Life Beyond Growth 2012
Executive Summary and Reader's Guide

Life Beyond Growth 2012 is the first in a new annual series of reports tracking the rise of "New Economic" ideas such as Green Growth, Green Economy, Genuine Progress, Gross National Happiness, and even De-Growth. It also covers the new indicators that are being developed to measure national progress in these terms. All of these ideas, and others like them, can be seen as emerging out of the global movement for Sustainable Development. And all of them have been treated seriously by one or more national governments in the past few years.

Life Beyond Growth can be read as an introduction to specific New Economic ideas and as an update on how they are currently being used in national economic policy (Chapter 5). For this first edition, Life Beyond Growth also provides the historical background (Chapters 1-4), as well as an analysis of how a wide range of geo-political issues — from citizen protest movements, to corporate responsibility programs, to armed conflict and war — are impacting the spread and adoption of New Economic ideas (Chapter 6). It closes with a reflection on the ethics of New Economic ideas in a complex, globalized world, where many still need (and want) the expansion of access to resources and security that is traditionally associated with economic growth (Chapter 7).

Readers interested in the full picture of how traditional economic growth, currently measured by the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), became enshrined in national policy-making and goal-setting, and how these alternatives arose to challenge the GDP's dominance, should read the full report starting from Chapter 1 (page 13).

Readers who just want to get a quick update on the range of New Economic ideas currently in play, somewhere in the world, should turn directly to Chapter 5, "Rethinking Growth: Alternative Frameworks and their Indicators." This chapter provides an annotated catalog of concepts and measures, together with Internet links to direct sources. (Page 34)

Readers interested in the geo-politics of New Economy ideas will want to turn to Chapter 6, "Looking Ahead: The Political Economy of Growth in the Early 21st Century (page 50). This chapter also underscores the lack of clear consensus on which New Economic idea, or mix of ideas, is preferable as a counterweight to the dominance of traditional "Growth as Usual," measured by the GDP.

Life Beyond Growth attempts to maintain a sympathetic-yet-objective perspective on the full range of New Economy ideas now vying for attention in the global policy marketplace. But in Chapter 7, "Concluding Reflections: The Ethics of Growth and Happiness, and a Vision for the Future," lead author Alan AtKisson makes transparent his own preferences and biases. He makes the case for combining two specific ideas — Green Economy and Gross National Happiness (i.e. national well-being) — as a way of meeting the needs of both the developing and the developed world.

To download a free copy of Life Beyond Growth, visit the publisher's website, www.isisacademy.com