

GREEN ECONOMY FOR A WORTHWHILE DEVELOPMENT

Posted on 13/04/2015 by Naider

The environment is one of the areas in which the Basque Country has improved the most in recent years. **Significant deficiencies have been resolved** in the field of sanitation, waste, management and recovery of contaminated soils, air quality, water,..., which were undoubtedly very significant ballasts of the Basque model developmental. The indicators reflect this ([consult the environmental profile of the Basque Country 2013](#)) and we see As in practically all of them, environmental improvement is projected in states and trends in tune with those of the most developed countries.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ijxEcYUMpPQ>

Leaving aside the past, the main question now is whether the trend that has led us to the current situation is capable of resolving the still serious environmental problems that we face or whether, on the contrary, we have reached the ceiling and it is our turn to drastically change. The answer is found in the [IV Environmental Framework Programme](#) which, following the established guideline by the [7th Environmental Action Program of the European Union](#), clarifies that **incremental improvements will not be enough , that structural changes are needed in the consumption-production systems so that our society advances towards a clean and healthy environment that can be bequeathed to the next generations.**

Structural changes that should be aimed at achieving an economy that increases quality of life standards and offers ample opportunities for development while improving the environment. The “squaring of the circle” and effectively **from the linear way in which we are used to thinking, it sounds really utopian to propose that more growth and development can be achieved with less environmental impact.**

Despite this, we have to get down to work. **Improving the environment while harming the economy would be too simple**, but no one is aware that it is also unacceptable in a society that is slowly coming out of the crisis, but which has more than 150,000 people without jobs (14.5% unemployment rate) and in which the number of people at risk of poverty continues to increase. (176,532 people in 2014 and an increase since 2008 of 44.8%).

Therefore, the million dollar question is, without a doubt, how to face this great challenge? How to get people, nature and the economy to walk on the same path? It is clear that standard solutions based on traditional corrective measures are not enough and that new ways of addressing problems are needed. We have a clear clue of how to act in our towns and cities. No one escapes how complicated and socially frowned upon are many of the measures aimed at correcting the serious environmental problems caused by excess traffic. The situation, however, would be very different and less costly if we had incorporated environmental problems into urban design and built spaces for coexistence on a human scale in which walking and public transportation were the most cost-efficient vehicles for people. . By way of example, Atlanta and Barcelona are cities with similar population and per capita income, but nevertheless, the greenhouse gas emissions of the former are ten times higher than those of the latter; the difference, its urban model. On the other hand, there is no doubt that people and society as a whole would better accept the increasing restrictions on traffic if they were really aware of the serious health problems that it entails and the additional social costs that it entails and that we do not take into account. when we decide how to move. According to the [World Health Organization](#), exposure to particulate matter (PM), the main source of which is traffic, decreases the life expectancy of people by an average of almost a year due to the increased risk of cardiovascular diseases, respiratory problems and lung cancer.

Therefore, the conclusion is: **let us focus our attention on the origin of the problems whenever possible and especially, let us prioritize the effort in more education and better training** to articulate a civil society that is organized and self-demands while demanding different ways of doing things. On excessive occasions, people look at the environment as a responsibility of others. From companies that pollute and from institutions that do not control enough, but the reality is that a good part of production decisions with their corresponding environmental and regulatory

impacts are strongly conditioned by citizens. **There is no other choice but to change our pattern of consumption** and not only because the potential for environmental improvement is enormous, but simply because getting out of the spiral of vain consumerism in which our society is increasingly hooked, **it will make us much happier**. It is about radically changing our way of shopping, making it more sophisticated and intelligent to better choose what we really need and also opening up to new paradigms such as **sharing (of vehicles, homes, electrical appliances,...), servitization (buying services, which is what we need and not goods) and increasing reuse (extending the useful life of products)**, which offer new perspectives with great potential for development

And in tune with these social developments, more **eco-innovation and eco-design that takes the environment into account at all stages of the product life cycle**, which will save us an unimaginable amount of resources. physical and economic and, most importantly, it will open up a new universe of business and social opportunities in which the Basque Country can position itself as a global benchmark.

In short, it is about **articulating a green and innovative economy for development that is worthwhile** for people.

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