

EU Indo-Pacific Ministerial Forum, Brussels, 2 February 2024

Roundtable «The Green Transition – Partnering for a Sustainable Future»

Concept note

(designed to introduce and facilitate the discussion)

Rising temperatures, increased frequency of extreme weather events, sea-level rise, environmental degradation and biodiversity loss are existential threats that need urgent joint action. The European Union and most Indo-Pacific partners have pledged to reach netzero economies by 2050 and are working on advancing their green transition. With climate change, environmental degradation and energy security transcending national borders, the partnership between the EU and Indo-Pacific countries is pivotal in charting a sustainable, inclusive and resilient path forward.

Cooperation between our regions in mitigating and adapting to climate change, as well as addressing biodiversity loss, has already yielded tangible results. Joint initiatives under EU's Global Gateway, such as the Green Blue Alliance for the Pacific, the ASEAN Green and Sustainable Connectivity Team Europe Initiatives, the Climate Change Adaptation & Resilience in Africa Team Europe Initiative are committed to climate mitigation, adaptation, resilience, and biodiversity preservation. The EU has also developed a collaborative project on green transition and climate change with the Gulf partners. In addition, the EU has established a Green Alliance with Japan, and a Green Partnership with South Korea; has established Connectivity Partnerships with Japan and India; has stepped up engagement at policy level with all partners on climate change and environmental protection; and, together with the G7, contributes actively to the Just Energy Transition Partnerships with South Africa, Indonesia, and Vietnam. These joint actions not only help meet the objectives of the 2015 Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, but also align with the recently adopted Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

In further efforts to protect our **oceans**, we need to enhance cooperation in support of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea and the recent agreement on Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction – the High Seas Treaty as well as in the fight against Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated fishing.

The issue of **plastic pollution** is a common challenge, especially in the Indo-Pacific region, which is significantly impacted by ocean plastic debris. Collaborative efforts are needed to develop strategies to minimize waste generation, protect marine ecosystems, and promote sustainable resource management, based on the circular economy approach, as well as ensure progress in negotiations on a Global Plastics Treaty.

Ensuring **energy security and a just energy transition** towards clean and sustainable energy is a universal concern. Many countries in the Indo-Pacific, as well as the EU, promote supply diversification; seek to tap into the potential of renewable energy sources, such as wind, solar, and hydroelectric power; take measures to save energy; strengthen their electricity grids; reduce methane emissions from fossil fuels; and explore new technologies and energy carriers such as renewable hydrogen production and its use in hard-to-abate sectors. At the same time, ambitious international cooperation is needed in the global civil aviation and maritime transport

sectors, with important decisions to be taken on the promotion of alternative aviation fuels and mid-term measures for the decarbonisation of shipping. These efforts will not only enhance energy security but also accelerate the transition towards net-zero economies contributing to our collective climate ambition.

The **[anticipated] UNFCCC COP28** pledge of endorsing the global goal of tripling renewables capacity and doubling the annual average rate of energy efficiency improvements between now and 2030 can bring about the progress we jointly aspire to achieve.

The **transition to a net-zero economy** needs to be socially just and inclusive, promote job creation and equitable access to clean-energy solutions. By working together, we can harness the potential of green and digital technologies to address energy security concerns, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and promote economic growth.

The EU is seeking to enhance its investment in projects that contribute to the green transition and to a cleaner and more circular global economy, through the Global Gateway, including by promoting more sustainable supply chains and connectivity. In order to identify areas for concrete cooperation between our two regions, **this roundtable discussion aims to address the following key questions:**

- **Sustainability:** How do we effectively achieve a rapid, lasting economic recovery anchored in resilient and diversified supply chains while respecting the imperative of contributing to the green transition with the aim of reaching net zero circular economies by 2050 in line with the pledges of European and most Indo-Pacific partners?
- **Climate change:** How can we strengthen climate resilience, mitigation and adaptation strategies based on the outcomes of the UNFCCC COP28? How to best support climate adaptation in the Indo-Pacific region, ensuring that these efforts lead to greater economic prosperity and security? How can we align and mobilise financial flows from all sources with and for climate finance?
- **Energy:** How to ensure greater uptake of renewable energy sources and energy efficiency measures within our energy systems? How can we manage the urgently needed phasing down of fossil fuels, in particular coal? How can we foster greater regional collaboration on sustainable energy infrastructure?
- **Sustainable CRM partnerships:** How can we ensure sustainable supply of Critical Raw Materials? What tools are available for our partners?
- **Environment:** How can we reinforce the links between climate change and biodiversity loss, as well as between climate change and circular economy? How can we accelerate the fight against plastic pollution through regional cooperation and innovation, and in particular in view of the ongoing negotiations on the Global Plastics Treaty?
- **Just transition:** How can collaboration between our regions address inequalities and disparities to ensure that vulnerable populations benefit from the green transition? What innovative approaches can be applied to enhance job creation and social equity?
- **Collaboration:** What other cross-border initiatives and regional partnerships should be developed to harness the potential of shared resources and expertise in driving green transition within the Indo-Pacific and EU?
- **Knowledge-based approach:** How can we mobilise private and public actors across the regions to cooperate on developing innovative solutions to cross-cutting green challenges? How can we ensure that the most up-to-date knowledge is applied in support of a just and green transition?