

Unlocking Trade in Environmentally Sound Technologies to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals



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The global clean technology market is growing at an annual rate of 4.5% in developed countries and over 10% in a number of emerging economies. It is expected to exceed \$2 trillion by 2020.

What are Environmentally Sound Technologies?

Environmentally sound technologies are technologies that protect the environment, are less polluting, use all resources in a more sustainable manner, recycle more of their wastes and products and handle residual wastes in an environmentally-friendly manner. Such technologies can also be referred to as clean technologies. Examples include renewable energy technologies such as solar panels and wind turbines, as well as air pollution mitigation equipment. Increasing the uptake of clean technologies can result in several benefits for the environment.

What can Trade do?

Trade can scale up the use of clean technologies by opening markets, and stimulating innovation. This brings down their cost through economies of scale, and thereby making clean technologies more accessible to less developed countries.

Trade policy instruments include tariff reductions, elimination of subsidies, voluntary sustainability standards, green procurement rules and trade finance. They can - if designed and applied properly - serve as effective vehicles to the development and application of environmentally sound technologies. Connecting to global markets and clean technology value chains can help countries to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, such as clean water and sanitation (6), affordable and clean energy (7), and climate action (13), as well as targets related to energy innovation, sustainable agriculture and industrialisation.

What we do:

The [Environment and Trade Hub](#) serves as the overarching delivery mechanism for UN Environment's work on trade. Services provided include:

- Deepening stakeholders' knowledge and understanding of the interlinkages between trade and environment
- Developing tools and platforms to gather and disseminate good practices
- Facilitating [stakeholder dialogues](#) to build consensus
- Providing policy support to trade policy makers and practitioners
- Enhancing the capacity of countries to benefit from trade in environmentally sound technologies and to connect to global value chains

The Hub works at the global, regional and national levels.

Featured Projects:

[UN Environment Report: South-South Trade in Renewable Energy](#)

This study analyses trends and opportunities for trade among developing countries in selected renewable energy products. It found that South-South trade in renewable energy grew at a rate of about 30% annually from 2000-2011, faster than global average, taking up more than one quarter of all global trade in this sector. In 2007 developing countries went from net importers to net exporters of renewable energy goods.

[Expert Workshop on Technology-Trade Nexus](#)

UN Environment brought together experts from ministries, businesses, think-tanks and international organizations to discuss the connection between technology and trade and their role in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. This facilitated an exchange of knowledge, experience and lessons learned and proposed a way forward in translating the technology-trade agenda into a concrete trajectory for action.

[Ghana Strategy Proposal-Realizing Solar PV Project in a Cross Border Power Supply Context](#)

Based on the Ghana Solar Export Potential Study (UN Environment, 2015), the Hub facilitated the development of a strategy for selecting a solar-ready, cross-border grid line between Ghana and Burkina Faso, including an in-depth assessment of technical and financial requirements for installation.

