Data-Driven Environmental Policy: Sustainability Metrics

Faculty Member: Robert Klee

Proposal Description:
The Yale Center for Environmental Law & Policy, a joint undertaking between the School of the Environment and Yale Law School, advances sustainability governance, finance, and research with data-driven analyses. As a leading initiative in evidence-based policymaking, the Center’s work promotes applying science and law to enhance the resilience and impact of sustainability policies in countries around the world. The Center seeks Tobin Research Fellows with a passion for applying their economics expertise to resolve outstanding environmental issues, like climate change, biodiversity and habitat loss, green finance, and the degradation of the global commons. Tobin Fellows will work closely with the Center’s faculty director, Dr. Rob Klee, the Center’s Associate Director, Meghan Kircher, and postdoctoral associates Nathan de Arriba-Sellier, Reed Miller, and Sebastian Munguia. Tobin Fellows will have the opportunity to work on one of the following projects:

- The Environmental Performance Index (EPI) provides a data-driven summary of the state of sustainability around the world. Translating the latest scientific research into actionable policy recommendations, the EPI’s metrics and country rankings highlight leaders and laggards in sustainability, identify best practices, and guide decisionmakers on the road towards a more sustainable future. Tobin Fellows will have the opportunity to research biodiversity and habitat metrics to enhance the upcoming 2024 EPI report. Postdoc: Sebastian Munguia

Depending on the Tobin Fellow’s interests and background, possible research tasks include:

- Exploration, analysis, and visualization of global environmental datasets;
- Assistance with quantifying and ranking countries environmental impacts and performance;
- Performing literature reviews and writing memos on issues relating to sustainable development;
- Assistance with other tasks to advance the Center’s research agenda.

- The Global Commons Stewardship Index (GSCI) assesses both countries’ domestic impacts on the Global Commons and the impacts embodied in trade and consumption (so-called “international spillovers”). Sustainable management of the Global Commons— the climate system, ozone layer, land biosphere, oceans, and ice sheets & glaciers – requires data and metrics to guide better policies. The focus this Fall will be on drafting a journal manuscript around ‘Visualizing Decoupling’ with our partner at the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network. Decoupling occurs when the rate of economic growth exceeds the rate of environmental harm, which is key to meeting sustainability targets. This concept can be difficult to convey and interpret, so this work will explore existing approaches and propose a novel depiction. Ability to code charts (such as with ggplot in R) is strongly preferred.

Requisite Skills and Qualifications:

Applicants should have excellent writing skills, strong organizational skills, attention to detail, and interests in sustainable finance or sustainable economic development and in data-driven environmental policy. These positions require flexibility to rapidly research and produce written deliverables in support of the Center’s research agenda.
Successful applicants will work well independently and within larger research groups.

**Additional Comments or Special Instructions:**

1. In the “Additional Documents” section, please upload a short writing sample (such as a previous term paper, essay, or class research project).
2. In the “Briefly describe your prior experience and your research interests” section, please write a statement of no more than 300 words in length. In it, please mention your preference for the EPI or the GCSI role, and describe how this position matches your experience and professional development goals.

Please contact us with questions (ycelp@yale.edu).

**Award:** Blake Bridge
Emilia Oliva

**Tobin Application Link:** Tobin Application

**Project Type:** Tobin RA
**Project Year:** 2022
**Term:** Fall 2022

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