

**Finding a Place for Promoting Sustainable
Consumption under Korea's Green Growth Agenda:
An assessment of governmental strategies in
a growth oriented approach**

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ABSTRACT

This research paper investigates the question of how governmental capacities can be better enacted to promote Sustainable Consumption under the Low Carbon Green Growth strategy in the Republic of Korea. It examines the strategies of the national government towards sustainability in 2010-2011 based on its Green Growth focus. The findings demonstrate that the rise of Green Growth caused an overall de-prioritisation of sustainable development and has led to confusion over the roles that leading agencies are expected to play. The interview analysis proves that civil society organisations and NGOs in Korea have a strong capacity in promoting Sustainable Consumption, which could be greatly supported through better government-civil society partnerships. Recommendations from interviewees were made for supporting public participation through lateral partnerships, and the need to overcome human resource limitations on Sustainable Consumption at the level of national government is also identified. A capacity assessment is also conducted to identify the valuable leverage points for strengthening Education for Sustainable Consumption implementation and policy integration from which recommendations are developed for strengthening the government's approach on Education for Sustainable Consumption promotion.

KEY WORDS: Governmental Strategy, Sustainable Development, Green Growth, Education on Sustainable Consumption, Capacity Assessment

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I . Introduction

Since the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002, the topic of Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) has emerged as an important issue. The early focus on SCP mainly addressed issues regarding cleaner production, but more recently the issue of more responsible consumption practices has become a primary focus for both research and policy. There have been diverse researches on Sustainable Consumption describing the problems around current consumer behaviour, business marketing, and government policy and by also analysing approaches to resolve them. For instance, a variety of work has been conducted to understand sustainable practice: such as public policy on sustainable consumption (Martens and Spaargaren 2005; Scholl et al. 2010), sustainable consumerism (Hansen and Schrader 1997; Assadourian 2010), green consumption and production (Grankvist and Biel 2001; Connolly and Prothero 2008), and even more progressively voluntary simplicity (Etzioni 1998; Grigsby 2004; Lee 2010). As the globalisation process continues to expand worldwide, the role of Sustainable Consumption is a key element to deliver harmonised economic development and to promote environmentally friendly patterns of consumption. Sustainable Consumption can be used as a tool to promote better quality of life for all through Sustainable Development; to achieve this education is one of the most efficient means for providing citizens with the skills and competencies to become sustainable consumers.

Education for Sustainable Consumption (ESC) provides a focus that is narrow and specific in comparison to the broad encompassing topics of both SCP and Education for Sustainable Development. It is a topic with the key purpose of directly engaging individuals to participate in activities that will

support the wider objectives of Sustainable Development and SCP. Sustainable Development can be a difficult concept to fully conceptualize in educational curriculums due to its idealistic and theoretical nature that does not always readily lend itself to practical actions. While SCP often addresses very complex and technical issues that are void of a substantial human element. ESC provides a uniquely different learning opportunity based on simple and practical actions individuals can take in their daily lives, and through this experiential learning process the wider principles of Sustainable Development and Sustainable Consumption can be illuminated. Thus, this provides a valuable entry point into the wider discussions about sustainable lifestyles as individuals' consumption patterns is one of the most pertinent lifestyle issues.

To understand the roles governments can play in influencing consumer behaviour towards Sustainable Consumption, it is necessary to investigate how consumer behaviour is affected. Several models of consumer behaviour have been developed, but all face limitations in explaining variance of behaviour among differing consumers. For instance, the Value-Belief-Norm theory of pro-environmental behaviour provides one of the strongest basis for analysing shifts in consumer behaviour towards sustainable consumption which builds off of Schwartz's Norm Activation model in 1977 and links it to environmental value theory. The Value-Belief-Norm theory postulates that pro-environmental values, an awareness of the consequences of one's actions, and an ascription of personal responsibility can lead to acceptance of a new environmental paradigm. Through this process, an individual moves towards developing a personal norm for pro-environmental behaviour (Stern et.al.,1999). Even though this model is considered one of the strongest for explaining pro-environmental behaviour, it only accounts for 35% of the variances between personal norms and indicators of

pro-environmental behaviour (Jackson 2005).

The various behaviour models provide some insight on the types of factors that may influence a behaviour shift towards sustainable consumption. What is clear is that value-motivations and pro-environmental orientations must be a key area of focus in policy activities. Governmental activities should first aim to alleviate barriers to practicing Sustainable Consumption, and second to provide better opportunities for Sustainable Consumption both in quantity and quality. The historical pretext must be understood if proper attempts are to be made for social transformation towards Sustainable Consumption because it has long been endorsed by both public and private sectors that the type of growth linked to increased consumption is synonymous with achieving social development. Sanne (2002) suggests that in many cases consumers are locked-in to a work-and-spend lifestyle by the conditions that are deliberately promoted by businesses and producers. Governments will need to recognise how social infrastructures define specific consumption possibilities and find their ability to influence the values that guide behaviour if inroads are to be made in promoting Sustainable Consumption practices.

The concepts of Sustainable Consumption are re-addressed in Korea under the new master plan of Green Growth National Vision announced in 2008 which takes several important policy steps by launching a new low carbon oriented market and expanding incentives for environmentally-friendly businesses and consumer behavior. Although the Green Growth programs are operational policy initiatives for achieving the goals of the national government's vision, approaches still remain conceptually and systematically oriented solely by economic rationality and a 'growth first, clean up later' mentality.

The case study was conducted through 2010-2011 to assess Korean

governmental capacity for effective ESC implementation and to identify pathways for improving overall performance, with an emphasis on individual policy tools and instruments and their effective combination.¹⁾ The collection of the empirical evidence was based on in-depth interviews utilizing an open-ended questionnaire guided by a structured interview schedule carried out with 15 interviewees from Korean national and local government officers and NGO practitioners²⁾; data collection was also supported by a review of relevant policy documents.

The findings from this research identify the key aspects of the current governmental context for promoting Sustainable Consumption in Korea. It addresses the existing relevant policy frameworks on ESC, current governmental strategies and capacity for promoting Sustainable Consumption, and assessment of that implementation. Finally, but most importantly, it suggests opportunities for better policy integration and recommendations for improving Korean capacity for ESC implementations.

II. Existing Policy Frameworks on Sustainable Consumption and ESC in Korea

1. Understanding Sustainable Consumption in Korea

The concept of SCP was first raised to the awareness of the international community when it was discussed at the Earth Summit in Rio in 1992 and

1) This study was initially prepared as part of the research commissioned by the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies as a comparative assessment of government capacity for ESC in China, Japan and Republic of Korea. This paper is a revised version of the research focused on Korean case.

2) Appendix shows the details of 15 interviewees.

later included in Agenda 21. The well-known announcement of Agenda 21 is that “the major cause of the continued deterioration of the global environment is the unsustainable pattern of consumption and production, particularly in industrialized countries, which is a matter of grave concern, aggravating poverty and imbalances”(UNCED 1993:8). Momentum behind this concept was further enhanced two years later when it was a central topic of the Oslo Symposium. In the Symposium, SCP was more clearly defined as “the production and use of goods and services that respond to basic needs and bring a better quality of life, while minimising the use of natural resources, toxic materials and emissions of waste and pollutants over the life cycle, so as not to jeopardise the needs of future generations” (Norwegian Ministry of Environment 1994).

To address implementation, UN World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002 initiated the Marrakech process to develop a 10-Year framework of programmes in support of regional and national initiatives to accelerate the shift towards SCP. Hence, the concept of SCP expanded into social, economic, and political principles by promoting “social and economic development within the carrying capacity of ecosystems by addressing and de-linking economic growth and environmental degradation through improving efficiency and sustainability in the use of resources and production processes and reducing resource degradation, pollution and waste” (UN 2002:7). Taking such principles into account, Sustainable Consumption has been defined in more inclusive concepts by UNESCO; it integrates a range of social, economic and political practices at the individual, household, community, business and government levels SC supports reducing the direct environmental burden of producing, using and disposing goods and services and meeting basic needs for key consumption goods and services, such as food, water, health, education and shelter.

Sustainable Consumption even supports to maximise opportunities for sustainable livelihoods in the South and contributes positively to the health and well-being of women and children. Sustainable Consumption aims to increase the development and adoption of energy and water efficient appliances, public transport and other demand-side measures as well as the production and sale of new goods and services adapted to global environmental constraints. Sustainable Consumption can instill lifestyles that place greater value on social cohesion, local traditions and non-material values (UNESCO 2005).

Korea launched a National Vision for Sustainable Development in 2005 which was followed by a National Strategy for Sustainable Development in 2006. In accordance, a Presidential Commission on Sustainable Development was also established, and the government took policy measures in the areas of Sustainable Development and SCP. After the 2008 global financial crisis, President Myung-Bak Lee announced a Low Carbon, Green Growth strategy as a new vision to guide the nation’s long-term development. About one year later, on 6 July 2009, Korea announced a 5-Year Plan for Green Growth to serve as a medium-term plan for implementing the National Strategy for

<Table 1> Fiscal Expenditure on Green Growth for 2009~2013
(trillion KRW, %)

| Key Category | Total | 2009 | 2010~1 | 2012~3 |
|---|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Total | 107.4 | 17.5 | 48.3 | 41.6 |
| Mitigation of climate change & energy | 56.9 | 8.6 | 29.2 | 19.2 |
| Creating new growth engines | 28.6 | 4.8 | 10.7 | 13.1 |
| Improving quality of life & strengthening the status of the country | 27.9 | 5.2 | 10.5 | 12.2 |

(Source: The Presidential Committee on Green Growth (PCGG) 2009b:22)

Green Growth over the period 2009-2013. According to the project, central government planned to spend a total of 107 trillion won (US\$83.3 billion), the equivalent of almost 2 percent of the Korean GDP per annum - a relatively high level by OECD standards - for the next five years (PCGG 2009b).

The 5-Year Plan outline a set of three strategies and ten policy directions. The three strategies comprise measures for addressing climate change and securing energy independence; the creation of new growth engines; and the improvement of the quality of life. The Presidential Committee on Green Growth, launched in 2009, is a fundamental institution to establish and implement Green Growth. On December 29, 2009, the Korean National Assembly adopted the Basic Law for Green Growth which provides the legal basis for Korea's Green Growth strategy (PCGG 2009a).

<Table 2> Green Growth Policy

| Main strategies | Policy directions |
|---|--|
| Mitigation of climate change & energy | Effective mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions |
| | Decrease energy dependence on oil and enhance energy sufficiency |
| | Support adaptation to climate change impacts |
| Creating new growth engines | Develop green technologies as future growth engines |
| | Greening of industry |
| | Develop cutting-edge industries |
| | Set up policy infrastructures for green growth |
| Improving quality of life and strengthening the status of the country | Green city and green transport |
| | <i>Green revolution in lifestyle</i> |
| | Enhance national status as a global leader in green growth |

(Source: PCGG 2009a:53)

Korean government believes that the country must continue to pursue greater economic growth and to improve on what has been achieved thus far. Korean government considers that in spite of increasing environmental pressure arising from economic growth, it is only through economic growth makes possible to reduce poverty and improve environmental management. Therefore, the challenge is not to limit economic growth but to convert it into an environmentally sustainable form.

Korean policy makers have sought to foster understanding and awareness of the objectives of the Green Growth strategy among civil society and to induce practice to support those objectives. In fact, there have been twelve Acts in relation to green issues in Korea that were enacted starting in the late 1970s and intensifying when Sustainable Development was emphasized in 2000s. Framework Act on Low Carbon Green Growth was added in 2010 due to the government drive toward Green Growth.

Beyond its policies at the national level, Korea is demonstrating engagement and leadership at the international level by boosting global efforts towards achieving a green economy. It is also playing a key role in promoting an East Asia Climate Partnership. However, many critics to Korea's Green Growth strategy have arisen domestically due to the government's sudden abandonment of Sustainable Development strategies and plans which included more consideration to social dimensions than the current Green Growth strategy.

In developed countries, as OECD (2001) mentions, the linkages between economic and social policies are relatively well established among the three pillars of Sustainable Development. However, in the case of Korea, the MB government within 2010-2011 emphasis on economic policies and their linkages with environmental policies has ignored the achievements of the past Sustainable Development process in the country. A government officer

at a press conference announced that there was no consideration of the social dimension within the Green Growth strategy, which had been an important category in the country's previous approach on Sustainable Development, but only economic and environment remain in Green Growth.

2. Policy and Implementation on ESC in Korea

Education for Sustainable Consumption (ESC) is a concept that has received a significant amount of attention as an important process for bolstering the transition towards a Low-Carbon, Sustainable Society. At the international level, the importance of ESC has been highlighted in the UN's Marrakech Process on SCP and under the UN's Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD 2005-14). UNESCO explains the importance of ESC in the mid-term report for DESD as:

ESC, a core theme of Education for Sustainable Development, is essential to train responsible citizens and consumers in this context: individuals need to be aware of their fundamental rights and freedoms, appropriately informed to participate actively in the public debate, oriented towards a conscientious participation in the markets. Hence, ESC has become a core component of Education for Sustainable Development and global citizenship and generates awareness of the interrelatedness of central Education for Sustainable Development issue (UNESCO 2009:50).

ESC, however, also affixes a further concept to the plethora of theories and ideas that have been incorporated into the all-inclusive framework of sustainability. ESC is a poignant concept though for its ability to bridge and incorporate three of the major approaches for sustainability, specifically SCP,

Education for Sustainable Development, and Sustainable Lifestyles. ESC has been identified as a means for integrating the human element into the wider - and often more technical - concepts of SCP by promoting active interventions in consumers' choices and behaviors. This process also encourages a deeper examination of how individuals (and society) choose to shape social and economic relationships.

It is necessary to emphasise ESC by providing support with professional materials as well as hands-on learning through school pilot schemes and green cultural lifestyle experiences. The main trends for expanding the delivery of Environment Education began in 2005 by Ministry of Environment's promulgation of the National Environment Master Plan and its goal and vision described as achieving a sustainable society with both healthy natural environment and livelihoods in the Korean peninsula for the 21st century. In 2006, the government developed the Master Plan of Environmental Education Development (2006-2015) which contains four categories of specified goals. Its vision was to achieve sustainable society through education and practice with the goals: to take a long-term vision of environmental education; a creative environmental education toward unpredictable conditions; environmental education as an innovative engine and; finally, as an international cooperative initiative.

In 2008, the Environmental Education Promotion Act was enacted by National Assembly; thus it became an obligation that the government must review the master plan every 5 years. The objectives of the Act were to set up requirements for the promotion of environmental education in order to activate it and to effectively contribute to the Sustainable Development of the nation and communities by finding a balance between human society and nature. In 2009, the Framework Act on Green Growth legislated local governments and regional education offices to consider the strategy for both

Environmental Education and Green Growth Education in the region. Green consumption educational programs have been developed that focus on providing information and raising awareness to encourage behavioural change in daily consumption patterns. The MB government advocated three main attempts to achieve Green Growth through education: these are to conduct capacity building of human resources and to improve the system for international cooperation as well as promoting citizens' awareness of the value and importance of Green Growth.

To compare with the previous Environment Education paradigm which simply focused on the protection of nature, Education for Green Growth has adopted the idea that economic development has no harm to environment when green technologies are mainstreamed as the growth engine. And it encourages students to be green future leaders who continue practice in daily life. For these reasons, central government, especially Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, have developed the conceptual framework of Education for Green Growth and identified the main strategies as the following: 1) Raising people's awareness on Green Growth - to understand that there is no conflict between environmental protection and economic growth and the importance of Green Growth toward a greener future; 2) Leading the practice of green lifestyle - to practice 'me first, right now' in daily life; 3) Preparing for the Green Growth future society - training for conducting of future human resources through vitalizing green technology; and, 4) Responding actively to global issues - i.e. climate change and participation as a leading nation.

According to citizens' attitude and awareness on environmental education from research conducted by Ministry of Environment (2009), most respondents answered that education is a useful tool to understand and solve environmental problems. Yet, 58.3% of respondents pointed out that the

environmental coursework and relevant information was insufficient. To promote successful environmental sustainability, they also pointed out the need for adaptable ‘experimental’ learning programs in schools. The research provided further information on the priority task for the government to promote ESC in school including: government’s active support and willingness to achieve Green Growth (85.8%), fostering environmental education in school (52.6%), active role of mass media (45.4%), and activation of civic organizations (15.5%).

III. Korean Governmental Strategies for Promotion ESC in 2010–2011

1. General understandings and strategies on promoting Sustainable Consumption

A primary goal of this research is to gain a clear understanding on the specific definitions for Sustainable Consumption that are understood by the main stakeholders working on ESC as a fundamental means for identifying opportunities to strengthen ESC implementation. The definitions of Sustainable Consumption given demonstrated a general understanding, especially most government officers showed an intermediate level of awareness by responding with very general ideas on green consumption. Some interviewees explained that they looked up the Basic Law on Sustainable Development before the interview. It was because: 1) the MB governmental strategy put much more attention on Green Growth than on Sustainable Development which had been endorsed and emphasized by the previous government administration until Green Growth was launched by the

current administration. Hence, the meanings of Green Growth and SD and their relationship with each other still not clearly defined; 2) in Korea, where concern with achieving the status of a developed country still exists, the concept of Sustainable Development which includes social dimensions as well as conservation of nature is a much broader and ideal target for practice in daily lives. Green consumption which narrowed implementation to economic and environmental dimensions provides a more practical and implementable target in Korea.

Slightly different responses were received from the three respondent groups. First, national government officers focused on Purchasing of Green Products, Saving Energy, and Recycling as ways for practicing Sustainable Consumption. They suggested Sustainable Consumption would be possible when current laws, i.e. Act on the Promotion of the Purchase of Environmentally-friendly Products and other related policies, are successful in spreading the idea of green consumption to governmental organizations as well as civil society. They replied the definition of Sustainable Consumption was influenced, improved by and fused with other country cases and various organizations' attempt to improve the interpretation of the definition. They explained that Korean government tends to adopt policies of Japan and European Union countries.

Local Authority officers, here the specific case is the capital city Seoul also explained green lifestyles based on Act on the Promotion of the Purchase of Environmentally-friendly Products, Seoul municipal ordinance, and the Framework Act on Low Carbon Green Growth (Declared 2010.4.14). Green Lifestyles implies reducing green-house gas emissions as well as energy and resource inputs and is to be aware of the seriousness of climate change and to minimize green house gas emissions by saving energy in daily lives. In the case of Seoul Metropolitan Government, on the basis of Act on

the Promotion of the Purchase of Environmentally-friendly Products, all officers are obligated to purchase environmentally-friendly products.

Practitioners in NGOs demonstrated much clearer understanding of Sustainable Development and Sustainable Consumption and provided more in depth explanations during interviews. They described sustainability as a new pattern of resource use that aimed to meet human needs while preserving the environment so that these needs could be met not only in the present, but also for generations to come. They emphasized the current problem of mass-consumption and modern lifestyles and it was not just a problem of consumption but of lifestyle patterns itself; therefore, alternative sustainable lifestyles are urgently needed. To do so, Green Consumer Network in Korea has proposed to work for green city consumers by attempting to solve environmental problems in the market system rather than escaping from the cities to establish radical alternative lifestyles in rural areas which only a limited number of people will ever be able to achieve in the modern world. Environmental issues must be solved in the present market system and fully depend on environmentally and ethically green consumption to achieve this. Both, Green Consumer Network in Korea and Consumers Korea interviewed have been considering global issues such as Sustainable Development since the late 1990s rather than just national-level consumer campaigns. They have contributed to broadening the Korean civil society and NGOs' world view.

The answers for the question "who are viewed as the main actors with responsibility for achieving Sustainable Development?" are diverse depending on interviewees' occupation. When the actors were categorized into 'National Government', 'Local Government', 'Citizens/Consumer', 'Industry/Business', 'NGOs/Civil Society', most governmental officers put 'National Government' as the most responsible one to systemize, especially, Green

Growth. In contrast, practitioners who have been implementing ESC in NGOs and civil organizations pointed out the importance of ‘Government’ and ‘Industry/Business’ in terms of budget and financial support and appropriate policy making for the better practice of civil society. It is noticeable that the Green Consumer Network mentioned that:

“As the Korean society achieved more democracy, citizens are able to become members of national assembly as well as local authority. And recently Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) became top priority in Korean business, many businesses practice CSR with NGOs. That is, the stable boundary between citizen and government, business/industry and consumers has been blurred. What remains in the end to achieve Sustainable Development is philosophy. And to lead Sustainable Development with its philosophy, civil society and NGO should be the highest responsible actor.” (Interviewed 11 Oct 2010)

As the above response shows, most of all interviewees generally emphasized the importance of not one actor but all. Some of them even criticized the unnecessary division of actors in this way under the current world when co-operation among all actors is now expected as the norm. They, therefore, mentioned the urgent need of a transformation of consciousness towards a sustainable society for real practice in daily living.

Another very interesting insight that became clear through the research with relevant ministries and government agencies is that they are utilizing different strategies to promote Sustainable Consumption depending on their own role and responsibility. Ministry of Environment enforced the Act on Obligational Purchase of Environmentally-friendly Products, especially across the governmental sector since 2005. The objective to expand green consumption by governmental sector through purchasing eco-products has

been mainstreamed and is perpetuated in success. It encouraged the promulgation of the Basic Plan on the Promotion of the Green Consumption which was eventually established on December 2010. Environmental Preservation Association, an affiliated organization of Ministry of Environment, mentioned they started two different green education strategies depending on the subject. One project is to provide school students 'Visiting Education' with travelling exhibitions promoting themes including green consumption/shopping and also green educational contents/materials which are still in high demand from most schools. The second project aims to encourage civil society awareness on Sustainable Consumption by offering eco-friendly free-gifts at every national event they organize.

Beyond central government agencies, there are efforts to promote Green Growth at the local level. Local governments in Korea are developing their respective five-year plans on Green Growth, which would translate the national plan into local implementation. Local authorities are willing to establish Green Growth projects to meet the needs and priorities of their constituencies through such plans. Seoul Metropolitan Government, as the best example, focuses on distribution and consumption of environmentally-friendly products as the main strategies for promoting Sustainable Consumption. They also autonomously published and distributed teaching materials to schools.

2. Practice and Implementation of ESC

Amongst national government agencies, the programs/projects being implemented by each relevant department to promote Sustainable Consumption and responsible consumer behaviour have only recently begun, and the interviewees replied that their departments do their best to integrate

Green Growth vision although its contents are still insufficiently detailed. There are few statistics on the performance of these initiatives because of their short history. Also, as the Director of Presidential Green Growth Committee replied, due to the characteristics of Sustainable Development and Sustainable Consumption, it is not easy to conduct quantified evaluation. Nonetheless, interviewees from each ministry, department, and committee replied they will try to evaluate the result of their project and capacity in the future.

The projects that Ministry of Environment carries out are adoption and dissemination of the Act on the Promotion of the Purchase of Environmentally-friendly Products to the governmental sector through the Act on Obligational Purchase of Environmentally-friendly Products and encouragement of voluntary purchase of green products to enterprises and individual consumers. It plans to promote the Basic Plan on the Promotion of the Green Consumption by the end of 2010. Korea Fair Trade Commission distributed the booklet “Green Life Guide Line” to local government and NGOs as one of the consumer education projects. It also runs a green lifestyle model house in Korea Consumer Agency. Especially, Korea Consumer Agency has achieved system improvement and consumer participation through program combination: research, education, testing, and cooperation with private organizations. Environmental Preservation Association successfully runs various Environment Education programs for children due to a high demand for Environment Education as well as availability of government budget.

The Seoul Metropolitan Office of Education raised several interesting projects. They have offered financial support to fifty school environmental groups for out-of-formal education programs. They also designated eight Environment Education model schools and initiated teachers trainings,

eco-trainings, experience programmes. Seoul Metropolitan Government also replied they target to expand environmentally-friendly products in distribution and consumption. In March 2009, Environmentally-friendly Product Manufacture Association and Emart, one of the biggest superstores in Korea made a partnership agreement for the promotion of green products. Since August 2010, there is special sale space designated for green products in Emart, and the officers from the Association explain about the green products directly to the consumers. Many consumers self-evaluated that their awareness on green products has increased, according to Deputy Director of Environmental Policy Division in Seoul Metropolitan Government. The role of Seoul Metropolitan Government is to offer administrative supporting for the agreement. They also opened the Eco-mileage webpage to encourage households to save energy, water, and gas since 2009 and they achieved 320,000 household participants in the Eco-mileage program among 3,230,000 household in Seoul. This program offers incentives i.e. environmentally-friendly product coupons and planting trees when households reach to save more than 10% of their average usage.

Programs and projects by NGOs are successful in terms of promoting Sustainable Consumption and raising consumer awareness. They have expanded at the local level and through the support of various citizen groups. For example, Green Citizens' Committee Seoul explained a project to support the creation of local communities appropriate for Seoul citizens working against global environmental problems and to revitalise local economies against globalisation. In comparison to the government, NGOs put more attention to general citizens' education and local-based, action-oriented projects. Green Consumer Network in Korea emphasized Sustainable Consumption in all of their education programs and projects, i.e. 'Eco-Creative Centre' for students and 'Green Academy' for citizens.

Consumer Korea run ‘Greening Super’ project which evaluates supermarkets’ efforts on environmentally-friendly product sales and conducts campaigns for purchasing green products which show food-miles and carbon footprint. Green Start Network answered a program educating citizens to be Green Leaders and to become local leaders for green society and practice in daily lives.

3. Relationship between government and civil society

The understanding of the relationship between the government and NGOs/civil society on promoting Sustainable Consumption is varied, and the differences of opinion are substantial depending on who is targeted. Most of interviewees representing government insisted on their positive relationship with NGOs and civil society; whereas NGOs argued that the relationship has worsened under the current Korean government.

The opinions from the national government include those of officers in several agencies. Ministry of Environment showed a highly positive evaluation for the partnerships they have with NGOs. Ministry of Environment proved that they have received much help from NGOs: ideas, know-how, network etc. Ministry of Knowledge Economy collaborated with civil society organisations and NGOs through the energy saving project. They organized the Green Energy Family Network to promote green consumption, and it supports project investment for local NGOs’ activities for the promotion of green consumption culture. Korea Fair Trade Commission explained their financial support for selected NGOs rather than commissioning projects as they used to do. They are collaborating specifically on green product comparison projects with four different consumer organisations. Other ministries also insisted they maintain close

partnerships with NGOs and civil organisations offering voluntary education programs.

In fact, engaging the private sector and civil society as stakeholders or partners is a fundamental condition to achieving the Green Growth vision. In order to accomplish this, as many interviewees mentioned, the current government launched several pan-national action networks such as Ministry of Environment's Green Start Network, Ministry of Gender Equality and Family's We-green, Ministry of Knowledge Economy's Green Energy Family Network, Ministry of Public Administration and Security's Green New-town. Instead of partnerships with existing NGOs, the government established its own civil society organizations to practice Sustainable Consumption as a part of Green Growth strategies. These organizations have been criticized as being stifled with little autonomy.

Civil society organisations in Korea have been very active participants in the debate on Sustainable Development by voicing their concerns and contributing to implementation of Sustainable Development concepts. This engagement was possible under the Presidential Commission on Sustainable Development established in 2000; however, since Presidential Committee on Green Growth launched, Green Citizens Committee Seoul is the only remaining agency that was part of Presidential Commission on Sustainable Development and acts to take part in the democratic governance process. Green Citizens Committee Seoul is very special in terms of their performance. It actually runs as cooperative governance initiative among three main stakeholder groups: Seoul Metropolitan Government, the Korea Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and NGOs; and it supports the project for Sustainable Consumption.

Interviewees from NGOs believed that Sustainable Consumption has been and will remain an important subject for any government now and in the

future. However, the MB government is lacking in terms of communication and mutual understanding. Partnerships under the current government are only for contract implementation and are void of negotiation or reflection of the contractor.

4. Overall Assessment of Current Approach to Promoting ESC

In general, government officers evaluated the current projects/programs on ESC as an overall success. Although, they also pointed out that due to the special character of Sustainable Development which includes not only purchasing eco-products but also changes to lifestyle in more sustainable ways, the overall achievements of such endeavours can be difficult to assess quantitatively. In contrast, NGOs argued that they face a shortage of financial and systematic support in order to carry out ESC programs and projects.

National government officers mostly pointed to the high motivation of the current government on Green Growth as the most important success factor for the implementation of ESC. It was possible to receive budget allocation from the National Assembly and to cooperate with private organizations including NGOs due to governmental willingness towards Green Growth. There are still high demands for information and materials for green education thanks to government commitment, but further support is still needed. These officers fully believe that current national government's Green Growth strategy has been effective in providing more green education supply.

Most of respondents from government explain that they have attempted to follow up on the activities initiated by other governmental agencies on Sustainable Consumption; nonetheless, different interests toward Green

Growth crossing diverse governmental departments are mentioned as one of the constraints. If Green Growth related projects which were planned under the different ministries were integrated in ways that focused policy direction and provision of financial support, they could be implemented in more effective manners. They suggested the urgent need of clarifying the main organizations for effective policy execution and opinion collection.

The inter-agency process is supposed to be led by the Presidential Committee on Green Growth and it is an innovative approach to planning that seeks better coordination of policy-making among ministries so that investment decisions are guided by multi-sectoral processes. However, its fundamental role as the focal point of the Green Growth is not fully practiced when compared with the function Presidential Commission on Sustainable Development head performed in the previous role. The innovative approach to planning better coordination of policy-making and governance was already practiced and established in a 10-Year plan by the Presidential Commission on Sustainable Development. Unfortunately, the efforts of the Presidential Commission on Sustainable Development have been ignored by the MB government, while the launch of the new Presidential Committee on Green Growth replaced the previous Presidential Commission on Sustainable Development, which were established based on bottom-up process, is not fully welcomed by the majority of NGOs.

Strong willingness on Green Growth by the national government mismatches with NGOs and local government approach on Sustainable Consumption, and what has made the situation worse is the lack of communication to support mutual understanding, as acknowledged by interviewees from NGOs and Green Citizens' Committee Seoul. The lack of collaboration between government and NGOs must be overcome. Indeed, NGOs have developed a diversity of pilot projects for Sustainable

Consumption and Education for Sustainable Development. The results of the projects could be used as experimental pilot projects and tested prior to national implementation of ESC under Green Growth vision for the effective implementation of ESC; however, under the new Green Growth vision there has been eagerness to create brand new concepts, visions, and practices as a key contribution of the MB government.

Local government and NGOs said their capacity in terms of human resources and financial supports for ESC are extremely limited. Representatives of NGOs argued that expanding Sustainable Consumption is uneasy especially under current national administration which has no philosophy or experience in “reflexive” governance for a sustainable society. The approach to Green Growth should include the concept of Sustainable Development which contains the pursuit of citizen’s well-being rather than conventional approaches to green consumption. In addition, education itself needs to have continuity rather than one-off events and fragmented campaigns. A lack of a long term blueprint for ESC has also been a major barrier to good implementation.

IV. Assessment of Capacities and Leverage Points for Effective ESC Implementation

An assessment of the important capacities and leverage points for the effective implementation of ESC was conducted based on the information collected during this case study. The framework for this assessment was adapted from the capacity assessment framework that formulates step two of the United Nations Development Programme’s (UNDP) capacity development

approach.³⁾ The levers of change will provide the main framework for analysis in this work and are identified by UNDP as 1) institutional arrangements, 2) leadership, 3) knowledge, and 4) accountability (see the table below for additional criteria on each leverage point) (UNDP 2010).

<Table 3> Components of Capacity Assessment Framework: Capacity Development Core Issues & Responses

| Institutional Arrangements | Leadership | Knowledge | Accountability |
|--|--|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Streamlined processes • Clear definition of roles and responsibilities • Merit-based appraisal mechanism • Coordination mechanism | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly formulated vision • Communication standards • Management tools • Outreach mechanism | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research supply and demand linkage mechanism • Brain gain and retention strategies • Knowledge sharing tools and mechanism | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit systems and practice standards • Participatory planning mechanism • Stakeholder feedback mechanism |

(Source: UNDP 2010)

First of all, institutional Arrangements provide leverage points that are relevant across most aspects of public sector management, governance and development activities as it addresses the policies and procedures that are in place to functionalise political mandates and development objectives. Inefficiencies in institutional arrangements are often identified during

3) The overall approach developed by UNDP for their development projects is more extensive than what was used for structuring the assessment in this work. The methodology applied for the capacity assessment by UNDP includes three distinct dimensions of investigation: 1) points of entry (enabling environment, the organisational, and the individual), 2) core issues or levers of change, and 3) functional and technical capacity (UNDP 2008).

capacity assessments due to the fact that optimal procedural structures in terms of efficiency and impact are often unacknowledged especially as new procedures and programmes are developed without incorporation or cohesion with previously existing arrangements. This is especially common when intra-ministerial and multi-agency work is examined (UNDP 2008).

The findings suggest that in Korea there has actually been a decrease in the capacities for institutional arrangements since the promotion of the country's Green Growth strategy and the subsequent dissolution of the previous structures which had been part of the governance structure under Presidential Commission on Sustainable Development. The new Green Growth strategy does bring a significant scoring in regards to a clearly formulated vision under the leadership lever, but in terms of institutional arrangement both roles and responsibilities have become more unclear and the streamlining of the new strategy has not yet to achieve the results of the previous initiative. At the same time, it can be noted that Korea's efforts to streamline the wider concepts of SCP and green market promotion have overall been quite successful, but this process has yet to systematically integrate a focus on the consumer and the promotion of sustainability in lifestyle choices.

Part of the challenge for the Korean government in regards to promoting ESC is effectively reframing within the national vision on Green Growth. The improvement of coordination mechanisms not just for ESC, but rather for framing the wider Sustainable Development agendas and activities, could greatly help to identify those areas where educational activities are needed and where they can be coupled with other policy instruments including economic incentives, regulations, information provision and cooperative agreements to increase dissemination of the concepts, policies and desired learning outcomes. In general, the coordination of educational instruments

into other Sustainable Development and SCP areas is an important process to heighten the capacity of institutional arrangements.

Secondly, leadership as a lever of change has different natures depending on if addressing individual or organisational levels. Effective leadership can extend beyond an individual-to-individual level though and become an organisational capacity that helps to advance a vision-driven agenda and strategic planning. Capacities for leadership can be enhanced by strengthening organisational abilities in vision setting, systems thinking, risk assessment and management and through establishing collective management systems that encourage active and experiential learning (UNDP 2008; UNDP 2010).

The Plan for Green Growth provides a clearly formulated vision for Korea's development and serves as good foundation from which to strengthen its leadership. However, it was also found that there are limitations in regards to communication standards, management tools and outreach mechanisms for Green Growth vision generally and for ESC specifically which has limited clear understanding of this agenda and the roles/responsibilities of various government divisions. Capacity building efforts to strengthen the other subcomponents of this lever could better support the dissemination of the green growth vision and ensure its proper management.

At an organisational level, knowledge development is about improving expertise and organisational learning strategies. Knowledge capacity can be strengthened through professional training, experience sharing and knowledge management systems in the organisations. At a social level, knowledge capacity is often best addressed through reforming formal education systems to ensure that younger generations will have the skills and know-how to deal with current and emerging challenges. The link

between social and organisational levels can be developed through ensuring that higher education is corresponding to desired skills and technical competencies desired by the professional sector (UNDP 2008; UNDP 2010).

Korea has initiated several new projects and agencies for knowledge generation and dissemination on Green Growth. There is high potential for significant improvements under the knowledge lever over the next few years, but as of yet it was not possible to identify clear impacts from these new initiatives. Addressing knowledge sharing tools, it is important to distinguish two aspects. The first aspect is on supporting decision and policy making processes with the best information and research available, and overall Korea has a good system for this. The second aspect is in regards to public awareness raising, especially on sustainable consumption practices and lifestyle/behavioural responses. This does occur at the simplest level in terms of promoting a single sustainable consumption choice or promoting an energy efficient product over another less efficient one. But, efforts could be taken by the government to greatly strengthen this capacity through the provision of knowledge and tools for people to understand how lifestyle patterns can be adapted to accommodate new changes to support more sustainable societies.

Accountability is an important lever of change within the organisational sector as it provides oversight, monitoring and evaluation to ensure that procedures and programmes are achieving their desired objectives, and when this is not the case it provides a mechanism to identify short-comings and overcoming obstacles. Furthermore, systems can also be established to provide for public accountability and transparency to ensure that governments are reaching the needs of their citizens which can lead to an additional benefit of encouraging mutual engagement in development activities. Accountability capacities can be improved through strengthening

mechanisms for individuals to voice opinions (especially through civic literacy and education programmes), open access to information, ensuring robust monitoring and evaluation systems including both internal and external/independent systems (UNDP 2008; 2010).

Finally, the accountability lever was viewed as having the lowest level of current capacity in Korea out of the four levers. This leverage point is a complex capacity area as it includes a system's built in mechanisms for auditing, monitoring and evaluating; along with including aspects of multi-stakeholder participation. In regards to SCP and ESC, there is a lack of holistic planning and a limited basis for decision making. Projects are often structured around quantifiable targets, such as visible reductions in energy usage or waste production, and almost no concern is given to the issue of behavioural change. The lack of clear strategies for affecting this type of deeper change is a major barrier in this situation as policy makers are unsure how to respond to this objective of SCP and ESC. A further barrier is the lack of effective ways to measure/quantify this type of behaviour change which dissuades government officers from working in an area for which they cannot demonstrate the impacts of their efforts.

V. Recommendations for improving the practice of ESC

It was recognized that it is necessary to increase the capacity of governments to plan and implement effective ESC, and several recommendations were formulated from each department on the details to best achieve this. Ministry of Environment has the main status as government agency working towards SC; however, as the officer in Ministry of Environment explained, it has a severe shortage of human

resources - only three persons at the moment addressing issues of Sustainable Consumption specifically. It needs to have a special team in charge of Sustainable Consumption and ESC while also requiring support from NGOs to implement Green Growth vision in more effective ways. Human capacity building for government officers to promote ESC is urgently recommended.

One of the NGOs' suggested the development of governance structures which support lateral partnerships and cooperation to encourage public participation and continuity; in contrast to the current top-down governance and one-off activities run by the national government. NGOs expect to strengthen linkages between national policies and local level implementation and also between top-town and bottom-up approaches. Civil society could play an important role as a proactive partner of the government in promoting the Green Growth paradigm. In particular, NGOs and consumer organizations could play a leading role in moving citizens and consumers towards eco-efficiency and sustainable consumption patterns because a change in the consumption patterns and lifestyles of consumers can be effectively promoted only when the initiatives come from the citizens and consumers themselves. Taking leadership in introducing new regulations and policies for Green Growth and Sustainable Development, it is important to secure the acceptance of the people.

The capacity assessment on the leverage points for ESC implementation in Korea draw out five important actions that could lead to a systems strengthening for ESC implementation along with greater support and integration for wider aspects included in the country's Green Growth vision. These five activities are: 1) expanding roles and responsibilities for ESC beyond national governments; 2) applying multiple policy mechanisms and inter-ministerial/inter-agency approaches; 3) defining policy priorities and

target areas for Sustainable Consumption; 4) addressing ESC as a thematic approach to Education for Sustainable Development and SCP; 4) improving accountability as a means to strengthen the overall system. At the level of a systems analysis, some of these recommendations may extend beyond the focus on ESC and could also be applied to others policies areas relevant to Sustainable Development, SCP, and Green Growth.

Addressing roles and responsibilities for promoting Sustainable Consumption is an important aspect of ESC, and generally it is found that governments take on an overburden of the responsibility to affect changes at the level of socio-cultural values and traditions. The government should have a coordinating role in ensuring the cooperation and participation of multi-stakeholders, but it may be important to consider how the overall roles and responsibilities can be better shared across the multiplicity of actors. There are numerous actors who can contribute to the effective implementation of ESC, and in most cases rather than competing with one another these actors' various expertises help to strengthen the overall impact of these initiatives. Three specific areas where this type of role sharing can be better enhanced is through multi-stakeholder networking for establishing a powerful cooperative dynamic; public participation in the vision forming and planning processes on Green Growth and Sustainable Consumption for enhanced public ownership and buy-in; and through an enhanced relationship between the national government and local government in regards to the promotion of Sustainable Consumption for better practical implementation of projects that respond directly to local contexts and citizens' needs.

Multiple policy mechanisms and an Inter-Ministerial approach help to provide a holistic and integrative strategy that can promote sustainable consumption by simultaneously addressing the physical infrastructures for

sustainable consumption, encouraging individual practice, influencing socio-cultural values and traditions that frame current lifestyles, and improving political systems and frameworks. The outline of a cooperative approach can be imagined where relevant ministries take efforts in areas of industry and infrastructure to ensure the availability of greener consumption options. At the same time, economic and finance ministries establish systems to reward consumers for practicing sustainable consumption such as eco-points or tax rebates, while environmental and educational ministries can work to engage the public and promote these new initiatives. Finally, as a whole the government should work to mainstream these practices across public agencies and also to encourage wider participation of multi-stakeholders which can be done through the respective coordination agencies each government already has.

Defining clear policy priorities and target areas for Sustainable Consumption is important because it was found that the current confusion over what more-sustainable consumption means continues to hinder effective policy formation. General definitions of Sustainable Consumption are understood by government officials, however clear principles for Sustainable Consumption and primary target areas for policy formation are not well identified. Furthermore, though government officials understand that Sustainable Consumption should reduce the environmental impacts of modern consumption patterns through energy efficiency and resource savings, there is no substantive identification of behaviours that need to be influenced to encourage this transition. Clear identification of the important values that influence these behaviours and support consumers' proactive participation in sustainable consumption would provide a better understanding of the types of socio-cultural transition ESC tries to promote, such as the values for environmental citizenship identified in Choi and

Didham (2009): 1) Pro-environmental values - a personal belief that protecting the environment is important; 2) Individual Empowerment - that each person can be a powerful agent of change; 3) Responsibility - a sense of environmental citizenship and duty; 4) Simple actions - recognition that little steps can lead to big impacts; 5) Future Vision - an inspired view of achieving a sustainable society.

VI. Conclusion

The results of this study have provided an important case study of the institutional structure and governmental capacities in Korea for initiating ESC programmes and integrating these efforts into the wider policies and structures for sustainable development, especially Education for Sustainable Development and SCP. The case study demonstrated strong foundations for the promotion of Sustainable Consumption by the Korean government, although it also became apparent that there are many opportunities to strengthen ESC implementation and better integrate policies and programmes to maximise impact.

The need for establishing a clear vision of Sustainable Consumption to clarify the overall social goals is urgently needed. The lack of a clear vision for the government's approach to Sustainable Consumption and ESC under the Plan for Green Growth has resulted in limited coordination of policy efforts between ministries and also limited defining of the roles of various ministries in promoting sustainable consumption. This includes a severe shortage of human resources dedicated to efforts on ESC. Inter-governmental coordination on sustainable consumption can greatly increase policy effectiveness. As different government agencies have different

capacities and strategic focuses, inter-governmental coordination provides an effective means to establish a holistic approach and application of a diverse range of policy tools.

When the Korean government institutionalised Green Growth in 2009, several of the existing institutional arrangements for Sustainable Development were lost. In 2008, the institutional arrangements for ESC would have received a higher capacity assessment ranking than they do today. Korea had actively encouraged a strong participatory planning mechanism as part of its Presidential Commission on Sustainable Development and its subsequent local groups. When the Presidential Commission on Sustainable Development was replaced with the Presidential Committee on Green Growth, this participatory planning mechanism was largely disbanded. The government's approach to ESC is further challenged by a lack of multi-stakeholder dialogue and cooperation in this area. Partnerships between multi-stakeholders should be encouraged for enabling and coordinating the promotion of Sustainable Consumption and Lifestyles. Partnerships between government - civil society - business - academia are especially important. Above all, the process should directly engage citizen participation in defining the overall vision to increase ownership and empowerment.

In many cases, it is civil society that pressures government and the private sector to improve the quality of life and of the environment. Increasing demand for improved quality of the environment and life is the basis for the environmental market and private sector innovations. When there has been development on Sustainable Consumption in civil society, it is better for government to integrate with these approaches rather than to create their own new policies and strategies. Korea should further promote a process of broad-based dialogue and consultation with a cross-section of

all stakeholders, especially civil organisations which have developed ESC for last decade in order to generate public support that could prove to be essential for the success of Green Growth.

It is important to keep in mind that the expectation of this paper was not to find existing systems for ESC implementation that were overflowing with capacity, but rather it was to be able to identify those areas that are ripe for capacity building and can lead to substantial improvements across the entire system when reviewing the assessment of the current capacities the governments have for implementing ESC. Furthermore it must be acknowledged that ESC in Korea still remains a very young and even novel topic that does not have substantial policy mandates to ensure its implementation. One of main objectives of the paper, along with identifying areas for capacity building to strengthen ESC, is to demonstrate how ESC can provide a means to better link and coordinate the existing capacity strengths Korea has in regards to SCP and Education for Sustainable Development. In this way, strengthening capacity for ESC may not always require establishing new capacities but rather finding means to integrate ESC into existing practices and frameworks. Where this is possible, the goal is not solely about strengthening ESC implementation but rather to demonstrate how ESC can be a crucial link in wider sustainable development policies especially when we consider the importance of citizen involvement in the long-term achievement of a low-carbon, sustainable society.

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Appendix

| N=15 | Personal Details | | Interview date |
|-------------------------|--|------------------------|----------------|
| | Organization (Division) | Position | |
| Central Gov't (N=9) | Ministry of Environment (Green Technology & Economy Division) | Director | 12 Oct |
| | Environmental Preservation Association (Affiliated Organization of Ministry of Environment, Public Information & Planning Environmental Education) | Chief Instructor | 18 Oct |
| | Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (National Curriculum Planning Division) | Educational Supervisor | 25 Oct |
| | Ministry of Knowledge Economy (Energy Resource Division) | Director General | 25 Oct |
| | Korea Fair Trade Commission (Consumer Policy Division) | Deputy Director | 17 Nov |
| | Presidential Green Growth Committee (Green Life & Sustainable Development Team) | Director | 14 Oct |
| | Presidential Green Growth Committee (Climate Change Policy) | Director General | 14 Oct |
| | Korea Consumer Agency (Policy Development Team) | Research Fellow | 18 Oct |
| | Korea Consumer Agency (Consumer Policy Research Office) | Senior Researcher | 18 Oct |
| Local Authorities (N=3) | Seoul Metropolitan Government (Environmental Policy Division) | Deputy Director | 27 Oct |
| | Green Citizens' Committee Seoul | Director General | 22 Oct |
| | Seoul Metropolitan Office of Education (Science and Gifted Education Division) | Senior Supervisor | 25 Oct |
| NGOs (N=3) | Green Consumers' Networks in Korea | Director General | 11 Oct |
| | Consumers Korea | Seoul Director | 5 Nov |
| | Green Start Network | Secretary General | 10 Nov |