



UNEP

# SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION

Living Well

Green Economy

Sufficiency Economy

Ecological Civilization

**SHARING NATIONAL PATHWAYS TOWARDS  
INCLUSIVE GREEN ECONOMIES**

Copyright © United Nations Environment Programme, 2013

This publication may be reproduced in whole or in part and in any form for educational or non-profit purposes without special permission from the copyright holder, provided acknowledgement of the source is made. UNEP would appreciate receiving a copy of any publication that uses this publication as a source.

No use of this publication may be made for resale or for any other commercial purpose whatsoever without prior permission in writing from UNEP.

#### Citation

UNEP, 2013, South-South cooperation: Sharing national pathways towards inclusive green economies

#### Disclaimer

The designations employed and the presentation of the material in this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the United Nations Environment Programme concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. Moreover, the views expressed do not necessarily represent the decision or the stated policy of the United Nations Environment Programme, nor does citing of trade names or commercial processes constitute endorsement.

UNEP promotes environmentally sound practices globally and in its own activities. This publication is printed on 100% recycled paper, using vegetable inks and other eco-friendly practices. Our distribution policy aims to reduce UNEP's carbon footprint.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*South-South Cooperation - Sharing National Pathways Towards Inclusive Green Economies* has been produced by the UNEP Economics and Trade Branch (ETB). It is part of a two-year project led by Claudia Assmann, under the guidance of Sheng Fulai, and ETB Chief Steven Stone.

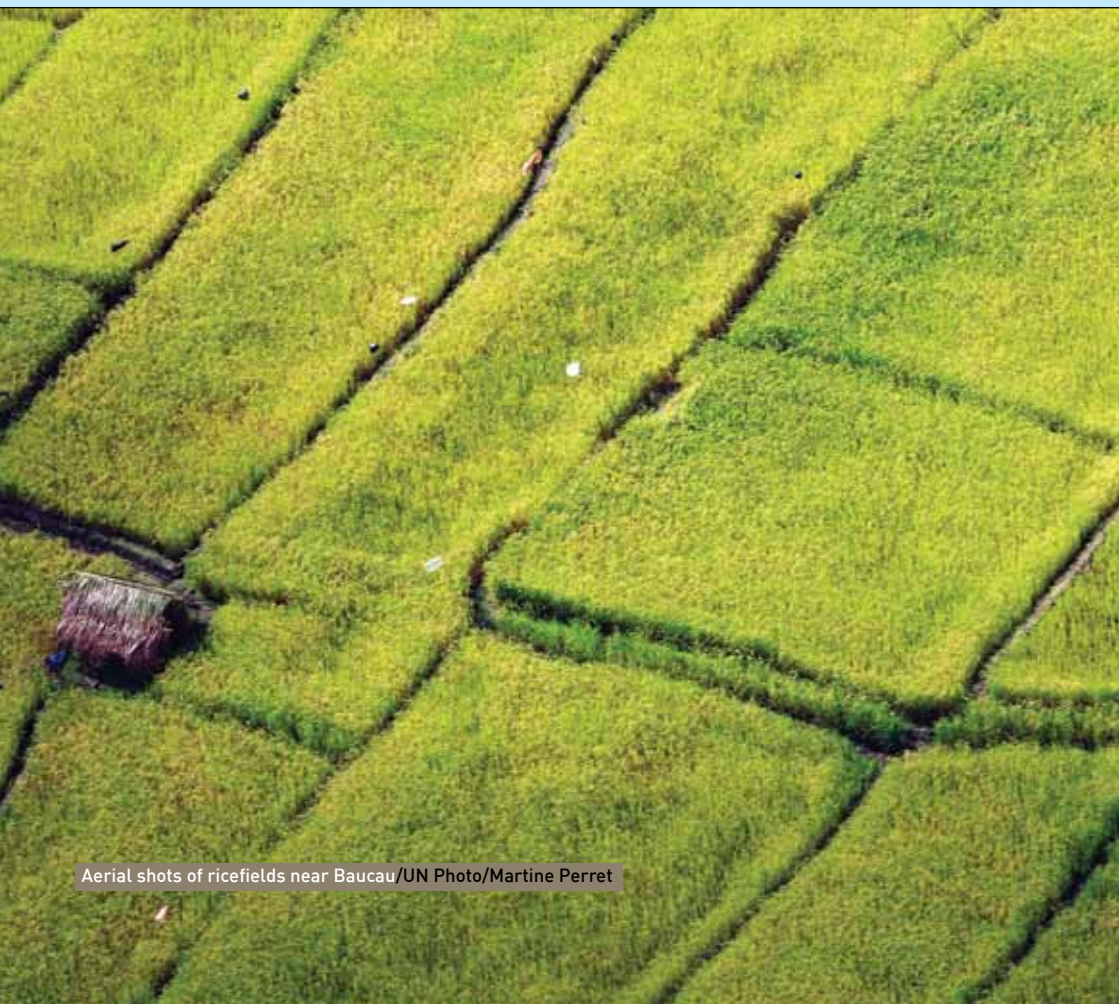
UNEP is grateful for the generous funding provided by China's Ministry of Environmental Protection for this project. It also expresses its appreciation to the other governments who participate in this project, namely Bolivia, South Africa and Thailand.

In particular, we wish to thank the following for their respective contributions to the writing of this publication: Diego Pacheco, Advisor, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Environment and Water, Bolivia; Wu Qiong, Chinese Academy for Environmental Planning (CAEP), China; and Christelle Beyers, Consultant, UNEP South Africa.

In addition, thanks to UNEP colleagues for their comments and assistance, including: Anita Beck, Alice Dauriach, Leigh Ann Hurt, Yoonhee Kim, Désirée Leon, Solange Montillaud-Joyel, Mara Murillo, Cecilia Njenga, Fatma Pandey, Rahila Somra and Tunnie Srisakulchairak. Finally, thanks to Diwata Hunziker and Thomas Gianinazzi for the editing, design and layout of this publication.

# SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION

## INTRODUCTION



Aerial shots of ricefields near Baucau/UN Photo/Martine Perret

The outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) highlighted the importance of a green economy as one vehicle for achieving sustainable development. Entitled “**The future we want**”, the document also acknowledged the existing different approaches, visions, models and tools to achieve sustainable development in accordance with each country’s context and priority.

In February 2013, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Governing Council took note with appreciation of different pathways for reaching a resource efficient, low carbon and socially inclusive economy. It requested UNEP to “collect such initiatives, endeavours, practices and experiences on different approaches, visions, models and tools, and to disseminate them, and facilitate information sharing among countries, so as to support them to promote sustainable development and poverty eradication”.<sup>1</sup>

In this perspective, the project “Enhancing South-South Cooperation – Building the Capacity of Developing Countries to Promote Green Economies” provides a forum to share the South’s various experiences and national-level initiatives for transitioning to resource efficient, low carbon and socially inclusive economies. The project also addresses the use of indicators for green economy policymaking, implementation and evaluation. Through this knowledge exchange platform, it aims to raise awareness of different concepts and, at the same time, inspire and support the participant countries of the ASEAN region in pursuing their pathways to sustainable development.

Four unique national initiatives are highlighted in this brochure – all taking place in countries in the South, at different stages of implementation: Bolivia’s **Vivir Bien** (Living Well), China’s **Ecological Civilization**, South Africa’s **Green Economy** and Thailand’s **Sufficiency Economy**. A brief overview of each country’s approach that guides its sustainable development initiatives and policymaking is presented.

In its later stages, the project will support an in-depth analysis of the underlying concepts of the respective initiatives and their integration in the national policy framework. It will also address the challenges related to a transition to a low carbon and resource efficient economy, as well as the impacts achieved by implementing the different concepts at the local level.

The summaries of the different approaches have been prepared in close cooperation with the respective governments and entirely reflect their views.

The Chinese government, who steered UNEP’s Governing Council Decision 27/8, is funding the project.

---

<sup>1</sup> 2013 UNEP Governing Council Decision 27/8.

BOLIVIA

# BOLIVIA

LIVING WELL IN BALANCE AND  
HARMONY WITH MOTHER EARTH



Quinoa farmers in Bolivia/Michel Hermann/Biodiversity

The concept of **Living Well** (*Vivir Bien*) is an ancient approach derived from the vision of indigenous peoples worldwide to support the long-term survival of Mother Earth without social, material and spiritual poverty. **Living Well** is a paradigm that challenges the anthropocentric approach to civilization and views nature as sacred interacting with human beings as equal members of a life system. The paradigm has three central dimensions:

- Ethical values, according to which individuals preserve a way of living and thinking that is holistic, humanistic, solidarity-oriented, community-based and focused on the eradication of all forms of poverty, such as material, social and spiritual;
- Equilibrium and balance between human beings and Mother Earth, which means living well with one's self and with other human beings in a community, as well as living well in harmony with Mother Earth; and
- Political, where **Living Well** is the alternative model to capitalism and modernity.

Bolivia believes that this approach should not be adopted only by the indigenous peoples of the world, since it has the potential to become a universal paradigm that can transform the political decisions and actions of human beings. In fact, **Living Well** in Balance and Harmony with Mother Earth aspires to build a contemporary society based on a cosmocentric, holistic, polycentric and non-commercial vision of Mother Earth.

In most developing societies, the balance and coexistence between human beings and Mother Earth has never been broken. According to Bolivia's approach, there is the need not only to preserve the balance and responsible stewardship of nature, but also to reduce the negative influence of capitalism and markets through **Living Well**. In this context, the creation of wealth is achieved by respecting the limits of regeneration of the components of Mother Earth and by considering the fact that economic accumulation is not at the centre of the society, but as a complement to human beings and Mother Earth.

Therefore, **Living Well** implies creating a new global relationship with nature and among human beings based on the following actions:

- Expanding the rights of Mother Earth. The main source of life is Mother Earth and its environmental functions must be protected, taking into account that they cannot be monetized and converted into a commodity;

- Expanding the rights of peoples. The collective rights of indigenous peoples and the fundamental rights of people (civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights), including the right of people to live free of all forms of poverty, could be achieved through their holistic development;
- Setting the duties of States, communities and individuals with respect to the protection and restoration of the systems of life of Mother Earth as needed, while promoting the integral and sustainable management of its life systems; and
- Recognizing peoples' knowledge and practices for **Living Well**, including the role of collective action.

These aspects constitute the key foundations to support the Living Well in Balance and Harmony with Mother Earth principle, and influence Bolivia's policy actions. As such, Bolivia has changed its status from a republic to its current name, Plurinational State of Bolivia, in recognition of the 36 indigenous nations that constitute an intrinsic part of the sociopolitical structure of the country. This new status includes the recognition of the plurality of Bolivian society, in all its economic, legal, cultural and political aspects, including the indigenous holistic and cosmocentric visions, which were all unified in the New Political Constitution of the Plurinational State of Bolivia in 2009.

Bolivia has adopted, as the basis of its national policies, the Living Well in Balance and Harmony with Mother Earth principle, enacting so far two important laws in support of the concept: Law No. 071, "Rights of Mother Earth" (December 2010), and Law No. 300, "Mother Earth and Integral Development for Living Well" (October 2012).

Law No. 071, "Rights of Mother Earth" (*Ley de Derechos de la Madre Tierra*), considers that Mother Earth is sacred and a living being, composed of systems of life, and therefore it has rights just as peoples do. The State and the citizens of Bolivia must protect the rights of Mother Earth. This law establishes seven specific rights: to life, to the diversity of life, to water, to clean air, to equilibrium of life systems, to restoration and to a life free of contamination.

Law No. 300, "Framework Law for Mother Earth and Integrated Development for Living Well" (*Ley Marco de la Madre Tierra y Desarrollo Integral para Vivir Bien*), establishes the philosophical, programmatic and operational bases for expressing the protection of Mother Earth, taking into account the holistic development of the



Bolivian people in order to attain **Living Well**. Among its important features, the law ascertains the need to achieve complementarity and balance among the following four groups of rights:

- Rights of Mother Earth as a collective subject of public interest;
- Individual and collective rights of indigenous peoples and local populations, according to ILO Convention 169 and the United Nations' Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples;
- Fundamental rights of people, such as civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights, to be achieved through their integral development; and
- Right of people to live in a just, equitable and inclusive society; free of all forms of poverty such as material, social and spiritual.



High altitude salt lake/UNEP ROLAC



Vegetable stalls in Cochabamba/Seiler Family

Law No. 300 has also introduced important guidelines to be developed in order to achieve such complementarity and balance, in the context of the management of the Life Systems of Mother Earth, including the:

- establishment of objectives and indicators of the Living Well in Balance and Harmony with Mother Earth;
- identification of the zones of life (ecosystems) and systems of life of Mother Earth in order to strengthen and promote harmonic and sustainable productive systems;
- registry of the components of Mother Earth (land, water, forests, biodiversity, environmental functions, among others); and
- establishment of a criteria on the capabilities for regeneration of the components of Mother Earth, including mitigation and adaptation to climate change.

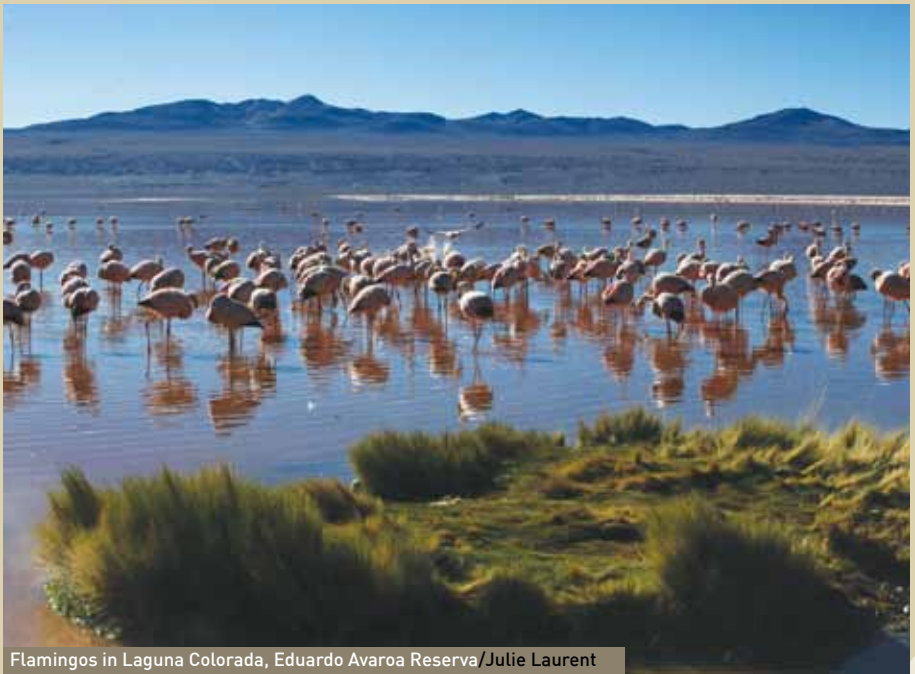
In addition, the law promotes the development of “Complementary Agreements with Mother Earth” at different levels, which includes the identification of rights and duties to be enforced by peoples and governments at a given territory; objectives and/or targets regarding the conservation of the integrity of Mother Earth; and actions and

contributions to protect and restore the integrity of Mother Earth.

One of the key institutions for the implementation of the Living Well in Balance and Harmony with Mother Earth in Bolivia is the “Plurinational Authority of Mother Earth” and its mechanisms, such as:

- Joint Mitigation and Adaptation Mechanism for the Integral and Sustainable Management of Forests and Mother Earth;
- Mitigation Mechanism for Living Well;
- Adaptation Mechanism for Living Well; and
- Plurinational Fund of Mother Earth.

Finally, Bolivia is currently developing the Patriotic Agenda 2025 which will present the new vision of the country in the year that commemorates the bicentenary of its foundation, choosing **Living Well** as one of its main themes.



Flamingos in Laguna Colorada, Eduardo Avaroa Reserva/Julie Laurent


CHINA

# CHINA

## ECOLOGICAL CIVILIZATION



Xiao Chehe Wetland Park in Guiyang/Tianhong Huang



China's **Ecological Civilization**, or also known as ecological progress, is a new development strategy that embraces harmonious and sustainable development between human beings, economy, society and nature. It is regarded as a reaction to years of unsustainable extraction of natural resources and uncontrolled growth. The construction of **Ecological Civilization**, or *Shengtai Wenming* in Chinese, has been continuously promoted in China in recent years. As the former Chinese leader Hu Jintao puts it, "building an ecological civilization, in essence, is to establish a resource efficient and environmental-friendly society based on the carrying capacity of the environment, observing the law of nature and aimed at realizing sustainable development". In 2012, **Ecological Civilization** received unprecedented high-level political attention when it was incorporated into the country's overall development plan, together with economic, political, cultural and social progress.

**Ecological Civilization** is a guiding principle for the world's largest emerging economy to transform its development course. China is facing increasing resource constraints, severe environmental pollution and deteriorating ecosystems. Rather than emphasizing economic prosperity, the country is seeking a more balanced approach to counter the high ecological cost it has paid for its economic growth.

**Ecological Civilization** has been mentioned in several keynote speeches of high-level national leaders ever since the 17<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Communist Party of China (October 2012), which has created incentives and momentum for all levels of government to promote it. Conventional economic indicators are no longer the sole criteria used to assess the country's overall performance. Now, ecological indicators, such as environmental quality, energy intensity and biodiversity, are becoming increasingly crucial on the policy agenda of local authorities. For instance, in the San Jianguan area, where three major rivers of the country originate (the Yangtze River, the Yellow River and the Lancang River), ecological performance indicators, such as water quality and ecological conservation investment, are used rather than GDP. Today, 16 provinces and more than 1,000 villages are competing for national ecological honours, some of which have specific development plans for **Ecological Civilization**.

**Ecological Civilization** has received enormous financial and political support, and has generated positive effects nationwide. The total environmental investment<sup>2</sup> in the 11<sup>th</sup> Five-Year Period (FYP) (2006-2010) was RMB 1.6 trillion,<sup>3</sup> which was 70 per cent higher than that in the previous 10<sup>th</sup> FYP and is expected to reach RMB 3.4 trillion in the 12<sup>th</sup> FYP. As a result, the ecological compensation fee, mainly from the central government, grew from RMB 2.3 billion in 2001 to RMB 78 billion in 2012. Another result was the increase of grassland vegetation cover by 2.6 per cent from 2011 to 2012, which was closely related to the compensation policy on abandoning grazing in certain lands.

In addition, China is also seeking other ecological solutions through pilot programmes. More than 20 provinces are piloting the cap-and-trade programmes for water and air pollutants, and carbon trading is taking place in seven provinces. Furthermore, the environmental insurance system has been constantly improved with more than 2,000 corporate insurance applicants.

Although institution building for **Ecological Civilization** is still evolving, there are already some positive actions. The country is working on a national proposal to promote **Ecological Civilization**, and it is expected to be carried out in the short-term. China is also making efforts on an evaluation system, integrating resource consumption, environmental protection and ecological benefits to assess the performance of ecological civilization on a province-level.

---

<sup>2</sup> Environmental investment in China refers to the spending for environmental protection purpose such as pollution control, cleaner production, and ecological conservation.

<sup>3</sup> An equivalent of around US\$261 billion.



City forest in Guiyang/Tianhong Huang

## Ecological Construction Demonstration Zones - China's innovation on **Ecological Civilization** practices

Since 2000, the Ministry of Environmental Protection (MEP) has been enhancing the construction of national Ecological Construction Demonstration Zones (ECDZ), which consist of a group of villages, counties, districts, cities and provinces that are undertaking efforts to improve their ecological performance. ECDZs are considered an effective incentive to integrate **Ecological Civilization** at the local level.

The following are three good examples of ecological demonstration zones.

**Guiyang**, in the Southwestern Guizhou province of China, is an outstanding example for the construction of a National Ecological City. The city is home to the first Ecological Civilization Construction Committee in China, as well as the international forum on ecological civilization. The concept of **Ecological Civilization** has been embedded in the overall urban development of Guiyang. The city is becoming cleaner, greener and more attractive through large-scale afforestation activities, cleaner watersheds and improved environmental treatment technology, as well as the promotion of low carbon transportation, the elimination of outdated and high polluting facilities, and the construction of wetland parks .



Aha reservoir in Guiyang/Tianhong Huang



## Shanghai Minhang Development Zone,

in the eastern part of the city, received the title of National Demonstration Zone of Ecological Industry in 2013. Its major achievements include: transformation of the development approach through low carbon manufacturing; enhancement of production and energy efficiency through detailed planning; protection of the environment through emission control, and; reinforcement of sustainability through corporate environmental responsibility. The average economic growth rate of the development zone between 2010 and 2012 was 7.87 per cent. Meanwhile, the energy intensity and annual water consumption dropped from 7 to 6.6 per cent. The emission of major pollutants has also decreased dramatically, hence ensuring the improvement of local environmental and water quality.



Local tram/Chinese Academy for Environmental Planning



Karamay Petrochemical Company/Tianhong Huang

**Karamay**, located in the far Western China's Xinjiang province, was named National Ecological District in 2013. The desert city made considerable progress in key sectors through the transition of industries, conservation planning and the greening of traditional industries. The city has invested about RMB 137.3 million per year on afforestation and landscaping activities. As a result, the green coverage rate has increased from 17 per cent in 2000 to 50.68 per cent in 2010, which has significantly reduced the frequency of sandstorms.

SOUTH AFRICA

# SOUTH AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICAN  
GREEN ECONOMY



Blue solar battery cells, Salmonsdam Nature Reserve, Western Cape, South Africa © Photosky/Shutterstock

Globally, the concept of a **Green Economy** arose against the backdrop of the recent energy, food and financial crises. This was underscored by data showing that the use of resources is transgressing ecological boundaries. The **Green Economy** approach is concerned with decoupling economic development from the excessive depletion and degradation of natural capital, pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. The concept is perceived as one of many pathways towards sustainable development. At Rio+20, the international community adopted an Outcome Document that underscored the **Green Economy** approach as one of the tools that could help countries make the transition to a low carbon, resource efficient and inclusive society.

In South Africa, the **Green Economy** approach has gained significant traction, where the concept is intricately linked to the country's key socioeconomic issues, namely poverty, inequality and unemployment. Thus, the government developed its position on **Green Economy** in response to the global financial crisis and the need to integrate critical socioeconomic pressures, as well as global and local environmental concerns into its economic development. The emphasis is on generating local knowledge and technical expertise needed for implementing a **Green Economy**.

The South African concept has its roots in the National Green Economy Summit, which was held in May 2010 and hosted by the government. Following the summit, South Africa came up with its own definition of a **Green Economy**: a sustainable development path that is based on addressing the interdependence between economic growth, social protection and natural ecosystems.

## Impact on national policy framework

As the country embarked on a transition to a resource efficient, low carbon economy and pro-employment growth path, subsequent roundtables and workshops were held and resulted in, among others, two key outcomes:

- The **Green Economy Accord**, which marks a key point in the partnership between the government, the business community, trade union movements and community organizations. Together, the parties to the Accord agreed to implement the commitments, such as (i) the roll out of renewable energies; (ii) waste recycling and recovery; energy efficiency, retrofitting, clean coal, investments in green

economy; and (iii) economic development according to the **Green Economy** principles; and

- The recently launched South African Green Economy Modelling Report (SAGEM) assessed national targets and the effects of investing in a **Green Economy** in selected sectors of the South African economy (natural resource management, agriculture, transport and energy).<sup>4</sup> SAGEM also forms the basis of further indicator, monitoring and verification work.

Today, South Africa recognizes that **Green Economy** should be promoted as a holistic transition and not only through stand-alone sector interventions. In this regard, the National Strategy for Sustainable Development and Action Plan (NSSD), considers 'greening the economy' by taking into account the entire social-economic system. This implies that actions on **Green Economy** are decentralised and implemented through a number of national and sector specific programmes, and are embedded across a number of functional departments, including the Departments of Environmental

<sup>4</sup> The South African government undertook the study, in partnership with UNEP and the United Nations Development Programme, and with technical assistance from the Millennium Institute and the Sustainability Institute, in collaboration with the Centre for Renewable and Sustainable Energy Studies (CRSES) of Stellenbosch University.



Solar panels for traffic lights; solar water heaters in Kuyasa/Department of Environmental Affairs, South Africa

Affairs (DEA), Trade and Industry (DTI) and Economic Development (EDD). It is cross-sectoral and coordinated by the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA), in collaboration with the economic sector and employment cluster Departments.

The support of UNEP, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and other key stakeholders is valuable in ensuring **Green Economy** implementation, knowledge generation and exchange. As shown during the 2010 Green Economy Summit, the government of South Africa relies on strong partnerships with industry, civil society, organized labour, academia and NGOs to implement the green economy concept in the country.

Some of the major policy documents that drive South Africa's shift to a **Green Economy** are: NSSD; South African Framework for Responding to the Economic Crisis; National Development Plan (NDP); New Growth Path; Green Economy Accord; Green Jobs Report (2011); and Industrial Policy and Action Plan 2011/2012 to 2013/2014. For further information, please visit [www.environment.gov.za/projectsprogrammes/greeneconomy](http://www.environment.gov.za/projectsprogrammes/greeneconomy).

## Green Economy in action

South Africa has developed a comprehensive green policy framework and is now considering the best routes to implement specific **Green Economy** interventions. In addition to SAGEM, some of the key existing activities include:

- **Ongoing Green Economy research.** This activity is undertaken by a number of academic institutions. For example, Stellenbosch University and partners analyse, among other topics, the actual amount of natural resources that flow through the economy at a national level, as captured in a Material Flow Analysis (MFA), as well as resources flowing through cities. This work provides a much needed empirical foundation for ongoing **Green Economy** activities in South Africa, and provides an important in-road for UNEP to partner with academic institutions on empirical, data and environmental accounting work. In this regard, a number of South African universities currently implement degrees on **Green Economy** at the master's and doctoral levels through the Department of Science and Technology (DST) and National Research Fund (NRF) programmes.

- **The Green Fund** is a unique national fund. Allocated by the National Treasury through the Department of Environmental Affairs, the fund seeks to support green initiatives that assist South Africa's transition to a low carbon, resource efficient and climate resilient development path delivering high impact economic, environmental and social benefits. It provides catalytic finance to facilitate investment in green initiatives, including **Green Economy** project initiation and development, research and development, and capacity building initiatives. With a portfolio of 21 projects in various stages of contract finalization, disbursement and implementation, the fund aims to respond to market vulnerabilities that hamper South Africa's shift to a **Green Economy**. For further information, please visit [www.sagreenfund.org.za](http://www.sagreenfund.org.za)
- **Implementation of Green Economy policies at the national, provincial, and local level.** The opportunities in a **Green Economy** are varied and include manufacturing, recycling, energy efficient industry, retrofitting, biofuels and bolstering investment for innovation – which all contribute to the identified nine focus areas of South Africa's **Green Economy**. The South African government is rolling out **Green**



Children in COP17 train/Department of Environmental Affairs, South Africa

**Economy** policies at the following levels, in collaboration with industry and other key stakeholders:

- National level includes national cross-sector policies and actual green **Green Economy** intervention policy projects, such as SAGEM and the Green Fund. In addition, most governmental departments are implementing **Green Economy** activities in line with their key functions, such as integrated social-environmental-economic rehabilitation, restoration and/or conservation, that address a range of **Green Economy** outcomes, specifically job creation and entrepreneurship;
- Provincial level includes the development of **Green Economy** strategies or plans by all nine South African provinces. Western Cape, Limpopo and Gauteng are among the provinces that have completed their strategies, while others, such as Free State, North West and KwaZulu-Natal, are in the process of initiation or approval; and
- Local level includes a number of metropolitan areas and cities that are actively rolling out **Green Economy** work. For example, the City of Tshwane is currently developing their **Green Economy** strategy, while City of Johannesburg has made **Green Economy** as one of the priorities of its Integrated Development Plan.



Picturesque lake/Department of Environmental Affairs, South Africa

THAILAND

# THAILAND

SUFFICIENCY ECONOMY



Lopburi solar power plant, central Thailand/Asian Development Bank



## Origins and definition of *Sufficiency Economy*

His Majesty King Bhumibhol of Thailand had anticipated the need for a change from unsustainable practices to a more development-oriented approach as far back as 1974. His Majesty's vision led to the concept of a **Sufficiency Economy**, a philosophy that stresses the middle path as an overriding principle for appropriate conduct by the people at all levels: families, communities and nations. **Sufficiency Economy** is an important basis for attaining poverty eradication and sustainable development for the country. It became critical during the economic crisis in 1997, during which Thailand needed to formulate critical policies to recover. Today, the concept is commonly included in many government projects and since 2002, Thailand's National Economic and Social Development Plan has adopted **Sufficiency Economy** at the heart of the country's development and management philosophy.

Human development towards well-being is central to **Sufficiency Economy**, which is based on three pillars: moderation, reasonableness and resilience. The first pillar, moderation, is needed to achieve a balanced development between material and non-material advancement, between self-reliance and integration in the global community, and between rural and urban society. Reasonableness, the second pillar, is the necessary quality of all analytical work and decision-making, while resilience – the third pillar – is to be understood broadly as the ability to manage economic, social and environmental risks to meet the challenges brought about by change. Last but not least, it is of primary importance that Thailand's development path benefits all citizens, who must be included in the decision-making process.

As the author of **Sufficiency Economy**, His Majesty King Bhumibhol was presented the first Human Development Lifetime Achievement Award by the former United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan in 2006. The award has shown and reaffirmed that His Majesty's **Sufficiency Economy** philosophy promotes a people-centred and sustainable path of development.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Further information on Thailand's Sufficiency Economy can be accessed at the following link: [http://www.chaipat.or.th/chaipat\\_english/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=4103&Itemid=293](http://www.chaipat.or.th/chaipat_english/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=4103&Itemid=293)

## Policies for enhancing sustainable development

Thailand strongly supports the concept of sustainable development. As a result, there has been a significant shift in Thailand's concept of development and issues related to the environmental and social pillars of sustainable development have been increasingly organized and mainstreamed into the national development agenda.

In particular, the well-being of the people is of paramount importance to sustainable development. His Majesty the King has initiated countless projects that focus mainly on agriculture and sustainable natural resources management, such as those related to poverty eradication, water supply and safety, and ensure the well-being of His Majesty's people. For example, a Royal Project-initiated in Northern Thailand to replace slash and burn opium cultivation is considered exemplary in addressing the three pillars of sustainable development. The project introduced alternative crops, such as temperate fruits and vegetables, which resulted in a win-win situation, thus preserving forests and generating better financial yields.

As an illustration of Thailand's development, the 2004 assessment of the country's efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) revealed that MDG targets on poverty, hunger, gender equality, HIV/AIDS and malaria were already achieved a decade prior to the target year. Thailand, therefore, embarked on the MDG-Plus challenge by adopting targets that are more ambitious than those set by the MDGs.

## Green Economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication

Green economy can be viewed as the foundation for enhancing sustainable development and poverty eradication efforts and is compatible with the philosophy of **Sufficiency Economy**. Specifically, Thailand's current development guidelines anticipate a shift in the development paradigm, reinforcing a transition to a green economy and to an environmentally friendly society. It involves the enhancement of human resources through knowledge and creativity in order to promote a green, sustainable society.

Most notably, the Eleventh National Economic and Social Development Plan (2012-2016)<sup>6</sup> includes the notion of green economy in its goals, which are to:


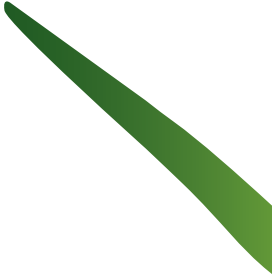
- create a resilient society, capable of managing all kinds of risks and of adapting to internal and external changes;
- achieve a green economy where knowledge and Thai identity will be used to restructure the economy based on innovation;
- connect effectively with regional and global economies;
- foster sustainability in the agricultural sector, and prosperity in the food and energy sectors;
- manage sustainably natural resources and the environment; and
- reinforce good governance and harmony in all sectors and at all levels. The accomplishment of these objectives will set the foundations for a balanced and sustainable development that benefits the people of Thailand.

In 2013, the Royal Thai Government announced a package of national strategies to move the country toward sustainable growth and strengthen its presence in the Southeast Asian economic region. The strategy heralds Thailand's arrival at a new era by urging the public sector to strengthen the country's competitive edge and lift its status from a low-income to a middle-income level. The strategy also aims to minimize disparity in society and create equal opportunity, as well as move the country in accordance with His Majesty the King's **Sufficiency Economy** initiatives.

<sup>6</sup> [http://www.nesdb.go.th/Portals/0/news/plan/p11/Plan11\\_eng.pdf](http://www.nesdb.go.th/Portals/0/news/plan/p11/Plan11_eng.pdf)



Fisherman on Inle Lake/Vetta Stock Photo



**For further information, please contact:**

**UNEP**

DTIE/Economics and Trade Branch  
11-13, chemin des Anémones  
1219 Châtelaine / Geneva  
Switzerland

T: +41 (0)22 917 82 43

F: +41 (0)22 917 80 76

E: [gei@unep.org](mailto:gei@unep.org)

[www.unep.org/greeneconomy](http://www.unep.org/greeneconomy)