



Promoting Sustainable Consumption and Production in Developing Countries for Poverty Alleviation

Project background

It is widely recognised that 'sustainable consumption and production' (SCP) has the potential to provide a valuable contribution to poverty alleviation in developing countries. This contribution could be made through changes in the areas of energy efficiency, access to sustainable energy sources, waste management, water efficiency and agriculture. However, in practice, SCP is generally not considered as delivering an important contribution to poverty alleviation, and tools for promoting SCP (including for example subsidies and other financial incentives for renewable and clean energy sources, eco-labelling of sustainable products and incentives to stimulate waste prevention within waste management policies and projects) tend to be used in an isolated manner, often focusing on only one side of the supply and demand equation.

In response to this discrepancy, UNEP, with the financial support of the Government of Norway, has recently started implementing the project 'Sustainable Consumption and Production in Developing Countries for Poverty Alleviation'. The project, which is part of the so-called Marrakech Process that works towards the development of the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production (10YFP), is expected to run until June 2009.

Overall objective

The overall objective of the project is to contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals through increased utilization of opportunities of SCP for poverty reduction and wealth creation in developing countries. The project aims to do so by identifying the barriers to investment in sustainable provision of basic needs at national and local levels in developing countries, and addressing these barriers through a range of activities. In doing so, the project wants to demonstrate the potential benefits of SCP and at the same time develop capacity for the integration of SCP objectives in development plans (including PRSPs, MDG implementation plans etc.) and their implementation. Similarly, the project aims to stimulate activities and investments of the private sector in SCP, by highlighting the benefits and opportunities of SCP-practices for businesses (including for example cost-savings, price premium, new markets, etc.).

Activities

The project will aim to achieve the overall objective through a range of activities. These activities include:

- Practice-oriented research on key aspects of SCP for developing countries, including for example cost-benefit analysis, markets for sustainable products and SCP indicators;
- Research on SCP in key sectors for developing countries: food, water, energy and waste management. The research will be practice-oriented and focusing on a specific geographical area;

- Demonstration projects within the key sectors mentioned above, highlighting the added value of sustainable consumption and production to poverty alleviation in economic, social and environmental terms;
- Provide technical support to countries wishing to integrate SCP objectives, activities and policies into their PRSPs or other national development plans. This support will depend on the specific needs of the country and could be in the form of the research and demonstration projects already mentioned but could also consist of training, the development and dissemination of guidelines etc.;
- Creation of public-private partnerships aiming to promote local, regional and global markets and business opportunities for sustainable and/or fair trade products and services;
- Conduct training and capacity building sessions on design and application of SCP tools for the public and private sectors at the national and regional levels and develop communication campaigns on SCP at the global level, regional and possibly also at the national level;

Linkages to other initiatives

It is important to stress that the project will build on the on-going work of UNEP in the area of SCP, and in particular will aim to enhance the contribution of this work to poverty alleviation. This applies particularly to the 10 year framework of programmes being developed under the Marrakech Process, which serves as an umbrella for much of this SCP work. In addition, in order to be more effective and strengthen the impact of the project, the activities of the project will be implemented in close collaboration with other relevant existing and planned initiatives, both inside and outside UNEP. One candidate for such a linkage is the UNDP-UNEP Poverty and Environment Initiative (PEI), which aims to develop the capacity of developing country governments to integrate environmental concerns into development plans and their implementation. It is expected that the SCP project will deliver concrete, persuasive evidence that can also be used by the PEI in its efforts to convince policy- and decision makers that investments in the environment, including in SCP, make sense economically.

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