

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

IEEP AND THE SDGs

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is a plan to eradicate poverty and guarantee humanity an equal future in a free and peaceful environment. At its core are 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Protecting the environment is a pre-requisite for sustainable development. As an environmental sustainability think tank, we are dedicated to advancing a sustainable society through the analysis and development of policy and the delivery of the SDGs.

To advance the 2030 Agenda, it is crucial that the SDGs speak to a broad range of interests and policymakers. By working across nine environmental areas and engaging a diverse range of stakeholders, this is precisely our aim.



The SDGs are a framework for advancing global social, economic and environmental sustainability.

At IEEP, our team of scientist, economists and lawyers provide evidence-based policy analysis and advice on European environmental policy.

Aligning our work to the SDGs advances a sustainable future not only for the citizens of Europe, but also for citizens of all countries.

Céline Charveriat
Executive Director IEEP

Across nine work areas, our cross-cutting approach aligns with the SDGs



Agriculture & Land Management



Climate Change & Energy



Green Economy



Industrial Pollution & Chemicals



Water, Marine & Fisheries



Natural Resources & Waste



Biodiversity



Global Challenges & Solutions



Environmental Governance

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Our work on agriculture, soil health and climate change



Our work demonstrates the potential of the agriculture sector to play an important role in the EU's efforts to combat climate change.

Soils are key to delivering a wide array of ecosystem services, including water and nutrient cycle regulation, food and fibre production, along with providing habitat for numerous species. Soil degradation processes undermine soil functions and the delivery of these ecosystem services.

Productivity and usability of our land, addressing soil challenges, is fundamental to implementing SDGs linked to zero hunger, life on land, responsible consumption and production, clean water and sanitation and climate action.

Policy opportunities for mainstreaming soil protection

- Promotion of resource efficiency in agricultural systems, emphasising more holistic management of soil resources to reduce inputs and maximise their added value.
- Improvements to the coherence of the CAP with priorities for the efficient use of soil resources to reduce soil degradation and improve soil quality.
- Increased recognition of the important role of soil in sequestering carbon as part of a strategy to increase the contribution of land management to reduce GHG emissions.



"Along with being a vital resource for production of food, fibre, timber and energy, rural land is also a major source of environmental and socio-cultural goods and services. Yet, these continue to be undervalued in land management decisions. Shifting to sustainable agricultural management will require changes in policy and societal values, while promoting collective action between land managers, stakeholders, private and public actors. Doing so would initiate a positive chain reaction of improvements across our wider environment."

Kaley Hart
Senior Fellow

SDG Target 1.2

Reduce by half the proportion of people living in poverty.

SDG Target 2.4

Ensure sustainable food production systems and implement resilient agricultural practices.

SDG Target 6.6

By 2020, protect and restore water-related ecosystems.

SDG Target 13.2

Integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning.

SDG Target 15.1

By 2020, ensure the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services, in line with obligations under international agreements.



Report: The consequences of climate change for EU Agriculture: Follow up to the COP21 UN Climate Change conference



Project: iSQAPER research on soil indicators, monitoring and policy



Report: Updated Inventory and Assessment of Soil Protection Policy Instruments in EU Member States

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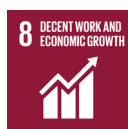


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Our work on the circular economy



Our research advances the application of circular economy principles to the plastics industry and marine litter.

We live in the plastic age. Around 300 million tonnes of plastic are produced globally per annum (Plastics Europe 2015), and between 5 and 12.5 million tonnes of it enters the ocean from mismanaged waste at coasts alone. There is a need to keep plastic and its value in the economy and out of the oceans.

Marine litter ranges from nano-sized particles such as fleece fibres and microbeads from personal care products to larger plastics such as plastic bags and abandoned boats and fishing nets. Marine litter impacts the environment, the economy and human well-being, but policy makers can improve the situation by implementing circular economy tools to the management of plastic waste.

The high cost of policy inaction

- **Environment:** Marine litter creates growing pressures on marine ecosystems and biodiversity such as plastic bags and abandoned nets posing risk to turtles, dolphins and seals.
- **Economic:** Plastic waste is a loss of material value to the economy. It can create economic pressures on the shipping sector (fouled motors, lost output and repair costs), fishing ('ghost fishing' by lost and discarded nets), and tourism (loss of revenues).
- **Social:** Marine litter creates risks to human health, via injuries and accidents, through the release of chemical substances (some potentially endocrine disrupting and carcinogens) and ingestion of micro plastics.



The transition to a circular economy represents an opportunity for Europe, both in terms of relieving pressure on the environment and capturing materials otherwise going to waste. The plastics sector, particularly plastic packaging - where wastefulness is currently the norm - is indicative of this opportunity. Measures that support the circular economy can avoid pollution including marine litter, and contribute to keeping plastics and their value in the economy.

Jean-Pierre Schweitzer
Policy Analyst



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SDG Target 8.4

Improve global resource efficiency in consumption and production and endeavour to decouple economic growth from environmental degradation.

SDG Target 9.1

Develop quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure, with a focus on affordable and equitable access for all.

SDG Target 12.2

By 2030, achieve the sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources.

SDG Target 12.8

By 2030, ensure that people everywhere have the relevant information and awareness for sustainable development and lifestyles.

SDG Target 14.1

By 2025, prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, including marine debris and nutrient pollution.



Briefing: T20 Policy Briefing on marine litter and circular economy



Fiches: Marine litter product profiles for microbeads, polystyrene and single-use plastics



Course: UN online course on marine litter

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Our work on the economic, health and social benefits of nature



Our research promotes access to nature and natural areas to improve economic, health and social benefits of citizens.

Europeans face health and social challenges that merit urgent attention – obesity, mental health problems, social exclusion, air and noise pollution, and heat stress in cities. These issues particularly affect socio-economically disadvantaged and vulnerable groups and put pressure on already stretched health budgets.

According to a growing body of evidence, health inequalities are linked to access to nature. Health inequality affects all stages of life: pre-birth, childhood, adult life and old age. A number of studies show access to nature is vital for good mental and physical health at all ages.

The evidence at a glance

- Living in areas with green spaces significantly reduces income-related health inequalities, counteracting the effect of deprivation (Mitchell and Popham, 2008).
- Doctors prescribe fewer anti-depressants in urban areas with more trees on the street (Taylor et al., 2015).
- For recent immigrant youths in Zurich, Germany, public parks and green spaces provided potential for cross-cultural social inclusion such as coming to understand and respect unfamiliar gender roles and develop friendships that cross the boundaries of ethnicity (Seeland et al., 2009, p.11).



Ideas for governments & IGOs

The evidence calls for more accessible and well-maintained natural areas for disadvantaged groups. Governments, international organisations and the European Union should recognise that access to nature is a fundamental human right and protect nature through the Natura 2000 network, funding investment and supporting related projects.

Patrick ten Brink

Head of Green Economy Programme and
Director of Brussels Office



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SDG Target 3d

Strengthen all country capacities, in particular developing ones, for early warning, risk reduction and management of national and global health risks.

SDG Target 5.4

Recognise and value unpaid care and domestic work through provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and promotion of shared household and family responsibilities as nationally appropriate.

SDG Target 10.2

Empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion, economic or other status.

SDG Target 11a

Provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities.



Briefing: Nature for health and equity (2017)



Report: Health and social benefits of nature and biodiversity protection (2016)



Workshop: Health and social benefits of nature (2016)

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