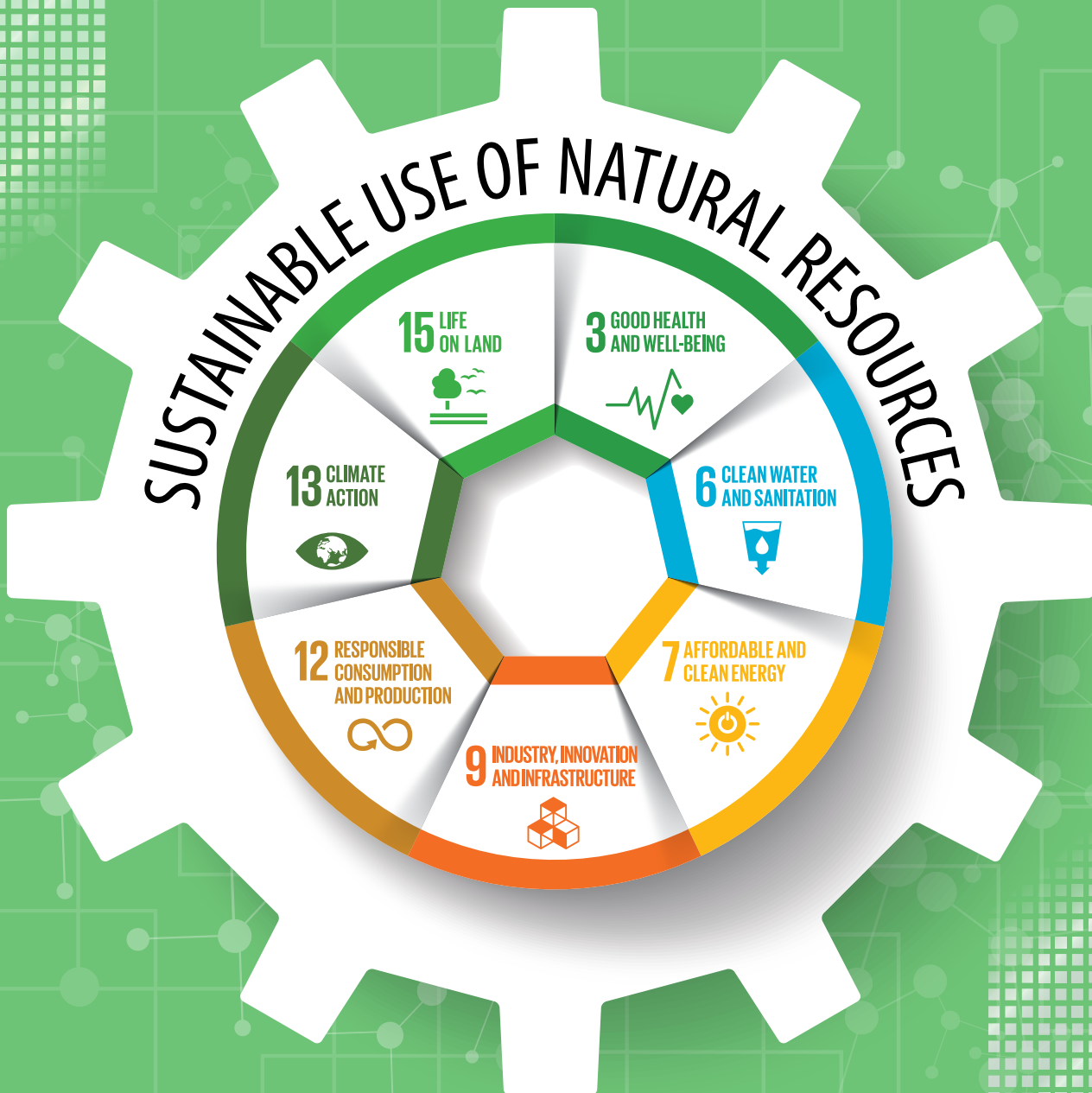


Natural Resource Nexuses in the ECE region



UNECE

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UNITED NATIONS

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FOREWORD

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development provides an ambitious and comprehensive framework that opens new perspectives for policymaking and international cooperation. While there has been progress in implementation, current efforts are far below the scale needed to deliver on the sustainable development goals (SDGs) within the next ten years. Ambitious, forward-looking action on the goals has become even more important in the context of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic: recovery that leads to greener, more inclusive economies and stronger, more resilient societies is essential.

ECE supports our member States in implementation of the 2030 Agenda through concrete and results-oriented activities in our eight sub-programmes: environment, transport, statistics, economic cooperation and integration, sustainable energy, trade, timber and forestry, and housing, land management and population. ECE's multi-sectoral structure has allowed us to support SDG implementation in an integrated manner, in line with the interlinked character of the SDGs, and to adopt a new way of working that cuts across sectoral boundaries. Four nexus areas have been defined where multiple SDGs converge:

- Sustainable use of natural resources
- Sustainable and smart cities
- Sustainable mobility and smart connectivity
- Measuring and monitoring progress towards the SDGs

In each of these areas, a cross-sectoral, inter-divisional team of ECE experts has undertaken an in-depth substantive analysis of current and future challenges and needs of ECE member States and has identified ways and means to address them, thus assisting member States to design and implement integrated policies in these areas. The findings of these analyses and corresponding policy recommendations are set out in a series of four flagship publications.

This report on the *Natural Resource Nexuses in the ECE region* describes the complex interactions and feedback loops between human and natural systems affecting the natural resource base such as energy, food, land, materials, and water. Two other sectors that are relevant to the nexuses, namely, transport and trade, also are considered here. A nexus approach ensures integrated and sustainable approaches to natural resource management that can be applied at all scales and that extend beyond the traditional sectoral "silos". This report identifies and analyses seven nexus hotspots that showcase specific challenges and opportunities for a nexus approach, considering core ECE expertise and products within a broader analytical framework that embraces regional megatrends and the SDGs.

The current patterns of linear, unlimited use of natural resources are starting to breach the carrying capacity of the planet. The seven key hotspots highlighted in this report are by no means exhaustive but demonstrate how total transformation of use and reuse of resources can be achieved through a holistic, systems approach. I invite member States to test and adapt the ideas put forward herein and to strengthen national capacities to tackle sustainable resource management through comprehensive approaches, especially given the challenge of building back better from the COVID-19 pandemic.



Olga Algayerova

Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations
Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

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