



~ *Achieving Together* ~

Inclusive Green Economy Forged through Partnership

A strategic partnership between the European Union (EU) and the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) is laying the foundational bricks upon which to build an inclusive green economy. Through an evolving series of projects dating back to Rio+20, the partnership is getting everyone - from governments to business to individuals - to embrace the principles of circularity. The partnership has brought stakeholders together and given them the knowledge, tools, the financial resources and access to financing, to move away from a “take-make-dispose” economic model towards more sustainable pathways of production and consumption. In doing so, the partnership has influenced decision making at every policy level and achieved concrete results on the ground and across the globe.

Sustainable consumption and production (SCP) reduces resource scarcity and the environmental impacts of economic growth – main tenets of green economy. SCP also sits at the core of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially Goal 8 on sustainable and inclusive growth, Goal 9 on building resilient infrastructure, promoting inclusive and sustainable industrialization and fostering innovation, and Goal 12 on ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns. Thus, by driving progress on inclusive green economy, the EU-UNEP partnership also supports implementation of the 2030 Agenda and its vision for shared prosperity and well-being.

Inclusive green economy has long been a shared priority of both UNEP and the European Union. The new European [Consensus on Development “Our World, Our Dignity, Our Future”](#), for instance, stresses the contribution of sustainable consumption and production patterns, resource efficiency, and investments in a low-emission, climate-resilient green economy to people, prosperity, and the planet. UNEP, meanwhile, has provided a consistent platform from which major global initiatives on green economy have been launched. The collaboration successfully leverages the comparative advantages of the EU and UNEP to support progress towards global development goals.

“In a circular economy, the value of products and materials is maintained for as long as possible, waste and resource use are minimized, and resources are kept within the economy when the product has reached the end of its life, to be used again and again to create further value.” – The European Commission

Why Inclusive Green Economy?

Our economies and our well-being depend on natural resources. We must therefore use them more sustainably to assure continued growth and prosperity for all.

Currently, our US\$77 trillion global economy consumes more than 90 billion tons of resources annually - more than three times the level in 1970¹. By 2050, given current trends, resource use is expected to double to 180 billion tons. Such exponential increases in material flows and carbon footprints point to growing environmental pressures, pollution and impacts worldwide.

Our global economy remains far from green or circular. The linear “take-make-dispose” model of production and consumption prevails, and of the estimated 90 billion tons of resources used in 2017, more than 50% were dispersed or emitted as waste, with less than 10% cycled back into the economy the following year. This means there are vast opportunities for improvement. Many countries and regions have recognized the need to adopt inclusive greener models of

¹ Assessing global resource use: A systems approach to resource efficiency and pollution reduction. *International Resource Panel*, 2017. <http://www.resourcepanel.org/reports/assessing-global-resource-use>

economy. Through its varied initiatives, the partnership is supporting this transition at the individual, national, regional and global levels.

SCP sits at the heart of the SDGs and the future we want.

Agenda 2030 recognizes the importance of consuming and producing more sustainably. Not only is there a stand-alone goal on “ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns,” but more than 50 SDG targets depend on this shift. SCP is embedded across 13 of the 17 SDGs.

The International Resource Panel² indicates that investments in resource efficiency are one of the least-cost approaches to meeting the SDGs as well as the Paris Agreement on climate change. By 2030, the economic benefits from decoupling technologies – innovations that grow economies while reducing resource use - could save up to US\$3.7 trillion globally per year. Further, by 2050, policies to improve resource efficiency and tackle climate change could reduce global resource use by up to 28%; cut global greenhouse gas emissions by 74%; and increase global economic activity by 6%.

SCP is an enabling factor traversing the SDGs. Achieving the 2030 Agenda inherently means a global shift towards sustainable patterns of consumption and production.

Joined-Up Delivery Means Results

The EU-UNEP partnership and its green economy initiatives have shown how partnership can accelerate progress on collective outcomes critical to SCP and the SDGs. Joint initiatives have:

- ✓ *Expanded the scientific and knowledge base informing policy and business decisions;*
- ✓ *Strengthened existing cooperation and platforms; and*
- ✓ *Encouraged synergies between initiatives and partners as well as learning from best practices.*

Keeping *science and knowledge at the core of policy*, the partnership has built broad and independent expertise, for instance through the International Resource Panel³ and the Life Cycle Initiative⁴. These projects have strengthened the knowledge base needed for innovation and the uptake of circularity and green economy practices. They have amplified learning and exchange by linking to and investing in the Green Growth Knowledge Platform⁵ and the SCP Clearinghouse.

The partnership is successfully *greening supply and demand*. Its 10-Year Framework of Programmes (10-YFP)/One Planet Network is widely accepted as the vehicle for delivering on sustainable consumption and production, as called for in the 2030 Agenda. Synergies with related partnership initiatives, such as the Partnership for Action on Green Economy (PAGE)⁶, the Resource Efficient and Cleaner Production Network and the World Economic Forum’s Platform for Accelerating the Circular Economy (PACE), are key to spurring further and faster progress on the 10-YFP and the SDGs.

The partnership is *bringing it all together through the EU SWITCH to Green Flagship Initiative*. Launched by the [European Commission Directorate General for International Cooperation and Development](#) (DG DEVCO), the SWITCH to Green Flagship Initiative links complementary programmes to improve the overall coherence, coordination and visibility of EU-funded international cooperation initiatives on green economy. The Initiative⁷ builds on the SWITCH regional programmes in Asia, Africa and the Mediterranean, which support the transition to an inclusive green economy through the promotion of enabling frameworks, green business development and green investments / access to sustainable

² <http://www.resourcepanel.org/>
<https://www.lifecycleinitiative.org/>

⁵ <http://www.greengrowthknowledge.org/>

⁶ <https://www.un-page.org/>

⁷ <https://www.switchtogreen.eu/?p=143>

finance. Collaborating on their outreach, projects under the Initiative will release a joint media package to be presented to journalists for the first time at the fourth session of the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA-4).

Project Highlights

EU-UNEP partnership initiatives are literally changing how we produce and consume – with the end goal of assuring that tomorrow’s economy is more circular, greener and more sustainable. Here are a few projects highlighting how the partnership accelerates global momentum on SCP and the SDGs.

- The **International Resource Panel**, a collaboration of eminent thinkers, creates scientific assessments that show the impacts of decoupling economic growth from environmental degradation. The Panel has been prolific and impactful, helping the international community move towards a greener circular economy. Since 2003, the IRP has produced 16 groundbreaking reports on topics traversing the SDGs.
- UNEP drives transformative SCP policies and practices in its capacity as **Secretariat for the 10YFP**, now known as the **One Planet Network**⁸. Through the Platform’s six Programmes, implemented in collaboration with over 450 partner organizations, UNEP has aligned work on SCP, the Paris Agreement, the 2030 Agenda and New Urban Agenda, fostering collaboration across international frameworks.
- Jointly delivered by UNEP, ILO, UNDP, UNIDO and UNITAR, the **Partnership for Action on Green Economy (PAGE)** assists thirteen developing countries and provinces with planning, prioritizing and implementing more inclusive and green economic models. Since its inception, 57 PAGE assessments have supported the reframing of 33 economic policies around sustainability in 11 countries, in partnership with 73 national institutes and ministries. PAGE trained 2,500 stakeholders.
- The **SWITCH** programmes in Asia⁹, Africa¹⁰ and the Mediterranean¹¹ turn environmental challenges into opportunities. They place inclusive green economy at the core of sustainable development, boosting livelihoods while protecting the environment. The programmes enable a literal switch to a green economy through: access to green finance; green policies and standards; promotion of sustainable production and consumption, including by introducing circularity and resource efficiency practices; and by building eco-entrepreneurship skills and support for innovative solutions.



Indicatively, in Africa, countries are using national SCP strategies to analyze opportunities and challenges for green business development, in Asia, countries have tailored green financing to SMEs, while in the Mediterranean, the concept of circularity in SCP practices has been well integrated into the Barcelona Convention regional governance framework and the programme supported demonstration projects, development of eco-design and green business models in the Mediterranean Partner countries.

- The **Greening Economies in the Eastern Neighborhood (EaP GREEN)**¹² project supported green economy in six countries of the European Union’s Eastern Partnership (EaP) - Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova

⁸ <http://www.oneplanetnetwork.org/>

⁹ <http://www.switch-asia.eu/>

¹⁰ <https://www.switchafricagreen.org/index.php?lang=en>

¹¹ <https://www.switchmed.eu/en>

¹² <http://www.green-economies-eap.org/>

and Ukraine. It mainstreamed SCP into national development plans, legislation and regulatory frameworks, and promoted the shift to circularity as well as the use of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) in priority economic sectors. Belarus and Moldova adopted green economy action plans and programmes. Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine reviewed their legal and regulatory frameworks and conducted market assessments for sustainable public procurement (SPP). Moldova and Ukraine subsequently adopted national SPP policy and action plans. Building on the achievements and lessons learned under EaP GREEN, a new EU4Environment project will further support these countries to unlock green growth opportunities and better manage the environmental risks and impacts of development.

Additional EU-funded Projects in the Green Economy Portfolio

- The **Green Economy TEST** project enables developing countries to objectively assess opportunities, benefits and challenges of liberalized trade in environmentally sound technologies (EST). With a focus on ASEAN and the EAC, it enhances developing countries' participation in relevant trade negotiations, strengthening inclusive value chain integration and trade in EST.
- The project on **Green Economy and Trade (GE TOP)** shifted the global narrative on the links between international trade and the green economy, contributing to paras 125 and 127 of the zero draft of the Rio+20 Outcome Document.
- The **Inclusive Green Economy Policy Making for SDGs** project developed and implemented an Inclusive Green Economy Policy Review (IGEPR) methodology and an Integrated Green Economy Modelling (IGEM) tool for analyzing countries' experiences with the implementation of green economy policies.
- A project on **Indicators for Measuring the Green Economy Transition** helped countries communicate and apply guidelines for measuring the transformational effects of a green economy approach. It launched the "Guidance Manual for Green Economy Indicators" and a synthesis report focusing on Ghana, Mauritius and Uruguay that discusses how indicators assist in national green economy policymaking.
- A project called **Inquiry Into the Design of a Sustainable Financial System**¹³ enhanced the international financial system's effectiveness in mobilizing capital towards a green and inclusive economy. Its first global report, launched at the 2015 IMF-World Bank Annual Meetings, reflected an in-depth analysis of practice in 15 countries. Report results were captured in over 70 working papers.
- The **UNEP FI**¹⁴ project is a partnership between UNEP and the global financial sector. Over 200 financial institutions, including banks, insurers and fund managers, now work with UNEP to understand today's environmental challenges, why they matter to finance, and how to address them. Its knowledge products, like the 2015 Positive Impact Initiative, drive dialogue and the implementation of finance for the SDGs.
- The **Resource Efficiency and Eco-Innovation in Developing and Transition Economies** project (REED TE) builds capacity for eco-innovation in small and medium enterprises (SMEs). It implemented national demonstration projects in nine countries across Asia, Latin America and Africa. It has provided technical assistance to 44 SMEs to develop and implement eco-innovation business models, and as a result, countries have set up national road maps to mainstream eco-innovation into their policies.
- The project **Demand and Supply of Sustainable Products through Sustainable Public Procurement (SPP) and Eco-labelling** built capacity across 13 countries. It established eco-labelling programmes in Argentina, Chile, Costa

¹³ <http://unepinquiry.org/>

¹⁴ <https://www.unepfi.org/>

Rica, Ecuador, Mauritius, Mongolia, Morocco, Peru and Togo. Argentina, Peru, Vietnam, and Mongolia completed SPP Action Plans in 2017, the same year the project launched the Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) Online Platform on Sustainable Public Procurement.

- In the Caribbean, the project **Advancing Caribbean States' Sustainable Development Agenda through Green Economy Policies (ACSSD-GE)** created the first regional green economy knowledge-sharing platform for representatives of public and private sectors from 10 Caribbean countries. It also established three multi-stakeholder Green Economy Steering Committees (GESCs) to guide the national knowledge and networking process in Haiti, Jamaica, and Saint Lucia.