Press release - For immediate release
21 October 2026

Transforming the Built Environment through Sustainable Materials in Ghana

Implemented by UNEP with funding from the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and support from UNOPS and UN-Habitat, a new project promotes circularity and low-carbon construction materials to address Ghana's housing needs sustainably.



- The project “Transforming the Built Environment through Sustainable Materials” is implemented by UNEP with UNOPS and UN-Habitat support, in collaboration with the Ministry of Works and Housing and Water Resources (MWHWR), and funded by the BMZ.

- UNOPS is supporting the project's implementation through the development of a compendium of locally available low-carbon construction materials and their basic technical specifications, a techno-economic feasibility study for a low-carbon model house and assistance with enhanced design of concept design from the Ministry, and EDGE Certification of the designs for housing prototype models.
- Two dedicated workshop sessions were organized to present the compendium of low-carbon materials and the techno-economic feasibility study and to gather feedback from key stakeholders and housing sector actors.

Accra, 21 October 2026.— As part of the project " Transforming the Built Environment through Sustainable Materials" in Ghana, a launch ceremony was held in Accra marking the launch of the demonstration project activities, including dedicated workshops held the same day. Using $217,477 in financing from the total project budget, UNOPS is supporting UNEP with the project implementation by providing technical expertise to the Ministry of Works and Housing to integrate sustainable materials into national housing prototypes, through feasibility studies, support to model design and sustainable certification.

In Ghana, where rapid urbanization, rising population pressures and limited housing supplies have led to a housing deficit estimated to exceed 1.8 million units, integrating locally sourced low-carbon materials offers a key opportunity to reduce emissions while expanding economic opportunities across domestic construction value chains.

"As a signatory to the Paris Agreement, Ghana has made a fair commitment through its National Determined Contribution to reduce these emissions. To honor this commitment, we must forge strong partnerships to transition away from carbon intensive practices and embrace solutions that are not only environmentally sound, but economically viable and socially inclusive", said **Chris Pobee Abbey, Ag. Housing Director, Ministry of Works, Housing and Water Resources**.

Recognizing this, the Ministry and its partners developed the Climate Action Roadmap for Buildings and Construction in Ghana to guide the sector toward low-carbon, climate-resilient, and inclusive growth. A key intervention within the Roadmap is the development and scaling of a model building using locally available low-carbon construction materials.

"The ministry in partnership with UNOPS, UNEP and UN-Habitat launched a roadmap to decarbonize Ghana's building and construction sector by 2050. [...] This roadmap provides a clear framework for reducing our emissions, promoting sustainable materials and fostering inclusive communities. Today's event represents a critical step to operationalizing this framework", said **Hon. Ahmed Ibrahim, Minister for Works, Housing and Water Resources**.

Under the project,UNOPS supports the Ministry to achieve this objective by cataloguing locally available bio-based and low-carbon materials to support design choices, strengthen domestic value chains, and advance the Roadmap's broader decarbonization goals.

Building on the findings of the Climate Action Roadmap for Buildings and Construction and the Technical Guidelines for Material Resource Efficiency Strategies, and in collaboration with research institutions, authorities and stakeholders of the buildings value chain, UNOPS developed a compendium of locally available low-carbon materials including basic technical specifications to be used in the demonstration project and future low-carbon housing construction projects in Ghana.

"Ghana faces a 1.8 million housing deficit, presenting both a challenge and an opportunity to avoid future embodied carbon initiatives. With much of Africa's future building stock yet to be constructed, choosing low carbon materials today is essential to reducing emissions for generations to come", stated **Thomas Kankam-Adjei, National Project Coordinator of UNEP**.

UNOPS support to the project implementation also included conducting design reviews and enhancements for three affordable district housing prototype models, conducting analysis and EDGE Audit, to assist the government in achieving EDGE green building certification for the three housing unit prototypes.

The compendium and the techno-economic feasibility studies were also presented to raise awareness on the relevance of improving sustainability and including low-carbon materials into housing in Ghana, and collect feedback from experts and stakeholders within the construction industry.

"At UNOPS, we are proud to support infrastructure solutions that are sustainable, resilient, and inclusive. The work we begin today has the potential to reduce emissions, strengthen local industries, create green jobs, improve housing affordability, and provide a model for sustainable housing development across the region", said **Linda Agbesi, UNOPS Head of Office in Ghana**.

ENDS

Notes to the editors:

Press contact details:

Souhaila Merzougui, Communications Senior Officer, UNOPS West Africa Multi Country Office | souhailam@unops.org

About UNOPS

UNOPS offers practical solutions across peace and security, humanitarian and development operations. We help the United Nations, governments and other partners to manage projects, and deliver sustainable infrastructure and procurement across the world. Read more: www.unops.org.

About UNEP

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is the United Nations' leading global authority on the environment, driving transformational change on the triple planetary crisis: the crisis of climate change, the crisis of nature, land and biodiversity loss, and the crisis of pollution and waste.
https://www.unep.org/en