



FOREWORD

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Information and statistics nowadays are rightly regarded as a new and valuable resource of our information age. Increasing requirements for environmental protection related to a number of activities at the national and international levels stimulate the rapidly growing demand for environmental information. This demand is highly motivated by the need to assess the state of and development within the different environmental domains, as well as the need to identify and describe the complex interrelationships with the economic and social aspects of sustainable development.

For many years the Czech Statistical Office has been actively developing an information base for a number of analytical activities in the fields of environmental science, environmental accounting, and sustainable development indicators, etc. In 2013, the environmental statistics department of the Czech Statistical Office commemorated its 20th anniversary. This fact additionally reflects the vast experience of the Czech Statistical Office in these fields.

The Green Growth strategy has been stimulated by a number of political discussions initiated more than two decades ago. Ideas regarding the systematic creation of prerequisites for better coordination of economic, social and environmental policy were, among others, incorporated within the EU strategic framework for 2007–2013. The basic ideas of strengthening synergies between environmental protection and economic growth were consequently integrated into Europe's new growth strategy – Europe 2020.

One of the more important aspects of promoting these synergies is the concept of an information base aimed at providing quality data for monitoring and decision-making processes. In contrast to continuing theoretical discussions, it is necessary from the practical perspective of official statistics to put concrete indicators into practice that are appropriate for decision-making. One of the big milestones in this process was the “Prague Memorandum” that was adopted at the 98th Director Generals of the National Statistical Institutes (DGINS) Conference 2012 held in Prague. The document supported the idea that it is time to find a consensual, albeit limited but practically feasible approach to moving forward.

“Green Growth in the Czech Republic 2013” is the second in a row of publications issued by the Czech Statistical Office in close cooperation with the Charles University Environment Center. Its aim is to describe this complex problem area from a number of perspectives by providing a bird's-eye view of the issue of green growth in the Czech Republic. With regards both to national conditions and data availability, a total of 27 indicators were selected for these purposes by a team of authors.

A major portion of the data referenced in the text is either directly produced by the Czech Statistical Office, or provided as an input to Eurostat for more aggregated statistics. However, not all domains in this complex problem field are covered by statistical surveys. Therefore, another portion of the data was mined from existing administrative sources. In this respect, I would also like to acknowledge all the other partner institutions that kindly provided additional data.



FOREWORD

Bedřich Moldan

Bedřich Moldan, Director,
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The outcomes of the Rio+20 Conference (2012) identified many areas for further work to move towards sustainable development and a greener economy. The key document, *The future we want*, states: "We acknowledge that a green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication will enhance our ability to manage natural resources sustainably and with lower negative environmental impacts, increase resource efficiency and reduce waste."

Every country is unique and has its own specific conditions, but green growth attracts their attention in regard to common topics such as increasing resource productivity, greening jobs and skills, education and innovation, green investments, etc. However, green growth is not an easy concept – just like sustainable development in which took decades to translate a universal strategy into concrete policies and action plans, goals and targets, indicators... The good news is that many organizations and international bodies are ready to assist countries with developing, testing and applying green growth strategies.

OECD makes a systematic effort to *Put green growth at the heart of development*. It has been addressing the question of generating economic prosperity and well-being for all citizens while respecting environmental limits. Thus OECD elaborates on its long-term program of *Measuring the progress of societies*. The European Union also has a growth strategy for the coming decade – *Europe 2020*. The EU's ambition is to become a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy. The European Environment Agency supports this vision with analytical work identifying which policies and innovations enable society to generate more value each year while maintaining the natural systems that sustain us. Another important actor in this field, UNEP, introduced its vision of greener, cleaner, low-carbon and resource-efficient economies and societies in 2009 and since then it has been working on elements of the *New deal for going green*.

In a further development in Mexico City in January 2012 the Green Growth Knowledge Platform was officially launched. The initiators were the Global Green Growth Institute of Korea, OECD, UNEP, and the World Bank. The Platform starts an even broader and truly global effort for both research and implementation of the green growth concept. A general framework was developed and offered to individual countries to use in their own national efforts. We have taken up this challenge and one may see the first results of its adoption in this brochure.

It seems that the concept resonates broadly – it has been taken up by governments and civil society organizations, industries and scientists, producers and consumers. Of course, it is a long way from visions and concepts to integrated policy making towards green economies. The Charles University Environment Center has been contributing to the measurement of green growth in the Czech Republic through several projects and initiatives. Cooperation with the Czech Statistical Office provides a unique opportunity to shift this crucial issue from the academic sphere closer to policy making and to make it more visible. This is necessary since the challenges we identified in the first publication on green growth two years ago still remain: we still need better tools for better policies for better lives.