

# Rethinking Growth in the light of Convergence

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## What is Convergence?

Convergence is a broad term describing the mechanism of the reduction of resource consumption and unsustainable behaviours in the developed world while accepting increasing consumption and systematic sustainability in developing and deprived sectors all within biological planetary limits. The term "Convergence" borrows in part from the principles behind 'contraction and convergence'.

**Convergence is a progress towards equity within biological planetary limits.**

However, Convergence should be understood to encompass a complex, holistic and practical field of activities centred on achieving decreases in resource use and increases in social justice (i.e. increasing inter and intra-generational equity), and thus is a more expansive term than the definitions of C&C as a GHG reduction framework.

Examples which could be considered Convergent may include the connecting of communities through action in order to maximize quality of life while minimizing and equalizing impact on Earth's resources, as well as individual, regional or national initiatives or policies, insofar as they are in compliance with the underlying principles of equitability and resource conservation and are in line with the principles of strong sustainability and sustainable development.

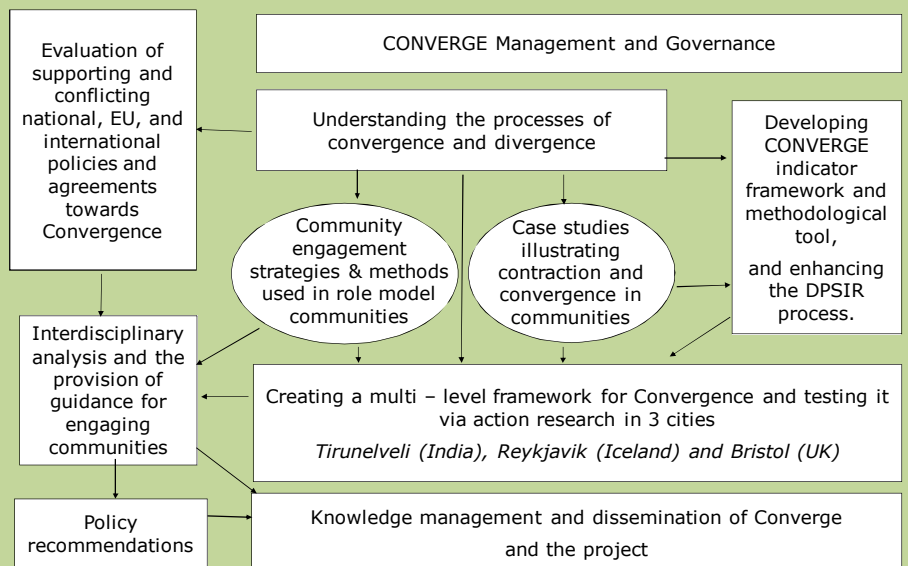
To provide an example, the community of Chew Magna (UK) decided to account for the impact of its consumption, and address the problems created by it at the individual, community and global level. This resulted in the formation of a charity called The Converging World through which they help the erection of wind turbines in Southern India (see picture).

## The CONVERGE project



The CONVERGE project is an interdisciplinary 9 research project funded by the European Union with partners across 5 countries, including partners from industrialised nations such as Sweden, the UK and Iceland, transition economies such as Hungary and rapidly industrialising nations such as India. Our research is inspired by the concept of contraction and convergence™ (C&C)<sup>1</sup>; a suggested way to stabilise atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gasses while promoting social equity with regards to climate change and green house gas emissions.

We recognize that resources are not equally distributed, some people, communities or nations are using more, and some less, than their 'fair share', and the annual draw-down of many resources exceeds the capacity of the planet to supply them - what some commentators have called 'borrowing from our children and our future'. We saw a need to explore this idea of equity in the light of biological planetary limits; an extended version of C&C, with regards to the various sustainability challenges and positive sustainability initiatives the world is witnessing.



## Get Involved

At CONVERGE our research is concerned with the sustainability of our current society and we are (to put it mildly) awed by the complexity of our challenges. As practitioners and purveyors of a little bit of 'good' in the world, we needed to be more innovative when seeking solutions to these complex challenges and looking for new ways forward. Collaboration is a way to channel innovation.

### Contact Us

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<sup>1</sup> In our work, we start from the original definition of C&C by the Global Commons Institute (GCI): Global Commons Institute 2000, 'GCI briefing: contraction and convergence', available at [www.gci.org.uk/Briefings/ICE.pdf](http://www.gci.org.uk/Briefings/ICE.pdf) originally published as Meyer, A. 2000, Engineering Sustainability 157(4): 189-92.