



International Institute for
Sustainable Development

Smart Solutions for a Small Planet

“Right now, in the amazing moment that to us counts as the present, we are deciding, without quite meaning to, which evolutionary pathways will remain open and which will forever be closed. No other creature has ever managed this and it will, unfortunately, be our most enduring legacy.”

— Elizabeth Kolbert, *Journalist*



The International Institute for Sustainable Development is an independent, non-profit organization that has earned a reputation for pioneering approaches to the task of integrating environmental and social priorities with economic development.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Air pollution from North America affects air quality in Asia. Pesticides sprayed in Argentina may harm fish stocks off the coast of Australia. And decisions our grandparents made about how to farm the land continue to affect agricultural practice now. The economic policies we endorse today will have an impact on urban poverty when our children are adults.

Quality of life is a system, too. It is good to be physically healthy, but what if you are poor and don't have access to education? It is good to have a secure income, but what if the air in your part of the world is unclean? And it is good to have freedom of religious expression, but what if you cannot feed your family?

Sustainable development requires that we see the world as a system—a system that connects space, and a system that connects time.

OUR APPROACH

IISD's 2014–19 strategic plan is organized around six programs and a core set of strategic goals.

Economic Law and Policy: Reform economic policies to advance sustainable and equitable development.

Energy: Shift energy systems and policies to support universal access to clean, low-carbon energy.

Water: Advance science-based solutions for universal access to water and healthy ecosystems.

Resilience: Strengthen capacities to manage climate- and conflict-related risks.

Knowledge: Transform data and information into knowledge that supports sustainable development.

Reporting Services: Provide accurate, neutral, high-quality analysis that informs decision making about multilateral environmental negotiations.

Sustainable Economies



Rethinking the design of our economies for sustainable growth.

China's pollution problems are well known. Twenty per cent of its agricultural land is toxic to human health. Lung cancer rates have increased by almost 500 per cent in the past three decades. Less well known is how China is fixing these problems. And the evidence is found in some unlikely places, like China's Central Bank.

Several years ago, IISD began working with Chinese institutions to investigate how reforms to the financial system could quicken the transition to green development. Today, green finance is a key part of China's environmental strategy. For example, the China

Banking Regulatory Commission has issued Green Credit Guidelines, stipulating that financial institutions must increase their support to low-carbon projects. A carbon market is under development, and private equity funds are ramping up investment in green sectors.

IISD continues to work in China, helping to overcome the obstacles that remain to the nationwide adoption of green finance. We are also supporting China to carry its knowledge and experience abroad, so that it benefits other governments in their efforts to green their financial policies.

Clean Energy



Transforming energy systems to support universal access to low-carbon energy.

For many years, Indonesia spent more on fossil fuel subsidies than on education, healthcare and infrastructure combined. Phasing out these subsidies, and re-directing the savings towards Indonesia's development priorities, would transform the country for the better.

Fossil fuel subsidy reform is an example of the difficult, but game-changing, reforms that are required in the energy sector around the world. IISD supports such reforms by providing analysis to governments on issues spanning the energy pricing system, social impacts and

how to maximize environmental benefits. We also build public engagement by strengthening the capacity of civil society organizations to participate in the reform process.

In Indonesia, the committed efforts of policy-makers, civil society organizations and international organizations like IISD are paying off. Recently, the government introduced large reforms to its gasoline and diesel subsidies, saving tens of billions of dollars a year. This has allowed for massive new investments in social safety nets, infrastructure and education.

Fresh Water



Combining world-class science and policy for fresh water management.

By adding small amounts of mercury to a lake using a crop-duster airplane, scientists examined the relationship between mercury falling in rain and toxicity in fish. Mercury is a neurotoxin that causes cognitive problems in humans. The primary route of exposure is by consumption of contaminated fish.

The experiment demonstrated a relationship between mercury added in simulated rain and mercury concentrations in fish. As a result, the governments of Canada and the United States have proposed major mercury emission standards and reductions for coal-fired power plants.

This is one example of experiments at remote lakes in Northwestern Ontario that are ultimately protecting the health of people and our environments around the world.

IISD is the proud operator of this whole-lake experimentation research facility, known as the Experimental Lakes Area (IISD-ELA). The science taking place at IISD-ELA is integrated with our work globally on policies for universal access to clean water and healthy ecosystems.

Resilient Communities



Strengthening the capacities of human and natural systems to cope, adapt and reorganize.

The majority of people in Uganda earn their living by farming. That makes the impacts of climate change, such as heavier rainfall, a critical threat to livelihoods. But farmers are not the only ones at risk. Agriculture is the foundation on which much of the economy is built. Truck drivers, marketers and shop owners—all are affected by climate change.

Yet little is known about the impacts of climate change on the various activities that carry agricultural products from farm to plate. In Uganda and elsewhere, IISD is assessing the risks throughout the supply chain for commodities like rice and coffee.

This work engages a broad and relatively new set of actors in climate adaptation, such as food processors, transporters, exporters, mobile phone companies and commercial banks. We are striving to make supply chains more resilient to climate change. That, in turn, builds the strength of entire economies.

Knowledge for Integrated Decisions



Managing data and information to support sustainable development governance.

What gets measured gets managed, and environmental measures are sorely lacking in comparison to measures of the economy.

Take Canada as an example, where six times as many staff are paid to measure Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as are paid to produce all of Statistics Canada's environmental data. This is true internationally. Compared to GDP, governments around the world pay relatively little attention to social and environmental indicators of well-being. While of clear value in managing

the economy, GDP and its counterparts all focus on short-term economic conditions. This imbalance reinforces decision-makers' fixation on the "here and now" at the expense of the future.

To address these shortcomings, IISD is working with governments and citizens on a move "beyond GDP" as the fundamental measure of societal progress. It is one way in which we are using data, indicators and methods of forecasting in order to support holistic and integrated solutions that support sustainable development.

Reporting Services



Tracking the real-time story of sustainable development.

Decision-makers from governments, civil society and businesses want to reach answers for complex challenges like climate change. But how do they keep track of the agreements reached at the latest meetings?

For decades, IISD Reporting Services has been inside the negotiations, armed with laptops, where we have tracked, filtered and reported on global sustainable development negotiations. Our Earth Negotiations Bulletin is a record of negotiations across a full range of sustainable development issues, from climate change to chemical management. In addition, our Knowledge

Management Platforms provide freely searchable databases that track the real-time story of sustainable development.

We provide clarity when the volume of information can be overwhelming. And we bridge the information deficit of developing countries, thereby contributing to environmental justice. As we move forward into the Post-2015 period, IISD Reporting Services will track the implementation of the sustainable development goals and communicate the sustainable development agenda.

An integrated approach characterizes all of our work, rooted in our belief that humanity's greatest challenges—from resource depletion, population growth, urban migration and ecological degradation—are interconnected.

LINKING WATER RIGHTS AND FARMLAND INVESTMENTS

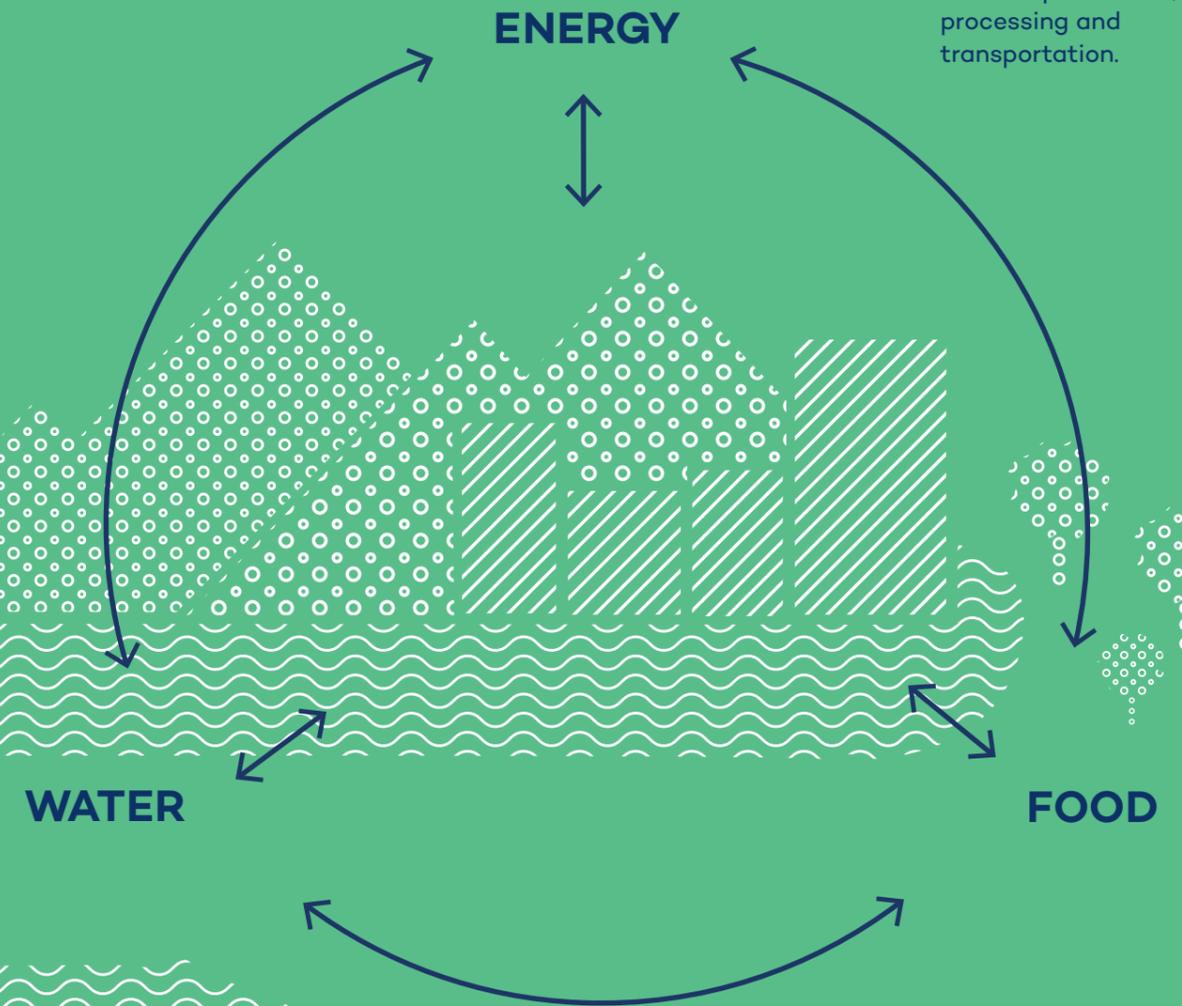
Any farmer will tell you that land without water is not worth much. But too often water is overlooked as a critical development factor in farmland investments. For example, where investment contracts are being signed in developing countries, land and water rights are often not formally recognized. This can lead to a situation in which the investor is allocated secure access to water, while local communities are left with weak or non-existent rights.

Our diverse teams of experts—which include investment lawyers, agriculture economists and fresh-water scientists—assist policy-makers, local communities and investors to understand the complex relationships among water, energy and food security that characterize farmland investments, in order to arrive at agreements that benefit rural livelihoods and investors' bottom line.

THE WATER, FOOD AND ENERGY NEXUS

- Water is used for energy production.
- Energy is needed for water treatment, distribution and more.

- Food often drives energy production and distribution.
- Energy is needed for food production, processing and transportation.



- Water is needed for food production.
- Food production and processing affect water availability and quality.

Our staff members and associates have worked in over 70 countries, bringing multi-disciplinary backgrounds including finance, economics, biology, hydrology, engineering, statistics, law and communications.

Here is a snapshot of our global reach.

CANADA: Winnipeg is our global headquarters and the centre of our water program.

UNITED STATES: New York is home to IISD's Reporting Services, our flagship information service on environment and development negotiations.

ECUADOR: In countries across Central and South America, we are assisting communities and governments with the challenge of adapting to climate change.

BURKINA FASO: We work intensively at the country and regional levels in Africa on investment strategies to create jobs, stimulate growth and protect the environment.

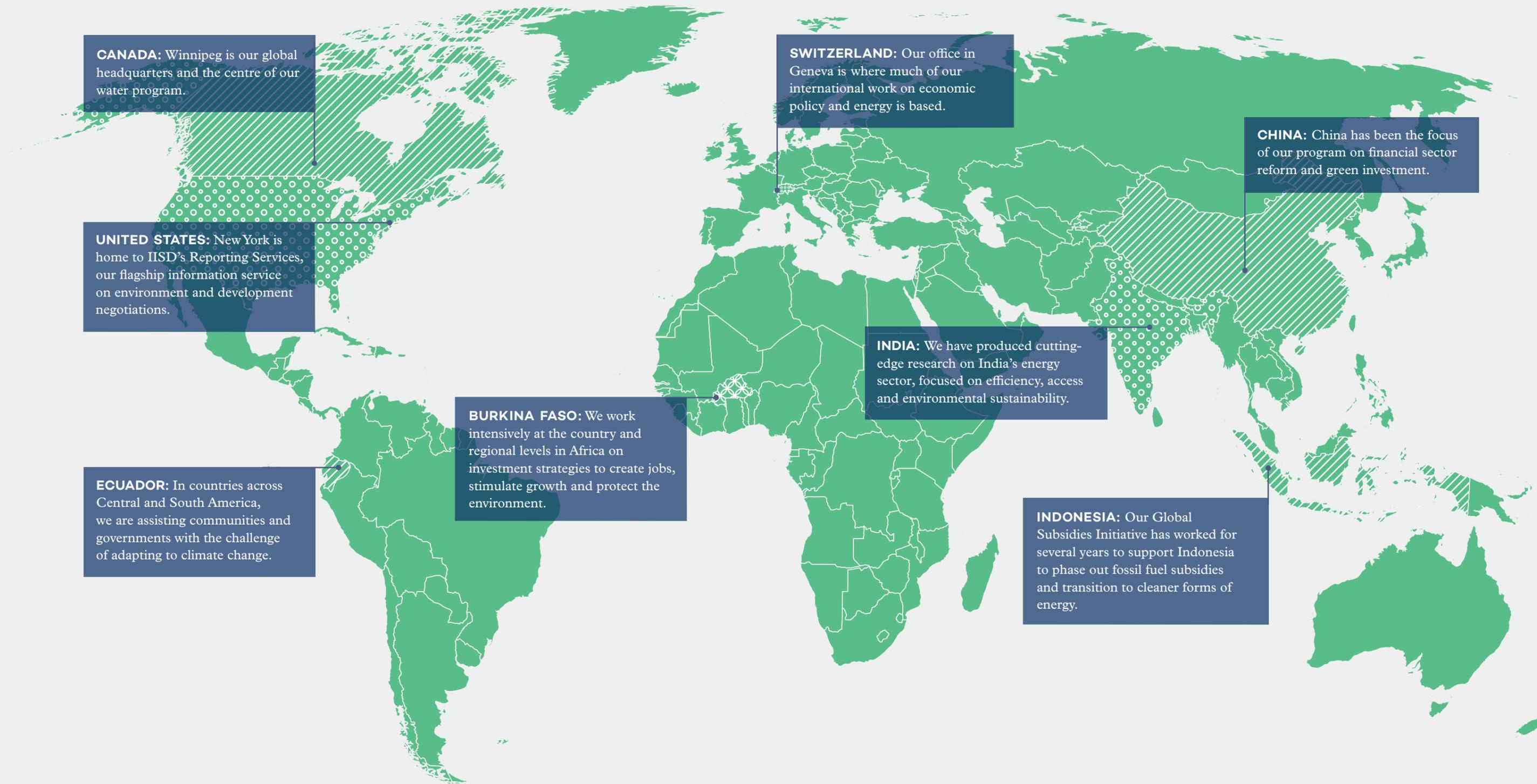
ARCTIC: Our wide-ranging work in the Arctic addresses challenges to sustainable development rooted in economic, social, political and legal systems.

SWITZERLAND: Our office in Geneva is where much of our international work on economic policy and energy is based.

INDIA: We have produced cutting-edge research on India's energy sector, focused on efficiency, access and environmental sustainability.

INDONESIA: Our Global Subsidies Initiative has worked for several years to support Indonesia to phase out fossil fuel subsidies and transition to cleaner forms of energy.

CHINA: China has been the focus of our program on financial sector reform and green investment.





Climate change, poverty and rapid biodiversity loss threaten present and future generations. For over 25 years, IISD has applied science and other forms of evidence to understand and respond to these challenges.

The solutions we seek are practical, and our work has impact because it is hands-on and meets the needs of decision-makers in public and private institutions. As a non-profit organization, IISD relies on project grants and donations from individuals, governments, foundations and businesses to conduct independent and applied research that supports sustainable development.

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The International Institute for Sustainable Development is an independent, non-profit organization that provides practical solutions to the challenge of integrating environmental and social priorities with economic development. We report on international negotiations, conduct rigorous research, and engage citizens, businesses and policy-makers in the shared goal of developing sustainably.

IISD is registered as a charitable organization in Canada and has 501(c)(3) status in the United States. IISD receives core operating support from the Government of Canada, provided through the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and from the Province of Manitoba. IISD receives project funding from numerous governments inside and outside Canada, United Nations agencies, foundations, the private sector and individuals.

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