

HOW CAN SOUTH AFRICA'S GREEN ECONOMY PROJECTS WORK BETTER FOR THE POOR?

HSRC seminar and roundtable, 31 May 2017

British Academy Newton Mobility Grant Project

Dr Amber Huff, Institute of Development Studies/ESRC Steps Centre
Dr Andreas Scheba, Economic Performance and Development, HSRC



British Academy Newton Mobility Grant

- **Newton Mobility Grants provide support...**
 - establish and develop collaboration with UK researchers around a specific jointly defined research project
 - one year awards to initiate new collaborative partnerships
 - strengthen the research capacity/capability
 - contribute to promoting economic development and social welfare in the country
 - initiate the development of longer-term links
- **Grant focuses on covering**
 - mobility costs (exchange visits, travel, maintenance)
 - training of early-career scholars
 - organisation of workshops and seminars

Dr Amber Huff

- Research Fellow at the Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex
- Convenor of Masters course “Poverty and development”
- Member of the IDS Resource Politics Research Cluster
- Member of the ESRC STEPS Centre
- Convenor of STEPS Resource Politics & Environmental Research Theme
- www.steps-centre.org
- www.ids.ac.uk

British Academy Newton Mobility Grant

- **Addressing South Africa's sustainable development paradox**
 - Develop conceptual framework to study green economy initiatives in South Africa
 - Identify combination of innovative social science methods to examine project processes and SD outcomes
 - Strengthen capacity to engage in sustainability research and influence policy/public debates to improve **equity and poverty reduction outcomes of green economy initiatives**
 - Training, public seminar, roundtable, workshops, collaborative writing
 - Involving young researchers within HSRC and build networks with other stakeholders

Training-Workshop, 30 May 2017



South African Green Fund

- Department of Environmental Affairs, administered by Development Bank of Southern Africa
- “objective is to lay the basis for South African economy to make transition to a low carbon, resource efficient and climate resilient development path delivering high impact economic, environmental and social benefits” (GF website)
- “aims to provide catalytic finance to facilitate investment in green initiatives that will support South Africa’s transition towards a green economy” (GF website)

South African Green Fund

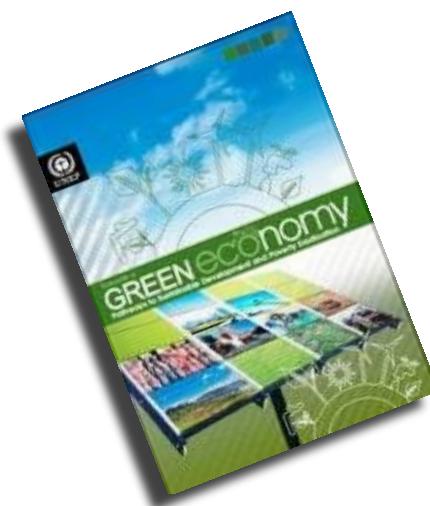
- Investment projects across 3 sectors: green cities and towns, low carbon economy, environmental and natural resource management
- Public finance for **national demonstration projects**
- **Green Grid Beema Bamboo project**
 - R 161 million (R97 non-recoverable grant, R 64 recoverable grant + 20% equity, R21 own funding)
 - case study reflecting green economy initiative in natural resource management in South Africa
 - emerging boom around bamboo and green economy in Africa
 - big knowledge gap in literature
 - previous research engagement with bamboo in South Africa

Green Grid Beema Bamboo

- 500 hectares bamboo plantation in KZN, tissue culture laboratory, nursery, beema bamboo as feedstock for power plant (gasification technology) to produce bioenergy
- demonstrate the environmental and financial benefits of cultivation Beema Bamboo for bioenergy
- implementation of the process on a larger scale at suitable locations in South Africa
- sustainable development ‘promises’:
 - green electricity from renewable resources, climate change mitigation, carbon sequestration benefits (200 tCO₂/ha/year), Eskom co-firing, mining and wasteland rehabilitation,
 - poverty reduction by creating 370 full time jobs
 - localisation, skills and technology development and transfer
 - pulp and paper industry partnerships
 - create local business opportunities

Green economy framing

- „improved human well-being and social equity, while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities“ (UNEP, 2011)
- „low carbon, resource efficient and socially inclusive“ (UNEP, 2011)
- „Green growth does not replace sustainable development, but is a means to achieve it “ (OECD, 2013)



Top-down, green economy intervention

- Changing resource extraction and consumption within ‘inclusive growth’ development paradigm
 - reduce and replace non-renewables with renewable resources
 - minimise pollution, waste, risks, damages
 - enhance efficiency, create new industries around circular economy
 - protect and enhance biodiversity and ecosystem services.

Technological solution to sustainable development challenge

- Using new technology and natural resource (bamboo) to generate positive economic, social and environmental outcomes
- Through technology bamboo changes from “poor man’s timber” to “miracle crop”, “wonder plant” and “green gold”
- Africa’s untapped potential and “new economic force [that] is generating income, creating jobs and protecting the environment” (UN, 2016:22)
- “Bamboo ticks many of the ‘green development’ boxes, offering a renewable resource that can help to restore degraded landscapes, provide sustainable bio-fuel, combat climate change, or provide new income streams for rural and peri-urban economies” (INBAR, 2016:3).

Bamboo:

- The world's strongest and fastest growing grass
- More than 1662 species representing 121 genera
- Rhizomes produce new shoots/culms every year = annual harvesting (30%) with 60% permanent canopy
- Harvesting can begin from 3 – 7 years after planting (depending on species)
- Grows on degraded lands (poor soils) with less inputs and prone to few diseases
- Drought resistant
- Ecosystem services provider: soil rehabilitation, prevention of soil erosion, control slope stability, agroforestry, water purification and carbon sequestration

Commercialisation of bamboo

- Resource that has been transformed into more than 2,000 (10,000?) uses from
 - subsistence and local products
 - to high-end value added commodities for consumer and industrial markets
- The global bamboo markets are currently estimated to be USD 60 billion and expected to rise further with bamboo substituting increasingly scarce timber and other fibre sources.
- At least 18 Africa countries have joined **International Network for Bamboo and Rattan** to initiate commercialisation of bamboo for green growth in Africa

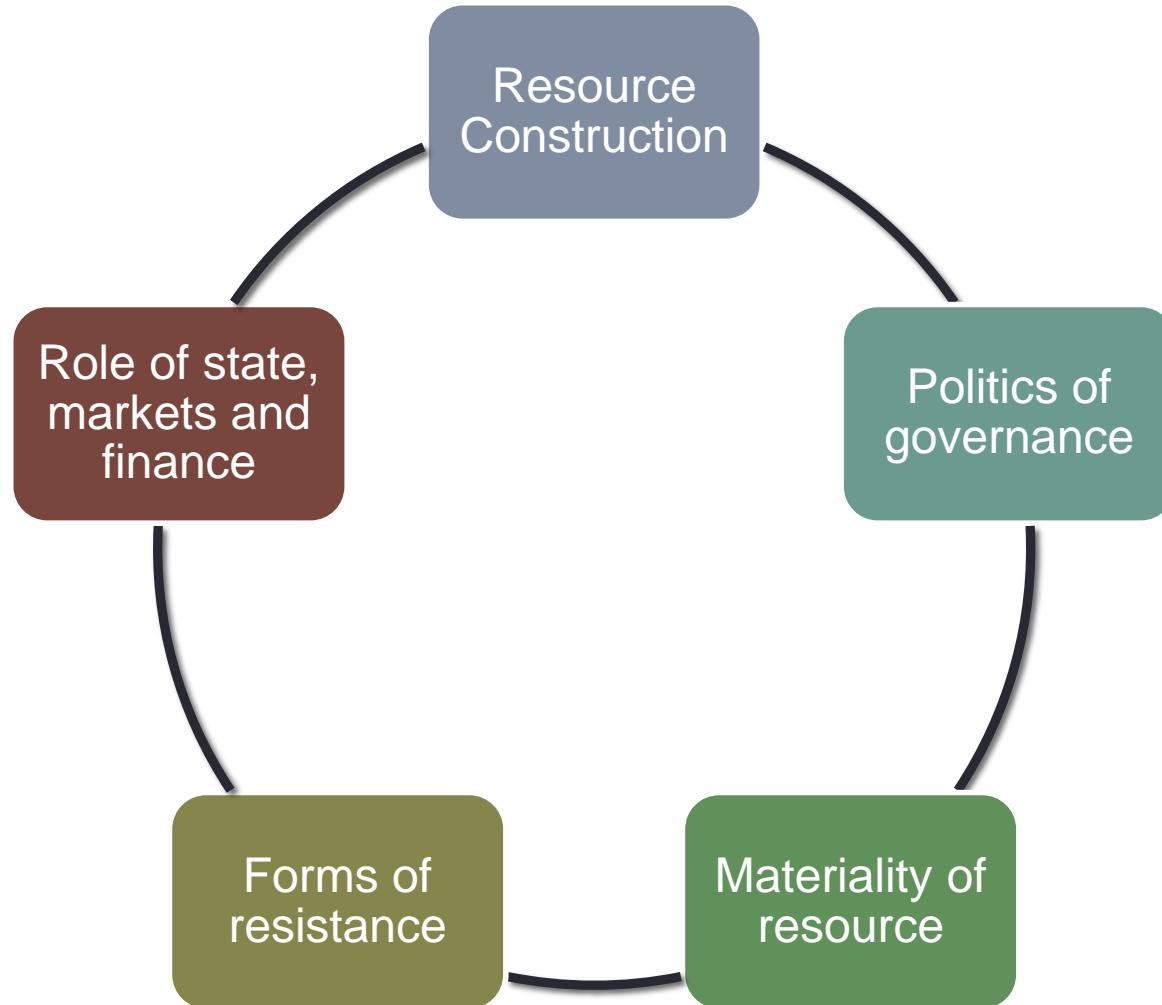
Bamboo for green growth in SA

- Bamboo symposium 2011 in East London, Eastern Cape, organised by Industrial Development Corporation and ECDC
- Trial community bamboo projects near Port Elizabeth, Stutterheim and Centane
- Interim project steering committee (public and private sector)
- Commissioned value chain opportunity study and business plan
- National Bamboo Association of South Africa (NBASA)
- Private sector investment
 - EcoPlanet Bamboo (active carbon, fibre for composites)
 - Blue Disa – Food & Trees for Africa CSI (carbon offsetting and processing)
 - DGB CSR bamboo projects (carbon offsetting and processing)
 - Green Fund's Green Grid Beema Bamboo project (bioenergy)
 - Individual farmers in KZN

Bamboo in social, political-economic context of South Africa

- Access to suitable land and conflicts over land use (grazing, crop cultivation)
- Complex and plural governance regimes – role of traditional authorities, state, tenure insecurity
- Challenges of working with local, heterogeneous communities in economically deprived areas
- Financial & technical challenges of installing and operating green technology
- Environmental challenges & trade-offs
- Market-related challenges
- Policy and regulatory gaps

Green economy in social, political-economic context



Researching the green economy:

- Use multiple methods to explore sustainability challenges in particular places and communities
- Highlight and open up discussion about how local ‘green economy’ interventions are embedded in broader social, political and economic relations
- Understand trade-offs, conflicts and distribution of costs and benefits across scales
- Link research and theories with practical and policy solutions to further equity, justice and sustainable development

Thank you