Sustainable Environment Research Workshop

25th September 2013

Socio-economics:
A NESC Perspective

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A NESC Perspective- drawing on:

1. NESC Response to the *Framework for Sustainable Development* (Feb 2012)

2. NESC Secretariat report: *Ireland and the Climate Change Challenge: Connecting 'How Much' with 'How To'* (December 2012)

3. Ongoing NESC work on sustainable development and greening the economy

Encompassing Strategy:
correct, but contains potential pitfalls

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1. A suite of 'Strategies' offers limited assurance: depends on policies & institutions

2. Can imply: all synergies, not trade-offs

3. Can invoke general/global view on relation between economy, society, environment

4. Can make 'implementation' sound vague

5. Can gloss over need for big change in direction in some key areas

6. Can engender scepticism re 'strategy' & policy

7. A number of revisions could reduce these risks

8. The FSDI is touching on unresolved issues in Irish admin, democracy & society

Ways of navigating these pitfalls

1. Explore relationship between 3 dimensions of sustainable development *in Irish context*

2. Explore and articulate an *Irish vision* of sustainable development

3. Delve into different policy approaches – good, bad & indifferent - & roles of actors

4. Explore the policy & 'implementation' issues in some detail – beyond the call for 'integration', facing unresolved issues

The power of *description* to…

- Make the vision more Irish & motivational
- Undercut scepticism -shows that large parts of policy work (for the environment & for firms & sectors)
- Make 'partnership' real by showing how stakeholders are already involved in certain areas
- Shrink the 'implementation' elephant:
  - Various problems need different methods of decision, implementation & stakeholder engagement
  - Less reliance on the power of ex ante 'assessment'
  - Less reliance on generic call for 'integration'
  - Pointing towards the unresolved process & devolution issues

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Climate Change:
Connecting 'How Much' with 'How To'

Reframe: because UN/EU, potential of price, trading & existing tech, cognitive issues

Key ideas: a loop not a line, focus on 'how to', in a governance system that links front-line problem solving with high-level review

A three track approach:

1. ***Strategic:*** Ireland's stance, institutional design, 'green growth' & 5 building blocks

2. ***Explore & experiment:*** 6 projects

3. ***Design & implement:*** eg. Efficiency, agriculture..

Ongoing Work:
exploring the 'integration' challenge

Explore policy & institutional innovations in:

1. *Action Plan for Jobs (2011-13)*

2. *Delivering Our Green Potential (2012)*

3. *Green Economy Group (2012)*

The role of data in policy & implementation: an exploratory study of its use and value

Tentative implications for design of EPA research strategy in socio-economic areas

1. **Policy relevant**, but this can be empirical, analytical or deliberative

2. More focus on **policy, policy processes & institutions**

3. A focus on areas where Ireland can make a **distinctive contribution**

4. **Realistic view** on knowledge, prediction, *ex ante* assessment, behavioural dimension and 'evidence-based policy'