



What does the so-called "*Green Development*" eventually stand for?

by Yannis Tsakos and Stavros Damianidis *, June 2010

Within the last year in Greece, the term "green" has been attached to the word "development", so as to define and describe an alternative national developmental course, in contradistinction to the up-to-now Greece's evolution and the current financial crisis the country is going through. This proposal is however not a recent innovation, since its essential options have been included in the sustainability declarations and principles for over two decades now. The demand for actions and the adjustment of development and consumer standards was included in the 1992 Rio declaration; since then, this whole frame has evolved from a theoretical concept to real-life practices, mainly focused climate change confrontation.

Particular countries have supported and implemented such actions in their economy sectors, following in this way a standard of soft and balanced development towards sustainability. Regardless though of each country's efforts, the ongoing financial crisis seems to retain its global character, presenting even particularly intense phenomena in countries like Greece that have been inactive in the field of sustainability. The prolonged world crisis does not diminish the true value of the "green development" concept, since it is widely acknowledged that the crisis is mainly attributed to economy globalisation and market distortions. On the contrary, a proposed holistic and global "green" approach seems now even more feasible, having its foundations already set through international environmental conventions and treaties. The main delay is recorded in the implementation of particular actions at national level so as to host a "green development" model both in local communities and in all productive units.

Such environmental friendly actions are realised in different time frames (e.g. on a daily, monthly or annual basis) and size scale (e.g. building level, urban or physical planning, national scale), through a grid of energy and environmental axes. These include numerous actions such as:

- energy saving in the buildings' sector;
- selection, production and utilisation of appropriate building materials;
- bioclimatic design;
- energy efficiency in the industrial production;
- modernisation of energy distribution networks;
- complete liberalisation of the energy market;
- promotion of renewable energy sources in accordance with local needs, potential and suitability;
- gradual upgrade and renovation of conventional energy sources units;



- rational solid waste management and upgrade of collection and selection systems;
- promotion of reuse and recycling;
- waste combustion and waste-to-energy implementation;
- utilisation of special waste currents;
- rehabilitation and utilisation of uncontrolled waste dumpsites;
- rational water resources management;
- water saving by reuse or aquifer recharge;
- rational collection, treatment and management of municipal and industrial wastewater;
- reduction of CO₂ and greenhouse gases (GHG) emissions;
- implementation of best available techniques (BATs) in industrial production processes;
- constant observance of environmental legislation;
- auditing and investigation of legislation implementation;
- environmental training and education;
- public awareness;
- information transparency on environmental issues.

This non-exclusive list reflects to all productive sectors. State initiatives are necessary during every part of the process, so as to define the development frame in which private investors shall act, and also to orientate actions through funding support, research, and innovation development. The recent adoption of the new renewable energy sources legislative framework in Greece sets a rational basis for particular areas of interest, aiming at arranging bureaucratic drawbacks and upgrading the up-to-now segmented and insufficient strategic planning. Both the general public and the market hope that this framework will eventually eliminate or at least minimise the presence of circumstantial investments and occasional business moves of the recent past, since they do not belong to a sustainable development course.

An optimum realisation of a sustainability plan is not an easy task; this must be clear to all parties involved – idealists, businesspeople, civil servants, citizens. Technical expertise, knowledge fusion, and implementation potential, are required, along with an integrated and global experience, at least in the field of design and consulting services. The “green development” incorporates consumers, commerce, producers, business, and every single state official, each one with their particular own role.

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