

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT

The Department of Environment of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) promotes the inclusive and sustainable development of global industry. It does so by providing assistance for the improvement of the environmental performance of existing industry and fostering new industries delivering environmental goods and services. This helps countries achieve sustained economic growth and human development.

In order to meet the growing global demand for goods and services caused by rising populations and income levels, the current pattern of economic growth leaves an ever greater footprint on the environment. Natural resource levels are reaching critical lows and in many parts of the world the capacity of the environment to absorb emissions and waste is being exceeded. The repercussions of this trend are already being felt today, with potentially drastic consequences for future generations.

Being the engine of economic growth, industry has helped generate prosperity and has increased living standards for many segments of society in numerous nations around the world. However, industry has also been responsible for large-scale and systematic depletion of natural resources and severe pollution of air, water and soil.

The Department helps industry grow along a sustainable trajectory by encouraging industrial development for economic growth, which is resource-efficient as well as protective of the natural environment and human health. Through its activities, the Department strives to improve competitiveness and access to markets for industries in tandem with improving their environmental performance. Particular attention is paid to assisting small- and medium-sized enterprises in developing and transition economies.



Through its interventions, the Department of Environment helps to further UNIDO's mandate of promoting Inclusive and Sustainable Industrial Development (ISID) in four key areas:

Resource-Efficient Industrial Production

The Department of Environment assists industries to improve their resource productivity and environmental performance through the adoption of resource-efficient and cleaner production practices, methods and techniques, as well as through enhanced recycling, resource recovery and treatment of all wastes.

In doing so, pressure on natural resources – in the form of overconsumption or pollution – is alleviated, leading to a more environmentally sustainable form of industrial production. In addition, pollution control measures and ecosystem conservation serve to keep workers, communities and consumers safe, thereby fostering inclusiveness through industrial development. At the same time, resource-efficient and cleaner industrial production, as promoted by the Department, engenders economic competitiveness. This takes the form of realizing productivity gains, implementing better process controls and standards, enhancing environmental accounting methods and adopting innovative business models.

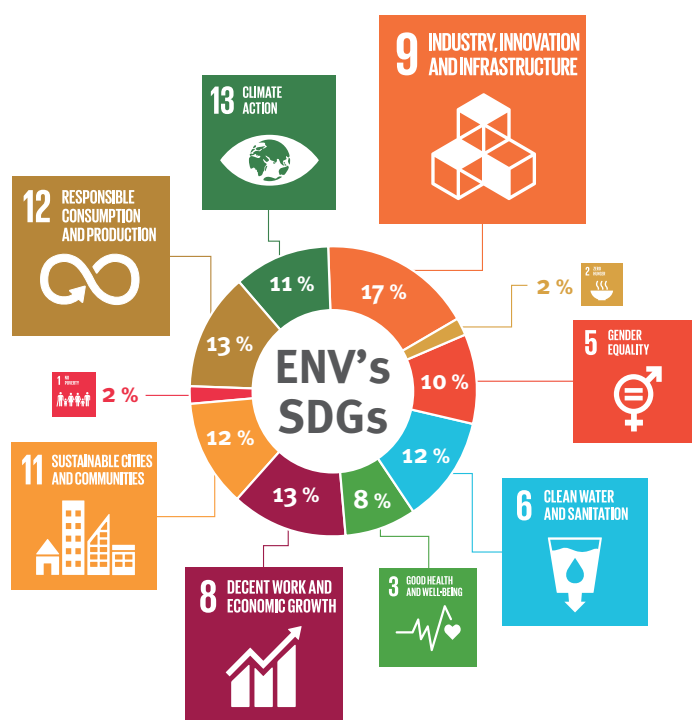


Diagram: The work of the Environment Department (ENV) linked to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Elimination of Persistent Organic Pollutants

In its work under the Stockholm Convention to reduce and eliminate the prevalence of persistent organic pollutants (POPs), the Department seeks to develop new, and re-tool existing, industries for the better management of POPs.

By reducing the amount of POPs produced, used and emitted by industry, the activities of the Department in this area contribute to the long-term conservation of our natural environment and to reducing a major human health risk. Furthermore, inclusiveness is promoted by building local technical capacities, and by raising awareness of the dangers of POPs throughout local small-scale industries and communities. South-South knowledge and technology transfer further facilitates mutual learning between industries to reduce and eliminate POPs. Lastly, environmental upgrading through the sharing and transfer of best available techniques (BAT) and best environmental practices (BEP) ensures the longevity and global competitiveness of participating industries.



Phase-Out of Ozone-Depleting Substances

In implementing the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, the Department phases out commonly used ozone depleting substances (ODS) from industrial processes and products by assisting countries to upgrade their industries and introduce ODS alternatives.

These interventions add to the sustainability of global industry by preventing the use and emissions of ODS, which not only lead to the destruction of the ozone layer, but also substantially contribute to climate change. Industrial development is rendered inclusive by the activities of the Department of Environment in this area since effective ODS phase-out relies on a collective improvement in the abilities and competitiveness of whole industrial sectors, thereby increasing the skill levels of technicians

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and industrial workers. ODS phase-out projects advance industrial development through targeted activities such as technology development, transfer and adoption, provision of equipment, market access support, technical assistance and training activities.

Future Environmental Regulations

The Department of Environment is preparing for emerging environmental compliance regimes by developing methodologies to support the industries of UNIDO's Member States in meeting the obligations of upcoming treaties.

The work of the Department in this area is sustainable in that it promotes the development of green industries by raising the level of compliance with internationally binding treaties. It does so by assisting countries to reduce the amount of toxic emissions produced by industry, which negatively affect the natural environment and human health. Activities in this area also demonstrate an inclusive development path for industry, since they increase the competitiveness of entire industries, generating a socially and economically beneficial impact for all industrial stakeholders.



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