



COUNTRY SPOTLIGHT

Uruguay

7 December 2021 | Summary Report

ABOUT THE COUNTRY SPOTLIGHT

Country Spotlights are focused deep dives presenting the green economy transformation from one PAGE partner country. The open discussions are delivered by government representatives and UN officials. The deep dive on 7 December 2021 was focused on sharing progress in Uruguay, outlining national priorities and challenges for the country's green economy transition, and how the PAGE engagement supports long-term sustainable development.

A discussion with:

Moderator:



Manuel Albaladejo

Head of UNIDO
in Uruguay, Argentina,
Chile and Paraguay



Walter Verri

Undersecretary
Ministry of Industry, Energy
and Mining of Uruguay



Pablo Ruiz Hiebra

UN Resident Coordinator
Uruguay



Paula Vincent Bertiz

PAGE Project Coordinator
Uruguay



Stephan Sicars

Director Department of
Environment UNIDO &
PAGE Management Board



KEY HIGHLIGHTS

I. The PAGE programme provides holistic support for driving the green economy transition forward on multiple levels.

According to Manuel Albaladejo, Head of UNIDO in Uruguay, Argentina, Chile and Paraguay, the idea of green economy “has turned from a colour into a shape” and is now one of the key thematic priorities in the country. PAGE has been sparking engagement on multiple levels. On governmental level, PAGE supported the design of national policies such as the [Waste Management Plan](#) and has also driven the measurement of national and subnational inclusive green economy and green employment statistics in the country. According to Walter Verri, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Industry, Energy and Mining of Uruguay, Page Uruguay has prioritized joint work between several ministries, namely the Office of Budget and Planning, the Ministry of Work and Social Security, the Ministry of the Environment, and the Ministry of Economy, as well as the Ministry of Industry, Energy and Mining.

“The relevance of PAGE in Uruguay is unquestionable. It makes the measurement of impact possible and supports resource mobilization and capacity building. Its impact has gone beyond national and subnational levels, placing the green economy on the overall agenda and setting a course for policymaking in this area.”

Walter Verri

Undersecretary of the Ministry of Industry, Energy and Mining of Uruguay

While governmental representatives are actively engaged in fostering green and circular economy, Pablo Ruiz Hiebra, UN Resident Coordinator Uruguay, also highlights the unique and strong support of the private sector for these new practices. The maintenance of such strong and substantive relationships is regarded as a key characteristic of the country. PAGE has played an important role in deepening and maintaining these connections by supporting incentives for sustainable business models through initiatives such as the [National Circular Award](#). PAGE Uruguay has also been able to bridge development on regional level, by involving subnational governments and regional institutions to implement national policies.

“The regional dimension of PAGE’s work is of particular interest, as it bridges the implementation of national policies, new funds and the idea of matching resources and technical capacities to drive, particularly circularity, forward in the country.”

Gabriele Wagner

Senior Advisor on Green Economy at Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)



“It might sound difficult to coordinate across different actors and agencies in any initiative, but PAGE has helped us in articulating and facilitating the understanding and we learned, that subnational governments are really open to these initiatives, because they are the ones implementing public policies.”

Walter Verri

Undersecretary of the Ministry of Industry, Energy and Mining of Uruguay

II. PAGE fosters close collaboration between different programmes and partners to join forces and accelerate the green economy transition.

PAGE contributes to the alignment of activities with other partners. With GIZ, the agency for international cooperation of Germany, PAGE collaborated in projects such as the [Green Economy Transformation \(GET\)](#) program to join hands on green economy interventions and create synergies to pool expertise across different sectors and networks. Marta Ramirez, Programme Officer in the Cooperation Section at the EU delegation in Uruguay, highlighted the active participation of Uruguay in the EU program [EUROCLIMA+](#), which has the objective of improving the capacities of countries in Latin America to implement an effective climate policy and to initiate transformative change. In that regard, Marta Ramirez flagged the importance of promoting synergies and strong coordination with international partners, in the UN system and in the context of the Team Europe Initiative, which enables aligned support by the EU, its member states, and the European Development Finance Institutions.

“We have learnt the need for institutional agreements for implementing green economy policies as well as the relevance of a national steering committee and a fully involved government. PAGE is helping to make green economy a national priority through the involvement of five agencies, as well as the onboarding of national stakeholders and linking with other countries to learn from valuable experiences.”

Paula Vincent Bertiz

PAGE Project Coordinator Uruguay

III. Through the PAGE programme, Uruguay recognized the importance of resource mobilization to finance a green economy.

In 2021, PAGE, together with the Agency for Innovation and Research (ANII) and the Laboratory of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB Lab) and UNIDO created the Circular Economy Research and Innovation Fund whose objective is to promote research and innovation capabilities, enabling the economic reactivation and resilience of companies. The fund brings together national financing efforts from several stakeholders and indicates the PAGE programme’s ambition to leverage outcomes through co-financing mechanisms. Further collaboration discussed included opportunities with the [Green Environmental Facility](#) and the [Green Climate Fund](#).



“A key element is how we managed to anchor initiatives to other partners to leverage outcomes. The joint funding for the Circular Economy Research and Innovation Fund has resulted in \$360,000 U.S. dollars for an unprecedented program, where we look at the circular economy from innovation and research angle – something that is pretty novel in the region.”

Manuel Albaladejo

Head of UNIDO in Uruguay, Argentina, Chile and Paraguay

IV. Supporting the development of a circular economy has been a key component of a green economy transition in Uruguay.

Uruguay has increasingly focused on supporting the development of a circular economy. The immediate focus has been the development of a [National Strategy on Circular Economy](#). According to Manuel Albaladejo, one of the greatest challenges in Uruguay was to transfer Circular Economy from an abstract topic into practice, making it more understandable and ease the constraints that companies face when moving towards circularity. Subsequently, PAGE launched the [National Circular Awards](#) in 2019, together with the Ministry of Industry, Energy and Mining (MIEM), and the National Development Agency (ANDE). The Award aims to recognize companies, entrepreneurs, communities, educational institutions and other organizations engaged in promoting the country’s transformation towards a circular economy and to set incentives for the private sector to foster green development.

“The Circular Economy Award is mainly geared towards the private sector, showcasing what circularity and a successful business model can look like, that match the country’s needs and address policy issues adequately.”

Manuel Albaladejo

Head of UNIDO in Uruguay, Argentina, Chile and Paraguay

UN Partnership for Action on Green Economy (PAGE)

PAGE is a joint collaboration between five United Nations agencies and seeks to put sustainability at the heart of economic policies and practices to advance the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. PAGE supports nations and regions in reframing economic policies and practices around sustainability to foster economic growth, create income and jobs, reduce poverty and inequality, and strengthen the ecological foundations of their economies.



LOOKING AHEAD

Uruguay stands ready to become an international model of sustainability efforts and to drive the development and discourse on green economy forward. Since the Minister of Economy and Finance of Uruguay has been appointed the chair of the Development Committee of the World Bank and the IMF in 2021, Uruguay has a strong opportunity to foster dialogue on climate, finance and trade in the country and globally.

The Government of Uruguay is also determined to continue the work on implementing circular economy policies. On 14 December 2021, three ministries, the Ministry of the Environment, the Ministry of Agronomy and Fishery, and the Ministry of Industry, Energy and Mining published a [National Strategy on Circular Economy](#). The government will also promote the measurement of statistics that show the progress in green economy and will firmly contribute to the inclusion of green economy as departmental policies, encouraging subnational government to implement programs and projects aimed to sustainable development.

“We have an opportunity to position Uruguay as a model for sustainable development in the world through promoting a narrative on sustainable development which is solid but also real in terms of commitments from different ministries. And I think PAGE is a central channel and mechanism for this endeavor.”

Pablo Ruiz Hiebra

UN Resident Coordinator Uruguay

The Country Spotlight sessions will continue in 2022 to enable dialogue and exchange between governmental representatives, UN officials, national focal points and funding partners.

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