

Sustainable Consumption and Production

HOW **ALGERIA** 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.

The People’s Democratic Republic of Algeria began its switch to sustainable development in 2000 when it put in place laws and regulations as part of its National Strategy for the Environment, as well as a National Action Plan for Environment and Sustainable Development, and programmes for development of renewal energies.

Working with SwitchMed and the United Nations Environment Programme, the country then developed its NAP for sustainable consumption and production. After a wide-ranging consultation process, the country developed a NAP entitled “42 Actions to Develop Sustainable Consumption and Production 2016–2030”.

Those 42 actions were divided into three priority areas:

- Integrating SCP into national policies and plans.
- Ensuring energy transition through promotion of energy efficiency and development of renewable energies.
- Developing a zero-waste economy by 2030.

Algeria considers the SCP-NAP to be one of the implementation tools for its National Strategy for Environment and Sustainable Development, through which it hopes to achieve its goals under Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals.

As well as developing its SCP National Action Plan, Algeria has focused considerable effort on putting in place the necessary strategic and regulatory frameworks to switch to more sustainable consumption and production. A significant part of this reflects the country’s wish to become a “zero waste” economy.

Other strategies developed and put in place include the National Plan for Climate, the National Integrated Waste Management Strategy, the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, and the National Strategy for Integrated Coastal Zone Management.

By mobilizing resources to develop and implement these strategies, Algeria has been able to embed sustainable consumption and production into its future development.



TEN SUCCESS STORIES | ALGERIA

01

GREEN CLUBS IN SCHOOLS

Teaching children to be good environmental citizens is the aim of Green Clubs set up in schools under a collaboration between the ministries of Environment and National Education. The clubs are the result of a memorandum of understanding signed between the two ministries in 2019 that encourages extracurricular activities related to the conservation of nature.

Some 3,197 Green Clubs have been established, overseen by regional committees charged with implementing and monitoring environmental and sustainable development education programmes. The National Conservatory of Environmental Training provides supervision, using materials and tools aimed at raising children's awareness in a fun way about the preservation and protection of the environment.

Various educational materials have been developed, such as guides on animation techniques in environmental education, practical manuals on the environmental clubs, green theatre and educational gardening, awareness-raising games on topics such as waste fishing, climate change, biodegradability, desertification and the selective sorting of waste. A national competition to find the best awareness message about the coronavirus was launched to encourage the creativity of environmental clubs' members under the slogan "صحتنا... بي يدنا" (Our health... is in our hands), attracting entries from 121 children.



02

ENVIRONMENTAL TRAINING

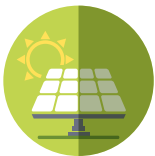
Algeria has made considerable efforts to make sure people from all walks of life have the skills they and knowledge necessary to implement the various national strategies the country has developed to help it meet its aims under Agenda 2030 and for the Sustainable Development Goals. This has involved conducting numerous workshops and training sessions, including for 55 environmental inspectors, 628 trainers for community organizations, 1,181 technical staff of landfill centres, 720 journalists, and 200 executives for regional environmental agencies.

The topics covered by these sessions included integrated waste management, environmental education for sustainable development, biodiversity conservation, clean production and sustainable consumption as well as the green economy and renewable energies.

As well, there has been a wide-ranging programme to train inmates of penitentiaries in the hope of reintegrating them into the community and employment on their release.

The aim is to guide inmates towards environmental projects and "green" jobs and to channel their energies into serving the environment and society by developing in them the sense and values of eco-responsibility and, to disseminate, environmental culture. Some 2708 prisoners and 1529 supervisors were trained on four themes: waste management, water economics and sanitation, gardening and green space development, and environmental education and awareness for sustainable development.

By raising awareness about SCP through such training sessions, Algeria hopes to build community support for the transition to a zero-waste, low-carbon economy.



03

COOPERATIVES FOR RURAL WOMEN

An experimental programme aimed at harnessing the traditional knowledge of rural women and developing local biodiversity resources was conducted in partnership by the Ministry of the Environment and Renewable Energies and GIZ, Germany's agency for international cooperation.

Two sites were chosen, the El Kala National Park and the Edough mountains. Rural women from both areas took part in three pilot projects to generate income from beekeeping, lentisk oil, and aromatic and medicinal plants. About 800 rural women were surveyed about traditional know-how to help determine the sectors to be developed in the pilot projects.

Each pilot project had three stages: outreach and awareness raising, training, and the organization of the women into cooperatives. Some 90 women joined the cooperatives: "Fleur de l'Edough", with seven women, "Miel de l'Edough" (beekeeping), with 27 women, "Green Women", with 11 women, all in the municipality of El Kala, and "Kal Miel" (beekeeping), with 23 women, "Arom Mex" (lentisk oil), with 20 women, in the municipality of Mexna.

This experience was supported by the development of a guide to good practices for the harvesting and extraction of vegetable and essential oils of the lentisk pistachio tree in Algeria, a sector identified having high commercial potential.

The women who took part in this programme attended several national and international fairs and exhibitions, nine technical and managerial training workshops for cooperatives, and study tours. Finally, these cooperatives were furnished with technical equipment for the extraction of vegetable and essential oils as well as beehives.



04

IMPROVING LIVES AND LIVELIHOODS

Fighting desertification and improving the living conditions of rural people was the aim of a number of rural renewal performance contracts awarded between 2009 and 2018. These contracts were for 12,148 integrated rural development projects, including 1608 for the modernization of villages, 3,467 for diversification of economic activities, 6,205 for the protection and enhancement of natural resources, and 868 for the protection and enhancement of tangible and intangible rural heritage.

This has resulted in the installation of arboreal orchards (140,000 ha, including 107,000 ha of olive trees) and family cattle, sheep, beekeeping, and rabbit breeding units for the benefit of nearly 200,000 people.

This programme promotes the development of alternative incomes for rural people, and the "protection and enhancement of natural resources and rural heritage, material and immaterial". It is a participatory and local approach to integrated rural development.



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05

RELAUNCHING OF THE GREEN DAM

The Green Dam Revival Project is a strategic and priority project that aims to improve and strengthen capacities to combat desertification and climate change. It is also expected to contribute to the renewal of forest increasingly endangered by human activity through livestock farming in the steppe. The cross-sectoral plan aims to increase the planted forest areas from 3.7 million hectares to 4.7 million hectares by 2035.

By 2030, it is hoped to rehabilitate rangeland in the steppe and pre-Saharan zone, developing and improving pastures on two million hectares. This work will include improving fodder production, rebuilding seed stock, regeneration of species threatened by overgrazing, conservation of vegetation cover, and protection of soils from erosion.

This programme also includes the rehabilitation and extension of the green dam (forest plantations 164,434 ha, pastoral plantations 17,058 ha, fruit plantations 6,811 ha, dune fixation 8,867 ha, development 15,618 ha).

06

CHANGING THE FUEL MIX

Algeria, as part of its environmental and energy transition policy as well as its strategy to combat climate change, has put in place strong measures to promote and encourage the use of cleaner energy sources. It has launched an action plan to ban the use of super petrol, whose annual consumption is around 1.4 million tonnes, and replace it with less polluting unleaded petrol. An operation to decontaminate the distribution network was also carried out in parallel by fuel distributors. Lead-free petrol in the nation fuel mix has increased from 29 per cent in 2015 to 40 per cent in 2020.

The Government has also taken steps to increase the use of GPL which in 2019 constitutes only 5 per cent of the fuel mix. In this sense, some initiatives deserve to be highlighted, such as that of the Algerian company Petrogel, operating in the oil sector, which has set up an innovative system for installing liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) kits on vehicles at its conversion unit in Batna, allowing vehicles to be converted in record time.

The National Agency for the Promotion and Rationalization of Energy Use (Aprue) has launched a programme to convert 150,000 vehicles to LPG. This project will benefit 50,000 taxis and 100,000 private vehicles.



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07

PROMOTING AGROECOLOGY AND PERMACULTURE

Agroecology is a type of sustainable farming that focuses on food production, using local natural resources but without damaging them. Farmers who use this method often work small family-owned plots, and seek to improve their yields, increase fair markets for their produce, and build on traditional practices. They may also use sales circuits to sell directly to like-minded consumers, sometimes through subscriptions or membership fees.

The Torba association works to promote agroecology and permaculture. In 2018-2020, together with the Ministry of Agriculture and the European Union, it provided support for smallholders in the national parks of Tlemcen, Djurdjura and Babord Tababort through training in agroecology, diversification (small processing and agro-tourism), and sales circuits.

In 2021, 100 unemployed young graduates were trained in agroecology and they helped to rehabilitate plots affected by the fires of July 2021 in Kabylia (village of Ighil Imoula, Ath yani) so that agricultural activities could resume. Additionally, eight hectares of land have been allocated in the base of the Douéra dam to build an agroecological and educational farm, shared gardens (already operational), a farmers' market, a training centre and a business incubator in agroecology.

In Algiers, Torba also promotes permaculture in city gardens through discovery days for citizens, a Torba junior programme for children, and support for permaculture projects.

Shared gardens are a way of engaging young and old in responsible management of green urban spaces. They also strengthen social ties by providing a convivial place for people to come together to work on improving the living environment.

The shared garden of Boumati, in Algiers Province, provides a welcoming space for the exchange of good practices in citizens' relationship with nature, and was awarded by the Islamic organization for education, science and culture (ISESCO) in 2014 for its role in the sustainable development of urban cities.

The therapeutic garden of the Ben Aknoun Hospital, also in Algiers Province, was initiated in 2018 by the Ministry of the Environment with the aim of improving the well-being of patients, their families and the staff of the health facility.

At the house of the environment in Tipaza Province, the garden terrace is eco-citizen space aimed at inculcating an environmental culture at the local level. This project was awarded by FAO in October 2019.



08

GREEN CITY AWARD

The Green City Award was established to promote, encourage and strengthen collective action for green cities as well as citizen and local community mobilization around ecological values in inhabited spaces. The Ministry of the Environment organized the first edition in 2018 and the second in 2019 of the Green City President of the Republic's Award. The municipalities selected during the final ranking of the winners of the first national prize in 2018 were: first, the municipality capital of Sétif; second, the municipality capital of Tlemcen; third, the municipality capital Médéa; and, fourth, the municipality capital Adrar.

The municipalities selected during the final ranking of the winners of the national prize of the green city of the second edition in 2019 were: first, municipality capital of Annaba; second, commune capital of Oum El Bouaghi; and, third, commune of Boussemghoun in El Bayadh Province.



09 MAKING SILVER JEWELLERY FROM RADIOLOGICAL FILMS

One of the key elements on a circular economy is to reuse resources multiple times, to be able to something new out of something old or used. One initiative in Algeria harvests the silver nitrate from discarded radiological films and turns it into unique and special jewellery.

A number of hazardous chemicals are used in radiological film processing which require specialist handling because of the risk that they could leak into soils and waterways. A waste recovery company, Eurl Tadjer Mohammedyasser, uses electrolysis to extract the silver nitrate, which is then given a second life when it is remanufactured into jewellery using the techniques of traditional Algerian craftsmanship. The plastic recovered from the film is sent to specialist plastic recycling companies.

10 PAVING THE WAY FOR A CIRCULAR ECONOMY

Algeria is revising and adapting its regulatory and legislative framework to better achieve its aim of a zero-waste, resource-efficient circular economy. The Ministry of Environment is working on changes to the laws that govern coastal development and waste management, with a view to adapting the protection and recovery of coastal areas and waste management to the new changes taking place in the country.

New institutional mechanisms has been also set up through the National Climate Committee and the protected areas commissions to deal respectively with climate change issues and biodiversity conservation.

The development of a national strategy for the blue economy (SNEB 2030) as well as the updating of the national strategy for integrated coastal zone management (SN GIZC 2030) contribute to providing Algeria with a clear vision for the sustainable development of maritime spaces and coastal zones by promoting intersectoral coordination, integrated monitoring systems and design methods, more sustainable planning, consumption and production. This coordination is achieved through the the National Committee for the Blue Economy (not institutionalized but functional) and the interministerial Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) commission.



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SCP IN ALGERIA: 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.

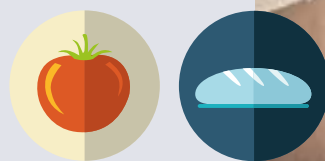
How we adapt to this challenge of rising demand for shrinking resources will be our legacy to future generations. We have a choice: we can leave them a diminished world, or a more resource-efficient low-carbon one. The true value of programmes such as SwitchMed is that they show a way forward to this 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.

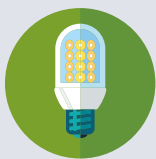
Currently, for instance, about one-third of all food produced is wasted, or spoiled because of poor transportation. This equates to 1.3 billion tonnes of food worth about \$US 1 trillion. And if the world switched to energy-efficient light bulbs we would save \$US 120 billion a year. Additionally, in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

In its National Action Plan, the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria focused on creating sustainability in the agri-food, energy and waste sectors, and has been building upon that work.

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 across these sectors and others 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. Working to reduce food waste from restaurants in the hospitality sector, as well as promoting locally grown in-season food, could help Algeria achieve some of its goals on Green House Gases (GHG) emissions, waste management, and circular economy. Additionally, for some rural communities, traditional skills and crafts could be developed for tourist interest, helping to diversify income sources and improve lives beyond the cities, while at the same time conserving natural resources and promoting environmental well-being.

+ 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) could 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 could aid in mainstreaming the principles of SCP and circular economy more broadly through society.



+ SUPPORTING CHANGE IN THE BLUE ECONOMY.

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 the biodiversity of marine environments could have significant flow-on economic effects, particularly in eco-tourism, but also by improving the livelihoods of coastal communities with the development of small-scale projects that highlight the cultural traditions and crafts of the populations along the coast. Coherent planning that flows from land to sea, demarcation of marine protected areas, and the promotion of nature-based solutions to support coastal ecosystems are already part of Algeria's strategy for the blue sector. A circular approach that reduces waste of natural marine-related natural resources could help the country meet its goals for food and water security.



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+ 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.



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+ 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. Expanding the digital transition to other sectors could aid in the efficient management of resources and better monitoring of resource exploitation, as well as improving economic resilience in the post-Covid world by providing new green jobs.



Whatever path Algeria 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. It is about improving lives and livelihoods, including for women and girls. 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.

Algeria is already advanced in putting in place integrated plans and a regulatory framework that have SCP at their core. For some time now, it has been building on these, working, for example, on a transition to renewable energy, sustainable agriculture to improve rural lives and food security, and more efficient use of natural resources such as water. 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 People's Democratic Republic of Algeria. They show how what began in workshops developed into plans that created a ripple that flowed out around the country.

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



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