

Fairtrade project to lead Africa towards a green economy

In collaboration with the Department of Environmental Affairs and the United Nations Environmental Programme, the European Union is backing a South African project spearheaded by Fairtrade South Africa. The project aims to boost sustainable consumption and production in the country. Sustainable consumption of goods and services that have minimal impact on the environment and is economically viable whilst meeting the basic needs of humans is a growing trend.



Fairtrade consumer

Selected from over 30 applicants across Africa, Fairtrade's project is funded under the SWITCH Africa Green initiative, a three-year programme aimed at transitioning six countries in Africa towards a private sector-led inclusive green economy.

"We are honoured to be selected to be part of this amazing initiative," said Arianna Baldo, executive director of Fairtrade South Africa. "South Africa was the first emerging economy to realise the potential of selling sustainable and ethical products locally. We believe that this project will further grow domestic supply and demand for Fairtrade products, as well as provide strong case studies and inspiration for other similar markets around the world."

Project componenets

The project has four components. The first aims to strengthen the capacity of South African institutions to endorse and promote fair trade practices in the local farming sector. Municipalities will also be encouraged to achieve Fairtrade Town status by procuring Fairtrade-labelled products wherever possible, and raising awareness of Fairtrade in the community. Over the past decade, this model has been very successful in Europe, with the establishment of over 1,600 Fairtrade Towns in 25 countries.

The second component will focus on educating consumers about sustainable consumption or, in other words, their power as shoppers. Over a two-year period, Fairtrade South Africa will lead four consumer awareness campaigns to this end. Each May there will be a Fairtrade Fortnight campaign which will use a series of platforms – traditional and social media, in-store promotions, etc. - to educate consumers about the positive impact of Fairtrade on South African farming communities. From June onwards, Fairtrade will launch a campaign to promote sustainable lifestyles more broadly in collaboration with the partner ecolabels Fair Trade Tourism, Forest Stewardship Council and Marine Stewardship Council.

The third objective of the project is to improve accessibility to Fairtrade certification for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises. Activities include developing a subsidisation model to assist these businesses with initial Fairtrade certification costs, and support them during their certification, licensing and product launch processes.

Finally, the project will also transfer best practices and successful models across the region and the world, thus facilitating the creation of similar initiatives in other emerging economies in Africa, South America and Asia.

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