

# IISD'S ECONOMIC LAW AND POLICY PROGRAM

Economies that Work for Sustainable Development

*Sustainable development demands new thinking in the design and implementation of investments to create long-term economic and social benefits without compromising the natural environment. It requires substantial investment in infrastructure to ensure and safeguard a clean water supply, promote sound land and agricultural development, develop ecological and efficient transport systems, and transition to renewable energy.*

*IISD's Economic Law and Policy Program focuses on the areas of economic policy-making that promise some of the greatest gains for equitable growth and environmental sustainability: investment, finance, trade, government procurement, and various forms of industrial policy. We identify the key economic and legal policies in need of reform, and pinpoint those policies most ripe for change.*

**US\$4.5  
TRILLION**

*Annual investment that developing countries require in the sectors covered by the Sustainable Development Goals*

**US\$460  
BILLION**

*Financing that China alone needs each year across key green sectors of its economy.*

**18%**

*Percentage of GDP that EU public authorities spend on public procurement – a powerful lever to influence markets*

Much of our work is with government officials in developing countries, advising on the design and implementation of policies that foster equitable, environmentally sustainable and durable economic development. As conveners, we also connect policymakers, the private sector and civil society, fostering dialogue on issues of shared interest. Independent and rigorous research forms the foundation of our work. We publish frequently and share our analysis widely.

## OUR STRENGTHS

**Technical and policy expertise:** Our team possesses exceptionally strong technical credentials, particularly around economic and legal analysis.

**Responsive:** We respond quickly to developing countries' request for assistance or capacity building on a range of economic-related policies and regulatory frameworks.

**Tailored solutions:** We conduct thorough research to analyze and understand the broader context of each country in which we work and tailor options accordingly.

## OUR FOCUS

### Investment for Sustainable Development

Shaping the global agenda in international investment for equity, social justice and the environment.

Enormous amounts of private and public investment are required to implement sustainable development goals, and to move from unsustainable to sustainable practices, including for resilient infrastructure, clean energy, health and education. Our experts examine how treaties, domestic laws and contracts can be improved so as to assist developing countries, in particular, attract investment that promotes equitable and sustainable growth, and to transition to a sustainable economy. Given the urgency of reform needed and the impact on sustainable development, our sector specific work focuses in particular on agricultural and mining investments in developing countries.

### Sustainable Industrial Policy

Fostering competitive firms that have positive spillover effects for national economies, job growth, and the environment.

Governments are looking for policies that drive economic growth without comprising social equity and environmental sustainability. We work with policy makers to assess whether and how it may make sense to employ sustainable industrial policies and, if so, what legal and economic tools to use in pursuing it. We do this both through in-country work that focuses on the specific challenges faced by

particular policy makers, and by more cross-cutting work that tries to find general themes of value to those policy makers from across a number of countries and research efforts.

### Public Procurement and Infrastructure Finance

Supporting the implementation of smart and sustainable procurement of goods and services and infrastructure finance.

Governments spend trillions of dollars each year on goods and services, giving them the ability to shape markets for the public good. They are also turning to public-private partnerships and other methods for commissioning infrastructure from highways and buildings to power generation and water supply tools. We work with policy-makers and public procurers to leverage their large and long-term spending power as a trigger for industrial competitiveness, innovation and technology transfer. We do this by strengthening legal and regulatory provisions on value for money across the lifecycle and incorporating environmental and social criteria into the procurement cycle, creating positive multipliers that will raise public services' value for money, while contributing to green growth and innovation.

### Sustainable Markets and Responsible Trade

Promoting sustainable global markets through voluntary standards and corporate social responsibility.

We promote economies of scale, efficiency, equity and transparency across voluntary sustainability initiatives. Our work focuses on private voluntary standards, labels and corporate social responsibility codes of conduct. We work closely with the private sector, civil society, and governments to cultivate best practice, innovation and market growth across sustainable supply chains. Our principal strength in this area of work rests on our deep commitment to science-based analysis and participatory multi-stakeholder governance.

---

*For more information contact*

*Nathalie Bernasconi [nbernasconi@iisd.org](mailto:nbernasconi@iisd.org)*

*or Flavia Thomé [fthome@iisd.org](mailto:fthome@iisd.org)*