

## **Proposal for a Special Issue of Environment and Development Economics on “Dynamics of Coupled Human and Natural Systems”**

The following is a call for papers for a special issue of *Environment and Development Economics* on the theme “Dynamics of Coupled Human and Natural Systems.” The special issue builds on a sub-set of the papers presented at an international workshop held at Cornell University in May 2003 (workshop details available online at <http://afsnrm.aem.cornell.edu/poverty/> ). The purpose of the call for papers is to supplement papers prepared for the workshop with other outstanding research papers related to the stated theme.

### **Theme:**

Rural poverty and the degradation of renewable natural resources such as soils, forests, water and wildlife are closely related. Understanding the complex causal relationships interlinking these two phenomena is thus a crucial first step toward solving each of these problems. A necessary second step involves identifying and rigorously evaluating prospective policy, technology, management and institutional innovations that might effectively address the most fundamental problems. Although scholars have devoted considerable effort to these problems, especially in the decade between the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro and the 2002 Johannesburg Summit, the current state of knowledge on relationships and remedies remains distressingly limited.

The objective of the special issue is to collect recent findings on the dynamic relationship between economic development and environmental change. These two processes are inherently and dynamically linked. Decisions that are made today have implications not only for future welfare and environmental status, but also impact the nature of choices which will be available in the future. The dynamic aspect of such decision making is further complicated by the presence of uncertainty. The impact and implications of current decisions may not be apparent until some time in the future. This is especially important given the growing belief in and evidence of the existence of “thresholds”, associated with the concepts of poverty traps and resilience, which give rise to key, important irreversibilities. Recent advances in data availability and in relevant theories and empirical methods make it increasingly possible to identify both the progress over time towards economic and environmental goals as well as the nature of the linkage between these goals. In particular, what policy measures have proved effective, and in what contexts, for advancing the goals of economic development and environmental protection simultaneously? How replicable are these experiences? What has been learned about the nature of human and natural system interactions and the dynamic component of these interactions, both in the short term and the longer term, as a result of the growing awareness of the linkage between these systems?

**Proposal Guidelines:**

Authors are asked to submit original work that is not currently published or intended for publication to the *Environmental and Development Economics* editorial office by November 1, 2003.

**Submissions can be mailed to:**

The Editor  
EDE  
Environment Department  
University of York  
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UK

Please format the submission following the Instructions to Contributors (available online at [http://titles.cambridge.org/journals/journal\\_catalogue.asp?mnemonic=ede](http://titles.cambridge.org/journals/journal_catalogue.asp?mnemonic=ede)). Please note in the cover letter that the submission is intended for the special issue on “Dynamics of Coupled Human and Natural Systems”.