



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**

CONTEXT

The textile and garment industry has contributed significantly towards the global economy as it is valued over USD 1.7 trillion and employs more than 300 million people. Despite its economic benefits, the industry is far from being sustainable. Countries are faced with the challenge on addressing the socio-economic, health, and environmental impacts across the garments sector value chain due to increasing irresponsible and unsustainable consumption and production.

The EU's textiles industry is the fourth largest cause of environmental pressures after food, housing, and transport.¹ Much of this impact is attributed to a large portion of the textiles consumed in Europe, which are produced elsewhere in the world, mostly in Asia. Production of garments takes place, to a large extent, in Asia – accounting for over 50% of the world's supply of fibres and fabrics - while much of consumption takes place in Europe and the US, with an increasing share of the middle class in other regions of the world. In recent years, the shares of clothing exports have been growing exponentially in countries such as Cambodia, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Vietnam and India,

while decreasing in China. This geographic distribution implies that environmental impacts typical of the initial stages of fibre productions and garments manufacturing, such as water and energy use, are largely generated in Asia. On the other hand, impacts related to the use and disposal of garments are largely generated in Europe or exported.

To achieve sustainable consumption and production (SCP) of textile and garments along its value chain, partnerships between Asia and Europe have to be strengthened where the former is where production and manufacturing are concentrated; while the latter is the largest consumers of textile in the world, controlling designing and branding. Asian countries must endure all the externalities linked to production, depleting their natural resources, and polluting the environment. Overproduction and the phenomenon of fast fashion are exacerbating the environmental impacts of this sector that is responsible for about 10% of global CO₂ emissions. Europe plays an important role to support the Asia's garment industry to shift towards SCP and a more responsible and circular economy approach.

¹ See link: <https://www.eea.europa.eu/highlights/private-consumption-textiles-eus-fourth-1>

NATIONAL SUPPORT TO COUNTRIES

There is a need to shift towards a circular textile and garments production and consumption system and partnerships play a key role to build a more resilient garment supply chains in Asia and Europe.

The EU SWITCH-Asia Programme provides the platform for partnerships and networks in between Europe and Asia for

the implementation of national strategies and action plans and implementation of SCP practices. With the assistance of the European Commission, Asian countries are supported to transition towards a low-carbon, resource-efficient and a more circular economy while contributing to poverty reduction through national support provided by the SCP Facility and the Regional Policy Advocacy Component and through the Grants Programme.

SWITCH-Asia is currently providing national support to the following countries focused on textile and garments:

SCOPE	OBJECTIVES
Formulation of the Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) National Roadmap and delivery of demonstration project focused on SCP and Circular Economy in the textile/garment sector – Cambodia (June 2020 – June 2021)	To support delivery of demonstration project by providing policy support, strengthening capacity, and increasing awareness on waste re-purpose, waste handling and disposal, resource efficiency, eco-innovation and eco-design in the textile/garment sector.
SCP tools and Circular economy approach in textile sector - Uzbekistan	To prepare guidelines on greening the textile products supply chain and enhancing the production and consumption of added value products.

The following ongoing **SWITCH-Asia Grant Projects** aim to achieve the following objectives focused on textile and garments:

CURRENT GRANT PROJECTS	OBJECTIVES
Effective waste management and sustainable development of the MSME tanning companies in the Kolkata Leather Cluster <i>India, 2020-2023</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reduction of the effluent and solid waste levels to reduce the environmental burden, waste management menace and improve workers' conditions; 2. Recycling or re-use of waste into useful by-products to generate additional livelihood opportunities.
Promotion of sustainable energy practices in the garment sector in Cambodia (Switch Garment) <i>Cambodia, 2020-2024</i>	To increase the investment in sustainable energy practices (such as efficient technologies, switch to renewable energy and good operations management) by garment factories in Cambodia.
STeP EcoLab: Sustainable Textile Production and Eco-Labeling <i>Mongolia, 2018-2022</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consolidating sustainable and certified raw material sourcing options meeting markets expectations; 2. Developing a conducive environment for textile processing SMEs to switch to sustainable production practices; 3. Raising customers' and consumers' awareness of Mongolian sustainable textile related initiatives.
RUTSIS: Reviving Uzbekistan and Tajikistan's sustainable Ikat and Silk <i>Tajikistan, Uzbekistan 2020-2023</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Contributing to the revival and upgrade of local silk and Ikat value chains; 2. Integration of sustainable production approaches in an ethically and environmentally friendly way; 3. Strengthening cross-cultural dialogue between Uzbek and Tajik societies; 4. Creation of new education and employment opportunities, safeguarding ancient silk and Ikat production techniques, and developing innovative sustainable design; 5. Enhancing recognition of Central Asian sustainable silk and ikat products in the international market services.

The **SWITCH-Asia study on Fashion and Apparel Sustainability** reiterated that Asia maintains its position as one of the main global manufacturing hubs of fashion and apparel products, as well as the largest consumers of these products.

The study suggested the need for a strong consumer advocacy as well as tracing the link between global and regional initiatives and continuous support to key actors in the industries such as producers across the value chain that can operationalise systemic changes in production processes, brand and retailers that can influence purchasing behaviour through value proposition and marketing, and to governments creating the right policies to enable conditions and incentives and ensuring regulations are implemented.

Moreover, sustainable production aspects vary between countries according to the focus of production segments; for example, groundwater use of industry in Bangladesh, use of water in cotton production in Pakistan, cutting waste energy in Cambodia. "Fast fashion" poses great challenges in the region, with limited awareness of SCP among the growing middle-class consumers. The "Slow Fashion" movement, on the other hand, is still at its infant stage. There are SCP policies in many countries focused on textile and garments, but those are yet to be translated into sector specific initiatives in most countries to effectively drive and transform the sector towards sustainability.

Even before the COVID-19 crisis, sustainability did not come easily for many companies in the garment sector. But to survive

this pandemic and emerge stronger, it is important to incorporate sustainability within stabilisation and new growth strategies to accelerate and build on collective efforts towards innovation across design, supply chain management, and new business models. Due to COVID impacts to the garment sector, there is a need to re-examine their value chains and search for operating models and capabilities better suited for the “New Normal”.

Companies that succeed in maintaining their sustainability programs and commitments as they manage the crisis will gain a durable business advantage once it ends and rebuild a more

INTERNAL THEMATIC MEETING

As result of the SWITCH-Asia Programme Steering Committee (PSC) Meeting held in December 2020, a series of “**Internal thematic cluster consultative and brainstorming meetings**” is now well inscribed in the programme as part of SWITCH-Asia activities 2021-mid-2022 and through joint efforts with partner countries and key organisations in the region.

Objective

For the clustered thematic issues focusing on textiles and garments, the objective of the consultation and brainstorming meeting is to strengthen cooperation and partnerships in delivering activities through the three SWITCH-Asia components, involving the Country EU Delegations (EUDs), the National Focal Points (NFPs) within Ministry of partner countries together with SWITCH-Asia implementing Ministry in case different, the Grant projects, and selected regional/international partners, to ensure cross-border exchange of experiences and larger impact.

Output

Results of the meeting can be:

- Increased collaboration between concerned partners;
- Important issues for consideration by the EU in the programming exercise;
- the preparatory step for few larger conferences, structured around the SWITCH-Asia programme related thematic achievements to better value the experiences cross-border and building partnerships.

Guideline for Discussion

1. How do we improve and consolidate synergies between the 3 Components, Grant Projects, RPAC and SCP Facility, and with other partners focusing on textile and garments?
2. How can the SWITCH-Asia programme, through its 3 Components, contribute to advancing the textile and garment sustainability in Asia?
3. How can potential synergies/partnerships be formed to mutually support and provide greater impact focused on textile and garments through SCP, in Asia?
4. What are the main challenges and opportunities for replicating and scaling-up SCP practices through the Grant Projects focusing on textile and garments, at national and regional levels?

sustainable textile and garment industry after COVID-19. The conversations, collaborations, and partnerships within SWITCH-Asia Programme and its partners have to move forward together to ensure that this important issue is raised in the forefront and addressed towards green recovery. In this regard, the SWITCH-Asia SCP Facility collaborated with Asia Europe Forum (ASEF) at their ENVforum Annual Conference 2020, contributing to [the policy brief on garments sustainability in Asia and Europe](#).

5. What are good practices to overcome challenges faced by the textile and garment industry including the COVID crisis, and what can grant projects, EU Delegations or the SCP Facility contribute?

Identification of common issues and possible areas for cross-learning and eventual cooperation:

1. The global textile sector trends, challenges, and the divide between Asia and Europe;
2. Reducing negative environmental and social impacts that characterise garments value-chains;
3. Reversing fast-fashion trends that are driving rising consumption and overproduction of garments both in Asia and in Europe

Challenges

1. Rise of fast fashion;
2. Consumer confusion on what sustainable fashion or garments is;
3. Fast fashion and sustainability being strong contradictory forces;
4. The impact of COVID-19 on the textile sector and sustainable alternatives needed to face the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Opportunities for collaboration and shared experience to guide the discussions

1. The rising interest on the sector to switch towards more sustainable and fair models is shaping up an environment
2. Positive trends on promotion of technological innovation and eco-design to switch to renewable or sustainable materials
3. Continuous support to key actors in the textile and garment industry such as producers across the value chain, brand and retailers that can influence purchasing behaviour, and to governments creating the right policies to enable conditions and incentives and ensuring regulations are implemented.

The meeting will focus on the SWITCH-Asia achievements in promoting SCP in the textile and garment sector through national support and grant projects provided to countries. The discussion will be on the role of stakeholders on how to scale up success stories from grants and support initiatives to foster innovative solutions and to address challenges that the sector is facing including the current COVID-19 pandemic.

PROGRAMME

16:00 (GMT+7)	Housekeeping & Welcome Remarks
16:05	Trends and Challenges for the Textile and Garment Sector towards Green Recovery through SCP
16:20	Sharing of Experiences from Country National Support and Grant Projects (Selected 5 speakers)
17:10	<i>Moderated Roundtable</i> Building on speakers' presentations, the discussion will develop also following participants inputs.
17:55	Event Closes

Regulations/guidelines on improving the environmental and social impact of textile production include:

- EU Green Deal
- EU Circular Economy Action Plan
- Regulation (EU) No 1007/2011 on fibre names, related labelling and marking of the fibre composition of textile products
- EU Ecolabel criteria for textile products
- EU Green Public Procurement (GPP) criteria for textile products and services
- Fashion Industry Charter for Climate Action – COP24
- The Partnership for Sustainable Textiles (Germany)
- OECD Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Supply Chains in the Garment and Footwear Sector
- Sustainable Textile of the Asian Region
- Circular Fashion - A New Textiles Economy: Redesigning fashion's future (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2017)
- European Clothing Action Plan

Proposed Attendees of the Meeting:

Project Managers of Country EU Delegations (EUDs), EU DEVCO, National Focal Points (NFPs) within Ministry of partner countries together with SWITCH-Asia implementing Ministry in case different, SCPF and its consortium members, RPAC, concerned Grant projects, and selected potential partners.

Potential Supporting Partners for future activities on textile and garments:

ASEF, EEA, Ellen MacArthur Foundation, WWF, GGGI, SEI, IGES, ILO, Sustainable Apparel Coalition, Clean Clothes Campaign



ANNEX:

The following completed SWITCH-Asia Grant Projects have also contributed to SCP in the textile and garment sector:

GRANT PROJECTS	SELECTED IMPACT ASSESSMENTS
Environmental Management Systems and eco-labelling schemes in the SMEs of the leather sector in Bangladesh (ECOLEBAN-Bangladesh)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Water use has been reduced by up to 40% in tanneries and by up to 5% in footwear SMEs through training and consultation in implementing measures to avoid wasting water; 2. Total chemical consumption was reduced by 15%; 3. Solid waste was reduced in footwear SMEs by approximately 10%.
SMART MYANMAR I (Myanmar)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 300 Myanmar garment producers improved their businesses with 35% increase in productivity; 2. 15 SMEs reduced energy consumption up to 15% and waste during a production cycle up to 20% based on current consumption level during a production cycle; 3. 260,000 workers from more than 270 factories were empowered to increase their awareness and understanding of SCP.
SUSTEX (India)	SusTex created 1,500 new jobs and leveraged green finance to a value of EUR 3,416,800.
SCI-PAK (Pakistan)	Achieved more than 35% reduction of electricity in the target sectors and thereby contributed to the reduction Greenhouse Gas emissions.
SPRING (Pakistan)	Improved resource efficiency of the cotton ginning sector, leading to an annual reduction in GHG emissions of 2,400 tonnes CO ₂ and increased access to international markets for 500 ginning SMEs.
RE-TIE BANGLADESH (Bangladesh)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Chemical and biological oxygen demand reduced by 30% 2. Water consumption reduced by 30-50% 3. Chrome content reduced by 60%
Eco-Jute (Bangladesh and India)	15% increase in income for 25,000 workers manufacturing jute-diversified products in Bangladesh and West Bengal.
Handwoven Eco-Textiles (Indonesia)	By promoting sustainable handwoven eco-textiles, an eco label for naturally dyed handwoven textiles was developed and led to a 30% increase in the artisans' income
Clean Batik Initiative (Malaysia and Indonesia)	10% reduction in production costs were achieved from switching to natural dyes thereby increasing workers' productivity and SME's competitiveness.
Sustainable Carpet and Pashmina (Nepal)	Developed a policy paper on how to integrate cleaner production into the carpet and pashmina production sectors and enabled the formation of a policy working group with ministries and producer associations.
KILOMET 109 (Vietnam)	Created a circular production chain in which waste is minimised and marginalised communities gain benefits with local artisans producing garments using natural materials and traditional production processes using organic fibres and traditional dyeing techniques.

