



The Eco-Innovation Project

Promoting Eco-Innovation and Resource Efficiency in Developing and Transition Economies

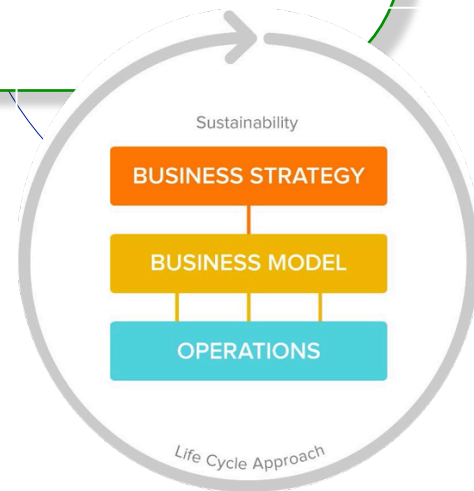
Division of Technology, Industry & Economics - www.unep.org/ecoinnovationproject

Harnessing eco-innovation for sustainable development

Alarming high levels of resource depletion, and environmental pollution from current production and consumption patterns are pushing the limits of sustainability. Multi-faceted and profound transformations are required to realign development towards a more resource efficient economy. This implies the creation of new strategies, products, processes and practices as well as shifts in consumption behaviour. Eco-Innovation holds the potential for systemic change through creating and meeting a demand for sustainable goods and services.

This is particularly important for developing and transition economies with growing manufacturing sectors. In many of these economies, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are key to economic activity and growth, providing up to two thirds of formal employment. Unsustainable production practices and business models however hinder company growth. This points to a number of challenges that SMEs in these countries face, such as access to finance and technology, that ultimately make them less competitive in the global market. Eco-Innovation breaks this "business as usual" routine to address these challenges.

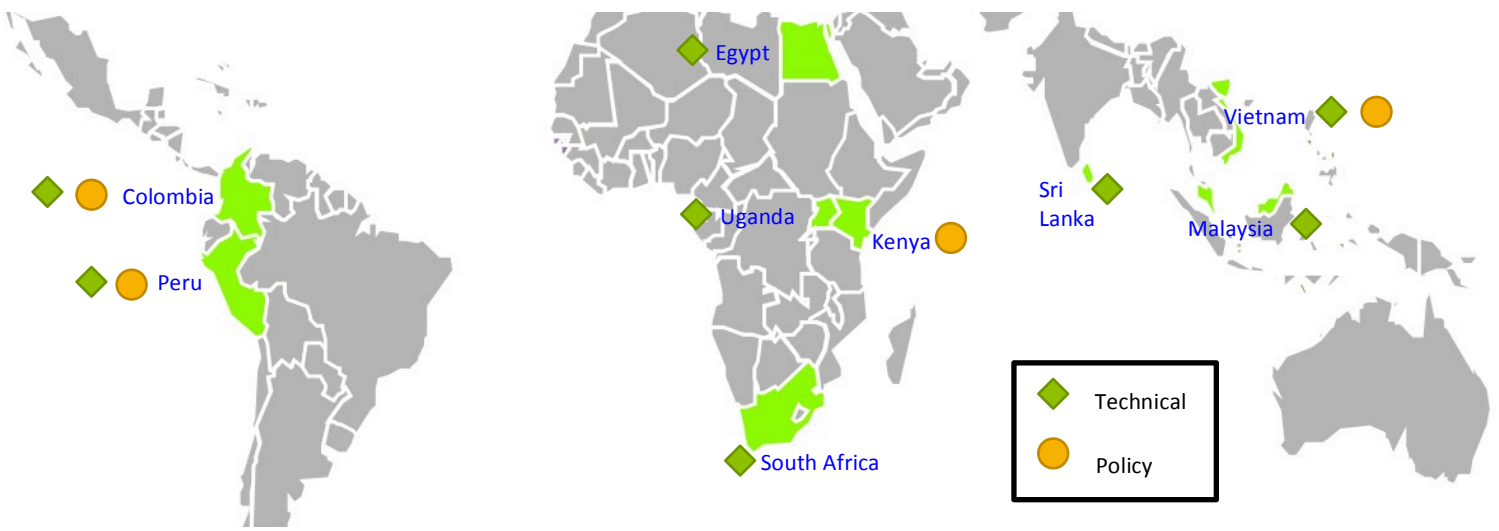
Eco-innovation works through a new **business strategy** that incorporates sustainability throughout all business operations. This approach involves **life cycle thinking** and considers partners across the **value chain**. By implementing a set of coordinated modifications to products (goods / services), processes, market approaches and organizational structures, eco-innovation enables the creation of novel solutions leading to **enhanced sustainability performance and competitiveness**.



UNEP & Eco-Innovation

In 2012, in partnership with the European Commission, UNEP established the project, which sets out to promote Resource Efficiency and Eco-Innovation in developing and transition economies. The project will run to the end of 2016, and specifically aims to engage SMEs in an eco-innovation process by facilitating policy and technical conditions that enable systemic innovation, and by complementing local expertise through capacity building activities.

Important enabling conditions include: the willingness and readiness of the company, the value chain, the market, national and regional policy frameworks, and the extent of Research & Development capacity within the country and the company.



A Path to Eco-Innovation

The UNEP Eco-innovation project entails activities that will address:

The Business Case for Eco-innovation

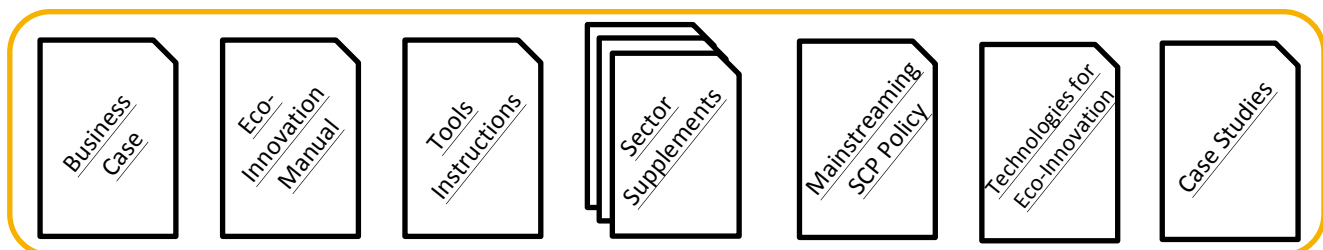
- The *Business Case for Eco-Innovation* publication outlines the key business drivers to implement eco-innovation. It builds on company examples spanning sectors across the globe that generated significant business benefits from eco-innovation.
- In conjunction, a technical *Eco-innovation Manual* has been developed for implementing partners to identify opportunities and develop strategies to implement eco-innovation. The *Manual* is complemented by supplements for the agri-food, chemicals and metals sectors.
- The *Manual's* approach has been validated through a number of regional expert meetings to confirm the eco-innovation approach in different countries and contexts. It is now being piloted through demonstration projects in the countries highlighted on the map above.

The Policy & Technology Context

- The *Mainstreaming SCP Policy for Eco-Innovation* guideline aims to inform implementing partners about proactive ways to support a policy framework that will stimulate sustainable production and consumption through eco-innovation. National level action planning will be carried out in countries highlighted on the map above, with some initial activities implemented within the project span.
- The Technology dimension is also highlighted as part of the conducive framework for eco-innovation. The publication *Technologies for Eco-Innovation* includes an assessment of the 'enablers' for the uptake of technologies for eco-innovation. In turn, this will support implementing partners in assisting SMEs in the identification, adaptation and development of technology for eco-innovation.

Scaling Up Eco-innovation Lessons

- A Final Compendium of best practices and lessons from pilot demonstration projects will be compiled upon their conclusion.



In collaboration with
the European Union