



GREEN ^{with plant and wind icons}economy and **TRADE**

Trends, Challenges and Opportunities



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Foreword

What does a transition to a green economy imply for international trade? In turn, what does international trade imply for a green economy? This report, *Green Economy and Trade – Trends, Challenges and Opportunities*, explores the critical and, indeed, exciting nexus between trade and the green economy.

In today's increasingly interconnected world, where trillions of dollars worth of goods and services are traded annually, greening trade is not only an opportunity, it is an imperative. If we are to reverse the global decline of biodiversity, mitigate the release of greenhouse gases, halt the degradation of lands, and protect our oceans, then international trade must become sustainable and responsible. Further, if we are to succeed in eradicating poverty, we will need to ensure that trade benefits the poor. The report illustrates that greening trade is an important element of the pathway to a sustainable world without poverty.



This is precisely what world leaders envisioned at the Rio+20 conference in June 2012. They reaffirmed "international trade [as] an engine for development and sustained economic growth", and identified the green economy as "an important tool for achieving sustainable development". As this report makes clear, developing countries in particular are likely to benefit from implementing green economy policies that scale up sustainable trade.

The report focuses on six economic sectors – agriculture, fisheries, forests, manufacturing, renewable energy and tourism – all of which are particularly promising in a transition to a green economy. A range of practical enabling conditions is identified that could help overcome hindrances to the achievement of sustainable development objectives through trade. By assessing the trends, opportunities and challenges for more sustainable trade practices, the report aims to stimulate governments to harness and seek further opportunities in these and other sectors.

In producing this report, UNEP has benefited from the inputs of many partner organisations, notably the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD) and the International Trade Centre (ITC) as well as many experts, government representatives and stakeholders. We are most grateful to all our partners, reviewers and contributors, as well as to the European Commission which has provided generous support for this project.

The report is a key output of UNEP's Green Economy and Trade Opportunities Project, which provides policy analysis and outreach activities on trade-related opportunities associated with a transition to a green economy. It supports the design and implementation of sustainable trade policies and tools, particularly in developing countries. With this report in hand, UNEP and our partners will move forward with assisting countries to capture the benefits of greening trade at a national level.

I am sure that national policy makers and other stakeholders will find inspiration in this report as a way of seeking and promoting new trade opportunities that arise from the transition to a green economy.

Achim Steiner,

UN Under-Secretary General
and Executive Director,
UN Environment Programme (UNEP)

About this Report

This report has been prepared by the Trade, Policy and Planning Unit of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). It is a key component of the “Green Economy and Trade Opportunities Project” (GE-TOP), funded by the European Commission, with a financial contribution from GIZ. GE-TOP aims to:

- Identify a range of international trade opportunities in various key economic sectors associated with the transition to a green economy;
- Identify policies and measures that may act as facilitators and overcome hindrances to seizing trade opportunities arising from the transition to a green economy; and
- Assist governments, the private sector and other stakeholders to build capacity to take advantage of sustainable trade opportunities at the national, regional or international level.

The report has been reviewed and discussed by more than 200 experts in their respective fields. The first draft was prepared as an input to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in June 2012 (Rio+20), and has been discussed at three conferences organized under GE-TOP:

- A workshop on Environment and Trade in Africa (May 2012, Windhoek, Namibia);
- A Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue in Rio (June 2012, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil); and
- A workshop on Green Economy and Trade Opportunities in Latin America (July 2012, Heredia, Costa Rica).

Participants to these events provided significant feedback on the drafts and commented in detail on the role of trade in facilitating the transition to a green economy, as well as on green economy measures creating trade opportunities. They noted that significant sustainable trade potentials already exist in some sectors, and that assistance will be needed to fully capture them. The participants particularly highlighted the importance of support of intergovernmental organisations and the need for regional and international coordination and cooperation to benefit from new opportunities.

Against this backdrop, the report, through real life examples and a review of available literature, aims to provide governments, investors, private sector representatives and civil society with an overview on how the transition to a greener economy can create sustainable trade opportunities particularly for developing countries. While illustrating how green economy policies and investments in trade-related sectors are means to achieve economic, social and environmental objectives in a mutually supportive manner, the report also considers some of the main trade-related challenges faced by developing countries to take advantage of the benefits arising from the transition to a greener economy. It explores how addressing these challenges can present opportunities to advance economic and social development in a sustainable way.

This report adopts a case-based approach with a view to stimulating further analytical work and policy dialogue, particularly at the national and regional level. It is composed of an introduction, six sectoral chapters on agriculture, fisheries, forests, manufacturing, renewable energy, and tourism, and a conclusion. The introduction provides an overview of the context, synergies and potential challenges of the nexus between international trade and the transition to a green economy. Each of the sectoral chapters reviews the environmental and economic context for greening the economy; presents green economy measures and assesses how they can and do create new trade opportunities particularly for developing countries; and finally discusses enabling conditions, policy tools and actions that can help support the creation of trade opportunities in connection with green economy reforms. Each chapter includes case studies prepared by field experts and academics, as well as a list of resources for further information.

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