

Ávarp rektors Háskóla Íslands, Jóns Atla Benediktssonar, á fundi Marie

Curie verkefnisins AdoptEconII í Öskju, 27. ágúst, kl. 9:00

Ladies and Gentlemen. Good morning.

I am delighted to open this AdoptEconII project conference.

One of the most fundamental question we face, both here in Iceland currently, and all around the world is how much natural resources we have to fuel the economy, and how much energy we have to extract, process and manufacture at the global scale. The compounding effect of exponential growth of population, resource extraction, production and consumption is degradation of the natural world.

Some might say that the answer is that we have already overstepped nature's boundaries, as we see environmental degradation, ecosystem collapses, species extinction and climate emergency.

New economic thinking is thus crucial, a sustainable economy that works for everyone, people and nature. The important and innovative research presented today contributes to this new economic thinking.

The AdoptEconII project has trained 12 PhD students in systems analyses, biophysical Earth limits and pluralistic economic thinking at the University of Iceland, Stockholm University and Université Clermont Auvergne in France.

All the students are on a joint PhD program and will, therefore, get a double degree from 2 universities. In addition, they have had a chance to spend a few months in a Civil society organization or research institute to broaden their perspective.

The PhD projects are under three research themes: 1) Sustainable natural resource management, 2) economic systems assessment, and 3) integrating society and economics. During the project's time five training sessions have been held in Iceland, Sweden and France.

The final workshop just ended at Hella in the South of Iceland where the students explored with their supervisors and guests from Australia, Canada, the United States, Denmark and the UK how the new sustainable economy for the 21st century could look like. Today the PhD students, along with some of guests and supervisors, will present research outcomes.

This important project is funded by the Marie Curie Horizon2020 framework of the European Commission. It started in December 2015 – when I had the pleasure to address the kick off meeting - and it will close this November

I would especially like to thank Kristin Vala Ragnarsdottir Professor in the Faculty of Earth Sciences here at the University of Iceland for her work in coordinating the project. I hereby declare the conference open.