



SDG 12: Ensure Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns

Introduction

Our planet offers abundant natural resources, yet we have consumed them unsustainably, exceeding its capacity. To mitigate this damage, we must adopt responsible production and consumption practices.

Key Components

SDG 12, "Responsible Consumption and Production," aims to "do more and better with less," decoupling economic growth from environmental degradation. Key components include reducing waste through recycling/reuse, managing chemicals safely, halving food waste, promoting sustainable corporate practices, and increasing resource efficiency.

- **Waste reduction:** Substantially reduce waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling, and reuse.
- **Resource efficiency:** Promote the sustainable and efficient use of natural resources.
- **Food waste:** Halve food waste in retail and supply chains and reduce food loss.
- **Sustainable procurement:** Encourage governments and organisations to adopt sustainable public procurement practices.
- **Company sustainability:** Encourage companies, especially large ones, to adopt sustainable practices and incorporate sustainability information into their reporting.

Challenges and Progress

SDG 12 aims to ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns, fostering a circular economy to reduce resource depletion, pollution, and waste. Key progress includes 530+ national policies and reduced fossil fuel subsidies, while major challenges remain: rising material consumption, high food/plastic waste, and complex supply chains requiring urgent action by 2030.

Challenges

- **Unsustainable consumption and extraction:** Global material consumption is increasing, leading to resource depletion and negative environmental impacts.
- **Waste generation:** There are high levels of waste, including food loss, plastic pollution from linear economy models, and electronic waste.

- Production inefficiencies: Some countries have low-technological production bases, leading to high material, carbon, and energy intensity.
- Lack of policy and implementation: Many countries are not seriously implementing policies, and compliance with international agreements is inconsistent.
- Data and monitoring: Tracking progress, especially for targets like halving food waste, is a significant challenge, particularly in emerging economies.
- Fossil fuel subsidies: Existing subsidies often encourage inefficient resource use.

Progress

- Policy and frameworks: More countries are developing policy frameworks for sustainable consumption and production, and compliance with environmental agreements is strong in some areas.
- Public and corporate awareness: There is a growing effort to raise public awareness and encourage companies to adopt sustainability measures and report on them.
- Circular economy: There is a greater push for circularity to address issues like plastic pollution across its lifecycle.
- Specific targets: Work is being done on specific targets, such as halving food waste by 2030.
- International support: The international community is increasingly supporting developing countries in building the technological capacity for sustainable production.

Targets and Indicators

Targets	Indicators
12.1 Implement the 10 Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns, with all countries taking action, with developed countries taking the lead, taking into account the development and capabilities of developing countries	12.1.1 Number of countries developing, adopting or implementing policy instruments aimed at supporting the shift to sustainable consumption and production
12.2 By 2030, achieve the sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources	12.2.1 Material footprint, material footprint per capita, and material footprint per GDP 12.2.2 Domestic material consumption, domestic material consumption per capita, and domestic material consumption per GDP
12.3 By 2030, halve per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels	12.3.1 (a) Food loss index and (b) food waste index

and reduce food losses along production and supply chains, including post-harvest losses	
12.4 By 2020, achieve the environmentally sound management of chemicals and all wastes throughout their life cycle, in accordance with agreed international frameworks, and significantly reduce their release to air, water and soil to minimise their adverse impacts on human health and the environment	12.4.1 Number of parties to international multilateral environmental agreements on hazardous waste, and other chemicals that meet their commitments and obligations in transmitting information as required by each relevant agreement 12.4.2 (a) Hazardous waste generated per capita; and (b) proportion of hazardous waste treated, by type of treatment
12.5 By 2030, substantially reduce waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling and reuse	12.5.1 National recycling rate, tons of material recycled
12.6 Encourage companies, especially large and transnational companies, to adopt sustainable practices and to integrate sustainability information into their reporting cycle	12.6.1 Number of companies publishing sustainability reports
12.7 Promote public procurement practices that are sustainable, in accordance with national policies and priorities	12.7.1 Number of countries implementing sustainable public procurement policies and action plans
12.8 By 2030, ensure that people everywhere have the relevant information and awareness for sustainable development and lifestyles in harmony with nature	12.8.1 Extent to which (i) global citizenship education and (ii) education for sustainable development are mainstreamed in (a) national education policies; (b) curricula; (c) teacher education; and (d) student assessment
12.9 Support developing countries to strengthen their scientific and technological capacity to move towards more sustainable patterns of consumption and production.	
12.A Develop and implement tools to monitor sustainable development impacts for sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promote local culture and products.	
12.B Rationalize inefficient fossil-fuel subsidies that encourage wasteful consumption by removing market distortions, in accordance with national circumstances, including by restructuring taxation and phasing out those harmful subsidies, where they exist, to reflect	

<p>their environmental impacts, taking fully into account the specific needs and conditions of developing countries and minimizing the possible adverse impacts on their development in a manner that protects the poor and the affected communities.</p>	
<p>12.C Rationalize inefficient fossil-fuel subsidies that encourage wasteful consumption by removing market distortions, in accordance with national circumstances, including by restructuring taxation and phasing out those harmful subsidies, where they exist, to reflect their environmental impacts, taking fully into account the specific needs and conditions of developing countries and minimizing the possible adverse impacts on their development in a manner that protects the poor and the affected communities</p>	<p>12.c.1 Amount of fossil-fuel subsidies (production and consumption) per unit of GDP</p>

SDG 12 and the UNEP Medium-term Strategy (MTS) 2026-2029

The [UNEP Medium-term Strategy \(MTS\)](#) advances SDG 12 by fostering circularity to decouple economic growth from environmental degradation and by addressing the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution. It prioritises systemic, science-based solutions, including tackling plastic pollution, promoting sustainable public procurement, and implementing the 10-Year Framework of Programmes (10YFP).

Key elements for SDG 12 in the 2026-2029 strategy include:

- **Targeted Action:** Focus on systemic changes to reduce resource extraction and waste, focusing on key sectors.
- **Plastic Pollution & Waste:** Implementing strategies across the full life cycle of plastics to move away from a linear "produce, use, discard" model.
- **Circular Economy:** Strengthening global and national commitments to sustainable consumption and production (SCP) patterns.
- **Key Initiatives:** Utilising the [One Planet Network](#) to support countries in achieving 12.1 and other SDG 12 targets.

- **Strategic Shift:** The new MTS emphasises country-level delivery, integrated solutions, and accountability through the One Impact Framework.

The strategy, alongside the [2026-2027 Program of Work](#), aligns with the 2030 Agenda, focusing on reducing food waste, sustainable management of chemicals, and encouraging corporate sustainability reporting.

Relevant linkages with other SDGs

SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) acts as a central enabler for the 2030 Agenda, with strong, direct interlinkages to [climate action \(SDG 13\)](#), [life on land and water \(SDGs 14 & 15\)](#), and [sustainable cities \(SDG 11\)](#). It reduces resource degradation, cuts emissions, and improves waste management, promoting circular economy practices, reducing poverty (SDG 1), and fostering sustainable, resilient economic growth.

Key interlinkages of SDG 12 with other goals include:

- **Environmental Protection (SDGs 6, 13, 14, 15):** Sustainable resource management (Target 12.2) directly improves water quality (6.3), promotes renewable energy (7.2/7.3), and protects marine and terrestrial ecosystems (14 & 15). Reducing food waste (12.3) mitigates climate change (13) by decreasing emissions.
- **Economic Growth & Infrastructure (SDGs 8, 9, 11):** Adopting a circular economy (12.5) improves resource productivity (8.4), creates green jobs (8.5), and develops sustainable, resilient infrastructure (9.4). It is vital for making cities and human settlements sustainable (11.6, 11.b).
- **Social Well-being (SDGs 1, 3, 10):** Sustainable production practices reduce chemical pollution, benefiting health (3.9) and reducing environmental degradation in poor communities. It also promotes ethical labour practices, addressing inequality (10.3).
- **Education and Partnerships (SDGs 4, 17):** Promoting sustainable lifestyles and consumer awareness (4.7, 12.8) and strengthening policy instruments (12.a) are critical for implementation.

Key science reports for SDG 12

Key scientific reports and data sources for SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) are primarily produced by UN agencies, focusing on material footprints, waste management, and sustainable practices. The most significant reports indicate that the world is currently off track, with material footprints increasing and only 7.6% of global resources being circulated.

Here are the key reports and data sources:

1. UN Global Progress Reports & SDG Hub

- **The Sustainable Development Goals Report (Annual):** Produced by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), this report provides the official annual progress update on all SDGs, including detailed data on the 11 targets and 14 indicators for SDG 12.
- **UNEP SDG 12 Hub:** The official platform for monitoring SDG 12, featuring data on policy instruments (12.1.1), material footprint (12.2), food waste (12.3), and e-waste (12.4/12.5).
- **The Sustainable Development Goals Extended Report (2024/2025):** Provides in-depth, indicator-level analysis, highlighting that while corporate sustainability reporting is rising, material consumption and waste generation are outpacing reduction efforts.

2. Specialised Thematic Reports

- **Global E-waste Monitor 2024:** Published by UNITAR, ITU, and others, this report highlights that e-waste generation is rising to record levels (7.8 kg per capita in 2022), with only 22.3% properly managed.
- **Food Waste Index Report (UNEP):** Tracks progress toward Target 12.3 (halving food waste), showing that 1 billion meals are wasted daily, with 60% of waste occurring in households.
- **Global Resources Outlook (IRP):** Published by the International Resource Panel, this report provides scientific evidence on material extraction and consumption trends, emphasising the need for decoupling economic growth from resource use.
- **Global Chemicals Outlook (UNEP):** Monitors the environmentally sound management of chemicals and waste (Target 12.4).

Funding SDG 12

Financing SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) requires mobilising trillions of dollars annually through a combination of public, private, and international investment to support circular economy initiatives, sustainable agriculture, and resource efficiency. Key needs include strengthening sustainable supply chains, scaling up waste management, fostering eco-friendly innovation, and implementing policy reforms.

Key Financial Mechanisms and Requirements for SDG 12:

Private Sector Capital & ESG: Investors must direct funds toward companies with strong Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) practices and those adopting circular business models.

Green Finance & Incentives: Increased use of green loans, bonds, and investments in resource-efficient technologies.

Public Funding & Policy: Governments need to fund infrastructure for waste management, promote sustainable public procurement, and create policy frameworks that decouple economic growth from resource consumption.

International Cooperation: Developing countries require international financial support for sustainable infrastructure and capacity-building to manage resources effectively.

Value Chain Transformation: Targeted investments are necessary in high-impact sectors, particularly agri-food (reducing post-harvest losses) and construction.

The Addis Ababa Action Agenda provides a framework for aligning these financial flows, bridging the gap between current consumption patterns and sustainable development goals.

SDG 12 and the Just Transition

SDG 12 aims to ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns, fostering a circular economy that reduces waste, increases resource efficiency, and minimises environmental harm by 2030. A just transition ensures that the shift to a sustainable, low-carbon economy is fair, creating green jobs while supporting workers and communities adversely affected by this change.

SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production

Core Goal: "Doing more and better with less" by increasing net welfare gains from economic activities while reducing resource use, degradation, and pollution.

Key Focus Areas

Sustainable Management: Efficient use of natural resources by 2030.

Waste Reduction: Substantially reducing waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling, and reuse.

Food Loss: Halving per capita global food waste at consumer and production levels.

Responsible Practices: Encouraging companies to adopt sustainable practices and report on them.

Policy Support: Rationalising inefficient fossil fuel subsidies.

The Just Transition

Definition: A transition to a green economy that is equitable and inclusive, ensuring no one is left behind.

Objective: Sharing the benefits of a low-carbon economy widely while supporting vulnerable, affected communities, regions, and workers.

Relation to SDGs: It is crucial for building social support for climate action, ensuring sustainable, long-term development.

Together, SDG 12 and a just transition seek to transform how goods are made and used, ensuring that this environmental shift is socially equitable and economically sustainable.

UNEP and Partnerships and Commitments

UNEP and One Planet Network (from UNEP's [One Planet Network website](#))

Adopted in 2012 at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, the [10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production \(10YFP\)](#) is a global commitment to accelerate the shift towards sustainable consumption and production in both developed and developing countries.

Sustainable consumption and production has been included as a stand-alone goal (SDG 12) of the 2030 Sustainable Development agenda, and Target 12.1 calls for the implementation of the 10YFP.

The One Planet network has formed to implement the commitment of the 10YFP. It is a multi-stakeholder partnership for sustainable development, generating collective impact through its six programmes: [Public Procurement](#), [Buildings and Construction](#), [Tourism](#), [Food Systems](#), [Consumer Information](#), and [Lifestyles and Education](#).

The One Planet network is an open partnership, and countries, including all relevant stakeholders and organisations, are invited to join and actively engage. The strategic objective of the One Planet network over the period 2018-2022 is to be recognised as the lead mechanism to support and accelerate the shift to sustainable consumption and production patterns, becoming the leading implementation mechanism for Goal 12 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Achieving sustainable consumption and production will deliver not only SDG 12, but simultaneously contribute to the achievement of almost all of the other SDGs, directly or indirectly. While a stand-alone goal (SDG 12) has been included, SCP should be seen

as an enabler for the implementation of a range of other goals and many of their targets. Actions and policies required to achieve the objective of SDG 12 aim to decouple economic growth from resource use and range of other impacts on the environment and their associated effects on poverty eradication and shared prosperity - this is the enabling effect of the shift to sustainable consumption and production patterns.

In 2018, UN Environment and other partners developed [Goodlife Goals](#). The [Good Life Goals](#) are a set of personal actions that people around the world can take to help support the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). They are lifestyle asks for individuals that are carefully aligned with the [SDGs' 169 targets and indicators](#).

Due to the breadth of the One Planet network, their numbers already include hundreds of organisations across all regions, and a knowledge management platform has been set up as a go-to hub for SDG 12, where stakeholders can find and share information and connect with one another. For more information on the activities of the One Planet network, and how they are contributing to the [One Plan for One Planet](#) 5-year strategy to implement the 10YFP, please visit the [One Planet Network website](#).

Partnerships and Commitments

Key partnerships and initiatives

- One Planet Network: A multi-stakeholder partnership and implementation mechanism for SDG 12 that provides solutions for shifting to sustainable consumption and production.
- UN Partnerships for SDGs Platform: An online platform where various stakeholders can register voluntary commitments and multi-stakeholder partnerships to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.
- [10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production \(10YFP\)](#): A global framework, supported by the One Planet Network, that helps countries implement SCP policies and improve waste management.

Corporate commitments

- The UN Global Compact encourages organisations to align their functions with SDG 12 and proactively partner with other stakeholders to advance the goal.
- Commitments often involve integrating sustainability information into corporate reporting and adopting sustainable practices.

Examples of specific commitments

- Halving food waste: A commitment to reducing food loss along supply chains and at the retail and consumer levels.

- Sustainable tourism: Tools to monitor the economic and environmental aspects of sustainable tourism, which promotes local culture and products.
- Circular economy: Efforts to reduce the environmental impact of industries like fashion by promoting the resale and reuse of fabrics to combat waste.

Examples of SDG 12 partnerships and initiatives

Multi-stakeholder and international partnerships

- **One Planet network**: A global partnership with over 1500 partners, including 140+ national governments, 21 UN agencies, civil society, and businesses. It focuses on six thematic areas, including three sectoral programmes on [Sustainable Tourism](#), [Sustainable Food Systems](#) and [Building and Construction](#), as well as three cross-cutting programmes on [Consumer Information](#), [Sustainable Public Procurement](#) and [Sustainable Lifestyles and Education](#).
- **UN Sustainable Development Group**: Various initiatives around the world, such as a communiqué between Kenya and the Center for Effective Global Action, and a sustainable development partnership framework in Zambia.
- **ActNow campaign**: A UN initiative that partners with tech companies like WhatsApp and media, including movie franchises and fashion designers, to promote sustainable behaviour change.

Private sector partnerships

- **The Alliance to End Plastic Waste**: A collaboration of over 40 companies committed to investing over \$1.5 billion to help develop and scale solutions to reduce plastic waste.
- **Dow and Fuenix**: A partnership where Dow works with Fuenix to use recycled plastic waste as a feedstock for producing new polymers.
- **Coca-Cola system**: A partnership with its bottling partners to reduce carbon emissions across its value chain.

University and community partnerships

- **University of Maryland's Terp to Terp ReUse Store**: A campus program that collects and redistributes gently used goods among students, faculty, and staff.
- **Punjab Waste Management Intervention**: A program in India that brings together communities, local governments, and organisations like the Round Glass Foundation to improve waste management and create compost.
- **Bridg.it**: An app that connects businesses and start-ups across industries to find and reuse excess materials, and which works with social impact start-ups and industrial ecology experts in India.

Other examples

- [The Center for Creative Land Recycling \(CCLR\)](#): Works with partners to revitalise urban areas by reusing brownfields (environmentally distressed properties) for sustainable development.
- [BRING](#): An organisation that partners with communities to change attitudes and behaviours regarding waste and consumption.

Key events for SDG 12 in preparation for the 2027 High-Level Review of the SDGs

[May 6-7: 11th Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals.](#)

[July 6-15: UN High-level Political Forum:](#)

The theme of the HLPF will be “Transformative, equitable, innovative and coordinated actions for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals for a sustainable future for all”. The 2026 HLPF, with full appreciation for the integrated, indivisible, and interlinked nature of the Sustainable Development Goals, will conduct in-depth reviews of SDG 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all; SDG 7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all; SDG 9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation, and foster innovation; SDG 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable; and SDG 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development.

Stakeholders

All Sustainable Development Goals should have engagement by all nine Major Groups from Agenda 21, but around different processes, there tends to be a focus on particular ones. Around the One Planet Network for UNEP's work on SDG 12, they frame the engagement as business, civil society, the public and others. This includes the nine Major Groups but also focuses on the public as an additional group.