

Sustainable Consumption and Production

HOW **JORDAN** IS SWITCHING TO A CIRCULAR ECONOMY

Building climate resilience and resource efficiency



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SwitchMed is an EU-funded initiative to support transformation towards Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) and Circular Economy in eight Mediterranean countries. SwitchMed directly supports the reinforcement of an enabling policy environment, practices by private sector, and experience-sharing among stakeholders to build a community of practice on SCP, circular and blue economy and reducing the environmental footprint of consumption and production activities.

SwitchMed is implemented by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Environment Programme Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP/MAP) and the Regional Activity Centre for Sustainable Consumption and Production (MedWaves, former SCP/RAC). The initiative is carried out in close coordination with the Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement (DG NEAR).

During SwitchMed's first phase (2013-2018) UNEP's collaboration with the countries focused on the development of National Actions Plans (NAPs) for the transition to SCP and demonstration projects. The Sustainable Consumption and Production National Action Plans (SCP-NAPs) feed into and are closely linked to related national strategies (Sustainable Development, Green Growth) and the regional SCP action plan developed by UNEP-MAP.

The second phase of the project (2019-2024) builds on the successes of the first phase by focusing on enhancing economic opportunities for businesses following green and circular economy models, enabling resource-efficient circular economies at national and regional levels. As a result, this action provides new employment opportunities, including for women. A special focus is encouraged to support their participation in trainings and capacity building activities and benefit from other supporting measures.

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SCP: PLANNING FOR CHANGE – IMPLEMENTING THE CHANGE

The core aim of SwitchMed is to assist countries in making the transition to SCP and circular economy, one of the objectives the world set itself when it adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015.



SwitchMed started back in 2013 – at a time when the SDGs were not yet adopted as the international Agenda for 2030. UNEP’s first activities at country level were to present and raise awareness of SCP and present the positive impact such a switch could have.

As a first step, UNEP provided technical assistance and capacity reinforcement for countries as they developed National Action Plans (NAPs) for making this switch. The plans focused on resource efficiency in tandem with other social and environmental challenges such as gender equality and climate change.

SwitchMed supported the Ministry of Environment in bringing together more than 300 participants to workshops that supported the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan in developing its NAP. Representatives came from the ministries of Finance, Ministry of Planning & International Cooperation (MoPIC), Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), Ministry of Industry and Trade (MoIT), Ministry of local administration (MOLA), Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources (MeMr), Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority (ASEZA), Municipality of Greater Amman (GAM) and other relevant institutions, business and industry, as well as the financial and academic institutions and Non-governmental organizations joined together in the discussions. Such wide-ranging engagement in the process has contributed to the mainstreaming of green, circular thinking and engagement on SCP throughout the country.

Jordan decided as part of this process that its priority areas in its switch to SCP would be sustainable agriculture and food production, eco-tourism transportation, and waste management, and has done significant work in establishing the legal framework needed to make the transition.

This work has included seeing up a steering committee for Green Economy and SCP led by the Minister of Environment.

Some high-impact demonstration projects, to put the principles outlined in the NAP into practice, were then established. These include an eco-tourism project in seaside Aqaba that found ways to reduce organic waste from hotels and restaurants, and another that re-trained women from local communities around Aqaba to reuse materials for craft products harvested from hard waste. A third project encouraged eco-innovation in business models in SMEs, with the aim of reducing risks from the use and disposal of hazardous chemicals.



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TEN SUCCESS STORIES | JORDAN

01

GREEN GROWTH

Jordan's Green Growth National Action Plan 2021–2025 lies at the heart of its continuous efforts and ambitions to support environmental and climate action, while, at the same time, achieving the country's objectives for sustainable economic growth. The plan was announced in 2020 in cooperation with the government institutions responsible for the six sectors it covers: agriculture, energy, waste, water, tourism, and transport. Endorsed by the Cabinet of Ministers as a national document towards transition to a green economy, the plan identifies 86 priority enabling policy actions and projects that can trigger green growth. Many of these actions are ready for the support of donors, partners, and private-sector investors.



02

MANAGING WASTE

As growing populations consume more, they also produce more waste. Yet studies show that the world is only 8.6 per cent circular (UNEP 2020). This amounts to a significant waste of natural resources, as many of these waste products could be recycled or remanufactured into something else. Extracting and processing natural resources causes half of global greenhouse gas emissions and much of biodiversity loss and water stress, yet natural resource extraction is predicted to double from 92 to 190 billion tonnes by 2060. In 2017, municipal solid waste in Jordan had grown to three million tonnes. Three years later, the country's parliament approved a law on waste management and reduction. The new Waste Management Framework Law no (16) covers waste recycling, treatment and safe disposal. Producers or owners of hazardous, explosive, flammable, toxic, or infectious waste must be licensed, and face stiff fines or jail if they are not or are caught dumping waste. In 2022, Jordan also released instructions on extended product responsibility. These aim to making producers and buyers financially responsible for the environmental impacts of the products they create or consume from creation to final disposal. The instructions are to be enacted in a three-step process. In the first year, they will be voluntary; in the second year, producers and importers will be held responsible for managing 50 per cent of the wastes and residues from their products; and in the third year it will be compulsory for them to manage 100 per cent of the impacts of their products and services.



03

ECO-TOURISM

The seaside city of Aqaba, popular for its clear waters and coral reefs, discards 150 tonnes of solid waste a day, significant amounts of it from the hotels and restaurants that service its tourism industry. Coordinated by the Ministry of Environment, UNEP and the EDAMA Association for Energy, Water and Environment worked with 15 hotels and 17 restaurants to audit the waste they produced and find ways to reduce it. The audit revealed that a focus on the food waste stream was warranted, so work was done to come up with a city-wide action plan on food waste. Currently, hotels pay a fixed price for waste collection, but under the plan the Aqaba Special Economic Zone (ASEZA) is considering a move to a system where hotels are charged according to the amount of waste collected. Lower fees for smaller amounts provide an incentive to generate less food and other waste. To support hotels in meeting their waste reduction goals, training sessions were held for staff, from management level through to engineering, housekeeping and stewards. Further work has been done on developing a national training programme for hotel staff, and also on a workplan showing the steps needed and the financial justification and opportunities for adopting similar waste reduction programmes in other destinations.





04 EMPOWERING WOMEN

In Aqaba, UNEP worked with the EDAMA Association for Energy, Water and Waste to train women from local communities in recycling and upcycling activities. The purpose was to provide incomes for the women while at the same time reducing the amount of waste being transferred to landfill. The first training session was a three-day workshop at which women living in Aqaba and surrounding communities learned how to extract materials from waste (cardboard, paper, furniture, for example) and use them in craft projects. A second training focused on stepping up these skills to a professional level, while further personalised sessions focused on designing, packaging, and marketing the goods produced with the aim of achieving sales from which the women could support their families. The women now rent premises to manufacture and sell their products, and interest has come from around the country. A number of companies have approached the women to discuss producing corporate giveaways for them, and their products were also featured in a special bazaar supported by SwitchMed and held at the Sheraton Hotel in Amman.

05 REDUCING PLASTIC LITTER

A great deal of work has been done in Jordan on plastic and marine litter. The high-profile *One Dead Sea is Enough* initiative was originally launched by the Ministry of Environment during the World Science Forum in the Dead Sea to present a message to the world about the need of marine pollution from plastic litter, which is estimated eight million tons annually. A documentary film, also called *One Dead Sea is Enough*, was shown at the United Nations Conference on Climate Change in Bonn, Germany, in 2017 where Jordan called on the 192 countries to take action to save the oceans and seas from plastic, because of the threat to marine life and the danger they pose to food supplies. The following year, Jordan made waste management and the fight against marine litter one of its national environmental priorities, and a number of important waste management initiatives are being put in place to bring sustainable change. One of those initiatives is the Plastic Shopping Bags Bylaw (no. 45). This regulates the importation, production and distribution of single-use plastic bags, and also aims to prevent random disposal in the environment. At the start of the campaign, the government estimated that each citizen used, on average, 500 single-use bags a year. The aim of the campaign is to reduce bag use and to replace single-use bags with biodegradable alternatives.



06 GREENING TRANSPORT

Because of its heavy reliance on fossil fuels the transport sector is a significant contributor to climate change through greenhouse gas emissions as well as to air pollution in some of the world's largest cities. Considerable work has been done on energy efficiency improvements, electrification and use of biofuels, but road vehicles such as cars, trucks, buses and motorcycles, remain responsible for about three-quarters of the transport sector's CO₂ emissions (IEA 2020). In Jordan's capital Amman, with support from the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the Green Climate Fund, a more efficient bus fleet is being purchased. The new fleet will consist of 15 zero-emission electric buses, the first of their kind in Jordan, and 136 Euro V diesel buses. In a separate initiative, aimed at reducing emissions from the sector, the Ministry of Transport has implemented a tracking system on governmental vehicles to limit unnecessary trips, idling time and fuel wastage. Sustainable transport is one of the three priorities of Jordan's SCP national action plan.



07 ENERGY EFFICIENCY IN HOUSING



The housing sector uses 40 per cent of the planet's total resources and represents more than a third of global greenhouse gas emissions (UNEP 2020), and the world's cities are responsible for 75 per cent of global carbon emissions (UNEP 2020). To future-proof our cities, we need to build them so that they are more resilient to the global challenges of climate change, pollution, and biodiversity loss and environmental degradation. A first step to building low-carbon, energy efficient cities is to understand the energy consumption patterns of households. To this end, a survey was done for 400 apartments in the Jordanian capital, Amman. This gave the country, for the first time, a benchmark for a typical residential apartment, providing detailed breakdown of energy consumption for heating, cooling, and electricity use for household tasks such as cooking and water heating. The information gathered in this initiative was published in a booklet made available to residents, designers and decision makers to help them determine how to upgrade or retrofit building to improve energy efficiency.

08 THINKING CIRCULAR

At a national level, Jordan has made SCP a priority, and this emphasis has flowed through to the private sector where a number of examples of circular economy can be found. One of these is the clothing banks set up by the Jordan Hashemite Charity Organization. Collection boxes are distributed around shopping centres and other locations and people can place into them their unwanted clothing and toys. Donated clothing is cleaned and ironed through a partnership with a number of big hotels as part of their contribution to corporate social responsibility (CSR), and any items that need it are repaired through a partnership with another organization, Arzaq, which helps with sewing and mending. Families and individuals in need are given coupons from the clothing bank and recipients can exchange the coupons twice a year, in summer and again in winter, for four items of as-new clothing. Any clothing that is unsuitable for re-use of chopped up and sold to merchants as stuffing for furniture and cushions, is fashioned into "rolls" for seating, or sold for use in institutions or exhibitions. All proceeds are used to buy new clothes for those in need.



09

RESOURCES EFFICIENCY AND CLEANER PRODUCTION

Adopting more resource-efficient and cleaner production (RECP) not only improves environmental performance, it also increases competitiveness, saves money, and allows businesses to invest and grow sustainably. The SwitchMed II/Transfer of Environmentally Sound Technology (TESTII) project identified potential annual savings of JOD 1.6 million (about \$US 2.25 million), 22,181 megawatt hours of energy, 63,844 cubic metres of water, 404 tons of raw materials and 83 tons of landfilled solid waste avoided in the 12 participating food and beverage plants. More than 214 resource efficiency measures were found by the TEST team in the 12 demonstration companies, with 161 (or 75 per cent) being approved by the companies' management and put into implementation plans for 2017. About half of these measures (48 per cent) had a payback period of fewer than six months with an investment of less than JOD 7,000. The TEST II project was a collaboration between the Cleaner Production Unit and the National Energy Research Centre at the Royal Scientific Society and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) in cooperation with the Chambers of Industry and the ministries of Industry and Environment.



10

SUSTAINABLE FACILITIES AND EVENTS MANAGEMENT GUIDES

The Sustainable Facilities Management Guide (SFMG) is the first such guide in Arabic and aims to reduce the environmental, social and economic impacts of managing and operating industrial, commercial and institutional facilities in the Middle East and North Africa. The guide has facilitated six ISO standards

and details successful tools to manage and operate facilities throughout their life cycle, and adopts an integrated waste management plan to ensure zero waste goes to the municipal landfill and that hazardous waste is kept to a minimum.

Similarly, the Sustainable Events Management Guide (SEMG), also the first such guide in Arabic, aims to reduce the environmental, social and economic impacts of organizing events. It detail sustainable practices across a 10-point checklist: Logistics and pre-activity Planning, Arrangements during the event, Catering services, Transportation and Communications, Sustainable procurement, Communications, Publications and Media, Exhibitions accompanying the event, Health and Public Safety during the event, Waste management during the Event, Procedures after the event.

The guides were produced in accordance with the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on SCP, with funding from the Ministry of Environment and the private sector.



SCP IN JORDAN: LOOKING AHEAD

Around the world, humanity is making ever-increasing demands on nature, taking from the planet natural resources at a rate far greater than that with which nature is able replenish them. Simply, we are living beyond our planetary means.

How we adapt to this challenge of rising demand for shrinking resources will be our legacy to future generations. We have a choice: we can leave them a diminished world, or a more resource-efficient low-carbon one. The true value of programmes such as SwitchMed is that they show a way forward to this new world, one where we still produce the goods and services that we need, but do so in a cleaner, greener way. Switching to SCP also contributes to the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021–2030) which aims to prevent, halt and reverse the degradation of ecosystems on every continent and in every ocean. It can help to end poverty, combat climate change and prevent a mass extinction.

The current Covid-19 pandemic has provided a tragic illustration of how closely linked human and environmental well-being are. Biodiversity loss, shrinking habitats, dwindling natural resources, pollution and climate change all adversely affect humans as well as flora and fauna.

But the pandemic has also created a rare opportunity to begin again, to adopt a systemic life-cycle approach that balances nature's needs with national priorities. Implementing sustainable consumption and production practices across all sectors would be a significant step towards achieving this equilibrium. Sustainable consumption and production policies also provide important opportunities to trigger transformative changes in economic and social systems and promote the human rights of women and girls as well as men and boys. It is imperative to integrate a gender perspective into sustainable consumption and production work in general and national action plans, which are the key policy instruments at national level that create the enabling policy environment to achieve SDG 12.

Currently, for instance, about one-third of all food produced is wasted or spoiled because of poor transportation. This equates to 1.3 billion tonnes of food worth about \$US 1 trillion. And if the world switched to energy-efficient light bulbs we would save \$US 120 billion a year. Additionally, in the decade between 2010 and 2019, electronic waste grew by 38 per cent but only 20 per cent of that waste was recycled (United Nations n.d.).

The National Action Plans developed by countries with the support of SwitchMed recognize the potential of making the transition to SCP and Circular Economy and set out the pathways they intend to follow.



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The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan in its plan prioritized sustainable agricultural, eco-tourism and transport, and waste management and some of the successes achieved under that plan have already been described in this document. It has also put significant efforts into waste management and reduction, including in its response to the global coronavirus pandemic.

The Building Back Better post Covid-19 Project was set up to handle the potentially infectious waste produced as a consequence of the pandemic, specifically disposable face masks and gloves. Working together, the EDAMA Association for Energy, Water and Environment and the British Embassy in Amman set up the project with the aim of encouraging behavioural change and positive environmental impacts from sustainable approaches to managing this kind of waste. The pilot project is being implemented in an educational institution and a government entity, but its benefits could be extended across the country.

SCP and the circular economy have great potential to respond to national priorities, and to the three global crises (biodiversity loss, pollution, and climate change) the world is facing. Switching to more sustainable patterns

of consumption and production will need behavioural change at both national and individual levels but could generate significant economic benefits. Research by the International Resource Panel shows that more efficient use of materials and energy could add an extra \$US 2 trillion to the global economy by 2050 (UNEP 2017), while a study by the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) shows that transforming the energy system could boost cumulative global Gross Domestic Product gains above business-as-usual by \$US 98 trillion by 2050, nearly quadruple renewable energy jobs to 42 million, and expand employment in energy efficiency to 21 million.



The opportunities for countries from sustainable consumption and production are rich and varied. Some ideas for building on successes and moving forward, subject, of course, to alignment with national priorities, include:

+ TOURISM. Tourism around the world has been hard hit by Covid 19, so, as the sector turns its mind to recovery, now may prove an opportune moment to support and encourage doing things differently. Embedding resource and energy efficiency, waste reduction, and protecting flora and fauna could build resilience in a sector that, traditionally, is jobs intensive. In Jordan, expanding the work being done in Aqaba to other destinations, and to other parts of the tourism sector beyond accommodation, could be considered as a way forward. Consideration could also be given to eco-tourism projects that are low-carbon and promote water conservation and are inclusive of local communities (such as the training on craft projects provided for women in Aqaba).



+ PROMOTING CIRCULAR ECONOMY. A circular economy is a strong first step on the path to more sustainable consumption and production in that it encourages us to reduce, reuse, and recycle, but a truly circular economy closes the loop by encouraging the repair and remanufacture of goods produced. Projects that support the creation of a market for repaired and remanufactured items (where goods at the end of their useful life are made into something else) would be valuable. Examples here could be creating standards for second-hand or remanufactured goods, making room for them within public procurement regulations, putting in place incentives for their purchase, and supporting factories and start-ups in the production of remanufactured goods. Targeting particular sectors, such as housing and construction, for instance, where much of the waste produced could be reused, may prove useful, and would build upon Jordan's existing work in promoting circular economic models.



+ SUPPORTING CHANGE IN THE BLUE ECONOMY.

The "One Dead Sea is Enough" campaign highlighted both the value and the challenges facing the marine sector. There is significant potential for SCP within the "blue" sector, from establishing more environmentally friendly port operations, to embedding resource efficiency in coastal and marine areas management plans, to innovative cleantech solutions, and standards for marine sports and eco-tourism. Protecting marine biodiversity and coral reefs through creation of natural reserves could promote environmental well-being and at the same time improve local livelihoods through the development of small-scale eco-tourism projects. At a national level, consideration could be given to the development of a blue economy roadmap to raise awareness of the potential of this sector and to guide development in a sustainable way.

+ SUSTAINABLE FINANCING. Globally, a switch to green financing is under way. A database maintained by UNEP and the Green Growth Knowledge Partnership (GGKP) shows that there are now at least 391 national and sub-national policy and regulatory measures on green finance in place around the world, with 79 new measures were implemented or announced in 2019 (UNEP 2019).

These measures range from transparency in climate-related risks in investment portfolios, to providing incentives for investing in green assets, and strengthening environmental risk management practices within institutions.

Projects that support green investment, or a shift towards considering environmental impacts as a fundamental pillar of investing and lending practices, could be a significant contribution to building a better, greener, post-Covid economy.





+ DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION. Delivering on the 17 Sustainable Development Goals the world set itself in 2015 will require commitment and innovation. Projects that examine, develop and assess the digital tools necessary to scale up ambitions in existing projects, to measure and record their achievements against SDG indicators, to understand the digital needs of industrial sectors to transform to cleaner more sustainable production, or that support technological start-ups working on creative solutions to climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution or that collect and disseminate data, statistics and knowledge will be important steps in the transformation to a more sustainable society.

For instance, in Jordan, the work already in place on sustainable agriculture may benefit from investment in cleantech solutions, perhaps supported by green financing options offered to the private sector. Smart energy grids are another way that digital transformation could support low-carbon development, and digital delivery could be considered for workers upgrading their skills for new, green jobs in a range of sectors.

Whatever path Jordan decides to follow in the years ahead, it is important that environmental, economic, and social concerns especially on gender equality, remain at its core. The country's commitment to sustainable consumption and production provides a solid foundation, but behavioral change at all levels of society will be essential to achieve the transformation to a resource-efficient low-carbon world. An agile, resilient, innovative approach could see us all doing more and better with less as we work together to face any challenges that arise.

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SWITCHMED: INSPIRING CHANGE

SCP is about doing more and better with less. It is about meeting humanity's needs but remaining within planetary boundaries, about using the natural resources that the Earth provides without degrading the environment. Now in its second phase, the SwitchMed projects works to support the development of policies and practices that support a switch to sustainable consumption and production (SCP) in the Southern Mediterranean region and to make the circular economy the mainstream business model there.

Jordan has developed comprehensive plans to mainstream SCP at all levels of society. The country developed a National Green Growth road map and action plan which has been endorsed by the national Cabinet. During the coronavirus pandemic, Jordan has worked to study the environmental impact on resources, air quality and waste generation. Many campaigns educated citizens on the best disposal options for hazardous and medical waste to limit the spread of the virus.

Green Jordan is one of the most important axes and objectives of the economic modernization vision 2033, which was announced under the auspices of His Majesty. This vision aims to unleash all potentials in Jordan towards sustainable economic development, by focusing on the principle of sustainability and green transformation. Significant work has also been done on plastic waste reduction, and on reducing plastic in marine litter, and this resulted in the Plastic Shopping Bags Bylaw No. (45) for the year 2017, which aims at reducing the amount of single-use plastic bags used by consumers around the country.

It is clear that SCP is no longer just something discussed in meeting rooms. Now it is happening on the ground, across business and industry, in cities and regions, reducing pollution, improving the air we breathe, and promoting better use of nature's gifts through resource-efficient and low-carbon consumption and production practices.

In this document you will see 10 success stories inspired by the work of SwitchMed in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. They show how what began in workshops developed into plans that created a ripple that flowed out around the country. This short publication shows that opportunities for countries from sustainable consumption and production are rich and varied.

The Switch to SCP is off and running. SwitchMed is proud to have supported Jordan in its work to build a society where people and planet thrive and prosper together.

