



Changing Economic World

The Impacts of Industry on the Physical Environment & London SIP

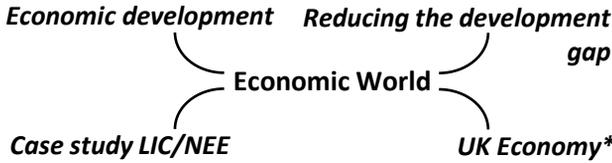


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The Big Picture



Environmental Impacts

In the past, industrial growth has had a significant impact on the environment. Coal mining led to the creation of spoil heaps and vast mounds of waste material removed during extraction. Burning coal to generate electricity led to considerable air pollution in cities across the UK. Toxic waste materials from heavy industry have polluted the land and water supplies.

Modern manufacturing industries impact both the landscape and the environment in various ways:

- The visual aspect of the landscape can be spoiled by manufacturing plants.
- Industrial processes can lead to air and water pollution and soil degradation.
- Waste products from the manufacturing industry are frequently disposed of in landfills contaminating air, water, and soil.
- The transportation of raw materials and manufactured products is primarily done by road increasing air pollution.



Sustainable industry

There is now an increased expectation for industries to adopt environmentally sustainable practices. This includes conserving natural resources, safeguarding ecosystems, fostering biodiversity, and enhancing health and well-being. Several approaches can be adopted to achieve this:

- Levying substantial fines in the event of industrial pollution incidents.



Key Terms



Brownfield site – Land that has been used, abandoned and now awaits some new use.



Physical environment – The natural environment including air, water, soil, and vegetation.



Sustainable industry – Industry that works to minimise the environmental footprint while maintaining economic growth, social advancement and quality of life.

- Utilising technology to reduce harmful emissions from power stations and heavy industries. Desulphurisation, for example, can extract harmful gases like sulphur dioxide and nitrogen oxide from the chimneys of power stations.
- Implementing more stringent environmental targets for industries concerning water quality, air pollution, and landscape degradation.
- Conserving, protecting, and restoring natural ecosystems to boost biodiversity.
- Monitoring and regulating industrial activities to reduce their environmental footprint.



Example: London SIP

London Sustainable Industries Park (SIP) provides space for nine different businesses. The business park is located on a brownfield site that was formerly the Dagenham Ford car factory.

The first three organisations to locate in the London Sustainable Industries Park include a recycling organisation, a sustainability research organisation and a company that specialises in turning waste food into biogas (ReFood). The aim of the park is that the companies will all work together, sharing resources and ideas and exchanging waste and by-products. The park has received government investment as it is a good model for future industrial parks.