In the past, the name of the game was global prosperity has been good – often at the cost of the environment. Global prosperity has come at the Earth's expense. We are only able to produce the resources we consume and to absorb its waste. The graph shows humanity's soa-productive land and water area a human population cannot cope with this increasing resource demand for long, and every day the room.

THE PLAYING FIELD IS GETTING SMALLER

In 1961, we consumed 50 percent of Earth’s available capacity. Yet we are already seeing in places with severe food and water scarcity.

THE RULES OF THE GAME ARE CHANGING

This 30 percent ecological overshoot means that humanity is using resources at the planet's expense. But in today's world, where humanity is already exceeding our ability to manage change. In this changing world, survival and sustainable development, the United Nations considers an indicator of socio-economic development.

The New Goal: Thinking Inside the Box

The Sustainable Development Goals set an ambitious agenda to end poverty and hunger, fight inequalities, and protect the planet. They are the blueprint to achieve what we can no longer afford to ignore – the wellbeing of current and future generations.

WHO HOLDS WHICH CARDS?

In the map of the future, the countries with the highest Footprint are shown in red. This indicates that these countries are using more resources than their environment can sustain. The countries with the lowest Footprint are shown in green. This indicates that these countries are using fewer resources than their environment can sustain.

Is My Country an Ecological Debtor or Creditor? What Should Be My Strategy?

Each country has its own ecological risk profile and a pathway toward sustainable development. The United Nations has developed a national Footprint and a national Biocapacity for each country. These metrics allow us to assess the sustainability of a country's economic development. The higher a country's Footprint, the more it relies on the planet's resources. The lower a country's Biocapacity, the more it depends on its own resources.

Playing Your Best Cards

Is our mobility dependent on cars or public transportation? Will there be further policy changes? Will there be more emphasis on renewable energy sources? Will we see a shift towards more sustainable lifestyles and practices?

New Rules of the Game

If the country's Ecological Footprint is higher than its Biocapacity, it is an ecological debtor, and it is using more resources than its environment can sustain. If the country's Ecological Footprint is lower than its Biocapacity, it is an ecological creditor, and it is using fewer resources than its environment can sustain.

Young policy-makers, entrepreneurs, and scholars who are aware of ecological overshoot are already adopting strategies to protect, restore, and conserve the Earth's natural capital. They are seeing the importance of managing natural resources sustainably. The New Goal: Thinking Inside the Box. How Does My Country Position Itself to Gain Competitive Advantage in This New Reality?
WHAT IS AN ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINT?

Ecological Footprint accounts track the biologically productive land and water area a human population requires to produce what it consumes and absorb its waste under prevailing technology. Plainly stated, it measures how much nature we have, how much we use, and who uses what. This tool empowers decision-makers to navigate through tough policy choices, manage competing objectives and position themselves best for the future. You can apply it at the global, national, regional, individual or product level.

THESE COUNTRIES ARE ALREADY ENGAGED IN FOOTPRINT RESEARCH COLLABORATIONS:
- Switzerland (2005)
- Japan (2006)
- United Arab Emirates (2007)
- Belgium (2007)
- Ecuador (2008)
- France (2008)
- Qatar (2009?)

See www.footprintnetwork.org/reviews

INFORMED DECISIONS = GOOD POLICY

For further information, please visit www.footprintnetwork.org

For more on Footprint applications specifically, see www.footprintnetwork.org/nations and www.footprintnetwork.org/africa.

Global Footprint Network is a think tank in Oakland (California), Brussels, and Zurich devoted to creating a world where everyone can live well, within the means of one planet.

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THE ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINT – A TOOL FOR ADVANCING A NATION’S COMPETITIVENESS IN A NEW GLOBAL ECONOMY

Ecological Footprint accounts track the biologically productive land and water area a human population requires to produce what it consumes and absorb its waste under prevailing technology. Plainly stated, it measures how much nature we have, how much we use, and who uses what. This tool empowers decision-makers to navigate through tough policy choices, manage competing objectives and position themselves best for the future. You can apply it at the global, national, regional, individual or product level.

ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINT ACCOUNTING:

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DRIVING COMPETITIVENESS IN A NEW GLOBAL ECONOMY

ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINT ACCOUNTING:

The Earth provides all we need to live and thrive. Yet, as humanity pushes up against the Earth’s limits, managing our ecological balance becomes essential for economic success, effective governance, sustainable development, and human survival. Just as strong businesses keep detailed financial accounts to manage and protect their assets, we need robust ecological accounts to manage and protect our ecological assets - and therefore our well-being. It’s simple: to make good policy, you must first have all the relevant information. This is what the Ecological Footprint offers.

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WHEN IS AN ECOLOGICAL DEBTOR?