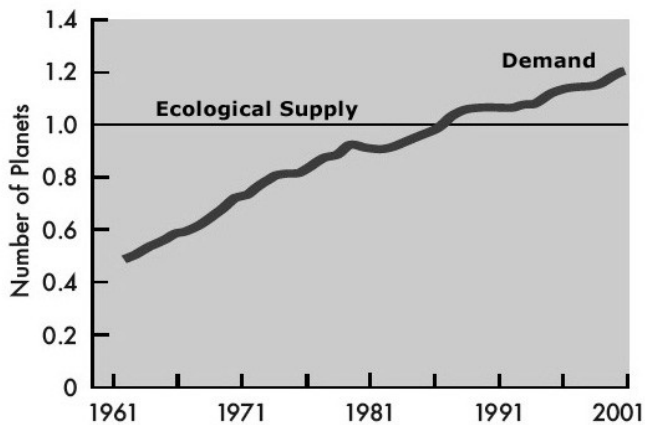


One Planet Budgeting: Making Sustainability Real with the Ecological Footprint

By Mathis Wackernagel
Global Footprint Network

Are we running out of planet? Was Malthus wrong? Do economies self-correct or self-destruct when operating as if resources are limitless? Can everyone on this planet live like a Chinese? A Costa Rican? A Canadian? Mathis Wackernagel, co-creator of the Ecological Footprint, explores these questions, and showcases applications from around the world with government agencies, NGOs, businesses, cities, highlighting how this tool helps make development sustainable.

Human demand on biosphere increasing



globe.

This accounting tool shows: Since the 1980s, humanity's demand on ecological resources has exceeded what the Earth can renew. We are in a state of ecological overshoot, on an unsustainable path.

We can reverse this trend by managing both supply and demand. The **Ecological Footprint** is a practical, scientific tool designed to do just that. Developed over the last 15 years, this tool compares human demand on ecological resources with the planet's capacity to renew them and is being used by hundreds of governments, businesses, and NGOs around the

Each national Footprint result is generated through about 30,000 calculations using 5000 data points per year. The method is continuously being refined and reviewed to make it more detailed and accurate. Reviewers include academic institutions, independent research institutes and government agencies. Australians have been leaders in applying the Footprint – now we are aiming at having the tool tested through a government sponsored initiative. This would be in the Australian's direct self-interest. Why? Like any responsible business that keeps track of its spending and income in order to protect its financial assets, we need ecological accounts to manage and protect our natural assets. They are our ultimate wealth, and there is no alternative as long as overdraft protection for the Earth is not available.

With the Ecological Footprint, countries, cities, or corporations can assess their sustainability performance, set realistic targets, monitor projects and programs, communicate successes and, by comparing scenarios, identify implications of policy choices. Mathis will discuss successful applications of this tool from around the world.



Global Footprint Network's mission is to support a sustainable economy by advancing the Ecological Footprint and making the reality of planetary limits relevant to decision-makers throughout the world. Together with its over 50 partner organizations around the world, Global Footprint Network continuously strengthens and improves the Ecological Footprint by coordinating research, developing methodological standards, and providing robust national resource accounts. For more information visit www.footprintnetwork.org.