

The 'Green Economy' in South Africa's Cape Floristic Region

Daniel Basubas¹, Tony Binns¹, Etienne Nel¹ and David Bek²

¹Department of Geography, University of Otago, ²Centre for Business in Society, Coventry University



Context

- The 'Green Economy' is a development pathway that strives to tackle poverty, inequality and reduce carbon emissions (Swilling *et al.*, 2016)
- South Africa has made commitments to transition to a green economy, though their efforts often do not translate to success on the ground (Bek *et al.*, 2017)
- Much of the green economy research focuses on quantitative measures (e.g. number of jobs created, improving research efficiency, reducing waste and pollution), whereas there has been little attention to the qualitative measurements of green economy success (e.g. social outcomes, knowledge sharing)
- Objective: The purpose of this research is to understand how the green economy plays out in a country that faces severe developmental challenges

Methodology

- Interview key informants (e.g. local government officials, leaders of local institutions and NGOs, officials at Partnership for Action on Green Economy (PAGE) and SWITCH Africa Green)
- Hold focus groups with key informants
- Relate findings to academic and grey literature

Possible Findings

- Government, international agencies, and NGOs have different interpretations of the green economy
- Low-wage job creation and immediate poverty relief drives the green economy conversation
- There are few efforts to reconcile the green economy with the country's reliance on minerals and resource extraction

National and local government focus:

- Green technology, investments and programs
- Green job creation
- Strong policy framework
- Economic growth is prioritized over human development

International agencies' (PAGE, SWITCH Africa Green) focus:

- Capacity-building and knowledge sharing
- Collaboration between policymakers and international stakeholders
- 'Greening' economic sectors and trade

Local institutions and NGOs' focus:

- Capitalize on 'green' market opportunities and value chains
- Information and skills programs for impoverished communities
- Research and development

Significance of research

- To provide context for an inclusive green economy transition in a country whose economy largely excludes the poor black majority
- To inform green economy decision-making and policies