

Conclusions

Green Productivity offers a successful strategy for innovating sustainability. The information tabled in this report is the measurable results of APO member economies, local communities and private enterprise. Green Productivity provides a practical method for creating value-added products and services that result in triple bottom line results. Communities benefit from economic development while improving environmental protection. The rewards it enables are quantifiable and demonstrate a method to obtain an enhanced quality of life.

Too often the apparent dilemma between environment versus development boiled down to arguments about who pays. Valuable time and resources were absorbed in fruitless banter. The truth is we all pay when inappropriate action is taken or indifference leads the way. The APO has empirical evidence that Green Productivity ends the dilemma, replacing "who pays" with those who profit and prosper. With the support of our respective countries, corporations and citizens, we can progress Green Productivity from triggering innovative ideas to be a full innovation – where environmental protection nets prosperity.

The business of managing the planet for prosperity demands a balanced approach between good governance, profitable enterprise and people who have a quality of life. More often than not people will pay for quality when the choice is offered. As more businesses understand that there is profit in improved environmental performance, that there is competitive advantage in offering green products and services, a demand-side market will pull sustainability forward.

Governments have an important role to play in supporting this transition. We need to set a good example by our own actions – with supportive policies, sensible laws and appropriate financial incentives. With the results that Green Productivity has captured, the conceptual dare for business and politicians evolves to be a carrot that leads to competitive advantage and poverty alleviation. Green Productivity builds political will, community confidence and profit-oriented results.

There are signals that supporting market driven approaches will pay off. The investment interest in the stocks under the Dow Jones Index for Sustainability³ indicates that investors are coming to appreciate more and more the management qualities that support a sustainability ethic. There is US data on the environmental technology market that shows the process and prevention

technology market segment grew by 23.3% annually between 1989 and 1998. While this sector is only 1% of the entire environmental technology market, it is the fastest growing one. Projections show this trend increasing. This is evidence that both governments and private enterprise are interested in moving away from end-of-pipe technologies to prevention of pollution. It is interpolated as a shift in both the public and private sectors moving their attention regarding environmental policy and management upwards and forward⁴. The strategy, method, tools and technologies in Green Productivity reinforce this refreshing shift.

Cooperative competition in theory and in practice can reduce costs and spread economic development opportunities. We must cooperate beyond our traditional borders to bring competitive advantage to local communities, a market driven variation of the "think globally, act locally" mantra.

We need to send a powerful message to the market – that natural capital must be integrated into pricing. We need to move our money and our management decisions upstream and recognize the true costs of inefficiency. As governments we must make policy decisions that overcome the barriers to change, our policies must support 'watershed economics'. By adopting Green Productivity into national policy, we can take action to foster greener innovation.

The APO does not suggest that we have won the war on waste – be it in any form. However, the results of Green Productivity have enabled enterprises, which have dared to think beyond compliance, to obtain competitive advantage.

Greening Productivity changes the pace of the marathon – the stakes involved are enormous. We have everything to gain; but we risk all if we do not enter the race.

Just as profit is the carrot that tempts enterprise to improve productivity, we as governments must run in parallel to help enterprise in the race for the carrot and innovate sustainability.

³ <http://www.sustainability-index.com/>

⁴ Innovation and the environment: OECD Proceedings: 2000 at www.oecd.org

Green Productivity enables those who are daring enough to think beyond compliance, innovate their businesses, and shift to a more competitive position by doing better with less.

