



GO 4 SDGs

ANNUAL REPORT 2022

Regional Solutions to Accelerate Implementation



Federal Ministry
for the Environment, Nature Conservation,
Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection



WORLD
ECONOMIC
FORUM



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1. REFLECTION ON 2022

This progress report highlights the main achievements of the Global Opportunities for SDGs (GO4SDGs) during the second year of work. We are pleased to see that during 2022, we have consolidated many global and regional partnerships, scaling up action and capacity development of governments, Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), financial institutions, youth networks, universities, and other actors. We have also started to yield results in high-impact sectors, such as agri-food, fashion/textiles, and tourism.

Notably a key achievement this year was the active engagement in preparing the **International Meeting of “Stockholm+50: A healthy planet for the prosperity of all – our responsibility, our opportunity.”** GO4SDGs, in close cooperation with the Swedish Government, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), organized five regional multi-stakeholder consultations, bringing around 2,000 participants, and new voices from indigenous people, women, youth, private sector, governments, faith-based organizations, UN Agencies, among others. The consultations resulted in key messages, which informed the Stockholm+50 Leadership Dialogues and were reflected in the outcome document.

Following the key recommendations of Stockholm+50, together with International Labour Organization (ILO), UNEP, and United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), we have developed the **“Green Jobs for Youth Pact,”** which was launched at the Climate Change Conference COP27. The Pact aims to tackle the youth and green jobs deficit based on three tracks: i) Employment and entrepreneurship, ii) Education and training for green skills, and iii) Empowerment and youth partnerships, to make the transition to a low-carbon, circular and nature-positive economy.

Another key strategic partnership has been our work with **UNEP Finance Initiative (UNEP FI), regionalizing the global report on “Financing Circularity” in Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC).** This work has engaged over 15 financial institutions and has strengthened the partnerships with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), IDB Invest, Dalberg, and the African Development

Bank, among others. It has also contributed to the work of the LAC Circular Economy Coalition and the African Circular Economy Alliance. As a result, we are setting up a task force on sustainable finance.

Our agenda supporting SMEs has advanced, strengthening our work with **Supporting Entrepreneurs for Environment and Development (SEED) and the Global Green Knowledge Platform (GGKP).** Innovation Labs were held in five regions and informed the development of the “Sustainable SME Action Agenda for 2030” launched at COP27. Furthermore, the I-GO tool has been deployed in three regions (LAC, Africa, and Central Asia) assisting over 300 SMEs with the self-assessment of resource efficiency.

Another important partnership strengthened this year, is the **10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production (10YFP) and its One Planet Network (OPN).** The 10YFP mandate was extended until 2030, and a new Global Strategy for Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) was approved. GO4SDGs is a strategic partner to support the delivery of pillar three of the Global Strategy related to “empowering countries and stakeholders in mainstreaming and implementing SCP, leveraging in the UN Development System.” We are strengthening cooperation with UN Agencies and UN Country Teams to develop and implement SCP strategies and initiatives at the national level.

Together with the 10YFP Programme on Sustainable Food Systems and the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP), we have **built the capacity to measure and reduce food waste across four regions, supporting 25 countries and 68 national partners.** Out of these, 16 countries have developed plans to measure food waste and approaches to tackling food waste.

The importance of **Sustainable lifestyles under 1.5 degrees** was highlighted at the International Meeting Stockholm+50 and the World Environment Day (WED) through multi-stakeholder dialogues, science-based evidence, policy recommendations, and inputs to a WED Practical Guide. Our work on the Sustainable Lifestyles Action Academy has continued developing online modules, and a gamification on **“My Sustainable Living Challenge”** in close cooperation

with the UN System Staff College and the Hot or Cool Institute.

GO4SDGs has been very dynamic at the regional level focusing on high-impact sectors and scaling up action. The **Sustainable Fashion Academy** in West Asia has trained governments, SMEs, and youth to integrate circularity in the sector. In Africa, we have launched **an ecosystem approach to increase SMEs' access to green finance to improve resource efficiency in relevant value chains**. This is done with the Green Industry Platform, the African Guarantee Fund (AGF), Absa Bank Kenya Limited, Kenya National Cleaner Production Centre, and finance experts.

In Africa and Central Asia, we are working on **sustainable tourism**. We are upscaling sustainable tourism in East Africa by developing mandatory national sustainable tourism certification standards, supporting financing mechanisms, and building capacity in MSMEs. In Central Asia, we are building the capacity of women in the tourism sector to reduce food waste and the use of single-use plastic products. In Latin America and the Caribbean, we are advancing circular economy, supporting the **regional Circular Economy Coalition** with the development of the regional Vision on Circular Economy to align understanding and increase cooperation among different stakeholders.

All this work confirms the important mission of GO4SDGs in connecting global partnerships to regional priorities and needs, as well as our ability to build upon existing initiatives

and develop alliances with regional strategic partners. Still, much remains to be done to strengthen cooperation for a bigger and collective impact, as well as, to mobilize resources for a systemic change toward sustainability.

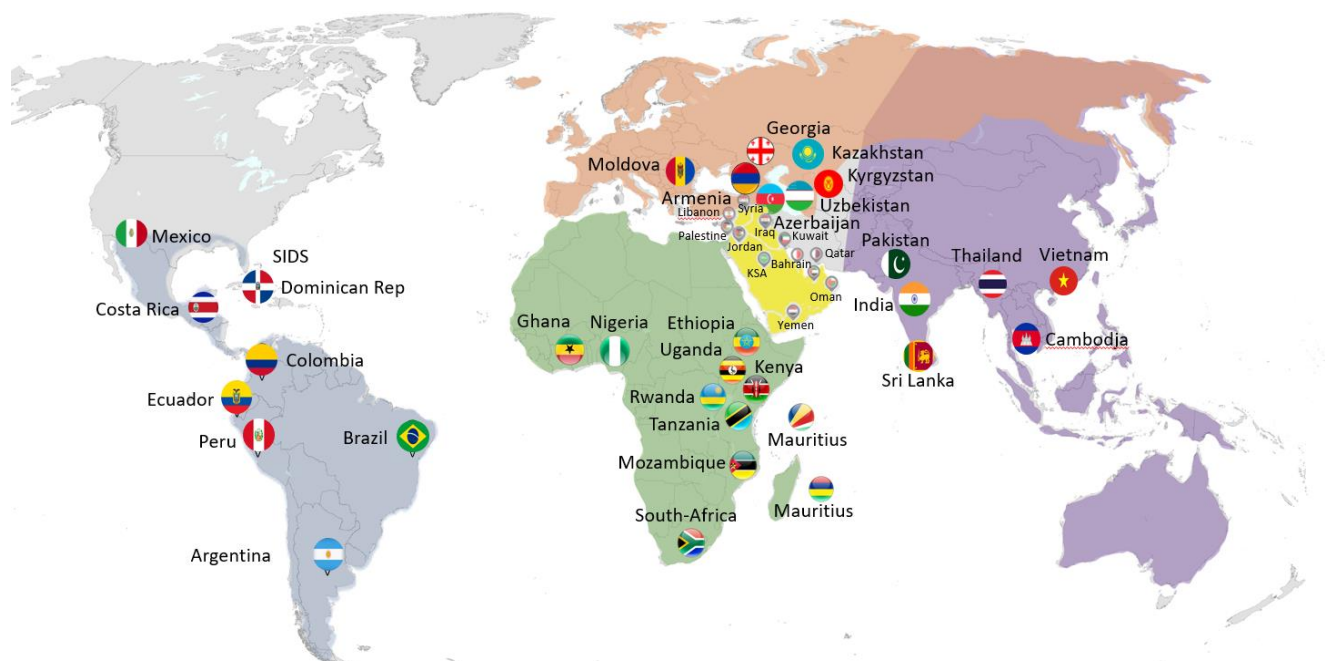
We want to thank all our partners for their cooperation and collective impact. We look forward to an even more powerful 2023.



Adriana Zacarias Farah
Head and Global Coordinator GO4SDGs, UNEP
Deputy head 10YFP Secretariat

2. GO4SDGs REGIONAL PRESENCE & NUMBERS

GO4SDGs works across five regions in 58 countries:



Our collective impact:



3. GO4SDGs STRATEGIC APPROACH

The Global Opportunities for Sustainable Development Goals (GO4SDGs) aims to accelerate implementation to meet the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Goals, especially, SDG 12 (Sustainable Consumption and Production) and SDG 8 (Decent Work & Green Economies). The Initiative builds partnerships connecting global initiatives with regional demands and solutions.

GO4SDGs uses a vast number and variety of tools developed by its partners and focuses on implementation, action, scaling up, and replications of good practices. GO4SDGs connects the dots and builds synergies with relevant partners to generate a more significant collective impact.

In doing so, GO4SDGs focuses on three main action components: i) supporting **governments** to strengthen policy coherence, ii) working with **small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)** to increase capacities and access for financing innovation and circularity, and iii) **youth empowerment** to amplify their voices and empower them to embrace sustainable lifestyles.

To achieve this, the initiative collaborates with its partners to share best practices, science-based knowledge, tools, and capacity development in the high-impact sectors of agri-food, fashion/textiles, and tourism.

Our partners:



Our approach:

Policy Coherence



Supporting governments to strengthen policy coherence; scaling up solutions for inclusive green economies & sustainable consumption & production

SMEs Innovation



To increase their capacities and access to financing innovation and circularity

Youth Empowerment



Empowering youth to amplify their voices and empower them to embrace sustainable lifestyles

Our Focus Areas in 2022-2023

Mainstreaming SCP & Circularity - policy coherence, financial mechanisms & capacity development

Supporting SMEs - to access finance for innovation & circularity

Advancing circularity in high-impact sectors - focus on fashion/textiles, agri-food & tourism

Empowering Youth - for sustainable lifestyles within 1.5 degrees & to increase skills to get green jobs

4. KEY ACHIEVEMENTS 2022

4.1 Almost 2,000 different voices and perspectives during 5 Regional Consultations @ Stockholm+50

The International Meeting Stockholm+50 (S+50) commemorates the 1972 UN Conference on the Human Environment and celebrates 50 years of global environmental action. To prepare for Stockholm+50, the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), with GO4SDGs as a key partner, organized five online regional multi-stakeholder consultations to discuss region-specific topics, identify best practices to scale up and bring concrete solutions to accelerate action to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



Participants represented a diversity of stakeholders, including youth, women, indigenous peoples, NGOs, the private sector, governments, and UN Agencies, among

others. Participants came together to reflect on and review how to accelerate action to achieve sustainable development and to prepare regional key messages to take forward to the International Meeting Stockholm+50. The consultations were held virtually (per region, in May and April 2022) and were live-streamed. More than 2,000 participants joined the virtual consultations, and many more followed the live streams.

The **Synthesis Report of the Five Regional Multi-stakeholder Consultations** highlights key recommendations from the five consultations. The recommendations respond to the themes of the S+50 leadership dialogues and identify priority high-impact sectors per region.

The consultations brought **new voices and narratives** to the table. They also showed the interest of civil society to reflect collectively on the environmental agenda, the need to strengthen multilateralism, intergenerational responsibility, and work for a new vision and pathways for a social and economic transformation to achieve sustainable development. Optimism was present, with around 70% of participants believing that their country or region can take bold decisions to protect the planet.

A Global Outlook: Cross-Regional Recommendations based on the Regional Consultations:

- Adopt new metrics **beyond GDP**
- Mainstream **Indigenous knowledge and rights** as part of the solutions for a healthy planet
- Need for new narratives and paradigms that offer positive and feasible visions of the future
- Criminalize **'ecocide'** and protect environmental defenders
- Rebuild **trust** among governments and stakeholders
- Steer **investments towards green sectors and green jobs** and skills to advance a just transition
- Private sector **'responsibility'** and inclusion of **SMEs**
- Green jobs and skills for **youth and vulnerable groups**
- Adopt **Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) and Circularity** in value chains and Nature-based Solutions (NbS)
- **Finance sustainability**

4.2 Green Jobs for Youth Pact, a legacy initiative of Stockholm+50

One of the focus areas of GO4SDGs is youth empowerment and expanding their opportunities for green jobs as a driving force for the economic transformation and the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. As a legacy initiative of Stockholm+50, UNEP (through GO4SDGs and the Youth Empowerment Alliance (YEA!)), ILO and UNICEF/Generation Unlimited have joined forces to develop the 'Green Jobs for Youth Pact.' The Pact aims to tackle the youth and green jobs deficit based on three tracks; Employment and entrepreneurship, Education and training for green skills, and Empowerment and youth partnerships, to make the transition to a low-carbon, circular and nature-positive economy.

8.4 million jobs for young people could be created by 2030 by implementing green and blue policy measures

This requires investments in upskilling and reskilling in diverse sectors like clean energy, buildings, construction, or sustainable agriculture. This Pact works with and for young people, governments, social partners, employers and workers' organizations, education entities, and the private sector. The Pact calls on all these key actors, to be part of a bold and unique partnership for action to close the skills gap in developing countries, targeting climate-vulnerable sectors, and contributing to a systemic change harvesting benefits for people, the planet, and prosperity.



Green Jobs for youth Pact – The main goals

The main goals are to increase commitments and speed up action to create green jobs for young people; strengthen the business and policy frameworks for sustainable economic growth; strengthen and develop green businesses; and close the skill gap necessary to reap benefits for the environment, society, and the climate in a way that encourages more and better jobs for young people.

Green Job for Youth Pact – Targets:



Launch at COP27

During COP27 in November 2022, the Pact was launched and promoted through several events by the three agencies and their key partners). This brought high-level speakers, national experts and operational experts together to cover the youth employment and climate action nexus holistically, ranging from global policy perspectives to national lessons learned.

Youth Advisory Group

The Pact will be co-designed and implemented with youth champions via a Youth Advisory Group composed of young experts from various sectors and geographies. Representatives from youth expert constituencies will join, amongst others: YOUNGO (the official Youth NGO of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCC)), Children & Youth Major Group accredited to UNEP, Students Organizing for Sustainability International, UNICEF/Generation Unlimited (GenU) Young People's Action Team, Young Trade Unionists (International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) nominee), and Young employer's representative.

Next steps

In 2023 the Pact will focus on rolling out its activities at the global and regional levels. GO4SDGs will continue to be an active partner for regional delivery.

Regional Rollout

Advancing Green Jobs for African Youth in agri-Food

As part of rolling out the Pact in the regions, GO4SDGs has started to develop a project to support decent green jobs for mostly unemployed African youth, focusing on the agri-food sector. Agriculture is Africa's largest economic sector. The project focuses on sustainable agriculture and food value chains. The activities are: 1. Developing a knowledgebase of green entrepreneurship initiatives, 2. Facilitating training for African youth on green entrepreneurship, and 3. Advancing circular business models in sustainable food systems (competition for youth-led Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs).

Regional rollout in Latin America and the Caribbean

[GO4SDGs](#) is to i) assess the need for training of purpose-driven professionals, ii) support the access graduate youth

have to green jobs and, iii) to include sustainable lifestyles in the university curricula. To this end, GO4SDGs is working with the Alliance of Ibero-American Networks of Universities for Sustainability and the Environment (ARIUSA) as a regional partner, as well as with ILO and UNICEF. The expected outcome is to identify gaps and opportunities for education to prepare young professionals for green jobs. This activity includes five webinars (multi-lingual). The first three webinars took place from September to December 2022, with over 290 participants.



4.3 Policy coherence to mainstream SCP and circularity in national policies

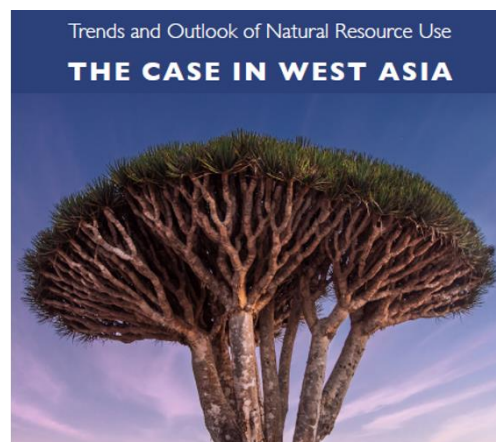
As part of GO4SDGs' component one 'Policy-Coherence,' GO4SDGs supports governments with science-based knowledge, capacity development, and south-south cooperation to mainstream SCP (Sustainable Consumption and Production) and circularity in national policies, including policies related to climate change and biodiversity. The following activities have been carried out across regions based on their regional priorities and demands.

Trends and Outlook of Natural Resource Use in West Asia

This think piece is the first regional version of the '[Global Resources Outlook 2019](#).' It has been developed in collaboration with UNEP and the International Resource Panel (IRP). This report "Trends and Outlook of Natural Resources in West Asia" aims to enhance the knowledge and capacity of policymakers in West Asia about the environmental impacts of natural resource use in the region. The think piece provides scientific information on:

- Data on natural resource use and its environmental impacts.

- The potential outlook for natural resource use and GHG emissions from 2015 to 2060. This includes two different scenarios or pathways, one based on "Historical Trends" and the second, "Towards Sustainability."
- Background information for undertaking regional consultations to shape relevant and targeted regional policies aimed at the sustainable use of resources.



Some findings on greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and natural resource use are:

- **GHG emissions** in the region are significantly higher than the global average.
- **Biodiversity**: Approx. 90 percent of land use-related biodiversity loss is embodied in imported products, requiring supply chain management actions.
- **Water Stress**: Since 1996, the effects of water stress in West Asia have remained largely unchanged. Water stress can be reduced by improving water productivity, reducing production, and potentially adjusting trade.

The think piece through the Towards Sustainability outlook introduces comprehensive policies to improve resource efficiency and mitigate GHG emissions in West Asia and provides projections for sustainable future pathways.

Strategic partnership GO4SDGs and One Planet Network to scale up regional and national delivery



In September 2022, the strategic partnership of GO4SDGs with One Planet Network was launched. This will help to identify stronger synergies, enhance knowledge-sharing, and increase capacity to deliver at the regional and national level on our mutual goal towards SCP. GO4SDGs has become a key partner in supporting the implementation of the new “Global Strategy for Sustainable Consumption and Production,” focusing on pillar three related to “Empowering countries – in particular developing countries – and stakeholders in mainstreaming and implementing SCP, leveraging in the UN Development System.”

In this regard, GO4SDGs will enhance cooperation with UN Agencies, UN Resident Coordinators, and UN Country Teams to increase knowledge of the need and benefits of SCP and circularity and support the development and implementation of national SCP strategies and initiatives. Dialogue with the UN Environment Management Group (EMG) was held, and a proposal to organize nexus dialogues on SCP, during 2023, was accepted. Likewise, GO4SDGs, together with the OPN and UNDP, will provide capacity development on integrating SCP and circular economy in climate policies, including National Determined Contributions (NDCs).

Increasing knowledge on sustainable consumption and production, through regional “Science Partners”

GO4SDGs, together with the One Planet Network (OPN) and the Life Cycle Initiative, has engaged five Regional Science Partners for Sustainable Consumption and Production in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Latin America, and the Caribbean. The Science Partners will help to increase knowledge on the importance to promote SCP and will provide training to develop regional capacities to use science-based tools and approaches, such as the SCP Hotspot Analyses Tool.



Our SCP Science Partners in the regions:

	The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI), India
	The Joint Graduate School of Energy and Environment (JGSEE), King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi, Thailand
	CLIOPE Group/Universidad Tecnológica Nacional/CONICET, Argentina
	Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú
	National Cleaner Production Centre of South Africa

For more information [click here](#).

The first year, the Science Partners have focused on using the SCP Hotspot Analysis Tool ([SCP-HAT](#)) to identify impactful hotspots for SCP interventions for governments. The Science Partners have showcased SCP-HAT at key regional events and provided presentations on the tool to the key partners in their region, including in Africa to the South African government, and in LAC to the annual life cycle conference. In Asia-Pacific and LAC, the Science Partners have integrated the SCP-HAT into institutions'

student programmes, including at the master's level. UNEP, together with the Science Partners, is identifying interested countries for direct SCP-HAT national assessment support in 2023.

Capacity development to reduce Food Waste (SDG 12.3)

GO4SDGs, One Planet Network (Sustainable Food Systems Programme), and WRAP set up four Regional multi-stakeholder Working Groups in Africa, Asia Pacific, Latin America, and West Asia to increase national capacities to measure and reduce food waste. The working groups covered representatives from 25 countries, 68 national and regional institutions, organizations, and partners. Eight capacity-building workshops were held for each region, enabling exchange between countries on food waste challenges, providing training on the Food Waste Index approach, and facilitating reporting on SDG 12.3 to halve food waste by 2030.

The workshops supported the development of national action plans for measurement, provided guidance on integrating food waste into National Determined Contributions (NDCs), and included interventions on finance for food waste measurement and reduction. Funding was highlighted as a significant barrier to action for most countries submitting food-waste measurement plans.

Impact: Across the four regions (Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, and West Asia), representatives from 25 countries and 68 national partners participated. 16 countries developed draft measurement plans – the assignment for the final workshop –, and ten were developed with government input. Concerning the three sectors covered by the Food Waste Index/SDG 12.3 reporting, 12 countries developed plans for household measurement, and ten countries also covered the retail and food service sectors in their measurement plans.

As part of the Regional Working Group, ROWA has engaged with governments individually to catalyze action on baselines. The first was Qatar, building upon the “Green Tech project” implemented by UNEP’s regional office of West Asia (ROWA) in 2021 (Case study: [Build Back Better: Using Green and Digital Technologies to Reduce Food Waste at Consumer Level | UNEP](#)), which analyzed the food waste situation in Doha (Qatar). In early 2022, a partnership with the Ministry of Municipality of Qatar led to a finalized household food waste baseline in September 2022.

Currently, there is an ongoing discussion about mobilizing resources to expand the scope of the work. A project proposal has been jointly developed with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) to reply to the United Arab Emirates government's request to develop a national food loss and waste baseline.

Next steps: It was recommended that the Regional Food Waste Working Groups continue with a tailored focus on regional priorities, providing deeper knowledge in key food waste reduction approaches, including circular food systems transitions, consumer behavior change programmes, public-private partnerships, strategy, policy and NDCs, measurement and reporting follow-up, and finance as a cross-cutting issue. In parallel, a Green Climate Fund proposal that could support up to 12 front-running countries in the Regional Working Groups is under development.



4.4 Financing Circularity – identifying regional mechanisms and partnerships

Access to financing for sustainable technologies for SMEs is an important aspect of GO4SDGs work to accelerate sustainable progress. In Sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean, regional studies were conducted to identify opportunities and gaps of regional financial mechanisms. The reports actively engaged financial institutions and built regional partnerships to strengthen cooperation and increase finance for circularity.

Unlocking Circular Economy Finance in Latin America and the Caribbean

To scale up and contextualize the global UNEP FI report on '[Financing Circularity: Demystifying Finance for the Circular Economy](#),' UNEP FI and GO4SDGs, in cooperation with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and IDB Invest developed a regional deep dive study, 'Unlocking Circular Economy Finance in Latin America and the Caribbean,' to identify policies and existing financial mechanisms to promote circular economy in the region. The study also included deep dives into specific countries, including Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Mexico, and Peru.



The study identifies policy options and key areas that offer the most significant potential for leveraging financial mechanisms for circularity and circular business models in the region. Preliminary findings are:

- Innovation ecosystems, business mentoring, acceleration programs, and financial mechanisms offered tremendous value to circular entrepreneurs.
- A shared notion of accelerating the circular transition must be collectively established by

policyholders, financial industry regulators, and financial institutions.

- The circular finance ecosystem mentioned before is essential to building financial institutions' capacities, raising financial clients' awareness, and contributing to policy framework development.

Net steps: set up a task force on sustainable finance to discuss topics of taxonomy and metrics for financing circular economy. The task force will be part of the LAC Circular Economy Coalition, with UNEP FI, IDB, and GO4SDGs. A pilot is planned with financial institutions and banking associations to provide a step-by-step approach to incorporating circular economy finance in their strategy, products, and services.



As part of this effort, UNEP FI and GO4SDGs, together with its partners, organized [a series of five webinars](#) exploring how financial institutions can accelerate the transition to a circular economy. These webinars looked at possible strategies and actions, how to manage current risks and barriers, and identify business opportunities through innovative financial products and services.

Impact: 510 participants from National Development Banks, Government Stakeholders, Academia, and Private Sector Financial Institutions from 42 countries joined the webinars. The webinars enabled actors to access information and exchange knowledge on existing initiatives to increase finance for circular economy, as well as information and case studies on overcoming financial and non-financial barriers.

Next steps: After creating a knowledge baseline, pilots and implementation models are expected to take place as the next steps. Moreover, this model is a leading example of good practices for other regions. The Canadian Circular Economy Leadership has engaged with this initiative and its participants, taking this as inspiration for its implementation in North America.

Partners: UNEP FI, UNEP, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), IDB Invest, the eco.business Development Facility and its Sustainability Academy, LAC Circular Economy Coalition.

Unlocking Circular Economy Finance in Africa



A similar study has started in Africa. In October 2022, GO4SDGs and UNEP-FI, working together with Dalberg developed a semi-final draft targeting the African region Preliminary findings from the study are:

- Create a conducive environment for circular businesses: i) Develop and adequately implement country-specific CE policies with a financing lens, ii) Ensure and make policies (regional and in-country) complementary.
- Raise financial institutions' interest in circular businesses: i) Support financial institutions to better understand circular economy, its needs and value addition, ii) Launch tailored products and services for circular economy business, iii) Develop a circular economy taxonomy for Africa.
- Increase access to finance for circular businesses: i) Develop indicators to assess the circularity of businesses, ii) Support circular businesses to present credit application files in line with the financial institutions' requirements.

4.5 Empowering SMEs – to access finance for innovation and circularity

Promoting social and environmental entrepreneurship is pivotal for environmentally friendly and socially inclusive development. This is another key focus area of GO4SDGs. Together with SEED and Green Growth Knowledge Partnership (GGKP), GO4SDGs works across five regions to support SMEs' trajectory to more sustainable systems of production and consumption and towards circular business models.

I-GO initiative supports SMEs with resource efficiency



The I-GO initiative aims to support SMEs in implementing resource efficiency actions and organizes national workshops to build capacity and raise awareness. One of the key components of I-GO is the I-GO Assistant tool, through which SMEs can carry out an online self-assessment to understand their specific resource efficiency needs, receive

customized recommendations on how to improve their resource efficiency status, be directed to adapt knowledge and support services to enable them to implement targeted actions.

As the first iteration of the I-GO Assistant is primarily focused on building awareness, it currently only tracks the status of SMEs regarding their existing level of resource efficiency and the type of support they need to be able to improve. However, going forward it is intended to develop an additional level to the I-GO Assistant that can help an SME track the performance of any resource efficiency actions they implement following the recommendation they receive through the tool. The I-GO initiative is also actively developing a comprehensive network of SME Stakeholders in three regions (Latin America and the Caribbean, Europe & Central Asia, and Africa) to promote the I-GO Assistant amongst local SME networks and develop stronger collaboration and engagement between SME stakeholders.

Impact: 423 self-assessments carried out for over 300 SMEs in about 40 countries, the majority of which are conducted by the SMEs themselves.

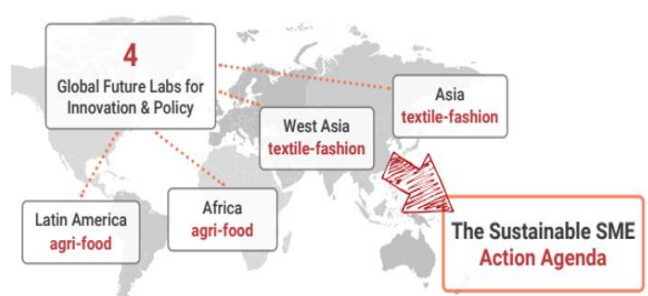
Next steps: Development Industry Working Group

The I-GO initiative, in collaboration with GO4SDGs, is developing an Industry Working Group (IWG) for large corporations, to directly support SMEs in their supply chain to engage in resource efficiency activities. The IWG will have a primary focus to engage on a practical level with corporate representatives from the Sustainability, Procurement, and Engineering divisions, as well as the related SME suppliers of the corporations. The focus will be to learn more about the common challenges that impede the greening of supply chains, and build awareness of the existing country and regional-level support through applying the I-GO tools within targeted supply chains. The IWG will initially focus on the fashion/textiles sector but with the objective to use sector-specific learning to expand its engagement across other high-impact sectors.

Sustainable SME Action Agenda for 2030



GO4SDGs, collaborated with SEED to develop the [Sustainable SME Action Agenda](#), targeting SMEs, and other relevant stakeholders including policymakers, financiers, intermediaries and SMEs. The Action Agenda was developed through a participatory consultation process with regional SMEs and stakeholders. To that end, SEED and GO4SDGs jointly organized four Future Labs for Innovation and Policy, offering a platform for Green SME Stakeholders to share their experiences and discuss the critical next steps. The Labs provided inputs to the Global Action Agenda. They focused on high-impact sectors: the agri-food sector of Latin America and the Caribbean, and Africa, and the textile-fashion sector of Asia and the Pacific, and West Asia.



Sustainable SME Action Agenda launched at COP27

The Sustainable SME Action Agenda marks the next step towards better-tailored and more accessible Green SME Support for 2030. As a next step, to implement this Action Agenda, SEED with GO4SDGs, UNEP, and other partners, including UN Agencies, the European Commission, and Germany, have launched the Coalition for Innovation, Circularity, and Entrepreneurship (CICE).

The Coalition aims at enabling SMEs to develop green business models, scaling up and replicating the good practices, while providing a voice for SMEs and enhancing system-wide innovation and collective green climate action. Both the Coalition and the SME Action Agenda were launched at COP27.

Green Finance for SMEs in Central Asia

GO4SDGs has carried out an assessment of the gaps and needs of SMEs in Kazakhstan in accessing products and benefits of green finance from public financial institutions, and banks, along with the development of recommendations for the Central Asian sub-region. The Desk Review provides the foundation to expand the financial mechanisms to create a regional market for green finance for SMEs. It also identifies the high-impact sectors of the economy (e.g., waste recycling, agriculture, construction, etc.) that can have a long-term and significant effect in greening the financial regulatory and institutional framework in the country.

The regional recommendations, emerging from the review, reflect the need to:

- introduce changes in the current finance-related legislation and regulations;
- increase the capacity of second-tier banks and SMEs on green finance international standards and available products;
- introduce green finance taxonomy for second-tier banks and the indicators for SMEs 'green projects';
- consider assigning respective public finance authorities to coordinate the above tasks.

As part of the workstream to support SMEs, a hybrid Roundtable on Green Finance for SMEs in Central Asia was organized, with the active participation of public finance authorities, SMEs, second-tier banks, and international organizations.

The roundtable presented the Desk Review for comments and increased awareness of business and finance sector organizations on the need to enhance green finance for SMEs.

Likewise, as part of GO4SDGs work on finance for SMEs, an **Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) Regional Conference** was organized to inspire a paradigm shift, encourage redirect, and mobilize finance for sustainable consumption and production in the Central Asian sub-region. The conference facilitated an expert dialogue on introducing ESG principles in the financial sector and promoted green finance instruments and a sustainable finance approach. The Conference engaged 450 second-tier banks, SMEs, and national authorities and received positive feedback. It is proposed to hold the Conference yearly to assess the progress and identify the next steps.



Impact: 130 participants (53 women, 77 men) learned about the opportunities of green finance for SMEs and current banks' capacity to accommodate green finance products.

Next Steps: The recommendations will lay the ground for concrete activities on the topic in the year to come (2023). Furthermore, participants requested GO4SDGs to conduct similar assessments in four other Central Asian countries.



Ecosystem Approach to Financing Resource Efficiency Upgrades for SMEs in Value Chains

GO4SDGs, the Green Industry Platform, the African Guarantee Fund (AGF), Kenya National Cleaner Production Centre (KNCPC), Absa Bank Kenya Limited, and finance experts are piloting an ecosystem approach to upscaling SMEs' access to green finance to improve resource efficiency in large value chains.

This initiative will engage with Meru Dairy Co-operative Union (MDCU) and Kenya Tea Development Agency (KTDA) and four SMEs in the two value chains. MDCU is the third largest milk processor in Kenya, processing over 80 million liters with a turnover of USD 80 million yearly. Their ecosystem includes 55,000 smallholder farmers supplying raw milk, 160 SMEs covering transport, plant maintenance, packaging materials, and cleaning chemicals, and another 400 SMEs for distribution.



KTDA is Kenya's largest tea producer, owned by over 560,000 smallholder farmers. Their ecosystem comprises 66 tea factories (also SMEs), supported by over 2,000 SMEs delivering various goods and services. As part of this project KNCPC will assess resource-efficient and cleaner production (RECP) challenges they face, and design finance-ready sustainability solutions.

Furthermore, GO4SDGs works with leading finance experts, AGF, and Absa Bank Kenya PLC to co-design customized financing models for the RECP/sustainability upgrades developed by KNCPC for SMEs in MDCU and KTDA value chains. Absa Bank Kenya PLC is the 5th largest commercial bank in Kenya (total assets of US\$3.561 billion in 2019).

4.6 Sustainable value chains in high-impact sectors

Creating sustainable value chains requires moving toward sustainable consumption and production patterns, and minimizing the use of natural resources, toxic materials, and emissions during the life cycle of the product. GO4SDGs works to increase the sustainability of the value chains of agri-food (Latin America & the Caribbean, Asia and the Pacific, Africa, and West Asia), fashion/textiles (West Asia), and tourism (Africa and Europe & Central Asia).

Agri-food

GO4SDGs works on tackling food waste, in addition to the capacity development on measurement and policies to reduce food waste (presented in section 4.2); GO4SDGs is also raising awareness through campaigns to change behavior and prevent food waste.

Recipe of Change Campaign in West Asia



The [Recipe of Change Campaign](#) aims at tackling food waste by raising awareness through the voices of top chefs. It was promoted during the International Day of Awareness on Food Loss and Waste (IDAFLW). The campaign strives to encourage the public to reduce their food waste and to help countries in their efforts to achieve responsible consumption and production.

The campaign was spread over many months to maximize its impact. The 1st phase of the campaign focused on households (engaging nine leading chefs with a 2M+ follower basis, 100k+ reach on Instagram, 70k+ impressions on Twitter, dissemination through podcasts, and TV channels, roll out during IDAFLW, and participation in international conferences/events). The target of the 2nd phase shifted to the Hotels, Restaurants, and Catering (Ho.Re.Ca) sector. During the IDAFLW in September 2022,

the Ho.Re.Ca sector was engaged in several activations in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Lebanon, Bahrain, and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). The activation in Dubai engaged 21 hotels/hotel groups, and five signed a pledge to align their actions with SDG 12.3. In Lebanon, seven restaurants were engaged, and two universities took part in spreading the campaign. Finally, in KSA, Marriott Riyadh rolled out the campaign to include measures to reduce food waste as part of its core value.

Fashion/textiles

The fashion/textile industry is one of the largest contributors to the triple planetary crises with an underpaid workforce facing discrimination, unsafe working conditions, and harassment. GO4SDGs works on the regional rollout towards a sustainable fashion and textile value chain in West Asia -through the Sustainable Fashion Academy, and in Asia and the Pacific with future projects in China and Thailand.

The West Asia Sustainable Fashion Academy (WASFA)

The Academy aims at bringing together experts and stakeholders from various fields to share knowledge, build capacities, and mainstream sustainable production and circularity in the fashion and textile value chains. It also intends to inspire behavioral change by shifting to more sustainable consumption patterns with a specific focus on the youth. In the first semester of 2022, training sessions were conducted, targeting different stakeholders with over 70 participants from 9 countries in the region. These included a 2-day workshop on Eco-Innovation and Sustainable Textiles (targeting SMEs), 1-day training on Circularity and Upcycling (targeting NGOs), and a 3-day “Hackathon -workshop on Zero Waste by Design” (targeting students).



During the week of Black Friday, West Asia carried out workshops with universities in Bahrain, Oman, and Lebanon to raise consumer awareness of the impacts of fast fashion and to communicate everyone's responsibility to make the right choice in our purchase patterns. Students were used to collecting used/unwanted clothes to encourage their repurpose, reuse, and redistribution. As a result, 70 students turned them into new outfits during workshops, and the rest was donated to the community.

Rethinking aspiration in a world of overconsumption

One important area to enhance sustainability in the textile value chain is working on behavioral change. An awareness-raising dialogue was organized just before Black Friday bringing global experts to discuss why the fashion industry is drowning our planet with overconsumption and how to rethink our sense of aspiration to live better and lighter. [The event](#) was organized in collaboration with UNEPs textiles team and the Hot or Cool Institute.



Next steps: Regional consultations

Together with the non-profit organization Global Fashion Agenda, UNEP launched the Fashion Industry Target Consultation on a proposed set of targets for the fashion industry on circularity, natural resources and materials, and social protection. Through GO4SDGs, the online survey was promoted and amplified in the regions, and a series of regional consultations will be held to collect insights on

specific targets and their localized impacts. A key objective of the regional workshops is to ensure that developing countries' and SMEs' views are reflected in the global fashion industry targets. The regional consultations will take place in January and February 2023.

Tourism

GO4SDGs also supports initiatives to bring sustainability to the tourism sector, mainly supporting governments to revise and increase their environmental standards and scaling up best practices using existing tools – e.g., guidelines to reduce single-use plastic products.

Upscaling Sustainable Tourism in East Africa



In September 2022, GO4SDGs and Ecotourism Kenya, launched a project to upscale sustainable tourism in East Africa by developing mandatory national sustainable tourism certification standards, supporting financing mechanisms, and building capacity in MSMEs.

Ecotourism Kenya is currently benchmarking sustainable tourism certification standards across Africa and identifying various (dis)incentives to promote compliance in the continent. Ecotourism Kenya is also collaborating with the East Africa Community Secretariat Office for Tourism and Wildlife and the East African Tourism Platform on developing a policy harmonization brief for East Africa on sustainable tourism standards.

Global Tourism Plastic Initiative (Central Asia)

Tourism is a growing sector in the Issyk-Kul region in the Kyrgyz Republic. There is a large potential to green the sector and ensure that tourism does not deplete natural resources but promotes the environmental protection of the region.

GO4SDGs has provided capacity development to tourism stakeholders on plastic and food waste management, and the UN Global Tourism Plastics Initiative. A pilot project has

started to promote the recycling of single-use plastic waste in the Issyk-Kul region, Kyrgyz Republic. The project will run from November 2022, till April 2023. The initiative will elaborate policy recommendations for plastics-related legislation in the Republic of Kyrgyzstan in May 2023.



4.7 Empowering Youth for Sustainable Lifestyles

Sustainable living means understanding how our lifestyle choices impact the world around us and finding ways for everyone to live better and lighter. GO4SDGs works to empower youth to embrace sustainable lifestyles, engaging youth networks and universities to promote solutions for sustainable living (e.g. policies, green campuses and curricula) and expanding youth opportunities for green jobs.

Sustainable Lifestyles Action Academy



GO4SDGs and UNEP have developed the Sustainable Lifestyles Action Academy, which offers educational tools to train youth, youth intermediaries, influencers, and other relevant actors on the transition to sustainable lifestyles.

A Technical Expert Group has been established with over 25 members from the five regions, including universities, the private sector, influencers, designers, and NGOs.

The Academy offers material and activities, including:

1. Anatomy of Action

The [Anatomy of Action](#), a social media toolkit, activates people to contribute to Sustainable Development Goal 12 (SDG 12) on responsible consumption and production. It includes messages and social media assets that can be used by anyone to show how they are supporting the growing shift to global sustainability.

2. Sustainable Lifestyles Learning Module

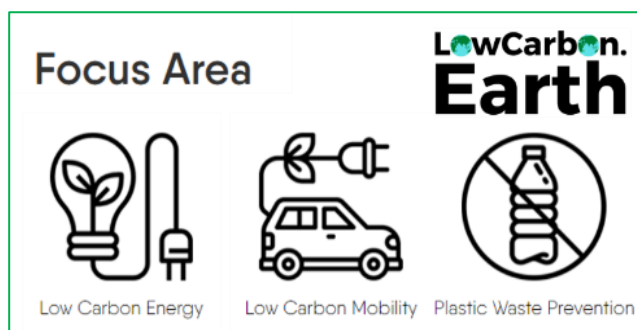
This self-paced online course of three hours provides facts on the urgency toward sustainable lifestyles/living, and examples and best practices around the globe. The module was developed with UNEP, UN Staff College, with research from Hot or Cool Institute, tested by around 100 sustainable experts, and launched in the first quarter of 2023.

3. My Sustainable Living Challenge

This Challenge, launched on World Environment Day 2022, is a curated online gamified learning platform promoting behavior change through understanding and action. The second multi-lingual edition is planned for spring 2023.



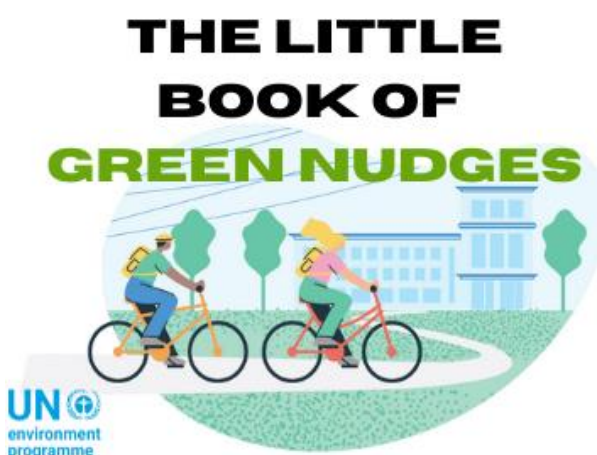
Regional Awards for SMEs and Youth Startups



In Latin America and the Caribbean, in collaboration with Universidad de los Andes, in Colombia, and the European Union, GO4SDGs promotes innovation among youth in universities with the 'Regional Innovation Competition for Sustainable Lifestyles' contest. The contest addressed the importance of sustainability in daily life and the need for clean, accessible options for transport, consumption, housing and leisure activities. The 2nd edition of the Innovation contest took place this year, and received 69 proposals from 12 countries, resulting in a Bootcamp with ten finalists and three winners.

In Europe and Central Asia, the work on sustainable lifestyles has started with a webinar organized by GO4SDGs with the Kazakh-German University, resulting in a proposal for capacity building on sustainable lifestyles. This includes the following activities for 2023:

- Introducing Sustainable Lifestyles self-ranking criteria, indicators, and model to the universities in the Central Asian sub-region;
- Building capacity and raising awareness of universities and students on sustainable lifestyles' related topics and using UNEP's "Little Book of Green Nudges";
- Piloting a project on sustainable lifestyles through the introduction of sustainable lifestyle-oriented education, research, and implementation at the Kazakh-German University;
- Organising a Sustainable Lifestyles Festival for Central Asian universities and students.



5. Next Steps and Strategic Activities for 2023

Building upon the achievements of 2022, important activities for next year and new challenges are the following:

Activities to strengthen and scale up:

1. **Green Jobs for Youth Pact** – roll out the Pact at the regional level in partnership with ILO, UNEP, UNICEF, and with the Youth Advisory Group. In 2023 the Pact will focus on rolling out its activities at the global and regional levels. GO4SDGs will continue to be an active partner for regional delivery. The Pact will focus on 3 outcomes: 1) Youth employment and green entrepreneurship: supporting employers in green, circular, and sustainable business models that reduce waste, pollution and resource use while increasing the demand for skills for green jobs; 2) Education and training for green skills: working with universities and knowledge institutions to equip young people with employable skills for green jobs; and 3) Empowerment and youth engagement: provide capacity development, and training to youth are in policy advocacy, green jobs, and climate change
2. **Advancing circularity and financial mechanisms for SMEs** – continue our work and expanding it to all regions and enhancing policies and initiatives for circularity (national strategies, new standards, regulations, etc.). Strengthen the partnerships with UNEP FI on financial mechanisms for circularity, including SMEs. Together with the LAC Coalition on Circular Economy and the African Circular Economy Alliance provide more technical support on high-impact sectors and facilitate south-south cooperation.
3. **Sharpen our focus on high-impact sectors (fashion/textiles, agri-food, and tourism)**, applying the SCP Hot Spot Analysis (SCP-HAT) tool, expanding regional knowledge with our science partners, and engage more private sector and financial institutions, as we have started in Africa with the African Guarantee Fund (AGF), and the Absa Bank Kenya Limited.
4. **Mainstream SCP and circularity in the UNCT and support its national implementation** workshops and capacity-building sessions are planned for next year in partnership with the 10YFP, and in close cooperation with PAGE and the UN Development Cooperation Office (DCO).
5. **Pathways on sustainable living within 1.5 Degrees** and youth empowerment – deepen knowledge on policies and incentives for behavior change, that go beyond purely awareness raising and education. Explore fiscal policies, infrastructure, market instruments, and choice editing to enable the shift toward sustainable living. Providing inputs for G20, for the SDGs Summit.
6. **Consolidate the existing partnerships for long-term cooperation** – building on existing partners, expanding cooperation with other strategic actors and partners to scale up implementation and formalizing cooperation for long-term work at the global and regional levels.
7. **Resource mobilization** – develop global and regional project proposals to scale up and replicate best practices.
8. **Cross-regional cooperation** – facilitate dialogues across regions focusing on common themes and sectors to share knowledge, and best practices and inspire action.
9. **Improve communications and outreach** – develop a new narrative and key messages for the next two years of work with an emphasis on systemic change and integrated solutions in high-impact sectors.