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UN-supported study reports promising gains towards low-carbon economy



Green Economy

21 April 2010 – A new United Nations-supported study released today shows that countries forged ahead with low-carbon growth economic strategies in the first quarter of this year despite the uncertainty surrounding international climate negotiations.

The annual Climate Competitiveness Index (CCI), produced by the independent non-profit institute AccountAbility in partnership with the UN Environment Programme ([UNEP](#)) investigated “climate accountability” to validate if a country’s climate strategy is clear, ambitious and supported by stakeholders and “climate performance” to consider each country’s capabilities and track record on delivering its strategy.

The Index, released at this year’s Business for the Environment Summit in Seoul, analyzed 95 countries responsible for 97 per cent of global economic activity and 96 per cent of global carbon emissions.

It concludes that despite gaps in performance and accountability, 46 per cent of countries demonstrated some improvement in climate accountability since the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change ([UNFCCC](#)) conference in Copenhagen in December last year.

Thirty-two countries made significant improvements, with Germany, China and the Republic of Korea being the outstanding examples. India, Indonesia, Kenya, Mexico, the Philippines and Rwanda also enhanced their climate accountability.

"This report comes as a breath of fresh air," **said** Alex MacGillivray, Managing Director at AccountAbility. "The CCI shows that countries at all levels of development can develop political leadership, stronger institutions and engaging with stakeholders to deliver climate competitiveness.

"Climate competitiveness is no longer rhetoric. It is a real, massive and dynamic economic frontier. This latest analysis proves that governments are seizing opportunities for green growth and making significant strides to tackle the climate crisis," he added.

Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Japan and France show the most consistent progress on combining accountability and performance. Switzerland and Austria are strong on performance, while the United Kingdom and United States are strong on accountability.

The Republic of Korea, Hong Kong and Malaysia are developing good strategies and Brazil, South Africa, India and China are progressing towards climate competitiveness.

The CCI predicts that the global market for low carbon products and services will be in excess of \$2 trillion by 2020. However, to secure this market, countries need ambitious climate competitiveness strategies, as well as the institutional infrastructure to build markets and convince investors, it notes.

It concludes that business must play a proactive role in promoting climate competitiveness. Countries that perform well on the CCI have a critical mass of firms managing, reporting on and reducing their emissions, while aggressively growing portfolios of low carbon products and services.

In a related development, UNEP released a new publication to help companies understand how they can be part of the transition to low-carbon, resource-efficient green economy.

The agency said biodiversity is a building block for the natural system on which much of the world's wealth depends directly or indirectly, yet too few in business realize the extent of the risks and potential rewards of managing their impact on this key nature-based asset.

The publication, previewed at the summit in Seoul, entitled *Are you a green leader? Business and biodiversity: making the case for a lasting solution*, examines a broad spectrum of business, including mining, energy, agrifoods, fisheries and aquaculture, construction, forestry, tourism, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, fashion and finance.

"Many sectors rely on raw materials such as timber, fish, cotton, crops and clean water, or work with supplies and suppliers throughout the life-cycle of production

processes," UNEP said in a statement. "But many do not realize how threatened those supplies are, and fail to include this in their calculations and business plans."

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