SWITCH Africa Green held the Ghana National Networking Forum in Accra City Hotel in Accra on 20-21 March, 2017. The main objectives of the forum were to discuss opportunities, challenges and barriers faced by the private sector in transitioning to an inclusive, low carbon green economy that promotes SCP practices and patterns in Ghana; discuss ways of scaling up and replicating green business in the context of trade associations, MSMEs, government policies and programmes; and foster networking between different project entities with other stake-holders.

During the second day of the forum, there were two main sessions focusing on financing and policy support for green business development. The session on financing discussed the financial opportunities and challenges faced by MSMEs in advancing green business development in Africa, with participation from both the public and private sector. Among the panelists in the session were

Mr. Mark Ofori-Kwargo (standing) from Ecobank Ghana answers a question from a participant at the morning session on financing for green business development

Photo: UN Environment
representatives from Ecobank, the Ministry of Trade and Industry and the Ministry Finance in Ghana. The major results of the deliberations emphasized the need for capacity building for MSMEs in business management. It was noted that SWITCH Africa Green project, through its grantees, offers capacity building in business management (including book-keeping). This is especially important for financing institutions to ensure that the funds given out as credit is utilized for the purpose for which it was given. It was also noted that most of the practitioners are in the informal sector and there was need for them to be supported to formalize their businesses enabling them to be better prepared for financing opportunities.

Participants noted the difficulty in accessing funds from the Green Climate Fund and other financial institutions towards promoting green business stressing the importance of capacity building. It was particularly important to note that the Ministry of Finance, Ghana had two representatives in the networking meeting and they were able to engage the stakeholders on green financing and demonstrated government goodwill and support towards achieving the objective of the SWITCH Africa Green project.

During the break-out sessions in the afternoon, deliberations were made covering the key priority sectors in Ghana: Tourism, Manufacturing and Integrated Waste Management. On tourism, it was noted that there was need for support in assisting hotels and other tourist establishments to utilize waste generated from the establishment in a bid to green their businesses. It was suggested that a rating system would help in attracting potential customers to destinations that are implementing SCP practices. There is a need for policy intervention in providing various incentives to encourage businesses in this sector to take up sustainable consumption and production practices especially in energy, water and inputs.

In manufacturing it was noted that there is need for awareness creation on CSP practices and patterns in the whole value chain. It was also noted that there is need to create incentives such as tax relief on technologies and equipment like solar water heaters that support green business.

In integrated waste management, it was established that there is need for intensive sensitization and awareness creation for waste segregation at source by individuals and service providers.
On behalf of UN Environment, Ms. Rhoda Wachira gave the closing remarks and noted that the deliberations from the National networking forum will feed into the regional policy dialogue scheduled to take place in Accra on 23-24 March 2017. She also encouraged the participants to put in good proposals and to abide by the rules in submitting the proposals by 31 March 2017 for the second phase of SWITCH Africa Green project.
Ebenezer Appah-Sampong (Deputy Executive Director - Technical, EPA) officially closed the meeting after thanking everyone for their fruitful deliberations and dedication to green business development in Ghana. He informed the participants that EPA will support the sustainability of the initiative on green business development in Ghana. He also encouraged them to apply for the current call for proposal by SWITCH Africa Green.

SWITCH Africa Green is bringing together about 80 stakeholders from six African countries for a Regional Policy Dialogue meeting in Accra, Ghana on March 23-24. The objective of this dialogue is to create a common understanding of policy landscape to enable countries strengthen their institutions with appropriate tools and legal instruments for green business development targeting four key sectors – agriculture, integrated waste management, manufacturing and tourism.

The overall objective of SWITCH Africa Green is to support 6 countries in Africa to achieve sustainable development by engaging in transition towards an inclusive green economy, based on sustainable consumption and production patterns, while generating growth, creating decent jobs and reducing poverty. SWITCH Africa Green is developed and funded by the European Commission and implemented by UN Environment in partnership with United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS).

For more information, please visit www.switchafricagreen.org or email info@switchafricagreen.org