

## Press release

### Want a green economy? SWITCH initiatives show how to build sustainable societies

- SWITCH initiatives aim to guide governments towards sustainability by unleashing access to green financing, policies and standards, and eco-entrepreneurship.
- One of the regional programmes, SWITCH Africa Green, has benefitted more than 3,000 Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises across 6 different countries (Burkina Faso, Ghana, Kenya, Mauritius, South Africa and Uganda)
- A project in Asia converts tuk-tuks into electric powertrains that generate zero tailpipe emissions.

**Nairobi, 13 March 2019** – UN Environment and the European Union (EU) came together at the UN Environment Headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya today to share insights on the SWITCH to Green initiative – a major global programme that supports governments in their transition to green economies.

The primary aim of SWITCH programmes is to turn environmental challenges into opportunities based on the understanding that an inclusive green economy is the core of sustainable development through sustainable consumption and production patterns.

“Greening the economy is not just about the environment. It also offers multiple benefits in creating jobs, poverty reduction, economic diversification and income generation,” said Satya Tripathi, UN Assistant Secretary General and Head of New York Office of UN Environment. “SWITCH programmes is a strategic vehicle that’s driving this transition. UN Environment appreciates the partnership with the European Union and others in laying the foundation for a better and equitable future for everyone,” he added.

The SWITCH to Green initiative builds on a series of regional SWITCH programmes, including SWITCH Asia, SWITCH Africa Green, SWITCHMed and EAP Green / EU4 Environment – together covering over 39 countries. Collectively, the programmes has contributed to the adoption of Sustainable Consumption and Production practices by 100,000 micro, small and medium entrepreneurs (MSMEs) sustaining 350,000 jobs, and leveraging investments of more than EUR 1 billion in total by project beneficiaries.

Today at the UN Environment Assembly in Nairobi, a roundtable is taking place to bring these regional programmes into a common platform and dialogue. The roundtable is showcasing the most outstanding achievements that inspire green entrepreneurial efforts and policymaking, and in doing so, it enables SWITCH and its partners to share their experiences and encourage the replication of good practices.

“The SWITCH to Green initiative is delivering results. An independent evaluation of EU international cooperation on Sustainable Consumption and Production, published in 2018, concluded that actions promoting green business development through the SWITCH programmes had achieved high impact in terms of uptake of SCP practices and increased levels of investments by MSMEs, contributing notably to the creation of green jobs” said Marjeta Jager, Deputy Director General, DG DEVCO.

Some of the ways in which SWITCH programmes help governments move towards sustainable consumption and production (SCP) include: Providing access to green financing, policies and standards, and eco-entrepreneurship.

For instance, launched in 2014, [SWITCH Africa Green](#) has been steering six African countries– towards sustainable consumption and productions patterns, while also generating economic growth. In the past 4 years, the programme has achieved widespread success. More than 3,000 Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) have directly and indirectly benefited from trainings, pilot demonstrations and SCP skills-development. 64% of the enterprises recorded an increase in income-generation with their annual cost savings amounting to an average of \$7m. Production rates increased by 68%.

One project beneficiary, Newton Owino is showcasing at the Sustainable Innovation Expo 2019 of UNEA 4. A leather producer is now producing fish leather from fish skin – adding value to fish skin that would otherwise be discarded as waste and the fast decomposing fish skin pollutes the environment. He has

managed to access new leather markets in different countries in Europe and North America which was not possible in the past. Mr Owino is the Chair of the Kisumu Leather Dealers Association (K LDA) which was established with support from Switch Africa Green to produce high quality leather, better bargaining power, increase income and strengthen access to financing facility (loan) to further develop the leather industry in Kisumu.

[SwitchMed](#) pioneers gains across the SDGs. In alignment with the Mediterranean Action Plan of the Barcelona Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean, the project supports business efficiency, knowledge sharing, and capacity building to ingrain circularity into national development policies as well as local business plans. 1500 national stakeholders were involved in the creating the Regional Action Plan on Sustainable Consumption and Production, adopted by the 22 Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention in 2016; 8 SCP National Action Plans and 20 demonstration projects were developed and are being implemented in priority areas.

[SWITCH-Asia](#) attained wide acclaim through their [Asia-Pacific Low-carbon Lifestyle Challenge](#), which aims to support young people with business ideas to foster low-waste and low-carbon lifestyles through start-ups. The 12 winning projects each received US\$10,000 and mentorship to help bring their ideas to fruition.

One winner, Pamela Nicole from the Philippines, has been transforming textile waste destined for landfill into higher valued products, such as footwear and clothes. From Sri Lanka, Sasiranga De Silva was awarded the prize for developing an affordable toolkit that allows tuk-tuk drivers to convert their vehicles into electric powertrains that generate zero tailpipe emissions.

## NOTES TO EDITORS

### About UN Environment

UN Environment is the leading global voice on the environment. It provides leadership and encourages partnership in caring for the environment by inspiring, informing, and enabling nations and peoples to improve their quality of life without compromising that of future generations. UN Environment works with governments, the private sector, the civil society and with other UN entities and international organizations across the world. <https://www.unenvironment.org/>

### About SWITCH to Green Initiative

Developed by the EU Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development, SWITCH to Green builds on several initiatives, in particular the SWITCH regional programmes [SWITCH-Asia](#), [SwitchMed](#) and [SWITCH Africa Green](#). It combines policy level cooperation to contribute to the establishment of the right incentive structures and instruments, with support to private sector initiatives to promote SCP practices and the development of green businesses.

Through technical assistance, the SWITCH to Green facility assists EU Delegations and Directorates, as well as development partners with identifying and formulating of actions, as well as potential synergies contributing to the green economy transition. It supports the dialogue an exchange of experiences and promotes the capitalization on existing knowledge and EU domestic experience on inclusive green economy. [www.switchtogreen.eu](http://www.switchtogreen.eu)

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