

Flash Report

National Action Plan on Sustainable Consumption and Production - Maldives

1st Stakeholder Consultation



Date: Wednesday 18 August 2021 | 9:30 -11:00 (GMT)+5

Venue: Online

Disclaimer

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Table of Contents

List of Acronyms:	3
Background:	4
Objectives of the event	4
Logistical information about the event	4
Review on Participants:	5
Summary of key messages:	5
Opening Statment	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Remarks	6
Panel Sessions	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Panel I:: Significance of National Action Plan on SCP and major elements of the NAP	7
Panel II: Indtroductory brief on NAP SCP and its importance in national context	8
Roundtable Discussion	8
Conclusion	12
Snapshots of the event	13
Annex:	15
Annex 1: The Final agenda	15

List of Acronyms:

CE	Circular Economy
EU	The European Union
NAP	National Action Plan
SCP	Sustainable Consumption and Production
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SWITCH-Asia RPAC	SWITCH-Asia Regional Policy Advocacy Component
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
SMEs	Small and Medium-sized Enterprises

Background:

SWITCH-Asia is the programme funded by the European Union (EU) to promote sustainable consumption and production (SCP) across the Asian Region. The SWITCH-Asia Regional Policy Advocacy Component (RPAC), implemented by United Nations Environment Programme, is designed to strengthen the dialogue at regional, sub-regional and national policies on Sustainable Consumption and Production and thereby contributing to green growth and reduction of poverty in Asian countries.

Based on the framework of the SWITCH-Asia Regional Policy Advocacy Component implemented by UNEP, and in cooperation with the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Maldives, a project entitled “Promoting SCP Mainstreaming and implementation at the National Level in the Republic of Maldives” has been initiated.

The objective of this programme is to strengthen Maldives’ national policy framework with regards to SCP through the development of a National Action Plan (NAP) on SCP. The NAP will allow the Maldives to identify priority actions to be implemented in the next few years in the country to support SCP and to monitor its progress.

Objectives of the event

The first consultation was aimed at scoping out the National Action Plan by inviting relevant ministries and industries to get stock of existing policies relevant to SCP and identify the gaps to be addressed.

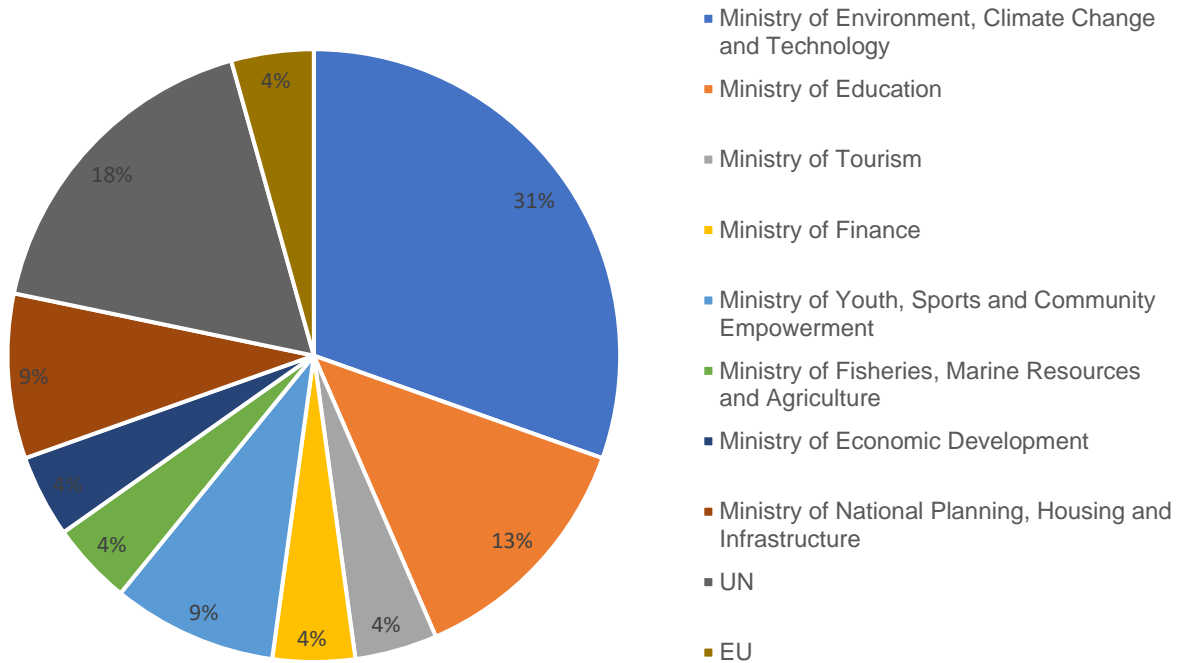
Logistical information about the event

The first stakeholder consultation for the National Action Plan on SCP was organized by SWITCH-Asia RPAC in partnership with the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Maldives on 18th August 2021 using zoom platform.

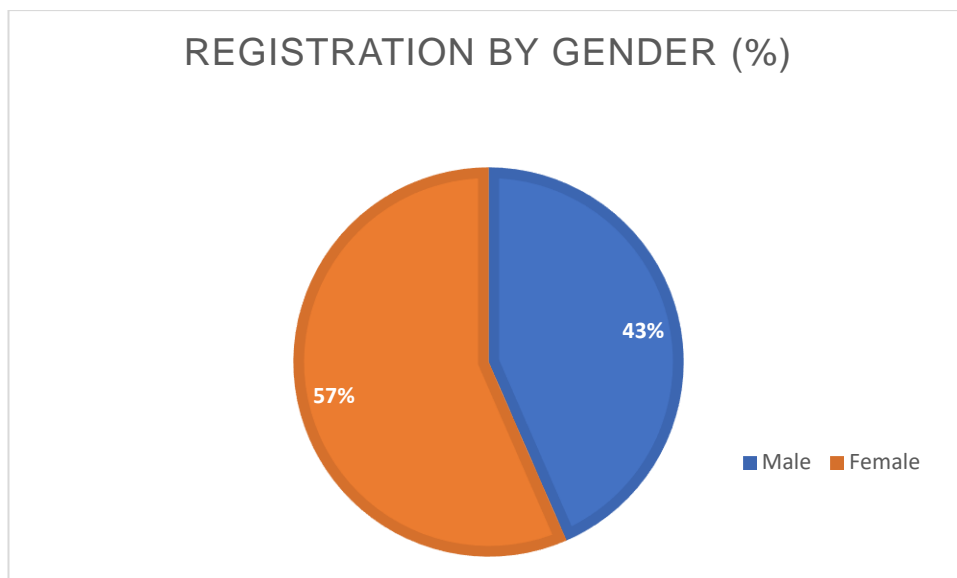
Review on Participants:

The stakeholder consultation was attended by 23 participants belonging to different government ministries (graph below). Figures below presents the distribution of participants who registered prior to the event by stakeholders.

Stakeholder Distribution (%)



REGISTRATION BY GENDER (%)



Summary of key messages:

The first stakeholder consultation for the NAP on SCP brought together representatives from different ministries to share insights on existing SCP policies, identify gaps and priority areas for SCP.

The expert panel discussed the challenges they face in incorporating SCP into their policies and plans. Lack of capacity, technical knowledge and expertise were the key challenges faced across ministries regarding SCP. Priority areas highlighted in this consultation were: sustainable buildings, agriculture and food, green schools, energy efficiency, plastic and waste management, fishery management and public awareness. Value addition, sustainable financing, technology, innovation, and policy were highlighted as important tools to achieve this. The roles of women and youth was also highlighted as a key group to mainstream SCP.

Opening statement

Ms. Aminath Shauna
Minister, Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Technology

Ms. Aminath Shauna highlighted that, efforts are required to transition towards a greener and more socially comprehensive economy by changing our consumption rate and patterns in a way that is in harmony with the biophysical capacity of the environment. She noted that as a developing country, Maldives has some challenges, especially in terms of financial resources, infrastructure and access to technology. This is precisely why formulation and implementation of a national plan on SCP is very crucial at this point, as Maldives must find ways to mainstream the principles of SCP in its policies, plans and strategies. She expressed that Maldives must also identify the gaps and areas where linkages and advantages can be made, and find ways to enhance resource efficiency, recycling, and sustainable production of resources. She affirmed that government ministries have a significant role to play in developing and enabling policy frameworks to help promote SCP in the country. In this effort, the aim should be to seek ways to strengthen the markets' ability to adopt principles of sustainable development. Rather than restricting the choices of consumers and producers, market must seek ways to foster innovation while protecting and preserving the fragile environment.

Key Remarks

Mr. Denis Chaibi
EU Ambassador to the Maldives

Mr. Denis Chaibi remarked that this workshop is timely because the Maldives will soon have the honor to preside over the UN General Assembly (UNGA) and it is a fantastic opportunity for Maldives to project their own experience with the impact of climate change to the world. He encouraged the Maldives to have strong communication on their initiatives because of their unique legitimacy to speak about climate change. He stated that the EU is very happy to work with the Maldives because of their unrivaled legitimacy in the fight against climate change. Giving a few examples, he stated that if there are more solar panels, there is far less risk of

oil spills within Maldives, if there are fewer plastic bottles, there is far less time spent cleaning up the beach. He elaborated that EU is addressing the issue from different angles by supporting actions such as through SWITCH-Asia and other programs on marine litter, single use plastics and so on. He noted that the European experience has shown that to develop any approach one must be inclusive taking views of industry, consumers, retailers by giving them a horizon of choices and economic incentives. He highlighted that Europe has experiences to share and simultaneously wants to learn mitigation and adaptation from Maldives since it is an urgent challenge for the country.

Panel Sessions:

Significance of National Action Plan on SCP and major elements of the NAP

Dr. Mushtaq Ahmed Memon

Regional Coordinator Resource Efficiency UNEP Asia Pacific Office, SWITCH-Asia RPAC Project Manager

Dr. Mushtaq Memon thanked the EU for their support in mainstreaming sustainable consumption and production in Asia through SWITCH-Asia. He referred the latest report by UN ESCAP which shows that SDGs implementation in Asia Pacific is not on track amidst a lot of challenges. He mentioned that SDG 12 on Responsible Consumption and Production is a cross cutting goal, directly or indirectly related to all other goals, whether it is poverty, gender issues or environmental rights. He also talked about the new green policies like the EU Green Deal, Korea's neutrality targets, Japan's carbon neutrality targets, China's current neutrality targets and so on to give perspectives on global development in this domain. The EU Green Deal looks to restore biodiversity, cut pollution, and boost efficient use of resources by moving to a circular economy. The RPAC aims to support Maldives through developing a framework of action plan on mainstreaming SCP in the country. Lastly, there are a lot of COVID-19 stimulus packages that have incorporated green recovery to address the three planetary crises: climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. He elaborated that given the current circumstances, this is another way to look at how SCP can support green recovery and vice versa. For SCP, legislative action, budgetary action and oversight are required from the policymakers. He stressed that the discussion should look at developing an inclusive SCP Action Plan, which focuses on gender mainstreaming and participation, environmental rights by leaving no one behind and sustainable development through social, economic and environmental integration in all the sectors across the full value chain.

Introductory brief on NAP SCP & its importance in National Context - Announcement of this cooperation and the institutional arrangement on SCP in Maldives

Mr. Ahmed Wisam

Senior International Relations Officer, Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Technology

Mr. Ahmed Wisam informed the participants that the consultation served two main purposes: 1) To kick off the formulation of the NAP and 2) as a scoping exercise. The aim of the

consultation was to review the main needs, issues, and challenges in relation to SCP, get a deeper understanding of SCP in a local context, catalogue existing SCP related policies/activities that are carried out by other ministries and to identify the priority areas for this action plan. He elaborated that they plan on establishing a clear governance structure or a system that defines the roles and responsibilities and that the participants of this consultation serve as the members of an intermediate stereo Coordination Group, who will oversee the development of this action plan and monitor its implementation. Setting the priorities overseeing the scoping study, the development of this plan, and its launch will be undertaken in consultation with this group or with the relevant ministries. He detailed that for the priority areas, the NAP will include specific objectives, targets indicators that will help monitor the progress towards implementation of this policy and there will be at least three stakeholder consultations throughout this process during which the Terms of Reference for the coordination mechanism and the scope of the NAP will be finalized.

Roundtable Discussion

Guiding Questions:

1. **Current Status of SCP Policy in Maldives**
2. **Information on previous and ongoing projects and actions on SCP in Maldives**
3. **Discussion on scope of the NAP including key sectors**
4. **Priorities for SCP roadmap**

Mr. Ismail Ajmal

Senior Environment Analyst, Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Technology (Waste Department)

Mr. Ismail Ajmal detailed that the hazard management policy exists at present and for single-use plastics and waste in general. He noted that there still exists the need for more policies and the infrastructure to manage waste. He highlighted that for circularity, Maldives would be a special case when compared to other countries as it needs a tailor-made circular economy model, because their industries are not as diverse.

Ms. Fatimath Nashwa

Chemicals Management Officer, Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Technology (Environment Department)

Ms. Fatimath Nashwa responded that the Ministry of Environment has undertaken a project to design the air quality monitoring programme for the greater Malé region which includes determining the number and location of sensing sites and selecting appropriate instruments. The ministry is also in process of procuring local air quality monitoring centers, which would be stationed in different locations all around Maldives. This is an initiative to monitor the air quality on a regional aspect, which will hopefully allow the individuals to become more familiar with specific air quality issues affecting our communities.

On the vehicle emission standards, she elaborated that under the Strategic Action Plan, they are currently developing national standards on vehicle and vessel emissions, as well as fuel quality. For this, an initial assessment study has been conducted. The preliminary report produced the gaps in the current emission standards and the next steps to ensure a comprehensive revision of the current vehicle emission standards have also been identified. She also highlighted that under the activity, they are currently working to train enforcement officers and garages on vehicle emission testing and calibration.

Ms. Aminath Lubna**Assistant Director, Ministry of Fisheries, Marine Resources and Agriculture**

Ms. Aminath Lubna mentioned that the main policy of the Ministry of Fisheries is to develop fisheries sustainably through Fisheries Act enacted recently in 2019. Under this Act, they have developed and are implementing eight fishery management plans for all commercially practicing fisheries in the Maldives. All these plans are aimed at sustainably developing fisheries and conserving the marine ecosystems. She elaborated that in terms of food waste reduction, there exist several policies including establishment of ice plants in key fishing areas, providing loan schemes to establish refrigerated sea water systems and programmes on training aimed at onboard fish handling. In the past they have undertaken research to maintain Yellowfin fish quality and have experimented with modification of bait house aimed at reducing live bait fish losses. Regarding key policy areas, she highlighted that the ministry currently faces limitations with staff and technical knowledge; fishery management requires robust scientific evidence and research to back fishery management plans and they possess limited capacity at their research facility, the MMRI.

Ms. Aishath Samahaa Musthafa**Economic Development Officer, Ministry of Economic Development**

Ms. Aishath Samahaa noted that plastics and plastic products are a big risk. For this, including non-biodegradable plastic bags, the duties increased up to 400%. While for single use plastic, such as film sheets, bowls, plastic plates, and cutlery is up to 200%. Further, duties have been eliminated for goods such as solar panels and generators, which is also to increase the pace of adoption and encourage the use of sustainable business practices. For priority areas of SCP action plan, she highlighted food items, consumables, cosmetics, and environmentally friendly products.

She also detailed that it is very important to create awareness and enabling legislations related to integrating SCP into investments. She detailed that policymakers and government can focus on engagement with civil societies, private sector, and NGOs for the issue of plastics, infrastructural development, and sustainable responsible investments in the future.

Ms. Mariyam Zoon**Consultant, Ministry of Youth, Sports and Community Empowerment**

Ms. Mariyam Zoon mentioned that relating to SCP, they have a very indirect role. Their main responsibilities include engaging and empowering youth and creating awareness about the environment. They introduce opportunities to increase youth engagement in greening initiatives. She elaborated that they conduct public awareness programmes through civil society organizations and have very recently dispersed grants to NGOs, to conduct different community level programs on the environment. She also highlighted that the Ministry lacks capacity when it comes to programmatically engaging with civil society organizations. Further, there also exists the need to increase the capacity of the civil society organizations to empower the communities.

Ms. Fathimath Shaufa**Director, Ministry of National Planning, Housing and Infrastructure**

Ms. Fathimath Shaufa informed that they have enacted the Construction Act in 2017, developed 13 regulations and started implementation after March 2019. She mentioned that the construction sector is one of the sectors whose Sustainable transition is not easy. As yet,

the Ministry has not carried out any activities or studies in how they can make the construction practices more sustainable. She highlighted that it is their aim to focus on areas such as sustainable buildings, increasing the durability of the buildings itself, increasing the maintenance and reducing waste through practices that utilize the construction material wasted for other purposes. She also detailed that they do have some regulations on material control in place, one regulation controls the import of materials. Currently, it is only focusing on the structural elements in the building, namely cement aggregate for concrete, sand for concrete, structural steel and ready-mix concrete and readymade blocks. She indicated the possibility to venture into sustainable production of materials that are developed in the Maldives which could be one area of focus.

She further stated that currently they do not have any certification for environmentally friendly buildings, but the Minister of Environment has carried out the development of a guideline for energy efficient buildings. In this guideline, there is some mention of interior environment and material, however it mostly involves the exterior facades control. They are working with the Ministry of Environment to develop the building code compliance documents relevant to the energy efficiency guideline to convert it into energy efficiency building code. She elaborated that the main issue they face while promoting green building design is that if it is not mandatory, it is typically not utilized in the sector. She highlighted that to develop sustainable construction, focus can be on making sustainable materials more available along with financing and increasing the awareness.

Ms. Fathimath Shanna
Director, Maldives Land Survey Authority

Ms. Fathimath Shanna mentioned that they have planned training programs for all municipalities, Island councils on how to implement the relevant plans. In promoting sustainability in the land use planning and zoning currently, they are following the land use planning guidelines that is under the Land Law which was last revised in 2008. So currently, they are in the process of revising the existing guidelines and talking about ways to incorporate sustainability into the land use planning guidelines. She detailed that they are following provision of enough open spaces, green areas, and neighborhood parks and natural drainage for reclaimed islands.

Mr. Mohamed Sinan,
Senior Environment Officer, Ministry of Tourism

Regarding the tourism sector for SCP, Mr. Sinan highlighted that there exist quite a few challenges like waste management, coastal erosion, because every year they expect around 1.2 million tourists. So, they are also producing huge amounts of waste in resorts and local guesthouses which is a major challenge because they do not have a proper waste management facility at the national level; Every resort is entitled to a bottle crusher, an incinerator and a compact waste management facility with a sorting area and there exist environmental guidelines and regulations implemented by Ministry of Environment and ETA that all resorts are supposed to follow these guidelines. Waste is a huge challenge because in these small islands even if there exists a proper service facility, it is not sufficient to fully manage the total waste generated from these sites. He also highlighted that recently coastal erosion has become very imminent in Maldives and to tackle this there is a trend of installation of breakwaters and precautionary measures to fight this sea level rise and coastal erosion.

He informed that they have development guideline, environmental guideline and every island is supposed to follow these. He also highlighted that monitoring is important in the tourism sector as they lack proper personnel and capacity in this Ministry, which are major challenges.

Ms. Sharuma Naseer

Deputy Minister, Ministry of Education

Ms. Sharuma Naseer remarked that any plan they prepare for the national curriculum supporting SCP will successfully reach every household level. In the curriculum, they have focused areas for these including extra-curricular activities. She concluded that therefore environment related concepts are inculcated and incorporated in students' learnings inside and out of the classroom, during their extra activities.

Mr. Ahmed Rafiu

National Institute of Education

Mr. Rafiu highlighted that the entire national curriculum is closely related to SCP. Starting with their four shared values, one which is values related to the environment, which highlights the importance given to SCP. Further, for key competencies or skills, one of them is using sustainable practices. He noted that these values and key competencies are cross cutting, which means these will be taught in all subjects and will be included in all activities within schools. Further, one of the key learning areas is environment, science, and technology, thus environment is part of the key learning areas. Further, he detailed that in the subjects, they have General Science in the national curriculum from Grade 1-8, which has two strands, chemistry, and biology. The biology strand is related to one perspective on biodiversity, the role of organisms, impact on the environment and measures to protect the environment and the other strand is chemistry is about understanding the natural environment and human impact and conserving this. Thus, they have two major strands within science which are related to SCP and the other side is SCP within social studies. Schools also have their own initiatives, such as environment clubs.

He stressed that school curriculum and school teaching learning will reach the whole country from every household to the whole community, and it will have a greater impact in the future. He detailed that they have also worked with different NGOs, received assistance from different funding agencies like UNICEF, have also prepared teaching and learning materials on SCP. He highlighted that there a lack of trained teachers which is a major challenge because although some of the materials are very good, what is most important is how the subject is taught. Teaching must be skill-based, inquiry-based and problem-based, which cannot be taught online. He highlighted the need for resources to train teachers, to make environmental studies more effective.

He also elaborated that they have a new initiative on green schools and developed a project framework with four pillars: ocean, land, waste management and innovation. He detailed that their aim is to reduce carbon footprint and promote eco literacy. In this project, schools will be categorized based on the level of implementation and accordingly awarded as gold school, silver school and bronze schools. Further, they are going to map the existing curriculum in partnership with National University so that teachers can identify related content in different subjects.

Conclusion and next steps

Mr. Ahmed Wisam

Senior International Relations Officer, Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Technology

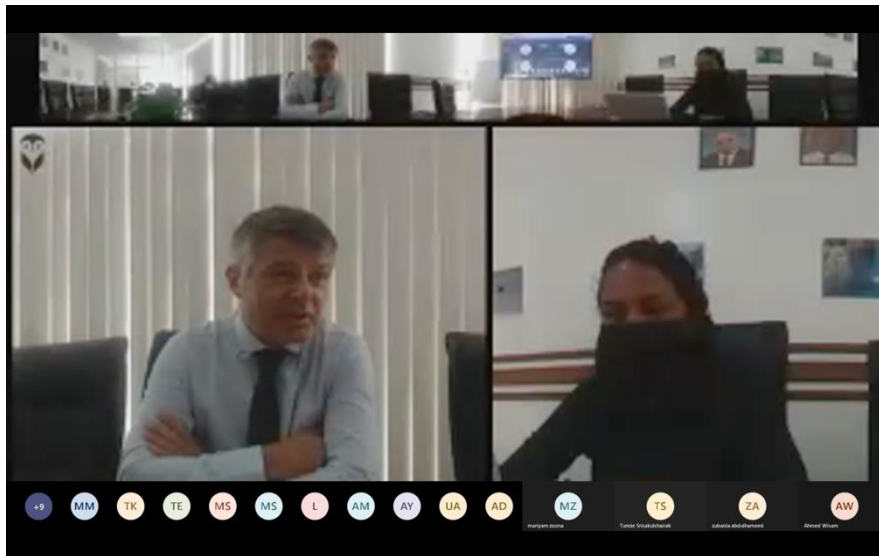
Mr. Ahmed Wasim concluded the discussion by thanking the participants for all the inputs. He informed the participants that all the points highlighted from various ministries will be included in the draft, which is a scoping study that will tell where Maldives stands and what the priority areas are, in terms of SCP. This will be shared with the group.

Ms. Tunnie Srisakulchairak

Programme Management Officer, United Nations Environment Programme SWITCH-ASIA RPAC

Ms. Tunnie noted that the consultation was very useful and informative. She shared the actions of other countries that SWITCH-Asia RPAC is supporting. They first start with the initial and very potential sectors, that SCP could be mainstreamed based on either national development plan or an exercise to identify potential sectors. And then with these sectors, they see what the relevant policies are, which are existing, have been used and mainstream SCP into those sectors. Through this method, the scoping study is compact and relevant to all the sectors.

Snapshots of the event





Annex:

Annex 1: The Final agenda

Time (GMT +5)	Programme	Facilitated by
09:30 - 09:37	Opening statement Minister of Environment, Climate Change and Technology	H. E. Ms. Aiminath Shauna
09:37 - 09:45	Remarks EU Ambassador to the Maldives	H.E. Mr. Denis Chaibi
09:45 – 09:55	Significance of national action plan on SCP and major elements of the national action plan	Dr. Mushtaq Ahmed Memon Regional Coordinator Resource Efficiency UNEP Asia Pacific Office, SWITCH-Asia RPAC Project Manager
09:55 – 10:05	Introductory brief on NAP SCP & its importance in National Context Announcement of this cooperation and the institutional arrangement on SCP in Maldives	Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Technology
10:05 – 10:50	Roundtable Discussion Moderated by MoECCT <i>Guiding Questions:</i> 1. Current Status of SCP Policy in Maldives 2. Information on previous and ongoing projects and actions on SCP in Maldives 3. Discussion on scope of the NAP including key sectors 4. Priorities for SCP roadmap	All Ministries
10:50 – 11:00	Summary of the discussion & next steps Closing	Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Technology

For more information

SWITCH-Asia event page

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