

EU in SA project provides support for local green SMMEs to understand opportunities in the EU Green Deal

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Following on from a previous EU funded project that supported green SMME resilience during the early stages of the Covid-19 pandemic, GreenCape partnered with Wesgro, Tips, Tralac, Trade Advisory and the International Cleantech Network to pivot support to local green SMME so that they could continue to build international relationships to secure trade opportunities, despite the travel restrictions, supply chain disruptions and a hard lockdown.

Insights from initial resilience research engagement with a database of green SMMEs led to the development of a set of designed interventions, including a deep dive into the opportunities presented by the European Green Deal for local green SMMEs who have been able to pivot their business models to "trade without travel".

Insights from the development of the interventions were shared during two events organised with the financial support of the European Union's Partnership Instrument and the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, and Nuclear Safety (BMU) in the context of the International Climate Initiative (IKI).

The first event was a webinar hosted on 20 October for green SMMEs. The webinar highlighted how SA green SMMEs can prepare to utilise trade opportunities presented by the European Green Deal. It also looked and highlights global opportunities for local green SMMEs.

A set of documents have been published to further assist green SMMEs to engage with the opportunities, available for download [here](#).

"As the world tackles climate change, preserves biodiversity and adopts more sustainable forms of production, the green economy is poised to become an important engine of growth. With COP26 on the horizon, South Africa continues to advocate for a just transition that benefits all, including communities that risk being left behind," said Trudi Makhaya, special economic advisor to President Cyril Ramaphosa, in her opening address. "It is also important that we support green industrialisation in key sectors such as renewable energy, green mobility and green hydrogen, and ensure that MSMEs are included in these new value chains. The EU Green Deal opens an important market for MSMEs in the green economy," she added.

"We have long been working with South Africa to help unlock the latter's green economy and SME potential. Now, as TeamEurope we, the EU and its member states, want to collaborate even further on 'Just and Green Recovery' initiatives as well as on 'Skills for the Future,'" said Raul de Luzenberger, deputy head of EU Delegation to South Africa, during his welcome address. "The EU internal market and the SADC-EU Economic Partnership Agreement are creating unique opportunities for green SMEs in South Africa. Let us use our strong South Africa-EU relations to their full potential," he added.

The second event was a workshop on 21 October with regional trade and investment promotion agencies, discussing insights about how export promotion agencies have adapted their approaches to support companies during the pandemic.

"To meet the goals of the Paris Agreement and of the South African NDCs, the private sector in South Africa needs to invest, innovate, trade and create jobs within and for a Green Economy. In a post-Covid world, an entirely new system of trade opportunities will need to be realised for the private sector to make such a contribution. The Covid-19 lockdowns curtailed international travel, disrupted supply chains and shipping. It disrupted the traditional approaches to business matchmaking. As economies look to recover and to build back economies that are more socially just than pre-pandemic, there is an opportunity to look at the trade dynamics that underpin South African trade," said Lisa Johansson, Green

Economy Investment & Finance liaison at GreenCape and Wesgro. “Green economy companies have had to find innovative ways to identify, validate and execute deals for domestic and foreign markets. There is also a need for understanding emerging trade opportunities as demand for sustainable goods and services have emerged in especially the EU, stemming from the Green New Deal,” she added.

View the recording of the webinar hosted on 20 October [here](#).

Please note: The opinions expressed are the sole responsibility of the speakers and do not necessarily reflect the views of the funders.

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GreenCape is a non-profit organisation that drives the widespread adoption of economically viable green economy solutions from South Africa.

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