



# Towards a Green Economy

United Nations Environment  
Programme

# Defining a Green Economy

- A green economy can be defined as one that **results in improved human well-being and social equity**, while significantly **reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities**.
- In its simplest expression, a green economy can be thought of as one which is **low carbon, resource efficient and socially inclusive**.
- Practically speaking, a green economy is one whose **growth in income and employment is driven by public and private investments** that **reduce carbon emissions and pollution, enhance energy and resource efficiency, and prevent the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services**.
- These **investments** need to be catalyzed and **supported by targeted public expenditure, policy reforms and regulation changes**.

# How is a Green Economy Measured?

- A wide range of indicators can help measure the transition towards a green economy. Governments can **choose from a range of indicators** depending on their national circumstances:
  - **Economic indicators**: e.g. share of investments or the share of output and employment in green sectors.
  - **Environmental indicators**: e.g. resource use efficiency or pollution intensity at either the sectoral or economy-wide level, for example, energy use/GDP, or water use/GDP
  - **Aggregate indicators of progress and well-being**: e.g. macroeconomic indicators to reflect natural capital depreciation, including integrated environmental and economic accounting, or broader interpretations of well-being beyond narrow definitions of per capita GDP.

# How does a Green Economy Support Employment?

- A green economy **creates jobs in a wide range of sectors** of the economy as new markets emerge and grow, such as in organic agriculture, renewable energy, building retrofits for energy efficiency, public transportation, reclamation of brown-field sites, and recycling, among others.
- **Decent jobs**, with high labour productivity as well as high eco-efficiency and low emissions, hold the promise to provide rising incomes, spur growth and help to protect the climate and the environment. Such green jobs already exist and some have seen high growth, for example, as a result of investment in energy efficiency.
- Nonetheless, to ensure a smooth transition to a green economy, a concerted effort in job creation is necessary. Social policies will need to be developed along with environmental and economic policies.
- Key issues like investing in new skills needed for a low-carbon global economy and policies to handle the employment adjustments in key sectors like energy and transport will be needed to ensure a smooth transition.

# How does a Green Economy Protect and Preserve Biodiversity?

- The loss of biodiversity has caused some people to experience declining well-being, and exacerbating poverty in some social groups.
- Furthermore, the ecosystem is the prime provider of a number of raw materials that serve as an engine for economic development.
- The preservation and protection of ecosystems is at the heart of the green economy agenda and green investments also aim at reducing the negative externalities caused by the exploitation of natural capital.
- Investments in the preservation of forests which sustain a wide range of sectors and livelihoods and at the same time preserve 80% of terrestrial species.
- By boosting investment in green forestry, a green economy agenda would preserve the economic livelihoods of over 1 billion people who live from timber, paper and fiber products which in their turn currently yield 51% of global GDP (this is far outweighed by the non-market public goods derived from forest ecosystem services)

# What does a Green Economy Offer for Developing Countries?

- Green economy policies can **help developing countries attain economic and social gains on several fronts**, e.g. deployment of cleaner energy technologies and improved access to energy services; improved resource efficiency through investments in cleaner production approaches; increased food security through the use of more sustainable agricultural methods; and access to emerging new markets for their green goods and services.
- **Improvements in resource efficiency and diversifying the energy matrix can reduce import bills and protect a country from price volatility in energy markets**, while reducing the environmental footprint and associated health costs of economic activity.
- There are a number of ongoing developing country initiatives that are demonstrating a positive benefit stream from specific green investments and policies, and if scaled up and integrated into a comprehensive strategy, could offer an alternative sustainable development pathway, one that is pro-growth, pro-jobs and pro-poor.



## GEI Objective

Advise countries in greening their economies by working with a wide range of partners to provide cutting edge economic analysis and research products







## Green Economy Report



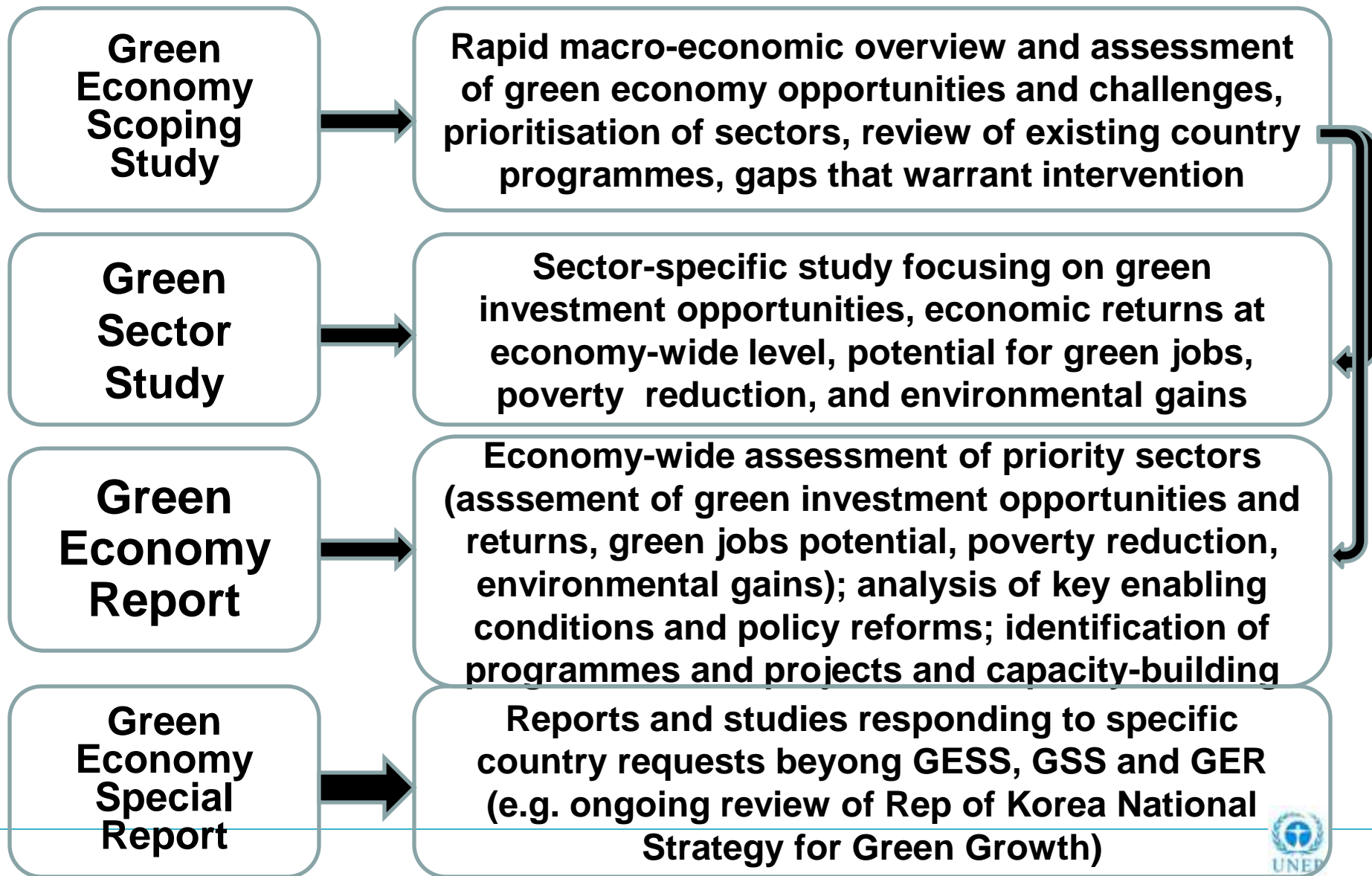
Agriculture  
Building  
Cities  
Energy  
Finance  
Forest  
Manufacturing  
Tourism  
Transport  
Waste  
Water  
Modeling  
Enabling Conditions



# Supporting National Green Economy Initiatives

- Platforms for dialogue and consultation
- Green Economy Scoping Study
- Tailored & Customised Country Models
- Assistance to countries in creating Indicators & Measurement Frameworks
- Identification & Facilitation of Enabling policies & Fiscal Instruments
- Support in developing Green Economy Roadmaps
- Training & Capacity Enhancing Activities
- Sharing International Experience

# Green Economy Advisory Products





# Green Economy Advisory Services

- To date - active in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe and West Asia
- Examples of UNEP GE reports
  - “Low Carbon Green Growth for Developing Countries in East Asia”
  - “National Strategy for Green Growth” of the Republic of Korea
  - “Scoping Study on Opportunities and Challenges of a Green Economy” for Indonesia
- Europe – launched study on promoting organic agriculture in Eastern Europe, Caucasus, and Central Asia
  - Azerbaijan – launched scoping study on priority areas for green economy programmes (linked to UNDAF priority of economic diversification)
- Contribution to awareness raising workshops on the green economy in the Arab region
  - Jordan Launched Scoping Study on priority areas for green economy
  - Egypt assessment mission carried out

# Green Economy Context in Arab Countries

- 50 million people still do not have access to safe drinking water in the Arab world
- Severe water scarcity by 2025
- 97 million lacking access to adequate sanitation
- Land degradation destroyed 34 % of irrigated agricultural land
- The region loses US\$5 billion of agricultural revenue per year because of desertification

# What is Needed in the Arab Region?

- Long-term environmental management strategies
- Powerful and effective environmental agencies
- Clear political and legislative mandates
- Environmental research, education and media



# More Information

**UNEP Green Economy Website**

**<http://www.unep.org/greeneconomy/>**