



### Context

In the late 1980s, the concept of “sustainable development” launched by the Brundtland Commission marked a turning point in global development and environmental politics. Then, the international community recognized that development and environmental sustainability are interdependent and must be tackled together. At the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, industrialized countries reiterated their commitment by adopting Agenda 21, thereby agreeing to foster access for developing countries and economies in transition to sustainable production methods, practices and techniques.

### Strategy

After the Rio Summit, UNIDO and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) launched pilot projects in resource-efficient and cleaner production to demonstrate preventive environmental strategies. Upon their successful completion, both partners agreed to sustain such production by establishing national capacities, known as the National Cleaner Production Centres (NCPCs), in developing countries and economies in transition. They focus on reducing the use of energy, water and other natural resources while also reducing the generation of waste and emissions, especially from small and medium-sized enterprises.

In South Africa, the NCPC was inaugurated during the 2002 World Summit for Sustainable Development in Johannesburg. The Centre is the result of a cooperation programme between South Africa and UNIDO. It functions with the financial assistance from the South African Department of Trade and Industry as well as from the Governments of Austria and Switzerland. Hosted by the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research in Pretoria, the Centre is active in agro-processing, automotive, chemicals metals, pulp and paper, textile and leather sectors, and implements projects in a wide range of areas, including eco-labeling, waste minimization, and energy efficiency. The NCPC also carries out cleaner production assessments and supports the implementation of cleaner production activities.

It promotes technology transfer, raises public awareness and contributes to policy development.

### Results

Since its establishment, the NCPC of South Africa has:

- Promoted the establishment of 25 waste minimization clubs with the participation of more than 270 companies
- Established a student development programme through workshops and hands-on experience
- Established a design competition to raise environmental awareness amongst fashion and textile design students, and to promote environmentally-responsible production

### Impact/Outlook

With the participation of the business sector and the host institution, the NCPC is co-directed by the South African Government. To ensure continuous relevance, an Advisory Forum has also been established with the participation of key national institutions representing the public and private sectors and civil society. Overall, the UNIDO-UNEP National Cleaner Production Centres and programmes have been established in 47 countries. In 2009, the partners agreed to expand and scale-up the global networking activities of the NCPCs.

*For more information on this project: [R.VanBerkel@unido.org](mailto:R.VanBerkel@unido.org)*

*For more information about UNIDO: [communications@unido.org](mailto:communications@unido.org)*

### At a glance:

- Goal:** Cleaner production in South Africa
- MDG:**
  1. Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger
  7. Ensure Environmental Sustainability
- Thematic area:** Environment and Energy
- Donor:** Government of Austria, Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO), Government of South Africa
- Partners:** South African Ministry of Trade and Industry, UNEP
- Status:** completed (ongoing cooperation with UNIDO and third-party funding)