

12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION



SWEDEN AND RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

MAIN MESSAGES

- **Toxic-free everyday life.** Intensify efforts to ensure an environmentally sound management of chemicals and all wastes, throughout their life cycles. Many lives and resources can be saved by investing in the sound management of both chemicals and waste. Thus, it is important to step up efforts through the Beyond 2020 process. Substitution, knowledge, information through the entire value chain, and non-toxic material cycles are key to achieving a circular economy. Preventive work is cost-effective both for chemicals and waste generation, including food waste, for which actions need to be taken throughout the whole value chain, from primary production all the way to the consumer.
- **Sustainable lifestyles.** Make it easy to live a sustainable life. Promote sustainable lifestyles (consumption) through innovative incentives, such as tax reductions for repairs, enhance knowledge of behavioural economics and nudging, and provide education and information, including sexdisaggregated data and statistics. Promote the efficient use of resources and a supporting infrastructure and sustainable production of products and services, exemplified through leading initiatives from the plastic, food and textile industries. Continue **support for the implementation of the 10YPF** on sustainable consumption and production (One Planet Network).
- **Promote sustainable procurement.** Ensure sustainable and fair supply chains. Sustainable procurement should be a main driver for transformative change towards resilient and sustainable societies. Investment in infrastructure and sustainable cities fosters sustainable business models, among both suppliers and users. More efforts are needed to harness the potential of sustainable procurement in development and multilateral organisations.

SWEDEN ON TARGET FOR SDG 12: ENHANCING POLICY COHERENCE AND SYSTEM THINKING

Sweden at work nationally

Sweden has national plans and strategies in place to promote sustainable consumption and production, including the global 10-year framework of programmes and the Swedish environmental objectives system. However, Sweden faces significant challenges linked to the goal of contributing to, and achieving, sustainable consumption and production environmentally, socially and economically, at home and abroad.

Greenhouse gas emissions within Sweden's borders decreased by 14 per cent between 2008 and 2014. At the same time, emissions have continued to increase in other countries, including countries from which Sweden imports goods and services. The greenhouse gas emissions that can be associated with Sweden's imports from other countries are today higher than its own emissions and are not following the domestic downward trend.

The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency has been given an assignment to develop better methods to calculate these emissions.

In its 2017 Budget Bill, the Government presented a strategy for sustainable consumption. A special focus is given to food, transport and housing, which account for the largest share of private consumption. Swedish businesses and research centres are among the main drivers of increased sustainability. Sustainability is also recognised as a competitive advantage.

The Government has given two assignments (2013–2015 and 2017–2019) to the National Food Agency, the Swedish Board of Agriculture and the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency to find ways to reduce food waste. Based on findings from the first assignment, the task now for these agencies is to present an action plan on how to implement a long-term food waste reduction strategy.

The Government has adopted an action plan for a toxic-free everyday environment for the

period 2011–2020, which entails measures to reduce exposure to hazardous substances in the everyday environment, with a particular focus on children.

In June 2016, the Government presented the National Public Procurement Strategy. Through this strategy, the Government wants to demonstrate the benefits achieved through a strategic approach to purchasing. The strategy primarily addresses central government agencies, but is also indicative for municipalities and county councils, through which the majority of public procurement takes place. Procurement is also identified as an important-sustainability tool by big enterprises.

The Government has given two corresponding assignments, one to the National Procurement Agency and the other to the Swedish-Consumer Agency, concerning production methods in other countries. The purpose of these assignments is to improve accessibility to accurate information, for example, with regard to labour exploitation in the production chain, so that both private and public consumers have the means to ensure more socially responsible consumption. Decent work for all along the entire value chain is key.

Sweden at work globally

A national group on the enforcement of transboundary shipments of waste has been established to actively address the prevention of illegal transportation of hazardous waste to and from Sweden.

Standards and standardisation have a significant role to play in reducing climate emissions and in promoting a toxic-free everyday life and sustainable energy use. The Swedish Standards Institute is responsible for several international secretariats, in the field of environmental analysis and monitoring. However, sustainability standards are mainly set by different private actors, which has led to a large number of different standards that are not internationally recognised.

Swedish development cooperation contributes to the promotion of sustainable production and consumption by supporting a series of areas and collaborations with a wide range of actors, including in the private sector. Development cooperation also promotes sustainable and responsible business, in line with international norms and guidelines.

Sweden also encourages increased economic, social and environmental sustainability in public procurement, across all areas of development cooperation. Innovation, new partnerships – both domestically and internationally – and new thinking, on matters such as the circular economy and the sharing economy will be needed.

Connecting the dots¹



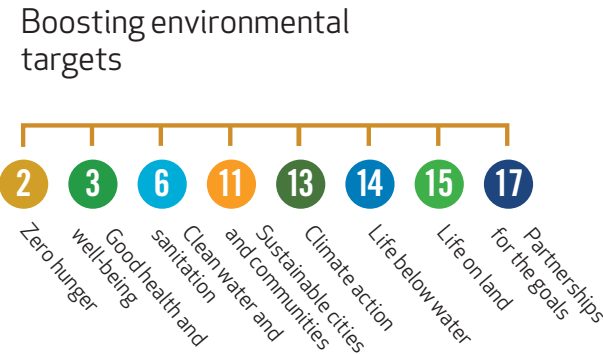
Source: Stockholm Environment Institute

It is estimated that, by 2050, the world population will have grown by around another 30 per cent, to 9.8 billion. The growth of the global middle class is widely recognised as a key mega trend. These future citizens will need consumer goods and services, and jobs; and maintaining safe, just and stable societies will require strong and productive economies. Yet, today's patterns of consumption and production are already having some serious environmental and socio-economic impacts. For many countries in the EU, SDG 12 will be one of the hardest SDGs to achieve. SDG 12 speaks to the need for transformative change in the ways we produce, consume and live. At the same time, sustainable consumption and production is one of the most cost-efficient and effective ways to promote economic development, and to reduce the impact of climate

change and other impacts on the environment and health, while advancing human wellbeing. Nearly half of the targets in SDG 12 require improved management and governance of water resources and waste treatment (SDG 6).

Sustainable consumption and growth

SDG 12 most clearly links with SDG 8, which calls for sustained economic growth decoupled from environmental degradation and greatly increased resource efficiency. To identify priorities in implementing SDG 12, a system of environmental-economic accounting is crucial²; particularly, as the value chains from production to consumption are largely global and are not halted by national borders. Transparent information targeting women



and men of all generations, backgrounds and occupations about sustainable lifestyle options must be made available, as called for in SDGs 12 and 4 (education).

Improved labour market and reduction of poverty

The relationship between SDG 12 and SDG 1 (poverty reduction) is also complex. Production creates wealth, while poverty is characterised by low consumption and lack of access and control of resources, including access to information. The impacts of production and the distribution of goods and services can exacerbate poverty for vulnerable and marginalised groups. A fairer redistribution of benefits and costs along supply chains can reduce both local and global inequalities (SDG 10). At the same time, unsustainable practices in supply chains can also have strong negative social implications – for example, labour exploitation (SDG 8) and gender discrimination (SDG 5).

Boosting environmental targets

SDG 12 can significantly boost progress on several other SDGs. Current unsustainable production, consumption, use and waste management patterns impact our health (SDG 3), and constrain progress in combating deforestation and degradation of freshwater, marine and terrestrial ecosystems (SDGs 6, 14 and 15), carbon emissions (SDG 13) and sustainable agriculture (SDG 2) as well as sustainable urban development (SDG 11). These impacts could be reduced by: changing overall consumption and production; enhancing innovative ecofriendly products, sound chemicals and waste management; choosing options with lower impacts (such as local vegetable-based, rather than globally sourced animal-based, diets, or organic products) and sustainable consumer goods with a longer lifetime; improving production technologies; and moving towards more circular business models that involve sharing, recycling and reusing materials and products, including upgrade and repair.

SDG 12 cannot be achieved without cross-sectoral and international partnerships and policy coherence (SDG 17). Consumption and production systems involve stakeholders in many sectors, spread around the world. While consumers' choices are important, companies and governments must ensure sustainable options are available. Governments can incentivise sustainable production through policy levers and infrastructure investment.

¹ This section is based on an analysis by Stockholm Environment Institute. For more information on their work visit the SEI website www.sei.org

² SEEA UN (2014) FAO (2014) Sustainability Assessment of Food and Agriculture Systems (SAFA)



Sweden and the transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies

Sweden's transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies is well under way and is taking place throughout the country. More and more people in Sweden say that concern for sustainability affects their consumption decisions. Municipalities and county councils are committed to sustainable development. Large parts of the Swedish business community see sustainability as a competitive advantage. Civil society is paving the way through its own efforts and by pushing decision-makers. Young people are key for transformative change. The Swedish research community contributes cutting-edge research on sustainable development. Many Swedish public agencies have agreed on a joint declaration of intent to implement the 2030 Agenda.

On 14 June 2018, the Swedish Government presented its action plan for implementing the 2030 Agenda during the period 2018–2020. Sweden has the ambition to be a leader in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Implementation involves a step-by-step approach towards a modern and sustainable welfare nation at home, and as part of the global system. This transformation must take place jointly, in partnership.

Website: www.government.se

Contact details: h1pf@gov.se

