



ASEAN Circular Economy
Stakeholder Platform


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The Circular Economy: ASEAN Perspectives and Insights on Policy, Practice and Way Forward in the Region

Proceedings of the ASEAN Circular Economy Stakeholder
Platform Webinar Series

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Acknowledgements

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1. Introduction

1.1 The ASEAN Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform Webinar Series

The ASEAN Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform Webinar Series is a collaborative effort between the ASEAN Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform and the SWITCH-Asia Policy Support Component, organised as part of a [technical assistance programme](#). Initiated in November 2023 and concluded in August 2024, the series aimed to promote a dialogue and knowledge exchange on the adoption of Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) policies and practices that advance the Circular Economy (CE) among stakeholders in ASEAN. Through these webinars, relevant concepts were translated into practical realities for ASEAN stakeholders, helping them define their roles as contributors to the implementation of SCP and CE at both national and regional levels. The series addressed six thematic priorities, each exploring different aspects of CE and their alignment with ASEAN's regional framework: circular economy for business, green public procurement, the role of tourism in advancing food sustainability in ASEAN through circular practices, circular fashion, just transition to an inclusive circular economy, and localising the circular economy within ASEAN values.

The proceedings of the ASEAN Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform webinar series synthesise and elaborate on the key insights shared by experts and practitioners during these webinars, with a focus on the policies, practices, and progress made in advancing the Circular Economy (CE) within the ASEAN region. Recommendations for government, private sector, civil society, and consumers are also provided to inform future dialogues and exchanges with these stakeholders.

1.2 Overview of Partners

ASEAN Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform



The [ASEAN Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform](#) (ACESP), inaugurated in 2022 by the EU and ASEAN, operates as a regional hub supporting the transition towards CE to promote SCP among ASEAN member states. It is part of the EU-ASEAN Partnership on Circular Economy, endorsed in 2018, and receives support from the Enhanced EU-ASEAN Dialogue Instrument (E- READI). Hosted by the ASEAN Centre for Sustainable Development Studies and Dialogue (ACSDSD), ACESP's main objectives include accelerating the ASEAN region's circular economy efforts through various platforms and initiatives and supporting these transitions by sharing policies, commitments, best practices, and success stories.

SWITCH-Asia Policy Support Component



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The [SWITCH-Asia Policy Support Component](#) (PSC) works under the SWITCH-Asia Programme, funded by the European Union (EU), which was active since 2007 in seeking to promote SCP in Asia, the Middle-East and the Pacific to transition countries to a low-carbon, resource-efficient and CE as part of SDG 12 and the Paris Agreement. The PSC works in 42 countries to provide direct technical assistance support to regional organisations, national governments and related implementing agencies in charge of policies and regulatory frameworks relevant to SCP. Its technical assistance and grants component are connected with the regional EU Delegations (EUDs)' programmes and priorities. Its mandate is to foster cooperation, strengthen networking and build a platform for exchange on SCP in the regions.

1.3 Webinar Series Thematic Priorities

The ACESP Webinar Series addressed six thematic priorities, each integral to advancing circular economy (CE) principles in ASEAN member states. These priorities are closely aligned with the [Framework for Circular Economy for the ASEAN Economic Community](#), which outlines an ambitious long-term vision. By building on the strengths of existing ASEAN initiatives, the framework identifies key focus areas for action, along with essential enablers, to accelerate the realisation of a circular economy across the ASEAN region. The series featured six webinars, each dedicated to a specific theme within the broader CE agenda:



[Making Circular Economy Work for Business and Industry](#)

The first webinar, held on 30th November 2023, focused on the practical application of circular economy principles within the business and industry sectors. The discussions covered strategies for integrating circular practices into business models, highlighted examples of successful industry implementations, and examined the challenges and opportunities businesses face in adopting circular economy practices.



[Enabling ASEAN Through Circular Economy Practices in Green Public Procurement \(GPP\)](#)

The second webinar, held on 8th February 2024, explored how green public procurement (GPP) can drive circular economy practices across ASEAN. Speakers provided insights into policy frameworks and practical approaches for incorporating CE criteria into public procurement processes, highlighting successful case studies from various ASEAN countries.



[The Role of Tourism in Advancing Food Sustainability in ASEAN Through Circular Practices](#)

The third webinar, held on 14th March 2024, examined the intersection of tourism and food sustainability, with a focus on how circular economy principles can be applied to enhance food systems within the tourism sector. Case studies illustrated how the tourism industry can support sustainable food practices and contribute to CE goals within the ASEAN context.



[Circular Fashion: Sustainable Consumption and Production Across Textiles and Leather](#)

The fourth webinar, held on 26th April 2024, focused on the circular economy in the fashion industry, including textiles and leather. Presentations covered Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) practices, innovative approaches to reducing waste in fashion, and the important role of industry stakeholders in promoting circular fashion.



[Just Transition to an Inclusive Circular Economy in ASEAN](#)

The fifth webinar, held on 19th June 2024, addressed the concept of a just transition towards an inclusive circular economy. Discussions focused on strategies for ensuring that circular transitions are equitable and inclusive, considering the social and economic impacts on diverse communities within ASEAN.



[Localizing the Circular Economy Concept Under ASEAN Values](#)

The sixth and final webinar in the series, held on 9th August 2024, focused on adapting the circular economy concept to align with local ASEAN values. Panellists discussed how traditional values and cultural practices can be integrated into CE strategies, providing examples from various ASEAN countries and emphasising the importance of respecting local contexts.

2. Policy

The policy discussions throughout the ACESP Webinar Series offered valuable insights into the state of policies tackling circular economy principles across the region. These discussions highlighted the varying stages of policy development and implementation among ASEAN member states, the influence of international frameworks, and the role of cultural integration in shaping effective circular economy strategies. The section below provides an overview of the key policy insights.

2.1 Policy Interpretation and Adaptation

Global Influence: Discussions during Webinar 1 emphasised how ASEAN countries interpret circular economy principles within the context of international frameworks, such as the UN Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG12 on Responsible Consumption and Production, and the EU Circular Economy Action Plan. While these international models offer valuable benchmarks, it is essential for each ASEAN country to tailor these interpretations to align with their unique economic structures, environmental resources, and societal needs. The diverse economic landscapes, environmental conditions, and cultural contexts across ASEAN member states necessitate a more nuanced approach to the application of these international models. This diversity means that a one-size-fits-all approach to CE implementation is not feasible.

Cultural Integration: Discussions in Webinar 6 reflected on how the interpretation of circular economy principles in ASEAN is deeply shaped by the region's cultural values and traditional practices. Speakers highlighted that many CE concepts, such as resource stewardship and community cooperation, are already ingrained in ASEAN cultures. The challenge, however, is to formally integrate these values into present CE policies, ensuring they resonate with both contemporary and traditional contexts. For example, the practice of repurposing materials, sharing resources within communities, and valuing frugality are inherent in many traditional ASEAN societies. These practices align closely with modern CE principles, which emphasize reducing waste, maximizing resource use, and fostering collaboration for sustainability. The integration of these cultural elements into CE strategies not only values the region's heritage but also provides a solid foundation for building more sustainable and resilient economies.

However, the challenge lies in formally incorporating these traditional values into contemporary CE policies and frameworks. Modernization, urbanization, and globalization have introduced new economic structures and consumption patterns that can sometimes be at odds with traditional practices. As ASEAN countries continue to develop and integrate into the global economy, there is a risk that these cultural practices could be overlooked or undervalued in the rush to adopt new technologies and systems. Therefore, it is essential for policymakers to consciously integrate these cultural values into CE strategies in a way that respects and preserves traditional practices while also addressing the demands of modern society. This integration requires a careful balance, ensuring that CE policies resonate with contemporary realities while remaining deeply connected to the cultural and historical context of the region. By doing so, ASEAN countries can create CE frameworks that are not only effective but also culturally sustainable, fostering a sense of ownership and continuity among local communities as they transition to a more circular economy.

Sector-Specific Adaptations: Discussions during Webinars 3 and 4 explored the adaptation of circular economy policies within specific sectors, such as tourism and fashion. In these sectors, policies are specifically tailored to address unique challenges, including reducing food waste in tourism and promoting sustainable production practices in the fashion industry. In the tourism sector, for example, the focus on reducing food waste is crucial due to the high volume of food consumption and the potential environmental impact of waste generated by tourists. Adapting CE policies to this sector involves not only promoting sustainable food practices but also integrating local food systems, encouraging responsible consumption, and minimizing the carbon footprint associated with food production and distribution. These adaptations can lead to a more resilient and sustainable tourism industry, which is particularly important in regions like ASEAN, where tourism is a significant economic driver.

Similarly, in the fashion industry, sector-specific CE adaptations are important for addressing issues such as the environmental impact of textile production, waste generation, and the exploitation of labour. The fashion industry is one of the most resource-intensive sectors, and its traditional linear model of production and consumption leads to significant waste and pollution. By promoting sustainable production methods, such as the use of eco-friendly materials, recycling, and upcycling, CE policies can help reduce the environmental footprint of fashion. Moreover, these adaptations can foster innovation in design, encourage more responsible consumer behaviour, and support the development of circular business models that prioritize sustainability over fast fashion.

2.2 Policy Readiness

Regulatory Frameworks: Discussions during Webinar 2 highlighted the varying levels of readiness among ASEAN countries to implement Green Public Procurement (GPP) as a crucial component of the circular economy. GPP serves as an effective tool for driving sustainability by ensuring that public sector procurement decisions prioritize environmentally friendly products, services, and practices. In the ASEAN context, countries like Thailand, the Philippines and Malaysia have made significant strides in developing advanced GPP frameworks. These frameworks are characterized by well-defined policies, robust criteria for green products, and active government support, which collectively help to integrate CE principles into public procurement processes. Thailand, for instance, has established clear guidelines and incentives for public agencies to adopt GPP, while Malaysia has developed a comprehensive GPP roadmap that includes capacity-building initiatives and partnerships with the private sector. The Philippines has waded into sustainability throughout its rules, making sustainability a 'must' without specifically mentioning that it is mandatory. These countries serve as models within the region, demonstrating how effective regulatory frameworks can foster the adoption of CE practices across various sectors.

On the other hand, several ASEAN countries are still in the early stages of developing their GPP frameworks. For these countries, the challenges are multifaceted, ranging from limited awareness and understanding of GPP principles to a lack of institutional capacity and technical expertise needed to design and implement effective policies. In these contexts, GPP is often perceived as a complex and resource-intensive process, which can hinder its adoption. Additionally, there may be a need for greater political will and cross-sector collaboration to drive the development of GPP frameworks. As these countries work to build their regulatory infrastructure, they can benefit from the experiences of their more advanced counterparts, learning from best practices and adapting them to their local contexts. By focusing on building the necessary capacity, raising awareness, and fostering collaboration between government, industry, and civil society, these countries can gradually establish the regulatory frameworks needed to support GPP as a key pillar of the circular economy, ultimately contributing to more sustainable and resilient economic systems across the region.

Political Will: Discussions during Webinar 5 brought to light the varying levels of political commitment to the circular economy across the ASEAN region, emphasizing its critical role in driving the successful adoption of CE practices. Vietnam and Indonesia have emerged as leaders in this regard, demonstrating strong political will by embedding CE principles into their national strategies and policy frameworks. In Vietnam, for example, the government has integrated CE into its broader economic development plans, recognizing it as a pathway to sustainable growth. The country's National Action Plan on Sustainable Consumption and Production outlines clear objectives and actions to promote CE across key industries, from manufacturing to agriculture. This strategic approach reflects Vietnam's commitment to not only environmental sustainability but also economic resilience, as the government views CE as a means to reduce resource dependency, create jobs, and enhance competitiveness in the global market.

Similarly, Indonesia has shown considerable political determination in advancing CE through various national initiatives. The Indonesian government has developed a comprehensive roadmap for CE, which includes ambitious targets for waste reduction, resource efficiency, and the promotion of green industries. This roadmap is supported by a series of policies and regulations aimed at encouraging businesses to adopt CE practices, such as extended producer responsibility (EPR) and incentives for circular innovations. Indonesia's political commitment is also evident in its active participation in regional and international forums on sustainability, where it advocates for the integration of CE into broader development agendas. However,

despite these strong examples, the webinar also highlighted that political will varies significantly across the region, with some countries still grappling with competing policy priorities, limited resources, and a lack of awareness about the potential benefits of CE. For these countries, fostering stronger political commitment will be essential to overcoming barriers and accelerating the transition to a circular economy, ensuring that the entire ASEAN region can move towards a more sustainable and circular future.

2.3 Policy Implementation

Challenges in Implementation: Discussions during Webinar 5 pointed out the significant challenges that ASEAN member states face in implementing circular economy policies, particularly in less developed countries within the region. One of the most critical challenges is the lack of adequate infrastructure needed to support CE practices. For instance, the absence of efficient waste management systems, recycling facilities, and sustainable production technologies can severely limit the ability of these countries to transition from a linear to a circular economy. In many cases, the existing infrastructure is outdated or insufficient to handle the demands of modern CE strategies, leading to inefficiencies and higher costs. This infrastructure gap not only hampers the effective implementation of CE policies but also discourages private sector investment in circular initiatives, further slowing progress. Without the necessary physical and institutional infrastructure, the ambitious goals set by national CE strategies may remain unattainable, particularly in rural and underserved areas.

In addition, insufficient funding and limited public awareness present significant obstacles to the widespread adoption of CE policies. Many less developed ASEAN member states struggle with budget constraints, making it difficult to allocate the necessary resources for CE initiatives. Funding is crucial for building infrastructure, supporting research and innovation, and providing incentives for businesses and consumers to engage in circular practices. Without adequate financial resources, governments may find it challenging to scale up successful pilot projects or enforce CE regulations effectively. Moreover, public awareness of CE concepts remains limited in several ASEAN countries, particularly in regions where education on sustainability is lacking. This low level of awareness can result in weak public support for CE policies and a slower adoption rate among businesses and consumers. Raising awareness through education campaigns, community engagement, and the promotion of best practices is essential to fostering a cultural shift towards circular approaches. Overcoming these challenges requires a coordinated effort from governments, international organizations, the private sector, and civil society to ensure that the benefits of the circular economy are accessible to all ASEAN member states, regardless of their level of development.

Successful Implementations:



Malaysia's Green Public Procurement (GPP): Experts in Webinar 2 highlighted the successful implementation of GPP in Malaysia, where government procurement processes have been significantly reformed to prioritize sustainable products. This reform has led to a notable increase in demand for environmentally friendly goods and services, thereby driving market shifts towards greater sustainability and encouraging the private sector to align with green standards.



Thailand's Bio-Circular-Green (BCG) Economy Model: Featured in both Webinar 1 and Webinar 3, Thailand's BCG Economy Model was showcased as a comprehensive strategy that effectively integrates circular economy principles into the national economic agenda. This model serves as a holistic approach to sustainability, addressing various sectors to ensure that economic growth is achieved alongside environmental protection.



Indonesia's National Circular Economy Strategy: Discussed in Webinar 4, Indonesia's National Circular Economy Strategy was particularly noted for its focus on promoting sustainable practices within the textile and leather industries. This strategy represents Indonesia's commitment to embedding CE principles into key industrial sectors, aiming to reduce waste and enhance resource efficiency across the supply chain.



Vietnam's National Action Plan on Circular Economy: Cited in both Webinar 2 and Webinar 5, Vietnam's National Action Plan on Circular Economy was recognized for its strong emphasis on waste management and resource efficiency. The plan outlines strategic actions to minimize waste and optimize the use of natural resources, positioning Vietnam as a regional leader in the transition to a circular economy.



The Philippines' Circular Economy Bill: Mentioned in Webinar 2, the Philippines' Circular Economy Bill is an ambitious legislative effort aimed at providing a comprehensive framework for industries to implement circular economy practices effectively. The bill seeks to create an enabling environment for the adoption of CE principles, ensuring that businesses across various sectors can contribute to the country's sustainability goals.

2.4 Policy Support

Inclusive Policies: Discussions during Webinar 5 emphasized the critical importance of developing and implementing circular economy policies that are inclusive and equitable, ensuring that the benefits of the CE transition are accessible to all societal groups in ASEAN, particularly marginalized and vulnerable communities. In many countries in the region, these communities—such as low-income populations, rural residents, and informal sector workers—are often disproportionately affected by environmental degradation and resource scarcity. Without intentional and inclusive policy design, there is a risk that the transition to a CE could exacerbate existing inequalities, leaving these groups further behind. Inclusive CE policies are essential not only for achieving social justice but also for ensuring the sustainability and resilience of CE initiatives. By integrating the needs and voices of marginalized communities into CE strategies, governments can create more holistic and effective policies that address the root causes of inequality while promoting sustainability.

Moreover, inclusive CE policies can lead to more widespread adoption and stronger community support for sustainability initiatives. When marginalized communities are actively involved in the development and implementation of CE policies, they are more likely to feel a sense of ownership and commitment to these initiatives. This can result in more effective and enduring outcomes, as communities work together to implement practices that align with their values and meet their specific needs. For example, in rural areas where traditional knowledge and practices already align with CE principles, inclusive policies can help formalize and scale these practices, creating new opportunities for economic development and social empowerment. Additionally, inclusive CE policies can provide targeted support, such as training programmes, financial incentives, and social protections, to help vulnerable populations transition to new economic models. This approach ensures that the benefits of the circular economy—such as job creation, improved livelihoods, and environmental health—are shared equitably across society, contributing to a more just and sustainable future for all ASEAN member states.

Cross-Border Collaboration: Discussions during Webinar 1 and Webinar 5 highlighted the important role of regional collaboration in the development and implementation of circular economy policies within ASEAN. Given the interconnected nature of economies and ecosystems across Southeast Asia, the success of CE initiatives in one country can have positive ripple effects throughout the region. To maximize these benefits, ASEAN member states are encouraged to engage in cross-border collaboration by sharing best practices, harmonizing regulations, and working together on transnational initiatives. By sharing experiences and lessons learned, countries can accelerate the adoption of effective CE policies, avoiding the pitfalls of working in isolation. For instance, a country that has successfully implemented green public procurement or waste management strategies can provide valuable insights to neighbouring nations that are just beginning their CE journeys. This exchange of knowledge not only fosters innovation but also builds a sense of regional solidarity in tackling shared environmental and economic challenges.

Moreover, harmonizing regulations across ASEAN is essential for creating a cohesive and efficient regional approach to the circular economy. Divergent regulatory standards can create barriers to trade and investment, limiting the scalability of CE initiatives. By working together to align regulations, ASEAN member states

can facilitate the free flow of sustainable goods, services, and technologies across borders, enhancing the overall impact of CE policies. Regional collaboration also opens the door to transnational initiatives, such as joint waste management projects, shared recycling infrastructure, and coordinated efforts to reduce plastic pollution in the region's rivers and oceans. These collaborative efforts can address environmental issues that no single country can tackle alone, ensuring that CE practices are implemented at a scale that can make a meaningful difference. In addition, cross-border collaboration can attract international funding and support, as regional initiatives are often more appealing to global investors and development agencies. Ultimately, by fostering a collaborative approach, ASEAN member states can strengthen the effectiveness of their CE policies, drive sustainable development, and position the region as a leader in the global transition to a circular economy.

3. Practice

The ASEAN region is demonstrating progress in adopting CE practices across various sectors. The ACESP Webinar Series showcased diverse examples of these successful practices.

3.1 Industry Practices

Sustainable Manufacturing and Operations: Discussions during Webinar 1 highlighted the achievements being made by industries in ASEAN as they transition to more sustainable manufacturing and processes and operations. Companies across various sectors, including electronics, textiles, packaging, and tourism are increasingly investing in advanced technologies and innovative practices that minimize waste and enhance resource efficiency. These industries are embracing sustainable manufacturing by integrating processes that reduce energy and water consumption, adopt cleaner production techniques, and promote the reuse and recycling of materials. For example, in the electronics sector, companies are developing products designed for easier disassembly and recycling, thereby extending their lifecycle and reducing environmental impact. Similarly, in the textile industry, there is a growing shift towards using sustainable fibers and implementing circular practices such as upcycling and waste-to-fabric technologies. Packaging companies are also exploring alternatives to single-use plastics, opting for biodegradable materials and designs that facilitate recycling. By adopting these practices, companies are not only meeting regulatory requirements but also responding to the increasing consumer demand for sustainable products, thereby enhancing their competitiveness in the international market. The following circular economy business cases developed with support from SWITCH-Asia PSC were presented: [Saeng Charoen Grand Co.Ltd. SC Grand Thailand](#) (textiles), Circular Economy Cocoa: From Bean to Bar Vietnam (agrifood), and [Knai Bang Chatt Cambodia](#) (tourism)..

Green Public Procurement (GPP): Discussions during Webinar 2 highlighted the growing adoption of Green Public Procurement (GPP) across ASEAN, where industries are increasingly required to meet sustainability criteria in public procurement processes. In several countries, this shift has been a catalyst for innovation within businesses, driving them to adopt circular practices to remain competitive. Some companies are now focusing on using recycled or eco-friendly materials, reducing environmental impact throughout product lifecycles, and designing products that are more durable and easier to repair or recycle. These changes not only align with the sustainability goals set by public procurement standards but also promote broader corporate responsibility and environmental stewardship. By embracing GPP, businesses are positioning themselves as leaders in the transition to a circular economy, benefiting from both market opportunities and regulatory compliance while contributing to the region's sustainable development objectives.

3.2 Local Innovations

Sustainable Tourism: Discussions during Webinar 3 explored the ways in which local tourism operators across ASEAN are integrating circular economy principles to foster more sustainable practices within the industry. By promoting eco-friendly accommodations, reducing food waste, and supporting local food systems, these operators are not only enhancing the environmental sustainability of their services but also contributing to the well-being of local communities. For example, in Thailand, Indonesia, and Cambodia small-scale tourism businesses are adopting circular strategies such as sourcing locally-produced food to minimize transportation emissions and food waste, implementing waste reduction initiatives like composting and recycling, and designing accommodations that prioritize energy efficiency and use sustainable materials. These efforts help reduce the overall carbon footprint of tourism activities while also preserving the natural and cultural heritage that is central to the appeal of these destinations. By embracing CE principles, these tourism operators are leading the charge towards a more responsible and sustainable tourism industry in ASEAN, which in turn helps to protect the region's rich biodiversity and promote long-term economic resilience.

Circular Fashion: Discussions during Webinar 4 spotlighted the transformative innovations taking place in the textiles and garments sector, where local designers and manufacturers across ASEAN are increasingly adopting circular and sustainable practices. This shift is being driven by a growing awareness of the environmental impact of traditional fashion production, prompting industry players to explore alternative methods that align with circular economy principles. For instance, upcycling has become a popular practice, where designers creatively repurpose existing materials or discarded textiles into new, fashionable items, thereby extending the life of resources and reducing waste. Additionally, the use of natural or waterless dyeing methods is gaining traction as a way to minimize the significant water consumption and chemical pollution typically associated with conventional dyeing processes.

Regenerative Agriculture: Discussions during Webinar 6 highlighted local innovations across ASEAN that exemplify how traditional agricultural practices are being seamlessly adapted to circular economy concepts. In Malaysia, the innovative use of all parts of the banana plant, from leaves to stems, showcases a zero-waste approach where every part of the plant is utilized for various purposes, such as food, packaging, and even textiles. Similarly, Vietnam's VAC system, which integrates gardening (Vườn), aquaculture (Ao), and livestock (Chuồng), demonstrates how traditional farming methods can be optimized to create a self-sustaining, closed-loop system that maximizes resource efficiency and minimizes waste. Thailand's Sufficiency Economy, inspired by traditional Thai wisdom and promoted by the late King Bhumibol Adulyadej, further underscores how sustainable practices rooted in local culture can contribute to economic resilience and environmental sustainability. This philosophy encourages moderation, prudence, and social responsibility, aligning perfectly with CE principles by promoting the efficient use of resources and reducing dependence on external inputs. These examples from Malaysia, Vietnam, and Thailand illustrate how traditional regenerative agriculture practices can be revitalized and scaled to meet contemporary sustainability challenges, offering valuable models for integrating CE into the agricultural sector across ASEAN.

3.3 Grassroots Initiatives

Traditional Sharing Economies: Discussions during Webinar 5 emphasized the role that traditional sharing economies play in the ASEAN region, where longstanding practices of resource-sharing, repairing, and communal cooperation align naturally with circular economy principles. In many ASEAN communities, these practices are deeply embedded in daily life, reflecting a cultural emphasis on sustainability, frugality, and collective well-being. For instance, the tradition of sharing tools, seeds, or labour within farming communities, as well as the communal repair of household items, embodies the essence of resource efficiency and waste reduction. These practices not only minimize the need for new resources and reduce consumption but also foster strong social bonds and a sense of mutual support within communities. By leveraging and preserving these traditional sharing economies, ASEAN countries can build on their cultural heritage to promote modern CE initiatives, ensuring that the transition to a circular economy is both culturally resonant and socially inclusive. This approach not only supports environmental sustainability but also strengthens community resilience, as members are empowered to rely on each other and local resources rather than external or finite supplies.

Community-Led Waste Management: Discussions during Webinar 6 showcased the growing impact of grassroots initiatives in addressing waste management challenges across both rural and urban areas in ASEAN. These community-led efforts are increasingly adopting circular waste practices that not only help manage waste sustainably but also create opportunities for economic empowerment. In many ASEAN countries, communities are embracing practices such as composting organic waste, which reduces landfill use and produces valuable compost that can be used to improve soil fertility or sold for additional income. Recycling initiatives are also gaining momentum, with communities organizing collection and sorting of recyclable materials, which are then processed and repurposed into new products. These activities not only help reduce environmental pollution but also generate income streams for local residents, particularly in areas where economic opportunities are limited. By turning waste into a resource, these initiatives align with circular economy principles and demonstrate the power of community action in driving sustainable development. The success of these grassroots movements highlights the importance of empowering local communities to take ownership of waste management, fostering a sense of responsibility and stewardship that contributes to broader environmental and social goals in the region.

3.4 Advocacy and Capacity Building

Educational Campaigns: Across all webinars, the crucial role of education and awareness campaigns in advancing circular economy principles was a recurring theme. These campaigns are essential for bridging the knowledge gap and fostering a deeper understanding of CE among the public and businesses alike. Governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are collaborating closely to develop and implement educational initiatives that highlight the economic, environmental, and social benefits of embracing circular practices. These efforts include workshops, public seminars, school programmes, and media campaigns designed to inform and inspire action at all levels of society. For businesses, these campaigns often focus on showcasing the long-term economic advantages of adopting CE models, such as cost savings through resource efficiency and new market opportunities. For the general public, the campaigns emphasize the environmental benefits, such as reducing waste and conserving natural resources, as well as the social impact, like job creation in new green industries. By raising awareness and equipping individuals and businesses with the knowledge and tools to participate in the circular economy, these educational campaigns aim at driving wider adoption and creating a cultural shift towards circular practices across ASEAN.

Capacity Building Initiatives: Across all webinars, the need for robust capacity-building programmes was consistently highlighted as essential for advancing circular economy practices in ASEAN. These programmes are important in empowering local governments, businesses, and communities with the practical skills and knowledge required to successfully implement CE initiatives. For local governments, capacity-building efforts focus on developing the expertise needed to design, enforce, and monitor CE policies, ensuring that regulations are effective and aligned with regional sustainability goals. Businesses benefit from training programmes that introduce innovative circular business models, resource efficiency techniques, and sustainable production methods, enabling them to thrive in a circular economy. For communities, especially in rural and underserved areas, capacity-building initiatives often include workshops and educational campaigns that teach residents how to engage in sustainable practices such as recycling, composting, and resource-sharing.

4. Identified Current Gaps

Policy Gaps: Despite the presence of supportive policies for circular economy across ASEAN, significant inconsistencies and gaps in policy implementation remain, as discussed in Webinar 2. These gaps often result from varying levels of commitment, resource availability, and regulatory enforcement across different member states. The webinar emphasized the urgent need for stronger policy alignment at the regional level to ensure that CE practices are uniformly adopted and enforced. Without this alignment, the potential benefits of CE, such as resource efficiency and waste reduction, may not be fully realized, leading to uneven progress across the region. Harmonizing policies would also facilitate cross-border collaborations and create a more cohesive regional approach to sustainability, thereby strengthening ASEAN's overall impact in transitioning to a circular economy.

Absence of Comprehensive Data: A major challenge highlighted in discussions during Webinar 3 is the lack of comprehensive data on circular and resource efficiency practices across ASEAN. Accurate and detailed data is essential for tracking the progress of CE initiatives, assessing their impact, and making informed policy decisions. Without reliable data, it becomes difficult to measure the effectiveness of current strategies, identify gaps, and prioritize areas that need more attention or resources. This absence of data also hinders the ability to benchmark progress against international standards or compare practices across member states.

Lack of Education and Awareness: Discussions during Webinar 6 shed light on the critical need for enhanced education and awareness campaigns to support the adoption of CE practices. While there have been some efforts in this area, they are not yet sufficient to drive widespread change. Educating both consumers and producers about the benefits and practicalities of CE is essential for fostering a culture of sustainability. Without widespread understanding and buy-in, the transition to a circular economy will remain limited and uneven. Effective education and awareness campaigns can help bridge this gap by providing the knowledge and motivation needed for individuals and businesses to embrace CE practices. These campaigns are particularly important in regions where traditional practices and economic realities may pose barriers to change, ensuring that the principles of the circular economy are accessible and relevant to all.

5. Recommendations



5.1 For Governments

Policy Integration and Coherence:

- ✓ Develop and integrate circular economy policies into national strategies to ensure coherence and effectiveness. This may involve revising existing legislation or adopting new regulations that emphasize the importance of circular practices.
- ✓ Encourage the adoption of CE practices across various sectors by moving from voluntary to compulsory measures, thereby increasing uptake and ensuring consistency in implementation.
- ✓ Enhance regional cooperation within ASEAN to align CE policies across member states, fostering a more unified and effective approach to circular economy practices.

Supporting Infrastructure Development:

- ✓ Invest in essential infrastructure that supports CE practices, such as advanced waste management systems, recycling facilities, and circular supply chains, to facilitate the transition to a circular economy.
- ✓ Provide financial and technical support to local governments and businesses to build capacity and develop the necessary infrastructure, ensuring that all regions and sectors can participate in circular economy initiatives.

Fostering Innovation and Market Development:

- ✓ Invest in research and development to drive technological advancements that support CE goals, including innovations in materials, processes, and product design.
- ✓ Promote the development of green markets through initiatives such as green financing, ecolabelling, and support for start-ups and SMEs focused on circular products and services.
- ✓ Facilitate the creation and adoption of innovation tools, such as ecolabelling and product registration, to stimulate market transformation towards sustainable and circular practices.

Enhanced Policy Advocacy:

- ✓ Strengthen policy advocacy efforts to support the adoption and effective implementation of CE practices by leveraging regional and international platforms for knowledge exchange, collaboration, and policy harmonization.

Promoting Education and Awareness:

- ✓ Develop and implement comprehensive educational programmes and awareness campaigns aimed at increasing understanding of the benefits and principles of CE among policymakers, businesses, and the general public.



5.2 For Private Sector

Adopting Circular Economy Practices:

- ✓ Integrate CE principles into core business operations, emphasizing resource efficiency, circularity, and sustainability to enhance both environmental performance and financial resilience.
- ✓ Lead by example, adopting innovative resource circulation practices and showcasing the economic and environmental benefits of circular approaches to inspire others in the industry.
- ✓ Support ongoing research and development in circular technologies and processes, ensuring continuous innovation and improvement in sustainable business practices.

Collaboration and Partnerships:

- ✓ Actively engage in multi-stakeholder collaborations to share best practices, exchange ideas, and collectively drive progress towards CE goals.
- ✓ Partner with local and international organizations to scale up successful CE initiatives, replicate best practices, and foster a global network of circular businesses.
- ✓ Collaborate with governments and civil society to align business practices with CE objectives, supporting the effective implementation of policies and regulations.

Consumer Engagement and Responsibility:

- ✓ Promote responsible business practices that encourage consumers to adopt CE principles, such as reducing waste, choosing sustainable products, and supporting companies that prioritize circularity.
- ✓ Implement strategies to educate consumers on the environmental and social impacts of their purchasing decisions, fostering a culture of circular consumption and sustainability.

Leadership and Capacity Building:

- ✓ Cultivate strong leadership within organizations to champion CE practices and drive their implementation across all levels of the business.
- ✓ Support capacity-building programmes for micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) to enhance their sustainability practices, improve competitiveness, and integrate into the circular economy.

5.3 For Civil Society

Advocacy and Community Engagement:

- ✓ Promote CE principles through targeted advocacy, public campaigns, and educational programmes, raising awareness and driving action at the grassroots level.
- ✓ Advocate for policies and practices that support CE goals, working with governments and businesses to ensure effective implementation and widespread adoption.



- ✓ Support and engage in grassroots initiatives that promote sustainable practices within communities, leveraging traditional knowledge and cultural values to address local environmental challenges.

Capacity Building and Education:

- ✓ Organize educational workshops and awareness campaigns to deepen understanding of CE concepts among community members, local organizations, and civil society groups.
- ✓ Support training programmes that empower local communities to implement CE practices, building their capacity to drive change and contribute to sustainable development.

Promoting Cultural and Social Dimensions:

- ✓ Encourage the integration of cultural and social values into CE practices, ensuring that these initiatives are culturally relevant and effective in the local context.
- ✓ Highlight and preserve traditional wisdom and indigenous knowledge as important components of CE, recognizing their role in fostering sustainability and resource conservation.



5.4 For Consumers

Adopting Sustainable Practices:

- ✓ Make informed purchasing decisions by supporting businesses that implement CE practices, choosing products designed for durability, repairability, and recyclability, and favouring local and eco-friendly products.
- ✓ Adopt sustainable consumption patterns, such as reducing, reusing, repairing, and recycling, to minimize waste and promote resource efficiency in daily life.

Engaging in Advocacy:

- ✓ Advocate for CE principles within communities, encouraging businesses and policymakers to prioritize sustainability and integrate circular practices into their operations.
- ✓ Participate in and support community initiatives that promote CE practices, contributing to local environmental conservation and sustainability efforts.

Educational Participation:

- ✓ Engage in educational opportunities to deepen understanding of CE benefits and principles, becoming an informed and proactive participant in the circular economy.
- ✓ Share knowledge and best practices with peers and within communities to promote a culture of sustainability, responsible consumption, and environmental stewardship.

6. Conclusions

By convening a diverse range of stakeholders, the ASEAN Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform Webinar Series has fostered meaningful dialogue and facilitated knowledge exchange, offering a platform where voices from across the value chain—governments, businesses, civil society, and communities—could be heard. The webinars have not only provided a comprehensive exploration of CE principles but also demonstrated their practical applications across various sectors and contexts. Through a series of targeted discussions, the webinar series shed light on the multifaceted nature of CE, addressing critical thematic priorities such as industry practices, green public procurement, local innovations, and the integration of traditional knowledge. These conversations revealed both the progress made and the challenges that lie ahead, highlighting the need for policies that are tailored to local contexts, culturally sensitive, and aligned with regional frameworks. Furthermore, the series showcased practical solutions already being implemented across ASEAN, from sustainable manufacturing practices to community-led waste management initiatives, reflecting a growing commitment to circular principles across sectors.

Looking ahead, the series has set the stage for continued momentum in the region. Enhancing regional collaboration, harmonizing policies, and scaling successful local innovations are essential next steps. Equally important is the investment in education and capacity building, which will equip all stakeholders with the tools and knowledge necessary to further advance CE practices. The emphasis on stronger public-private partnerships and ongoing advocacy will be crucial in addressing existing gaps and driving broader impacts. The insights gained and recommendations provided through this series will serve as a valuable roadmap for all those committed to advancing CE and Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) in ASEAN, ensuring that the region continues to lead in the global transition towards a more sustainable and resilient future.

7. Upcoming Events and Initiatives

Sustainability Expo 2024:



The [Sustainability Expo](#), scheduled from 27th September to 6th October, 2024, will be held at the Queen Sirikit National Convention Centre (QSNCC). This event will be a platform for showcasing sustainability practices and innovations, setting the stage for the ASEAN Circular Economy Forum.

ASEAN Circular Economy Forum 2024:

The second [ASEAN Circular Economy Forum](#) will be held on 1st-2nd October 2024, in Bangkok, Thailand. This forum will focus on guiding the transition through ASEAN and EU policy and business approaches to circular innovation and entrepreneurship. It will feature discussions with CE champions and thought leaders. The forum will be organised in conjunction with the Sustainability Expo, which aims to strengthen regional connectivity and provide a dynamic networking platform for businesses and stakeholders.



<https://ce.acsdsd.org/>



ASEAN CE Platform
<https://facebook.com/ASEANCE>



ASEAN Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform (ACESP)
<https://www.linkedin.com/company/asean-circular-economy-stakeholder-platform-acesp/>