



FOREWORD

The main goal of the Czech Statistical Office consists in acquisition of data and consequent production of statistical information on social, economic, demographic, and environmental development of the state. Based on acquired data the Czech Statistical Office yields a reliable and consistent image about the state and development of the society according to various user needs.

The stress laid during the last two decades on the environmental protection as part of the so-called green growth strategy was primarily stimulated by discussions and policies both at international and national levels. These activities lead to an intensive demand for high quality sustainability-related statistics from the variety of stakeholders. The interest is primarily motivated by the need to assess the environmental state as well as to define and describe multiple social-demographic-environmental-eco-

conomic interrelations that are highly influencing economic activity, employment, foreign trade, price level, etc.

The Czech Statistical Office has been making active steps to meet these rapidly changing institutional requirements. The publication “Green Growth in the Czech Republic” aims at describing this complex problem area from number of perspectives.

The primary target audience of the book comprises of non-professionals interested in sustainability issues. In this respect one can find short definitions and green growth relevance explanations in the text. The whole publication is broken down into five interrelated sections each presenting one complex dimension of an issue. These include sustainability and equity, environmental and resource productivity, natural asset base, environmental quality of life, and policy responses and economic opportunities. Each chapter of the book introduces the relevant indicator time series accompanied with the description of the Czech peculiarities and international comparisons. We also believe that due to its user friendliness the book would be of interest to professional public as well.

The publication provides a bird's-eye view of the issue of green growth in the Czech Republic based on the total of 27 indicators. Indicators were picked with regards both to national conditions and data availability. The majority of data referenced in the text is either directly produced by the Czech Statistical Office, or provided as an input for a more aggregated statistics to Eurostat. It is clear that not all domains of this complex problem field are covered by statistical surveys. However one should also mention that a significant part of data could be mined from other administrative sources. In this respect we would also like to express acknowledgements to all the other partner workplaces that kindly provided the additional data. We would also like to thank experts from the Charles University Environment Center that greatly contributed to preparation of this publication.

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Iva Ritschelová,
President, Czech Statistical Office

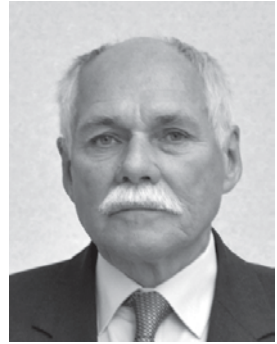
FOREWORD

The multiple economic and social crises in the contemporary world are already clearly visible and pose an urgent and pressing challenge. However, the current environmental crisis, though outwardly less visible and seemingly less urgent, is in the long term equally serious. In a recent report from the UNEP (Keeping Track of our Changing Environment: From Rio to Rio+20) it is stated that *“the indicator report gets us all back to basics, underlining the rapid buildup of greenhouse gases to the erosion of biodiversity and the 40% increase in the use of natural resources – faster than the global population growth”*. On the whole, there is a clear need for a new paradigm for a sustainable socio-economic development.

Resolution 64/236 of the United Nations General Assembly (December 24, 2009) represents a strong response to this challenge, calling for a UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) and determining that one of the two themes of the Conference should be The Green Economy in the Context of Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication. In the same vein, the May 2011 Ministerial Council Meeting of the OECD adopted the landmark strategic document *“Towards Green Growth”*. The desired model for economic development must ensure economic growth that will not undermine the natural resource base and the ecosystem services upon which the human economy and their well-being rest.

In its submission to the Rio+20 Summit, the European Union strongly supports the preparation of this developmental model, and of the Conference itself, and hopes for outstanding results. The European Union fully commits itself to the idea of a green economy and suggests some basic elements of the Roadmap that, if adopted by the Summit, may lead the way towards a transition to green growth. It is not by chance that the very first point of the proposed Roadmap reads: *“To further develop and strengthen indicators complementing a gross domestic product that integrates economic, social and environmental dimensions in a balanced manner. Such an approach should include the selection of headline indicators reflecting several aspects of sustainable development”*.

The Charles University Environment Centre has been contributing to the development of indicators through many projects since its very first initiative began in 1994, resulting in the book *“Sustainability Indicators”* (SCOPE 58, B. Moldan and S. Billharz, Eds., 1997). We believe that reliable and quantifiable information is indeed an essential prerequisite for any progress towards a green economy. This is the idea behind this modest publication.



A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Bedřich Moldan'.

Bedřich Moldan, Director,
Charles University Environment Centre