



Nexus2020

The most important questions
for business

The nexus and business

Food, water, energy and the natural environment are intimately interwoven and impacts upon one can affect the others

As pressures start to mount, placing enormous demand upon natural resources, we need to navigate towards a step change in practical approaches and policy that will address these growing challenges. One way is to consider the interplay and trade-offs between the nexus of food, water and energy security.

From March to July 2015, businesses, policy makers, academics and civil society were asked to submit the questions that they thought were most pressing, to be answered by research, to improve business management of the nexus.

Nexus2020 is a project that aimed to determine the top questions for business around the food-energy-water-environment nexus

Do we always know how to meet societies' demand for food or energy without, for example, degrading our natural environment or water supplies? What more do we need to know in order to ensure sustainable enterprise?

Responses were collected following webinars, presentations, workshop sessions, newsletters, blogs and social media discussions.

Individuals responded to the high level question:

“What are the most important questions around business practice that, if answered, could help companies manage their dependencies and impacts upon food, energy, water and the environment?”

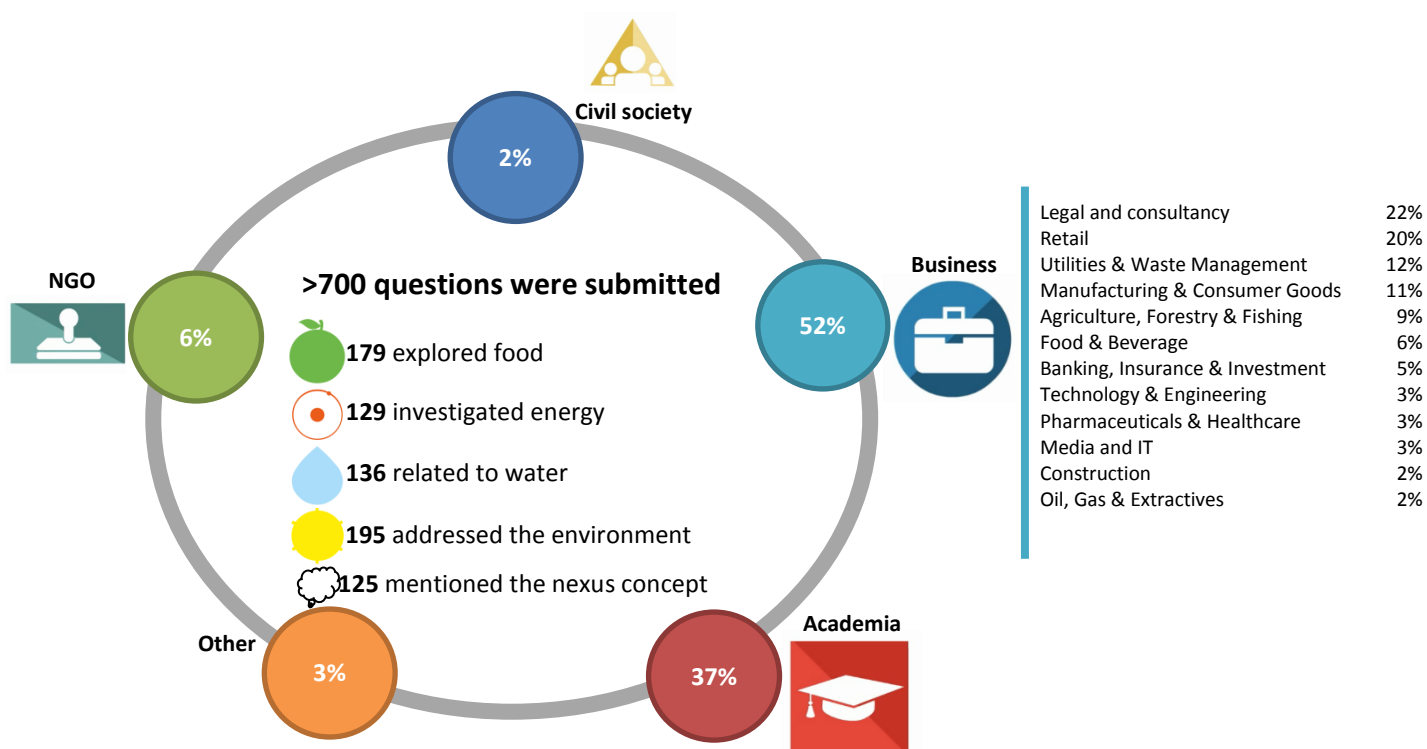


Figure 1: Over 700 questions were submitted to the Nexus2020 project (March-July2015) by over 230 participants from a range of backgrounds.

Business and academics co-create research questions

A select group of senior business practitioners and researchers were convened over two days to identify which of these would make it into the top 40 questions that, if answered, would best help companies manage their food-energy-water-environment nexus dependencies and impacts. This co-creation of research questions is vital to ensure that the issues businesses need to be explored are highlighted whilst also making sure they are answerable through research.



A number of leading researchers and business practitioners met for two days in Cambridge

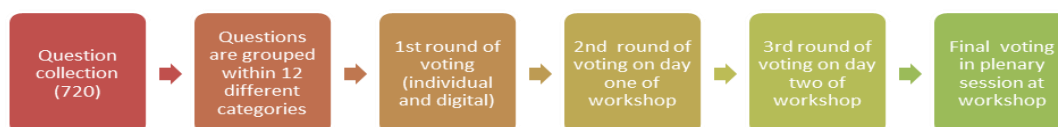


Figure 2: The process during which the top 40 questions for business on the nexus were determined

Priority Questions and Platinum questions

The workshop's second day saw the group of participants come together to distil the list of research questions down to the top forty; a further exercise identified twenty 'platinum' research questions that were deemed most

urgent to address by the participants. The themes that emerged highlighted the need for interdisciplinary research and validated the value of incorporating nexus thinking into decision making.



A number of key themes emerged from the two-day workshop discussions and are well represented in the priority list of research questions.

Next steps

The top 40 research questions will be revealed in a forthcoming journal article. It is the role of multi-disciplinary panels of researchers and business practitioners to then devise the projects that will deliver the solutions to these pressing nexus issues.

Through collaboration between business, government and academia we can begin to answer these questions and address the most critical global challenges of today.

Participants

CISL would like to thank all participating businesses and researchers (see full list below) for their input into the collaborative process that finalised the suite of Nexus2020 questions. Special thanks to the core team: Gemma Cranston, Jonathan Green and Hannah Tranter. We also thank Jake Reynolds, Bill Sutherland and Bhaskar Vira for their considerable support and guidance. With thanks to John Pharoah for invaluable assistance in helping to prepare and run the workshop, and Tsvetelina Kuzmanova, Robin Mydlak and Steve Strebl for note taking.

Participant	Affiliation
Sarah Bell	Openfield
Tim Benton	University of Leeds
Eva Blixt	Swedish Steel Association
Colm Bowe	Liverpool John Moores University
Sarah Broadley	Saint Gobain Building Distribution
Andrew Brown	Anglian Water
Chris Brown	Asda
Neil Burns	Mondi Group
David Butler	University of Exeter
Hannah Collins	Economic and Social Research Council
Monica Contestabile	Nature Publishing Group
Helen Crowley	Kering
Justin DeKoszmovszky	Ovo Energy
Leslie Firbank	University of Leeds
Brett Fulford	GlaxoSmithKline
Toby Gardner	Stockholm Environment Institute
Rosie Hails	Centre for Ecology & Hydrology
Sharla Halvorson	Nestlé
Michael Jack	HSBC Bank
Ben Kerrison	EDF Energy
Lenny Koh	University of Sheffield
Steven Lang	Ernst & Young
Emily McKenzie	WWF
Pablo Monsivais	University of Cambridge
Tim O'Riordan	University of East Anglia
Jeremy Osborn	Ernst & Young
Stephen Oswald	Bidvest Fresh
Emma Price-Thomas	ArcelorMittal
David Raffaelli	University of York
Jagjit Singh Srail	University of Cambridge
Belinda Reyers	Stockholm Resilience Centre
Bernardo Strassburg	International Institute for Sustainability
David Webster	Jordans & Ryvita
Ruth Welters	University of East Anglia
Gail Whiteman	Lancaster University Management School
James Wilsdon	University of Sussex