

# CONVERGE

**Rethinking growth in the light of Contraction and Convergence**

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Intézet



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## What is the CONVERGE project?

- ▶ Title: Rethinking globalisation in light of Contraction and CONVERGENCE
- ▶ Funded by the EU (FP7)
- ▶ 4 year research programme (2009-2013)
- ▶ Focusing on the exploration of **‘Equity within biological planetary limits’**
- ▶ 8 Partner organizations in 5 countries
  - ✓ UK – Schumacher Institute, University of Bristol
  - ✓ Hungary – Szent Istvan University, GreenDependent Institute
  - ✓ Sweden – University of Lund, The Natural Step
  - ✓ Iceland – University of Iceland
  - ✓ India – Social Change and Development

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## The origins of CONVERGE project

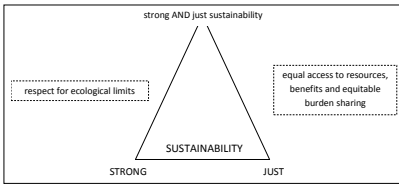
- ▶ Partly inspired by **Contraction and Convergence™**
  - ▶ Science-based, global climate policy framework
  - ▶ Proposed by Aubrey Meyer at ‘The Global Commons Institute’ (GCI) (Meyer, 2000)
    - A) Recognition of planetary limits - *Establishing a full-term contraction budget (a ‘cap’) for global emissions of CO2*
    - B) Equity-based burden sharing - *sharing of this budget as a pre-distribution of entitlements that result from a negotiable rate of linear convergence to equal shares per person globally by an agreed date*
  - *“Achieving the goal of the climate treaty [to stabilize Greenhouse gas emissions] inevitably requires Contraction & Convergence”* (Waller Hunter, UNFCCC Executive Secretary)

Combines recognition of limits with equity-based burden sharing approach

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## Framework and rationale for CONVERGE project research

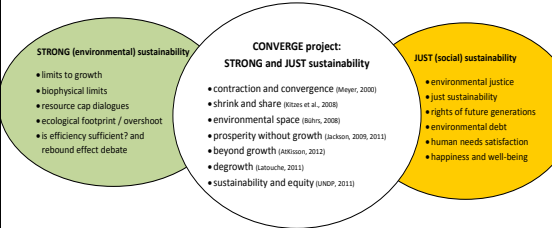


- ▶ *“The literatures on human development and sustainable development ...have long been separate”, and...*
- ▶ *“the majority of the sustainability discourse tends to neglect, if not outright ignore intragenerational equity issues”* (Hayward, 2006)

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## Where does the CONVERGE project fit?



**STRONG (environmental) sustainability**

- limits to growth
- biophysical limits
- resource cap dialogues
- ecological footprint / overshoot
- is efficiency sufficient? and rebound effect debate

**CONVERGE project: STRONG and JUST sustainability**

- contraction and convergence (Meyer, 2000)
- shrink and share (Ross et al., 2008)
- environmental space (Wain, 2009)
- prosperity without growth (Jackson, 2009, 2011)
- beyond growth (Jackson, 2012)
- degrowth (Kallis et al., 2011)
- sustainability and equity (UNEP, 2011)

**JUST (social) sustainability**

- environmental justice
- just sustainability
- rights of future generations
- environmental debt
- human needs satisfaction
- happiness and well-being

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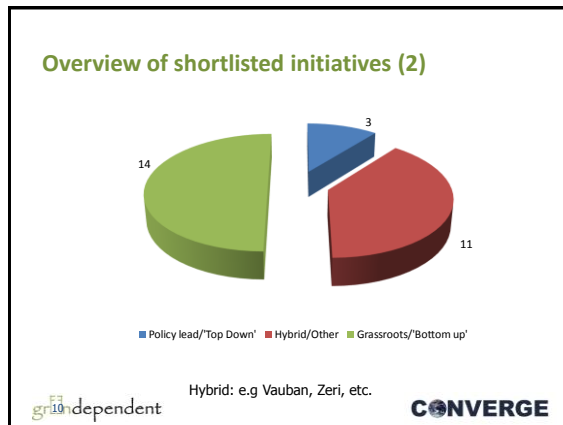
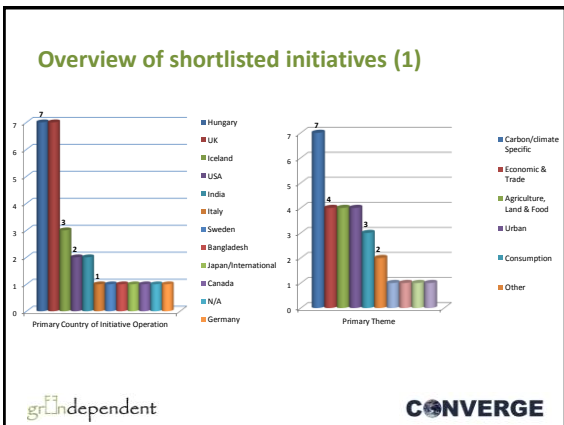
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### Summary – what is sustainability in this framework?

- ▶ **Shrink and share:**  
*„Sustainability is the possibility of all people living rewarding lives within the means of nature.“*
- ▶ **Environmental space:**  
*„...recognition of limits and a strong equity principle (people living now and future generations)...“*
- ▶ **Prosperity without growth:**  
*„The vision of sustainable development in terms of a strong, healthy and just society able to flourish within the ecological limits of a finite planet...“*
- ▶ **Beyond growth:**  
*„...everyone, in every country, has the opportunity to experience quality of life, happiness, and well-being while living within the boundaries of what our planet can physically sustain...“*
- ▶ Recent (2011) **Human Development report** by UNDP: Sustainability and Equity

### GreenDependent’s work in CONVERGE: initiatives illustrating Contraction and Convergence

- ▶ **Aim:**
  - ✓ Identify and analyze initiatives illustrating contraction and convergence from around the world, and
  - ✓ Through them show how contraction and convergence works in practice (if at all)
- ▶ The aim was not to assemble a representative database of initiatives but to illustrate variety:
  - ✓ Developed and developing
  - ✓ Top-down and bottom-up
  - ✓ Themes (carbon specific, faith based, agriculture, corporate, etc.)
- ▶ Number of initiatives studied:
  - cc. 200 on initial list
  - 51 selected for initial study
  - 28 selected for detailed study



### GreenDependent’s Research

- ▶ Studying the initiatives from a variety of perspectives
  - ▶ Themes/governance/beneficiaries and participants/scale/barriers/evolution, etc.
- ▶ Most importantly: Contraction and convergence aspects
  - ▶ An index was developed to evaluate the ‘contraction’ and ‘convergence’ elements of our shortlisted initiatives (based on Agyeman’s “Just Sustainability Index”).

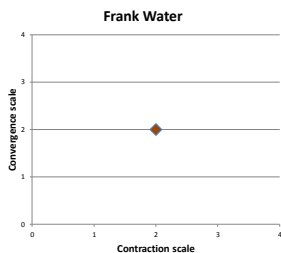
### Example initiative 1: The Converging World (UK)

- ▶ What is it about?
  - ✓ UK based charity (2007)
  - ✓ Started from a community project (Chew Magna)
  - ✓ CO<sub>2</sub> offsetting and donations channelled to developing country projects (e.g. wind turbines)
  - ✓ Profit generated used for further sustainability work
  - ✓ Aim of connecting communities
- ▶ C&C elements

### Example 2: Frank Water (UK)

- What is it about?
  - UK based charity (2005)
  - Focuses on sale of 'ethical' bottled water/water related products in the UK
  - profits go to fund new clean water facilities in villages in India
  - Aware of environmental sustainability issues and phasing out sales of bottled water in favour of free-fill scheme

- C&C elements

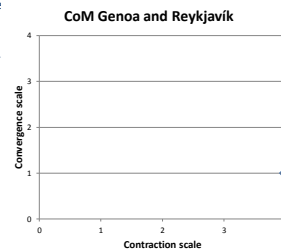


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### Example 3: Covenant of Mayors (I, HI)

- What is it about?
  - European Commission Policy initiative
  - Each signatory city makes a voluntary commitment to reduce its CO2 emissions beyond the target of 20% by 2020.
  - Requires that cities submit a Sus. Energy Action Plan
  - Measures typically involve local transport, public and private buildings, renewable energy sources and innovative technologies

- C&C elements

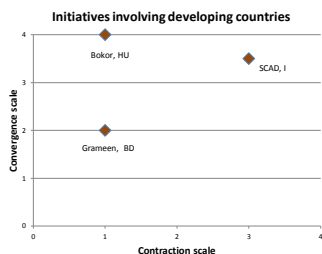


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### Some initiatives involving 'developing' countries

- Within developing: Grameen Bank, SCAD kitchen gardens
- Connecting developing and developed: Bokor (faith based)

- Common challenge: need for growth, but with limits in mind



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### Conclusions

- Contraction and convergence: often appear separately in initiatives – “**cross-fertilization**” is needed, promotion of both aims are necessary
- Contraction and convergence do **not mean the same in developed and developing countries** (developed: mostly contract, developing: grow but with limits in mind)
- Contraction and convergence needed **across scales**, i.e. it is needed at all levels: within communities, towns, regions, countries, ... at the global level (even within EU research projects... 😊)

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## THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!

THERE IS AN ELECTRONIC **CONVERGE** BOOK COMING...

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