



Editorial: EAERE, ERE and the Research Challenges of the Coronavirus Pandemic

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Superlatives have become the staple fare of journalism over the last few months, however it is not hyperbole to state that this issue of the journal of Environmental and Resource Economics (ERE) comes at a truly unique point in history. Whether in hindsight the global coronavirus pandemic will prove to be a watershed moment in terms of a long-lasting change in the tripartite relationship between economy, environment and human wellbeing, or a short-term phenomenon causing tremendous but transitory misery, only time will tell. What is already clear though is that the economic impact of coronavirus is truly global and substantial, recently described by the IMF as the “Worst Economic Downturn Since the Great Depression” (Gopinath 2020).¹ The consequent effects on the global environment and human welfare are already evident and major and raise a host of research questions and challenges.

This issue of ERE marks an early start to the journal’s response to the research challenge raised by coronavirus. The issue opens, however, on a more positive note with a celebration of the 30th Anniversary of the creation of the journal’s home association, the European Association of Environmental and Resource Economists (EAERE). This important landmark is marked with a typically masterful paper overview of the achievements of this seminal institution by one of its most acclaimed academic luminaries, Aart de Zeeuw. This celebratory article reviews the development of the Association from

¹ While other organisations have predicted less extreme effects (OECD 2020), even here considerable uncertainties are acknowledged with significant downside risks to economic development being recognised.

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its early formation in response to the clear need for collaboration to address the complexities of the multiple environmental challenges faced by society. The paper charts the symbiotic growth of both the Association and the discipline of environmental and resource economics showing how EAERE has consistently contributed to the development of both academic debate and academics themselves. One aspect of this ongoing development is highlighted in the subsequent paper from EAERE President-elect Phoebe Koundouri and colleagues which announces the latest winners of the annual EAERE Award for the Best Paper Published in Environmental and Resource Economics, the current award covering the year 2019.

EAERE have responded rapidly to counteract the effects of coronavirus lockdown and social distancing restrictions upon its 25th Annual Conference of the European Association of Environmental and Resource Economists. Originally planned to take place in Berlin for June of this year, a close collaboration between the EAERE Council, the local organizers at Technische Universität Berlin and Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, and the Programme Committee is attempting, in the words of EAERE President Christian Gollier, “to make history” by converting the conference into a pure online event, key features of which include the following:

- Participation in the online conference will be free of charge and open to everybody.
- The *Opening* and *Closing Ceremonies*, one *Plenary Keynote* and the *Award Announcements* will be live-broadcast and recorded for subsequent viewing via an online video platform.
- Other *Plenary Sessions* will, where possible, also be broadcast online.
- Authors of accepted papers are encouraged to present their paper in virtual *Parallel Sessions*, which will be organized in a decentralized manner by session members themselves. These sessions will be grouped by their topics and methods by the conference organizers, as usual. However, presenters will be given the flexibility to choose the timing and specific format of their session. Volunteer organisers will coordinate presentations and provide videoconference hosting for each *Parallel Session*. The conference website will be used to advertise all sessions in an online programme.
- Accepted *Policy* and *Thematic Sessions* will be organized in the same way as *Parallel Sessions*.
- All participants will have the opportunity to interactively participate in the *Plenaries* and *Sessions* through the provision of a conference app with chat and polling functions.
- To offer more flexibility for presenters and session organizers, the organisers have extended the conference schedule from the original dates of the conference. Ceremonies and Plenaries will be centred on Friday 26th June. *Parallel*, *Policy* and *Thematic Sessions* will generally be scheduled between Thursday 25th June and Saturday 27th June. However, in a flexible response to the unique nature of the coronavirus pandemic, a wider window for sessions is offered extending from Monday 22nd June to Friday 3rd July with further flexibility possible in exceptional cases.
- As usual, only one paper per presenter will be included in the conference programme for *Parallel* and *Thematic Sessions*.
- Accepted papers featuring at least one author who is an EAERE member will also be included within an online database with extended search options including by topic and method. The Association warmly welcomes every new or renewed EAERE membership.

EAERE and the conference organisers are looking forward to a thrilling conference and wish to thank everybody who already contributed or will contribute in the next weeks to a successful event, including more than 2500 contributing authors, over 400 reviewers, and, at the time of writing more than 200 volunteer Session organisers.

Further updates will be provided via the EAERE mailing list, Social Media and the *Conference Website*, the later also providing links for participants to join the hundreds of sessions and talks which will make this first online EAERE Annual Conference such an inspiring and important international event.

Finally, EAERE and the conference organisers extend a warm welcome to next year's 26th EAERE Annual Conference 2021. This is planned to run in Berlin, as this year's event was originally conceived, providing an ideal venue to meet your colleagues personally.

The ERE Editorial Board, again with support from members of the EAERE Council, determined early on in the coronavirus outbreak that this is a subject that the journal should be acting on. We have now issued online a Call for Papers to address the environmental economics of the coronavirus, details of which are given in the Annex to this Editorial together with a suggested agenda for research questions. As a precursor to this initiative, in this issue of the journal we publish a specially commissioned paper providing what is, to our knowledge, the first assessment of the environmental policy challenges raised by the coronavirus phenomenon. In "The Environmental Impacts of the Coronavirus" Dieter Helm sets out an agenda for integrated environmental economic research and policy response. This embraces a range of research challenges including: understanding the drivers and consequences of the short and long-term environmental effects of coronavirus; how to design economic stimuli and investment to deliver an economic recovery which also addresses major ongoing environmental problems such as the climate emergency and biodiversity loss; the consequences of coronavirus for trade and the environment; and possible behavioural changes, their impact upon the environment and the positive and negative welfare effects arising from this.

Our Call for Papers extends this research agenda and comes at a time when economic thinking and analysis are absolutely vital for informing future policy. We encourage the environmental economics community to respond to this key challenge.

1 Annex: Call for Papers

1.1 COVID-19 Environmental Economics Research: Coronavirus-Related Papers in ERE

The Coronavirus pandemic has triggered one of the most rapid changes in the global economy ever seen. Accompanied by almost worldwide restrictions on movement and behavior this marks a true phenomenon of historic proportions. But what might be the consequence for the natural environment and its intimate relationship with human wellbeing? Short term this has been marked by incredibly rapid change in natural resource use, industrial and transport related emissions and wider greenhouse gases. Will these changes endure or at least leave some residual effect upon the way we live our lives and our relationship with the environment?

The Environmental and Resource Economics (ERE) journal is seeking contributions for fast production and publication of a collection of papers examining Environmental Economics in the Time of Coronavirus.

Contributions should ideally include an economic or policy perspective on this issue but can take a theoretical and/or applied approach, focus on public or private sector issues, social or individual behavioral perspectives and consider practical and policy questions. Papers can consider short and/or long-term effects with a mix of the two being preferable.

Papers should be submitted to the ERE Coronavirus Topical Collection at: <https://www.editorialmanager.com/eare/default.aspx>

While conventional manuscripts are welcome, so are short papers (e.g. 5–10 A4 pages) and policy-focused pieces. We are also considering a multi-author Perspective piece collecting together a number of short (up to 2-page) pieces, to showcase the very fast-moving research this is generating and highlight novel issues raised by the pandemic.

Speed will be of the essence here and pieces will be reviewed by the Editorial Board to ensure fast turnaround and early publication.

The deadline for submissions is Friday, June 12, 2020. Earlier submission is very strongly encouraged. Papers received after the deadline may have to be excluded from the Topical Collection but may be considered as conventional submissions to the journal.

The Editorial Board.

Environmental and Resource Economics.

The Official Journal of the European Association of Environmental and Resource Economists.

1.2 Environmental Economics in the Time of Coronavirus: Suggestions for a Research Agenda

While the following is offered as an initial research agenda, we welcome papers addressing all aspects of the environmental economics of coronavirus.

- Environmental economic policy for a post-COVID-19 world.
- Environmental economic effects of social distancing to control COVID-19.
- The greenhouse gas emission consequences of the coronavirus pandemic.
- A green strategy for post-COVID-19 recovery.
- The European Green Deal, carbon neutrality and the impact of COVID-19.
- Short and long-run implications of coronavirus on mobility patterns.
- Coronavirus impacts on global trade and their environmental consequences.
- The consequences of coronavirus for global wildlife: Impacts and policy response.
- Tourism, eco-tourism and the coronavirus pandemic: Short and long-term implications.
- Environmental economics of the wild meat trade in the shadow of coronavirus.
- Health and the environment: The short and long-term effects of coronavirus.
- The distributional impacts of coronavirus.
- Behavioral perspectives for the design of a post-pandemic environmental policy.
- What will and won't change? The environment and behavioral responses to the coronavirus pandemic.
- What will and won't change? The environment and business responses to the coronavirus pandemic.
- Environmental economic and policy challenges for a post-COVID-19 world: A view from the global south.
- Synergies and trade-offs: The economic and environmental policy decisions, dilemmas and opportunities raised by coronavirus.

- Environmental valuation perspectives under the shadow of COVID-19.
- A post-pandemic agenda for environmental economic research.

In addition to the above papers we are also seeking a very small number of contextual papers setting out the expected economic impacts of coronavirus and epidemiological modelling of the pandemic.

References

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