



## **SDG 11, sustainable cities and communities:**

### **From Glass to Cities – SGD Pharma’s Impact on Urban Sustainability**

Urban sustainability is one of the key challenges of modern development. Industries play a vital role in shaping the environmental and social health of cities. Companies are trying to integrate environmental responsibility into their operations in ways that support cleaner, healthier, and more resilient urban environments. One of them is SGD Pharma, which, through targeted actions such as carbon emission reduction, waste recycling, and support for public health infrastructure, demonstrates how industrial innovation can positively influence the quality of life in and around urban areas.

SGD Pharma specialises in manufacturing moulded and tubular glass packaging for pharmaceutical products. With production sites in France, Germany, China, and India, the company serves global healthcare markets while actively working to reduce its environmental footprint.

#### **SGD Pharma’s environmental initiatives and urban impact**

SGD Pharma has committed to reducing its CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 42% by 2030 and 65% by 2040. These reductions contribute to improved air quality in urban and peri-urban areas surrounding their manufacturing sites, supporting healthier living conditions for nearby communities. The company recycles 70% of its industrial waste, significantly lowering the burden on landfills. This practice supports cleaner urban environments and promotes responsible resource use, aligning with the principles of a circular economy.

By producing high-quality pharmaceutical glass packaging, SGD Pharma ensures the safe and reliable distribution of medicines. This strengthens urban healthcare systems and contributes to public health, especially in densely populated areas where access to safe medical products is critical.

In Zhanjiang, China, SGD Pharma collaborates with the local government and universities to protect coastal ecosystems, including by planting 10,000 mangrove trees. This initiative enhances urban resilience to climate change and fosters meaningful community engagement in environmental stewardship.



All the above-mentioned initiatives and actions demonstrate that, although some of SGD Pharma's plants are located in dense urban centres and others in suburban or semi-urban areas (such as Sucy-en-Brie near Paris and Zhanjiang in China), each of them has a direct and measurable impact on the surrounding cities and communities.

### **Challenges Faced by SGD Pharma in Urban Sustainability**

Despite its achievements, SGD Pharma has faced several challenges on its journey towards urban sustainability. One of the most pressing issues has been the environmental impact of glass production, which requires high-temperature furnaces and results in significant energy consumption and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

Another challenge lies in engaging local communities in sustainability initiatives. While the mangrove reforestation project in Zhanjiang was a success, SGD Pharma encountered difficulties in building trust and ensuring long-term community involvement.

Operating in multiple countries also presents regulatory challenges. SGD Pharma must comply with diverse environmental and labour standards, which vary significantly between the EU, China, and India.

Internally, the company has worked to improve employee well-being and workplace safety.

### **Questions**

1. How can SGD Pharma and similar manufacturers reduce energy consumption and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in glass production without compromising product quality or operational efficiency?
2. What strategies can SGD Pharma implement to build long-term trust and active participation from local communities in environmental initiatives like mangrove reforestation?
3. How should multinational companies like SGD Pharma adapt their sustainability strategies to comply with varying environmental and labour regulations across different countries while maintaining consistency in impact?
4. To what extent should companies like SGD Pharma take responsibility for urban sustainability, and where should the role of local governments begin?



5. What metrics or evaluation tools could SGD Pharma use to measure its broader impact on urban sustainability, beyond emissions and waste – such as public health, ecosystem resilience, or social equity?
6. How can industrial design and site planning be improved to minimise the negative health impacts on urban populations living near manufacturing facilities?

### List of references

- Glass International, 2025. *SGD Pharma publishes sustainability report*, <<https://www.glass-international.com/news/sgd-pharma-publishes-sustainability-report>>.
- GlassOnline, 2023. *SGD Pharma is committed to fight global warming*, <<https://www.glassonline.com/sgd-pharma-is-committed-to-fight-global-warming/>>.
- Packaging News, 2024. *SGD Pharma sustainability report shows 70% of waste recycled*, <<https://www.packagingnews.co.uk/news/markets/pharmaceutical-medical/sgd-pharma-sustainability-report-shows-70-of-waste-recycled-17-06-2024>>.
- Pharma Industry Awards, 2025. *SGD Pharma's waste management sets new standard amidst tighter EU rules*, <<https://www.pharmaawards.ie/news/sgd-pharmas-waste-management-sets-new-standard-amidst-tighter-eu-rules>>.
- SGD Pharma China, 2023. *Health, safety, environment and energy policy*, <<https://sgd-pharma.cn/sites/default/files/SGD%20Pharma%20Policy%20SSEE%20EN.pdf>>.
- SGD Pharma North America, 2025. *SGD Pharma's Zhanjiang plant reaches 8 million hours without lost-time accident*, <[https://www.linkedin.com/posts/sgd-na\\_sgdpharma-zeroaccident-safetyfirst-activity-7254771031096049665-VJP0](https://www.linkedin.com/posts/sgd-na_sgdpharma-zeroaccident-safetyfirst-activity-7254771031096049665-VJP0)>.
- SGD Pharma, 2023. *SGD Pharma's commitment to fighting global warming and biodiversity conservation*. <<https://www.sgd-pharma.com/company-news/sgd-pharmas-commitment-fighting-global-warming-and-biodiversity-conservation-journey>>.
- SGD Pharma, 2024. *Sustainability report 2024*, <[https://www.sgd-pharma.com/sites/default/files/mediacenter-file/CSR%20report%202024\\_press%20release.pdf](https://www.sgd-pharma.com/sites/default/files/mediacenter-file/CSR%20report%202024_press%20release.pdf)>.

Author: Teona Maisuradze  
t.maisuradze1@seu.edu.ge