

The Flagship Initiative



What is SWITCH to Green?

Launched by the [European Commission Directorate General for International Cooperation and Development](#) (DG DEVCO), SWITCH to Green is a Flagship Initiative linking complementary programmes to improve the overall coherence, coordination and visibility of existing and future EU-funded international cooperation initiatives on green economy.

A flagship initiative aiming at facilitating the transition to an inclusive green economy that generates growth, creates decent jobs, and helps reduce poverty. SWITCH to green contributes to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular goal 12: “Ensuring sustainable consumption and production (SCP) patterns”. SWITCH to green should also be seen in the context of the EU action plan on circular economy, which acknowledges the global dimension of the circular economy and foresees EU cooperation with international organisations and other interested partners as part of the global efforts to reach the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

SWITCH to green builds on several initiatives, in particular the SWITCH regional programmes:

- in Asia: <http://www.switch-asia.eu>
- in Africa: <http://www.switchafricagreen.org>
- in the Mediterranean: <http://switchmed.eu>

The initiative provides a platform to improve the overall coherence and coordination of EU funded initiatives on green economy. Among others, it aims to strengthen the linkages between macro-level initiatives -such as [the UN Partnership for Action on Green Economy \(PAGE: <http://www.un-page.org>\)](#) - and micro-level interventions -such as the green business components of the SWITCH regional programmes- in order to reinforce synergies and create stronger enabling environments for green economies.

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 **sustainable consumption and production (SCP)** practices and the development of green businesses. The expected results of the initiative are:

1. Inclusive green economy policy reforms take shape/are in place in partner countries;
2. Economic actors are better equipped and have greater opportunities to develop green business and/or apply SCP practices in partner countries.

In the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#), the international community acknowledges the importance of SCP practices, through a dedicated [Sustainable Development Goal \(SDG 12\)](#) and various targets across the

agenda. EU development policy explicitly backs the transition to green economy in partner countries. The EU has significant experience with international cooperation on SCP to contribute to this process. It has committed more than EUR 200 million over recent years to support the development of SCP policies and green business initiatives in developing countries under the SWITCH regional programmes. The EU also has relevant domestic experience to share with partner countries. Initiatives such as the [Resource-efficient Europe roadmap](#) or the [Green Action Plan for SMEs](#) provide instructive blueprints, with significant lessons learnt for partner countries. Thus, EU international cooperation on green economy aims to build on the EU's domestic experience and to contribute to EU's efforts to achieve policy coherence for development.

Glossary

'Agenda for Change' – *Communication from the Commission* 'Increasing the impact of EU Development Policy: an Agenda for Change'. This document, adopted in 2011, states that EU development policy should promote green economy.

2030 United Nations Agenda for Sustainable Development – a universal framework for all countries to help eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development by 2030 (one of the main areas of EU cooperation with the private sector on green economy). It was adopted in September 2015 by all 193 member countries of the United Nations.

2030 SDGs – Sustainable Development Goals; 17 SDGs were adopted under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. They aim to balance economic, sustainable and environmental dimensions. These came into force on 1 January 2016.

Circular economy – this is an ideal of an economy that aims to 'close the loop' of product lifecycles, aiming where possible for the reuse of materials, relying on restoration and regeneration to preserve and enhance natural capital as well as optimising resource yields. The European Commission has adopted a Circular Economy Package including an [EU action plan for the Circular Economy](#) adopted in December 2015.

Europe 2020 Strategy – the [EU's growth strategy](#), in which the green economy concept is embedded. Launched in 2010 to create the conditions for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, this is the European Union's growth strategy for the next decade and aims at establishing a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy with high levels of employment, productivity and social cohesion.

GPGC – the [Global Public Goods and Challenges Programme](#) 2014–2020 seeks to foster economically, socially and environmentally sustainable development in an integrated and holistic way aiming at promoting good governance, political stability and security, and the requirement for policy coherence in external action. This is a European Commission programme.

MIP – [Multi-Annual Indicative Programme](#). These are cooperation programmes spelling priorities of EU international cooperation at national, regional and global level.

Resource Efficiency means using the Earth's limited resources in a sustainable manner while minimising impacts on the environment. It allows us to create more with less and to deliver greater value with less input: increasing resource productivity and decoupling economic growth from resource use. The [Roadmap to a Resource Efficient Europe](#), adopted in 2011, outlines how we can transform Europe's economy into a sustainable one by 2050. It is part of the Resource Efficiency Flagship of the Europe 2020 Strategy.

SCP – Sustainable Consumption and Production. This is the main focus of [SDG 12](#) ('Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns'), and is a cornerstone of the green economy concept.

Who is who?

EU actors

The European Commission's Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development ([DG DEVCO](#)) is responsible for designing and implementing EU international cooperation and development policy which, among others, commits the EU to "promote a 'green economy' that generates growth, create jobs and helps reduce poverty".

DG DEVCO works closely with other Commission services responsible for thematic policies, as well as with the [European External Action Service](#) (EEAS) and Commission services on external action. The EEAS is responsible for running 139 EU Delegations and Offices operating around the world, representing the European Union and its citizens globally. The EU Delegations play a key role in presenting, explaining and implementing EU's foreign policies.

International organisations

The [United Nations Environment Programme](#) (UNEP) plays a prominent role in promoting the transition to a green economy, by serving the [Ten-year Framework Programme](#) (10YFP) Secretariat on the one hand, and by being involved in the implementation of the SWITCH regional programmes on the other. .

The [UN Partnership for Action on Green Economy \(PAGE\)](#) brings together five UN agencies – [UNEP](#) (United Nations Environment Programme) [UNDP](#) (United Nations Development Programme), [UNIDO](#) (United Nations Industrial Development Organization), [ILO](#) (International Labour Organization), [UNITAR](#) (United Nations Institute for Training and Research) – to provide assistance to interested countries in developing, adopting and implementing green economy policies and strategies, as well as assisting countries in achieving and monitoring the [Sustainable Development Goals](#).

Partner Countries

The green economy transformation is at least as important for developing countries as it is for developed economies. Developing countries face the same necessity to improve the environmental sustainability of their economy and mitigate the economic costs of further environment degradation, which, if unaddressed, could lock them further into poverty. At the same time, more efficient resource use, and presence on the rapidly growing global environmental goods and services market are important for developing countries' competitiveness and growth. The SWITCH to green initiatives covers Africa, Asia, Latin America, and EU neighbouring countries.

Private sector entities

As underlined in the 2014 Communication from the Commission on the role of the private sector in international development, the private sector is expected to play a key role in driving the transformation to the green economy. Adopting environment-friendly business practices is already widespread, with many commercial and economic opportunities making such a process attractive to the private sector. The private sector acknowledges the rapid growth of the environmental goods and services global market, the prospects for savings from resource efficient production processes, for improved reputation, and increased security of supply chains resulting from the procurement of sustainably produced raw materials. It is therefore responding positively to this challenge, with relevant initiatives being important drivers of green economy transformation in many countries.

Selected EU policies promoting an inclusive green economy

[Europe 2020 strategy](#): EU's growth strategy aiming at facilitating a more competitive economy with higher employment by delivering growth that is: smart, with effective investments in education, research and innovation;

sustainable, following the path to a low-carbon economy; and inclusive, fostering job creation and poverty reduction.

EU Roadmap to a Resource Efficient Europe: It sets objectives for 2020 and indicates action to be taken in SCP, waste, research and innovation, environmentally harmful subsidies, ecosystem services, biodiversity, minerals and metals, water, air, land and soil, marine resources, food and drink, buildings, and mobility.

EU Roadmap to a Low-Carbon Economy: It sets incremental targets until 2050 on greenhouse gas emissions, along a cost-effective pathway to a Competitive Low-Carbon Economy, indicating how the main sectors responsible for Europe's emissions — power generation, industry, transport, buildings and construction, and agriculture — can help make the transition successful.

The 7th Environment Action Programme: Living well, within the limits of our planet: It aims at enhancing Europe's ecological resilience and transforming the EU into an inclusive green economy, recognising three thematic priority objectives (natural capital protection; EU shift to a resource-efficient, green and competitive low-carbon economy; EU citizens health and well-being) and six objectives establishing an enabling framework supporting effective action (improved implementation of legislation; EU environment policy based on increased knowledge; environment and climate policy investments secured and environmental externalities accounted for; improved environmental integration and policy coherence; EU sustainable cities; effectiveness in addressing international environmental and climate-related challenges).

EU Energy Roadmap 2050: It sets out a strategy for the energy system to balance between greenhouse reduction targets on the one hand, and on the other, the need to increase competitiveness and security of supply, building possible scenarios for 2050. It focuses on four key aspects: energy efficiency, renewable energy, nuclear energy and carbon capture and storage.

EU Roadmap to a Single European Transport Area — Towards a competitive and resource efficient transport system (White Paper): It aims at breaking the EU transport system's dependence on oil without sacrificing its efficiency and compromising mobility, through the use of less and cleaner energy, the exploitation of modern infrastructure and the reduction of negative impact on the environment and key natural assets like water, land and ecosystems.

Circular Economy Strategy (Closing the loop – An EU action plan for the Circular Economy): The **Circular Economy Package has been adopted with a view to boosting** global competitiveness, fostering sustainable economic growth and generating new jobs. It consists of an EU Action Plan for the Circular Economy, with measures covering the full life cycle of products: from production and consumption to waste management and the market for secondary raw materials.