



“... it is by pooling resources with others that the best solutions can be found.”

Benita Ferrero-Waldner, Commissioner for External Relations and Neighbourhood Policy

Taking care of the ocean

Coral reefs and mangroves can provide coastal communities in the Indian Ocean with some defence against extreme weather. But, together with an increasingly hostile climate, such communities who earn their living from the sea, are threatening the biodiversity and future of the very marine resources they depend upon.

A three-year project, with an EU grant of over €700 000, has been set up to help improve the management and co-ordination of **marine and coastal protected areas** in South Asia. International and regional organisations are working with the governments of Bangladesh, India, the Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka to build up the capacity of the institutions concerned, to share information and knowledge, and to help develop networks of the protected areas, in line with multi-lateral environmental agreements. Stemming the loss of biodiversity and helping find alternative ways of making a living for coastal communities are key.

Are you going to SWITCH?

Small and medium-sized enterprises provide much-needed local jobs but have less to invest when it comes to looking for new ways of doing things that fully respect the environment. It is not just cleaner technologies that can reduce pollution but the processes involved and the demands of the market.

With a budget of €90 million, the SWITCH-Asia programme offers co-funding to partnerships of SME-supporting organisations and networks boosting the use of information, knowledge, training, awareness, technologies and processes that cut down on pollution during production. The programme also addresses consumers, acknowledging the power they wield, and the behaviour changes that can minimise waste and stimulate the production of **cleaner products from more sustainable systems**.

Published by EuropeAid Co-operation Office, European Commission, 2007



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Climate change - a development issue

EU-Asia development initiatives in a changing climate

Less developed countries and vulnerable populations are already at the centre of the European Union's development policy. They are also the most at risk from unpredictable and often extreme weather brought about by a changing climate.

It is increasingly important, therefore, that development activities should help communities – especially, but not only, the poor – firstly to adapt to, and eventually mitigate climate change and its consequences.



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

The EU is promoting dialogue, knowledge, capacity building and technologies, like those using renewable energy, to help deal with the changes we are facing. In Asia this is particularly necessary due to a heavy reliance on climate-sensitive sectors such as agriculture, forestry, water, fisheries, energy and tourism, and the sheer numbers of people living in poverty. **Here are five projects, out of over 100, that are promoting sustainable development through a variety of means – while also dealing with climate change.**

Everyone a partner in the forest

In Indonesia, the Philippines, and Thailand the involvement of local communities in natural resources management (NRM) has been shown to improve the **sustainable use of forests** and to reduce poverty. Despite this, community-based NRM is still not well known in many areas and the information and skills required to do it well are not widespread. The SPARK Project, with an EU grant of €1.14 million, is helping to bridge the gap by providing training, knowledge and support, encouraging local authorities and NGOs to work more closely with the communities, and to value indigenous knowledge in forest management. SPARK is also helping people to be more aware of their rights, and more active in the protection of their natural heritage.



Carbon finance for cleaner air

Industrialised countries are investing in projects that cut back on emissions in the developing world. As Asian cities grow, and populations expand, it is more important than ever to limit air pollution as well as greenhouse gases. Small businesses are key drivers for development - working closely with them can deal with both climate and socio-economic change at the same time. The CURB-AIR Project is using an EU grant of less than €300 000 to raise awareness of these problems and, through training and information activities, to help businesses switch to **cleaner technologies** that also contribute to better air quality.

The team behind the project - seven institutes from the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Spain, Thailand, Indonesia, India and China - is making use of the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) developed through the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change to achieve this objective. Initiating and developing four potential CDM projects, saving over 300 000 tonnes of CO₂ a year, moving towards cleaner energy and transport – CURB-AIR has brought about change and has had an impact beyond original expectations.



Being prepared in the floodplains

In Bangladesh 20% of the land floods every year. This is likely to rise due to climate change in the years to come. People need help, and fast, when natural disasters destroy their homes, health and families. The EU is contributing €9 million to a **disaster preparedness** project being implemented by the Government of Bangladesh and the UN.

Although not designed to fight climate change in itself, the project is working with adults and school children to raise their awareness and understanding of disasters, how to prepare for them, and what to do in the event of one happening. It is also identifying the areas most susceptible to heavy rain, tidal waves or flooding, establishing emergency procedures and creating a network for disaster management information. Being prepared is more empowering, more effective, and less costly than having to rely on emergency responses following a disaster.

