

# Equity within Planetary Limits – where do you stand?

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INTRODUCING THE CONVERGENCE MAPPING SYSTEM:  
A SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT TOOL

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TO FOLLOW-UP  
CONVERGE DELIVERABLE 33:  
EQUITY WITHIN LIMITS IN THEORY AND PRACTICE  
CASE STUDIES ('INITIATIVES') ILLUSTRATING  
CONTRACTION AND CONVERGENCE



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Sustainability Assessment; Contraction and Convergence; Planetary Limits; Resource Limits; Equity; Intra and Intergenerational Equity; Justice; Just Sustainability; Case studies

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# 1. Introduction

Welcome to the CONVERGE project's sustainability assessment tool guidebook, or, in other words, welcome to Convergence Mapping. The guidebook has been designed to assist leaders and members of organizations/initiatives/projects/policies who are seeking ways to improve their performance in social and environmental sustainability.

The output of the assessment process is a graphical 'snapshot' in the form of a map. This indicates the emphasis of the activity under discussion at the time of study in terms of 'Planetary Limits' (representing on one axis the environmental aspects of the activity) and 'Equity' on the other (essentially representing the social sustainability component).

The assessment process as well as the output (the map itself) provide a valuable opportunity for stakeholders of the activity which is being assessed to comment on, analyse, publicise and ultimately develop their social and environmental performance with the goal of bringing their activities into harmony with the principles described by the CONVERGE project – "equity within planetary limits".

## Background to Convergence Mapping

The aim of the FP7 EU-funded CONVERGE project which ended in 2013 was to 're-think globalisation' by developing the implications of a 'Convergence' approach to global development based on more equitable access to the life-support capacities of the planet and fair livelihoods within planetary boundaries through a transdisciplinary systems approach (Fortnam et al. 2010). Convergence is here defined as being a rights-based framework based on the principle that every global citizen has the right to a **fair share of the Earth's biocapacity** and **access to fundamental human rights**. It advocates socio-ecological justice and calls for wealth, well-being and consumption to converge across and within nations to a level that the biosphere can support. The concept of Convergence is illustrated in Figure 1.

One component of this project involved the analysis of a number of initiatives and the generation of a tool which could be used to show how these initiatives are managing to address the imperatives of both living within the limits of the planet and sharing its resources equitably (through mapping their 'Planetary Limits' and 'Equity' components using 2 five item scales). The Convergence Mapping tool which was constructed during the project is presented here in revised form for use as a sustainability assessment tool.

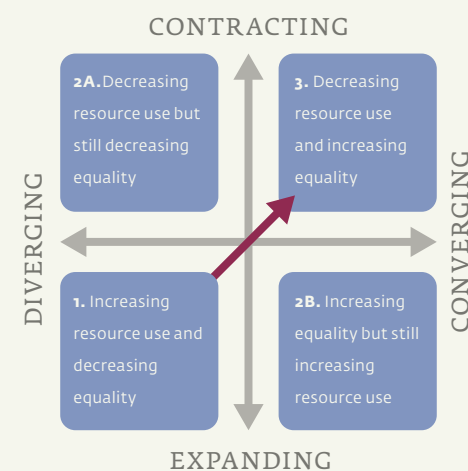


Figure 1: Schematic overview of the process of Convergence

The term **Planetary Limits** is used within this document to mean progress, development or movement towards ensuring that resource, ecosystem and planetary limits (or boundaries) are observed and respected.

**Equity** is used in this document to mean progress, development or movement towards more equal sharing of both the benefits (e.g. food, fuel, clean air) and burdens (e.g. responsibilities to reduce carbon dioxide emissions, adverse impacts) of resource use, and thus relates to normative concepts such as justice and rights.

**Convergence** is used to refer to 'Equity within Planetary Limits'.

## Who is Convergence Mapping designed for?

Convergence Mapping may be used by managers and/or stakeholders of organizations, projects and policies who wish to improve their performance or understanding of social or environmental sustainability or both of these fields. The time required for the assessment depends on the complexity of the initiative and the amount of information available to the assessors. The tool can be used both for self-assessment or assessment of external activities and initiatives. For details of the assessment process, please see Chapter 2.

## Why use Convergence Mapping?

- The assessment process which results in the map is relatively **easy to undertake** and does not require a great deal of technical or other specialist knowledge.
- The assessment is unique in that it **results in a simple, single, easy-to-understand graphical output** which may be applied to a variety of activities'. However, the basic principles which underlie the assessment criteria are based on fundamentally important observations – to be truly sustainable an activity must 1) observe and respect best available science about natural resource limits; and, 2) foster the coming into being of a more equitable society.
- The Map may be used as a **standalone tool** or it can be used to **complement other sustainability assessment and reporting tools** such as the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI); it could also form part of a CSR or sustainability reporting process or strategy or be used alongside sets of principles such as the UN Global Compact.
- The mapping process results in a useful output – the Map – for **use in benchmarking and tracking development** but the assessment process itself can provide equally valuable insight which can be used for **awareness-raising** about environmental and social sustainability and for provoking discussion about the relationship of activities to their social and environmental impacts.

<sup>1</sup> Please note that in this document the word 'activities' is used to refer to individual or community initiatives, organizations, projects, programmes, or policies.

## 2. Finding your place on the Convergence Map

In this section we provide guidelines about how you can analyze your activities in terms of Convergence, or in other words:

- evaluate how your activity manages to address the imperatives of both living within the limits of the planet and;
- identify how it contributes to sharing planetary resources equitably.

As a result, you will be able to place it on the Convergence Map. If you then conduct the evaluation on a regular basis you will also be able to map your progress, provided appropriate action is taken to strengthen any Convergence elements.

When looking at the results of the convergence mapping process, it is tempting to rank the initiatives using the 'scores' awarded them. However, it is important to remember that scores are not intended to be used for ranking but are rather given for **descriptive purposes** – to determine where a certain initiative / organization / project / policy, etc. stands in relation to its limits and equity activities at a certain point in time. Apart from being used for descriptive purposes, the results of the mapping could also be used to **identify and evaluate different developmental paths** for your activities.

The principles and processes of the Convergence Mapping are covered in the following basic steps:

- **Understand** the combined nature of the environmental and social, global and local challenges our society faces. To do this, for example, check the literature review in the [Background Paper](#), or some of the references contained within it.
- **Analyse** the equity and planetary limits issues and challenges your activities face and consider how you can help tackle them. Identify the ways in which it would be possible to tackle them simultaneously.

For example, you need to ask and find answers to questions such as:

- What do the existence of planetary (including resource) limits and the need to promote equity/justice mean to my activities?
- What can / will go wrong if we do not pay attention to these limits?
- Do we know which resources are critical for the long-term maintenance of our activities? How well prepared are we to address and deal with resource scarcity?
- How do our aims and activities relate to justice/equity? How do we impact justice/equity?

- **Incorporate** explicit references to inter and intragenerational equity and planetary limits in your mission statement, aims and other documents.
- **Learn** how to leverage your environmental (resource use contraction) efforts for maximum gains in social development (equity) and vice-versa.
- **Collaborate and Combine**: use internal expertise and/or consider collaborating with other organisations who have the expertise that you may lack - or with whom you can start building a strong network or gain inspiration from (e.g. consider joining the Convergence Alliance<sup>1</sup> or contacting GreenDependent Institute<sup>2</sup>).

Depending on

- your current level of understanding;
- level of commitment and ambition;
- the size and nature of your activities; as well as the
- available time and resources;

the mapping process can take any amount of time, from a few days to several months, or even become part of a long-term development strategy. Below, we provide **more detailed guidelines** for using the Convergence Mapping System to (self-) assess your activities in terms of how they address planetary limits and equity/justice. Please note that these steps need not simply be followed in a linear way - they usually happen more or less in parallel with one another. Some of the steps may even be omitted, or some added.

### 2.1 Prepare and Assess Buy-in

First of all, you need to find out if your initiative / organization / project / policy, etc. is already interested in and committed to the concept of Convergence<sup>3</sup>. You can do this:

- through discussion with colleagues and stakeholders; and
- by checking relevant documents (e.g. mission statement, sustainability report, aims and objectives, procedures, existing certification such as for environmental and quality management systems, products or process, etc.).

Once you have assessed the level of interest and commitment which already exists you need to secure additional resources to either establish interest and commitment or take the interest and commitment further.

If you find that your initiative / organization / project / policy, etc. has not yet made a commitment, implicit or explicit, to Convergence, you will need to spend more time on preparing for the next step by working on the basic **Understand** and **Analyse** steps mentioned above.

<sup>1</sup> Please write to [info@convergeproject.org](mailto:info@convergeproject.org)

<sup>2</sup> Please write to [info@greendependent.org](mailto:info@greendependent.org)

<sup>3</sup> To learn more about Convergence, read the literature review in our [Background Paper](#) or check the resources and materials provided on the CONVERGE project website.



## 2.2 Obtain Commitment and Resources

After making an overall assessment of the current level of commitment, you will probably need to get decision makers to agree to a higher level of commitment to Convergence, as well as agree to make resources – both human and financial – available for realizing this commitment. Please note that completing the Convergence Mapping is usually far less time consuming than, for example, writing a sustainability report or getting certified using EMAS or ISO.

To decide on the amount of resources needed for completing the Convergence Mapping you will need to have an idea of how exactly you would like to carry it out. Items you may find important to consider are detailed under 3, 4, 6, 7 and 8 below.

## 2.3 Decide on the Objective of Convergence Mapping, and Who to Involve

First, you need to decide what the objective of the Convergence Mapping is. For example:

- Do you want to increase understanding of the concepts and issues of planetary Limits and Equity?
- Have you already achieved some results in terms of Convergence which you would like to take further?
- Do you want to ensure that a focus on resource reduction and meeting Limits is observed just as strongly as a focus on Equity, or vice versa?
- Or do you want to ensure that the policy you are planning to introduce appropriately deals with Limits as well as Equity?

Once your objective is clear, it is necessary to decide who should and will be involved, at what level and at what stages in the mapping process, both **internally** and **externally** (e.g. consultants, stakeholders, investors/funders/sponsors, etc.).

## 2.4 Decide on the Format of the Mapping Process

Convergence Mapping can be carried out in various ways depending on a variety of factors such as the objective of the mapping exercise, the nature of the activities being assessed, the amount of resources available, etc. Accordingly, there are a variety of potential formats for the mapping process:

- One dedicated person can complete the review and assessment, write the report and present it to the management / board / colleagues / research or policy team, etc.
- It is also possible to complete the mapping in a more participatory way, but still mainly internally, e.g. through holding a (series of) internal discussions or workshops.
- You may decide to select an external expert to moderate and facilitate your internal work, workshops and discussions.
- Finally, you could opt to entrust an external expert or organization to do the assessment, write the report, and present it to your team.

Once you have decided on the format most appropriate to your purpose, consider the steps detailed below and select the steps most appropriate to you.

## 2.5 Carry Out a Document Review and Collect Data

The next key step is to carry out a review of the key documents. 'Key documents' refers to founding documents, mission statements, sustainability reports, terms of reference for projects and policies, etc. The objective of the review is to check the content of the selected documents against the Convergence (Planetary Limits as well as Equity) criteria provided below.

If for some reason (e.g. because you are an informal community initiative) these documents do not exist or do not provide the information required, the necessary information may be obtained through the following activities:

- interviewing and talking to the relevant people, people in charge, long-time members, important sponsors and/or beneficiaries, etc.;
- checking the internet for resources and information;
- checking if there are any research papers or reports available about this topic for the activities in question.

Once the document review and data collection process is complete, your activities can be preliminarily placed on the Convergence Map using the two 5 item scales provided below on pg. 9-10.

## 2.6 Debate Results and Obtain Feedback

It can be useful to discuss and obtain feedback about the result of the preliminary placement. This can be done in a great number of different ways which include but are not limited to the following:

- internal workshop/s;
- workshop/s with stakeholders;
- online publication of results accompanied by invitations for written feedback from stakeholders;
- online discussion; etc.

## 2.7 Draw the Convergence Map and Report

Once you have considered all available data and feedback you can make the final placement using the Convergence Map and write a report about it, justifying your decisions. Again, depending on the objectives of the mapping process, the content of your report will be different and may take different forms:

- the report may just be the Convergence Map of your activities, which could then be included on your website, in your mission statement, sustainability report or other sustainability related assessment; or
- it may take the form of a standalone report with information about the mapping process which was undertaken, as well as a description of activities designed to strengthen Convergence.

### 2.8 Communicate Report and Results of Convergence Mapping

To ensure commitment to the values and principles embodied in Convergence as well as maintain the discussion about them, it is important to communicate the outcomes of the mapping process both internally and externally. The format will be varied depending on the objectives of mapping, the nature of your activities, etc.

### 2.9 Implement and Strengthen Convergence

For some initiatives / organizations / projects / policies, the Convergence Mapping process will end with the drawing of the final map. Others may want to leverage the mapping process to strengthen Convergence and related activities. In this case, some or all of the following activities can be useful:

- conducting research into how the elements of Convergence are relevant to your activities;
- deciding how you need to strengthen Convergence, and which action you need to take in order to do this;
- organizing training and discussions about Convergence internally, and, if necessary, with/for relevant stakeholders to ensure a general understanding of Convergence and what it means to your activities;
- modifying key documents in order to appropriately include Convergence and related considerations (e.g. explicitly mention that your initiative recognizes planetary limits, and places importance on equity);
- setting up appropriate indicators and measures to motivate as well as ensure implementation.

### 2.10 Monitor and Review

Finally, to complete the Convergence Mapping process (or to lay the ground for the next cycle of mapping) you may set up monitoring processes to follow, evaluate and report on implementation efforts. Furthermore, repeating the mapping exercise regularly is essential for tracking progress. The format of the Convergence Map (a very simple-to-understand graphic) can help with visualizing progress, which can then be easily and powerfully communicated to partners and stakeholders.

## 3. Convergence Evaluation Criteria

The details of the evaluation criteria used for Convergence Mapping are provided underneath.<sup>1</sup>

### 3.1. Planetary Limits<sup>2</sup>

- 1: **Mention of** resource, ecosystem or planetary limits or boundaries in core mission statement or in prominent, contemporary textual, or programmatic material **BUT no obvious mechanism for, or attempts to**, reduce consumption of resources or reduce pollution. Initiative activities may even contribute to increases in resource consumption/pollution.
- 0: **No mention** of resource, ecosystem or planetary limits or boundaries in core mission statement or in prominent, contemporary textual or programmatic material. The initiative's main goals are not related to reducing consumption of resources or of reducing pollution in any obvious way.
- 1: **Implicit**. No explicit mention of resource, ecosystem or planetary limits or boundaries in mission statement. May have limited mentions of limits and resource issues in associated prominent, contemporary textual, policy or programmatic material. However, despite the lack of formal references to limits, the initiative is involved in activities to reduce resource consumption and/or decrease pollution.
- 2: **Explicit**. Resource, ecosystem or planetary limits or boundaries are mentioned in core mission statement or/and in prominent, contemporary textual or programmatic material and the initiative is clearly engaged in attempts to reduce consumption and/or reduce pollution. Specific quantitative reduction targets or goals may or may not be defined.
- 3: **Explicit + Targets/Indicators**. Core mission statement/prominent, contemporary textual or programmatic material relates to resource, ecosystem or planetary limits or boundaries and reducing consumption. Specific limits are identified and/or specific contraction targets are detailed. There are transparent and accountable methods for contracting resource use and tracking results (e.g. use of indicators).
- 4: **Explicit + Targets that are defined based on available (scientific) information** about resource, ecosystem or planetary limits or boundaries. Clear efforts are being made to connect limits-related science with practice. Transparent and accountable methods for contracting resource use and tracking the results (e.g. use of indicators) are in place.

<sup>1</sup> Please note that this is version 2 of the criteria as we have developed the evaluation of Equity and thus slightly changed the criteria as compared to the system introduced in our earlier work, most of all in the [CONVERGE e-book](#).

<sup>2</sup> The Limits element of the Convergence Mapping System was adapted using material from: Vadovics E. 2009. Understanding and enhancing the contribution of low-carbon communities to more sustainable lifestyles. Thesis Prospectus. Budapest, Hungary: Central European University.

### 3.2. Equity<sup>1</sup>

- 1: **Mention of 'equity' or 'justice'** in core mission statement or in prominent, contemporary textual, or programmatic material **BUT no indication of activities** relating to promoting equity or justice. Initiative activities may even contribute to increasing inequality/hindering justice.
- o: **No mention of 'equity' or 'justice'** in core mission statement or in prominent, contemporary textual, or programmatic material. No evidence of an equity/justice/re-distributional focus to the initiative's activities.
- 1: **Implicit or Limited mention.** No explicit mention of 'equity' or 'justice' in core mission statement. Limited mention (once or twice) in prominent, contemporary textual, or programmatic material. The initiative's activities involve attempts to address the issue of justice/equity.
- 2: **Explicit mention.** 'Equity' or 'justice' mentioned and reference given to either intragenerational or intergenerational equity in core mission statement. Limited mention (once or twice) in prominent, contemporary textual, or programmatic material. The initiative's activities involve attempts to address the issue of justice/equity.
- 3: **Explicit mention of and reference to both intra- and intergenerational 'equity' or 'justice'** in core mission statement. Limited mention (once or twice) in prominent, contemporary textual, or programmatic material. The initiative's activities have a focus on addressing the issue of justice/equity. Specific quantitative targets or goals relating to Equity may or may not be defined.
- 4: **Explicit mention + Targets/indicators.** Core mission statement relates to both intra- and intergenerational equity and justice and/or 'justice' and 'equity' occur in same sentence in prominent, contemporary textual, or programmatic material. The initiative's activities have a focus on the issue of justice/equity. Transparent and accountable methods for fostering equity and tracking the results (e.g. use of indicators) are in place.

<sup>1</sup> The Equity/Convergence element of the Convergence Mapping System was adapted using materials from: Agyeman J, Bullard RD, and Evans B. 2003. *Just Sustainabilities. Development in an Unequal World*. The MIT Press, US. 367 p. Roderick I. with Jones N. 2008. *The Converging World*. In: Blewitt J. ed. *Community, Empowerment and Sustainable Development*. The Converging World Series. Green Books Ltd., UK. 204 p.

## 4. Case Examples<sup>1</sup>

### 4.1 For-profit and non-profit organizations

#### FRANK Water (UK)

##### Introduction to the organisation

The UK-based FRANK Water initiative was founded by Katie Alcott after she visited India and contracted dysentery after drinking dirty water. She realised that profits from the sale of 'ethical' bottled water in the UK could be used to fund new clean water facilities for villages in need in India and as a result set up a not-for-profit social enterprise and related charity in 2005 to serve these aims.

Despite successes in reaching one of the [Millennium Development Goals](#) of reducing by half the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation before 2015, the World Health Organisation estimates that around 3.575 million people die each year from water-related diseases, usually due to a lack of access to sanitation facilities/clean water for hygienic use and unsafe drinking water. Not only is the burden of disease due to lack of clean water very high, but millions of women and children across the developing world spend hours every day collecting water from often unsafe sources.

FRANK Water raises money to fund clean water projects through 'FRANK Water Products', a not-for-profit social enterprise which donates 100% of the profits made from selling bottled water, bottle refills and water containers in the UK to the charity 'FRANK Water Projects'. This charity uses this money to fund fee-based, community-owned and-run clean water projects (which typically use ultra violet and reverse osmosis technology water filtration systems), mainly in India. FRANK Water has funded around 70 such projects so far which have benefitted hundreds of thousands of rural Indians.

##### An Assessment of Convergence Elements

###### PLANETARY LIMITS:

Although FRANK Water generates its revenue from selling bottled water and water refills in the UK, it is highly aware of the need for contraction of resource use. "FRANK Water recognises the paradoxes of water consumption in the Northern Hemisphere and the injustice of lack of clean water in developing nations [and] does not seek to increase the sale of bottled water – but FRANK Water is pragmatic – it recognises that a bottled water market exists and probably will do for some time"<sup>2</sup>. They use a local spring source for their water, do not ship water over long distances (they refuse to export

<sup>1</sup> Please note that data collection for the case examples was conducted mainly between September 2010 and July 2012.  
<sup>2</sup> pp. 2–3., <http://www.frankwater.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/12/FRANK-Water-Philosophy.pdf> (last accessed Sept. 2013)



water abroad), primarily supply local customers (within 150 miles of the spring source) encourage the reuse and recycling of bottles, promote the restoration, replacement and repair of public drinking fountains and, primarily, encourage the refilling of water bottles at public events they have a presence at through their 'Free Fill' activities. Thus FRANK actively encourages reducing sales of bottled water but desires to be the preferred 'ethical' choice if bottled water must be purchased.

#### EQUITY:

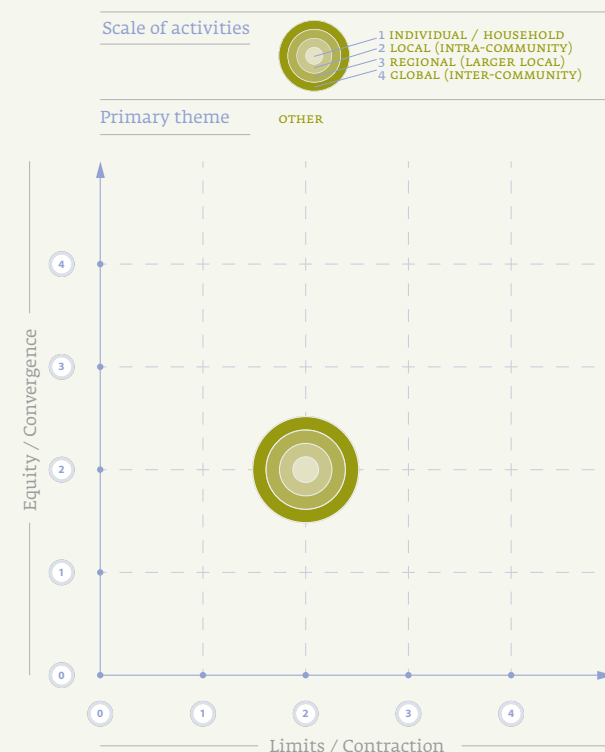
While intra and intergenerational equity are not both specifically referred to in the initiative literature, FRANK's work in using the profits it makes from buyers of water in the UK to fund human development-related projects in 'developing' countries is a clear example of equity principles being implemented at the global scale using the mechanism of a social enterprise/charity. Water projects that FRANK funds are "community owned and run, with a priority on community ownership, education and longevity. Each project is managed and operated by local villagers and an affordable user fee model is implemented to ensure sustainability and achieve maximum community uptake well into the future".

#### Strengthening Convergence – Examples and Opportunities

FRANK Water already seems well aware of the need to reduce consumption of natural resources. In terms of strengthening Limits, organizations such as FRANK Water could, for example:

- Build on the pre-existing 'Limits' elements in their operations by making them as resource efficient at an individual/local level as possible across a range of resources (perhaps by defining a range of environmental indicators and targets for the staff, office, infrastructure and operations they support, where they are not already available);
- Consider if FRANK Water could further reduce their resource impact by collaborating and learning from environmental experts from NGOs or other consultancies, if they have not done so already;
- Ensure that they maintain a discussion about the costs and benefits of their operations which is based on best scientific information to make sure that the benefits of their operations (in terms of gains in equity) are not outweighed by environmental costs.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.frankwater.com/what-we-do/> (last accessed Sept. 2013)



In terms of Equity, FRANK Water has already been extremely successful at supplying safe drinking water to those in need (one of the Millennium Development Goals). They could ensure that they maintain an emphasis on equity by:

- Making **explicit references** to 'inter and intragenerational equity' in their primary documentation and making explicit the inter-related nature of the development and environmental challenges humanity faces;
- Considering not only the impact they have on their beneficiaries but also on their customers. For example, they could consider whether it is possible to design a pricing structure for their products which reflects the customer's ability to pay;
- Continuing to ensure that their employment policies and daily operations are conducted in accordance with recognized principles of equitable employment (concerning gender, disability, compensation, participation and representation in decision-making, etc.).

#### References and Further Reading:

- I. Initiative website: <http://www.frankwater.com>
- II. The FRANK Water Eco-Policy (2010–2011): <http://www.frankwater.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/12/FRANK-Water-Philosophy.pdf> (last accessed Sept. 2013)
- III. Oppenheim L. 2010. An interview with FRANK Water's founder, Katie Alcott: <http://www.treehugger.com/green-food/katie-alcott-of-frank-water-on-being-an-insider-rebel-within-the-bottled-water-industry-interview.html> (last accessed Sept. 2013)





## Grameen Bank (Bangladesh)

### Introduction to the organisation

The Bangladeshi-based Grameen Bank is a [microfinance](#) and community development organisation (established as a bank in 1983) set up to target the rural poor. It was founded with the primary goal of alleviating poverty through providing micro loans to individuals excluded from using traditional banking services. The initiative was originally started by [Muhammad Yunus](#) who lent his own personal money to poor householders in the rural Bangladeshi village of Jobra in 1976.

The founder, Muhammad Yunus, from his own personal experience and professional background as a professor of Economics at Chittagong College, realised that many rural Bangladeshi's were only able to gain access to loans to support their micro businesses at very high interest rates. He noted that this lack of capital was a significant reason that entire families were locked into poverty and a serious impediment to regional economic development. In order to circumvent this problem, over a period of decades Muhammad Yunus formalised the microcredit model and gained significant institutional support for it.

Grameen bank provides zero collateral micro-loans to the low-income demographic, primarily rural Bangladeshis (usually women – who make up 97% of the current loan portfolio). Loans are typically in the order of 100–1000 Taki (a few dollars to tens of dollars) and lenders are supported through peer pressure to abide by the principles of [solidarity lending](#) and a set of values known as the [Sixteen Decisions](#) (which include prescriptions about environmental protection and promoting social justice). The recovery rate of loans is high – over 97% (as of 2010) – and the lending model is considered to be highly successful from both a commercial and a socio-economic development perspective.

### An Assessment of Convergence Elements

#### PLANETARY LIMITS:

The primary aim of this initiative is socio-economic empowerment and a review of the core literature related to the initiative does not uncover specific references to ecosystem limits. However, one of the initiative's core methodological elements is the '16 Decisions' which each Grameen borrower pledges to abide by. This covers environment-related issues (such as limiting family size, keeping the environment clean and the use of disease-limiting sanitation facilities). Escaping from poverty is likely to mean that the ecological footprints of Grameen borrowers increase as they obtain access to more material benefits, but reaching a state of 'equity within planetary limits' must involve a decrease in the environmental footprints of some citizens and corresponding growth in others.

#### EQUITY:

Perhaps surprisingly, the initiative literature does not contain specific references to 'intra- and intergenerational equity' and there is no mention of 'equity' or 'justice' in their core mission statement. However, there is limited mention of these concepts in their prominent,

contemporary textual or programmatic material and Grameen clearly has equity at its heart, seeing credit “as a human right”. The initiative explicitly seeks to empower the low income fraction of the population it works with according to the principles and practice of social justice. The principle of social justice is also embedded horizontally through the initiative in the Sixteen Decisions, where borrowers pledge to work with each other in a democratic and ethical manner towards basic common goals.

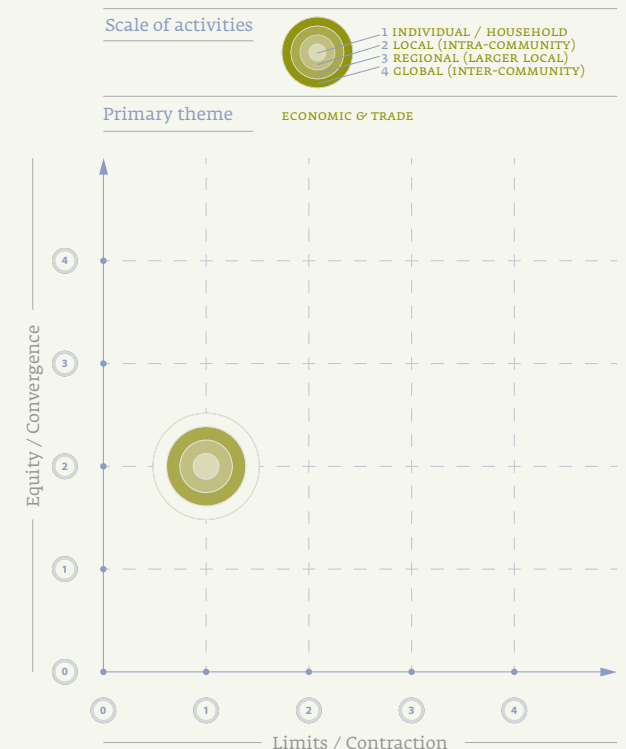
### Strengthening Convergence – Examples and Opportunities

In terms of strengthening Limits, Grameen organizers could:

- Build on the pre-existing ‘contraction’ elements in its 16 decisions and make them more effective at an individual/local level by defining environmental indicators and targets for the microbusinesses they support;
- Consider how the Grameen infrastructure (e.g. bank offices and vehicles) and operations (types of investments) could be made more environmentally friendly (perhaps through [collaboration](#) with an environmental NGO);
- Start a discussion about whether [defining](#) an environmentally ‘preferable’ way of living/consuming for its debtors as well as a ‘minimum’ standard is possible or worthwhile.

In terms of Equity Grameen is already extremely successful at alleviating poverty. They and other similar organizations could strengthen the equity component of their activities by (for example):

- Making [explicit references](#) to ‘inter- and intragenerational equity’ in their primary documentation;
- Forging links outside their main region of operation by collaborating with materially wealthier countries/individuals (e.g. developing a sponsoring programme for microbusinesses, or [developing relationships](#) with socially responsible banks outside the region).



**References and Further Reading:**

- I. Initiative website: <http://www.grameen.com/> or <http://www.grameen-info.org/>
- II. Brau J. 2004. Microfinance: A Comprehensive Review of the Existing Literature. Journal of Entrepreneurial Finance and Business Ventures. 9(1): 1–26.
- III. Holcombe SH. 1995. Managing to empower: the Grameen Bank's experience of poverty alleviation. Zed Books. 208 p.
- IV. MIT world video about Grameen Bank; Muhammad Yunus describes the theory and practice of micro-finance: <http://video.mit.edu/watch/muhammad-yunus-ending-global-poverty-9957/> (last accessed Sept. 2013)

**GreenDependent Sustainable Solutions Association (Hungary)****Introduction to the organization**

GreenDependent (GD) is a not-for-profit, non-governmental and public benefit association that was founded in 2005 by ten professionals committed to working towards the creation of a sustainable future. The professionals enrich the association with a variety of expertise (environmental, sustainability and sustainable energy management, economics, architecture, education and training, project management, mental hygiene, agricultural engineering and biology). The mission of GD is to research, create and promote sustainable lifestyles, sustainable production and consumption patterns and levels. In order to fulfil this mission GD carries out educational, research, consulting and local mobilization activities. Its most recent and ongoing projects include the organisation of national and international academic conferences about sustainable consumption, collaboration with national and local civil society organizations in sustainability projects (e.g. local food projects, starting and managing a local carbon group) and being a partner in international research projects.

Through its activities GreenDependent tries to establish links between research and everyday living so that important findings can be disseminated, discussed and put into practice as soon as possible. While GD partners in international projects, it also tries to be active on the local level: it initiates dialogue, motivates change and sets an example.

**An Assessment of Convergence Elements****PLANETARY LIMITS:**

One of the primary aims of GreenDependent, as expressed in its founding document, is “To reduce the impact of human activities (the so-called ecological footprint) on the environment and ecosystems.”<sup>1</sup> In order to do this, GD strives to reduce the ecological and carbon footprint of its own activities, including its operations and project implementation as well as in how it designs and carries out projects which promote living within planetary limits.

Examples of GreenDependent activities:

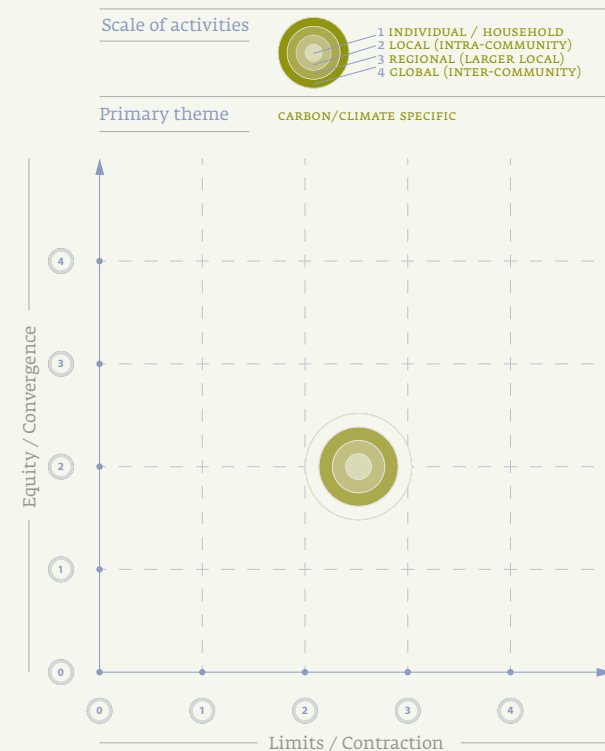
- GD keeps track of its carbon footprint, promotes the use of carbon foot-printing in all of its activities and projects and has created an online [carbon footprint calculator](#) for households;
- GD calculates the carbon footprint of most of its events and organizes offsetting activities, most often the planting of native fruit trees by participants;
- GD is a member of the [Resource Cap Coalition](#).

<sup>1</sup> See the founding document at [http://www.greendependent.org/hivatalos/GD\\_Egyesulet\\_alapszabaly.pdf](http://www.greendependent.org/hivatalos/GD_Egyesulet_alapszabaly.pdf)



## Examples of projects:

- GD initiated and established the **Gödöllő Climate Club**, a low-carbon community group introduced elsewhere in this publication;
- based on research and a literature review, GD has devised successful methodology to induce individual and household behaviour change towards more sustainable lifestyles and implemented campaigns and projects based on it (e.g. the **Small Footprint** and the **EnergyNeighbourhoods** projects);
- GD writes and publishes the monthly electronic **Small Footprint newsletter** which provides news, inspiration, practical advice and good practice examples to promote one-planet living.

**Equity:**

In its documents and activities GreenDependent places less explicit focus on the promotion of equity and justice. Still, the aim of reducing “social, environmental and economical inequalities”<sup>12</sup> is mentioned in its founding document, which also includes provisions for participatory decision making processes. Furthermore, GD has had and implemented an equal opportunities plan for its employees since 2011.

More recently, inspired by cooperation with its spin-off organization GreenDependent Institute, and the CONVERGE project, GD has published a column entitled “Equity within Planetary Limits” in its **Small Footprint newsletter**.

**Strengthening Convergence – Examples and Opportunities**

In terms of Limits, while already doing numerous things to promote the theory and practice of one-planet living, GreenDependent could further strengthen its activities through establishing, and communicating concrete resource reduction targets and implementing activities to meet those targets.

GD and similarly-focused organizations could reach a higher placement on the Equity scale through

- Incorporating explicit references to, as well as creating activities for promoting, inter- and intragenerational equity in its projects;
- Initiating discussion and debate on the topic of Equity and Equity within Limits at all levels; and

- Strengthening through case study examples and communicating more widely how living within the means of the planet can foster a more equitable distribution of resources, as well as promoting responsibility taking for more sustainable and equitable resource management.

**References and Further Reading:**

- Initiative website: <http://www.greendependent.org/index.php>





## 4.2 Community Initiatives

### Transition Town Totnes (UK) and Climate-Friendly (Transition) Wekerle (Hungary)

#### Introduction to the two Transition Initiatives

**Transition Towns** is an environmental and social movement (born in Totnes in 2006) which aims to make communities more resilient to the major global threats of peak oil, climate change and economic crisis. Transition is defined as an iterative process. There are two central aspects to a Transition Initiative<sup>(1)</sup>:

- Re-localization: meeting core needs locally (food, building materials, energy, etc.), which can, at the same time, be of great support to the local economy;
- Building resilience through reducing vulnerability to dependence on oil and reducing carbon emissions.

Transition is an iterative process and has been influenced and inspired by a variety of ideas and methods (e.g. the leaderless organization approach, the science of 'resilience' and research on happiness, ecopsychology (for details see II.)). One of the most important features of the transition process is that it should be community-led, and communities should be invited and enabled to find and develop solutions (ways of living, businesses, infrastructure, etc.) more suited to a low-carbon and resilient world.

Neither Transition Town Totnes (TTT) nor Climate-Friendly Wekerle claim to have all the answers but instead both wish to inspire people that positive change is possible and they themselves should take responsibility for creating it. Thus, creating a common positive vision of a future low-carbon and resilient community is vital. Once the vision is there, members of the community can work towards achieving it – and the role of Transition is to facilitate this process.<sup>1</sup>

#### An Assessment of Convergence Elements

##### PLANETARY LIMITS – TRANSITION TOWN TOTNES (TTT)

The **Totnes and District Energy Decent Action Plan** advocates A. Meyer's Contraction and Convergence<sup>TM</sup> framework<sup>1</sup> to manage the global carbon budget. Furthermore, in order to build resilience and to prepare for a decrease in availability of oil, TTT actively encourages contraction (i.e. decreases in the use of resources), and has implemented various programmes to promote this (e.g. helping households reduce their energy consumption – **Transition Streets**). However, although they advocate measuring progress, TTT does not appear to have defined specific contraction targets yet.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.transitiontowntotnes.org/about/who-we-are/aims/> (last accessed Sept. 2013)

#### PLANETARY LIMITS – CLIMATE-FRIENDLY WEKERLE

The long-term aim of Climate-Friendly Wekerle is to reduce consumption and environmental impact. At the moment, they are mostly engaged in carbon footprint reduction initiatives such as their own Energy Brigades programme which assists people to insulate their homes, or **EnergyNeighbourhoods**, a home energy use behaviour change programme. Thus, a lot of effort has been made towards reduction but concrete reduction targets or carbon quotas have not yet been established.

##### EQUITY – TRANSITION TOWN TOTNES (TTT)

TTT aims to be inclusive and participatory in nature and provides an opportunity for everyone to get involved. At the same time, it was found<sup>(v)</sup> that it is typically the “educated middle-class” that become engaged and it is more difficult to involve the less advantaged. As a result, there is now a move to engage lower income households and communities more actively. TTT operates at the local and regional level, and although they mention future generations in their mission statement, they limit the term to Totnes: “Sustainable development of Totnes and environs means development that meets the needs of the present citizens of Totnes and environs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”<sup>1</sup>

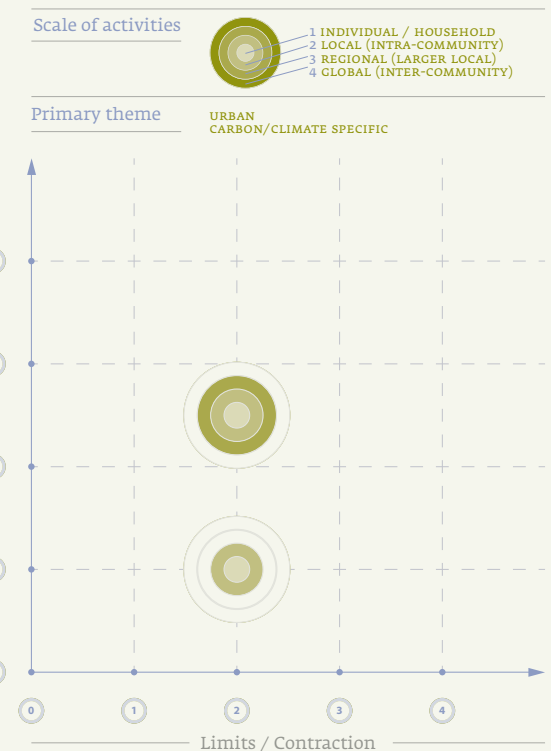
##### EQUITY – CLIMATE-FRIENDLY WEKERLE

The group experiments with the techniques of participatory democracy, operates with a low level of hierarchy and all members have an equal say in discussions over strategic and/or operational issues. The core group of Climate-Friendly Wekerle has also initiated community planning events in the estate to involve local residents in the renewal and design of public spaces. The overall aim of the initiative is to improve local resilience and self-sufficiency, which includes strengthening the connection between producers and consumers. Thus, the initiative has an influence at the individual, local and regional level. At the moment, apart from the recognition of global challenges (climate change and peak oil), there is no active focus on global equity and environmental justice issues.

#### Strengthening Convergence – Examples and Opportunities

In terms of Limits, the transition initiatives described here could strengthen their pre-existing efforts, for example, by:

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.transitiontowntotnes.org/about/who-we-are/aims/> (last accessed Sept. 2013)



- Keeping informed of and engaged in the discussion about, and where possible, establishing, concrete science-based sustainable contraction targets for key resources, and;
- Designing appropriate monitoring processes to measure the impact of existing and future contraction efforts both at the community and individual/household level.

In terms of Equity, the transition initiatives introduced here have been placed differently on the Convergence Map. TTT is already doing a great deal and showing a high level of awareness of the issue. It could reach a higher placement on the Equity scale by adopting a more global approach to sustainability and resource use. For Climate-Friendly Wekerle, there are more opportunities to become more engaged in the issue; for example:

- Making explicit references to the need to maximize inter and intragenerational equity in their primary documentation, and making clear the link between environmental and social challenges in the course of their activities;
- Creating discussion about and analysis of the equity/convergence related challenges relevant to the initiative and its activities through any means that the organizers find suitable for addressing and engaging their stakeholders (which may be formal, such as conducting a review of relevant literature or canvassing member opinions in a survey, or informal, such as hosting a town-hall type debate or equity-themed discussion about the climate).

### References and Further Reading:

- I. Initiative websites:
- II. Transition Town Totnes: <http://www.transitiontowntotnes.org/>
- III. Climate-Friendly Wekerle: <http://atalakulowekerle.blogspot.hu/> (information in English: <http://www.transitionnetwork.org/initiatives/talakul-wekerle-transition-wekerle>)
- IV. Banks S, Whitty C, Gillmore H. and Hopkins R. 2011. So What Does Transition Town Totnes Actually Do? The Story So Far... 2006–2010. 60 p. Available from: <http://transitionculture.org/wp-content/uploads/Transition-Town-Totnes-Ashden-report-final4.pdf> (last accessed Sept. 2013)
- V. Hopkins R. 2010. Localisation and Resilience at the Local Level: The Case of Transition Town Totnes (Devon, UK). PhD thesis, University of Plymouth, UK. Available from: <http://transitionnetwork.org/blogs/rob-hopkins/2010-11-09/now-available-localisation-and-resilience-local-level-case-transition> (last accessed Sept. 2013)
- VI. Scott-Cato M. and Hillier J. 2010. How could we study climate-related social innovation? Applying Deleuzian philosophy to Transition Towns. *Environmental Politics*. 19(6).
- VII. Richardson J. 2011. Assessing the potential health impacts of a Transition Town Initiative: A health impact assessment of Totnes Transition Together and Transition Streets. Plymouth University. Available from: [http://transitionculture.org/wp-content/uploads/TTT\\_HIA\\_ShortReport1-1.pdf](http://transitionculture.org/wp-content/uploads/TTT_HIA_ShortReport1-1.pdf) (last accessed Sept. 2013)

## Gödöllő Climate Club (Hungary)

### Introduction to the community initiative

The Gödöllő Climate Club is a small, voluntary, grassroots group initiated by an NGO ([GreenDependent Association](#)) in 2009. It was established in order to raise awareness of climate change issues in households, establish links between climate change and household consumption and create a sense of responsibility for consumption and lifestyle-related emissions in households.

As research about motivating behaviour change related to energy use points towards the importance of small groups, when initiating the club, GreenDependent decided to experiment with an informal group format using the inspiring examples of and lessons learnt from [EcoTeams](#), [CRAGs](#) and [transition towns](#).

The Club generally meets every month and members discuss climate change and energy-related issues, ideas and concerns in an informal setting while drinking fairtrade tea and eating homemade cakes. Some club members keep track of their consumption and emissions with the help of a [carbon calculator](#) developed by GreenDependent and tested by club members. They also calculate the footprints of club events and occasionally plant fruit trees in a local community garden to offset the emissions.

More recently, club members have decided to become more active in the local community in order to raise awareness of what they do, attract more members, and motivate community level change towards more climate-friendly living.

### An Assessment of Convergence Elements

#### PLANETARY LIMITS:

The primary aim of the initiative is to contract or reduce the carbon footprint of the climate club members. However, members also support each other in reducing one another's footprints, sharing skills and knowledge about lower-carbon living and promoting awareness and practical action in the wider community through organizing and participating in community events in the town of Gödöllő in Hungary. The overall aim is to contract (i.e. have smaller and more sustainable carbon footprints) not only in the households involved but also for the community as a whole, but for the time being no specific contraction targets have been set.

#### EQUITY:

The reduction of the carbon footprint is not only about reducing one's own impact but also about sharing the resources available to humanity with others, both at the local and global level. As Gödöllő (the home town of the club) has a twin town in Indonesia, some of the club members have the more long-term goal of establishing a link with the community there.

Convergence in the club is also happening in terms of collecting and sharing information,



and exchanging certain goods and services (e.g. plants and seeds; car-sharing between members). Decisions are made in a participatory way, taking into account everyone's opinions and ideas.

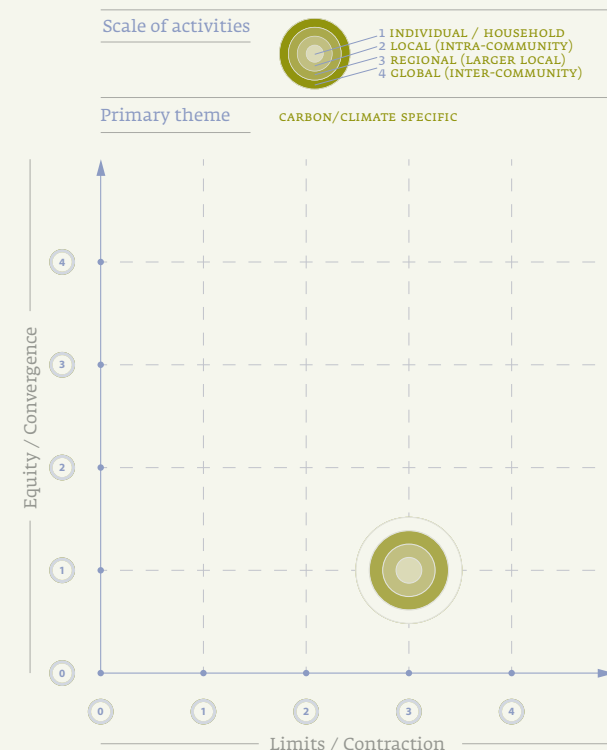
### Strengthening Convergence – Examples and Opportunities

In terms of strengthening Limit elements, members of the Climate Club could:

- Make the measuring of carbon footprints more relevant at the individual level, meaning, for example, that when joining the Club each member could make a pledge to monitor his/her footprint;
- Collect and publish club members' good practice examples in terms of reducing direct and indirect energy use and thus lowering their carbon footprint.
- An informal collection of such efforts already exists and has been published in local papers, but a more formal version (e.g. annual collection and publication) could motivate larger scale community change towards one-planet-living.
- Attempt where possible to use best available science for formulating targets and indicators, firstly as applied to the carbon footprints of members (i.e. what size of carbon footprint would be sustainable). This process could later be extended to include other resources.
- At the same time, an attempt could be made to extend the idea of one-planet-living to the local community, e.g. through facilitating discussion and efforts with local stakeholders.

In terms of Equity, the Club could start by

- Incorporating explicit references to inter- and intragenerational equity into initiative documents and activities; and
- Considering how living within the means of the planet can foster a more equitable distribution of resources as well as responsibility taking for managing them. This process could take the form of informal discussions within the club, through moderated debates, invitation of external speakers, other collaboration with relevant experts, a web-based discussion platform, or some combination of the above.



### References and Further Reading:

- I. Initiative website: <http://www.klimaklub.greendependent.org>
- II. Almássy T, Farkas M, Kovács B, Wheatley T. 2011. KLIKK – Klímabarát hálózatok és kisközösségek. [KLIKK – Climate-friendly networks and communities]. Független Ökológiai Központ Alapítvány, Hungary. 32 p. Available from: [http://lmv.hu/files/klikk\\_kiadvany.pdf](http://lmv.hu/files/klikk_kiadvany.pdf) (last accessed June 2012)
- III. Vadovics E, Heiskanen E. 2010. Understanding and enhancing the contribution of low-carbon communities to more sustainable lifestyles: the case of the Gödöllő Climate Club in Hungary. Poster presented at the ERSCP-EMSU conference in Delft, Holland, 26–29 October 2010. Available from: [http://www.klimaklub.greendependent.org/kutatasi\\_eredmenyek/ClimateClub\\_poster%20presentation\\_ERSCPEMSU%20conf\\_2010Delft.pdf](http://www.klimaklub.greendependent.org/kutatasi_eredmenyek/ClimateClub_poster%20presentation_ERSCPEMSU%20conf_2010Delft.pdf) (last accessed Sept. 2013)





4.3 Municipality-Level Policy

Covenant of Mayors – Genoa (Italy) and Reykjavík (Iceland)

Introduction to the Policy Tool

The **Covenant of Mayors** (CoM) is a “mainstream European movement involving local and regional authorities, voluntarily committing to increasing energy efficiency and use of renewable energy sources on their territories”. In 2008 the **EU Climate and Energy Package** was accepted and as a part of this initiative the **European Commission** launched the CoM “to endorse and support the efforts deployed by local authorities in the implementation of sustainable energy policies”. CoM signatories are required to create adequate administrative structures for making municipal carbon reductions, undertake a Baseline Emission Inventory (of energy consumption and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions) submit a **Sustainable Energy Action Plan** (SEAP) to the CoM and present, implement and monitor the city’s results. It is estimated that 80% of Europe’s energy consumption and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are associated with urban activity<sup>2</sup>.

	Genoa	Reykjavík
Joined the CoM	2009	2010
SEAP Accepted	2010	2011
Target CO <sub>2</sub> reduction	23.7% by 2020	22% by 2020
Avoided CO <sub>2</sub> equivalent by 2020	538014 tonnes	267000 tonnes
Challenges	High energy demand of residential building stock Increasing demand for air conditioning and other cooling systems Electrification of public transport systems.	Demand from public transportation Rising domestic energy use
Areas of focus	Greening building stock Improving air conditioning Improving public transportation, including bike paths	Increasing number of cycle paths Renewing municipal vehicle fleet Increasing use of alternative energy Limiting sprawl Waste management programmes

An Assessment of Convergence Elements

PLANETARY LIMITS:

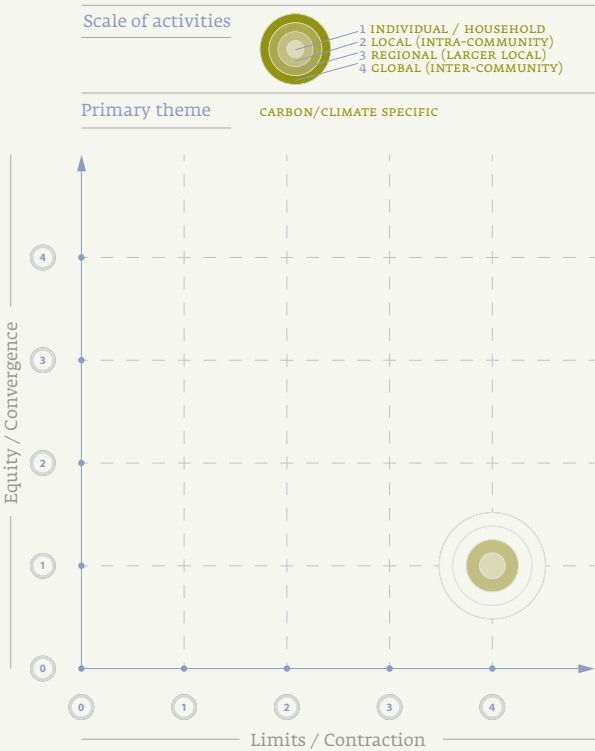
The Contraction component of the CoM initiative is strong. The municipalities described here have explicitly recognized energy consumption targets that are in line with the 2007 unilateral commitment by the EU to cut Europe’s CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by at least 20% of 1990 levels by 2020 to attempt to limit climate-change induced global average temperature rises to max. 2°C. They have both prepared an inventory of current energy use and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and have defined their own programmes, goals, indicators and quantitative targets for reducing

1 [http://www.covenantofmayors.eu/about/covenant-of-mayors\\_en.html](http://www.covenantofmayors.eu/about/covenant-of-mayors_en.html) (last accessed Sept. 2013)  
2 [http://www.eumayors.eu/index\\_en.html](http://www.eumayors.eu/index_en.html) (last accessed Sept. 2013)

urban emissions and have publically pledged to report on their progress.

EQUITY:

The literature on and programmes of these initiatives do not explicitly refer to 'equity' or 'justice'. However, in the SEAPs of both initiatives, proposed activities include ensuring that citizens and other stakeholders are consulted on the subject of energy sustainability in public decision making (to improve transparency and give access to correct technical information). The Reykjavik CoM states that reducing “emissions will be achievable only if local stakeholders, citizens and their groupings share responsibility” thereby “allowing citizens to benefit directly from the opportunities and advantages offered by a more intelligent use of energy”. As a result, although the initiative is Contraction-focused it appears that some attempts are being made to ensure that the rights of affected citizens are being considered procedurally in terms of participation as well as substantively in terms of how they benefit from infrastructure and energy-related improvements to the cities.



Strengthening Convergence – Examples and Opportunities

In terms of Limits, the CoM initiative is already strong. The cities described here could strengthen these pre-existing efforts, for example, by:

- Considering how to make the pre-existing ‘contraction’ elements as relevant and effective at the individual/local level as possible (e.g. by designing a carbon rationing system for local government employees’ offices, districts, businesses or vehicle fleets);
- Fully examining how meeting CO<sub>2</sub> contraction targets can be harmonized with other urban environmental goals;
- Delegating resources to studying the existence and impact of resource limits on the urban environment and including the public in this discussion;
- Promoting a discussion with other CoM signatories about cooperating in reducing CO<sub>2</sub> (e.g. through trade or transport activities).

CoM cities could reach a higher placement on the Equity scale by doing things such as:

- Making explicit references to the need to maximise inter and intragenerational equity in their primary documentation and making clear the link between environmental and social challenges;

1 [http://www.eumayors.eu/about/signatories\\_en.html?city\\_id=18420-seap](http://www.eumayors.eu/about/signatories_en.html?city_id=18420-seap) (last accessed Sept. 2013)

- Analysing the equity/convergence related challenges relevant to the area covered by the CoM activities and identifying how to leverage contraction efforts to assist in solving such challenges;
- Ensuring that an equity impact assessment is done before implementing CoM activities.

### References and Further Reading:

- I. Initiative website: [http://www.eumayors.eu/index\\_en.html](http://www.eumayors.eu/index_en.html)
- II. Bulkeley H. 2010. Cities and the Governing of Climate Change, Annual Review of Environment and Resources. 35: 229 -253.
- III. van Staden M, Musco F. editors. 2010. Local Governments and Climate Change. Sustainable Energy Planning and Implementation in Small and Medium Sized Communities. Series: Advances in Global Change Research. Vol. 39. 1st edition.



The authors of this Guidebook wish you success  
in your efforts to 'Converge'!

Please visit [www.convergeproject.org](http://www.convergeproject.org) and/or [www.greenindependent.org](http://www.greenindependent.org) to  
learn more about the project and the background to this Guidebook.