

## Environmental Policy Research Centre

---

# Approaching Rio+20: A survey of positions and expectations of civil society organisations in six European countries on the Green Economy

Holger Bär

Klaus Jacob

Stefan Werland

---

### FFU-Report 01-2012

---



Environmental Policy Research Centre (FFU)

Freie Universität Berlin

Department of Political and Social Sciences

Otto Suhr Institute of Political Science



## Publisher

Freie Universität Berlin

Environmental Policy Research Centre

Innestraße 22

14195 Berlin

Website: <http://www.fu-berlin.de/ffu>

ISSN 1612-3026

FFU-Rep 01-2012

## Approaching Rio+20: A survey of positions and expectations of civil society organisations in six European countries on the Green Economy

This report is based on a survey conducted in a research project commissioned by the European Economic and Social Council.

The authors would like to thank the experts interviewed, Maria José Lopez Grancha and Veronica Tomei of the European Economic and Social Council as well as our colleagues Prof. Dr. Martin Jänicke, Sabine Weiland, Lisa Münch and Rainer Quitzow for their comments and advice.

## Authors

Holger Bär, [holger.baer@fu-berlin.de](mailto:holger.baer@fu-berlin.de)

Dr. Klaus Jacob, [klaus.jacob@fu-berlin.de](mailto:klaus.jacob@fu-berlin.de)

Stefan Werland, [werland@zedat.fu-berlin.de](mailto:werland@zedat.fu-berlin.de)

The Environmental Policy Research Centre (FFU) publishes its FFU reports as a scientific working paper series since 1993. It aims at sharing research results with the public early on. The reports are peer-reviewed internally. The views expressed are solely the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the FFU.

---

# Table of Contents

---

- Executive Summary..... 1
- 1 Introduction ..... 2
- 2 Objectives and methods of the survey and expert interviews ..... 3
  - 2.1 Objectives of survey and expert interviews ..... 3
  - 2.2 Selection of participants..... 3
  - 2.3 Data on participation by civil society groups and countries ..... 4
  - 2.4 Expert interviews ..... 6
- 3 Results of the survey and expert interviews ..... 7
  - 3.1 Key Elements of the Green Economy ..... 7
  - 3.2 The relationship between Sustainable Development and the Green Economy . 8
    - 3.2.1 The Green Economy: A two or three-pillar concept? .....8
    - 3.2.2 What is the social dimension of the Green Economy? .....9
  - 3.3 Ecological limits, welfare indicators and consumption models ..... 10
    - 3.3.1 What is necessary to keep humanity within the planetary boundaries? ..... 10
    - 3.3.2 The measurement of welfare: Which new approaches? ..... 14
    - 3.3.3 The importance of values and consumption models..... 16
  - 3.4 Key sectors in the GE transition ..... 16
    - 3.4.1 Mainstreaming vs. sector-based concept..... 16
    - 3.4.2 Key sectors ..... 17
  - 3.5 Opportunities and risks in the Green Economy ..... 18
    - 3.5.1 Opportunities in the Green Economy ..... 18
    - 3.5.2 Risks in the Green Economy..... 20
  - 3.6 The role of national governments ..... 22
  - 3.7 Policy instruments to foster the Green Economy transition..... 23
  - 3.8 Financing the Green Economy transition..... 24
  - 3.9 Responsibility of various actors in the transition ..... 25
  - 3.10 Developing countries and the Green Economy ..... 26
  - 3.11 Analysis of results according to countries of origin ..... 27
- 4 Key Messages ..... 30

5	Annex.....	33
5.1	Discourses on the Green Economy - Results from the preliminary study .....	33
5.2	Survey and interview questions.....	34
5.2.1	Survey questions.....	34
5.2.2	Interview questions .....	40
5.3	Interview partners.....	41
5.4	Survey results.....	43
5.4.1	Key Elements of the Green Economy .....	43
5.4.2	The relationship between Sustainable Development and the Green Economy	46
5.4.3	Ecological limits, welfare indicators and consumption models.....	48
5.4.4	Key sectors in the GE transition.....	50
5.4.5	Opportunities and Risks in the Green Economy .....	52
5.4.6	The role of national governments.....	55
5.4.7	Policy instruments to foster the Green Economy transition.....	57
5.4.8	Financing the Green Economy transition.....	59
5.4.9	Responsibility of various actors in the transition .....	60
5.4.10	Developing countries and the Green Economy .....	61
5.4.11	Analysis of results according to countries of origin.....	62

---

## Tables and Maps

---

Table 1:	composition of responses from the four remaining countries .....	6
Table 2:	Welfare indicators named by respondents as “particularly important” [excerpt] .....	15
Map 1:	Opportunities in the Green Economy .....	19
Map 2:	Risks in the Green Economy .....	21
Table 3:	Elements of the Green Economy considered “important” or “very important” by all respondents .....	43
Annex Map 1:	Opportunities in the Green Economy (landscape) .....	53
Annex Map 2:	Risks in the Green Economy (landscape) .....	54

---

## Acronyms

---

EESC	European Economic and Social Committee
ETS	Emissions Trading Scheme
EU	European Union
EUSDS	European Sustainable Development Strategy
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GE	Green Economy
HDI	Human Development Index
HPI	Happy Planet Index
PES	Payments for Ecosystem Services
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNCSD	United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

## Executive Summary

This report presents findings from an online survey and a number of expert interviews on the perspectives of European civil society on Sustainable Development and the Green Economy in the run-up to the 2012 UN Conference on Sustainable Development. The survey was sent out to civil society organisations in six selected European countries to gain a better understanding of their views on specific aspects of the Green Economy concept. In addition to this, the data analysis allows us to compare respondents' answers across different groups of civil society as well as between countries.

The survey questions range from the definitional aspects of what the Green Economy is and what its elements are to the conflict dimensions identified in the first part of the study as well as the risks and opportunities seen in the Green Economy. Finally, it includes the questions what role governments should take and what policy and financing instruments should be used more widely in the transition to the Green Economy.

The Green Economy concept is still an open concept and civil society groups are eager to weigh-in and help define its boundaries and key aspects. With this lack of clarity come many concerns, both internationally as well as on the European level, that the Green Economy could be 'just a greened capitalism' that allows for 'greenwashing' and 'social greenwashing'.

A large majority of respondents say that the concept should be based on a three-pillar approach, while questions remain concerning the extent of the social dimension of the Green Economy. Trade unions emphasize the need for better working conditions and international standards, for example by implementing social protection floors. This question in particular is connected to the European debate and the relationship between the Europe 2020 strategy and its flagship initiative on resource efficiency, and the European Sustainable Development Strategy (EUSDS). Unions and environmental groups fear that the EUSDS might be replaced by the 'narrower' Europe 2020 strategy that, in their view, lacks a strong social dimension.

The social partners agree that the greening of the economy should be a consensus-based approach that includes all sectors and rejects a view that distinguishes between 'brown' and 'green' sectors of the economy. There are more diverse views on the questions of what role governments should play and what instruments they should use. Respondents agree that national governments should provide framework conditions and economic incentives to businesses and support research and development for green technologies. Beyond that, there is still disagreement within civil society sectors along with significant differences in the member states over what instruments should or should not be used. Similarly, there are differences regarding the question of how much the government should get involved in the development of the economy and if there should be an active de-growth of certain polluting sectors.

What respondents generally seem to agree on is that the European Economic and Social Committee can and should play a significant role in providing a forum to bring European civil society together and build consensus, to help civil society's views be heard in EU policymaking and to work to ensure the EU acts as a role model in the transition to a Green Economy. This report aims to make a contribution to this endeavour.

## 1 Introduction

What are the positions and expectations of European civil society for the upcoming World Summit on Sustainable Development in Rio 2012? The conference's agenda envisages a comprehensive greening of the economy. The world's economy should be transformed from the current resource-intensive method of production towards a sustainable economy - one that fulfils current and often urgent human needs without inhibiting the chances of future generations. However, what this means in concrete terms, what aspects will be given priority, which measures will be agreed upon and what institutions will be formed for the implementation phase is quite open and under dispute. While it is almost unanimously acknowledged that a far-reaching transformation is needed, disputes emerge as to the role and prospects of the different sectors, regions and actors affected by such a transformation. With the current crises over public finances, the scale of ambition and the envisaged timeline for the greening of the economy is additionally being challenged.

European institutions, including the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), are preparing for the summit by developing their positions. This study, commissioned by the EESC to the Freie Universität Berlin, aims to facilitate this process. It does so by exploring the positions of different European civil society actors on the concept of the Green Economy and sustainable development in light of next year's 2012 UN Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD).

The project started out with an analysis of policy documents, academic studies and position papers on different worldwide concepts of and views on the Green Economy. This report formed the basis for the survey and was published as FFU-Report 07/2011.<sup>1</sup> The survey was sent out to civil society organisations from six European countries (France, Germany, Poland, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom); the findings from the survey were then complemented by interviews with civil society representatives from these six countries and European field experts.

---

<sup>1</sup> See [http://www.polsoz.fu-berlin.de/polwiss/forschung/systeme/ffu/publikationen/2011/Baer\\_etal\\_FFU-report\\_07-2011\\_Green\\_Economy/index.html](http://www.polsoz.fu-berlin.de/polwiss/forschung/systeme/ffu/publikationen/2011/Baer_etal_FFU-report_07-2011_Green_Economy/index.html)



This report will first discuss the methodology of the survey and then turn to the results of the survey. The insights from this data will be combined with the findings from the expert interviews conducted and synthesised into key messages. The annex to this report will contain a summary of the preliminary study, the survey and expert interview questions as well as additional survey data.

## 2 Objectives and methods of the survey and expert interviews

### 2.1 Objectives of survey and expert interviews

The survey and the interviews aimed to produce a more nuanced representation of civil society actors' opinions on the concept of the Green Economy and the pathways and obstacles used to work towards it. Rather than being representative, the study aimed to invite a large number of organisations to participate. Based on this explorative approach, it identifies consensus and disagreements between civil society groups regarding aspects of the Green Economy and to identify policy preferences amongst the actors to foster the transition to the GE. The expert interviews conducted helped put the results of the survey in a better context and to explain national differences as well as differences between civil society groups.

### 2.2 Selection of participants

The survey was sent to civil society groups in six European countries - France, Germany, Poland, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom. As its population, the survey began with those civil society organisations that are registered with the European Transparency Register<sup>2</sup> and have declared their interest in sustainability-related issues.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, members of the EESC and the Committee of the Regions were invited to complete the survey. The sample included businesses and industry organisations<sup>4</sup>; trade unions; agricultural and farmers' associations; non-governmental organisations working on the environment and conservation; NGOs working on development and humanitarian aid; consumers' and women's rights and youth; as well as faith-based groups; and networks and associations of local communities with issue specific purposes (e.g. "Energy Cities"). Altogether, more than 700 invitations to participate in the survey were sent out to civil society representatives from these countries.

---

<sup>2</sup> The Transparency register can be found at: <http://europa.eu/transparency-register/>

<sup>3</sup> The selected categories were: Agriculture, Climate action, Consumer affairs, Development, Education, Employment and social affairs, Energy, Environment, Equal opportunities, External relations, Fisheries and aquaculture, Food safety, Humanitarian aid, Public health, Research and technology, Taxation, Trans-European networks, Transport and Youth.

<sup>4</sup> This group also includes individual companies that are registered in the transparency register.

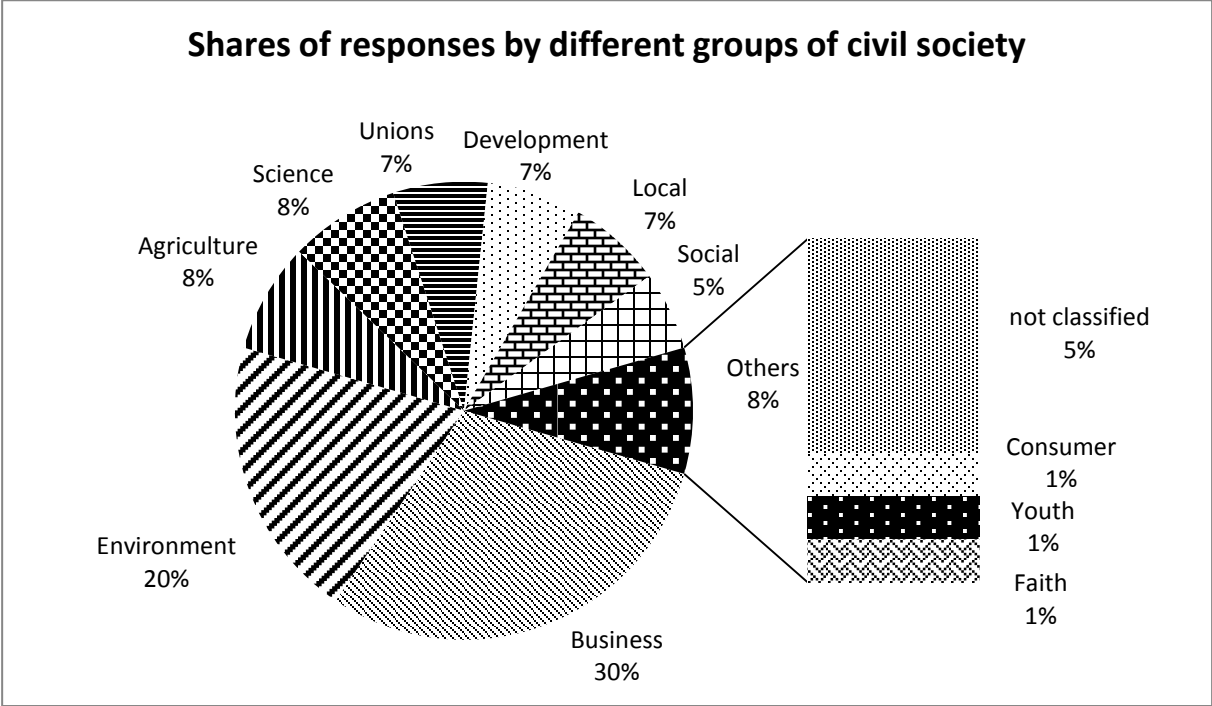
### **2.3 Data on participation by civil society groups and countries**

We received complete answers from 81 respondents. The chart below provides an overview of the civil society groups that are represented by the survey responses received. The study will present results for the eight groups of civil society actors in which at least five responses were received.

These are:

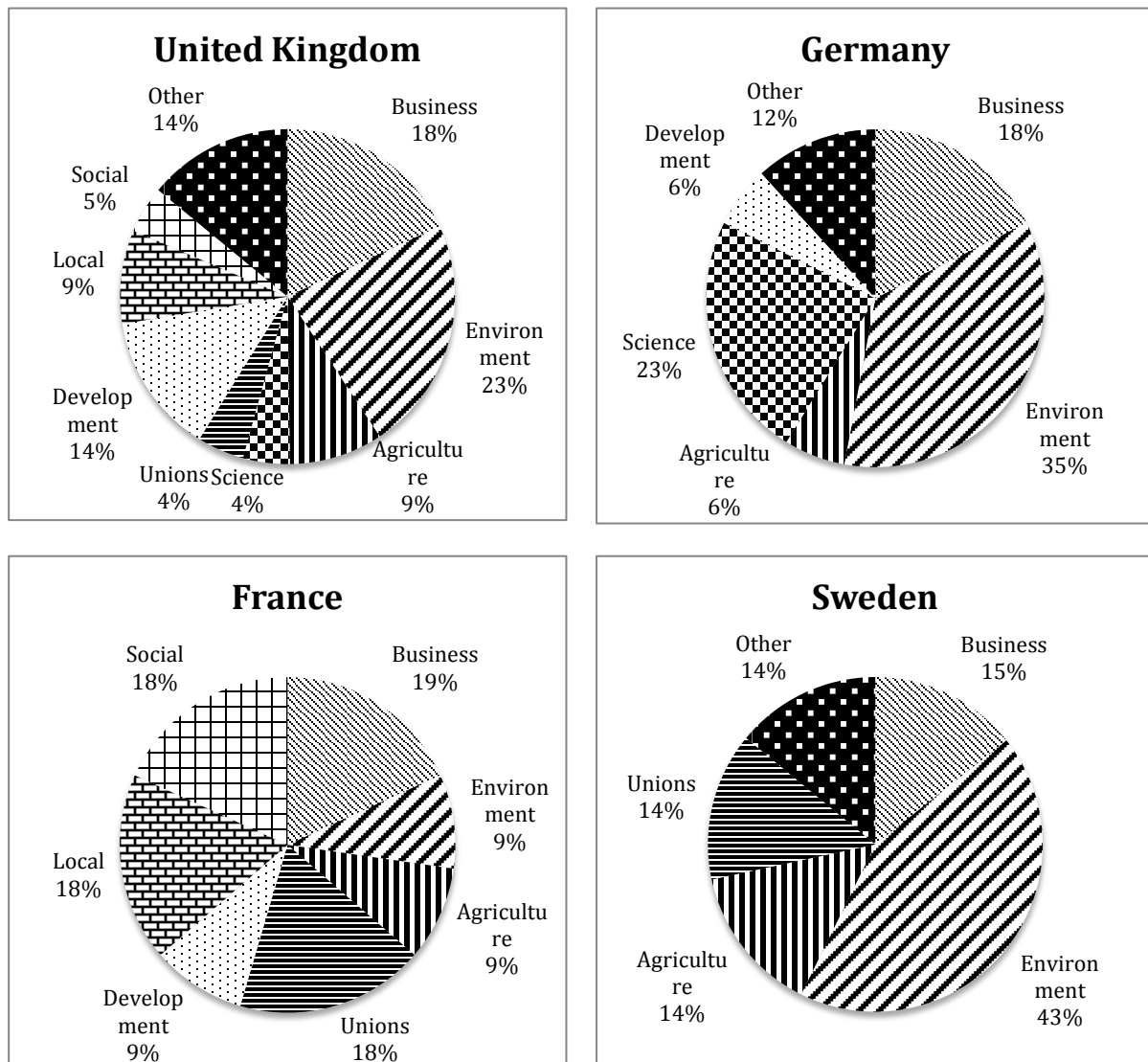
- [Business]: Business and industry associations (including individual companies listed in the transparency register)
- [Environment]: Environmental NGOs
- [Agriculture]: Agricultural and farmers' associations
- [Science]: Scientific institutions (listed in the transparency register)
- [Unions]: Trade Unions
- [Development]: Developmental and humanitarian NGOs
- [Local]: Networks and associations of local communities (with purposes relevant for Green Economy)
- [Social welfare]: Social welfare groups

The 8% of respondents that listed in the "Others" category were not considered as separate categories because not enough organisations (<5) representing these groups of civil society participated in the survey to be considered representative. This was the case for faith-based, youth, women's and consumer rights organisations. The category "not classified" contains respondents that did not want to identify themselves in any of the categories listed above; their responses are contained in the results that are presented for all respondents.



The sample of the European countries was based on the following rationale: the survey was supposed to cover and assess the Green Economy debate in the three major European economies (the UK, France and Germany) and in other European regions. This means that Scandinavian, Southern European and an Eastern European Member State should all be included. Poland was chosen out of this group because it provides an interesting example of a high-carbon economy in transition. Response rates from the six countries varied widely, with high response rates from the UK (22) and Germany (17) to lower levels from France (11) and Sweden (7). Only two responses were received from Poland and Spain, therefore the countries will not be included in the more detailed analysis. The tables below present the composition of the responses from the four remaining countries broken down by civil society groups. It shows that national responses are composed differently between the four countries. These different compositions need to be kept in mind when comparing the survey results across the various countries.

Table 1: composition of responses from the four remaining countries



## 2.4 Expert interviews

Based on the findings of the survey, we conducted 14 semi-structured expert interviews. The experts spoken to come both from these organisations that participated in the survey and other experts that helped in understanding the wider European debate and the debates in the six member states; they were also selected to represent the range of countries and civil society groups in the survey.<sup>5</sup> Sections 2.2 and 2.3 of the annex document contain both the interview questions as well as a table of the experts spoken to.

<sup>5</sup> Individual interview partners will not be cited directly in the presentation of the results. Statements and facts gained from these results will contain a reference to them.

### 3 Results of the survey and expert interviews

This chapter will present the responses to the survey questions and will complement - or contrast - the survey data with the in-depth knowledge gained through the expert interviews. The structure of this section follows the survey: It will first present the different views on key elements of the GE concept and, secondly, its relationship to Sustainable Development and views on its social dimension. Third, it will discuss the need for ecological limits, new welfare indicators and measurement concepts and a discussion on consumption models. The fourth section will identify sectors considered crucial in the GE transition, analyse perceived risks and opportunities in the GE, discuss the roles of governments and other actors and it will present views on policy and financing instruments. The fifth section will briefly discuss views on developing countries and the GE transition while the last section will look at the data and differences between actors not as members of a sector of civil society, but according to their countries of origin.

#### 3.1 Key Elements of the Green Economy<sup>6</sup>

The first part of the survey identified which elements of Green Economy different civil society groups considered to be the most important. Participants were asked to evaluate the importance of ten elements using a five-point scale from 'not important' to 'very important'. These ten elements of the Green Economy were derived from the review in the interim report.<sup>7</sup>

The findings from the survey on key elements of Green Economy can be summarised as follows:<sup>8</sup>

- Technological solutions - **resource efficient technologies** and **renewable energies** - were almost unanimously considered as being crucial for the Green Economy over all of the civil society groups.
- However, besides technological approaches, there was still very wide agreement among respondents that **changes in consumption patterns** are also a key element of the Green Economy. There was some scepticism expressed on this issue from business and industry associations, agricultural and farmer's associations and social welfare associations. The importance of behavioural changes, i.e. new lifestyle and

---

<sup>6</sup> Wording of the survey question: „Key elements of the Green Economy: Please evaluate the importance of these different aspects of the Green Economy“

<sup>7</sup> These elements were: Resource efficient technologies; Climate change mitigation technologies; Renewable energies; New growth potentials; Green jobs; New welfare indicators ('beyond GDP'); Respect for ecological limits/planetary boundaries; Greater social equity; Poverty reduction; Changes in consumption models and culture and values.

<sup>8</sup> The corresponding tables and charts can be found in section 3.1 of the annex document.

consumption patterns, was also confirmed in the survey question on the “social dimension of Green Economy” (Cp. section 3.2.2)

- Lesser agreement was found with regard to the importance of social aspects. While **poverty reduction** still reaches relatively high support over all of the groups, there are significant differences on the importance of **greater social equity**. Unions, social welfare organisations and development NGOs as these are the primary supporters of enhanced equity.
- Significant differences, mainly between business and industry associations, trade unions, and environmental NGOs can be found in the evaluation of **green jobs** and new growth potentials from the Green Economy. The Green Jobs concept receives most of its support from unions and environmental groups, but is considered significantly less important by business representatives. Some trade unions and environmental groups have started to cooperate and build common agendas around the issue of green jobs to combine their strengths. Examples for this can be found in France, Germany and on the European levels, while in other countries there is no such dialogue. **Potentials for new growth** in the Green Economy are considered “important” or “very important” by roughly 80% of business and union representatives, while responses from environmental groups are neutral towards the topic.

## 3.2 The relationship between Sustainable Development and the Green Economy

### 3.2.1 The Green Economy: A two or three-pillar concept?

Another question that was identified in the interim report as crucial in the debate on Green Economy was the relationship between Green Economy and Sustainable Development. The distinction between the two concepts is both conceptual and practical-political. On the one hand, there is the question of whether the new Green Economy concept is - similar to Sustainable Development - a three-pillar concept including a social dimension or if it is a concept focused on the environmental and economic dimension. Secondly, it contains the question of what the social dimension of the Green Economy concept entails. Thirdly, on a political-practical level, there is the question on the European level of how the Green Economy policies, such as the Flagship Initiative for a Resource-efficient Europe of the Europe 2020 strategy, relate to the existing European Sustainable Development Strategy.

There was overwhelming agreement - and even unanimity in many groups of civil society - that the Green Economy *should* be viewed as a three-pillar concept. A share 41% of business respondents, 29% from the agricultural sectors, 22% of environmental NGOs and a sixth of local responses have been in favour of a two-pillar approach.

The three-pillar approach found broad support in the expert interviews. Experts emphasized the importance of the social dimension - both on the global and European level.

Globally, a central element of the social dimension is focused on the reduction of poverty, greater social equity and income perspective for the poor on the individual level. Interview partners underscored the need for global redistribution and burden-sharing measures if developing countries are supposed to agree to adopt measures to transition towards a Green Economy, as well.

Nearly all interviewees agreed that the Green Economy should be considered a subset of Sustainable Development. Most of them observed that the three-pillar approach was, more or less, undisputed in the international debate. When asking for the situation in Europe, this homogenous picture fundamentally changes fundamentally: While business and industry representatives point to the Green Economy as an implementation strategy for Sustainable Development and position themselves as service providers, there is widespread concern amongst environmental NGOs, unions and scientists that the Europe 2020 strategy draws attention away from the European Sustainability Development Strategy (EUSDS). An interviewee from business and industry confirmed this impression and explained that there are too many uncoordinated initiatives at the EU level and that stakeholders had to decide where to invest their limited resources. Thus, there is an observable shift of attention away from the EUSDS and towards Europe2020. Interviewees from unions, science and environmental NGOs also criticised that Europe2020 uses a two-pillar approach that neglects the social dimension of Sustainable Development and is driven mainly by economic interests. The Green Economy was also criticized for being an unclear concept that provides opportunities for 'greenwashing' and 'social greenwashing'. (cf. section 3.5.2: Risks of the Green Economy).

### 3.2.2 What is the social dimension of the Green Economy?

Turning to the question what constitutes the social dimension of Green Economy, the survey asked respondents to select *two out of six*<sup>9</sup> aspects they considered to be the most important.<sup>10</sup> Results of the survey indicate that there is much less consensus on this issue amongst civil society groups.

The category 'new lifestyles and consumption patterns' received highest overall support. A closer look, however, revealed stronger variations in the responses. The same is true for categories like 'greater social equity' and 'poverty reduction'. While greater social equity was particularly emphasised by unions and social welfare groups, businesses and envi-

---

<sup>9</sup> Since respondents were asked to select two out of six possible items, agreement with specific aspects in this question is considerably lower than in Question 1, where there no restriction in the number of choices and respondents were free to select as many aspects as they wanted. A restriction in the number of choices forces respondents to select those aspects they perceive as most important. The result is a ranking of aspects.

<sup>10</sup> The six aspects were: Green & decent jobs; Social protection floors; Greater social equity; Poverty reduction; Improved public health; and New lifestyles and consumption patterns.

environmental organisations attributed greater importance to poverty reduction and new lifestyles and consumption patterns. The concept of 'social protection floors' was strongly supported by unions, but received little support from other organisations. Expert interviews with union representatives underscored that the topic is a central issue that unions want to see addressed on a worldwide basis. The European and International Trade Union Confederations are actively supporting the work of the International Labour Organisation on Social Protection Floors.<sup>11</sup> In the preliminary analysis and also in the expert interviews, a central topic was the 'green and decent jobs' concept. It is championed by trade unions and some environmental NGOs. While it received stable support among all civil society groups, the overall level of support was average hinting at a low degree of "enthusiasm" about it.

The expert interviews underscored the differences between civil society perspectives on the social dimension of the Green Economy. This was most striking in regards to questions over the relationship between the social dimension and employment. Business and industry representatives, on the one hand, referred to the creation of skilled and unskilled jobs and pointed to the importance of establishing universal labour standards (for example, interviewees pointed to the abolishment of child labour in developing states). On the other hand, union representative went further and stressed the importance of green and decent jobs and the international introduction of social protection floors. They put the Green Economy concept in the context of a deterioration of labour standards both globally and in the EU in the last decades and were mainly worried that it might lead to a further deterioration of working conditions and therefore argued that new jobs must not just be 'green', but also be 'decent'.

The interviews emphasised that there is also an international perspective on the social dimension of the Green Economy. Here, experts named both potential benefits - the redistribution of income to the Global South through payments for ecosystem services schemes - as well as potential threats to social development in developing countries - through the commodification of nature and the negative impacts of European biofuels policies in these countries.

### 3.3 Ecological limits, welfare indicators and consumption models

#### 3.3.1 What is necessary to keep humanity within the planetary boundaries?

The first question of this section asked for respondents' views as to how far technological changes will have to go in order to stay within planetary boundaries, whether there need

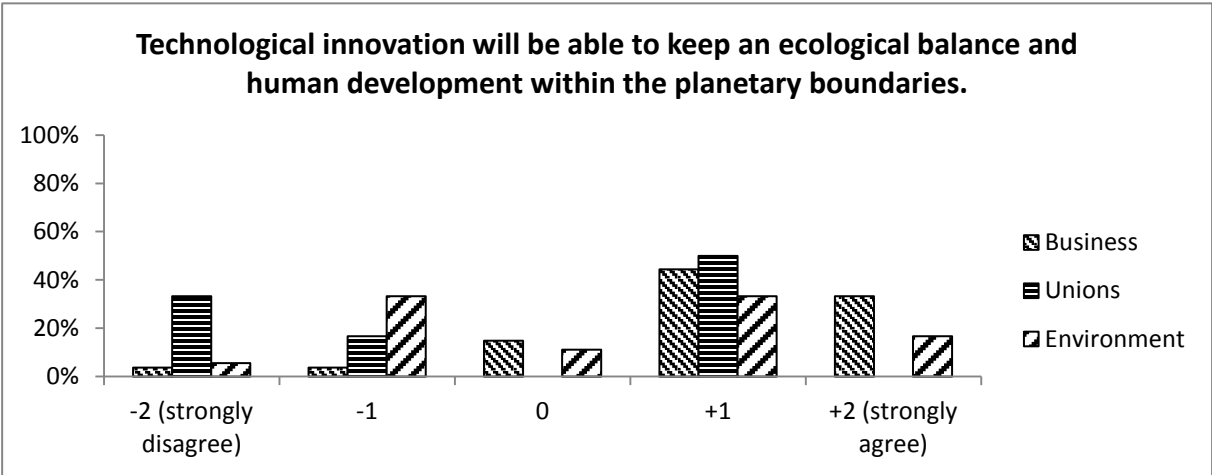
---

<sup>11</sup> See for example: <http://www.etuc.org/a/9085>

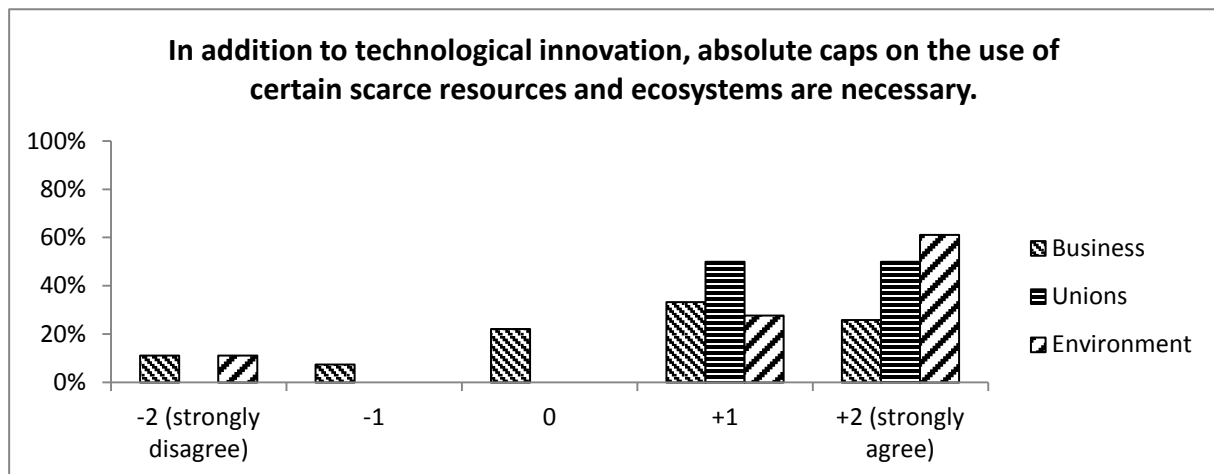


to be absolute caps on the use of scarce resources and ecosystem services - or even a need for de-growth of 'brown industries'. Overall, the views of the different groups vary considerably on this set of questions - both between the groups and within them (see Annex, section 3.3.1.).

The first question - whether technological innovation will be sufficient to keep human development within the planetary boundaries - shows a wide range of answers amongst all groups, ranging from non-belief to technological optimism. Similarly, when focusing on the three major groups, one can see a higher degree of optimism amongst businesses compared to unions and environmental groups whose responses are dispersed.



Respondents generally supported the view that there is a need for absolute caps on the use of scarce resources and ecosystem services and the need for de-growth of certain polluting sectors. However, the level of support for de-growth of certain sectors is lower on average. When turning to the analysis of the views among the three major groups, we can find significant differences between them. While we find strong support for absolute caps among unions and environmental groups, business responded generally supportive of absolute caps, albeit at a lower level.



Evidence from expert interviews on these questions shows a **broad agreement that both technological innovations and changes in values and behaviour will be needed to stay within planetary boundaries**. Interviews have shown that the 'limits to growth' debate is broadly taken up throughout all stakeholder groups. Industry representatives from Germany, France indicated that they are well aware of the 'limits to growth' debate. While they call for maintaining economic growth, their starting point is the question of how to deal with ecological limits and finite resources and how to make growth more resource efficient. The reduction of material throughput and the resulting environmental impacts was considered important by a range of interviewees from industry, unions, and environmental NGOs as well. Interviewees from business and industry associations and from individual companies pointed to the role of industry as solution provider. This positioning of businesses allows them to maintain an overall growth-orientation of the economy that they consider crucial, while many environmental groups and scientists consider the latter as the heart of the problem of growing material consumption.

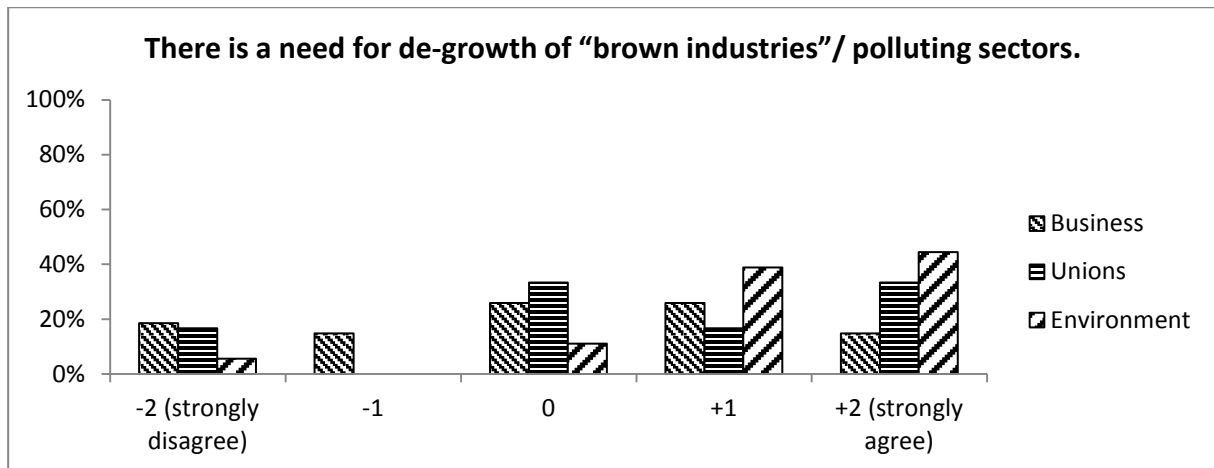
Interviewees also pointed to a rising awareness that lifestyles, values and consumption patterns are important. The reduction of material throughput and the resulting environmental impacts was considered important by a range of interviewees from industry, unions, and environmental NGOs as well. However, the willingness to interfere with the market in order to achieve this goal varies significantly. While the business sector mainly focuses on technological innovation to achieve this aim, some interviewees mainly with environmental background answered that **clear price signals** (e.g. through **higher taxes on unsustainable products or lower taxes for eco-friendly products**) were a precondition for changes in consumption and subsequently production. Without price signals, they were concerned not enough people would change their behaviour and consumption patterns to influence the overall production patterns to reduce material consumption.

On the question of the need for **de-growth of certain sectors**, a strong support among environmental groups continues, while the responses from business and union representatives varied widely - giving no clear indication of support or opposition. Interviewees from **France, the UK and Germany admitted that this debate is intensifying and gaining increasing momentum**, but is not "policy relevant" yet.<sup>12</sup> Interviewees indicated that although the debate is not a fringe debate anymore and gaining acceptance in wider circles, talking about de-growth or sufficiency is politically risky - especially in times of economic crisis. Interview partners from Sweden, Spain and Poland indicated that there was no debate that questions economic growth was conceivable within their countries. An interesting observation in this regard was that the recent election campaigns for the Spanish parliament essentially focused on the "classic" narrative of economic growth as a precondition for employment while leaving out critical perspectives on it. Positive contributions of 'green responses' to the economic crisis are hardly considered in the policy debates. An expert pointed to "increasing barriers" for the deployment of renewable energies that were set by the Ministry for Energy, since renewable energies were considered too expensive. Interviewees from Poland pointed to the weakness of Polish NGOs, which were mostly dealing with local and regional issues. These experts also reported that - similarly to Spain - most people are worrying about their immediate economic situation and that the vast majority of the population still consider the protection of the environment as being an obstacle with economic growth.

While the de-growth debate remains mostly restricted to NGO and academic circles, interviews have shown that the 'limits to growth' debate is broadly taken up throughout all stakeholder groups, even among some members of the business community (see chart below). What is preventing a wider spread of the topic is the overwhelming impact of the current economic and financial crisis that is causing a demand for quick answers for increased employment - that are answered throughout the political spectrum with "more growth."

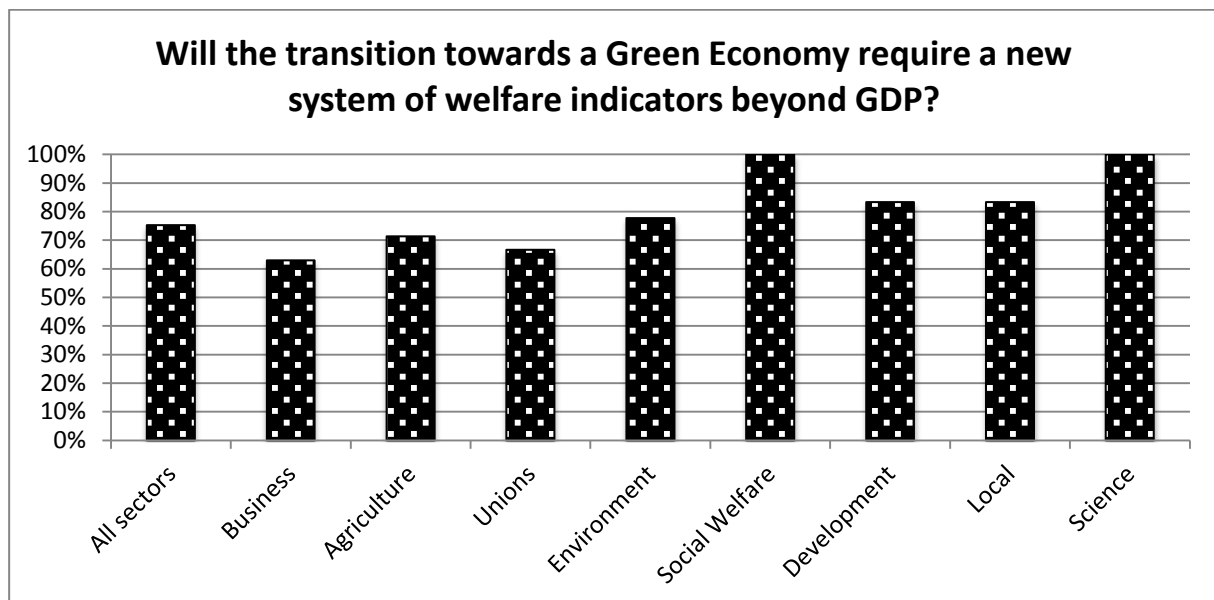
---

<sup>12</sup> Interviewees from Poland and Spain indicated that the limits-to-growth debate is not important at all in their countries and current debates much more focused on the classical growth paradigm.



### 3.3.2 The measurement of welfare: Which new approaches?

There is widespread agreement amongst all groups that another element in the transition to a Green Economy will be a new system of measuring welfare. The support for complementing GDP with other welfare indicators ranges from close to two-thirds of business respondents to universal support for it amongst social welfare groups and scientists.



However, beyond the mere question of whether there is a need to complement GDP, there is also a wide variety of responses regarding which indicators are important. Interviewees agreed that new indicators are needed in order to measure welfare beyond GDP. One central result of the expert interviews was that the integration of externalities into macroeconomic accounting needs to be enhanced, but other indicators should also be used. As one example of indicator systems, interviewees pointed to the Enquête Commission of the

German Bundestag's work or to existing private reporting initiatives to assess the environmental and social impacts of enterprises and value chains.<sup>13</sup> Many of these initiatives were developed in cooperation with environmental NGOs. One interviewee suggested a 'shopping list' for indicators and indicator systems as one potential outcome of the Rio+20 conference.

The following table presents an excerpt of the responses given on the question of what indicators and indices/indicator sets are considered particularly important.

Table 2: Welfare indicators named by respondents as "particularly important" [excerpt]<sup>14</sup>

Environmental: Ecological costs of products and production procedures (2); energy and resource consumption/GHG emissions; state of nature/natural capital accounting (3)

Social: Health (5); child mortality; poverty (2); access to clean water (2) and education (4); food security (2); social equality (4) and social cohesion (2); cost of energy and food; quality of life and wellbeing (3)

Economic: Income inequality (3); transparency of production chains; share of green investment in total capital investment

Governance: Inclusion in decision-making; 'Good governance'

Proposed indicators and indicator sets: Global Footprint index/planetary boundary index; UN Human Development Index (3); Gross National Happiness (4); Stiglitz Commission indicators (3); Happy Planet Index (2); OECD better life indicators; Genuine Progress Indicator - GPI

While there was widespread consensus that new indicators were desirable, some experts also expressed doubt. One interviewee stressed that, despite initiatives and studies such as 'The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity' (TEEB), the available indicators are not ready for implementation yet. Another expert argued that while alternative indicators can make an important contribution, in his view the alternative indicators' ability to influence policy decisions is often exaggerated. There are examples of indicators that have been used for a long time - like the Human Development Index - that haven't had much of an impact on policy decisions; there must be an openness on the part of important policy-

<sup>13</sup> The Enquête Commission "Growth, Welfare, Quality of Life's" website can be found at: <http://www.bundestag.de/bundestag/ausschuesse17/gremien/enquete/wachstum/index.jsp>

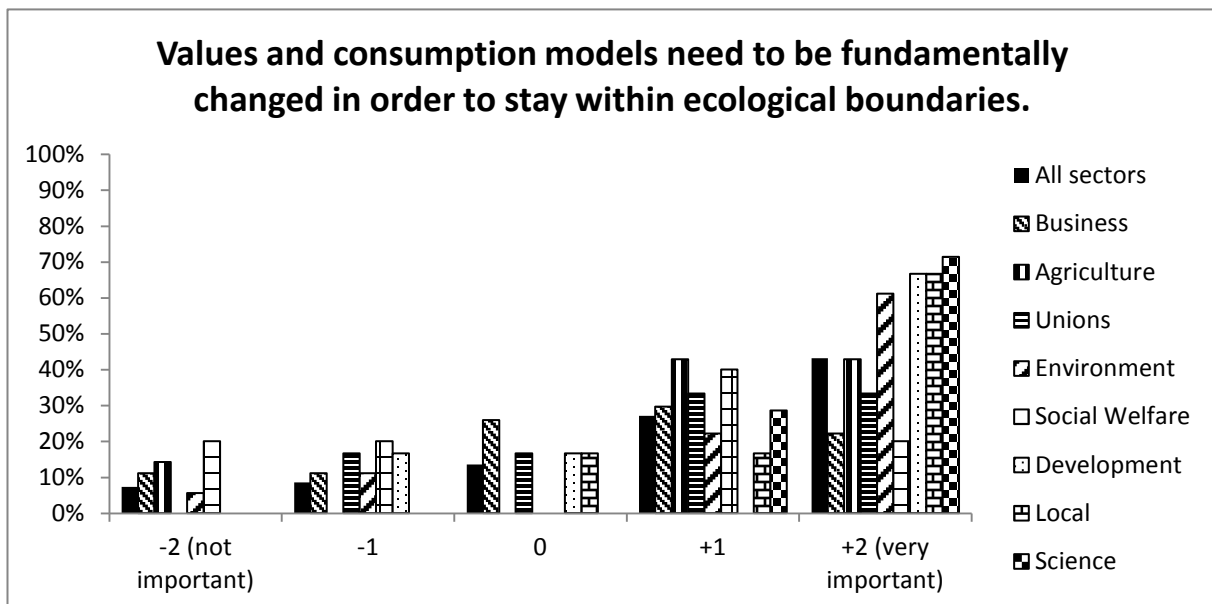
<sup>14</sup> The numbers in the parentheses indicate how often the indicator(s) sets were named.

makers to recognise the alternative indicators if they are to have an actual impact on policy decisions.

### 3.3.3 The importance of values and consumption models

When turning to the individual side of what is produced and consumed, the survey data suggest a rather solid agreement amongst civil society groups that values and consumption models need to be fundamentally changed. The greatest amount of support for these changes could be found amongst scientists, representatives of environmental, developmental local organisations and farmers.

We received similar feedback in the expert interviews in all countries, while the degree of support for these changes - and the level to which these changes should be enforced by government policies - varies between groups and the experts we talked to. Some interviewees voiced concern about the willingness of people to change their behaviour unless prices gave clear incentives (cf. ch.3.1.1).

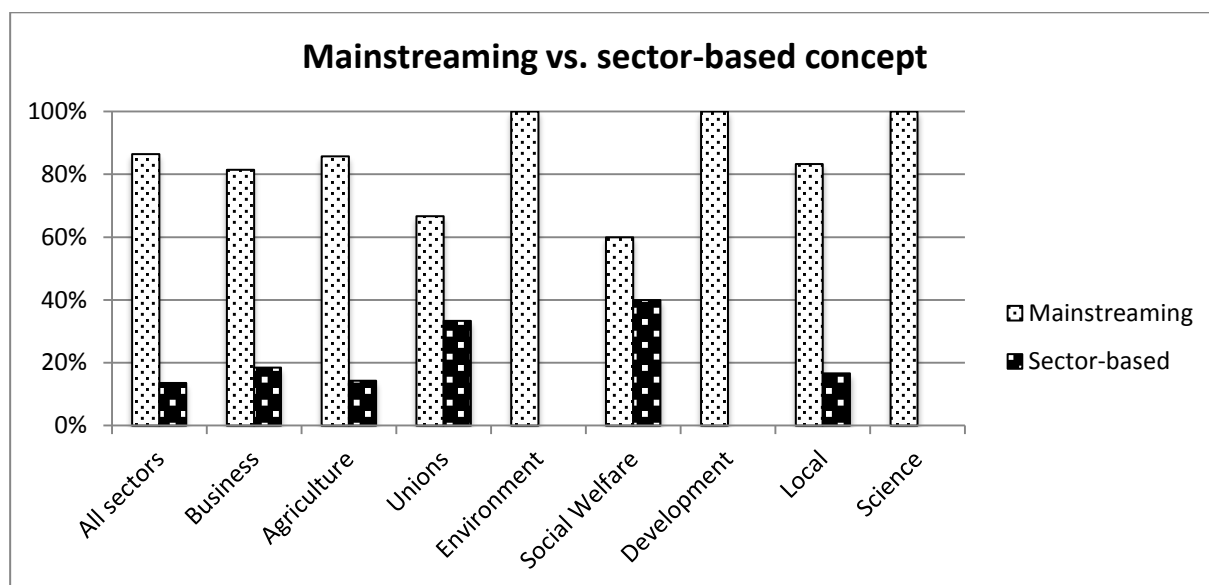


## 3.4 Key sectors in the GE transition

### 3.4.1 Mainstreaming vs. sector-based concept

The Green Economy is overwhelmingly regarded as a mainstreaming concept that affects all sectors of the economy as opposed to a sector-based view that is focused on a number of environmental technologies. Over 86% of total responses consider the Green Economy in this way, while social welfare (40%) and union representatives (33%) show the greatest deviation from that view. Interviewed experts from businesses and unions alike also argued that the focus of the Green Economy should not be on specific sectors, but on 'greening'

whole supply chains. They voiced opposition to the distinction between 'green' and 'brown' - both in terms of economic sectors and jobs. A classic example in this regard are the basic materials that are needed in the production of environmental technology products - such as steel for wind turbines - that can only be produced with great energy input, for which the sector is considered 'brown' by critics.



### 3.4.2 Key sectors

The next survey question asked respondents to identify those sectors (out of a list of 13 choices) they considered crucial to building a Green Economy. Respondents were allowed to name up to three sectors.

The clearest support and agreement could be found for the energy sector. 72% of all respondents identified this sector as crucial - with support ranging from 40% amongst social welfare groups to 89% of environmental groups who saw it as crucial. Amongst the major three groups, businesses (70%) and unions (83%) also underscored the centrality of the sector. This high support confirms the findings from the very first questions in which respondents underscored the centrality of renewable energies for the transition to a Green Economy.

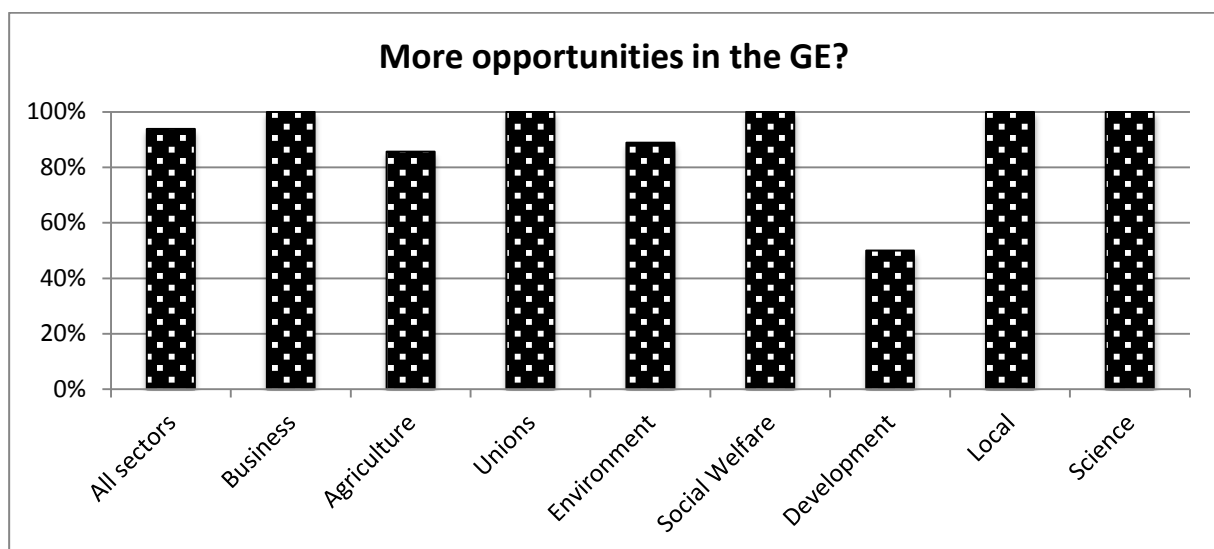
The transportation, agriculture and waste/recycling sectors were also considered important, albeit with lower overall support and more variation between the groups:

- The **transportation** sector was considered crucial for building a Green Economy by 42% of all respondents, with support levels ranging between a sixth (development) and two-thirds amongst unions.
- **Agriculture** was regarded amongst all respondents as similarly important (42%).

- The sector for **waste and recycling** was considered crucial by 31% of all respondents.
- It is noteworthy that both agriculture and the waste and recycling sector were not regarded as crucial by any of the union representatives.
- Some support amongst all respondents could be found for the importance of the water (21%) and manufacturing (23%) sectors.
- All other sectors were considered less important by the respondents - the mining and tourism sectors received no votes from any of the respondents.

### 3.5 Opportunities and risks in the Green Economy

Respondents from all groups except for the development community held the view that a Green Economy provided more opportunities than risks.



#### 3.5.1 Opportunities in the Green Economy

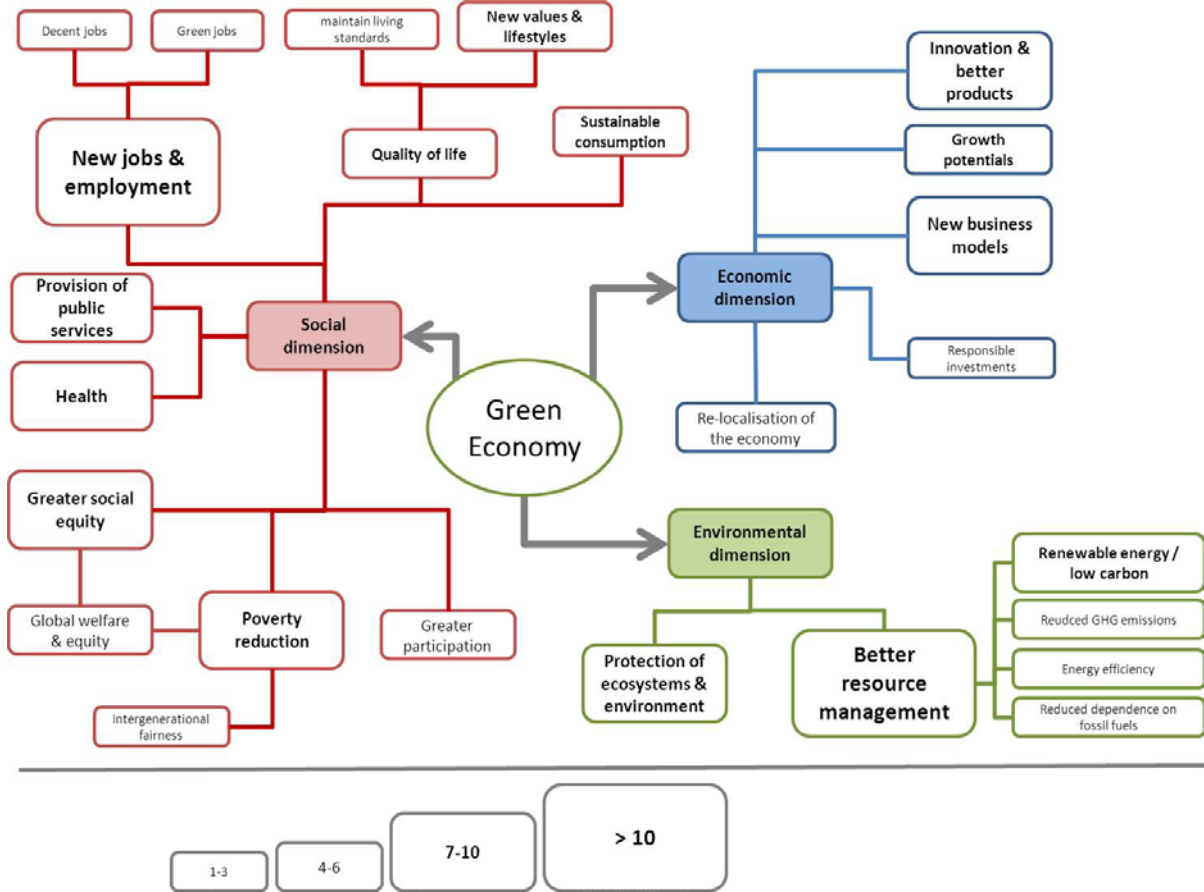
The following question asked respondents to name up to three opportunities they expect to arise from the transition towards a Green Economy.<sup>15</sup> The map on the following page presents the most common responses and sorts them into three main categories, while the size of the nodes indicates how often an aspect was named.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>15</sup> For better readability, the mind maps for opportunities and risks in the Green Economy can be found in landscape format in the annex of this document.

<sup>16</sup> Section 3.5 of the annex contains landscape version of both maps on the opportunities and risks in the Green Economy that are easier to read.



Map 1: Opportunities in the Green Economy



Respondents located most opportunities in the realm of new jobs and employment and in the realm of better management of resources. It is interesting to see that economic concerns did not play a primary role in the answers.

The complex 'better management of resources', which comprises the efficient use of natural resources and the consumption and production of energy, gained the highest response rates in the survey (23 mentions). Another important area where opportunities from a Green Economy are expected is the protection of ecosystems and the environment (8 mentions).

Concerning the social dimension of the Green Economy, the emphasis was on employment issues. While the creation of jobs/tackling unemployment was mentioned 22 times in the survey, more specific concepts such as 'green jobs' or 'decent jobs' were only given one time each. This low emphasis on *decent jobs* is astonishing given that evidence from the expert interviews pointed to a high importance of decent working conditions (cf. section 3.2.3). Other main concerns related to the social dimension were poverty reduction (7 mentions) and social equity (8 mentions). Taken alongside intergenerational fairness (1 mentions) and global welfare and equity (5 mentions), this realm can be considered a core

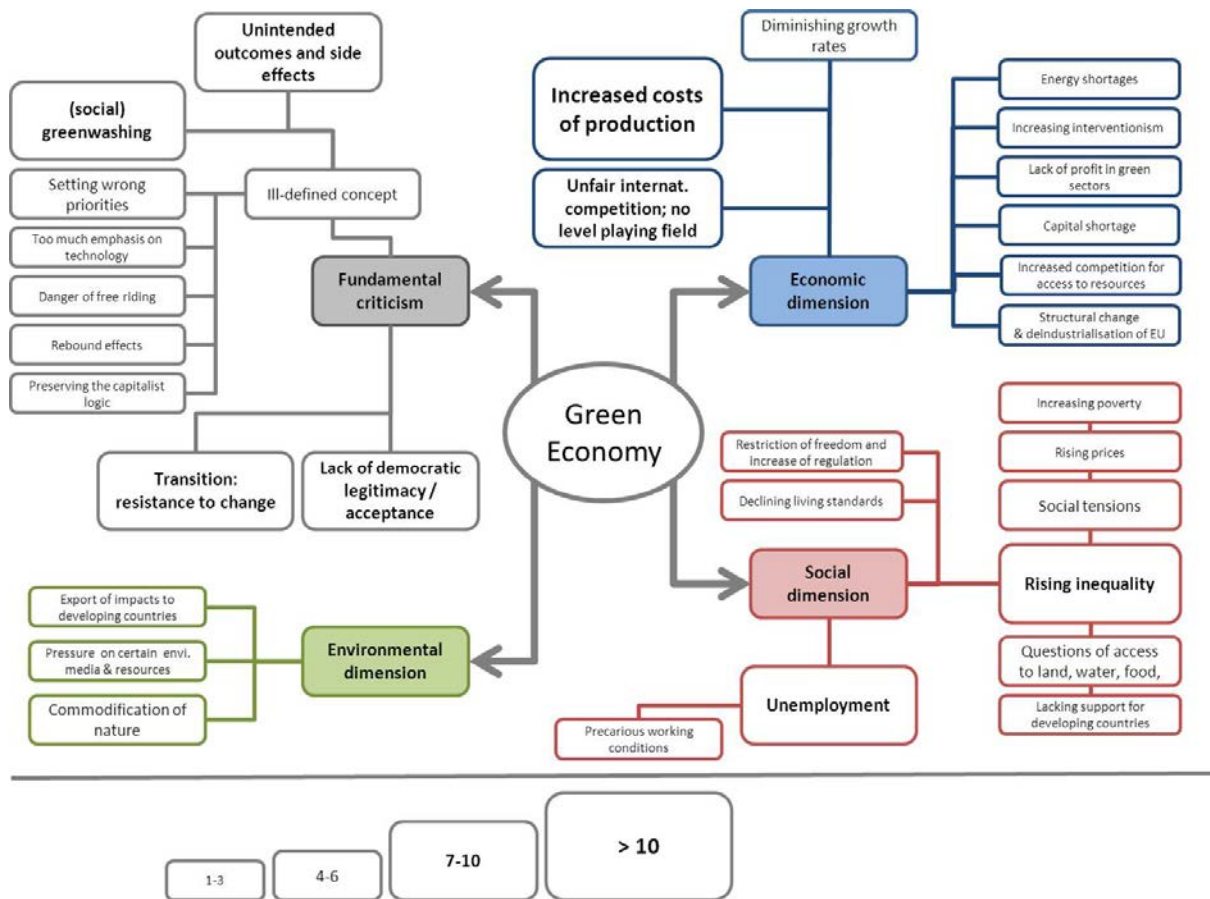
area in which respondents see opportunities for a Green Economy. The Green Economy was also considered to be an opportunity to critically reflect and rethink values, lifestyles, consumption patterns and the existing understanding of 'quality of life' (overall: 12 mentions).

26 answers referred to the **economic aspects** of the transition to a Green Economy. 11 respondents saw opportunities from 'growth potentials' (4 mentions) and 'new business models/new markets' (7 mentions), while 'innovation' and 'better products' were referenced 10 times. 4 respondents indicated that the Green Economy provides an opportunity for the re-localisation of the economy.

### **3.5.2 Risks in the Green Economy**

The weighting of these areas changes in the following question, which asked the respondents to name up to three risks they expect to arise from a Green Economy. While the environmental dimension attracted much less responses in this question, **economic aspects received much more interest**. Also, a considerable amount of mentions **fundamentally challenged the concept of the Green Economy** as such.

Map 2: Risks in the Green Economy



The most fundamental criticism was related to the unclear definition of the concept (4 mentions); shortcomings in the definition of the concept were *inter alia* considered to allow for cheating and free-riding (3 mentions) or for the 'green washing' of a business as usual behaviour (10). Six responses pointed to the danger of unintended outcomes and side effects of Green Economy initiatives. Eleven responses questioned the willingness of society and/or the economy to accept changes. More fundamentally, a range of responses questioned the democratic legitimacy of the concept and pointed to its lacking acceptance in the public ('elite project') (8 mentions).

Besides the fundamental criticism against the concept, most risks were associated with economic aspects. At central issue was the increase in the costs of production (15 mentions) and international competitiveness. Seven mentions dealt with issues of unfair competition and the lack of an internationally level playing field. Six mentions claimed that the Green Economy could lead to diminishing growth rates. Capital shortages (2 mentions), the management of structural change and deindustrialisation (3 mentions) were also considered in the responses.

Risks were connected to social aspects of a **growing social inequality**, both within Europe and worldwide. This issue was addressed in 20 mentions. **Unemployment** also gained relatively high rates (8 mentions). This is interesting in so far as the creation of jobs was considered a central opportunity in the previous question. **Precarious working conditions** were only considered in two responses; this is well in-line with the relatively low appreciation of 'decent jobs' in the previous question.

Environmental aspects did not rank high throughout the responses (only 9 mentions overall). Three responses pointed to the **export of environmental impacts** (e.g. carbon leakage) and two responses expected increasing pressure on certain environmental media and resources (e.g. arable land). An increasing '**commodification of nature**' in the Green Economy was ranked highest in the environmental realm (4 mentions).

### 3.6 The role of national governments

The GE concepts discussed in the preliminary report all see a significant role for government. The aim of the next set of survey questions was to compare this general perception amongst the different civil society groups and to investigate what roles for national governments were supported and to what degree the government should get involved in the economy.

The survey data suggests **widespread consensus** amongst all groups on two core aspects: The national governments' role in **providing the regulatory frameworks and economic incentives** for businesses to develop innovative products and services, as well their role in **supporting research and development** for green technologies. While the latter statement was 'agreed' and 'strongly agreed' to by 92% of all respondents, the former was 'agreed' and 'strongly agreed' to by 90% of respondents, with no answer disagreeing.<sup>17</sup> Throughout the expert interviews, there was widespread agreement that the state needs to provide a stable regulatory framework for economic action and specifically for (re-)directing investment. Providing incentives for sustainable production and consumption (e.g. through taxes or public procurement policies) was considered equally important.

Furthermore, there is support amongst all groups for national governments **promoting green sectors of the economy** (viewed favourably by 79%) as well as - to a lesser degree - for **establishing limits on the use of scarce natural resources and ecosystem services** (viewed favourably by 70%).

---

<sup>17</sup> As no 'strongly disagree' or 'disagree' responses were received regarding national governments' role in providing framework conditions and economic incentives, the graph shows only three columns for the neutral and positive views.

While some interviewees pointed to the state's role in **mobilising money** to support the transition towards a Green Economy (e.g. funding R&D or market introduction of sustainable products), other interviewees were more sceptical about the financial leeway of public spending in times of economic crisis.

Significantly stronger disagreement, also amongst the three major groups, can be found for the questions **whether national governments should get more involved in the direction of economic development** and if it should **manage the de-growth of "brown" sectors** of the economy. Union representatives are strongly calling for a greater role for the government in managing the direction of economic development - a view that is shared by the wide majority of environmental groups. While half of the responses from the business sector agree with a stronger role for government, 22% are neutral and 29% are opposed to the statement.

The conflict line between the major groups with regard to the question of government managing the de-growth of certain sectors runs between environmental groups, of which 78% generally support the statement, and businesses and unions, who lean more towards a rejection of the statement. This finding is very much in-line with the interviews conducted with business and union representatives, where it was emphasised that governments should focus on framework conditions, formulating goals and providing incentives to market actors to achieve the necessary changes. The next section on what policy instruments should be employed to foster the transition to the Green Economy complements these findings.

### 3.7 Policy instruments to foster the Green Economy transition

After asking about the role of governments in the transition, the survey turned to specific policy instruments and asked respondents to check three out of eleven policy instruments (or name another) that they think should be more widely applied in the transition to a Green Economy. While some answers reflect earlier results, they also identify differences within civil society in their support for specific instruments.

Not surprisingly, **government spending on research and development** for green technologies received the highest overall level of support and was supported over all sectors of civil society.

**Regulatory standards** for goods and services and **ecological taxes** were also selected as important instruments by 34% and 31% of all respondents, respectively. While support for regulatory standards was generally balanced (with the small group of social welfare organisations being an exception), by far the largest support for ecological taxes stems from environmental NGOs, of which 61% call for a wider application of the instrument.

The **preferential treatment** of green and innovative products in international trade rules and the wider use of **information-based instruments**, such as labels and certification

schemes, were also supported throughout the different sectors of civil society - both with an overall level of 28% of all responses.

Two policy instruments that are currently being championed by unions - especially when compared to the two other major groups - are the **public procurement** of green and innovative products and services and **green industrial policies**. While half of the union representatives think these instruments should be applied more widely, support for them amongst environmental and business representatives ranges much lower, between 17% and 29%.

Lower levels of support and a wide variety of views can be found with regards to the **market-based instruments** (emissions trading schemes and payments for ecosystem services (PES)). Every third business representative is calling for a wider use of market-based instruments in the transition to the GE, which is where emissions trading schemes receive most of their total support from; on the other hand, payments for ecosystem services schemes are strongly supported by agriculture, with none of the developmental NGOs naming the instrument. The expert interviews conducted have similarly shown **two different perspectives** from environmental and developmental NGOs on **market-based instruments** for emissions or ecosystem services. While one group is generally doubtful about the schemes - with references to the 'commodification of nature' criticism raised by several developing countries - others see the chance that PES can become a means of significant redistribution from the Global North to the South and generate income for the poor while sustaining ecosystems.

### 3.8 Financing the Green Economy transition

Related - and with some overlap - to the question over which policy instruments should foster the transition to the Green Economy is the question of which instruments are used to finance the transition to a Green Economy. The survey asked respondents to select three out of eight policy instruments (or name another) that they considered the most important for financing the Green economy.

Two policy instruments received support from half of the respondents. Corresponding to previous results, a majority of all respondents (54%) stated that **R&D measures should be financed publicly** - with general support for all sub-groups ranging from 28% of environmental groups to 86% of the scientific community. A financing tool that received a similar level of support amongst all groups (53%) was the **reduction of environmentally harmful subsidies**; support for this instrument was lowest amongst unions (17%) and highest amongst the development community (83%).

Financial support for the **market introduction** of green innovations is a policy instrument that received a strong and steady level of support, with 46% amongst all groups and

amongst the major three groups in particular: 52% among business, 67% among unions and 50% of all responses from the environmental community.

Much more disagreement amongst the three major groups can be found for three more instruments.

**Eco-taxes** received a significant level of support (43%) amongst all groups and above average support from unions (50%), and are most strongly supported by environmental and developmental groups (each 67%).

The **financial transaction tax** is the financing instrument that led to the widest gaps in responses; it is championed by unions (67%) and social welfare groups (83%), while it received hardly any support from the business community (7%).

The **trading of permits** for pollution or ecosystem services is similarly seen very differently amongst different sectors of civil society. While being supported by nearly half of all business responses (48%) and 39% of responses from environmental groups, union representatives didn't name the instrument once and low levels of support were also found amongst social welfare organisations (20%) and development NGOs (17%). Some interviewees from environmental NGOs were rather sceptical of market-based instruments and feared a commodification of nature (cf. section 3.5.2) and the possibility that rich industrialised countries would avoid domestic action entirely and 'buy themselves free' from their international responsibilities. On the other hand, representatives of business and industry as well as environmental groups pointed to the benefits of market-based instruments (and specifically to the Clean Development Mechanism) as one means to support the transition towards and raise income for the Green Economy transition in developing countries.

The remaining financing mechanisms asked about in the survey, the use of official development aid (19% among all respondents) or the UNFCCC's Green Climate Fund (10% amongst all respondents), received the lowest levels of support - hinting at a low level of international redistribution of means in times of austerity.

### 3.9 Responsibility of various actors in the transition

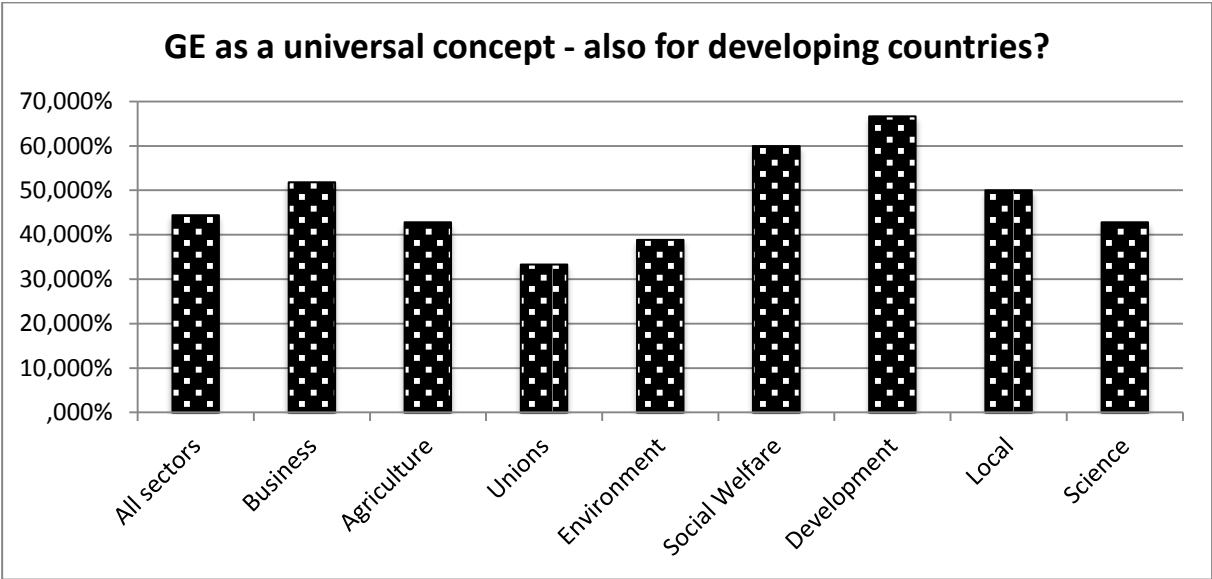
The survey also asked civil society representatives if the level of responsibility for the transition to the Green Economy should be assumed by different groups of actors - such as businesses, private actors that are not businesses and the public sector.

Over 96% of responses over all categories identified the **public sector** as having a 'high' or 'very high' responsibility - a view shared amongst the three major groups, too. **Businesses** are viewed as having a 'high' and 'very high' responsibility by 88% of all respondents, albeit with a stronger variation between groups, while **private actors** outside of business are considered to have a 'high' and 'very high' responsibility in 74% of all responses. This corresponds with earlier findings that through all civil society groups there is widespread

agreement that governments have a significant role to play in the transition to a Green Economy in fostering not only technological changes, but also changes in behaviour and consumption patterns. Naturally, businesses are seen as crucial in achieving the necessary technological innovations needed to reduce global environmental pressures.

### 3.10 Developing countries and the Green Economy

There are no clear answers to be found in the survey data on the question of whether the Green Economy should be regarded as a universal concept or if there needs to be a special perspective for developing countries. A slight majority of all respondents tend to see it as a universal concept - interestingly with the highest support for that view coming from development NGOs.



A major political discussion point is the question over how far the Rio principles, in particular the 'common, but differentiated responsibilities,' will remain central elements, especially if they are going to apply to many of the emerging economies benefiting from their 1992-based status as a developing country, but which are now facing calls to agree to assume greater global responsibility and to more binding targets. At the heart of this group are the BRICS countries - Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.

The question whether the Rio principles - and particularly the common, but differentiated responsibilities - should be continued has produced very different responses. The best conclusion to take from looking at the bigger picture across civil society organisations is to say that there is both strong opposition as well as support for the statement. When looking specifically at the three major groups, we can see that a majority of environmental groups (67%) 'agree' or 'strongly agree' with the statement, while business and union representa-



tives are more reluctant to support the statement (45% and 50% 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree', respectively).

### 3.11 Analysis of results according to countries of origin

While the primary analytical focus of the survey was on the differences in opinions between civil society groups throughout Europe, the data also allows for a comparison between Member States. This section will present selected responses where answers between the countries diverge. For the purpose of this section, results will be presented for the United Kingdom, Germany, France and Sweden.<sup>18</sup> As a cautionary note, it needs to be emphasised that the composition of responses by stakeholder groups varies between the countries.<sup>19</sup> For example, Germany and Sweden have high response rates from environmental groups, while France shows a relative high degree of responses from unions. Therefore differences between the groups can be caused both by national differences and by differences in the composition of civil society organisations responding to the survey.

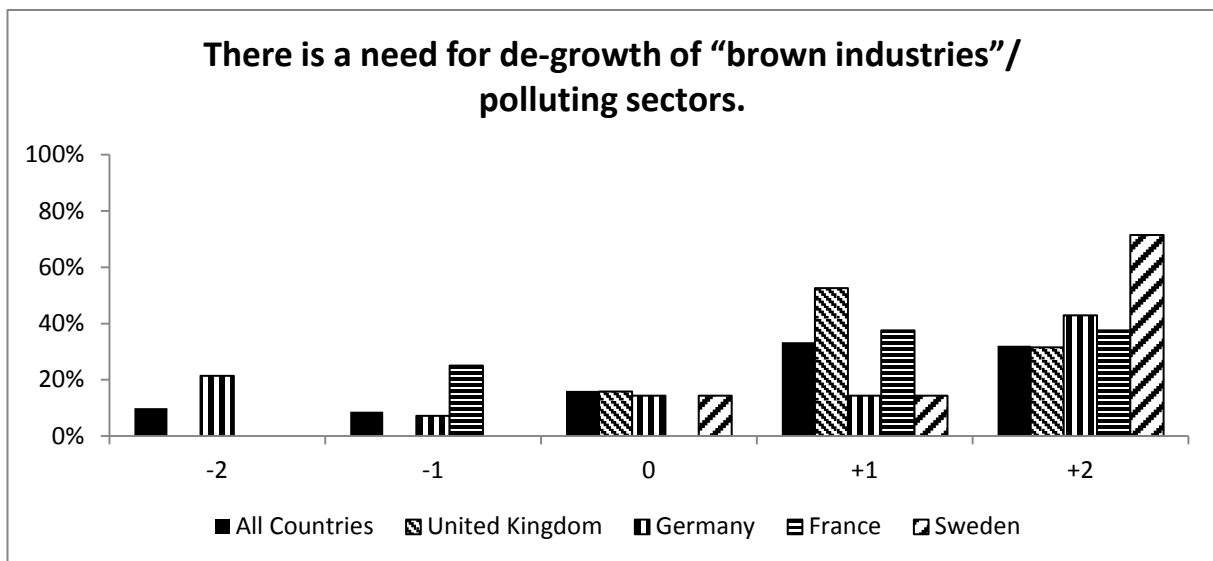
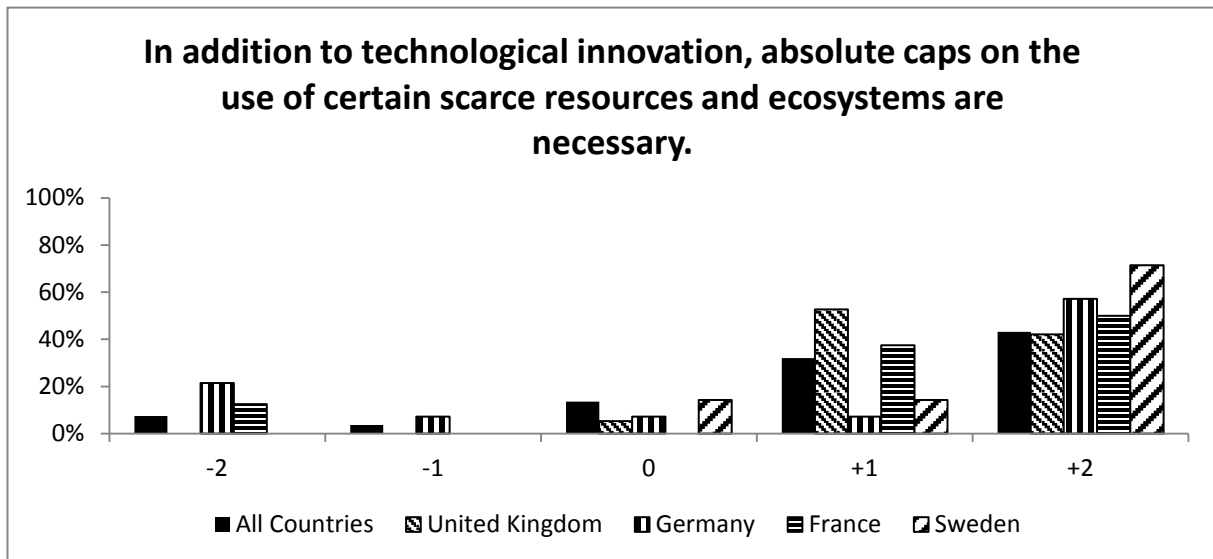
The first significant finding in this section is that the differences between the responses from the four countries are generally quite small. Two areas with more significant differences shall be discussed here: first, there is the set of question how big the contribution of technological innovation compared to how much a reduced material consumption has to be enforced through absolute caps and promoted by alternative welfare concept; and secondly, there are diverging views on the role of national governments and which policy instrument they should use more widely in the transition to the Green Economy.

The greatest belief in the contribution that technological innovations can make to help keep human development within planetary boundaries can be found in Germany, with only 21% being sceptical ('strongly disagree' or 'disagree') of the statement - compared to 38% in France, 43% in the United Kingdom and 57% in Sweden. Similarly, German respondents agreed less to absolute caps on the use of scarce resource and ecosystems (64% 'agree' and 'strongly agree') and the de-growth of polluting sectors of the economy (57% 'agree' and 'strongly agree'). This compares to 95% and 85% support for absolute caps from British respondents; 88% and 76% from French and 85% support on both absolute caps and de-growth of polluting industries from Swedish respondents.

---

<sup>18</sup> Spain and Poland had to be excluded from the analysis due to the low number of responses.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Section 2.3, in which the different compositions were displayed via pie charts.

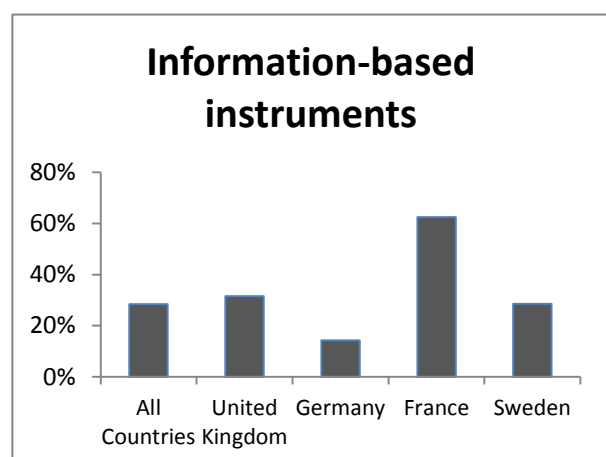
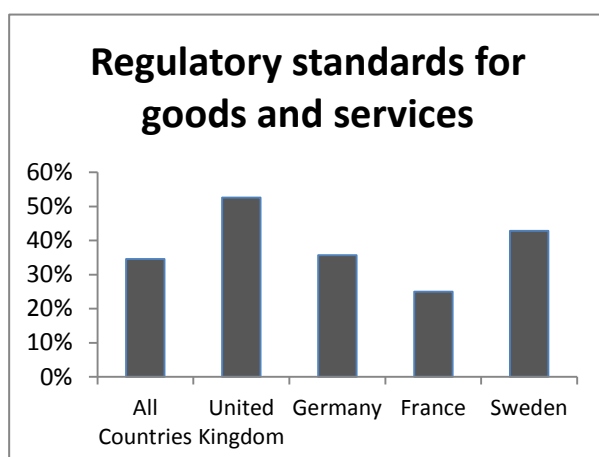
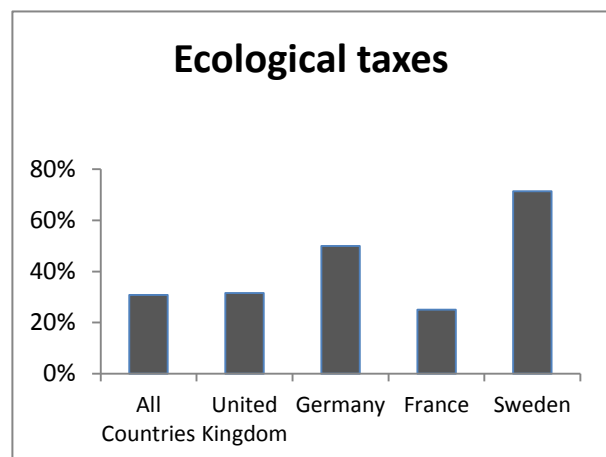
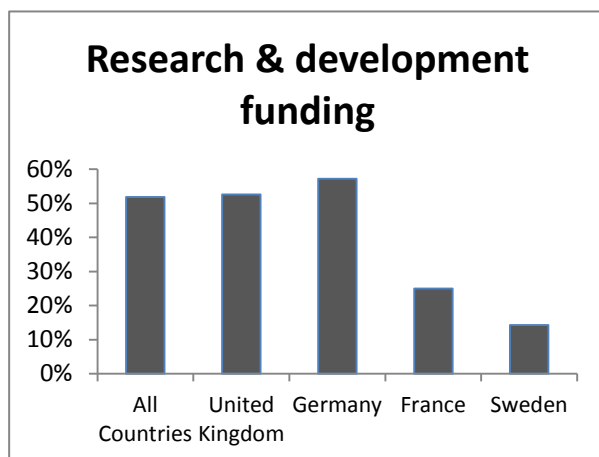


In line with these findings, support for the introduction of alternative welfare measurement concepts is lower amongst German respondents (57%) than in Sweden (86%), France (88%) and the United Kingdom (95%); similarly, support (‘agree’ and ‘strongly agree’) for a ‘fundamental change in values and consumption models’ is lowest amongst German respondents (57%), followed by responses from France (63%), Sweden (71%) and the UK (95%).

The second area with significant differences between the countries is the questions over what role national governments should play and which policy instruments they should use to foster the GE transition. There is widespread agreement in all countries that national governments should set framework conditions that include economic incentives for innovative green products and services and support research and development for green technologies. Opposition to a stronger involvement by the government in the direction of economic development is strongest in Germany, while it is absent in the data for the United King-

dom and Sweden. Very significant differences can be found for the question over how governments should manage the de-growth of polluting sectors - where all Swedish respondents 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed', in France (38%) and in Germany (42%) only a minority of respondents 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' with the statement.

When turning to the discussion of specific policy instruments to play a greater role in the transition to the Green Economy, a number of difference can be identified. They can be found for government support of research and development: While support for this instrument is high in Germany (57%) and the UK (53%), respondents from France (25%) and Sweden (14%) attached much less significance to it. Support for the greater use of 'eco-taxes' was highest in Sweden and Germany, where 71% and 50% of all respondents supported it, respectively - compared to 32% in the United Kingdom and 25% in France. Regulatory standards receive the highest support in the UK (53%) and their lowest support in France (25%), while French respondents were the strongest supporters of information-based instruments (63%) compared to the UK (32%), Sweden (29%) and Germany (14%). The results mirror existing on regulatory cultures in these countries with more active intervention in the market in Sweden and France - while in the UK and Germany a greater focus is put on public support for research & development. The higher levels of support for eco-taxes suggests an overall positive view of the existing eco-tax regimes in Germany and Sweden



## 4 Key Messages

This final section discusses the empirical findings from the survey and interviews and aims to summarise some key messages.

1. **The debate on what the Green Economy is, is still open** - especially at the global level. There is a large diversity in ideas concerning what constitutes a Green Economy and there is no delineation of what is not a part of the Green Economy. The **low degree of specification** and the focus on implementation contributes to a low level of conflict on the international level, but it also makes it harder to measure progress.
2. The lack of definitional clarity of the Green Economy concept allows for **'greenwashing'** and **'social greenwashing'**. There is a **need to define the boundaries of the concept and identify suitable indicators** for measuring progress towards a Green Economy. While there is a range of potential indicators and indicator systems around, there is no consensus about which indicators are applicable and should be used.
3. There is **broad agreement** among all stakeholder groups that the Green Economy should be based on a **three-pillar approach**. However, the **definition of the social dimension is disputed** between social partners. While business and industry point to new employment possibilities, unions push for the **'green and decent jobs'** concept, which also takes into account working conditions.
4. There is strong agreement amongst social partners (business and industry and unions) that the Green Economy should be a **mainstreaming concept to 'green' all sectors of the economy**; its focus should be on greening (transnational) supply chains and not distinguish between **'green'** and **'brown'** industries due to the many interlinkages between them in terms of input products.
5. On the European level, the **relationship between the Europe 2020 strategy** - which is regarded as an implementation of the Green Economy Concept - and the **European Sustainable Development Strategy is unclear**. Representatives of unions, environmental stakeholders and the business community alike argue that the Europe 2020 strategy takes a narrow focus on economic and environmental aspects and largely ignores the social dimension of Sustainable Development. A common perception is that the EUSDS will not be renewed at all or take a backbench position compared to the narrower Europe 2020 strategy.
6. There is **consensus that national governments should provide stable framework conditions and incentives for businesses to innovate**. This includes both the regulatory framework, funding for research and development in green technologies, as well as incentives for more sustainable investment and consumption choices, e.g. through taxation systems or green procurement. **There is disagreement about the extent to which governments should get involved in providing the direction for the economy**, if it should enforce more stringent caps on natural resource use and if it should promote more actively structural changes/the de-growth of certain polluting sectors of the economy.

7. There is also **no consensus on adequate financing mechanisms** for the transition to a Green Economy. There is a certain degree of support for the introduction of a financial transaction tax and for a greater use of eco-taxes. Market-based instruments for the use of nature and ecosystem services have come under greater scrutiny and find some support only among business and industry, but are criticised mainly by unions and environmental NGOs ('fear of commodification of nature').
8. Survey respondents and the experts interviewed suggested that **both technological innovation and behavioural changes would be necessary components** in the transition to the Green Economy. Data has indicated that there are differences in opinion on what technological innovation can contribute with business representatives being more optimistic about its ability to innovate and provide technological solutions, while especially environmental NGOs are more critical and advocate stronger lifestyle changes, there is a shared awareness throughout all civil society groups that there is no one-fits-all approach, but rather a need for an combination of these aspects. This shared understanding can serve as a basis for increased dialogue between civil society actors on (policy) instrument that foster technological innovations and more sustainable lifestyles and consumption.
9. The debate on **limits to growth and de-growth is on the rise in Europe, albeit to a different extent in the various Member States**. There are two interpretations of, and reactions to, this debate. First, there is consensus throughout all stakeholder groups that resources are limited and a reduction of physical throughput of resources and related environmental impacts is urgently needed (the 'limits to growth debate'). Business and industry see their role as (technological) solution providers for combining growth potentials and resource-efficient products and services. Second, beyond the 'limits to growth debate', there are also calls for de-growth of certain industry sectors and changes in behaviour, values and consumption models. This de-growth debate is led by some environmental NGOs.
10. European civil society sees the European Economic and Social Committee mostly in an advisory role for EU policymaking in that it ensures that civil society concerns are heard, supports dialogue and helps to build consensus among European civil society groups. Survey respondents argued that the EESC should serve as an open and participatory forum for European civil society organisations - it should capitalise on the breadth of its membership and seek to be even more open to wider circles of civil society. It should further serve as a 'watch dog' to ensure that EU positions are ambitious and reflect the understanding that the EU is striving to be a role model for the world.

Overall, the survey shows that the transition towards a Green Economy is not straightforward, but requires a dialogue and exchange between the different actors. It may not always be possible to achieve consensus on the issues, which are likely to be tabled at the summit and in the near future. However, there is a striking consensus amongst all actors

that change is needed. Conflicts will emerge with regard to the means of these changes, the timetable for implementing them and on the role of the various actors. These disputes require dialogue and compromise. We hope that this study helps to facilitate such dialogue.

## 5 Annex

### 5.1 Discourses on the Green Economy - Results from the preliminary study

The first part of the research project<sup>20</sup> analysed the central concepts and contributions<sup>21</sup> to the Green Economy debate in the run-up to the 2012 UNCS D conference. The concepts were compared along their economic, social and environmental dimensions, as well as the role of national governments they envisioned and the policy instruments that they advocated for. Based on the analysis of these concepts and expert interviews,<sup>22</sup> the preliminary study outlined six dimensions in the debate where the views of different actors diverge. These six dimensions include the following: The relationship between the Green Economy and Sustainable Development and the question whether the Green Economy is focused on the economic and environmental dimensions - and if it is - what the social dimension of the Green Economy is in different contexts. The second dimension is related to the question whether there needs to be a different perspective on developing countries' needs and the role of the Rio principle of common, but differentiated, responsibility. The third dimension covers the different views on economic growth, ranging from debate on new growth potentials to the argument for selective perspectives on growth to scepticism towards growth in general. The fourth perspective, which covers new ways of measuring welfare to complement economic indicators such as GDP, provide a better picture of the impact of a company's business operations or the development of an economy. Fifth, there is doubt whether the "Western consumption model" can be sustained through technological changes or if there is a need for significant cultural changes as well. Finally, the debate on how to finance the transition to the Green Economy was also analysed. All of these dimensions were core parts of the questionnaire in the later stages of the project.

The preliminary study identified three discourses on the Green Economy in the debate. Discourse A can be understood as an approach toward "Greening the Existing Economy", which remains committed to economic growth while acknowledging ecological boundaries

---

<sup>20</sup> The study was published as FFU-Report 07/2011 and can be found online at: [http://www.polsoz.fu-berlin.de/polwiss/forschung/systeme/ffu/publikationen/2011/Baer\\_etal\\_FFU-report\\_07-2011\\_Green\\_Economy/index.html](http://www.polsoz.fu-berlin.de/polwiss/forschung/systeme/ffu/publikationen/2011/Baer_etal_FFU-report_07-2011_Green_Economy/index.html)

<sup>21</sup> Some of the central concepts investigated were the UNEP's "Towards a Green Economy", the "OECD: Green Growth Strategy, the Europe 2020 Strategy" including its flagship initiative "Resource Efficient Europe", the study "Towards a Sustainable Asia" by the Association of Academies of Sciences in Asia and the inputs of important civil society stakeholders such as the International and European Trade Union Confederation, Business Europe and the World Wide Fund for Nature or Greenpeace.

<sup>22</sup> Four interviews were conducted as background information for the study. The interview partners included a German government official involved in the international negotiations and the preparation of the German and European position for Rio+20; a Sustainable Development Policy Analyst and Scientific Advisor to the Chinese and German governments; Representatives of an international development non-governmental organisation and an expert on international environmental politics and observer of the negotiations at the United Nations and international environmental conferences.

in terms of constraints and future risks. The second discourse, "Green Development", is an extension of the first, as it reconsiders the existing welfare concept and gives greater consideration to the social dimension and the complexity of the changes needed; it criticises the first discourse for overestimating the capacity of technological solutions and argues that new production and consumption patterns must be based on a renewed cultural model different from today's model of Western consumption. The third discourse, entitled "Sustainable Development", emphasises the international and developmental perspectives on the Green Economy concept and underscores the need for poverty eradication and greater international equality to be a part of the transition to a Green Economy/Sustainable Development, and argues that the first two discourses are mainly focused on the Western World.

## 5.2 Survey and interview questions

This section lists the survey and interview questions that were used to gather the data analysed in this report. Please note that for the expert interviews the questions were adapted to the specifics of the interview.

### 5.2.1 Survey questions

#### Concept of a Green Economy

Q: Key elements of the Green Economy: Please evaluate the importance of these different aspects of the Green Economy from 1 (not important) to 5 (very important):

- Resource efficient technologies
- Climate change mitigation
- Renewable energies
- New growth potentials
- Green jobs
- New welfare indicators ('beyond GDP')
- Respect for ecological limits/ planetary boundaries
- Greater social equity
- Poverty reduction
- Changes in consumption models, culture and values



## The Relationship between Green Economy and Sustainable Development

The relationship between the concepts of Green Economy and Sustainable Development is a central issue in the run-up to the Rio+20 conference. The Sustainable Development concept comprises three pillars (economic, environmental and social) that are to be considered at the same time. The definition of Green Economy and its relation to Sustainable Development is still debated.

**Q: In your perception, should a Green Economy concept build on the three-pillar approach of Sustainable Development or primarily focus on the economic and environmental dimension?**

A: Three Pillars (Economy, Environment, Social)

B: Two Pillars (Economy and Environment)

**Q (if 1.2 = A): In your opinion, what aspects does the social dimension of a Green Economy entail? Please check the two you consider most important.**

- Green decent jobs
- Social protection floors
- Greater social equity
- Poverty reduction
- Improved public health
- New lifestyles & consumption choices

## Limits, welfare indicators and consumption models

### *Limits to Growth*

**Q: Please indicate if you agree or disagree with the following statements. (5-point scale: 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree)**

- a) Technological innovation will be able to keep an ecological balance and human development within the planetary boundaries.
- b) In addition to technological innovation, absolute caps on the use of certain scarce resources and ecosystems are necessary.
- c) There is a need for de-growth of "brown industries" / polluting sectors.

### *Welfare concepts and indicators*

**Q: Will the transition towards a Green Economy require a new system of welfare indicators beyond GDP?**

- Yes
- No

Q: If Yes, are there some you consider particularly important?

Text box

#### *Consumption models.*

Q: Please indicate you if you agree or disagree with the following statements. (5-point scale: strongly disagree to strongly agree)

- a) Technological innovation will lead to sustainable products and services that allow reconciling 'Western' consumption models with ecological boundaries.
- b) Technological innovation will not be sufficient and values and consumption models need to be fundamentally changed in order to stay within ecological boundaries.

#### **Financing, key sectors & materials and the role of governments**

Q: Do you consider the Green Economy to be a concept focused on a number of environmental technology sectors or a mainstreaming concept that affects all sectors of the economy?

- Sector-based focus on environmental technologies
- Mainstreaming concept for all sectors of the economy

Q: Which sectors do you consider key in the GE? Please indicate 1) sectors for which you expect pressure to change, 2) sectors for which you expect a decline 3) sectors for which you expect an increase in importance

- Agriculture (pressure/decline/increase)
- Fisheries
- Water
- Mining
- Forests
- Energy
- Manufacturing
- Waste and Recycling
- Buildings
- Transport
- Trade
- Tourism

Financial incl. insurance

Other: ...

**Q: Overall, do you see more opportunities or risks in the Green Economy?**

- a) More chances
- b) More risks

**Q: Please name three aspects of sustainable development you expect to profit from the GE:**

*Text box*

**Q: Please name three aspects of sustainable development you expect to be negatively affected by the GE:**

*Text box*

**Q: What role do you see for national governments? Please indicate you if you agree or disagree with the following statements. (5-point scale: strongly disagree to strongly agree)**

- a) National governments should support research and development for green technologies.
- b) National governments should provide the regulatory frameworks and economic incentives for businesses to develop innovative products and services.
- c) National governments need to get more involved in managing the direction of economic developments than in the past.
- d) National governments need to establish limits on the use of scarce natural resources and ecosystem services.
- e) National governments should promote green sectors of the economy.
- f) National government should manage the de-growth of brown sectors of the economy.

**Q: What policy instruments should be applied more widely to foster the transition to a green economy?**

- Preferential treatment for green and innovative products in international trade
- Border adjustment taxes
- Regulatory standards for goods and services
- Emissions Trading Schemes
- Payments for Environmental Services
- Eco-taxes

- Research & Development funding
- Green Industrial Policies
- Green and innovation-oriented public procurement
- Incentives for private consumption
- Information-based instruments (label, certification)
- Other: ....

**Q: Financing: Which instruments for financing the GE transition do you consider most important? Please check the three you consider most important:**

- Public spending on R&D
- Official development aid
- Supporting market introduction of green innovations
- Green Climate Fund under the UN Climate Convention
- Emissions trading schemes/ Payments for environmental services
- Financial transaction tax
- Eco-taxes
- Reduction of environmentally harmful subsidies
- Other: ....

### **Developing countries and the Green Economy**

**Q: Do you regard GE and its elements as a universal concept or is there a need for a special perspective on developing countries needs?**

- Universal concept
- Specific perspective for developing countries needed

**Q: Please indicate you if you agree or disagree with the following statements. (5-point scale: strongly disagree to strongly agree)**

- a) The Rio principles - the right to development and the common but differentiated responsibility - shall be continued and developing countries allowed to focus primarily on their development before assuming international responsibilities for their environmental impacts.
- b) Industrialized countries should consider "giving up" potential growth to allow for growth in developing countries?

## Role of EESC

Q: What role do you see for European Economic and Social Committee in the run-up to the Rio+20 conference?

*Text box*

## Participant information

Q: What sector of civil society is your organisation representing?

- Business & industry
- Agriculture/ Farmers
- Consumer Protection
- Workers & Trade Unions
- Social welfare organizations
- Environment
- Development
- Local & regional government and administration
- Children & Youth
- Scientific and technological community
- Faith-based organization
- Other:

### 5.2.2 Interview questions

Block 1: Perception of the international debate on Green Economy
According to your observation, what are central lines of conflict in the international debate on Rio+20 and Green Economy?
How does the concept of Green Economy relate to the “older” concept of Sustainable Development?
What do you consider the social dimension of Green Economy - both internationally as well as in the European perspective?
How do you view the role of developing countries: is there a need for a separate perspective on them and should the Rio principles, especially the common, but differentiated responsibility, be continued?
Who is leading the debate? How do you conceive the role of civil society in the debate?
Block 2: Critical issues
What is your position and your view of the nation-wide debate on ... ... the ‘limits to growth’ and de-growth debate?
... new welfare indicators and measurement concepts?
... the question of sustainability of the ‘Western lifestyle’?
What do you consider is the adequate role of the state in the transition towards a Green Economy?
Block 3: The debate in your country
How does your organisation position itself in the national debate on the Green Economy?

Is there a consensus on the definition/ meaning of Green Economy in your country?
Where do you consider are most important potentials of Green Economy for the European/your country's economy?
Where do you see conflicts in the transition towards a Green Economy? (e.g. certain industry sectors; social consequences from rising fuel prices)

### 5.3 Interview partners

The following table presents the experts and their organisations that were contacted.

<i>Name</i>	<i>Organization</i>
Liliane Spendeler	Amigos de la Terra (Friends of the Earth Spain)
Franz-Josef von Kempis, Nora Habib	Bundesverband der Deutschen Industrie (Federation of German Industries)
Dominique Olivier, Emmanuel Mermet	Confédération française démocratique du travail (French Democratic Confederation of Labour)
Ingeborg Niestroy	European Environment and Sustainable Development Advisory Councils
Judith Kirton-Darling	European Trade Union Confederation
Martina Bianchini	International Chamber of Commerce, Chair ICC Taskforce on Green Economy & The Dow Chemical Company
Jan Eksvärd	Lantbrukarnas Riksförbund (Federation of Swedish Farmers)
Daniel Mittler	Greenpeace International
Krzysztof Kameniecki	Instytut na rzecz Ekorozwoju (Institute for Sustainable Development)
Ursula Stefanowicz	Polski Klub Ekologiczny (Polish Ecological Club)
Zineb Fahsi	Suez Environnement

---

Thomas Janson	TCO - The Swedish Confederation for Professional Employees
Victor Anderson	WWF United Kingdom
Bartłomiej Kozek	Zielony Instytut (Green Institute)



## 5.4 Survey results

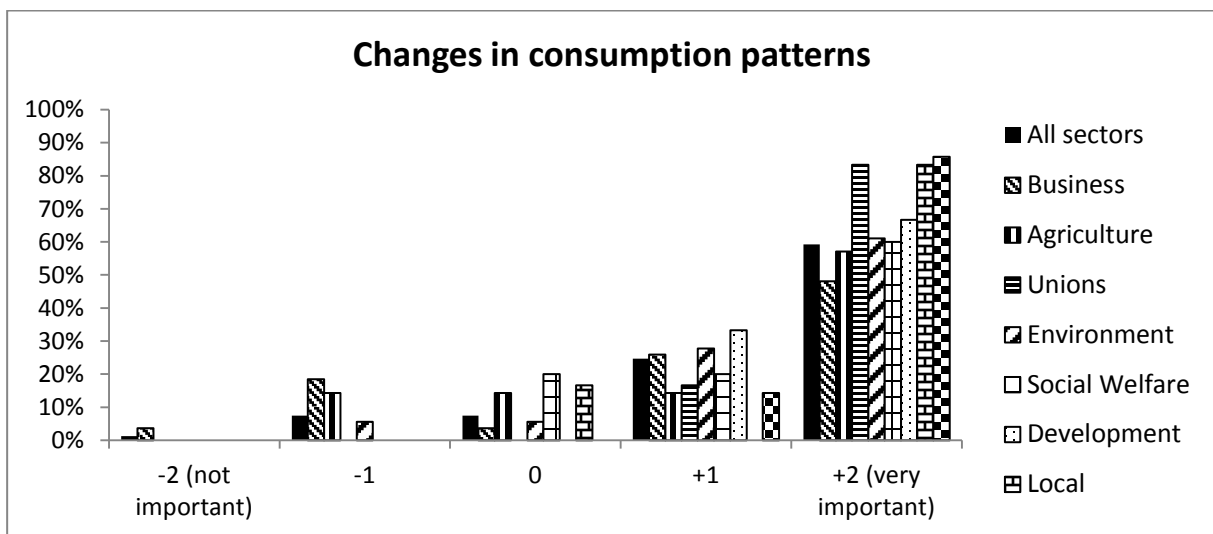
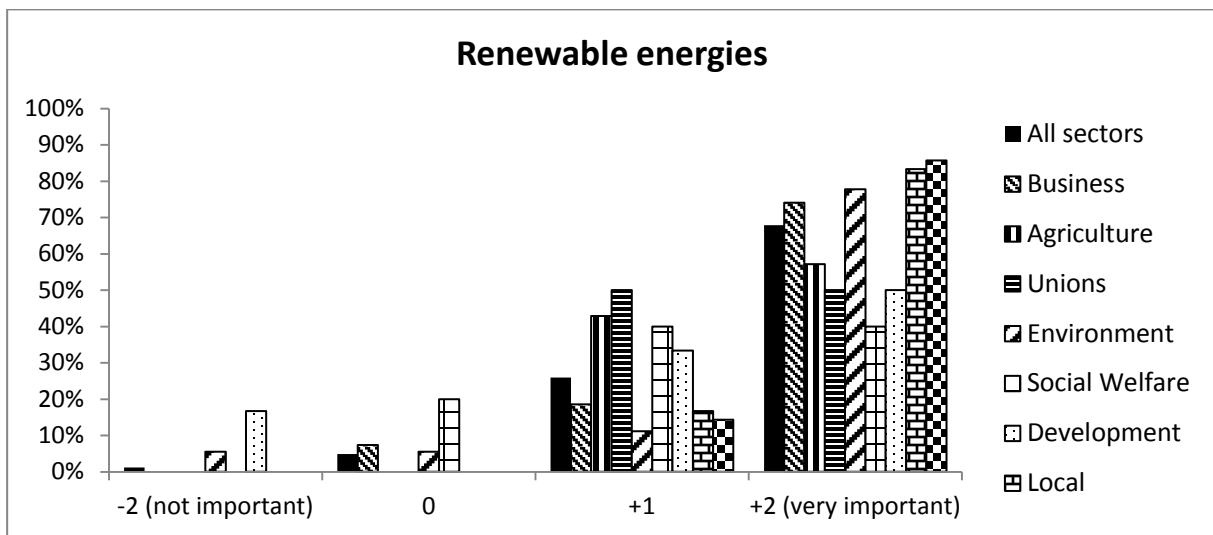
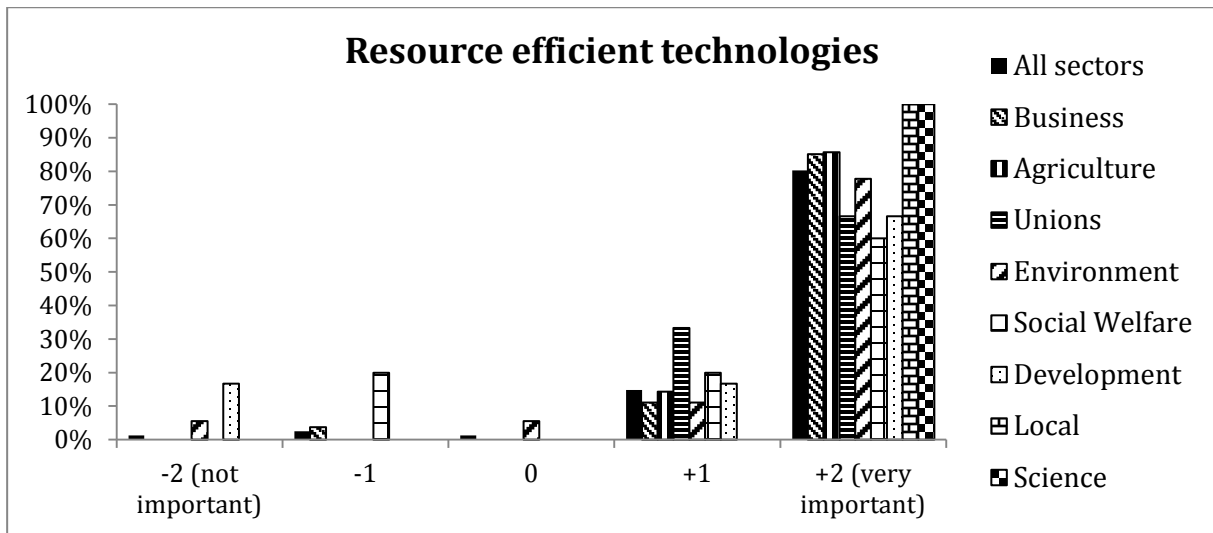
This section of the annex contains the graphical representations of data presented and referred to in the text. The enumerations of the sections in this part of the annex correspond to the main document.

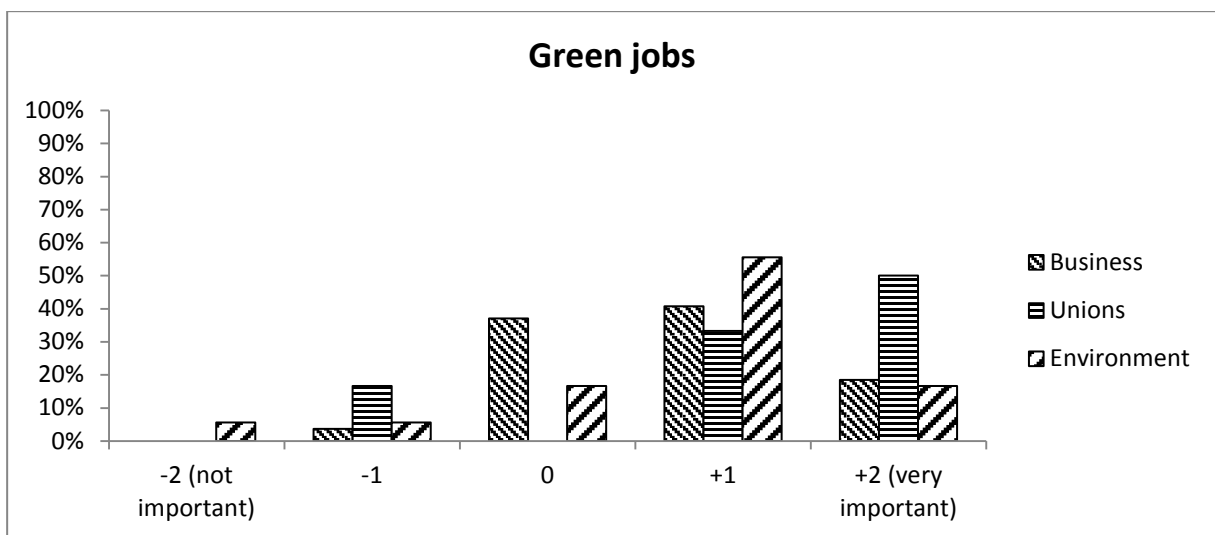
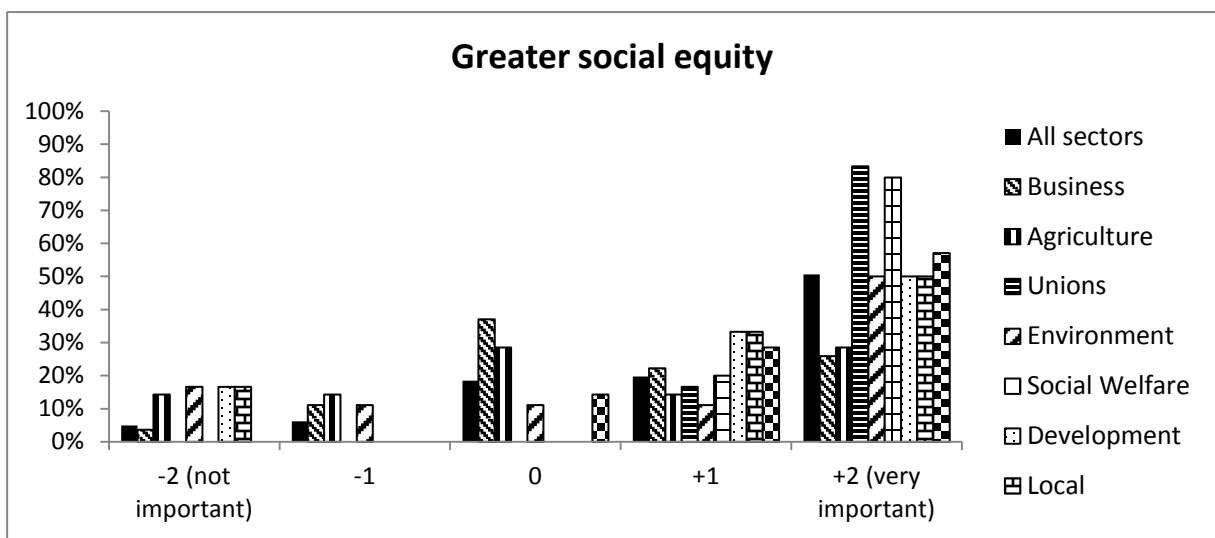
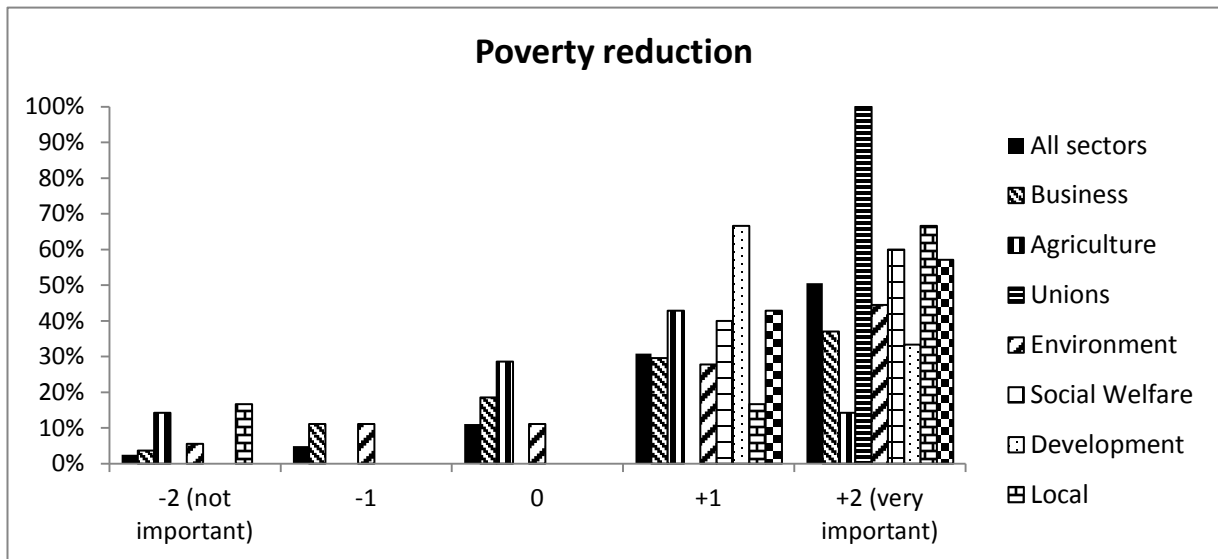
### 5.4.1 Key Elements of the Green Economy<sup>23</sup>

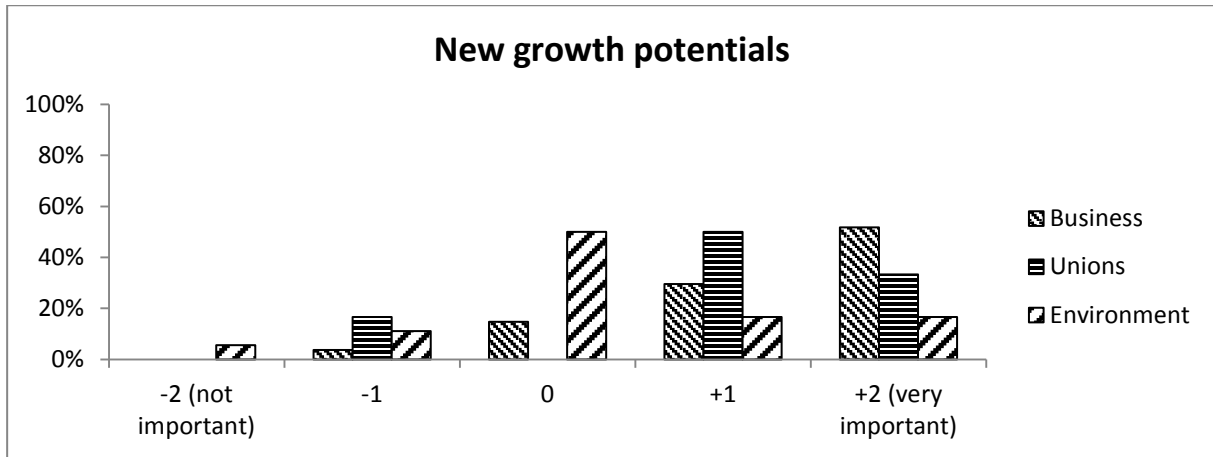
**Table 3: Elements of the Green Economy considered “important” or “very important” by all respondents**

Resource efficient technologies	94,74%
Renewable energies	93,42%
Changes in consumption models, culture and values	84,21%
Respect for ecological limits/ planetary boundaries	82,89%
Climate change mitigation technologies	81,58%
Poverty reduction	80,26%
Green jobs	72,37%
Greater social equity	69,74%
New growth potentials	61,84%
New welfare indicators ('beyond GDP')	61,84%

<sup>23</sup> Wording of the survey question: „Key elements of the Green Economy: Please evaluate the importance of these different aspects of the Green Economy“

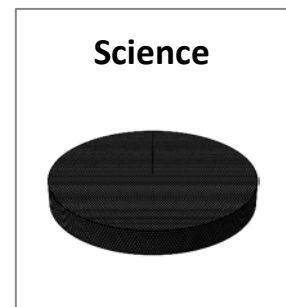
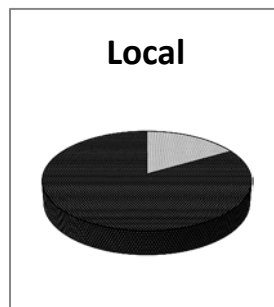
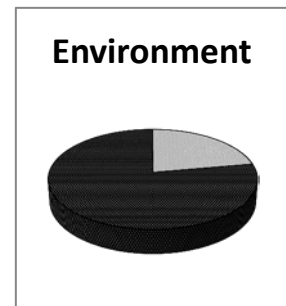
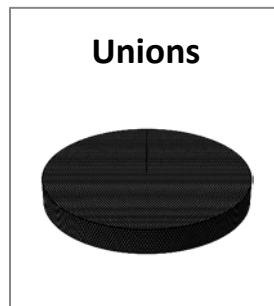
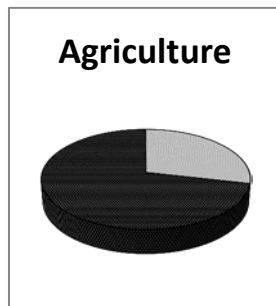
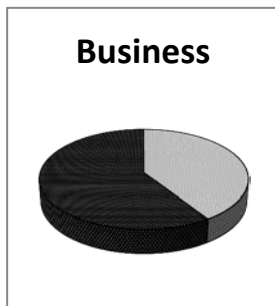
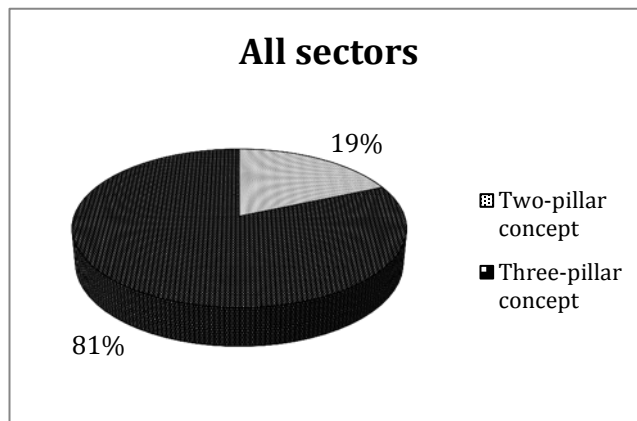




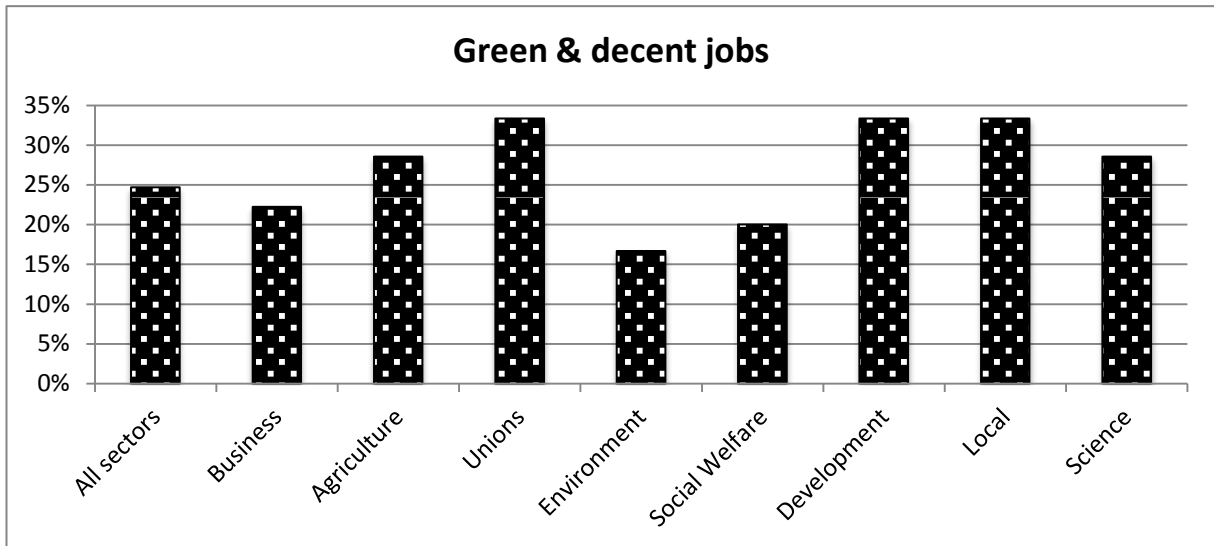
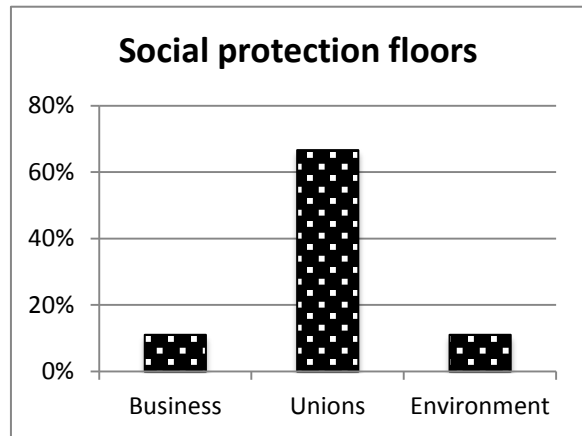
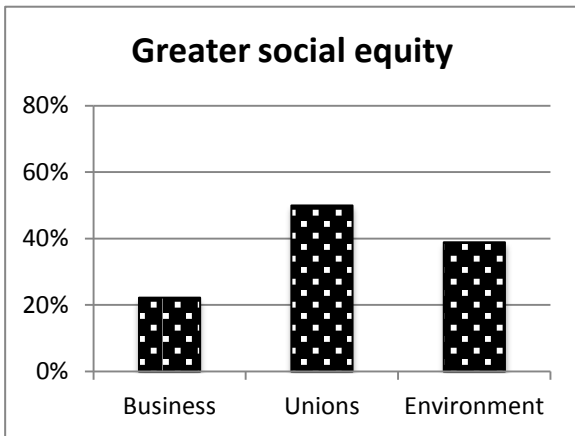
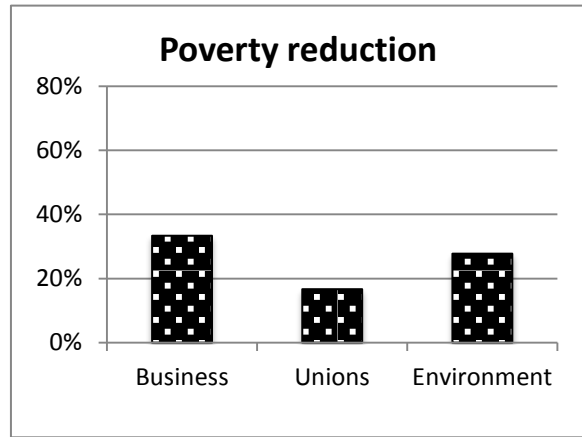
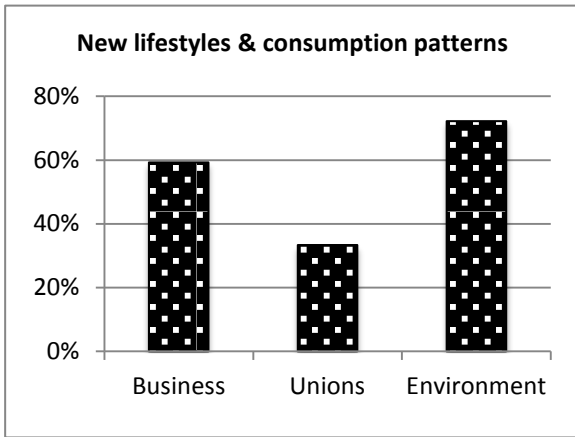


### 5.4.2 The relationship between Sustainable Development and the Green Economy

#### 5.4.2.1. The Green Economy: A two or three-pillar concept?

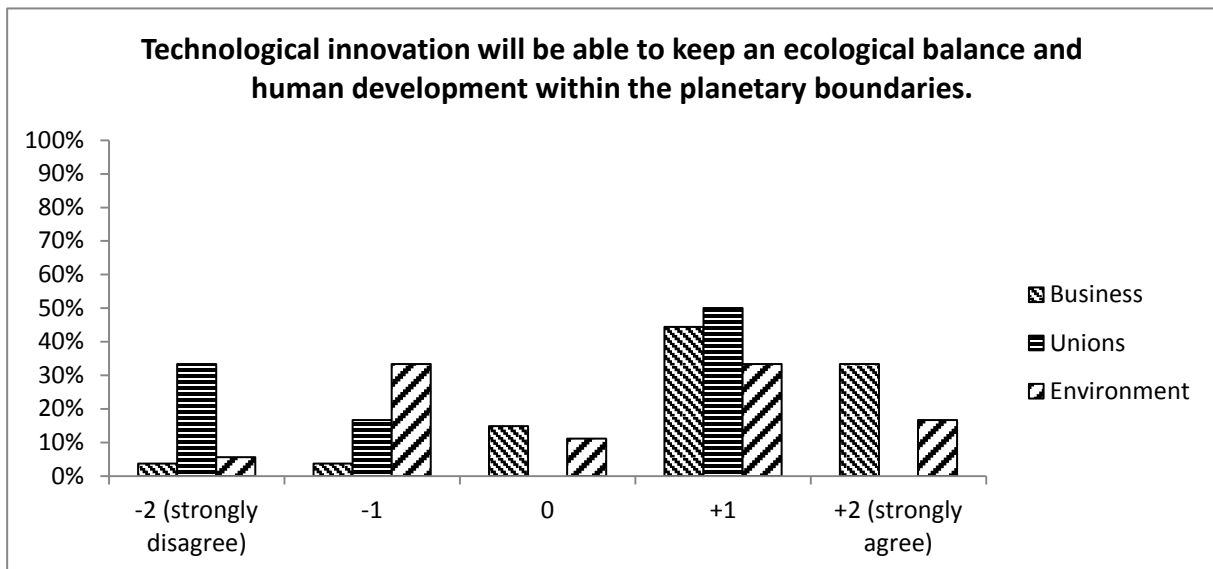
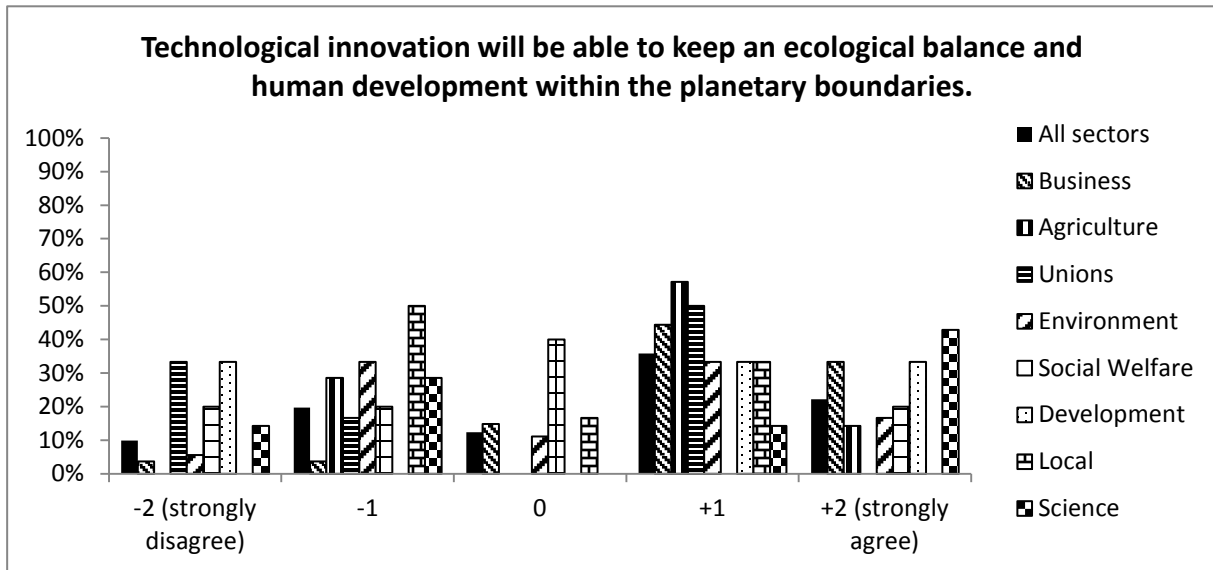


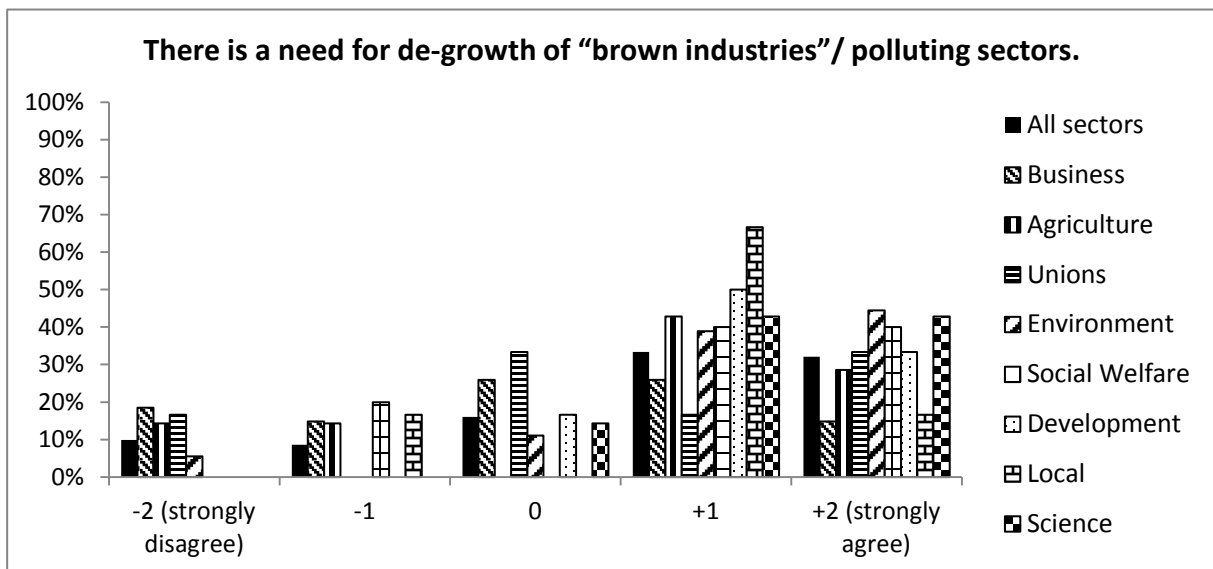
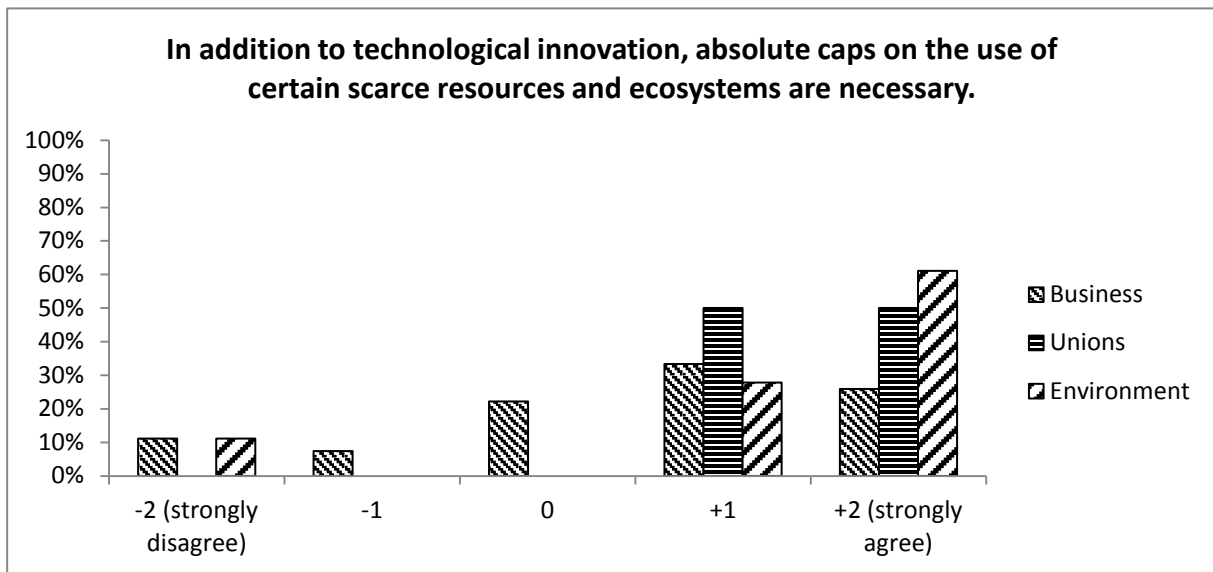
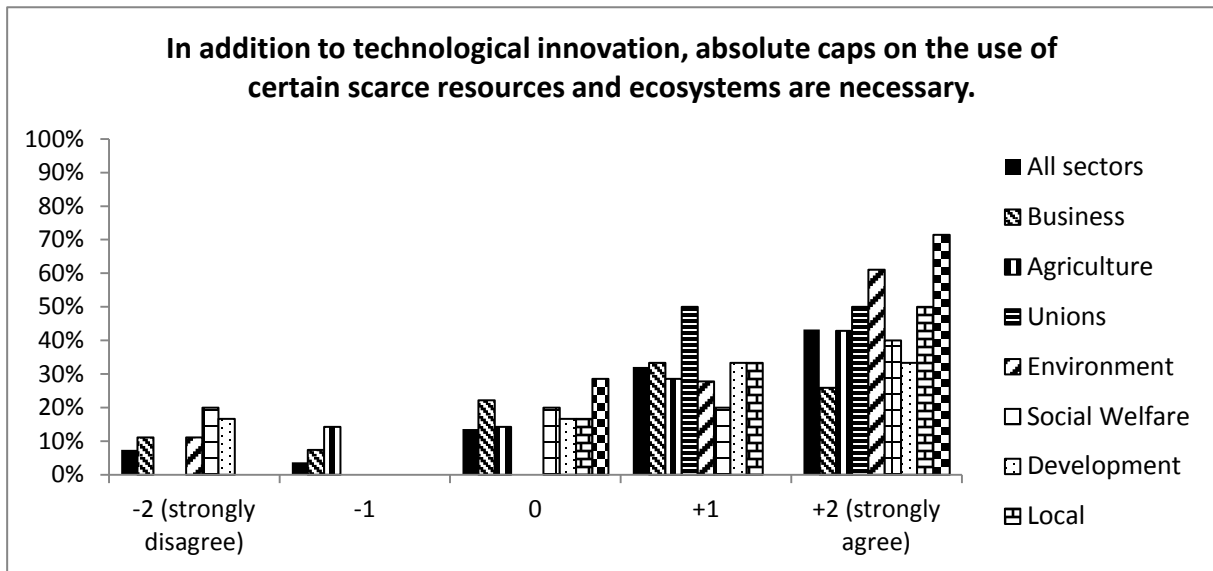
5.4.2.2. What is the social dimension of the Green Economy?

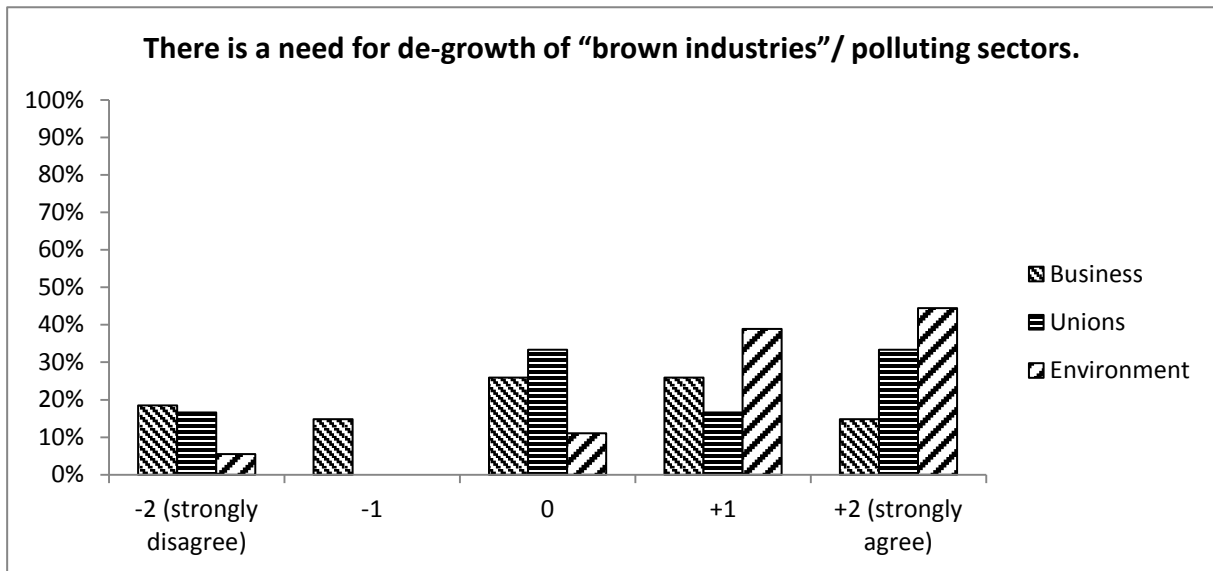


### 5.4.3 Ecological limits, welfare indicators and consumption models

#### 5.4.3.1. What is necessary to keep humanity within the planetary boundaries?

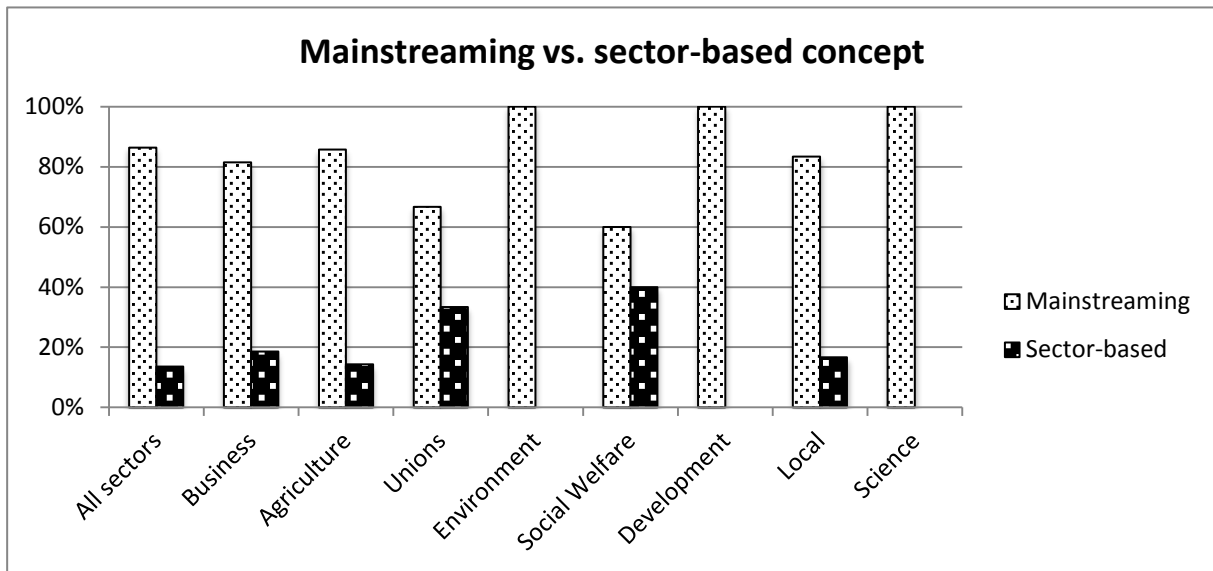






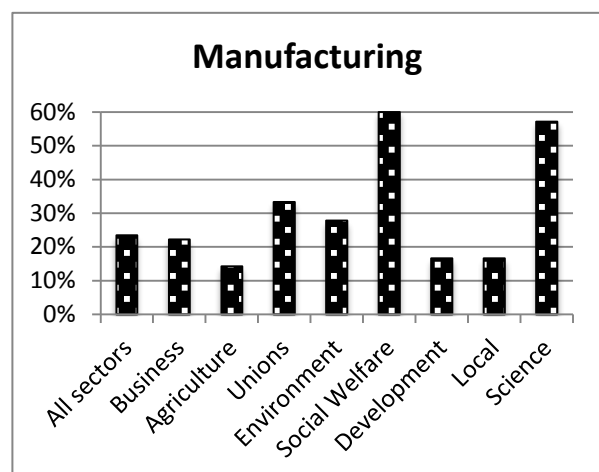
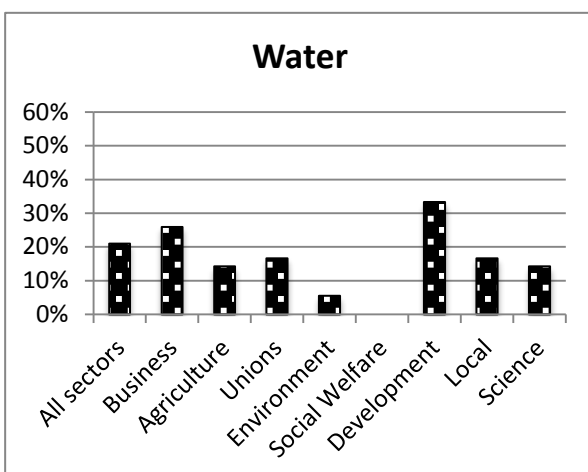
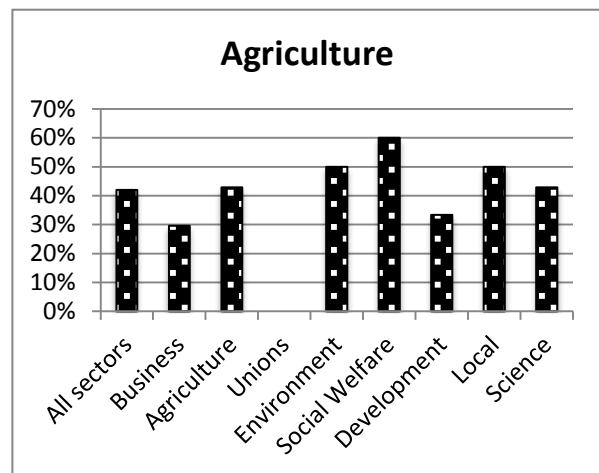
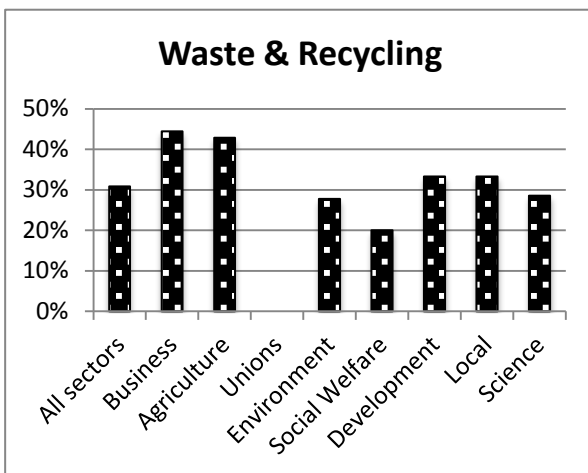
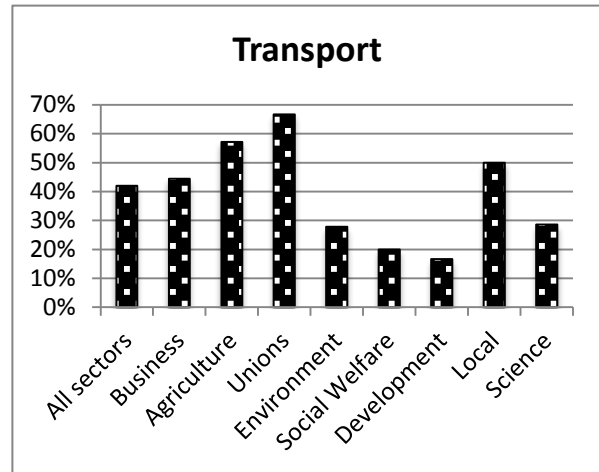
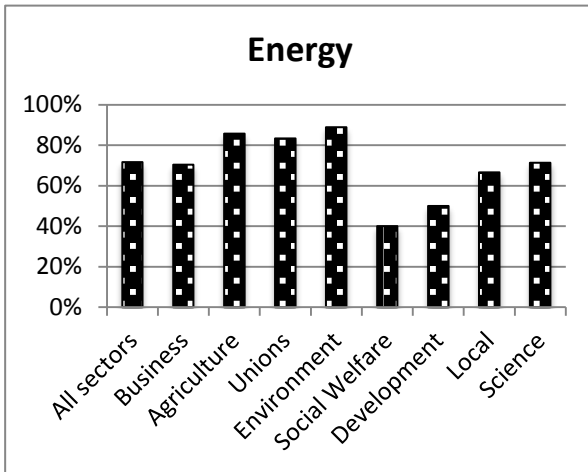
#### 5.4.4 Key sectors in the GE transition

##### 5.4.4.1. Mainstreaming vs. sector-based concept

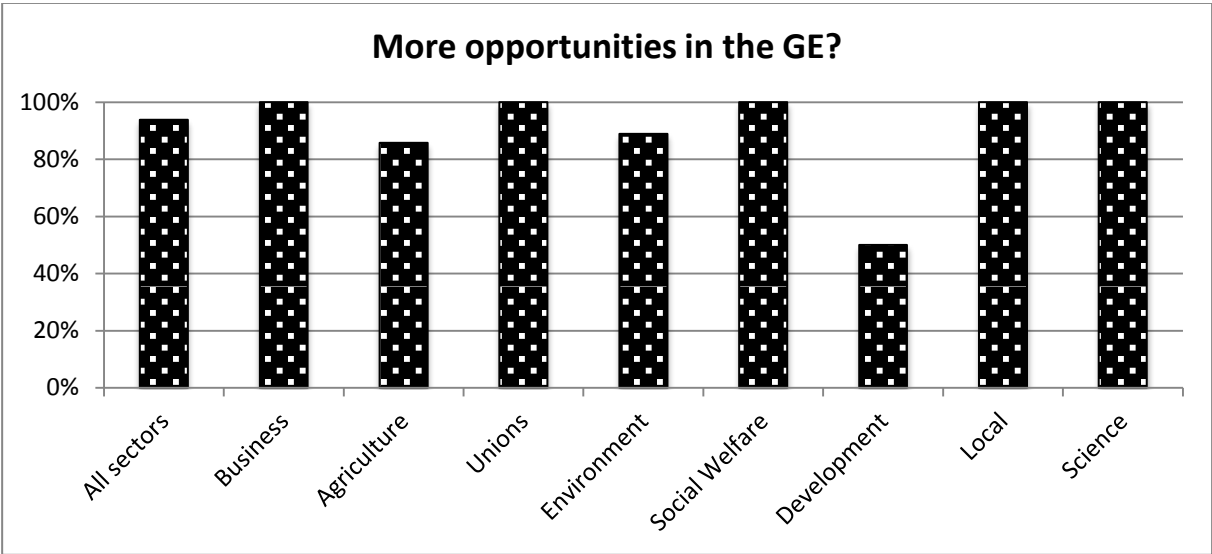




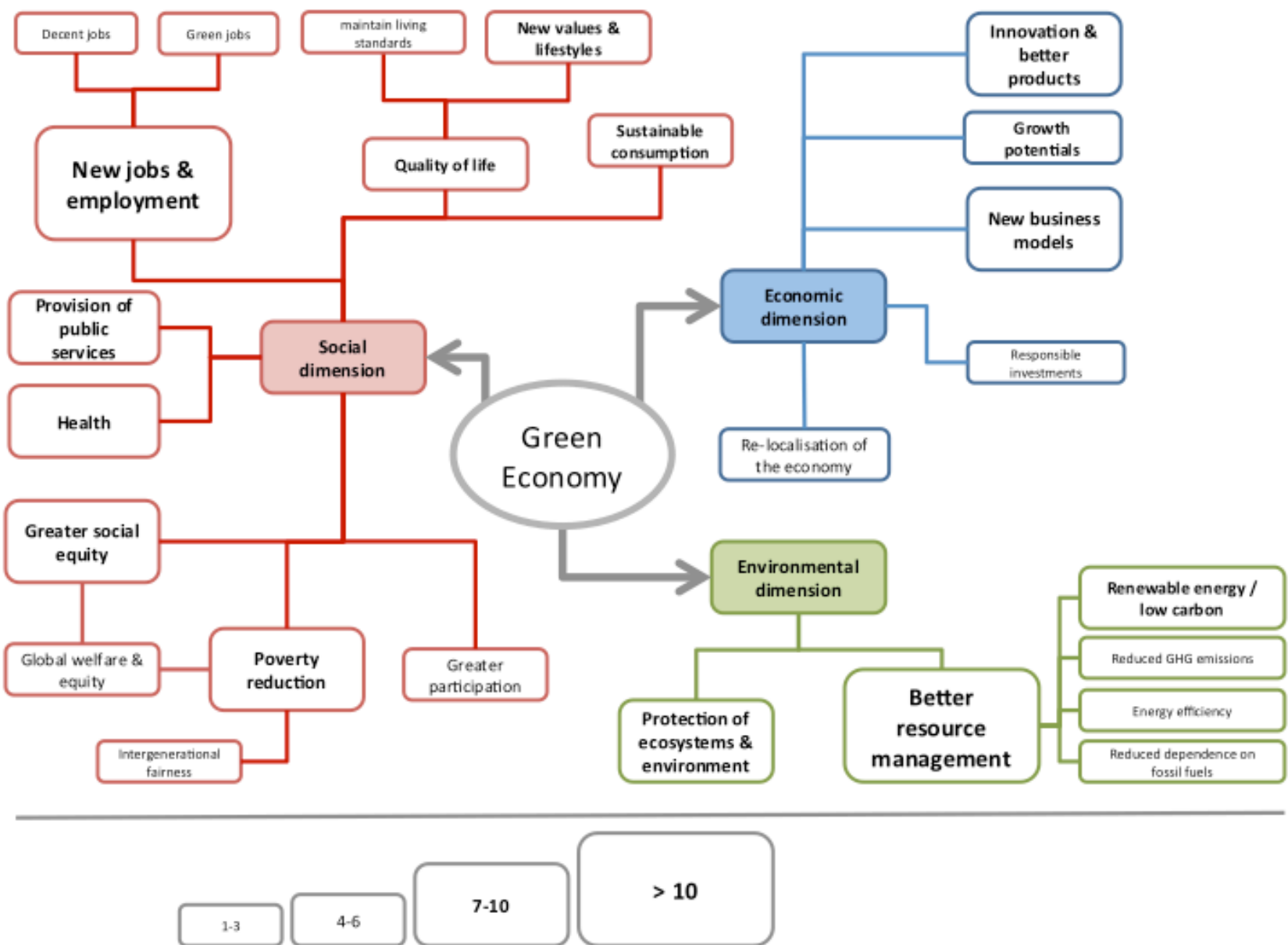
5.4.4.2. Key sectors



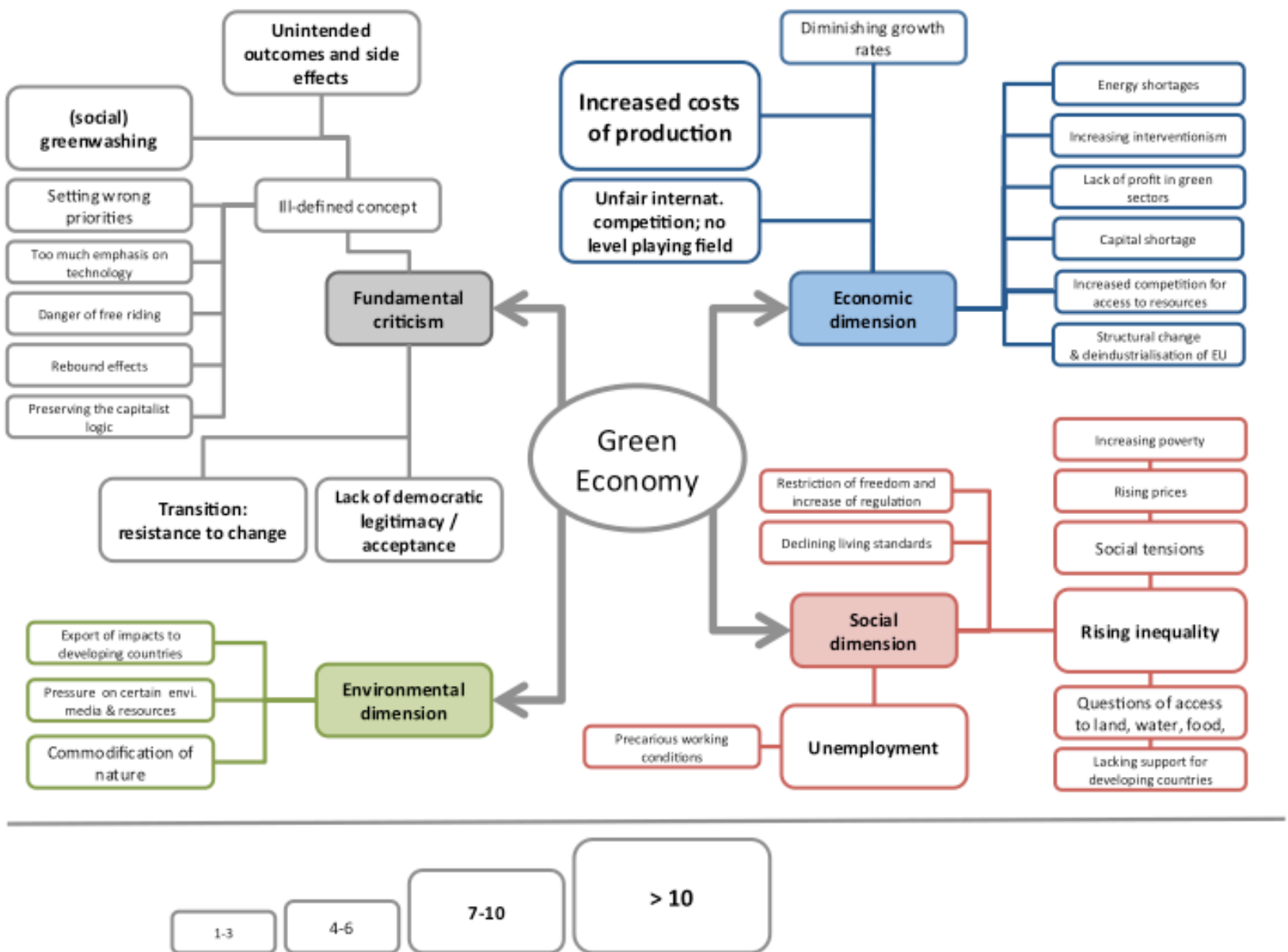
5.4.5 Opportunities and Risks in the Green Economy



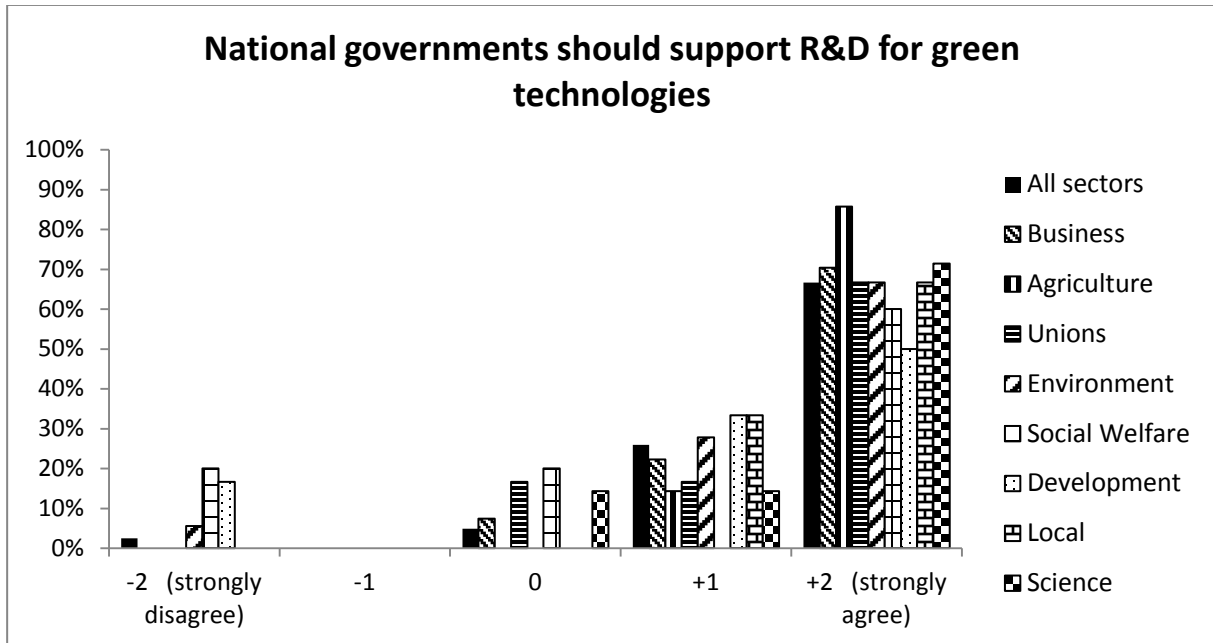
Annex Map 1 : Opportunities in the Green Economy (landscape)

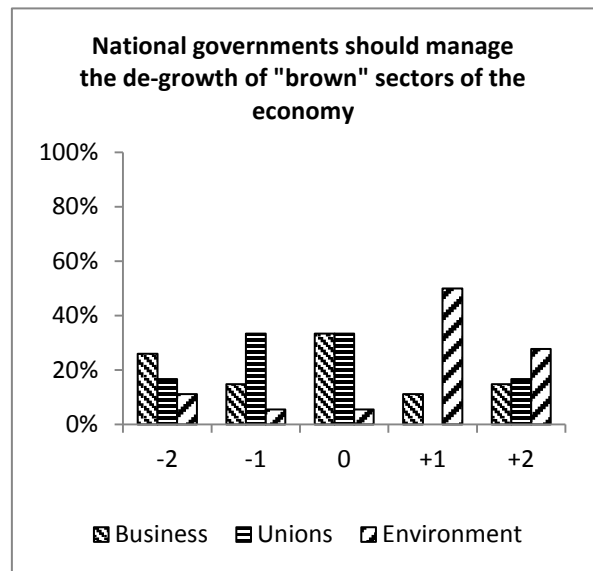
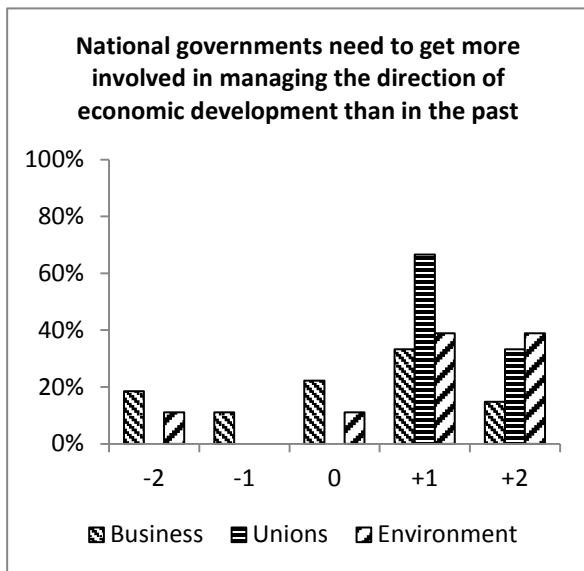
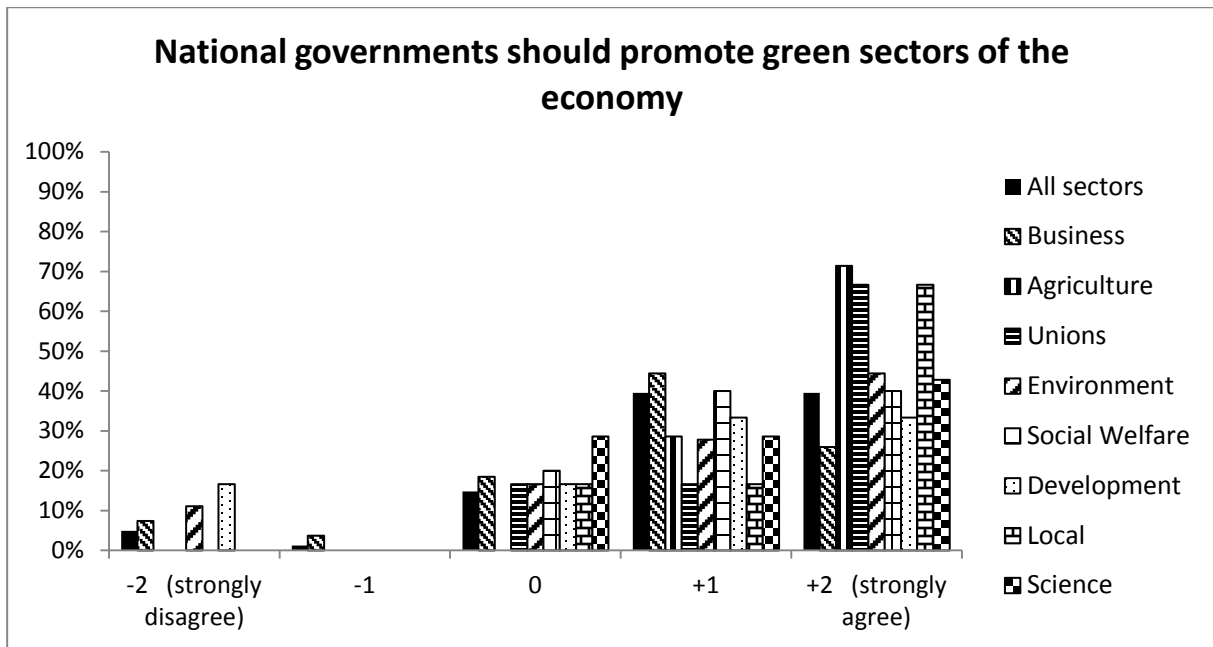


Annex Map 2: Risks in the Green Economy (landscape)

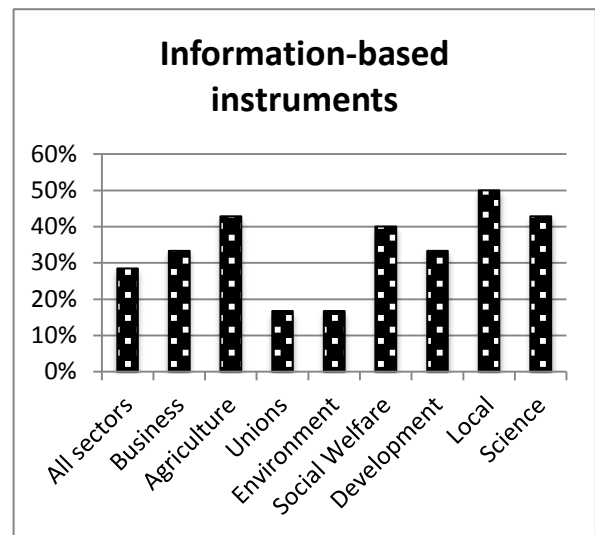
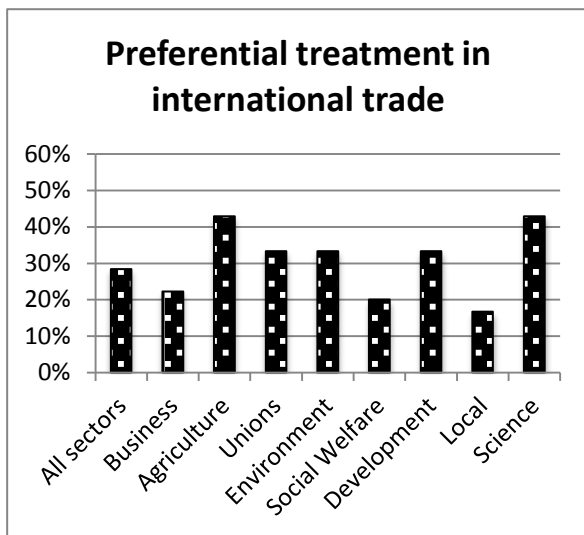
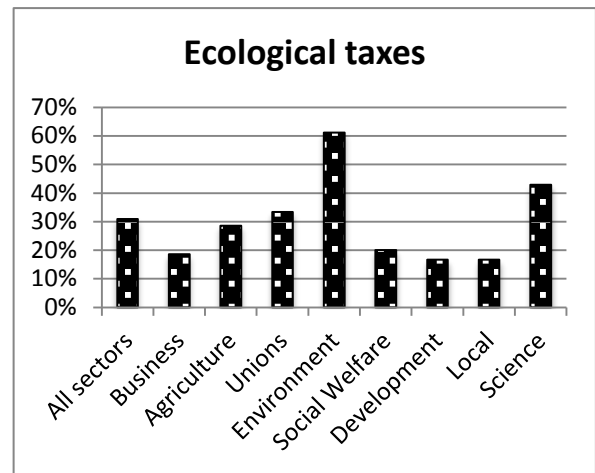
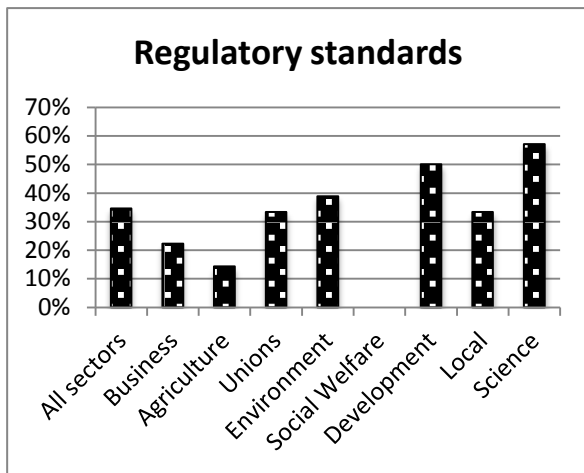
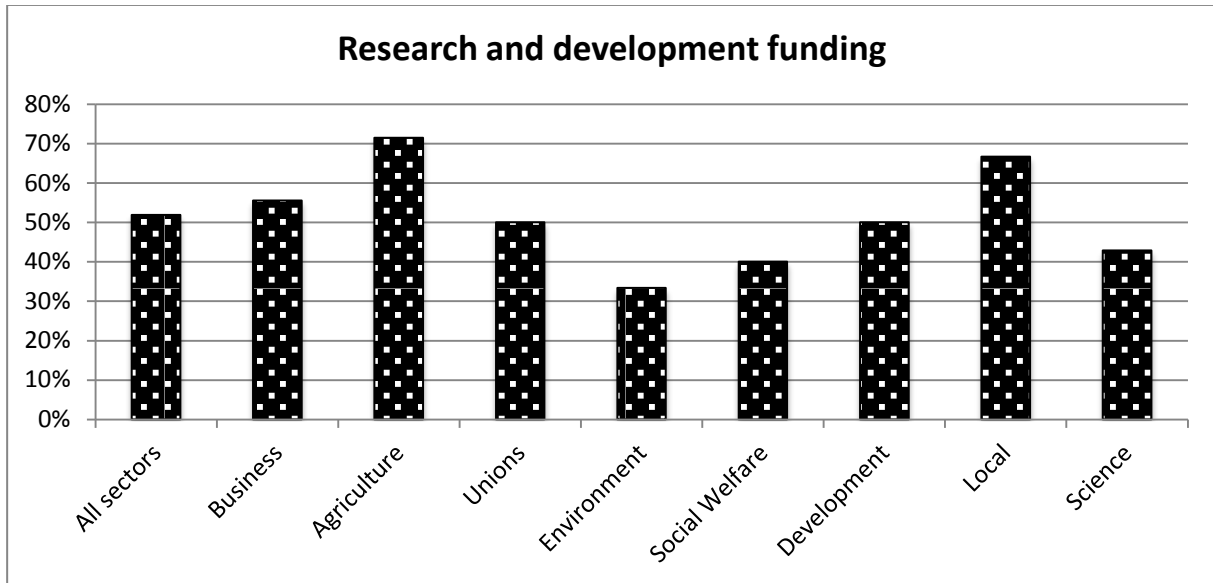


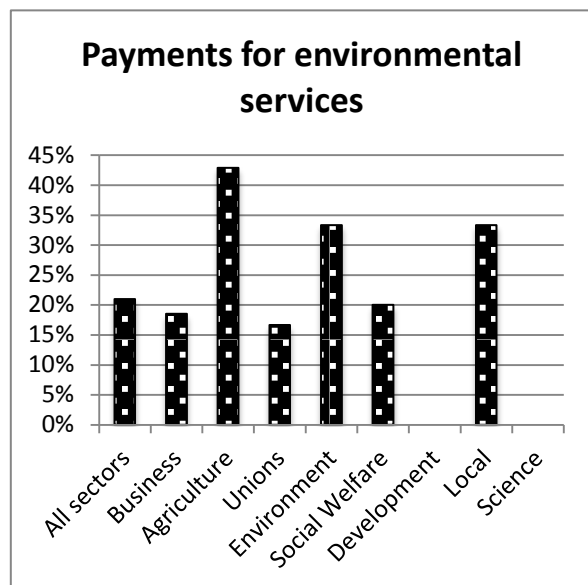
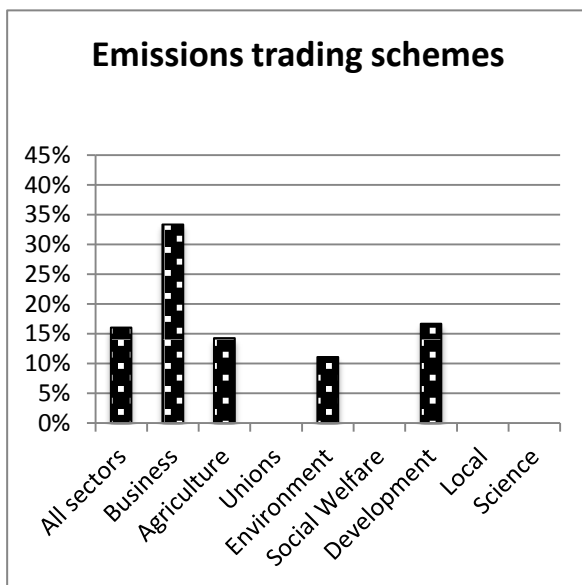
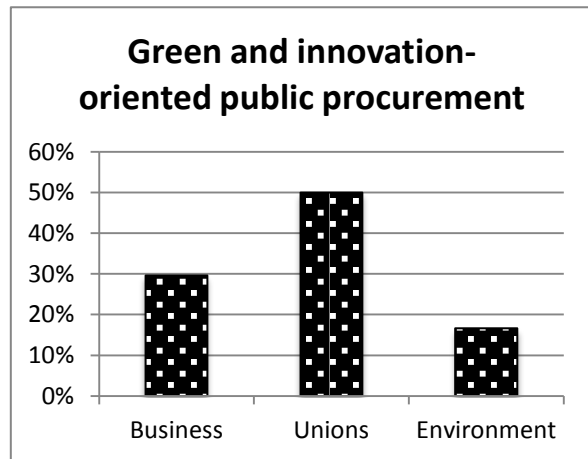
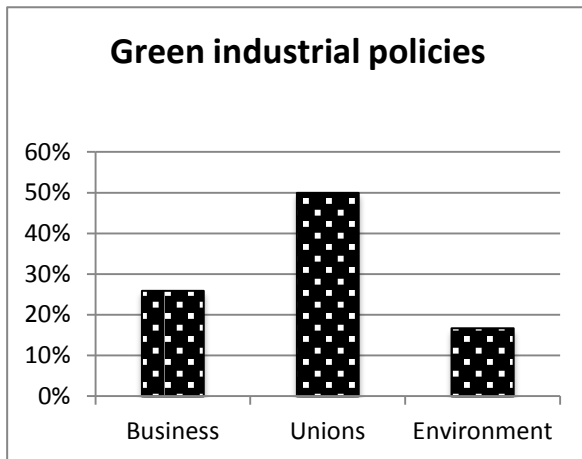
5.4.6 The role of national governments





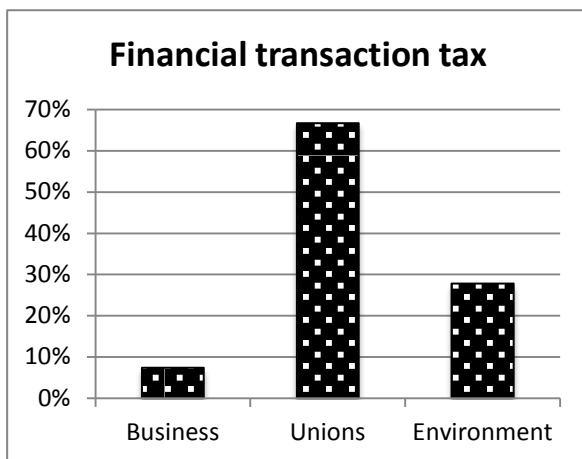
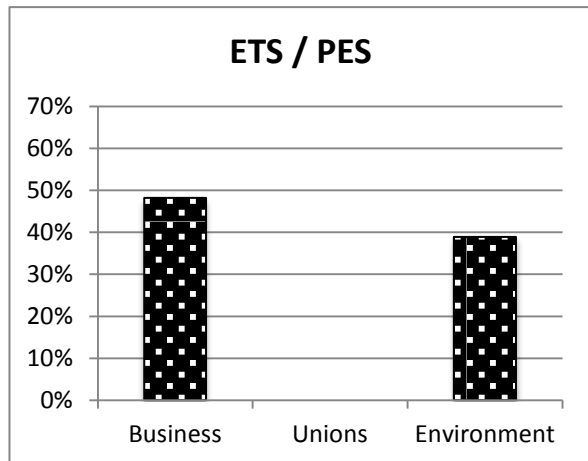
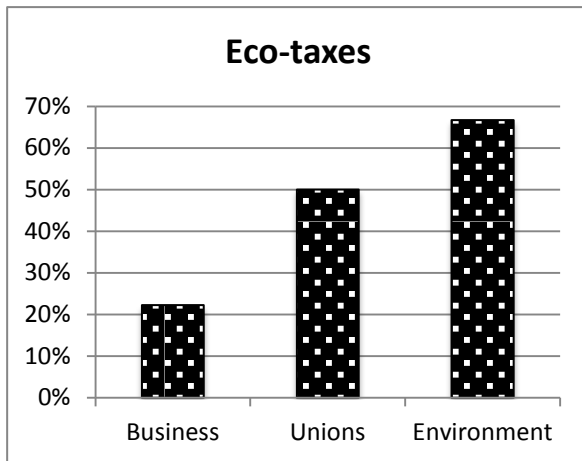
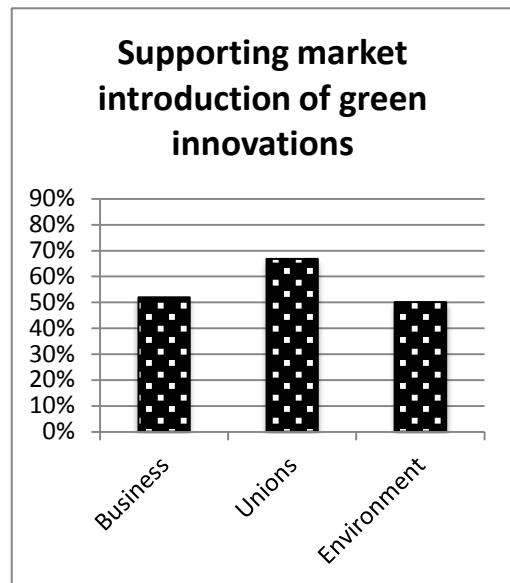
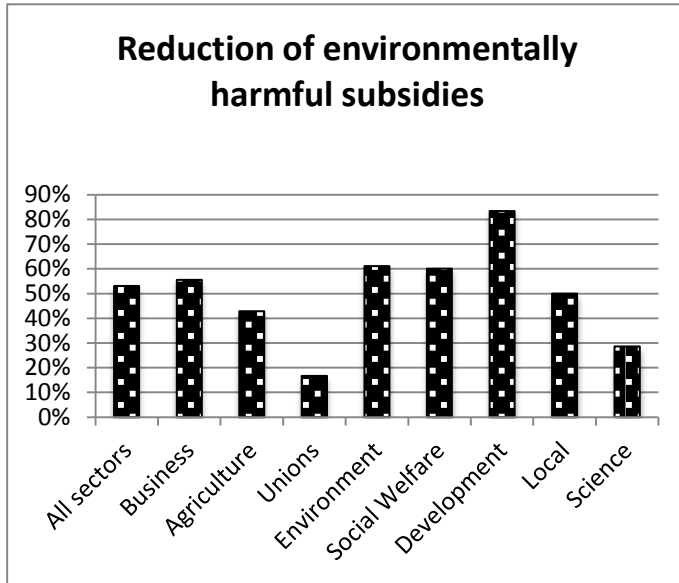
5.4.7 Policy instruments to foster the Green Economy transition



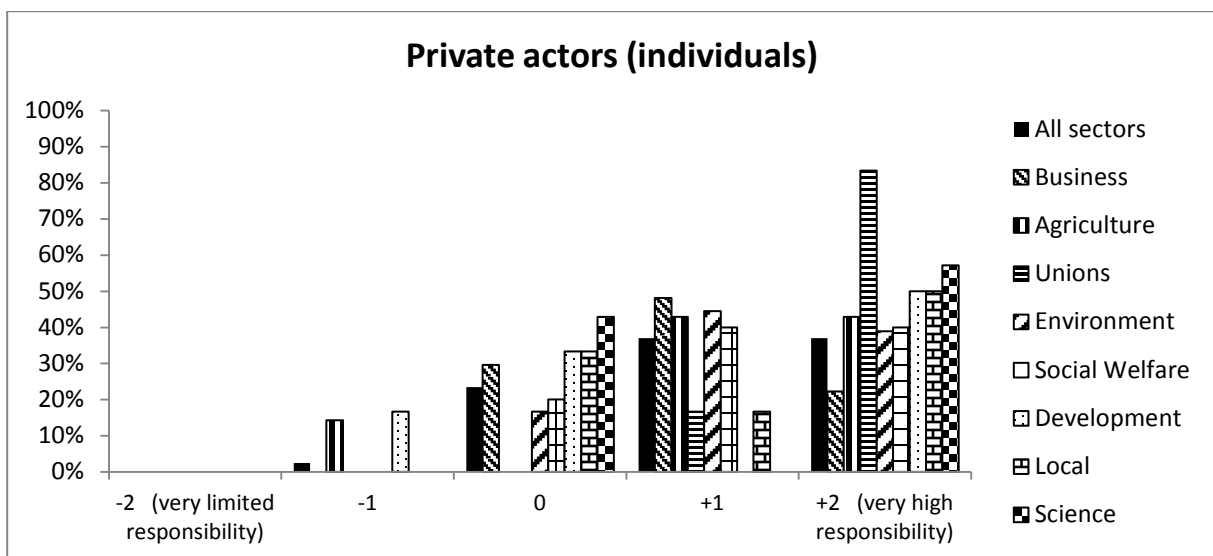
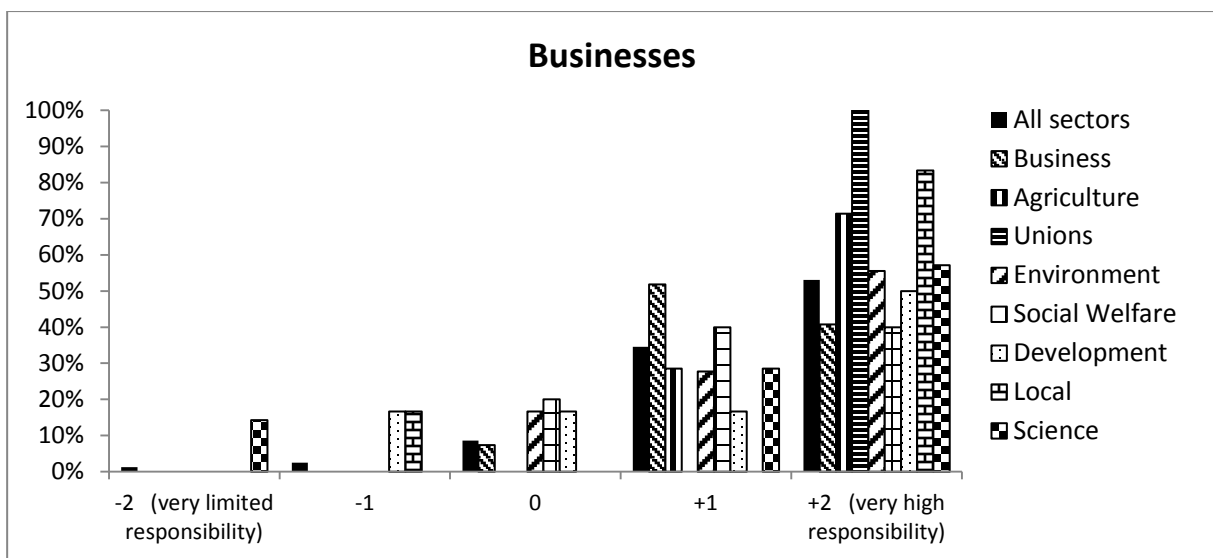
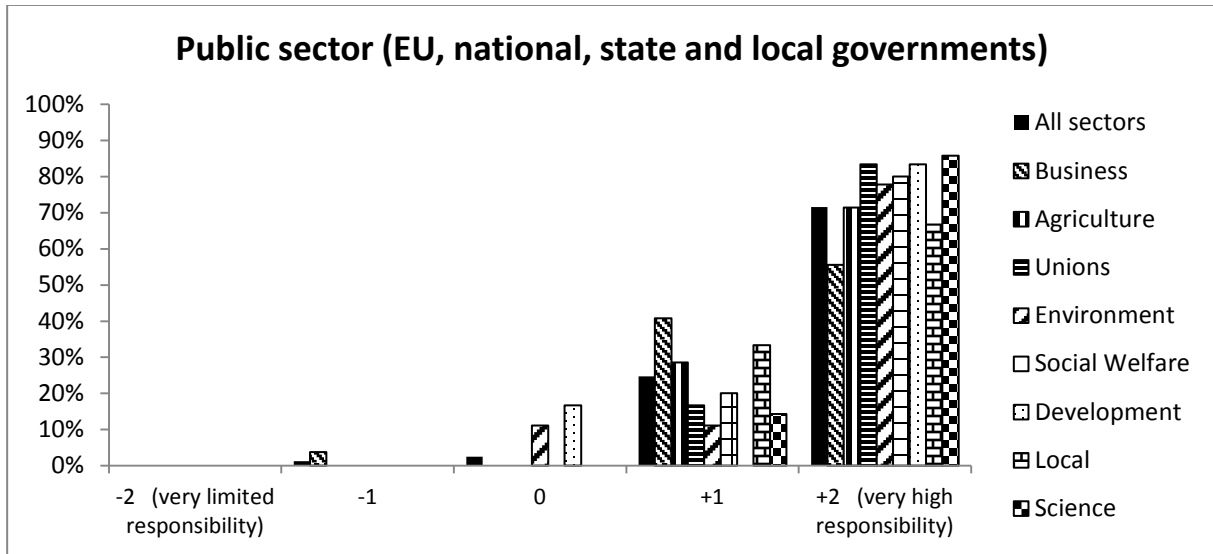




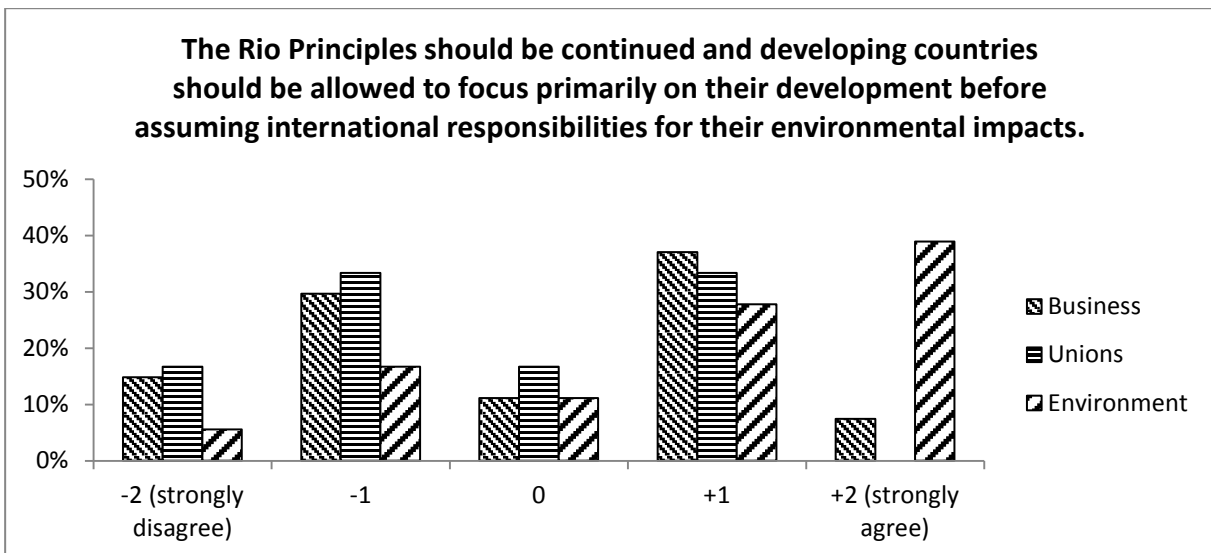
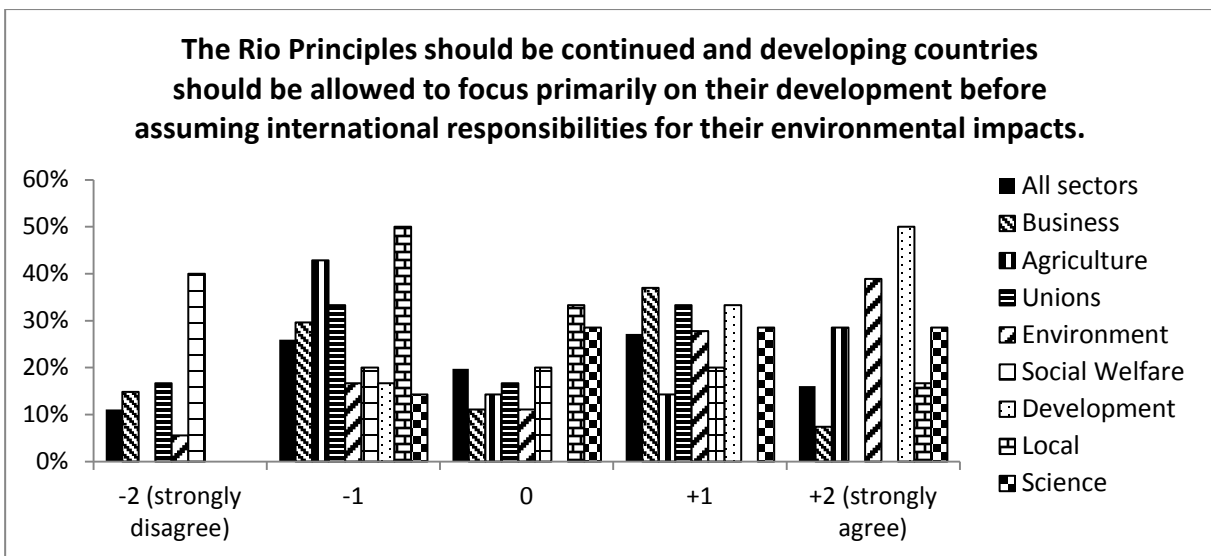
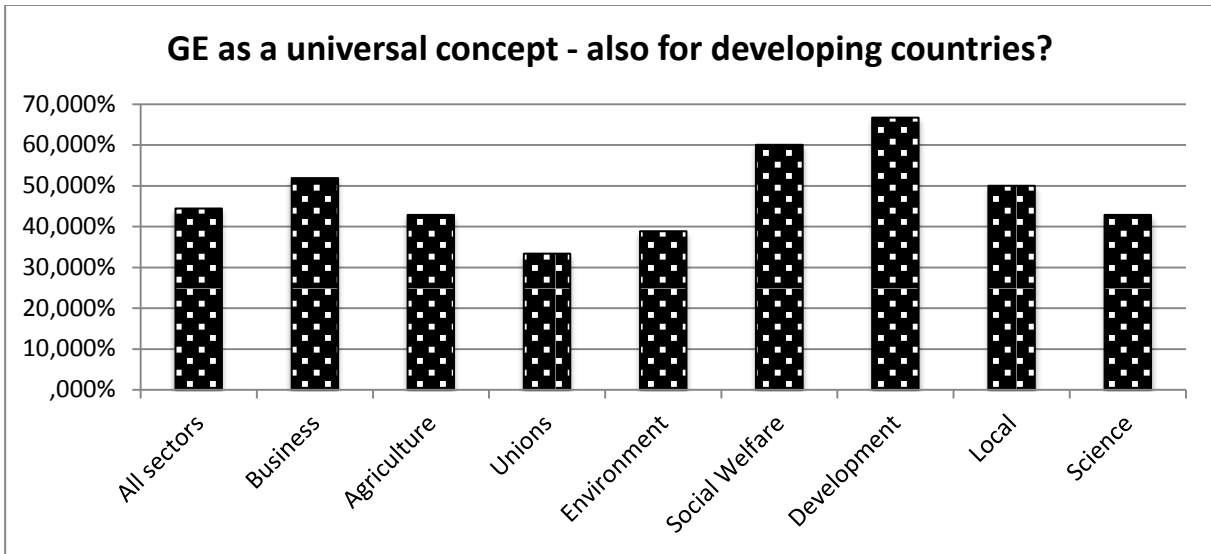
5.4.8 Financing the Green Economy transition



### 5.4.9 Responsibility of various actors in the transition



5.4.10 Developing countries and the Green Economy



5.4.11 Analysis of results according to countries of origin

