



Circular Economy and SMEP, Side-event at WCEF 2019
Finlandia Hall, Helsinki, Finland
2-3.30 p.m. 4 June 2019

Concept Note

Tackling manufacturing-based pollution in SA and SSA: the SMEP research programme

(DRAFT of 24 May 2019)

Background

Manufacturing processes play a key role in trade-driven economic development in many developing countries. However, these manufacturing processes are unsustainable for several reasons. These include outdated infrastructure, machinery and inefficient methods which generate high levels of pollution, carbon emissions and widespread environmental degradation, as well as inefficient use of energy and natural resources.

Environmental degradation and pollution have been directly linked to several life-threatening illnesses and chronic health problems among manufacturing workers in many developing countries. They are also responsible for affecting the health of the general population as a result of contamination of air, drinking water, soil, crops, livestock, fish and other resources. Equally important, some production processes hinder economic development because of low productivity outputs.

Under this context, UK-DFID and UNCTAD have launched the Sustainable Manufacturing and Environmental Pollution (SMEP) programme. This is a £20 million research programme which will run until 2023. It primarily aims to assist countries to improve the environmental and health impacts associated to manufacturing pollution, as well as improve economic efficiency of the targeted industries.

The programme will also focus on generating evidence and practical solutions to address the problem of plastic pollution in the ocean, an issue which has gained increased attention due to its adverse effects for the economy, ecosystems and human health. A baseline assessment of critical areas is being undertaken by UNCTAD in 2019, and full calls for research will be published in early 2020.

Objectives

Aspects of manufacturing pollution and circularity are often linked, making the WCEF an important venue to learn and collaborate on the design of research lines which tackle problems from low and mid-complexity industries in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. Using the opportunity in Helsinki, this event will be an interactive gathering of policy makers, researchers businesses and other parties with interest in both technology “hard” as well as policy “soft” solutions to manufacturing pollution.

In specific, the session aims to:

- Learn from audience experience in circularity-based solutions, as well as other research initiatives, as an input to the SMEP programme.
- Raise awareness about SMEP as an instrument to use circularity approaches to tackle manufacturing pollution in key income-generating, job-creating economic sectors in developing countries.
- Showcase preliminary findings of the SMEP baseline assessment.
- Promote cooperation with private companies working in the target regions, in order to enhance impact of upcoming research calls (early 2020).

Speakers

Chair: **Mr. Lucas Assunção**, UNCTAD

- **Mr. Alessandro Moscuza**, Senior Responsible Manager, DFID-UK
- **Mr. Robert Hamwey**, Economic Affairs Officer, UNCTAD
- **Ms. Lisa Emberson**, Stockholm Environment Institute, York Centre
- Discussion panel
 - **Mr. Hugh Pile**, Blue Skies Holdings Ltd
 - **Mr. Tony Addison**, Chief Economist, UNU-WIDER
 - **Mr. Joss Blériot**, Executive Officer, Ellen MacArthur Foundation
 - **Mr. Brendan Edgerton**, Director of Circular Economy, WBCSD