting this campaign.

In India, the new National Rural Employment Guarantee Act seeks to reduce poverty by guaranteeing employment to rural households. The Act aims to use the employment to create natural productive assets, as for instance in reforestation or water harvesting structures. The Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), a crucial player in Indian civil society and a major partner in this project, is calling for capacity building for the application of Ecological Economics methods in order to monitor and evaluate the social, economic and environmental benefits in different districts of the Act’s implementation.