



Sustainability Snippets

FRIDAY, 23 JUNE 2023

A.06

A smokeless future?

There have been a few studies in the news recently. The first, on the level of vaping in children aged 11-17, comes mostly in response to the government consultation on how to reduce the use of vaping in children.

Action on Smoking and Health (ASH) released their results that showed nearly 7.5% of kids are vaping in comparison to around 3.5% who are smoking but the number of kids trying it out has risen by 50% in the past year to 11.5%. It would appear that these are mostly the single use vape kits rather than the refillable, which obviously has an environmental impact as well.

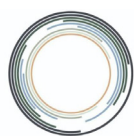
A much smaller investigation in Liverpool found that there were high levels of lead, nickel and chromium contained in a lot of these kits, which can have long term health effects. We can expect there to be a lot more news filtering in about this as the government consultation progresses – and possibly more of a clamp down on the imported products that are clearly marketed for children and flavoured in a range of sweets to improve appeal.



SBTN Framework

Last month, the Science Based Targets Network (SBTN) unveiled the first release of nature-focused science-based targets for corporations. These targets provide a framework for companies to evaluate and prioritise their ecological footprints, while also establishing a benchmark for addressing these concerns.

This initiative expands upon the progress made by the emissions-focused Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi), allowing companies to set targets that go beyond addressing climate-related issues. The SBTN say that these new targets will complement existing climate targets,



allowing companies to take holistic action to address their impact in the face of mounting environmental and social crises.

As part of its initial release, the SBTN is unveiling targets that focus on freshwater and land, providing companies with the means to evaluate their impacts and establish objectives related to freshwater quality and quantity, as well as the protection and restoration of terrestrial ecosystems.

The release forms part of a multi-year plan, with future coverage including biodiversity and ocean targets.

The SBTN has revealed that 17 companies have been selected to pilot the validation process for the newly introduced targets. The validation process for companies outside the pilot group is expected to commence in early 2024.

The participating companies in the pilot phase include AB InBev, Alpro (a division of Danone), Bel, Carrefour, Corbion, GSK, H&M Group, Hindustan Zinc, Holcim, Kering, L'OCCITANE Group, LVMH, Nestlé, Neste, Suntory, Tesco, and UPM.

“Safe and Just”

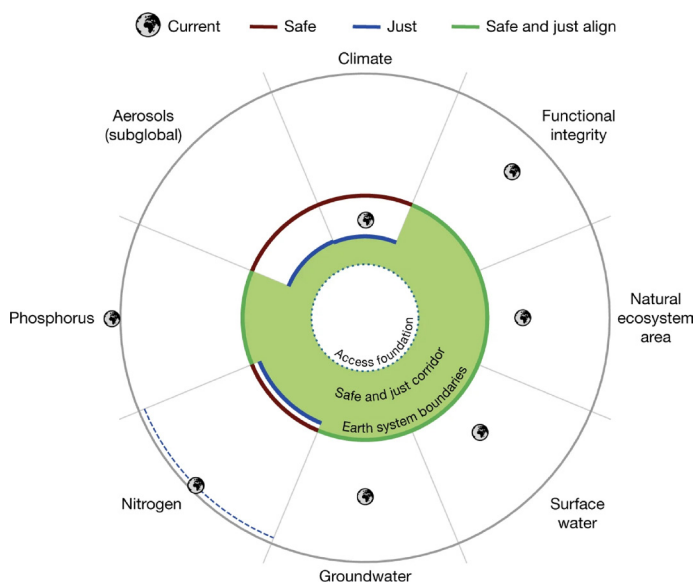
Earth System Boundaries (ESBs)

The Earth Commission, an international team of leading natural and social scientists, has published the first study quantifying Earth System Boundaries (“ESBs”).

ESBs define safe and just limits for a range of biophysical processes and systems which regulate the Earth system, including climate, freshwater use, the biosphere, nutrients and aerosols. The report makes for grim reading with the authors concluding that human activity has already led to 7 out of the 8 ESBs breaching their safe and just corridor, risking the stability and resilience of the entire planet.

The ESBs will also be used as the basis for a new set of science-based targets for businesses, cities and governments to help address these crises.

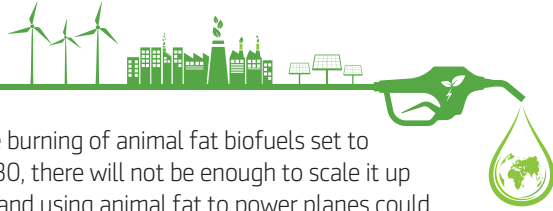
Earth's planetary boundaries



Rockström et al., Nature, 2023

Biofuels

The aviation industry is responsible for around 3% of global emissions and one way the EU are trying to decarbonise the sector is using animal fats in jet fuel. EU rules classify three types of animal fats depending on their quality. Categories 1 and 2 should be used in heating applications, such as biofuel, whereas category 3 has wider uses including in pet food and cosmetics.



But with the burning of animal fat biofuels set to triple by 2030, there will not be enough to scale it up sustainably and using animal fat to power planes could force other industries to rely on substitute materials, such as palm oil.

A study by Ceruly for the Transport and Environment agency found that the subsidies introduced by the EU have created a financial incentive to mislabel the higher quality category 3 fats. The increased demand for category 1 and 2 and potential mislabelling of category 3 animal fats, has led to pressure on the entire supply chain, driving up prices for the likes of pet food and cosmetics manufacturers.

The worry is that competition to secure feedstock for biofuels will indirectly increase the amount of palm oil being used throughout European supply chains.

Meet the gummy squirrel

And over 5000 other weird and wonderful species living in deep-sea habitats – nearly all of them previously unknown to science. The new species were discovered by remote-controlled vehicles sent to the bottom of the seabed in a region known as the Clarion-Clipperton Zone (CCZ), an area targeted for mining in the coming years.

The UN body responsible for regulating deep-ocean mining will soon consider whether to permit the first project to move forward. Proponents of deep-sea mining argue it will be essential in order to secure the minerals necessary for EV batteries and renewable energy technologies. But many, from countries to companies, are pushing back until the implications for biodiversity are better understood.



DeepCCZ expedition/Gordon & Betty Moore Foundation/NOAA

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