



Implementing Inclusive, Green Economy Approaches: Asia Regional Dialogue on Country Experiences and Ways Forward for Economic Decision-Makers

Summary Report

Supported by the Netherlands

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Background

A two-day Regional Dialogue was held in Bangkok, Thailand from 27-28 September 2012 on inclusive green economy approaches. The Dialogue provided a forum for over 80 officials and experts representing ministries of finance, planning, and environment, as well as civil society, UN agencies and partners, see annexed concept note, agenda and participant list. Participants shared experiences on implementing inclusive, green economy approaches as a means for reducing poverty and ensuring more equitable sustainable development, including a range of policy instruments, tools and measurement frameworks.

The Regional Dialogue is one of a series of regional and global events co-organised through a [UNEP-DESA-UNDP Green Economy Joint Programme](#) as a contribution to Rio+20 and post-Rio follow-up. These activities are informed by and feed into the Green Growth Knowledge Platform (www.ggkp.org). The [UNEP-DESA-UNDP Green Economy Joint Programme](#) works at the global, regional, and national level to: 1) enhance political engagement and mobilize public support for post-Rio implementation; and 2) build capacities and strengthen advisory services on inclusive green economy policies, tools and measures.

Key Messages

The event comprised a series of moderated panel discussions. For the final session, participants broke into sub-regional groups to identify promising green economy initiatives that could be scaled up across the region, to identify gaps and country needs, and to outline the role of UN agencies, UN Country Teams and other development partners in supporting these priorities. A synthesis of the key messages emerging from these discussions follows.

Rio+20 framed inclusive green economy as an important tool for sustainable development, but provided only initial general guidance and examples regarding policy measures, tools and priorities for implementation.

Rio+20 provided a platform to discuss inclusive green economy approaches in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication. It recognized the key role of the economy within sustainable development debates, as well as the need to integrate all three social, economic, and environmental strands in development policy making. While some broad guiding principles and priorities were articulated, the discussion in Rio did not provide detailed practical guidance for implementation by national governments. Despite a perceived lack of clarity around the definition of inclusive green economy, countries have a good understanding of the opportunities and challenges associated with implementing the concept.

There is no single 'green economy' but rather 'green economies': many countries in the region understand now that there is no specific template for an inclusive green economy and that there can be different green economy approaches depending on national context. Several countries are already pursuing inclusive green initiatives with or without the "green economy" label as a means to achieve sustainable development.

Some of the green economy policy instruments and diagnostic tools that countries are using and seeking collaboration on include: inclusive green economy/green growth strategies and related consultations, workshops and assessments; valuation of ecosystems and social-economic-environmental analysis; fiscal policies, pricing, taxes, revenue collection, and market based instruments; green accounting and measurement frameworks; clean production and greening of value chains; legislation, and removal of barriers; win-win-win thematic approaches, including for energy and water - more work is needed on looking at tradeoffs for different groups over time; and initiatives focusing more explicitly on equity and social aspects, such as poverty-environment links, green jobs, gender equality and youth, benefit sharing, etc.

While there are some common elements emerging around the mainstreaming of green economy into national development strategies and the involvement of central planning and finance ministries, many country initiatives can be strengthened with respect to governance and integrated planning and implementation across sectors, institutions, and stakeholders at all levels.

Greater efforts are needed to ensure that the social, economic and environmental aspects of inclusive green economy transitions are balanced, particularly the social dimensions. This requires better coordination around green economy planning, implementation and stakeholder engagement. Ministries of economy, finance and planning are engaged in some cases, although this work is still led by ministries of environment in some countries, or by separate line ministries without being integrated fully into national budgets and frameworks such as the PRSPs, MDGs, and now post-2015 efforts. Many countries recognize the need to institutionalize stakeholder consultations, including with Major Groups at all levels and through public private partnerships. Some countries have developed national multi-sectoral green economy strategies and institutional arrangements to coordinate strategy design and implementation.

There is strong country demand for capacity development and advisory services to help unpack a practical set of context-responsive inclusive green economy tools and measures

Policymakers, civil society advocates, and other national partners have identified several areas that are key to the “how” of greening economies based on national priorities. Some of these tools and measures include: diagnostic tools for integrated environmental, social and economic assessments and the policy selection based on trade-offs and synergies; data and indices used to inform the above diagnostics, including environmental accounting; environmental fiscal reform and related green innovation, industrial and employment policy tools; and social protection instruments. As requested by the Rio+20 Outcome Document, the UN system and partners are responding to this demand by providing targeted advisory services; matching interested countries and partners; producing toolboxes of good policy examples, and strengthening existing and emerging platforms including the Green Growth Knowledge Platform (www.ggkp.org) and Global Green Growth Initiative. As part of these efforts, inclusive green economy issues are being integrated into the coordination mechanisms of UN country teams, including the UN Development Assistance Framework.

Summary of plenary discussions

A summary of the each plenary and working group session follows. More detailed session presentations are also available with this report at the [UNEP-DESA-UNDP Green Economy Joint Programme web site](#).

1. Green economy: Rio+20 Implications and Follow-up for Economic Decision-makers

Moderator: Thomas Hamlin, DESA

Panellists:

- Purushottam Ghimire, National Planning Commission, Nepal
- Rathin Roy, UNDP
- Steven Stone, UNEP

While the concept of inclusive green economy is gaining wide use in the region and many countries are planning the implementation of Rio+20 outcomes, there remains a lack of clarity around its definition, its relationship with other concepts such as green growth, sustainable development and low-carbon development, and its implications for national development planning. Further clarity around ownership of green economy implementation is needed, including who has the leading role and mandate.

Rio+20 provided a platform to discuss inclusive green economy approaches in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication. It recognized the key role of the economy within sustainable development debates, as well as the need to integrate all three social, economic, and environmental strands in development policy making. . These debates underscored issues of inclusivity and equity. The Rio+20 Outcome Document encouraged governments to implement inclusive green economy policies, but acknowledged that there is no universal template for the green economy approaches, and that countries will need to select and tailor appropriate policies according to their national priorities, endowments and circumstances. As such there is no single 'green economy', but rather varied 'green economies'.

There are, however, several general guiding principles agreed to in Rio+20, including the need to deliver on equity if sustainable development efforts are to be successful. These principles are summarized in the following table.

Green economy in the Rio+20 Outcome Document

The Rio+20 Outcome Document affirms that green economy approaches should:

- serve as tools for reducing poverty and supporting more sustainable development;
- promote inclusive economic growth and create opportunities for employment and decent work for all;
- maintain the healthy functioning of Earth's ecosystems;
- contribute to the Millennium Development Goals;
- improve the livelihoods and empowerment of the poor and vulnerable groups;
- mobilize the full potential and ensure the equal contribution of both women and men;
- engage all stakeholders and major groups, including civil society and the private sector;
- respect human rights and national sovereignty;
- avoid unwarranted conditionalities on official development assistance and finance;
- not be used as arbitrary or unjustifiable discrimination or a disguised restriction on international trade;
- derive from integrated planning processes, enabling environments, and effective institutions at all levels; and
- be supported by the UN and partners upon request through capacity development and technical assistance.

Countries are already beginning to frame green economy approaches according to their national context and are pursuing initiatives with or without the green economy label. Through sharing experiences and opening a dialogue between countries, we can better come to a common understanding on green economy and begin to unpack the policy measures and tools available.

Inclusive green economy approaches must be politically feasible and improve peoples' lives. They need to enhance dialogue and coordination across government and involve central planning and finance agencies as well as line agencies. Key multi-sectoral entry points and guiding principles for inclusive green economy policies include employment and equity.

Many countries are now entering the implementation phase for Rio+20 and/or are continuing inclusive green economy initiatives begun before Rio+20. For example, Nepal has formed a Steering Committee under its National Planning Commission for effective coordination, which is looking at how green economy should be mainstreamed into their national development processes and down to the local planning level. An initial priority is building capacity at all levels including for institutions, planners and policy makers, and other national stakeholders, as well as increasing access to international financing.

2. Country over-arching strategies for inclusive, green economy approaches.

Moderator: Usman Iftikhar, UNDP

Panellists:

- Nguyen Le Thuy, Ministry of Planning and Investment, Viet Nam
- Laksmi Dewanthi, Assistant Deputy Minister, Ministry of Environment, Indonesia
- Maria Diosa L De Mesa, National Economic and Development Authority

Implementation of inclusive green economy policies provides both opportunities and challenges for countries. Some key challenges for countries in the region include: maintaining growth, social progress and job creation while reducing carbon emissions; generating public revenues whilst retaining biodiversity and ecosystem services; and enhancing energy security, resource efficiency and resilience. Inclusive green economy approaches provide the opportunity for more integrated planning through the use of tools and methodologies that link growth, equity, poverty and sustainability. These tools enable us to identify synergies between the various policy objectives and effectively analyse and understand the benefits, costs and trade-offs among different groups and sectors over time.

Countries themselves are defining what green economy approaches are relevant to country context and are making progress. Some common elements are emerging, including the mainstreaming of inclusive green economy priorities into national strategies and integrating it with national and international poverty eradication goals and objectives. Countries are using a range of different approaches, policy instruments and methodologies to compare trade-offs and identify synergies or 'win-wins' across the social, economic, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

Opportunities and challenges

Countries commented on several green economy **opportunities**. For example, inclusive green economy approaches can be seen as a new economic model which can create jobs and reduce poverty, including a focus on renewable energy. They present opportunities to

integrate sustainable development priorities into national development plans, ensure better coordinate programme implementation by national government agencies, and provide a new perspective for evaluating programmes, projects and activities.

Shifting away from a traditional growth model that is dependent on exploiting cheap natural resources and the generation of pollution remains a **challenge**. Existing policies are biased towards this traditional model, and the shift requires integrated planning of the infrastructure sector (water, waste, energy and transportation) towards a low carbon development pathway, which has significant financial implications. Some green economy policies may result in both the loss of employment and an increase in prices for essential goods and services, which in turn may negatively impact the poor, unless a range social safeguards and related policies are also put into place.

A 'multiple track' or multi-sectoral approach to development planning is needed, which requires integration, coordination, consultation and policy intervention. Low levels of technology and technical capacity, inadequate institutional frameworks that ensure implementation and enforcement, and the need for new investment and financing are seen as key barriers to implementing green economy policies in the region.

National experience with strategies and policy tools

There is emerging experience in the region with the development and implementation of national green economy strategies, as well as a suite of inclusive green economy policy instruments and tools. For example, green growth (or low-carbon growth) is a central pillar of Viet Nam's Sustainable Development Strategy (2011-20). A new Green Growth Strategy is being finalised which aims to change the economic growth pattern by increasing efficiency in resource use, shifting industries from polluting sectors, and conducting research on new green technologies.

In Indonesia, it is acknowledged that green economy strategies need to be aligned and integrated with international and national development goals. Green economy initiatives are linked with the national development strategy through the environmental pillar, and progress has been made via a gradual, step-by-step process including awareness-raising of planners and politicians through the use of green accounting and indicators. Green economy policies are being delivered through a number of action plans that target low carbon development and less hazardous waste, sustainable use of biodiversity, and natural carrying capacity.

In the Philippines, inclusive green economy approaches are being adapted to existing capacities and resources, including through the formulation of a sustainable development action plan and sustainable development goals, identification of key sectors and priority areas, organisational assessments, and national and regional consultations.

While only some countries have an explicit national strategy or framework in place for inclusive green economy policies, countries across the region have experience in implementing specific policy measures and diagnostic tools. These include: measurement frameworks such as green accounting, green GDP or 'dashboards'; integrated spatial planning and resource management; strategic environmental assessment; economic instruments (incentives, fees and charges); payment for ecosystem services; macroeconomic modelling; and resource valuation. Other innovative instruments include the establishment of green investment funds using proceeds from ecological tax and subsidy reform, and green banking policies which target responsible investment and profit generation.

3. Indicators and measurement frameworks for inclusive green economy approaches

Moderator: Steven Stone, UNEP

Panellists:

- Syed Zahoor Ali Shah, Planning Commission, Pakistan
- Ministry of Environmental Protection, Kazakhstan
- Daniel Clarke, ESCAP

Inclusive green economy approaches are difficult to understand and implement without clear goals. How we define progress and measure success will be critical for moving forward. Indicators and measurement frameworks are one of the tools available for putting green economy policies into practice. There are some well-known examples of measurement frameworks and metrics such as the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA), The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB), and the family of Human Development Indices. At the national level, countries are also innovating, through such initiatives as Bhutan's Gross National Happiness index.

National implementation of inclusive green economy approaches will depend on each country's endowments, circumstances and capacities, and measurement frameworks can help countries to 'set their north' or identify clear goals and indicators for measuring progress. Each country will need to establish its own indicators and measurement framework which will not necessarily be entirely comparable with other countries'.

The SEEA is a universal statistical standard for environmental accounting. Indicators hosted in the system can be selected depending upon country priorities and interests and can help countries to define green economy in their particular context. This will require selecting and indicators that effectively inform their policy processes.

In the Asia-Pacific region, a number of countries have experience with measurement frameworks including China, Philippines and Indonesia. There is also research underway in India and significant experience and expertise in Australia. International organisations such as the World Bank and ESCAP have been promoting this work.

One of the challenges in establishing measurement frameworks is that collecting the necessary data is time and resource intensive. Further, if there is a perception that new metrics will detract from growth, it is unlikely to be politically acceptable, particularly in LDCs. There may also be difficulties in the definition of indicators. For example a key indicator for the transition to greener economies will be creating and new 'green jobs' and greening of existing jobs, indicators that can be difficult to define.

4. Fiscal and budget policies for managing natural resources and promoting lower carbon economies

Moderator: Rae Kwon Chung, ESCAP

Panellists:

- Araya Nuntapotidech, Deputy Director General, Pollution Control Department, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Thailand
- Yeong Chee Meng Kelvin, Economic Planning Unit, Prime Minister's Office, Malaysia

The transition to greener economies or green growth will involve shifting from a resource- and carbon-intensive economic structure to a resource- and carbon-efficient structure. To do so requires that governments send appropriate price signals to the private sector through the use of fiscal policy measures that tax 'bads' and subsidise 'goods'. If implemented successfully, such measures can deliver a double dividend of higher economic growth and employment and lower resource use and pollution. Fiscal reform will be particularly important for short-term changes in behaviour; however, investment in critical infrastructure will be necessary in the longer-term.

Fiscal reform should aim at the structural reform of the economy. While countries may share a common objective of shifting to a resource efficient economy, the pathway that is followed will be different for different countries. There is growing experience in countries in undertaking such reforms through their national economic and social development plans, including by operationalising the polluter-pays principle. For example, Thailand has implemented a range of market-based instruments including air pollution taxes, hazardous waste taxes, carbon taxes, deposit refund systems, and green vehicle taxes. The main purpose of these taxes is to send a price signal to business to change behaviours and drive innovation, with a secondary benefit being the raising of revenue which can be reinvested in environmental and/or related social initiatives. Similarly, phasing out of perverse subsidies, as has been done in Indonesia for fossil fuels, also shifts incentives away from resource use and pollution.

Some challenges associated with fiscal policy reform include the unintended social impacts and costs. Fiscal policies need to be implemented with complementary social policies to address such risks. For example, in the case of the Indonesian fossil fuel subsidy reform, reforms included cash transfer to vulnerable groups. The transition to greener economies may also create tradeoffs between different groups and sectors in the economy. Countries with large informal sectors may be particularly vulnerable to these risks.

In addition to fiscal policy, countries are implementing a range of complementary green economy policies and tools including green procurement, ecolabelling, green rating systems for buildings and companies, and life-cycle assessments.

5. Social dimensions of inclusive green economy approaches

Moderator: Roberta Clarke, UN Women

Panellists:

- Phunstho Wangyel, Gross National Happiness Commission, Bhutan
- Phonevanh Outhavong, Ministry of Planning and Investment, Lao PDR
- Jeanette Gurung, WOCAN
- Qazi Kholiqzaman Ahmad, Dhaka University, Bangladesh

Inclusive green economy approaches will need to address three critical global issues: resource depletion ('green'), economic problems ('black'), and social inequity ('pink'). They must be a means for achieving poverty reduction and inclusive human development. For developing countries in particular, greening economies must not be a barrier to economic and social development. A holistic framework is needed that integrates the three social, environmental, and economic dimensions of sustainable development.

A critical area that needs to be mainstreamed into economic policy by governments is climate change mitigation. Unless there are deep cuts in emissions led by developed countries but also by developing countries that have high emissions, then many least developed countries will have difficulties in adapting and surviving. Such an outcome would have significant negative repercussions on social development and environmental objectives.

Addressing such complex environmental and social problems requires that the solutions are mainstreamed into economic planning and decision-making, including five-year plans and national consultations. For developing countries, this includes the integration of objectives and policies relating to income distribution, food security, energy, nutrition, education, health and gender. This work includes tools such as Social Impact Analysis, Strategic Environmental Assessment, public environmental expenditure reviews, greening of national accounts.

Gender mainstreaming is also being implemented by providing women with access to land, finance and technology, which is significantly enhancing social outcomes. Empowering women as natural resource managers and green entrepreneurs is a powerful strategy for sustainable development that cannot be overlooked if inclusive green economy approaches are to reduce poverty and increase equity.

Bhutan has developed an integrated framework for mainstreaming social, environmental and economic objectives through its development philosophy of 'Gross National Happiness' which is based on four pillars – governance, environment, sustainable/equitable economic development, and the preservation and promotion of culture. A framework of indicators relating to economic security, material well-being, equity, gender equality, and environmental degradation is used to screen all policies and to help mainstream environmental, climate and poverty issues ('mainstreaming CEP').

6. Employment and green jobs: public works programmes and public-private sector job creation

Moderator: Vincent Jugault, ILO

Panellists:

- T. Chandini, Ministry of Environment and Forests, India
- Hansin Dogan, Int'l Centre for Private Sector in Development (UNDP), Turkey

An important indicator for measuring the success of inclusive green economy approaches will be whether or not they create new 'green jobs', and green existing jobs. Given that the private sector will be largely responsible for creating new jobs, it will play a central role in the transition to greener economies. Government will also play an important role as the implementation of green economy policies can both create and destroy jobs and may require significant transitions in the workforce. Government policies will need to adequately address tradeoffs and incorporate social protection schemes as part of the policy package. Some green economy approaches may also be dependent on enabling finance and technology.

Participants noted that greater clarity and awareness-raising is needed on the definition of green jobs and the methodology used to calculate them. There are also concerns that moving towards greener economies could exclude the growth of jobs in sectors that were

not classified as 'green', with negative impacts on economic and social development objectives.

There is currently no universal standard for green jobs, but they are generally defined as decent work and quality jobs which reduce environmental impacts of activities in environmental sectors. There is a methodology that has been developed and significant work is underway counting these jobs. For example the ILO is completing a number of green jobs mapping studies in different countries using both qualitative and quantitative tools.

Through the initial implementation of the ILO/UNEP green jobs initiative, there is no indication that moving towards a green economy will bring a net deficit in employment generation, and the evidence suggests that there will be slight positive net benefits. However, there will be other transition costs in shifting to greener economies, and the risks need to be anticipated, monitored and accommodated.

A key gap faced by many countries is a weak statistical base and capacity to calculate or monitor green jobs. A number of countries are enhancing their capacity in this regard, including pioneering work in the Philippines incorporating green jobs into its climate change action plan, capacity development work with the ILO in India, and efforts in Malaysia and Indonesia to develop dynamic country matrices breaking down economic sectors into sub-sectors that are considered green.

7. Country-level follow-up and programming – breakout groups and plenary

Moderator: Laksmi Dewanthi, Assistant Deputy Minister, Ministry of Environment, Indonesia

Presenters:

Nepal, Purushottam Ghimire, National Planning Commission

Philippines, Angelito Fontanilla, Department of Environment and Natural Resources

Mongolia, Batbold, Ministry of Environment and Green Development

UNDP Indonesia, Stephen Rodrigues

Regional country break-out groups recognized that the green economy concept needs to be flexible so that it can be adapted to different country circumstances; however, this inherent flexibility can also lead to ambiguity. Countries can begin to frame and adapt inclusive green economy approaches to specific contexts by setting clear goals and establishing measurement frameworks and indicators. There are a range of tools available to help governments select appropriate green economy policies and pathways.

However, moving towards greener economies is not simply a technical process, but rather a long-term transformation. This requires fundamental changes which cannot be achieved if inclusive green economy approaches are managed as individual programmes of a single ministry. They must be integrated into macro-economic policy and bring together the various ministries and stakeholders, including central planning and finance agencies, and sectoral and social ministries, as well as civil society and the private sector.

A similar focus on coordination will be required within the UN system to effectively harmonise its activities that support capacity development, technology transfer, and knowledge sharing of best practices. This can only be done if the UN and partners continue to break down silos and support more integrated transformative programmatic approaches to addressing the nexus between poverty, environment, finance, and inclusive economics.

- ***Promising initiatives that could be replicated and/or scaled up in countries and region***

Significant progress on inclusive green economy approaches have been made across the region with a number of innovative initiatives underway at the local, national and regional levels. At the regional level, there are emerging examples of effective cooperation and regional coordination including the Green Mekong, Green Development Initiative, the Green Bridge Partnership, and Environmentally Sustainable Cities initiative of ASEAN.

At the national level, a number of countries have developed national green economy strategies and climate change plans, as well as sophisticated institutional and governance arrangements to support strategy development and implementation, including the national green growth strategies of Viet Nam and Cambodia.

Countries are seeking to address trade-offs and also identify triple-win initiatives that drive inclusive, sustainable and economic growth, with a range of policy instruments being used. For example, countries are gaining experience with the implementation of fiscal instruments such as green tax and subsidy reform in Thailand, Indonesia and Malaysia, as well as payment for ecosystem services through REDD+. Importantly, a number of these countries have also established green investment funds, using the proceeds from tax and subsidy reform to fund environmental projects. Other initiatives include those relating to community forestry (Nepal), pollution control, National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (India), Corporate Social Responsibility (Pakistan and India), coastal afforestation and integrated planning (Bangladesh), and green procurement (Sri Lanka).

- ***Gaps and needs for countries to work towards more inclusive green economy approaches***

Key gaps and needs identified by participants included limited capacities, political will, financing, research and development, and technology to support green economy implementation. Many countries lack the overarching policy framework to enable a green economy transition, and there is a need for a common set of indicators and supporting baseline data to measure the transition towards more inclusive green economies, as well as the need to build technical capacity in environmental and natural resource accounting. Implementing inclusive, green economies will need ownership at the national level, broad awareness building and education for sustainable development, and the involvement of all stakeholders including women, local groups and youth. Some specific gaps include challenges related to the lack of energy security, access and supply, as well as the capacity to deal with ongoing vulnerabilities related to natural disasters and climate change. There is also a need for greater regional cooperation and integration.

- ***The role of UN agencies, UN Country Teams and other development partners in addressing priority areas***

Regional country groups identified various roles for UN agencies, UN Country Teams and other development partners, including areas of work encouraged by the Rio+20 Outcome Document. These include initiatives to address gaps and priority areas related to capacity building, facilitation, knowledge sharing, finance and technology. With regard to capacity building and knowledge sharing, some priority areas included the development of indicators and best practices, and supporting the exchange of information, experiences and knowledge. The UN can play an important role in facilitating partnerships between countries, donors and the private sector and providing a platform for country dialogues, including through stronger UN Country Team coordination. Enhancing south-south and regional cooperation, coordination and harmonisation of roles and responsibilities of UN agencies, UN Country Teams, and other actors will be necessary, as well as securing financial and political commitments from donors. Support for research and development, indigenous technology development, and technology transfer are also priority areas of focus.

Dialogue Follow-up:

This report, as well as the presentations and other resource materials from the Asia Regional Dialogue, will be disseminated widely among participants, as well as national and international partners within and beyond the region. Materials will be available on the [UNEP-DESA-UNDP Green Economy Joint Programme](#) web-site, and also through regional and global platforms, including the [Green Growth Knowledge Platform](#) and [Green Growth Best Practices initiative](#), the Green Mekong, Green Development Initiative, the Green Bridge Partnership, and Environmentally Sustainable Cities initiative of ASEAN.

The results and findings of the Asia Regional Dialogue will also be used to inform the work of the Green Economy Joint Programme. As requested by the Rio+20 Conference outcome document, the UN system and partners are responding to country demand by matching interested countries and partners, producing toolboxes of good policy examples, and strengthening existing and emerging south-south exchange platforms. As part of these efforts, inclusive green economy issues are being integrated into the coordination mechanisms of UN country teams, including the UN Development Assistance Framework.

This work includes more in-depth regional workshops designed to unpack inclusive green economy tools, as well as targeted advisory services and integrated programming to support work in pilot countries in Asia, and other regions. More detailed updates on follow-up to this Asia Dialogue will be shared through the Joint Programme web-site and similar forums.

Annexes:

Concept note and Agenda

List of participants



Implementing Inclusive, Green Economy Approaches: Asia Regional Dialogue on Country Experiences and Ways Forward for Economic Decision-Makers

Supported by the Netherlands

Bangkok, Thailand - Amari Watergate Hotel

27-28 September 2012

Summary

A two-day Regional Dialogue is being organized in Bangkok, Thailand from 27-28 September to share country experiences from Asia on the transition to a more inclusive, greener economy with instruments, tools and indicators to improve implementation targeted at economic-decision makers.

The meeting will bring together a range of countries from the region with ministries of finance, planning and environment, as well as selected UN agencies, development partners and civil society to review experience and identify ways forward where international agencies can provide support.

Background

Many countries have expressed their aspirations and are already making the transition to an inclusive, green economy to achieve sustainable development. Within the diverse Asia region, countries have interpreted “green economy” in different ways. Some have seen it as a new export opportunity and a way to develop new goods and services to provide employment. Other views are more cautious and shaped by concerns that the transition to more resource-efficient, lower-carbon models of growth could be accompanied by financing conditionalities, or non-tariff trade barriers. Debates have also included a related discussion on the need to reaffirm the “common but differentiated responsibilities” (CBDR) principle as set out in the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, which recognizes the historical responsibility of developed countries and special circumstances of developing countries.

These and other views were raised during Rio+20 negotiations and helped inform the green economy section of the Outcome Document and related text, which is summarized below.

Green economy in the Rio+20 Outcome Document

The Rio+20 Outcome Document affirms that green economy approaches should:

- serve as tools for reducing poverty and supporting more sustainable development;
- promote inclusive economic growth and create opportunities for employment and decent work for all;
- maintain the healthy functioning of Earth’s ecosystems;
- contribute to the Millennium Development Goals;
- improve the livelihoods and empowerment of the poor and vulnerable groups;
- mobilize the full potential and ensure the equal contribution of both women and men;
- engage all stakeholders and major groups, including civil society and the private sector;
- respect human rights and national sovereignty;
- avoid unwarranted conditionalities on official development assistance and finance;
- not be used as arbitrary or unjustifiable discrimination or a disguised restriction on international trade;
- derive from integrated planning processes, enabling environments, and effective institutions at all levels; and
- be supported by the UN and partners upon request through capacity development and technical assistance.

Some of these views were also reflected in the earlier green growth approach for achieving sustainable development adopted at the 6th Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in October 2010. This concept of green growth emerged among some countries in the Asia-Pacific region in part as a response to multiple crises and climate change, and as a strategy to help turn resource constraints into economic opportunities that generate a double dividend of higher growth with lower environmental impact.

In practice, if not always labeled as “green economy”, several countries in the region are already planning and implementing policies that can form the building blocks of an inclusive green economy (PEP, 2012).¹ Following the financial crisis in 2007, some fast growing countries in the region have initiated strategies for improving resource and eco-efficiency. These include investments in low-carbon technologies, energy efficiency and renewable energies; integrated water resource management and related agriculture and food security strategies; sustainable transport, more compact city planning, environmental fiscal reform and green accounting; eco-tourism; and payment for ecosystem services.

Some countries, including Bhutan, Cambodia, and Vietnam, have formulated green growth roadmaps and established green growth institutional frameworks. Others, such as Indonesia, are considering green economy options in their regional development and economic corridor approaches, while countries such as China and India have committed significant amounts of investments in renewable energies, recycling and the development of an environmental industry in their five-year national development plans.

One of the most visible of these initiatives is driven by the Republic of Korea, which was the first country to declare low carbon green growth as its national vision in 2008 and now hosts the Global Green Growth Institute. In 2010, Kazakhstan started promotion of a Europe-Asia-Pacific inter-regional green growth partnership through the Astana Green Bridge Initiative, highlighted in the Rio+20 Outcome document².

This Regional Dialogue is one of a series of regional and global events co-organised through a UNEP-DESA-UNDP Green Economy Joint Programme as a contribution to Rio+20 and post-Rio follow-up by facilitating knowledge exchange of inclusive green economy experiences within and across regions. These activities are informed by and feed into the Green Growth Knowledge Platform (www.ggkp.org). The UNEP-DESA-UNDP Green Economy Joint Programme works at the global, regional, and national level to: 1) enhance political engagement and mobilize public support for post-Rio implementation; and 2) build capacities and strengthen advisory services on inclusive green economy policies, tools and measures.

Justification

As the above country examples demonstrate, there are ways that the transition to more inclusive, greener economies can be made without having to choose between poverty reduction and environmental sustainability. Through careful planning, inclusive, greener economies can be designed in ways that limit any potential harm, while increasing access to new economic investments, reducing inequalities and promoting social well-being. National level assessments using quantitative methods that link the three dimensions of sustainable development to evaluate green economy policies and investments have been attempted in some countries, including China, Indonesia, and the Philippines).

Still, empirical and theoretical evidence on how inclusive green economy or green growth can be planned, implemented and evaluated in different contexts remains limited. Coordination among different stakeholders involved with developing tools and methodologies for planning inclusive green economy requires strengthening. In many Asian countries, different green economy expertise and data is often

¹ An Inclusive, Green Economy for All: Opportunities and Challenges, <http://www.povertyenvironment.net/files/PEP%20GE4All-Final-logos%20front.pdf>

² paragraph 102 on page 20 of The Future We Want , Rio+20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 20-22 June 2012; A/CONF.216/L.1*

compartmentalised between institutions responsible for environment, energy, climate change, economic and social areas at all levels. For these reasons, the task of harnessing opportunities afforded by different green economy approaches can be challenging for policymakers and practitioners at all levels even when there is a basic understanding of the potential gains across social, economic and environmental strands.

To ensure that the participatory design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of integrated green economy approaches are informed by relevant information, decision-makers and partners from civil society and the private sector require access to and understanding of a more advanced yet practical set of policy tools, measures and methodologies that can be adapted and respond to the needs of different country contexts. The Rio+20 Outcome Document recognizes these needs and encourages UN agencies and partners to help meet this demand by coordinating information on tools and good practice to support the implementation of inclusive green economy approaches.

Several initiatives led by Member States, UN Agencies, OECD, MDBs, civil society, and partners have already identified a range of inter-related instruments, tools and indicators to move towards an inclusive, green economy that are particularly relevant for economic-decision-makers.

These can be divided into policy instruments, analytical tools, and measurement frameworks.

- **Policy instruments** to encourage an inclusive, green economy. Such policy instruments include fiscal policies (such as environmental fiscal reforms), social protection (including public works programmes, micro-credit, adaptive social protection and conditional cash transfers for social objectives and environmental objectives such as Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation or REDD+), public private partnerships and provision of decent and “green” employment and trade policies to promote social or environmental objectives.
- **Decision-making tools** to assess options for an inclusive, green economy. Such decision-making tools include macro-economic modelling of economic, social and environment trade-offs and synergies, for modelling labour market effects of selected policies and assessment tools such as poverty social impact assessment and strategic environmental assessment of selected policies.
- **Measurement frameworks** to track progress towards the social and environmental outcomes of an inclusive, green economy. This can include MDG assessments, State of Environment Reports, green accounting, Human Development Reporting and poverty or climate and environment public expenditure reviews to assess expenditure on social and environmental objectives. Such national indicators are linked to the international debate on Sustainable Development Goals and indicators for the post-2015 Millennium Development Goal targets.

The following table includes more examples of these policy tools, and measurement frameworks.

Selected Policy Instruments, Decision-making tools and Measurement Frameworks to Support Inclusive Green Economy Approaches

Policy instruments

Green Investment Strategies

The report "Towards a Green Economy: Pathways to Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication" examines the potential effects on inclusive growth, employment creation and environmental gains of investing 2% global GDP in 10 key economic sectors, comparing such effects with a scenario of Business as Usual. The report offers a range of tools and instruments that can help policy makers identify investment options and policy reforms to advance their sustainable development goals.

Green Economy Report: Synthesis for Policy Makers: http://www.unep.org/greeneconomy/Portals/88/documents/ger/GER_synthesis_en.pdf

Full report: http://www.unep.org/greeneconomy/Portals/88/documents/ger/ger_final_dec_2011/Green%20EconomyReport_Final_Dec2011.pdf

Economic Instruments for Environmental Management

As natural resources come under increasing pressure and countries face ongoing budget constraints, economic instruments – pollution taxes, user fees and other incentives to improve environmental quality – can provide an important tool to complement command-and-control measures to ensure sustainable development.

Integrated Policymaking for Sustainable Development: A Reference Manua, <http://www.unep.ch/etb/publications/IPSD%20manual/UNEP%20IPSD%20final.pdf>

Integrated Assessment for Mainstreaming Sustainability into Policymaking: A Guidance Manual

<http://www.unep.ch/etb/publications/AI%20guidance%202009/UNEP%20IA%20final.pdf>

Training Resource Manual: The Use of Economic Instruments for Environmental and Natural Resource Management

<http://www.unep.ch/etb/publications/EI%20manual%202009/Training%20Resource%20Manual.pdf>

Environmental Fiscal Reform (EFR)

EFR refers to a range of taxation and pricing measures which can raise fiscal revenues, increase efficiency and improve social equity while furthering environmental goals.

Global Subsidies Initiative, IISD, <http://www.iisd.org/gsi/>

Environmental fiscal reform, World Bank <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTRANETENVIRONMENT/Publications/20712869/EnvFiscalReform.pdf>

Reforming Fiscal Policies, Low Carbon Green Growth Roadmap for Asia and the Pacific, ESCAP,

<http://www.unescap.org/esd/environment/lcgg/documents/roadmap/Roadmap/individual/2.2.2.pdf>

Social Protection Instruments

Social protection instruments are a way to make green growth more inclusive and socially acceptable including by easing the burden of the transition on the disadvantaged. There are a range of social protection schemes including public works programmes, micro-credit and conditional cash transfers. Some of these schemes are now expanded to include climate and environmental aspects now known as "climate adaptive" social protection. Examples of the latter include micro-insurance that takes account of the risks of climate disasters, and conditional cash transfers linked to forest management, known as Reduced Emissions for Deforestation and Degradation.

UNDP and ILO (2011), "Sharing Innovative Experiences: Successful Social Protection Floor Experiences".

<http://www.ilo.org/gimi/gess/ResShowResource.do?ressourceid=20840>.

Low Carbon Green Growth Development Policies

A comprehensive toolbox of green growth/green economy policies for resource efficiency, including physical infrastructure such as transport, buildings and energy systems, as well as market prices, regulations and lifestyles.

Low Carbon Green Growth Roadmap for Asia and the Pacific, ESCAP, <http://www.unescap.org/esd/environment/lcgg/documents/roadmap/Roadmap/>

Decision-making tools

There are a range of decision-making tools which focus on improving both environmental and social outcomes. Environmental Assessments (SEAs) refer to a range of analytical and participatory approaches that aim to integrate environmental considerations into policies and evaluate the inter-linkages with economic, social, and climate change considerations. They comprise a variety of tools, rather than a single, fixed and prescriptive approach.

World Bank. Strategic Environmental Assessment Toolkit: <http://go.worldbank.org/XIVZ1WF880>

Poverty and social impact analysis (PSIA) involves the analysis of the distributional impact of policy reforms on the well-being of different stakeholder groups, with a particular focus on the poor and vulnerable.

[A User's Guide to Poverty and Social Impact Analysis](#)

There are also examples of modelling approaches such as the analysis of labour market and income effects, where the knowledge of how the transition to a sustainable, low-carbon economy will affect employment, especially underlying job movements, as well as income generation and distribution is vital to informing policy.

ILO (2011) [Assessing Green Jobs Potential in Developing Countries: A Practitioner's Guide](#).

UNDP (2012) [Human Development Impact Assessment of Trade Policy: A Toolkit](#)

Measurement Frameworks

Green Accounting

Green accounting extends national accounts to include the value of the damage and depletion of the natural assets that underpin production and human well-being. Net saving, adjusted for the depreciation of produced assets and the depletion and degradation of the environment, indicates whether well-being can be sustained.

System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA), UN Statistical Commission - <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/envaccounting/seea.asp>.

Public Climate and Environmental Expenditure Reviews (PEERs)

PEERs examine government resource allocations within and among sectors, and/or at national and sub-national levels of government, and assesses the efficiency and effectiveness of those allocations in the context of environmental and social priorities.

<http://www.unpei.org/PDF/budgetingfinancing/Public-Env-Expend-Reviews-PEERS.pdf>

Measuring Progress Towards a Green Economy

This brochure introduces a framework for the use of indicators in developing and tracking green economy policies. The objective is to provide brief guidance on the use of indicators in major stages of policymaking using environmental issues as an illustrative entry point.

http://www.unep.org/greeneconomy/Portals/88/documents/research_products/MeasuringProgress.pdf

Objectives

The objective of this dialogue is to offer Member States from the Asia region a space for sharing more detailed experiences on how to plan and implement inclusive, green economy approaches as a means for achieving sustainable development goals. It seeks to enhance knowledge and awareness about different policy instruments, decision-making tools and measurement frameworks. The event will also be used to help plan post-Rio support.

Format and Outputs

The event will include a series of moderated panel discussions with speakers from Member States and invited representatives of major stakeholders groups on green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication.

Based on these discussions, the workshop will produce:

- recommendations on opportunities for inclusive green economy approaches, including demand for *practical* tools, measures and methodologies to support better *integrated* green economy policymaking and implementation that national policy-makers and partners can adapt to *country context*.
- recommendations for national support by international agencies and UN partners included by the UNDP-UNEP-UNDESA Green Economy Joint Programme;

Participants:

The primary audience includes mid- to senior government economic decision-makers and focal points for green economy and related sustainable development policymaking from ministries of finance/planning/economy and environment from Asia and Central Asia, as well as civil society and private sector representatives.

Other resource experts include the UNEP Regional Office for Asia-Pacific and UNEP Beijing Office; UNDP Regional Bureau/Centre and UNDP CO experts from Asia and Central Asia, including UN RCs/CDs, as well as experts based in Bangkok from sister UN agencies including UNESCAP, ILO, UNWOMEN, etc.

Additional host country participants, including civil society and private sector representatives.

Venue and Date:

The workshop will take place from 27-28 September 2012 in Bangkok, Thailand at the Amari Watergate Hotel: 847 Petchburi Road, Bangkok 10400; Tel: +66 02 653 9000

<http://www.amari.com/Watergate/>



**Implementing Inclusive, Green Economy Approaches:
Asia Regional Dialogue on Country Experiences and Ways Forward for Economic Decision-Makers**

Supported by The Netherlands

**Bangkok, Thailand – Amari Watergate Hotel
27-28 September 2012**

AGENDA

DAY 1	
8:30 – 9:00 am	Registration
MoC Day 1: Stefanos Fotiou, United Nations Environment Programme	
Opening, Introductions	
9:00 - 9:30 am	Welcome and Opening Remarks UNDP Rathin Roy, UNEP Steven Stone, DESA Keneti Faulalo Objectives, Agenda and Expected Outputs
9:30 - 10:45 am	Rio+20 – Implications and Follow-up for Economic Decision-makers Introduction and panel discussion, DESA Facilitation, Thomas Hamlin Nepal, Purushottam Ghimire, National Planning Commission UNDP Rathin Roy, UNEP Steven Stone <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What are the implications of Rio+20 preparations, including National Reports and the Outcome Document on national inclusive green economy approaches sustainable development and poverty eradication? - What post-Rio global, regional and national follow-up activities are planned and how can these support decision-makers to plan and implement green economy initiatives?
10:45 - 11.00 am	<i>Coffee Break and Group Photo</i>
11.00 - 12:30 pm	Country over-arching strategies for inclusive, green economy approaches Introduction and panel discussion, UNDP Facilitation, Usman Iftikhar Viet Nam, Nguyen Le Thuy, Ministry of Planning and Investment Indonesia, Laksmi Dewanthi, Assistant Deputy Minister, Ministry of Environment Philippines, Maria Diosa L De Mesa, National Economic and Development Authority <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What are the opportunities and challenges in transitions to a green economy, including links to poverty reduction strategies and issues of social equity? - What has been the experience of different countries in formulating strategies, plans and policies for socially inclusive, low carbon, natural resource efficient economy? - Where can market mechanisms support equitable, inclusive, sustainable development, and where do they not have a role? - Role of macro-modelling and other decision-making tools to identify trade-offs and synergies for the transition to an inclusive, green economy?
12:30 – 1:45 pm	<i>Lunch Break</i>

1:45 - 3:15 pm	<p>Indicators and measurement frameworks for inclusive green economy approaches Introduction and panel discussion, UNEP facilitation, Steven Stone</p> <p>Pakistan, Syed Zahoor Ali Shah, Planning Commission Kazakhstan, Bulat Yessekin, Ministry of Environment Thailand, Daniel Clark, Statistics Division, ESCAP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What measurement frameworks are needed to inform, track, and assess inclusive green economy approaches? - What is the role of national systems of environment and economic accounting (SEEA)? - What examples are there of “going beyond GNP” to capture the social, environmental, and economy aspects of inclusive green economy?
3:15 – 3:45 pm	<i>Coffee Break</i>
3:45 – 5:00 pm	<p>Fiscal and budget policies for managing natural resources and promoting lower carbon economies Introduction and panel discussion, ESCAP facilitation, Rae Kwon Chung</p> <p>Thailand, Araya Nuntapotidech, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment Malaysia, Yeong Chee Meng Kelvin, Economic Planning Unit, Prime Minister’s Office</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How can fiscal policies influence the planning and implementation of inclusive green economy approaches? - What are the implications of different fiscal reform options for subsidies and taxes; cost recovery through fees and charges; and pollution charges? - Which successful experiences exist with reforms of economically distorting, environmentally harmful or socially ineffective subsidies? - How to address the trade-offs of fiscal reforms for different groups and sectors? - What is the role of Public Climate and Environmental Expenditure Reviews?
5:30 pm	Reception
DAY 2	
MoC Day 2: Paul Steele, United Nations Development Programme	
9:00 - 9:15 am	Recap of Day 1, UNDP Paul Steele
9:15 - 10:30 am	<p>Social dimensions of inclusive green economy approaches Introduction and panel discussion, UNWOMEN facilitation, Roberta Clarke</p> <p>Bhutan, Phunstho Wangyel, Gross National Happiness Commission Lao PDR, Phonevanh Outhavong, Ministry of Planning and Investment WOCAN, Jeanette Gurung Bangladesh, Qazi Kholiquzzaman Ahmad, Dhaka University</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How to ensure that green economy approaches are a means towards poverty reduction and inclusive human development? - What are the re-enforcing links between gender equality and inclusive green economies? - How to ensure that GE green economy approaches improve the livelihoods and empowerment of the poor and vulnerable groups? - What is the role of welfare, livelihood schemes, revenue and benefit sharing? - How to ensure the meaningful engagement of all stakeholders and major groups? - What examples are there of using Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEAs) and Poverty and Social Impact Analysis (PSIA) tools?

10:30 - 11.00 am	<i>Coffee Break</i>
11:00 - 12:30 pm	<p>Employment and green jobs: public works programmes and public-private sector job creation Introduction and panel discussion, ILO facilitation, Vincent Jugault</p> <p>India, T. Chandini, Ministry of Environment and Forests Turkey, Hansin Dogan, Int’l Centre for Private Sector Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What are the challenges and opportunities that green economy transitions bring to jobs and livelihoods in different country contexts? - What is the role of public policy in supporting the creation for green jobs and addressing changing employment and demographic changes? - How can government-employers-workers partnerships and dialogue generate more equitable employment opportunities for all? - What experiences exist with social and environmental entrepreneurship? - What tools are there to support an analysis of labour market and income effects?
12:30 - 1:30 pm	<i>Lunch Break</i>
1:30 - 3:00 pm	<p>Country level follow-up and programming opportunities Break out discussion groups by sub-region comprising national governments, UN agencies, and development partners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What are the most promising initiatives that could be replicated and/or scaled up in your country and region? - Considering the themes and tools discussed over the preceding two days, what are the gaps and needs for your countries to work towards more inclusive green economy approaches? - What role can UN agencies, UN Country Teams and other development partners play in addressing these priority areas?
3:00 - 3:20 pm	<i>Coffee Break</i>
3:20 - 5:00 pm	<p>Plenary discussion of country level follow-up and programming opportunities, cont. Facilitation, Indonesia, Laksmi Dewanthi, Ministry of Environment Nepal, Purushottam Ghimire, National Planning Commission Philippines, Angelito Fontanilla, Department of Environment and Natural Resources Mongolia, Batbold, Ministry of Environment and Green Development UNDP Indonesia, Stephen Rodriques</p> <p>Final Reflections and Closing UNDP Tim Scott, UNEP Steven Stone, DESA Thomas Hamlin</p>

**Participant List for Implementing Inclusive, Green Economy Approaches:
Asia Regional Dialogue on Country Experiences and Ways Forward for Economic Decision-Makers**

**Bangkok, Thailand - Amari Watergate Hotel
27-28 September 2012**

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