

Towards sustainable markets

Promoting inclusive and responsible market systems for
sustainable development



Putting people at the centre of change

The need to transition to more sustainable and inclusive economies to address growing inequality, avoid devastating climate change and deliver the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is urgent. This cannot be achieved by governments alone; they must join businesses (of all shapes and sizes), investors and civil society in innovative partnerships. IIED is developing the evidence to support more inclusive and sustainable policies and practice across a range of sectors crucially important for poor people and the environment. We focus on people-centred approaches, involving citizens in the design, development, interpretation and use of research and dialogue.

The largest private sector in the world

Much of our work focuses on the markets of poor people. These are often informal, made up of small-scale enterprises operating under the radar of government regulation, cash-based and not involving formal employment contracts. These markets are a key source of livelihoods and employment, especially for women and young people. IIED generates evidence to challenge assumptions about the informal sector and to highlight hotspots of innovation and dynamism in what we call 'the largest private sector in the world'.

Green and fair economies

We are members of, and host the global hub of, the **Green Economy Coalition** (GEC). This is the world's largest movement for green and fair economies, bringing together a broad and diverse constituency — peoples' movements, faith groups, nongovernmental organisations (NGOs), businesses, activists, trade unions, academics, UN agencies and think tanks. GEC members represent many and varied perspectives but are united by a shared recognition that the current economic system is failing to provide social equity, preserve our natural resources and ecosystems, and provide a sustainable future for the next generation.

Priorities for action

Our work is cross-sectoral and multidisciplinary, and addresses problems of unsustainable markets in sectors such as agriculture, fisheries, energy and mining.

Inclusive blue economy

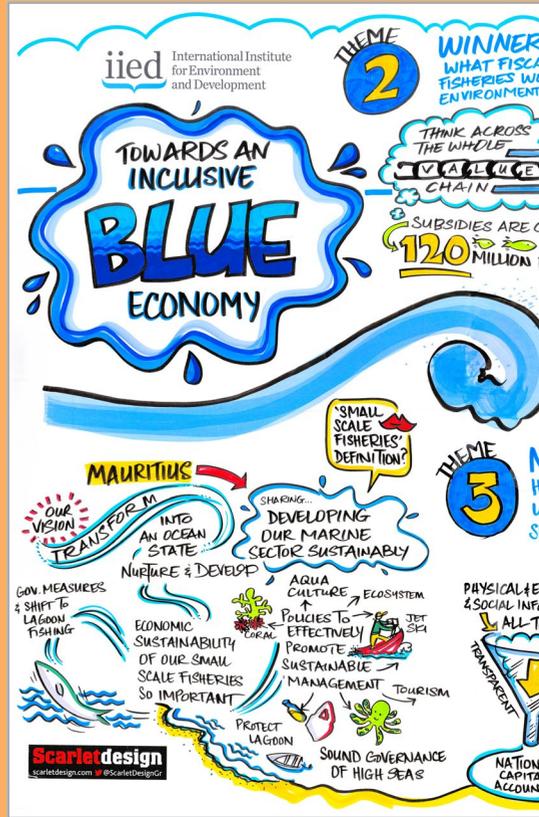
Investments in the blue economy must promote healthy marine and coastal ecosystems and benefit the millions of people who depend on the ocean for their livelihood. Our work will prioritise activities to achieve that, including better ways to show the true economic and social contribution of small-scale fisheries to national economies. At the global level, we are supporting the Least Developed Countries at UN negotiations for a treaty to govern the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction. www.iied.org/moving-towards-inclusive-blue-economy

Equitable and transformative energy systems

Access to sustainable energy is key to reducing poverty and addressing climate change. We work on financing models to encourage decentralised energy, identifying the priorities, mechanisms and models to get public and private finance to the local level. We have developed an innovative planning and dialogue approach, bringing together stakeholders, including the private sector, to develop energy solutions appropriate to local needs.

Incentives for an inclusive green economy

A response to climate change and the pressing need for biodiversity conservation needs inclusive finance mechanisms such as insurance, offsets and payments for ecosystem services. In Kenya and Sri Lanka we are addressing the growing problem of elephant damage to crops (leading to retaliatory elephant killings) through insurance, with premiums and payouts timely and fairly designed to respond to farmers' contexts. The project is piloting a scheme with commercial insurance companies.



Sustainable food and nutrition systems

Food is an inevitable part of life — and connects aspects of society, culture, health and the economy. We look at the food systems, from small-scale farming through processing, wholesale and retail, to nutrition and consumption, to understand what people produce, trade and eat, and why. We support partners in Uganda, Zambia, Kenya, Bolivia and Indonesia to generate evidence, including with citizens, and to support advocacy for a food system that works for people living in poverty. www.iied.org/sustainable-diets-for-all

Recent achievements

- In February 2019 we hosted a major international conference in London. 'Towards an inclusive blue economy' included participants from government, business, academia and NGOs.
www.iied.org/action-for-ocean-for-all
- New research on finance 'aggregation' from Nepal, Bangladesh and East Africa looks at the potential to channel finance into the millions of off-grid projects and products to make universal energy access by 2030 possible.
pubs.iied.org/16651IIED
- We produced a toolkit to improve the visibility of small-scale fisheries in natural capital accounting and national policy planning. Our work in this area was recently recognised through an invitation to be a founding member of the Oceans Accounts Partnership and contribute to the High-level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy.
pubs.iied.org/16646IIED
- As part of the Sustainable Diets for All programme, our partners Tanoker in Indonesia and Kabarole Research and Resource Centre in Uganda are getting their local governments to listen to people's concerns about diversity in their diets. IIED and Hivos are supporting these partners to use food diaries — data collected and interpreted by citizens — to understand what people are eating, what they feel is missing from their plates and what they think needs to change to make their diets healthier.
- We were invited to join the World Economic Forum-convened Global Battery Alliance, bringing together miners, end users, NGOs, civil society and government, to build understanding of how artisanal and small-scale cobalt mining can contribute to sustainable and responsible supply chains for this key green mineral.



Get in touch

We are keen to hear about what others are doing on markets and sustainability, and if you think we can help with your work or the challenges you are facing.

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IIED applies original thinking to sustainable development issues, linking local priorities to global challenges. We work with marginalised people around the world to amplify their influence.

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Institutional
Materials

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Cover: market Place near Fort Portal, Uganda. Credit: Rosalind Goodrich/IIED

Page 5: Faraba gold mines, Selingue, Mali. Credit: Mike Goldwater/GWI West Africa/IIED