



Ecological Footprint

Project

Duration

Nov 2006 - Jan 2007

The Ecological Footprint is one of the most successful indicators worldwide for conveying the concept of the ecological sustainability and the biophysical limits of the Earth. This project for the German Federal Environmental Agency consisted of a comprehensive analysis and evaluation of the "Ecological Footprint" indicator regarding its possible application as an indicator of sustainability for Germany.

The Ecological Footprint was established in the last 10 years as one of the most important indicators for the biological resources consumed in production and consumption activities on the international level and is used by a multiplicity of institutions to evaluate the impact on the environment of human activities. Key users of the indicator include urban and regional planning institutions as well as environmental and development organisations. There are very few examples of application by national governments, however. The project addressed the following key issues:

1. Description of the state-of-the-art methods of computing the Ecological Footprint and a review of existing computations.
2. Analysis of the underlying data using the example that national accounts of Germany and an analysis of the key issues regarding data quality. The study identified and evaluated possible alternative data sources for Germany.
3. Critical analysis of the existing computations of the Ecological Footprint, in particular regarding the weak points in the calculation method as well as the meaningfulness and interpretability of the indicator.
4. Development and presentation of suggestions regarding how the identified weaknesses can be overcome (particularly regarding alternative data sources and calculation methods) and for which areas of application the Ecological Footprint appears suitable.

Funding

[German Environment Agency](#) (UBA), Germany

Partner

[Ecologic Institute](#), Germany

[Sustainable Europe Research Institute](#) (SERI), Austria

[Best Foot Forward](#) (BFF), United Kingdom

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