

Senegal accelerates circular practices



Senegal has emerged as a major economic centre in Francophone West Africa with one of the highest GDP growth rates in Africa between 2014 and 2018 (above 6% annually). The country's economy largely hinges on the services sector, with growth driven by exports and investment. Natural resources such as fish, livestock, groundnuts and minerals also play an important role in the economy.¹ Rapid urbanisation and migration to urban areas on the coast have increased demand for land, water and infrastructure, and have led to coastal ecosystem degradation, air pollution and land/water contamination due to inappropriate waste disposal.

Senegal has emphasised the importance of the transition to a green and circular economy, among others, through the [Plan Sénégal Emergent \(PSE\)](#) (2014), including its phase 2 [Priority Action Plan 2019-2023](#) and its environmental component (Green PSE). Relevant priority actions include interventions in the energy mix to promote renewable energy (solar and wind), ecosystem protection (in particular, reforestation with the creation of the Senegalese Agency for Reforestation and the Great Green Wall) and a "Zero Waste Programme", which focuses on solid waste collection and treatment in urban areas. The Zero Waste Programme explicitly moves towards a circular economy and aims to reduce costs, reuse inputs, take harmful substances out of the environment and create awareness of relevant issues.

Along these policy processes, a pivotal step encouraging the country's transition was the [High-Level Conference on Circular Economy, Green Industry and Jobs \(2019\)](#) organised by the European Commission, UNIDO and the Government of Senegal, that led to the adoption of the "Dakar Vision on Circular Economy, Green Industry and Jobs" and strengthened regional engagement on the circular economy.

switch²
green

1. World Bank Data: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/senegal/overview#:~:text=Economic%20overview&text=GDP%20growth%20was%205.3%25%20in,were%20the%20strongest%20growth%20drivers>.

Senegal's recipe for a circular economy

The focus on waste management and the transition to a circular economy has been corroborated by the National Programme on Waste Management, including the Project for the Promotion of Integrated Management and Economy of Solid Waste in Senegal (PROMOGED) and a recent Law on Plastic Waste ([Loi No. 2020-04](#)). The national programme consists of five components: legal and financial reforms; the development of a waste economy; improvement of solid waste management systems; inclusive, participatory and responsible management of the sector; and effective governance of the sector. This programme promotes the recovery and recycling of waste, and encourages inclusive and participatory management of waste collection. The Law on Plastic Waste aims to prevent and reduce the environmental and human health impact of single-use plastic waste. A decree on Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) – under development since 2015 – has been recently promoted through [a consultation and dialogue process](#) intended to accelerate the process.

The [National Strategy for the Promotion of Green Jobs in Senegal](#) (SNPEV) 2015-2020 aims to formalise jobs in the circular economy, for example in recycling, and to transform these activities into decent jobs. As early as 2013, the [National Strategy for Economic and Social Development \(NSES\) 2013-2017](#) identified priority actions related to the circular economy: restoration of

degraded ecosystems, investment in waste infrastructure, promotion of sustainable consumption, cleaner production and sustainable tourism. Further strategies that support the transitioning to a green and circular economy in Senegal include: the [National Strategic Orientation Document on the green economy](#), the [National Action Plan for Energy Efficiency 2015-2020/2030](#), [Green Secondary Cities Development Program](#) and the [Nationally Determined Contributions \(NDCs\)](#) adopted in December 2020.



Milestones for the transition



Drivers for the circular shift

🕒 **Creating green jobs in new sectors to reduce poverty:** The National Strategy for the Promotion of Green Jobs in Senegal (SNEV), integrated into the Plan Sénégal Emergent, focused on developing and promoting new sectors for green jobs, for example around mobile kiosks with solar panels, drinking water production and the recycling of energy efficient lamps, along with other opportunities in rural waste valorisation, aquaculture, sustainable agriculture and forestry. Projects under the National Strategy mostly target unemployed and rural populations with the goal to reduce poverty.

“Renewable energy for productive use in agriculture is important as the cost of energy in Senegal is high, and the sector is particularly vulnerable to climate change. We need to look at resilience and productivity through adoption of technology and climate smart agricultural practices. In particular, this can have an impact on jobs for women and youth.”

Romain Brillie,
Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI)

🕒 **Building resilience and adding value in high-employment sectors:** With sustainable agricultural practices, low carbon technologies such as solar-powered irrigation systems and reforestation programmes, Senegal is advancing the transition to a circular economy in priority sectors with a high level of employment, such as agriculture and forestry. Adopting circular economy approaches – for example through using agricultural residue or regenerative plants as sources of energy – fosters local value-added production and builds resilience in sectors vulnerable to climate change.

🕒 **Improving quality of life in urban areas:** Infrastructure in urban areas is under stress from a growing population, poor urban planning, flooding and climate change events such as heavy rainfall. These challenges drive efforts to improve urban waste management, invest in sanitation infrastructure and integrate circularity concerns into the construction sector.

🕒 **Political leadership:** The Presidency of Senegal has given political guidance. The leadership role of the president was recognised in 2017, when he became a Global Green Growth Institute green growth champion for promoting the green economy.

How EU support accelerated the switch to a CE

With the **National Indicative Programme 2014-2020** being the basis for cooperation between Senegal and the European Union, EU support through the 11th European Development Fund focused on democratic governance, sustainable agriculture development and food security, and water and sanitation. Furthermore, the EU provided support for renewable energy, water infrastructure, integrated coastal zone management and wastewater treatment in Hann Bay.

From 2021, the European Investment Bank (EIB) will be co-funding the Senegal Integrated Solid Waste Management Project, which is part of the second phase of the National Waste Management Programme. The EU has also provided finance through EIB projects on [scaling solar PV](#), and projects with circular economy advancements, such as the [transformation of degraded arable, pasture land and water irrigation systems for rice production in the Senegal River Valley](#).

EU member states have supported circular practices. Luxembourg with its' Ministry of Environment, Climate & Sustainable Development of the EU's member state funds a programme with focus on plastic waste, E-waste and domestic wastewater. Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden via GIZ and GGGI implement an energy efficiency project.

The EU co-funded Partnership for Action on the Green Economy (PAGE) has supported Senegal since 2014 to integrate the inclusive green economy into national policies, develop reforms for green jobs, promote green industries and build capacities in green skills, including by hosting National Green Economy Days (2015, 2018, and 2020) and establishing a National Platform on the Green Economy to engage stakeholders around green jobs, green finance and climate change.

The **Eurocham** has served as an entry point for dialogue with the European and Senegalese private sector. The **Eurocham** brings together European investors, with a relevant group having been established to advocate for Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) projects and

engage Senegalese companies in the process. Indicatively, a French construction company has set up a platform to support circular economy and sustainable city initiatives to promote and reduce the carbon footprint in the construction sector.

Motivation for the European Union Delegation in Senegal to bring in a focus on the circular economy in the next programming cycle grew out of a high-level conference on “Circular Economy, Green Industries and Jobs in West Africa” held in July 2019. The conference included a Circular Economy Mission from the Director General for Environment and the Director General for International Cooperation and Development and was attended by high level representatives from the Senegalese government. The conference was jointly held by the Republic of Senegal, the member countries of ECOWAS, the UNIDO and the European Commission. It was co-chaired by the Ministry of Industries and the Ministry of Environment.

EU support at a glance

- 🕒 Projects on waste recovery and waste management infrastructure
- 🕒 Projects on water and sanitation, renewable energy, integrated coastal zone management, agriculture and food security
- 🕒 Support via the EU co-funded Partnership on Green Economy in policy processes and event organisation, and the establishment of a National Platform on the Green Economy
- 🕒 Support to the high-level conference “Circular Economy, Green Industries and Jobs in West Africa”
- 🕒 Support to the private sector via Eurocham

Lessons learnt

From recent EU support for a circular economy, the EU Delegation has drawn the following lessons:



Align with national and institutional strategic priorities:

Alignment to the [Plan Sénégal Emergent \(PSE\)](#) and Green PSE, as well as the adopted [NDC](#), have provided entry points for discussions on the circular economy. Furthermore, this has enabled conversations on green and circular components of growth to continue.



Establish a conducive regulatory environment

to facilitate private sector contributions to the transition. In Senegal, the e-waste sector is a good example of the importance of a clear regulatory framework, the lack of which currently hinders full engagement by private companies.



Utilise multiple entry points to sustainably advance the circular economy agenda:

Links to work under the governance portfolio, for example, have also provided entry points for discussion with other actors, such as the Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Trade. For the EU Delegation to Senegal, Eurocham has been an entry point for dialogue with the European and Senegalese private sector.

Future steps

To evolve completely, the CE transition needs to remain **high on the political agenda**; this calls for coordination and for raising awareness among stakeholders. The CE transition also requires an expansion to the **local government level**. Political leadership at the national level needs to translate into action within local municipalities and *collectivités*. In this context, actors at the local level would benefit from **resources in terms of time, investment, staff and technical support**. As circular economy topics often span across sectors and topics, **clear roles and responsibilities between ministries** would facilitate the transition. Furthermore, efforts are needed to **change perceptions of private sector actors** on the trade-off between profit and environmental impact as part of the private sector remains unconvinced of the economic benefits of transitioning to green and circular activities. Within a context of many competing priorities and recovery of the economy, an opportunity exists **to integrate circular economy considerations into building back efforts** as a means to enhance resilience and sustainability.

