



Collaborations and synergies for sustaining the implementation of SWITCH-Asia Programme for a more impactful #WeSwitch focused on:

TEXTILE AND GARMENTS SUSTAINABILITY TOWARDS GREEN RECOVERY



24 February 2021 • 1500-1700 (Bangkok Time) • WEBEX

WELCOME REMARKS

Ms. Alessandra Lepore from the European Commission Directorate-General for International Partnerships acknowledge partners and welcomed the participants in the meeting. She stated that the meeting is the first of a series of thematic consultative meetings of the SWITCH-Asia Programme's activities in 2021-2022. She reiterated the meeting's objective which is to strengthen cooperation and partnership to scale up activities on textile and garments and to ensure the exchange

of experiences to create a larger impact in the region. She highlighted **EU's support on implementing garment and textiles** relevant projects in Cambodia, India, Mongolia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan through the EU SWITCH-Asia Programme and **EU's commitment to work hand-in-hand with partner countries and organisations** to increase uptake of sustainable consumption and production (SCP) in the textiles and garment sector.

EU POLICIES IN THE TEXTILES SECTOR

Mr. Christos Kyriatzis from DG for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (DG GROW) at the European Commission highlighted the **importance of the sector**, which employs more than 1.5 million people in Europe in more than 160,000 companies, most of which are SMEs with an annual turnover in 2019 of over 160 billion Euros. He also mentioned the **environmental effects due to high consumption of textile** leading to an increase in waste disposal (fast-fashion phenomenon) with 11 kg of textile discarded per person per year. **Textile consumption is the fourth highest pressure category** in the EU in terms of the used of primary raw materials and water (after

food, housing, and transport), and the fifth for greenhouse gas emissions. He highlighted the **impacts of COVID crisis** on the sector such as disrupted supply, dropping in consumers' demand, international trade of recycled and secondhand products, and disrupted waste streams. He mentioned the upcoming **EU Strategy for Sustainable Textiles**, which is a comprehensive framework aiming to boost competitiveness, sustainability, and resilience of the textile sector that will ensure coherence and complementarity with initiatives under the European Green Deal, the Circular Economy Action Plan, or the Chemical Strategies for Sustainability. It will explore how to

reinforce human rights protection, the environmental duty of care, and due diligence across value chains, including improving traceability and transparency. He concluded emphasising the

importance of platforms such as the SWITCH-Asia Programme for networks and partnerships between Europe and Asia for the implementation of textile strategies for sustainable products.

PRESENTATION ON TRENDS AND CHALLENGES IN THE TEXTILE AND GARMENT SECTOR

Mr. Luca Coscieme, Research Program Manager from Hot and Cool Institute mentioned the need to **address the increase of reduction of garments' use-time**, giving an example in China having an increase by 70%. On trends regarding consumption of textile and garments in Europe, he gave an example in the UK that the business **on secondhand garments and renting is growing** because people are willing to buy more secondhand clothes. He also highlighted reports stating that because of the COVID crisis, people are ready to make **changes in lifestyle and consumption** due to climate change and biodiversity lost. There was discussion on the **ASEF policy brief on textile sustainability**,

which was disseminated to Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) contact points.

Ms. Grazyna Pulawska from the Asia Europe Foundation (ASEF) mentioned that the ASEM summit has been postponed to November 2021. At the beginning of March, there will be an ASEM coordinators meeting. Another workshop is in preparation with the EU focusing on green recovery, including the greening supply chain. She mentioned that the **Sustainable Development Transformation Forum** was also held in 22 - 26 February 2021.

SHARING OF EXPERIENCES FROM NATIONAL SUPPORT

H.E. Lina Ngin, Deputy-Secretary General, Ministry of Environment (MoE) Cambodia presented on the **SWITCH-Asia's support to Cambodia** in the formulation of their SCP National Roadmap and in the delivery of activities to strengthen policy, capacity and awareness on managing and reducing waste in the textile and garment sector. The **SCP National Roadmap** aims to strengthen national policy frameworks related to SCP focusing on identified priority policies and actions, such as enhancing pollution control, upgrading technology in factories, and introducing policy support towards resource efficiency. Ms. Caixia Mao representing Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES) working with the experts under SWITCH-Asia SCP Facility (SCPF) continued the presentation on the status of the project on **enhancing SCP in the Garment Industry by addressing current challenges on waste management**. Policy review and interviews with stakeholders are currently ongoing including conduct of quantitative data analysis on resource efficiency and waste management.

Ms. Loraine Gatabayan from SWITCH-Asia SCP Facility who moderated the meeting highlighted that the national support is a joint partnership between the SWITCH-Asia SCPF and the Regional Policy Advocacy Component (RPAC), and in collaboration with the SWITCH-Garment Grant Project in Cambodia. The SCP Facility is also coordinating with Garments Manufacturing Association in Cambodia (GMAC) and FABRIC Asia on data gathering and assessment review.

Mr. Dovrugbek Inogamdjano from the Uzbekistan Textile and Garment Industry Association presented an overview on the **textile and garment sector in Uzbekistan** highlighting the **efforts towards resource efficiency and implementation** of International Standards and Certifications. Ms. Gatabayan mentioned that SWITCH-Asia country support to Uzbekistan is being prepared to develop **guidelines on greening the textile products supply-chain** and enhancing the production and consumption of added value products.

SHARING OF EXPERIENCES FROM GRANT PROJECTS



Mr. Tatheer Zaidi from Solidaridad Regional Expertise Centre presented an overview of the SWITCH-Asia Project, **"Effective waste management and sustainable development of the MSME tanning companies in the Kolkata Leather Cluster."** He highlighted the project's activities to **promote sustainable production practices in the tanning sector** such as cost-effective green tanning technologies, solid waste management solutions, and through partnerships on the transfer of green technology and practices.



Mr. Bradley Abbott from Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI) Cambodia provided an overview on the SWITCH-Asia Project, **"Promotion of sustainable energy practices in the garment sector in Cambodia (Switch Garment Cambodia)"** and introduced how the project is aims to achieve scaling investment in sustainable energy investments and practices to improve the sector's competitiveness. He highlighted the **importance of the industry actors** in supporting the Switch Garment Project and acknowledged the active involvement of the GMAC. He also stressed the **importance of government to take a strong lead role** in collaboration amongst development partners through SWITCH-Asia Programme to reduce overlap, effort duplication, and synergy.



Ms. Sarangoo Ukhnaa from Agronomes et Veterinaires Sans Frontieres, France presented an overview of the SWITCH-Asia Project, **"STeP EcoLab: Sustainable Textile Production and Eco-Labeling in Mongolia."** She mentioned the project's key activities to develop sustainable wool and cashmere value-chain, such as consolidating sustainable and certified raw material sourcing options and implementing sustainable practices in the Mongolian Textile Factories. She mentioned **key challenges and further actions** to be addressed such as need for policy support to develop sectorial target indicator for energy efficiency and water efficiency, technical support for uptake of green textile technologies, and capacity building particularly to set up national sustainable textile auditors.



Ms. Alina Ulmer from adelphi consult GmbH presented an overview of the SWITCH-Asia project, *“RUTSIS: Reviving Uzbekistan and Tajikistan’s sustainable Ikat and Silk Tajikistan, Uzbekistan.”* She highlighted the importance of policy dialogue on sustainable production issues and local and cross-regional relationships for building new supply chains and the need for capacity building on sustainable product development, policy support such as on product labelling criteria, and building awareness among local and international buyers. She mentioned **possible synergies with SWITCH-Asia grants projects on textiles and garments in Central Asia** through information exchange platforms, to share information on SCP tools and circular economy approach applied in projects and on lessons learned for better achievements in cross border activities and partnership development. With STeP Eco-Lab, possible synergies can be consolidating sustainable and certified raw material sourcing options to meet market expectations and developing a conducive environment for textile processing SMEs to switch to sustainable production practices.



Dr. Jürgen Hannak from adelphi consult GmbH provided information on **FABRIC Asia**, which is a regional initiative that is **promoting sustainability in the textile and garment industry in Asia**. He mentioned the importance of taking into account regional learning experiences and distributing knowledge about sustainable business practices across the region. FABRIC Asia’s activities include exchange on efficient environmental governance and environmental regulations, introduction of circular economy (CE) concepts, integration of certification and assessment approaches & tools, building regional competences at factory and business intermediary level, and embedding of environmental and CE topics in curricula of local educational institutions.

KEY ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS DISCUSSED BASED ON THE PRESENTATIONS AND THE ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

1. Comparative strategies/policies in the textile sector of each country were discussed.
2. SCPF and RPAC could encourage governments to take strong leadership collaboration roles between development partners and industries.
3. GMAC expressed gratefulness to SWITCH-Asia, supporting Cambodia’s textile sector through the implementation of the SWITCH Garment project.
4. Reports on the impact of COVID crisis in garment sector can be shared and possible collaboration can be explored.
5. Establish cross-border collaboration and partnerships through SWITCH-Asia.
6. Provide a database of international donors working on textiles and garments sector in Central Asia.
7. Improve communication to promote activities of projects in the sector.
8. Recommendation for continuous dialogue platforms such as this meeting to share experiences on project implementation, guidelines and policy instruments used and to link with other projects, national programs, and potential partners to form synergies and partnerships.
9. Information sharing platform among textile projects to exchange green technologies such as wastewater treatment system, energy efficiency, etc.
10. SWITCH-Asia can also provide platform for interface with international brands on sustainability.
11. Cross-border events between Uzbekistan and Tajikistan are planned twice a year such as business-to-business initiatives, consultation meetings between business and government, and policy roundtable between the two countries on sustainability certification and laws.
12. RUTSIS is searching for partners in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan and connecting them to identify possible collaboration.
13. RUTSIS project and STeP EcoLab stated their interest to collaborate and share information to learn from each other.
14. India (Tanning project) is exploring an opportunity to scale up the implementation of the project to the whole country and other countries in Asia and Africa such as Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Ethiopia.

CLOSING REMARKS

Mr. Arab Hoballah reiterated how EU is giving importance on SCP in the textile sector because of increasing demand from consumers and growing awareness calling for sustainability. Platforms for partnership are created in the EU through the SWITCH-Asia Programme and in EU supported programs. Though challenges remain despite these efforts and current trends increasing production and consumption, the projects and programs presented in the meeting showed clear examples on product innovations and finding solutions towards resource efficiency and sustainability. There is much opportunity to learn from each other on how to improve water and energy efficiency and how to make the sector better managed. He highlighted that partnership is essential and reiterated the important role

of governments in leading the right framework and the role of the business sector in pursuing more environmentally friendly practices in the long-term.

SWITCH-Asia will take into account recommendations provided such as the need for synergy, cross-border partnerships, and multi-stakeholder partnerships to share knowledge and technologies, and the need to have a database in the Central Asia in priority sector, among others. SWITCH-Asia will create more opportunities for sharing information and experiences in the sector. Next step is to plan for a larger dialogue platform in the next 6-7 months to share good practices and to mutually support initiatives to better deliver sustainability through SCP.