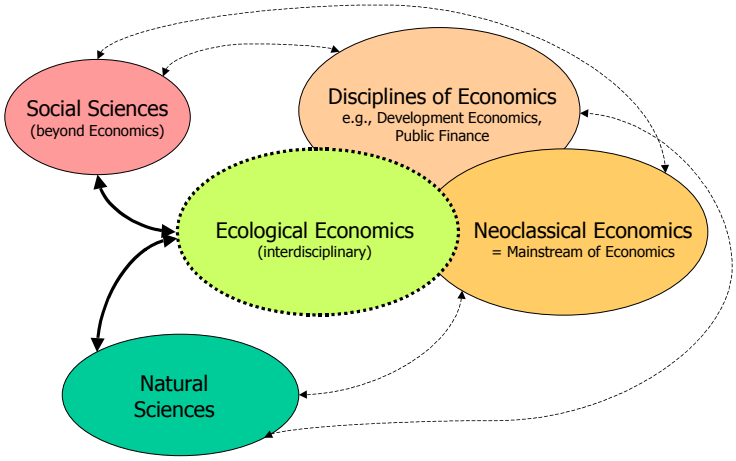
Survey Project Sustainable Development and Economics

Starting Point

- The theoretical and methodological contributions of (mainstream) economics to sustainable development are perceived as having been small in the past, compared to other scientific disciplines.
- The concept of sustainable development has not been systematically adopted by the economic mainstream, represented by **Neoclassical Economics**.
- **Ecological Economics** brings together a variety of interdisciplinary and diverse scientific approaches to sustainable development, often characterized by an 'anti-Neoclassical' view.
- Many economic approaches to sustainability are in an early stage of development.

➡ Dealing with issues of sustainable development in economics has led to a scientific divide.
➡ There is a need for a supportive science and research policy.

Economics dealing with Sustainable Development
and related scientific disciplines



Survey tasks

- Analyzing economic approaches to sustainable development in the context of related scientific disciplines (Social Sciences, Natural Sciences)
- Identifying research needs and 'cutting-edge' research approaches

Dual approach

(A) How must economics change to face the challenge of sustainable development?
(B) How can economics effectively contribute to sustainable development research?

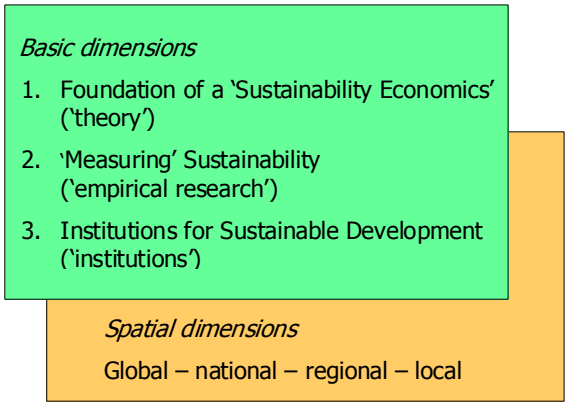
Employing Philosophy of Science approaches

- Studying integration and disintegration processes of theories in economics
- Concept of 'consilience': Do economic concepts and the knowledge they generate harmonize with those of other sciences?

Cluster analysis of theoretical foundations

- Identifying common ground and key divide topics amongst economists, independently of 'schools of thought'
- Are there research concepts that can help to bridge the gap between Neoclassical and Ecological Economics?

Multi-layer survey approach



Start-up Workshops (May-July 2003)

(1) Intergenerational Justice and Sustainability – Theory and Measurement

- Equity and sustainability
- Intra- and intergenerational justice
- normative and positive concepts of justice and sustainability
- A positive tool: generational accounting of natural resource use
- Conserving natural, social and economic capital – how do the concepts relate?
- Overlapping generation models of natural resource use

(2) Economic Notions of Sustainability – Consequences for Measurement

- Foundation: What scale is 'sustainable'?
  Concepts of strong, weak and critical sustainability
- What level of aggregation? Indicator systems and indices of sustainability – where are we now?
- 'Substantial rationality' versus 'procedural rationality': Is any number better than no number?
- Measuring 'safe minimum' and 'critical load'
- Integrating ecological, social and economic dimensions of sustainability by means of systems theory
- Decision-making support: Multi-Criteria Analysis and participation

(3) International Institutions for Sustainability

- Environment, development and trade - reconsidered
- Sustainability and global distribution
- 'Global governance' from an economic perspective
- Is there a need for creating new global institutions?

You can participate in the following research activities

- You are invited to fill in a questionnaire that will be made available at our website.
- A limited number of experts will be invited to participate in workshops (taking place between May and December 2003).

Workshop papers and survey results will be published and made available at our website: **www.sustainabilityeconomics.de**

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