

# Syria



**GDP real growth rate:** 2.4% (2008)  
**GDP per capita:** 4,900 \$ (2008)  
**GDP per sector:** Agriculture 22.5%,  
Industry 27.9%, Services 49.6%  
**Human Development Index:** 0.742 (rank 107)  
**Number of inhabitants ( in 000's ):** 21,227  
**Major industries:** Oil, textile, food, drink, phosphates,  
tobacco, minerals, cement, seed oil, vehicle assembly.

## Main Issues related to SCP

Damascus has undertaken several economic reforms in the last few years. GDP grew around 2.4 % in real terms in 2008. However, the country is facing many challenges: the decrease in the production of crude oil, the growing pressure on water supply, desertification and erosion caused by intensive agricultural practice and a rapid demographic growth.

### Waste:

Waste management is still an unresolved matter. Urban and hazardous waste produced by major industries is disposed of directly in dumps, generally without any previous treatment. In coastal areas the pollution of untreated urban and industrial waste, the leaks of crude oil from refineries and solid waste dumping has had a severe impact on the sea and coastal biodiversity.

### Water:

Problems of water quality and scarcity are mainly created by higher living standards, insufficient sewage systems, industrial waste dumped illegally and the inappropriate use of pesticides and fertilizers. The construction of several waste treatment plants in urban areas as part of governmental programs have demonstrated a positive influence on pollution levels for both superficial and underground water sources.

### Energy & Atmospheric Emissions

Atmospheric pollution in cities has become a major problem due to the increase in traffic levels and the proximity of highly pollutant heavy industries. Major sources of pollution are fuel oil combustion and industrial production processes. High concentrations of Suspended Particle Matter are severely damaging to human health, and also to buildings, particularly those with archaeological and cultural value. Dependence on fossil fuels has lessened in favour of natural gas. The potential of renewable energies, especially solar and wind power is huge, although their use is currently rather symbolic.

## Policies and Strategic Framework

The National Strategy for Sustainable Development, established in 2002, makes reference to sustainability objectives for transport, agriculture and renewable energies without explicitly mentioning cleaner production or SCP.

The Strategy and National Environmental Action Plan (SNEAP), passed in 2003, identifies the country's main environmental problems, as well as the medium and long-term priorities and actions to be undertaken.

The Tenth Five-Year Plan 2006-2010 collects and transforms the objectives identified in the aforementioned documents into initiatives, projects and activities.

## Legal and Regulatory Framework

Few additional decrees and laws complementing the existing legislation and strategies related to cleaner production have been adopted in the last few years.

The main problem to implement cleaner production and to enforce legislation is the lack of human and administrative resources to correctly apply the legislation.

The Syrian government bases its economic instruments on soft loans and fiscal tax deductions to improve energy efficiency and product quality. These measures have been promoted especially in official industrial areas to encourage major industry resettlement.

Sustainable Public Procurement (SPP) is not included in the current public procurement regulations.

## Greening Industry and Society

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is a totally new concept in Syria. However, more recently a certain degree of privatization and opening of markets has presented ideal conditions to lay the foundations of CSR during the first years of business development. Major promoters of CSR and sustainability have been international organisations, especially UNDP or the Global Compact. Most effort has been concentrated on reinforcing the role of NGO's, and favouring contact with companies and public organisations.

No major initiatives with other voluntary instruments, such as eco label or EMAS and ISO have been reported.

## Main Actors and Projects

The **Ministry of Local Administration and Environment** and the **General Commission for Environmental Affairs (GCEA)** are the institutions that are most involved in the promotion of cleaner production. A new relevant agent is the **Syrian National Cleaner Production Centre (SNCPC)**, aiming above all to promote and favour sustainable development in industry.

Towards the end of 2005 the **Industrial Pollution Prevention and Control Centre** was officially opened to implement pollution prevention methods, encourage the rational use of resources and collaboration with public authorities in the drafting of the corresponding regulations.

The Syrian Fund for Integrated Rural Development, in partnership with the EU promotes a Concerted Planning of Sustainable Local Development as well as an additional project for Integrated Waste Management for Olive Oil in Syria, Lebanon and Jordan.

