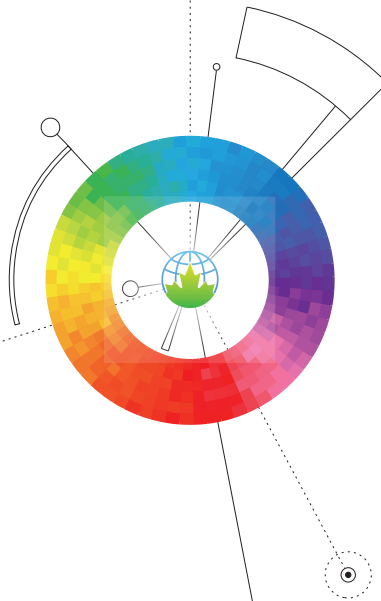


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The Low-Carbon Economy and the African Development Bank

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The African Development Bank (ADB) recognizes that a paradigm shift towards low-carbon, resource-efficient and climate-resilient development pathways using science, technology, and innovation will help steer growth towards inclusive and sustainable development for all on the continent. The ADB's Ten-Year Strategy (2013–2022) acknowledges that the rapid economic growth recorded by several African countries is clearly vulnerable to external shocks and challenges, including climate change.

African countries have expressed their support for global action against climate change through their submission of ambitious Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to curb greenhouse gas emissions and chart a low-carbon development pathway. The ADB is working with African countries to implement their NDCs by committing about US\$5 billion annually by 2020 for climate finance.

Efficient land use practices are key to reducing Africa's emissions, which largely emanate from depleting soil carbon and carbon sinks, which in turn reduce the continent's productivity, biodiversity, and resilience to climate change. The ADB's Climate Smart Agriculture Program seeks to reverse these trends, improve productivity and yields, and build the resilience of 5 million vulnerable farmers. The program will result in an increase in forest carbon sequestration of about 50 Mt CO₂ in twenty-five years through the sustainable management of 500 000 hectares of forests. Africa holds 65 percent of the world's arable land and 10 percent of internal renewable fresh water sources; if properly harnessed, growth in the agriculture and agribusiness sectors is expected to reach US\$1 trillion by 2030.

About 60 percent of Africa's population has no access to electricity, despite the continent's abundant renewable energy resources, much of which remains untapped. The ADB is taking advantage of the falling cost of renewable energy and the rising demand for smart technologies to invest in affordable renewable energy technologies to transition Africa to low-carbon development while providing universal access to energy. The ADB has financed large-scale renewable energy projects, such as the 160 megawatt Ouarzazate Concentrated Solar Power Project in Morocco, the 310 megawatt Lake Turkana Wind Farm and the Menengai Geothermal Project in Kenya. The ADB is also significantly scaling-up its support of renewable, decentralized energy solutions (off-grid and mini-grid) that are key to achieving the 2025 universal energy access objective of the ADB's New Deal on Energy for Africa.



Africa's low-carbon development must not leave anyone behind. Over 80 percent of Africa's population does not have access to clean cooking fuels and rely on traditional biomass and fuelwood. This threatens Africa's forests and ecosystems and is responsible for a significant share of global black carbon emissions and the death of over 600,000 Africans annually. While it is desirable that modern forms of cooking fuels, such as LPG, electricity, and non-solid biofuels are adopted in all households, their high costs and limited availability in most sub-Saharan African countries are preventing a quick transition. This has prompted the ADB to adopt a dual strategy of supporting the development of modern fuel industries and investing in needed infrastructure, and also improving the efficiency of traditional biomass and charcoal use while minimizing their environmental and health impacts.

In view of Africa's rapid urbanization, transport emissions are having an increasingly negative impact on its cities. Poor-quality fuel combined with second-hand vehicle fleets contribute to high levels of health-damaging emissions. The ADB is investing in sustainable transport systems, such as the Senegal Regional Express Train Project, that will be powered by electricity from the national grid, further reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Such low-carbon mass rapid transport systems offer opportunities to create cities that are truly fit for a low-carbon future.

Supporting low-carbon development requires a structural transformation based on green industrialization—a low-polluting and resource-efficient industrialization that adds value to Africa's raw materials and increases global competitiveness. At about three times the world average in 2013, Africa's energy intensity remains the highest in the world. The ADB is therefore scaling-up its efforts to green Africa's industrialization through the establishment of efficient industry clusters and clean production that will use scarce resources wisely and enable Africa to build an industrial base that is capable of competing in a 2050 world. Moreover, the ADB, through its Jobs for Youths Initiative, is committed to creating 35 million jobs (many of them green) and training Africa's youth to provide much-needed manpower.

The ADB will continue to work with development partners to fast-track Africa's transition to a low-carbon economy.



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