



United Nations  
Economic Commission for Africa

**Aide-memoire**

**Ad Hoc Expert Group Meeting on Enabling Measures for an  
Inclusive Green Economy in Africa**

**23-24 September 2014  
United Nations Conference Centre  
Addis Ababa**

**Green Economy and Natural Resources Section  
Special Initiatives Division**

## 1. Background and introduction

The concept of an “inclusive green economy” continues to gain traction in developing countries. It is seen as presenting opportunities, but also challenges. For Africa, transitioning to an inclusive green economy offers an alternative approach for tackling the continent’s unique development challenges, which include structural fragility, persistently high poverty and unemployment, environmental degradation, vulnerability to climate change and rapid population growth. It also provides a credible opportunity for achieving sustainable development and eradicating poverty in Africa, provided that emphasis is placed on the key sectors that will have the greatest impact on the environment and social issues.

The potential for the green economy to support the structural transformation of Africa and economic growth lies in the continent’s large natural resource endowments, which serve as the foundation of economic growth for most African countries. However, owing to the non-inclusive nature of economic growth, specific sectoral problems, such as poor infrastructure and low human capital, will continue to be key challenges in the transformation of the continent.<sup>1</sup>

In the run-up to and during the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, which was held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 20 to 22 June 2012, African countries highlighted the importance of understanding the implications of the green economy paradigm for the continent. They emphasized the need to properly plan the transition in a way that minimizes the potential adverse effects on certain groups or sectors over time. They also called for building the capacities of countries in green economy strategic policy formulation and coordination to ensure consistency with national development plans that relate to the economic, social and environmental goals. In this regard, to foster the adoption of the inclusive green economy concept, several interrelated actions must be undertaken.

First of all, the transition process has to be embedded into long-term development plans that have fundamental impacts on progress towards achieving sustainable development. Developing countries should, therefore, formulate national green growth plans and strategies, and mainstream the green economy into national development frameworks. Second, the transition to a green economy should be supported by an assessment of the costs and benefits. In this regard, a thorough evaluation should be conducted to identify the needs of developing countries during the transition.

National assessments must be carried out to identify green growth opportunities from the wide range of renewable and non-renewable resources of African countries.<sup>2</sup> However, most developing countries, particularly those in sub-Saharan Africa, have limited technical and financial capacity to undertake the transition to a green economy at the scale that would result in significant economic, environmental and social impacts. In line with the outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development on the green economy, African countries should be supported by appropriate means of implementation that takes into account the region’s level of development. These needs are at several levels, including the planning stage, during which policies and strategies have to be elaborated and assessments conducted to review requirements.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>United Nations, Economic Commission for Africa, “Bridging the means of implementation gap; key issues for Africa”, May 2012. Available from <http://www.uncsd2012.org/content/documents/Bridging%20the%20means%20of%20implementation%20gap%20Key%20issues%20for%20Africa.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup>Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, “Green growth and developing countries: a summary for policy makers”, June 2012. Available from <http://www.oecd.org/greengrowth/green-development/50526354.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup>United Nations Environment Programme, “Modelling global green investment scenarios: supporting the transition to a global green economy”, version 02.22.2011. Available from [http://www.unep.org/greeneconomy/Portals/88/documents/ger/13.0\\_Modelling.pdf](http://www.unep.org/greeneconomy/Portals/88/documents/ger/13.0_Modelling.pdf).

In order to accelerate the transition to an inclusive green economy in Africa, the commitments of countries to undertake such an endeavour must be matched with enablers of the transition, including means of implementation. While the transition to an inclusive green economy will be specific to the conditions of each country, the types of approaches adopted, such as those that are sectoral, stepwise or economy-wide, must be supported by appropriate enabling measures. This entails quantifying investments that promote sustainable use of natural resources and at the same time pave the way for, among other things, economic diversification, industrialization, innovation and technological development, an evidence-based institutional and policy shift, and the closing of financing gaps that constrain green investment.

To carry out a rapid but controlled transition to an inclusive green economy, the following are required: (a) adequate funding of the process, including mobilization of domestic and international investments directed at green sectors; (b) supportive institutions and policies, including fiscal and monetary instruments that facilitate resource-efficient and climate-resilient growth, and help create and sustain decent jobs; (c) an environment that stimulates innovation and the adoption of green technologies that do not exclude any social group; (d) bolstering the role of the private sector by, for example, providing new incentives, strengthening market infrastructure and market-based mechanisms, redirecting public investment and expanding market access for green products from Africa; and (e) building capacity at all levels to implement inclusive green economy policies and strategies.<sup>4,5</sup>

Furthermore, developing countries should also be supported in efforts aimed at improving their competitiveness in the world market, commensurate with their resource endowments. In this context, economic integration and strengthening capacity and institutions are critical in the transition to an inclusive green economy. In the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled “The future we want”, Heads of State and Government and high-level representatives reaffirmed the following: the means of implementation identified in Agenda 21; the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21; the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation; the Monterrey Consensus of the International Conference on Financing for Development; and the Doha Declaration on Financing for Development. They also highlighted the need for adequate financing, technology transfer and development, capacity-building and rule-based trade in order to promote sustainable development, and called upon the United Nations regional commissions, other United Nations organizations and bodies, and relevant intergovernmental and regional organizations to support developing countries, upon request, in implementing sustainable development, including through, among other things, green economy policies in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication.<sup>6</sup>

It is against this background that the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) has commissioned a study on enabling measures for an inclusive green economy in Africa, to explore opportunities and challenges and put forward options that could enhance the understanding of enabling measures relevant for the transition to a green economy in Africa. In particular, the study provides the following: (a) analysis of the implications of the transition to an inclusive green economy for Africa; (b) discussion of the challenges and opportunities of inclusive green transformation in Africa, and highlights of best practices and lessons; (c) identification and analysis

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<sup>4</sup>United Nations Environment Programme, “Towards a green economy: pathways to sustainable development and poverty eradication”, version 02.22.2011. Available from [http://www.unep.org/greeneconomy/Portals/88/documents/ger/ger\\_final\\_dec\\_2011/Green%20EconomyReport\\_Final\\_Dec2011.pdf](http://www.unep.org/greeneconomy/Portals/88/documents/ger/ger_final_dec_2011/Green%20EconomyReport_Final_Dec2011.pdf).

<sup>5</sup>Asian Development Bank and others, “Building an inclusive green economy for all: opportunities and challenges for overcoming poverty and inequality”. Poverty-Environment Partnership Joint Agency Paper, 2012. Available from [http://www.unep.org/pdf/PEP\\_Paper-Final\\_2.pdf](http://www.unep.org/pdf/PEP_Paper-Final_2.pdf).

<sup>6</sup>A/RES/66/288.

of key intervention areas and enablers required for a smooth transition; and (d) policy recommendations based on the findings.

ECA is holding the ad hoc expert group meeting to review the draft report of the study and to exploring enabling measures that could facilitate the transition to an inclusive green economy in Africa.

## **2. Objectives of the expert group meeting**

The overall objective of the expert group meeting is to provide a platform for experts to deliberate on and enhance the draft report. The specific objectives of the meeting are the following:

(a) To review the draft report with a view to identifying gaps, providing expert inputs and proposing revisions that should form the basis for finalizing each of the chapters;

(b) To identify key intervention areas and enablers, including means of implementation, required for carrying out a smooth transition towards achieving an inclusive green economy in Africa.

## **3. Format of the meeting**

The format of the meeting will be as follows:

(a) Opening session

During this session, opening statements from the organizers and partners will be delivered along with a presentation on the objectives of the meeting, highlighting the background and justification for the study.

(b) Plenary session 1: presentation of the report

The organizers will present the main chapters of the report: implications for Africa of the transition to an inclusive green economy; institutions and policies for an inclusive green economy; economic instruments for an inclusive green economy; technology development and transfer; capacity development for a green economy; the private sector and the green economy; and financing the green economy. Discussions on the presentations will follow. The main issues and recommendations emanating from these discussions will be synthesized.

(c) Breakout sessions

During this segment, the experts will be divided into breakout groups. Each group will be tasked with reviewing in detail chapters of the report. This will give participants the opportunity to critically examine and discuss the chapters, with a view to contributing inputs and comments for the final report. Each of the groups will focus on key intervention areas and enabling measures.

(d) Presentation and discussions on the outcomes of the breakout sessions

During this session, each breakout group will give a detailed summary of the discussions that took place and the outcomes. The session is expected to generate informative discussions and concrete recommendations pertaining to the enabling measures needed for achieving an inclusive green economy in Africa.

#### **4. Documentation**

The documents and resources available for the participants are: the draft report on enabling measures for an inclusive green economy in Africa; the concept note of the study; and selected reports and publications.

#### **5. Expected output of the expert group meeting**

The main outputs of the expert group meeting will be contained in the final report of the meeting, which will include the comments, inputs and recommendations provided by the participants with regard to the draft chapters of the report on enabling measures for an inclusive green economy in Africa.

#### **6. Participation**

The expert group meeting is expected to bring together some 30 to 40 experts and practitioners in the fields of green economy, economic planning and sustainable development. Among them will be experts in the specific thematic areas of green economy, policies and institutions, economic instruments, financing sustainable development, private sector development, technology and capacity development.

#### **7. Working languages**

The plenary sessions of the meeting will be conducted in English and French, with simultaneous interpretation in both languages.

#### **8. Dates and venue**

The meeting will take place at the United Nations Conference Centre, at the headquarters of the Economic Commission for Africa in Addis Ababa, on 23 and 24 September 2014.

#### **9. Administrative arrangements**

Kindly refer to the accompanying information note for details on administrative arrangements, including hotel accommodation.

#### **10. Contacts**

All communication about the meeting should be addressed to:

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