

**radio
workshop**

MINI GUIDE #6

GREEN ECONOMY



Chris Leboutillier, Unsplash

INTRODUCTION

In July 2024, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa signed a new Climate Change Act into law. This is a big step towards developing a green economy for the country. **A green economy is an economy that is low-carbon, resource-efficient and socially inclusive (UNECE).** The colour green is associated with plants and the natural environment. In these guides, we have been exploring various aspects of the transition from our current fossil fuel economy to a green economy. Here we unpack some ways that a green economy is different from our current economy.

There are three levels of transition that are potentially happening now.

LEVEL 1

The first level is about **changing the energy source that powers the existing economy from fossil fuels to clean renewables like wind and solar.** At the moment, for example, old power stations and energy infrastructure, such as the power lines that carry electricity from the plants where it is produced to all the places where it is used, are being repurposed for renewable energy. However, this energy transition is only one aspect of developing a green economy.

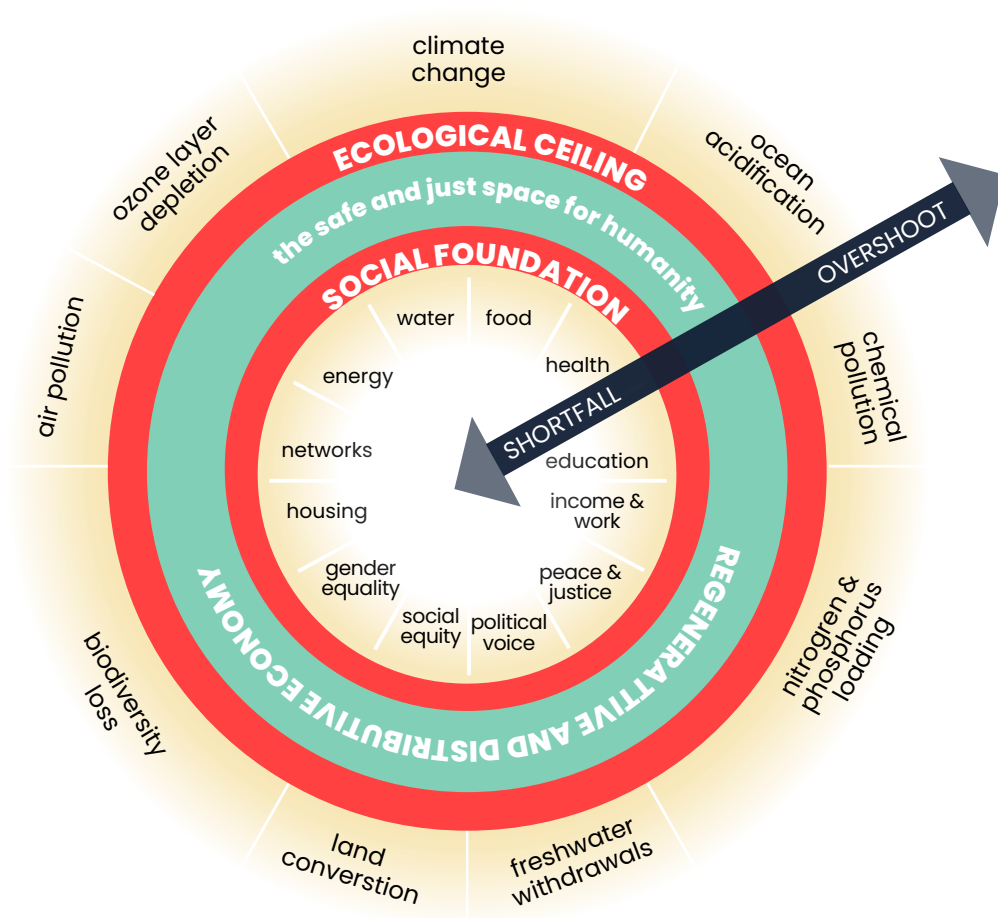
LEVEL 2

The second level of transition involves changing the economy itself. The current economy is unsustainable not only because it runs on fossil fuels but also because it is based on the extraction and consumption of natural resources and produces a lot of pollution and waste. Everything we have, make and use comes from the Earth: the minerals in our cell phones, the fibers in our clothing, the food we eat and all the other products we use. In the current economy, the more we consume, the more economic growth there is. That is seen as a good thing, but unfortunately, there are real limits to what the Earth can provide, and we have gone beyond those limits.

“The Doughnut” is an approach to thinking about how to meet everyone’s basic needs within environmental limits. Since 2009, scientists have been mapping the overall health of the Earth. Their findings show that many of the key life support systems maintaining planetary health, including the climate, have now been pushed beyond a ‘safe operating space’ for humanity. Our current economic activities, which cause things like deforestation as well as pollution and waste from industry and agriculture, are destroying the Earth’s capacity to support life, including human life. At the same time, many people around the world do not have their basic needs met, such as food, shelter, healthcare, and education. The Doughnut combines scientific knowledge with an understanding of our economic and material needs to help guide us towards living within ‘a safe and just space for humanity.’



Doughnut Economic Model



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The Doughnut shows us a simple truth: **We need to become much better at using the resources the Earth provides while also distributing these resources much more fairly.** That means every major industry on Earth, not just coal, must change profoundly. Many industries are changing, as we will explore further in the case studies below.

A green economy calls for a new approach to design so that the things we use and consume require less energy and materials to make, last longer, and are reused or recycled at the end of their life instead of thrown away. If you go to a fast food restaurant today, for example, it is likely your food was raised or grown using lots of chemical inputs like fertilisers made with fossil energy. Your food was probably produced far from where you live, possibly even in another country, so it has to be trucked or shipped or flown over a long distance, burning even more fossil energy. The food will come wrapped in disposable paper or plastic packaging designed to be thrown away after a single use. In a green economy, however, your food would be produced locally using methods that work with nature and are light on the Earth, with minimal packaging that is either reusable or is chemical-free and easy to compost so that its nutrients are recycled to regenerate the soil.

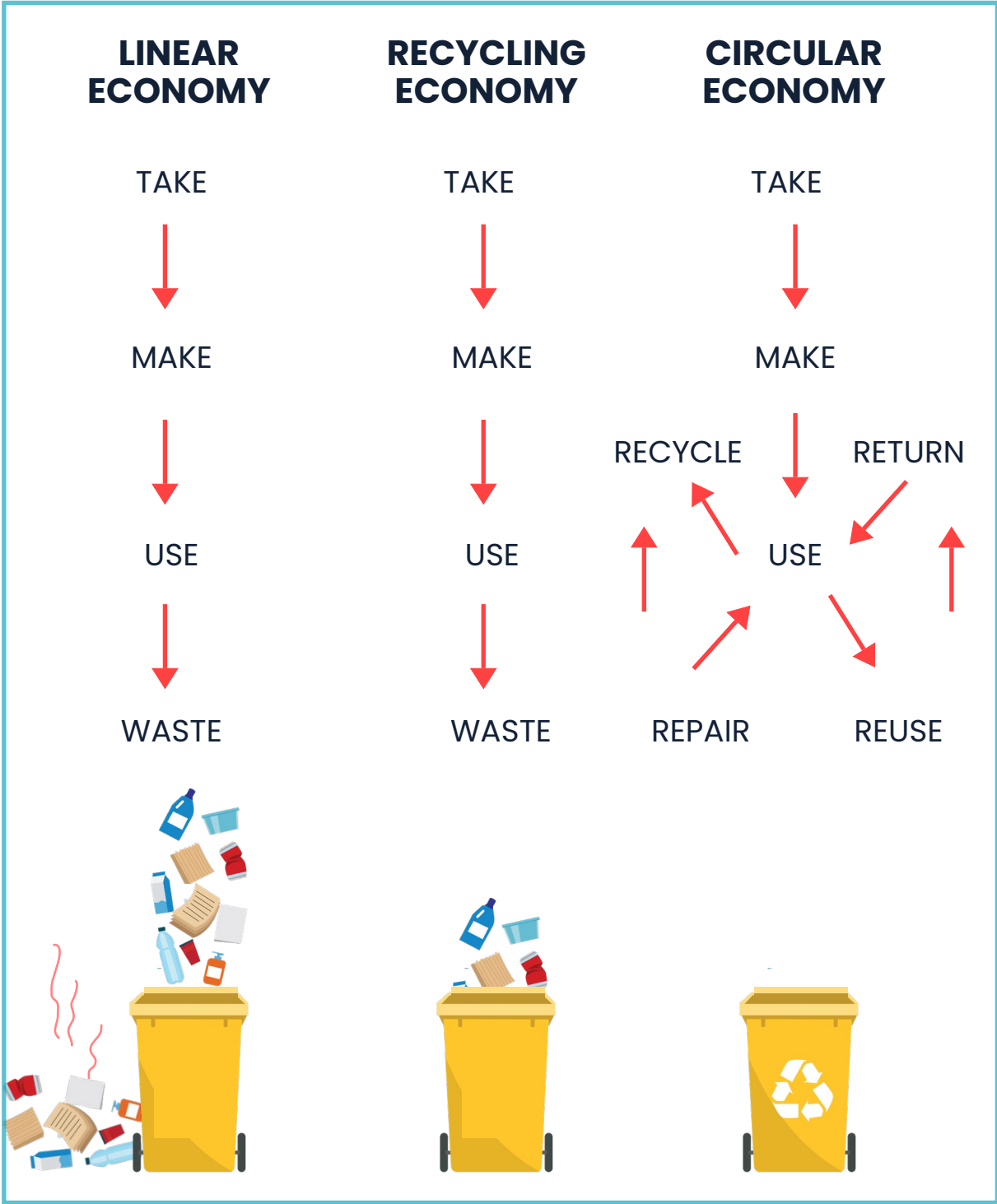
[The circular economy](#) is another term closely related to the green economy. A circular economy is based on three design principles:

- Eliminate waste and pollution
- Keep products and materials in circulation and at their highest value
- Regenerate nature (Ellen MacArthur Foundation)

A circular economy promotes maintenance, repair, recycling, upcycling and composting as ways of keeping materials and products in circulation so that they don’t become waste. For example, [one company](#) uses low-value

agricultural waste as substrate to grow mushrooms into packaging. Using these materials and manufacturing methods not only eliminates plastic, but produces packaging that is easily and safely compostable.

Example of a circular economy



LEVEL 3

The third level of transition raises the question of a Just Transition. How can a green economy be fairer and more inclusive than the current economy? How can it provide opportunities to youth, women, and others who have been excluded from participating in the current economy? How can a green economy give people decent jobs and a safe, healthy environment?

The green economy will look very different to the [coal economy](#) it is replacing. It will involve many of the same industries that exist today, such as agriculture, manufacturing and tourism. But it is also likely to involve new kinds of jobs that involve caring for land and water, educating people about the environment, restoring degraded land and producing more of the things people need locally instead of importing them. Ultimately, these jobs will help improve biodiversity, water quality, and clean air and support human well-being. Yet the transition to a green economy is also challenging and tricky. There will be winners and losers. The jobs that emerge in a green economy, for example, may be in different locations and require different skills than the jobs in the current economy. That's why it is so important to pay attention to all three levels of transition, including a Just Transition while working together with your community to make sure your voices are heard.



Resources for further research and reading:

Explaining the Circular Economy and How Society Can Re-think Progress | Animated Video Essay:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zCRKvDyyHml>



Bust the Myth Get the Facts

MYTH

All the workers who lost jobs in the coal sector will move to employment in renewable energy.

FACT

It is not quite so simple. Many of the jobs in renewables will be in other parts of the country. In some areas such as the assembly of microgrids, there may be a lot of jobs in the next few years as the demand for new solar power installations increases. But then the demand for those skills may drop off as the sector becomes more established, and the focus shifts to maintaining the existing installations. The aim is to make a green economy more diverse than the existing, coal-dependent economy is, so that it supports all kinds of different industries and enterprises, some of which do not yet even exist. The seeds of new local, national and global scale green value chains are there, but they still need help to grow and mature. This uncertainty is challenging for people and communities who need steady, reliable sources of employment. One way to help navigate this uncertainty is to cultivate an entrepreneurial mindset, discussed in the Youth and Green Jobs Fact Guide.

DID YOU KNOW?

Local fact: The World Bank has estimated that for every job lost in Mpumalanga's coal sector, two or three new jobs will be created in the green economy. Some 200,000 workers can be reskilled or trained for the renewables industries in Mpumalanga. Since the Komati power plant closed in 2022, Eskom has converted the plant to wind, photovoltaic and natural gas and training former staff to build and assemble renewable energy components at the power station. Yet it is not certain how sustainable many of these jobs are in the long term.

Local fact: An estimated 43% of South African households are considered energy poor, meaning that they can't meet their basic energy needs ([TIPS report pdf](#)).

Global fact: \$100 trillion will need to be invested in low carbon infrastructure globally by 2030 as part of a just transition, which is equivalent to about a year of global GDP (Heat of the Moment Podcast).

CASE STUDY:

Sugarcrete

Scientists from the University of East London, in collaboration with an architecture studio, have developed a method of making bricks out of sugar cane waste. This new material, called 'Sugarcrete' is designed to be affordable and eco-friendly, producing between 15 and 20% of the carbon emissions of traditional bricks. This and other innovations can help green the building industry, where greenhouse gas-intensive processes like manufacturing bricks and cement contribute to global warming. See video: <https://youtu.be/RFeG4S6WuJ4>

South Africa's Climate Change Act

Will the new Climate Change Act help to bring about a greener economy? The Act will set specific targets and prices for greenhouse gas emissions, giving companies a stronger financial incentive to go low carbon. For example, companies that do not reduce their emissions may pay a higher rate of carbon tax. The Act calls for the development of specific plans for industries like energy and agriculture to reduce their emissions. It also calls on the government to develop strategies for greater resilience and adaptation to climate change at national, provincial and municipal levels. See videos: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5mx_3bznfgM

And on financing the JET:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iRvxS5wIx4U>

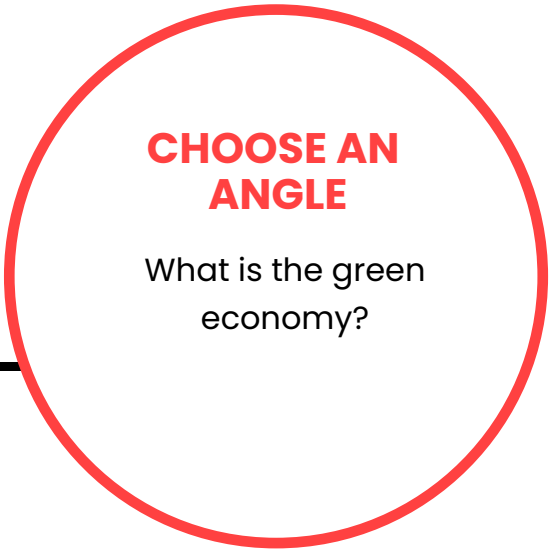
RADIO PRODUCTION GUIDE

PREPARING FOR THE SHOW

ANGLES: DIFFERENT WAYS TO TALK ABOUT THE GREEN ECONOMY

- What is the green economy?
- Why are we transitioning towards a green economy?
- What does a future green economy look like?





CHOOSE AN ANGLE

What is the green
economy?

FORMATS FOR TELLING THE STORY



AUDIO COMMENTARY



AIM:

This is a way to get people's opinions about a topic they care deeply about. You don't just talk to ordinary members of the community – you choose a person who has first-hand experience of the issue you're exploring.



WHO DO YOU TALK TO?

Anyone in the community (or external expert) that has an understanding of the green economy.



QUESTIONS

- What is the green economy?
- Can you tell us a little bit about it?
- How can our listeners wrap their minds around why the transition towards a green economy is important and how to become part of it and grow with it?



AUDIO PROFILE



AIM:

To get a first person account of someone's experience, passion and journey. Audio profiles often aim to inspire.



WHO DO YOU TALK TO?

Someone who understands what the green economy and is trying to build a business in it or contribute to its development in some way.



QUESTION

- When did you first start understanding what the green economy is about?
- How has your personal journey been affected by your understanding and what have you learnt on the way?



INTERVIEW



AIM:

To source information from someone who has expertise or experience in the topic.



WHO DO YOU TALK TO?

- A green economy expert
- Climate change activists or NGO doing work in this field
- Green entrepreneur/enterprise



EXAMPLES OF QUESTIONS FOR INTERVIEW:

- What is the green economy?
- What are the common misconceptions about the green economy?
- Why is the green economy important?
- What will a future look like when we fully transitioned into the green economy?
- What do you see as the major challenges of transitioning away from coal?
- In what way can people build resilience in facing this transition?

***(Please remember to fine-tune the questions once you know who you are interviewing).**



VOX POP



AIM:

To get many opinions on one topic.



WHO DO YOU TALK TO?

A large number of community members



QUESTION

- Do you know what the green economy is? (If yes, can you please describe it?)

HOW TO PRESENT YOUR SHOW

SAMPLE SCRIPT

[INTRO:]

Host 1: It's just gone [TIME] and you're just in time for the [NAME OF SHOW] on [RADIO STATION]. My name is [NAME].

Host 2: And my name is [NAME]. On today's show, we will be talking about the green economy.

Host 1: What is the green economy, one might ask?

Host 2: Yes that is exactly what we going to talk about today? We going to try unpack and understand this 'green economy' thing.

Host 1: eMalahleni is facing a lot of change in the coming years, and we need to understand and prepare for the transition.

Host 2: This 'green economy' thing is not clear for everybody. I have just learnt about it recently to be honest!

Host 1: So to try understand it, we went out to hear what community members understood it to mean.

[PLAY VOX POP]

Host 2: It means different things it seems to different people, let's try unpack it a bit.

Host 1: In its simplest definition, a green economy is an economy that is low carbon, resource efficient and socially inclusive. The Green Economy is different from our current economy.

Host 2: There are three levels of transition that are happening now. The first level is about changing the energy source that powers the existing economy from fossil fuels to clean renewables like wind and solar. This is the transition we talk about in our shows because, this is what is affecting eMalahleni the most.

Host 1: The second level of transition involves changing the economy itself. The current economy is unsustainable not only because it runs on fossil fuels, but also because it is based on extraction and consumption of natural resources. Everything we have, make and use comes from the Earth: the minerals in our cell phones, the fibers in our clothing, the food we eat and all the other products we use. In the current economy, the more we consume, the more economic growth there is. That is seen as a good thing, but unfortunately, there are real limits to what the Earth can provide, and we have gone beyond those limits.

Host 2: The third level of transition brings up the question of a Just Transition. How can a Green Economy be fairer and more inclusive than the

Use your produced radio features, your research and the suggested script and questions to write your own script.

current economy? How can it provide opportunities to [youth](#), women and others who have been excluded from participating in the current economy? How can a Green Economy give people decent jobs and a safe, healthy environment?

Host 1: Deep stuff and a lot to think about!

Host 2: We spoke to [name of person that did audio-profile], working in [xxx] for [number of years] to understand his experience his personal journey with understanding what the green economy is.

[PLAY AUDIO-PROFILE]

Host 2: [Comments on the audio-profile to provide closure and transition]

Host 1: A Green Economy calls for a new approach to design, so that the things we use and consume require less energy and materials to make, last longer, and are reused or recycled at the end of their life instead of thrown away.

Host 2: Yes, it's about thinking and doing things differently but that can be hard to imagine even.

Host 1: Yes, "The World Bank has estimated that for every job lost in Mpumalanga's coal sector, 2 or 3 new jobs will be created in the Green Economy. This sound like good news, but hard to believe in something you can't imagine, see or touch. For many the green economy is not really real yet.

Host 2: Considering all the challenges faced by the community of eMalahleni in the transition away from coal. We asked [name person that did audio-commentary + short intro to who he/she is] what is this green economy? How can our listeners wrap their minds around why the transition towards a green economy is important and how to become part of it and grow with it?

[PLAY AUDIO -COMMENTARY]

Host 2: [Comments on the audio-profile to provide closure and transition]

Host 1: I heard \$100 trillion will need to be invested in low carbon infrastructure globally by 2030 as part of a just transition, which is equivalent to about a year of global GDP.

HOW TO PRESENT YOUR SHOW

SAMPLE SCRIPT

Host 1: Yes, its a strange thing, on one hand it feels it is not changing fast enough and much more commitment and finance is needed. On the other hand it feel like it is changing too fast and we strill wrapping our heads around it. How do you feel about it ? Send us your thoughts [share ways in which they can comment and participate in the show]

Host 2: We aked some of these question to [name person that did interview + introduction to who they are].

[PLAY INTERVIEW (if live you can do it in studio)]

Host 1: [Comments on the audio-profile to provide closure and transition]

Host 2: Let's hear now from our listeners... [share ways in which they can comment and participate in the show]

[OPEN LINES FOR LISTENERS WEEDBACK]
[Show clock]