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12th ASEAN+3 Leadership Programme on Sustainable Consumption and Production

Circular Economy transition as pathway towards accelerating climate and SCP policy and practice

4-6 November 2024, Vientiane, Lao PDR



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I. Introduction

The ASEAN+3 Leadership Programme on Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP), launched in 2008 as part of the ASEAN Environmental Education Action Plan (AEEAP), aims to build the capacity of policymakers. It focuses on developing and implementing SCP policies, as well as mainstreaming SCP practices. The programme provides evidence-based learning to help policymakers facilitate changes in consumer and producer behaviours, practices, and systems, moving away from traditional approaches.

The 12th ASEAN+3 Leadership Programme on Sustainable Consumption and Production was held from November 4-6, 2024, in Vientiane, Lao PDR. It was hosted by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MoNRE) with support from the EU SWITCH-Asia Policy Support Component, the Delegation of European Union in Lao PDR through the Lao PDR-EU Cooperation Facility, the EU Delegation to ASEAN through the EU-ASEAN-Technical Assistance Facility to the Green Team Europe Initiative, and the Hanns Seidel Foundation – Vietnam. This year's programme highlighted the role of the CE in driving sustainable change across the region, focusing on how circular practices can be a transformative approach to achieving both climate goals and SCP policy advancements.

This programme sought to deepen policymakers' knowledge and skills in SCP policy development and coherence, reinforcing SCP practices among ASEAN member states. It focused particularly on Goals 1 and 3 of the ASEAN SCP Framework: the implementation of SDG 12 and the establishment of green products and guidelines for Green Public Procurement. Participants engaged in discussions on SCP-related SDG goals and climate commitments, exploring strategies for aligning national policies with broader sustainability targets.

The programme included practical case studies demonstrating effective changes in behaviour and systems among producers, consumers, and policymakers. Key objectives for the event included:

1. Defining key SCP goals and priorities aligned with national and regional contexts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.
2. Discussing SDG 12 reporting as a tool for assessing policy progress and mainstreaming SCP.
3. Exploring business practices contributing to SCP, CE, and key SDG transitions.
4. Examining how S/GPP supports SCP and ASEAN's achievement of the SDGs and its potential for market transformation.

This collaborative initiative seeks to strengthen regional alignment on eco-friendly policies and build a resilient ASEAN community. It aligns with the outcomes of the recent UN Summit of the Future (September 2024), underscoring the commitment of ASEAN and its partners to a sustainable and future-ready region.

Ms. Phakkavanh Phissamay, Director General of the Department of Planning and Finance, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MoNRE), Lao PDR, delivered welcoming remarks. She introduced the programme, discussing this year's theme and its role as a platform for ASEAN leaders and partners to exchange perspectives on SCP goals and climate commitments. She emphasised the objective to deepen understanding of SCP practices, noting that the CE is a transformative approach that decouples economic growth from resource depletion, promoting sustainability and resilience. She also presented Lao PDR's vision for a CE that balances economic development with carbon neutrality, expressing confidence in regional cooperation to address environmental challenges and achieve SDGs. In the end, she encouraged participants to actively share insights and contribute to SCP objectives, concluding with gratitude to all partners and hope for success.

Ms. Veerle Smet, Head of Cooperation at the EU Delegation to Laos, welcomed attendees to the 12th ASEAN+3 LP on SCP. She highlighted SCP's critical role in shaping sustainable policies that protect the planet and secure future resources by promoting efficient resource use, waste reduction, and material reuse. This aligns with the EU's commitment to a greener future via the Switch-Asia programme, aiding countries in transitioning to low-carbon, resource-efficient economies. She stressed the urgency of addressing the triple crisis, noting that, if left unchecked, resource use could double by 2060. She emphasised the EU's

commitment to achieving carbon neutrality by 2050 through the EU Green Deal, stressing that global collaboration is essential in our interconnected world. The EU's Global Gateway initiative highlights this need for international cooperation to drive sustainable change. She concluded by expressing hope that the event would inspire learning and exchange to foster a sustainable future.

Dr. Zinaida Fadeeva, Team Leader of SWITCH Asia PSC, greeted attendees to the 12th ASEAN+3 LP on SCP, expressing hope for continued collaboration in the years ahead. She highlighted that the platform supports the operationalization of two ASEAN frameworks: the ASEAN SCP framework and the ASEAN circular economy framework. She expressed hope for continued collaboration, with countries seeking future cooperation in subsequent programmes. She presented the Switch-Asia Programme PSC, emphasising its commitment to support SCP practices aligned with the leadership programme's mandate. She highlighted three key technical advisories: Green Public Procurement (GPP), the ASEAN Circular Economy Business Alliance (ACEBA), and environmental education at the ASEAN level. She expressed hope that the programme would foster innovative ideas at the ASEAN level and thanked all partners, emphasising the importance of lasting synergies to promote and implement the ASEAN SCP and Circular Economy frameworks.

II. Overview of Session 1: Introduction to the LP on SCP

Ms. Loraine Gatlabayan, Strategic Partnerships Expert at SWITCH Asia PSC, invited participants to introduce themselves before presenting the background and objectives of the 12th ASEAN+3 LP on SCP. The programme aims to build the capacity of policymakers in ASEAN+3 countries, focusing on policy development, implementation, and the scaling up of SCP practices. This year, the programme would explore the relationship between SCP and the CE to support climate change commitments and the SDGs. It also offered a platform for policymakers to share experiences and lessons on advancing SCP and addressing key sustainable development challenges. She highlighted three key session topics: defining SCP goals to accelerate SDGs and climate commitments; examining SDG 12 progress and implementation; and exploring business practices and sustainable GPP to advance SCP and CE.

III. Overview of Session 2: Taking Stock of Accelerating Progress and Unlocking CE as a Pathway for SCP and Climate Action

Part 1: SDGs – current status and renewed commitment

Dr. Rene Van Berkel, Co-convenor of ACEBA, Senior Expert of SWITCH-Asia PSC, and Thammasat University, presented a global overview of the SDGs and SCP. He discussed the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, highlighting its five pillars and the evolution from MDGs to SDGs. He shared progress indicators from the UN Sustainable Development Group, noting the significant differences in environmental footprints between highly industrialised and least developed countries. He discussed SDG 12, its targets, and progress, highlighting the 2022 launch of the Global Strategy for SCP 2023-2030, which frames SDG 12 within a broader strategy focusing on circularity, collaboration, innovation, and multilateral agreements. He noted delays in SDG progress due to COVID-19 and global conflicts, emphasising the need to accelerate progress and recognizing SCP as both a challenge and an enabler for achieving the 2030 targets.

He presented six key transition pathways for achieving the SDGs, noting that nature conservation, energy, and food waste are closely linked to the CE and SCP agendas. He introduced the "Pact for the Future," a declaration committing to concrete actions for a safer, more sustainable world, covering themes like SDG financing, international security, and a Global Digital Compact on AI ethics. He stressed the importance of promoting SCP, sustainable life cycles, and CE for achieving zero waste. He questioned the need for new CE commitments, suggesting existing SCP and climate action agreements should be prioritised. He explained the progression from 3R to 12R for re-engineering linear systems and emphasised that design plays a key role in sustainability, with recycling as a last resort in a circular economy.

Ms. Loraine Gatlabayan, Strategic Partnerships Expert at SWITCH Asia PSC, asked participants to reflect on the following questions:

1. What is the status of SDG implementation in your home country?
2. What 2-3 SDG successes can you highlight for your country?
3. What are the 2-3 main challenges for increasing ambition and achievement towards 2030 in your country?

Reflections from Participants:

Mr. Navann Ouk, Deputy Director General at the General Directorate of Policy and Strategy, Ministry of Environment in Cambodia, highlighted the country's efforts in advancing the circular economy and sustainable development. Cambodia launched a National Circular Economy Strategy and Action Plan in 2021 to improve waste management, along with the Circular Strategy on Environment (2023-2028), focusing on three pillars: Clean, aiming for clean air and water with a campaign to reduce plastic waste that reached over 9.5 million students and plans to expand to factory workers and government employees; Green, committing to forest conservation and afforestation to achieve 60% forest cover by 2050; and Sustainability, going beyond SDG 12 with an SDG roadmap and a dedicated sustainable consumption and production working group. Additionally, Cambodia is implementing an environment code to prioritise SCP and has policies from the Ministry of Economy and Finance, such as public procurement laws and regulations encouraging electric vehicle use. The country's Pentagonal Strategy aligns all SDGs under a national framework to ensure holistic progress.

Mr. Nakhalin Vorasarn, Deputy Director of the International Cooperation Division, DPF, MoNRE in Lao PDR, shared that the country's SDG 12 roadmap is in its final year of implementation, set to conclude in 2025. Progress has been made on the SCP plan, with a technical working group formed from various sectors to draft the initial roadmap. While not formally structured, the group has created a strong network, with focal points across sectors, and agreed during the consultation phase that this informal structure would focus on action rather than protocols.

Ms. Nichanan Tadkaew, SWITCH-Asia SCP Focal point, Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning (ONEP), MONRE in Thailand, shared updates on SDG implementation, highlighting that various agencies oversee SDG progress with annual colour-coded ratings. While SDG 12 is a concern, Thailand has made progress in promoting CE practices, especially among SMEs. The BCG model integrates environmental indicators, helping SMEs improve their performance and access bank loans. However, SDG 12.3 on food waste remains a challenge, particularly in urban areas like Bangkok, due to data gaps and limited local government efforts. Campaigns on food waste separation are underway, but the focus should shift to reducing waste at the source.

Ms. Anabelle Llenos, Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in Philippines shared that the DENR, along with the Environmental Management Bureau, is responsible for environmental conservation and implementing laws related to SCP and SDGs, such as the Solid Waste Management Act and the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Act. The DENR promotes eco-friendly products through collaboration with government agencies and institutions, aiming to reduce pollution. A key focus is the EPR law, which holds producers accountable for the entire lifecycle of waste, emphasising collaboration between the government, private sector, and businesses.

Ms. Le Thi Le, Official, Institute of Strategy and Policy on Natural Resources and Environment (ISPONRE) and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MoNRE) in Vietnam shared that the country has issued key legal documents to promote sustainable development, including the National Green Growth Strategy, National Action Plan on SCP, and a roadmap for SDGs by 2030. Vietnam also has laws on energy efficiency and cleaner industrial production. In 2022, MoNRE partnered with the Hanoi Department of Industry and Trade to create a retailer alliance to reduce single-use plastic bags, continuing with campaigns to reduce plastic waste.

Mr. Vu Tien Dat, Officer, Public Procurement Agency, Ministry of Planning and Investments in Vietnam, shared that the country's public procurement law promotes SDGs by encouraging eco-friendly products in bidding documents, with state agencies considering environmental criteria. However, contractors

face challenges in balancing these green requirements with higher costs, complicating the adoption of sustainable options in public projects.

Mrs. Yeri Permatasari, Head of the Center for Facilitation of the Implementation of Environmental and Forestry Instrument Standards at the Ministry of Environment and Forestry, and National Focal Point for SCP in Indonesia, shared that Indonesia's CE Roadmap for 2045, integrated into the National Development Plan, aims to reduce resource use, extend product life, and boost recycling. The country is also developing Sibarjasramling, an information system for green public procurement, and has launched five pilot projects. Key challenges include scaling policy implementation, making green procurement mandatory, and helping SMEs meet environmental standards.

Ms. Azlina Binti Hashim, Manager, Malaysian Green Technology and Climate Change Corporation (MGTC) shared that Malaysia's Government Green Procurement (GGP) 3.0 guidelines promote green products in government purchasing, with the MyHijau Mark Programme requiring officers to prioritise them. However, challenges remain in monitoring and evaluation due to the manual system. Malaysia plans to develop an online system for procurement tracking.

Mr. Hermingardo Albano Soares, Executive Director of the National Procurement Commission (NPC) in Timor-Leste, emphasised the country's focus on agriculture, tourism, and petroleum to achieve SDGs. While aiming for food security by 2030, Timor-Leste faces challenges, including a lack of inclusive development policies, climate change, resource depletion, and environmental degradation.

Part 2: Centrality of materials use and waste generation

Dr. Rene Van Berkel, Co-convenor of ACEBA, Senior Expert of SWITCH-Asia PSC, and Thammasat University, presented a report on the planet's health, emphasising that the Earth is surpassing its planetary boundaries, with six out of nine assessed boundaries now crossed. He stressed the urgency of taking action to protect the environment, warning that without immediate steps, the planet could become uninhabitable by 2050. Current emission scenarios predict a 3°C rise in global temperatures, leading to unpredictable and extreme weather events, highlighting the need for immediate action. He also presented the triple planetary crisis: climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution, highlighting that these issues are manmade and driven by unchecked growth in resource use. He emphasised the need for transformative change in production and consumption systems, aiming for more economic output with fewer resources while enhancing well-being.

He shared insights from the Global Resources Outlook by the International Resources Panel, emphasising an integrated approach to managing natural resources through improved energy, material, and water efficiency. The report underscores that material use has direct and indirect environmental impacts, especially through energy consumption that contributes to climate change. He noted that domestic material consumption varies across Southeast Asia, even among countries with similar economies, due to differences in economic structure and industry. The report stresses that high-income countries consume six times more materials per capita than low-income nations, underscoring the need to "decouple" economic growth from material use. He explained that, despite small improvements in material productivity, global resource use still outpaces economic growth, highlighting the need for greater efficiency, especially in housing and mobility, where lifecycle emissions could be reduced. He noted that to support growth in low- and middle-income nations while reducing excessive resource use in high-income countries, the report calls for sustainable policy innovation across sectors such as food, mobility, and the built environment. He emphasised that the circular economy is essential for addressing the triple planetary crisis and ensuring lasting environmental sustainability.

Ms. Loraine Gatlabayan, Strategic Partnerships Expert at SWITCH Asia PSC, asked participants to reflect on the following questions:

1. Is the efficient and sustainable use of natural resources an issue in your country? How is it perceived by the government, businesses, and civil society?
2. What options do you see for raising awareness, developing policies, and promoting action among businesses and consumers toward resource efficiency, considering the country's economic, social, and environmental priorities?

Reflections from Participants:

Mr. Nakhalin Vorasarn, Deputy Director of the International Cooperation Division, DPF, MoNRE in Lao PDR, outlined the government's efforts to implement the SCP roadmap. He explained the division of roles across government sectors, emphasising collaborative action plans to transform SCP goals into concrete measures. Involving the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Chamber of Commerce, and other entities, he highlighted significant business engagement and contributions during national consultations, noting strong business readiness to support SCP efforts. He also discussed the role of civil society, mentioning EU and Swiss support for a participatory SCP project in Lao PDR, aiming to shape policies and actions. Lastly, he emphasised the importance of integrating circular economy concepts within SCP initiatives on the interrelationship between SCP and circular economy as two complementary frameworks necessary for advancing SCP goals in Lao PDR.

Mr. Navann Ouk, Deputy Director General at the General Directorate of Policy and Strategy, Ministry of Environment in Cambodia, shared challenges in natural resource management from a business perspective. He noted that both farmers and entrepreneurs face issues with adding value to resources due to a lack of proper utilisation methods and technical support. Farmers often sell crops in bulk without maximising profits, while sectors like mining and logging struggle with efficient resource use. He emphasised the need for capacity building and training as essential for addressing these challenges, suggesting that investing in SCP-related skills and education could improve resource management and reduce wasteful practices.

Mr. Hermingardo Albano Soares, Executive Director of the National Procurement Commission (NPC) in Timor-Leste, discussed government efforts to promote sustainable natural resource use and reduce environmental impact. He noted that Timor-Leste, heavily reliant on oil and gas, faces significant challenges in preventing resource depletion. The government is working to align policies across sectors and collaborate with international partners to address these issues, emphasising the importance of learning from other countries. With support from international institutions, Timor-Leste is focused on raising public awareness and advancing measures to mitigate environmental harm.

Ms. Nichanan Tadkaew, SWITCH-Asia SCP Focal point, Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning (ONEP), MoNRE, explained that in Thailand, efforts to raise awareness, develop policies, and encourage business and consumer action on resource efficiency are ongoing. Multiple platforms provide knowledge and guidance on incorporating CE practices in business. However, there is still a gap in understanding resource efficiency among businesses and even within government sectors. Different ministries often approach CE with varying methods, highlighting the need for unified efforts to promote resource efficiency through CE. Demonstrating best practices, particularly in sectors like tourism and agriculture, could help increase understanding and adoption of CE practices.

Ms. Anabelle Llenos, Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in the Philippines, stated that the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in the Philippines is actively implementing the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Act, enacted in 2022. Despite being introduced during the pandemic, the law is now in effect, focusing on cooperation with producers and manufacturers, particularly for plastic products. The department has been educating the public and coordinating with manufacturers to ensure responsibility for the entire lifecycle of products, especially plastics. Social media is a key tool for raising environmental awareness and promoting SCP goals in alignment with the SDGs.

Ms. Le Thi Le, Official, Institute of Strategy and Policy on Natural Resources and Environment (ISPONRE) and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MoNRE) explained that Vietnam uses economic tools to manage natural resources, such as a natural resources tax on mining and water, as well as environmental protection taxes and fees on waste. Current laws outline eight resource categories subject to taxation, though the rates are relatively low. Vietnam is considering revising these laws to increase taxes, aiming to ensure the sustainable use of natural resources.

Ms. Reiza Syarini, Planner, Center for Facilitating the Implementation of Standards of Environment and Forestry Instruments, Ministry of Environment and Forestry, explained that the Indonesian government is committed to sustainable resource use and has established several policies to support this goal.

One key programme is the Corporate Performance Rating Programme in Environmental Management (PROPER), which rates companies based on environmental criteria, including resource efficiency. Businesses that demonstrate strong resource efficiency, energy efficiency, GHG emission reductions, and waste management practices can earn green or gold ratings. Other initiatives include Eco-Office policies, resource-efficient and cleaner production standards for businesses, environmental technology verification, and standards for public facilities aimed at promoting resource efficiency for civil society.

Ms. Azlina Binti Hashim, Manager, Malaysian Green Technology and Climate Change Corporation (MGTC), described Malaysia's efforts toward sustainable resource use, highlighting the "MyHijau" Mark recognition programme, which supports suppliers and developers in implementing sustainable products and services on a dedicated platform. This platform includes a managed directory to help businesses find products and services aligned with sustainability. Malaysia has established various policies, including a CE policy focused on waste management, led by the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI). Additionally, there are awareness sessions for suppliers and developers on waste management, and a regulatory department ensures compliance with these waste management standards. All products and services are monitored to meet sustainability criteria under this framework.

IV. Overview of Session 3: SCP and CE Policy coherence to raise ambitions in relation to climate and SDG commitments

Ms. Loraine Gatlabayan, Strategic Partnerships Expert at SWITCH Asia PSC presented the role of CE in supporting the 2030 Agenda, emphasising its contribution to climate resilience, sustainable cities, and clean water. She highlighted CE's potential to meet global climate commitments and introduced a toolkit for integrating CE into NDCs across sectors like agriculture, industry, and transport. She mentioned the SWITCH-Asia Programme's work on integrating SCP into NDCs and the need for a business case to attract investments, especially for the private sector and MSMEs. She also discussed how the programme aligns with the EU Green Deal, noting the impact of EU policies and urging governments to prepare for upcoming legislation. Additionally, she showcased the ASEAN SCP Framework, which promotes synergies among ASEAN countries and aims to strengthen regional efforts on SDG 12. She also presented the CE Framework, which includes priorities such as standard harmonisation, trade facilitation, innovation, sustainable financing, and efficient resource use. She concluded by encouraging participants to share their country's progress in implementing SCP and CE to achieve SDGs and climate commitments.

Mr. Navann Ouk, Deputy Director General at the General Directorate of Policy and Strategy, Ministry of Environment in Cambodia, outlined Cambodia's policies addressing climate change through SCP and their alignment with the NDCs. He focused on waste management as a key area for CE, mentioning the 2021 Circular Economy Strategy, SCP roadmap, and sustainable procurement efforts. Challenges include inadequate waste management infrastructure, lack of policies and guidelines for recycling, and limited private sector engagement. He expressed hope that the Switch-Asia programme would assist in advancing these initiatives.

Mr. Nakhalin Vorasarn, Deputy Director of the International Cooperation Division, DPF, MoNRE in Lao PDR, outlined the policy framework timeline, highlighting that the GPP guiding notes will be finalised by the end of 2024 and that the final draft of the Green Cart for Lao PDR has been completed. He shared the vision for the SCP roadmap by 2030, aiming for eco-friendly consumption, stable economic growth, and sustainable practices, including renewable energy and eco-tourism. The GPP vision for 2030 is to make green procurement central to government practices, supporting national green growth strategies. He also discussed ongoing projects like the Swisscontact waste-to-value initiative and the SUSTOUR project promoting sustainable tourism and MSME integration.

Ms. Anabelle Llenos, Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in Philippines, highlighted the implementation of key waste management policies in the Philippines, including the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act and the EPR Act of 2022, which mandates companies to take responsibility for plastic packaging. She emphasised promoting SCP through education, eco-labeling, green procurement, and supporting CE initiatives like waste-to-energy projects. Other initiatives include monitoring environmental laws, collaborating with stakeholders, conducting environmental impact assessments, advancing

sustainable technologies, and supporting eco-tourism. The country also participates in international cooperation for sustainable development.

Mrs. Yeri Permatasari, Head of the Center for Facilitation of the Implementation of Environmental and Forestry Instrument Standards at the Ministry of Environment and Forestry, and National Focal Point for SCP, discussed Indonesia's Circular Economy Roadmap and National Action Plan (2020-2045), which serves as a guideline for transitioning from a linear to a CE. The roadmap, evaluated every five years, is integrated into the National Medium-Term Development Plan (2025-2029) and the Long-Term Development Plan (2025-2045). It focuses on five priority sectors: goods, retail, electronics, construction, and textiles, aiming to reduce resource use, extend product life, and increase recycling and waste utilisation. She also presented the development process of GPP, including the Indonesian green label and the Sibarjasramling information system for green goods and services.

Ms. Le Thi Le, Official, Institute of Strategy and Policy on Natural Resources and Environment (ISPONRE) and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MoNRE) introduced SCP and CE efforts in Vietnam, highlighting key legal frameworks like the National Strategy on Green Growth (2021-2030) with a vision to 2050, and the National Action Plan on SCP (2021-2030). She reviewed policies related to CE, emphasising Article 138, which sets criteria for reducing non-renewable resource use, increasing resource efficiency, saving energy, extending product lifespans, and minimising environmental impact. Key goals include reducing waste, toxic chemicals, and disposable products, promoting recycling, and encouraging green purchasing habits. She also provided examples of circular economy activities in Vietnam.

Ms. Nichanan Tadkaew, SWITCH-Asia SCP Focal point, Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning (ONEP), MONRE, discussed Thailand's BCG economic model, which combines economic growth with environmental conservation. Efforts are underway to advance CE practices, with research and innovation supporting business engagement in CE. The government is also implementing CE initiatives, including a recent waste management campaign from Bangkok to encourage waste separation.

Ms. Azlina Binti Hashim, Manager, Malaysian Green Technology and Climate Change Corporation (MGTC) outlined Malaysia's efforts in advancing CE and SCP through various policies and initiatives. Key measures include a Circular Economy Roadmap focused on waste reduction and recycling in sectors like plastics, supported by the Green Technology Master Plan (GTMP) and a roadmap for eliminating single-use plastics by 2030. The government also promotes Green Government Procurement (GGP) to drive demand for sustainable products and has established the MyHijau Mark recognition programme to identify green products for public and private procurement. Additional efforts involve EPR, public awareness campaigns, and international cooperation.

Ms. Loraine Gatlabayan, Strategic Partnerships Expert at SWITCH Asia PSC, asked participants to respond to the following questions by sending their answers via email to info@switchasia.com or through the provided Google form:

1. Which initiatives can be prioritised for the start of operationalization of the SCP Framework? Which priority areas of the SCP and CE Frameworks are most relevant from the perspective of your country?
2. What are the challenges and opportunities you see in deploying SCP/CE strategies to enhance SDG commitments and climate ambitions?
3. Please suggest initiatives that will shift our focus to the upstream part of value chains of products and services, for example, how to reduce our material consumption and impact through design?
4. Please suggest some ways in which cooperation between the ASEAN SCP Framework and the AEC's Framework for a Circular Economy can be materialised to broaden implementation and its impact?

Dr. Zinaida Fadeeva, Team Leader of SWITCH Asia PSC, asked participants to respond to question 4. Some responses to the question are as follows:

- In ASEAN, the SCP coordinators are part of a small group under the ASEAN Working Group on Environmental Education, which mainly focuses on educational aspects of environmental issues. However, SCP covers a broader scope that involves multiple ASEAN working groups. The participant emphasised the challenge of transforming SCP and CE frameworks into actionable projects due to

the limited scope of the current working group and its separate nature from other relevant groups. The participant suggested creating a separate ASEAN working group for SCP and CE to improve implementation and collaboration.

- There is a movement to enhance coordination across sectors and pillars on SCP issues in ASEAN. While the CE framework is clear with a work plan, the SCP framework is still under development. The participant suggested that a separate working group for SCP might not be necessary, as it overlaps with CE, and emphasises that SCP is a cross-sectoral issue. The participant emphasised the importance of focusing on SCP implementation, with discussions ongoing with the ASEAN Secretariat about restructuring after 2025.
- The participant suggested that ASEAN should establish a financial institution to support SMEs and create an SCP training centre for capacity building. Additionally, the participant recommends developing a monitoring and evaluation system for new reports on SDGs and SCP once these institutions are in place.

V. Overview of Session 4: CE as a Responsible Business Action in ASEAN - Lessons and Potential Strategies

Part 1: Clarifying the circular economy, and its ambition

Dr. Rene Van Berkel, Co-convenor of ACEBA, Senior Expert of SWITCH-Asia PSC, and Thammasat University, presented three main views on the circular economy: optimists believe it will naturally lead to a successful transition; sceptics argue it lacks an economic theory to shift from the neoclassical model; and reformists see its transformative potential if social and environmental conditions are met. He discussed various perspectives, including the butterfly diagram, the expanded 3R hierarchy, business models that maximise material value, and decoupling economic growth from resource use. He also highlighted ISO 59004's six circular economy principles, stressing its importance for planetary health, business resilience, and long-term benefits. While differing views exist, there's broad agreement on the need for transformative action to address the planetary crisis through circular, sustainable practices.

An overview of the responses during the group discussion on the five examples of CE practices is as follows:

- *Case 1 Village-Level Recycling of Aluminium Cans into Cookware:* The responses highlighted that the process isn't very green due to health risks. The use of coal fire and chlorine acid in aluminium purification is harmful to both the environment and people's health. Others pointed out that the model is not suitable for scaling up, as it involves energy-intensive processes and may lead to waste management issues, which raises concerns about sustainability.
- *Case 2 Zero Waste Food Processing Model:* The responses praised its potential to eliminate waste while producing food and energy. However, concerns were raised about the practicality of fully utilising all byproducts, as livestock still require other feed. Despite some limitations, the model helps reduce emissions by cutting fertiliser use, reducing methane from livestock waste, and generating biogas for energy. It offers a circular system with opportunities for carbon credits, making it a promising example of sustainable, closed-loop practices.
- *Case 3 Towards Circular Fashion:* The response praised this example for using software to save fabric, which conserves energy and incorporates new technology. It promotes a circular system by recycling fibres and reintroducing them into production. This approach aligns with CE principles and can be applied across various categories within the fashion industry.
- *Case 4 The Teak Leather model:* The responses praised its resource efficiency, using teak leaves to create products like bags which supports eco-design principles. However, concerns were raised about market acceptance and the sustainability of this approach, as it may be seen as a niche product driven by CSR rather than broader demand. Additionally, the impact on soil health was questioned, as removing the leaves could disrupt ecosystems, even though it is less harmful than traditional leather production. Sustainable practices must be balanced with environmental and market considerations.

- *Case 5 Compressed Sand Plastic Bricks*: The model is praised for its innovation in turning plastic waste into useful resources, but concerns were raised about the strength and durability of the bricks compared to traditional concrete bricks. There are questions about whether the product meets the necessary standards for compressive strength, water absorption, and tensile strength. Additionally, environmental concerns were raised regarding the efficiency of the plastic processing method, particularly the water usage in shredding and melting the plastic. If these issues are addressed, the idea could be a promising solution.

Part 2: Mobilising business action on circular economy

Dr. Rene Van Berkel, Co-convenor of ACEBA, Senior Expert of SWITCH-Asia PSC, and Thammasat University, presented activities on Technical Assistance for mobilising business action in the circular economy, introducing guiding principles and a unifying framework. He showcased examples of circular economy business cases in ASEAN and explained why businesses get involved, citing cost savings, new opportunities, unavoidable change, and market trends. He highlighted key success factors, such as understanding the bigger picture, developing impactful products, knowledge-driven solutions, and the competencies needed to turn ideas into successful ventures. He discussed the background and purpose of the ACEBA and showed a video. Finally, he asked participants to share comments on how to make ACEBA work for the circular economy transition in ASEAN.

A summary of the key points from the comments:

- *Platform for Circular Economy Products*: Participants suggested creating a platform to connect circular economy businesses in ASEAN, making it easier for consumers to engage and purchase products, facilitating public procurement and business-to-business connections.
- *Certification for Circular Economy Businesses*: There is a need for a certification body to officially recognize businesses as part of the circular economy. ACEBA could play a key role in certifying businesses and providing clear guidelines for circular economy practices.
- *Market Creation and Material Exchange*: A concept for a material exchange platform, where businesses and purchasers can interact in real time, was shared. This would address the challenge of finding suppliers for secondary materials or construction and demolition waste and could be a useful tool for the circular economy.
- *ASEAN Adoption and ACEBA's Role*: Suggestions were made to integrate ACEBA into national strategies and policies, particularly through ministries of finance. ACEBA could become a regional hub to support technological innovations and business opportunities across ASEAN countries, potentially funded by contributions from each government. The idea of ACEBA evolving into a standard for negotiations and business practices was also proposed.
- *Funding Challenges and Opportunities*: The participant suggested exploring sources such as ADB or the World Bank. Therefore, ACEBA could generate funding by advising businesses on reducing environmental impacts, which could lead to new financial support options.

Mr. Nakhalin Vorasarn, Deputy Director of the International Cooperation Division, DPF, MoNRE in Lao PDR, wrapped up by saying that we've learned a lot about the basics of SCP and the circular economy, particularly in relation to the policies of ASEAN Member States. We also explored an exercise comparing different business platforms to better understand the concept of the circular economy through practical examples.

VI. Overview of Session 5: Introduction to Topic 2 - SDG 12 reporting as enabling the CE transformation

Ms. Cosima Stahr, SCP Policy Options and SDG12 Progress Key Expert, SWITCH-Asia PSC, explained the SDG 12 targets and indicators, emphasising its cross-cutting nature and broad scope, which involves multiple ministries at the national level. She discussed the SDG monitoring process, including coordinating platforms, data suppliers, and implementation agencies, supported by international organisations. She also introduced custodian agencies, data supporters, and explained the VNR and HLPF. She then asked about

participants' experiences with SDG 12 reporting and how it is managed in their countries.

The participant from MoNRE, as the national focal point for SDG 12 in Lao PDR, explained the country's SDG reporting system. The Ministry of Planning and Investment, along with the National Centre of Statistics, centralises the achievement of SDG indicators, while the Ministry of Foreign Affairs handles the reporting on SDG implementation. They are working to improve data collection and reporting systems, particularly on food waste, but face challenges in obtaining accurate waste data and lack resources for capacity-building at the provincial and district levels. The participant noted the difficulty of integrating SDG 12, particularly sustainable consumption and production, into the education curriculum. There is confusion about which ministry is responsible for reporting and implementation, highlighting the need for further national-level discussions to improve coordination.

Dr. Zinaida Fadeeva, Team Leader of SWITCH Asia PSC, also asked how data and monitoring are collected in each country, specifically whether it is done at the focal point ministry level or if there is communication between subnational and national levels. She inquired about the use of shared databases across ministries and the interaction between national and subnational data. Additionally, she asked if there are any issues with the flow of data and the understanding of the SDGs between national and subnational levels.

The participant said that in Cambodia, the Ministry of Planning is the focal point responsible for coordinating the SDGs. It works with all line ministries through a working group to collect data. Each ministry submits relevant data to the Ministry of Planning, which consolidates it. For example, in the Ministry of Economy and Finance, various departments have designated focal points who gather data related to the SDGs. This data is then sent to a central office for consolidation, including data from provincial departments of economy and finance. The process ensures a coordinated approach to data collection and reporting on SDG progress.

The participant said that in Thailand, the National Economic and Social Development Council (NESDC) is responsible for overseeing all SDG goals. It assigns specific goals to relevant ministries. For example, the MoNRE is responsible for SDGs 12, 13, 14, and 15. My team focuses on SDG 12, collecting data from other agencies involved in each target. These agencies submit the data to the Office of National Economic and Social Development (ONEP), which consolidates it and reports to the NESDC. The NESDC also promotes SDG localization at the local government level, providing platforms in various regions to raise awareness and encourage local involvement. For example, in waste management (SDG 12.3), agencies need to collect data from local governments, collaborate on projects, and report this data at the national level.

The participant said that in Malaysia, the Ministry of Finance serves as the focal point for collecting reports from all federal agencies, which include 27 ministries. Currently, there is no requirement for state governments or local governments to report to the Ministry of Finance. The Ministry of Finance consolidates the reports and forwards them to the Malaysian Green Technology and Climate Change Corporation (MGTC) for analysis. At present, the focus is on monitoring SDG targets 12.7 and 12.1.

Ms. Cosima Stahr, SCP Policy Options and SDG12 Progress Key Expert, SWITCH-Asia PSC, asked for feedback on reviewing the SDG indicators and considering how they align with the concepts of responsible or sustainable consumption and production as defined by the UN.

The participant shared the opinion that to achieve SDG 12, we should focus on target 12.7, which relates to GPP. A large portion of government budgets is spent on major construction projects and other government initiatives. If sustainable procurement practices are integrated into these projects, it could have a significant impact. By prioritising sustainable items in public procurement, we can accelerate progress and see more rapid results.

Ms. Cosima Stahr, SCP Policy Options and SDG12 Progress Key Expert, SWITCH-Asia PSC, presented two charts showing the interaction between SDG 12 indicators and other SDGs, based on research by the EU and UNEP. She provided an example of SDG monitoring, highlighting relevant organisations and platforms. Additionally, she presented the global, Southeast Asia, and country-specific reporting status for SDG 12. She shared her thoughts on reporting indicators for SDG 12. She highlighted SDG 12.1, which focuses on

SCP programmes. She noted that in ASEAN, many SCP programmes exist, and even though the 10YFP has ended, SDG progress is still being reported. It's easy to link existing SCP strategies to UNEP's monitoring agency and raise awareness of national SCP action plans. Regarding SDG 12.7, focusing on SPP, she emphasised that this indicator is about progress rather than achieving an endpoint, making it easier to report on and show improvements.

VII. Overview of Session 6: Overview over SDG 12 implementation and monitoring status, particularly SDG 12.1

Ms. Cosima Stahr, SCP Policy Options and SDG12 Progress Key Expert, SWITCH-Asia PSC, noted that while many countries have SDG national action plans, some do not fully report or cover them. Using data from the Our World in Data platform, she highlighted a limitation of this indicator: it only measures the existence of a plan, not its quality or ambition. She also noted that reporting on SDG 12 can be a quick win, as the analysis includes different types of policy instruments and their adoption years in the Asia-Pacific region. Interestingly, nearly half of these instruments are macro policies, which cover multiple sectors and aspects rather than targeting specific indicators.

VIII. Overview of Session 7: Moving the needle for improving resource efficiency (SDG 12.2, 12.3, 12.4, 12.5) (recycling rates and domestic material consumption per GDP/capita), and limiting food loss, pollution / hazardous waste: policies, monitoring systems and sanctioning mechanisms

Ms. Cosima Stahr, SCP Policy Options and SDG12 Progress Key Expert, SWITCH-Asia PSC, explained that SDG indicator 12.2.1, which tracks material footprint per unit of GDP, is currently only monitored at the global level with limited progress. This indicator measures consumption and is adjusted for trade impacts. She shared her favourite tool, the metadata database by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, as an invaluable resource for SDG reporting. It consolidates definitions, concepts, units of measure, recommended data sources, data types, collection methods, calculations, contact points in custodian agencies, quality management recommendations, and further reading for each SDG target and indicator. Using SDG 12.2 as an example, she highlighted a recent report detailing natural resource use in the economy and reporting guidelines for the indicator. While comprehensive, the tool is designed for policymakers focused on reporting rather than tracking indicator progress.

Mrs. Yeri Permatasari, Head of the Center for Facilitation of the Implementation of Environmental and Forestry Instrument Standards at the Ministry of Environment and Forestry, and National Focal Point for SCP in Indonesia, presented Indonesia's resource efficiency initiatives aligned with SDG 12, highlighting frameworks like the SCP Strategic Framework 2020-2030, which supports sustainable consumption and production through policies like green public procurement and eco-industrial parks. Key strategies include demand-supply alignment, resource pooling, and support for green technology. Additionally, she discussed regulations such as the 2021 Presidential Decree on carbon economy, awards for corporate environmental performance, and eco-labeling programmes that promote resource-efficient practices across sectors.

Ms. Cosima Stahr, SCP Policy Options and SDG12 Progress Key Expert, SWITCH-Asia PSC, discussed SDG 12.3 on food loss, highlighting sub-indicators within the Food Loss Index, and SDG 12.4 on hazardous waste, explaining the need for extensive data monitoring and international agreements. She noted that SDG 12.5.1 on municipal waste recycling has seen progress in Thailand and Indonesia, while SDG 12.c.1 on fossil fuel subsidies, overseen by UNEP, relies on data from the International Energy Agency. She explained that resource efficiency, while beneficial, can lead to rebound effects, where gains may lead to higher consumption. She stressed the importance of focusing on absolute reductions in resource use rather than

solely on efficiency. In the context of the circular economy, she emphasised prioritising human development and well-being over economic growth, presenting a chart comparing the Human Development Index with ecological footprint. She highlighted a report by WWF, the Well-being Economy Alliance, and the European Environment Bureau on tailoring resource efficiency and well-being indicators to national needs.

IX. Overview of Session 8: Making sustainability reporting work (SDG 12.6), and scaling up and mainstreaming SCP

Part 1: Sustainability reporting, transparency and accountability

Dr. Rene Van Berkel, Co-convenor of ACEBA, Senior Expert of SWITCH-Asia PSC, and Thammasat University, outlined several sustainability reporting frameworks, starting with the GRI standards, which emphasise identifying and reporting material sustainability impacts, prioritising them based on significance, and engaging stakeholders. He also highlighted the challenges for SMEs due to the complexity of GRI and the need for simplified reporting. Next, he explained the CSRD, which mandates sustainability reporting for large enterprises and their supply chains, especially affecting companies exporting to Europe. He also discussed the ISSB, which focuses on financial reporting related to sustainability, urging companies to report on climate-related emissions and other key sustainability metrics. He also introduced the SBTi, which helps companies set emissions reduction targets aligned with the Paris Agreement's goal. He emphasised that sustainability reporting must lead to real action; otherwise, companies risk reporting the same lack of progress year after year. He also discussed the importance of due diligence, which involves companies identifying and addressing negative impacts in their operations and supply chains. This process focuses on responsible business practices in areas like human rights, environment, and labour relations.

Dr. Rene Van Berkel, Co-convenor of ACEBA, Senior Expert of SWITCH-Asia PSC, and Thammasat University, asked participants to reflect on the following questions:

1. What is the status of sustainability reporting in your country? Consider policy initiatives, business practices, and stakeholder engagement.
2. Are current sustainability reporting practices useful as a guide and tool to monitor sustainability management efforts of companies? Do they effectively inform and engage key stakeholders, such as the government, supply chain, workforce, and communities?

Reflections from Participants:

Some participants raised the following questions: One asked whether GRI reporting is the same as ESG reporting or if it is part of ESG reporting. Another inquired about how companies that follow GRI standards can ensure the accuracy and reliability of their reports, and how to verify that the reports reflect the company's actual operations. There was also a question about whether companies that already report according to GRI standards need to do so again under the ESRS if they wish to sell their products in the EU.

Mr. Sanjay Kumar shared that India has mandated that the top 1,000 listed companies report on their sustainability efforts, providing a specific format for this reporting. The reports are verified by third parties controlled by the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI). While progress has been made, there are concerns that sustainability reporting can still be easily manipulated, as it does not undergo the same level of scrutiny as financial reporting. More work is needed to ensure greater transparency and accountability in sustainability reporting.

Part 2: Raising ambition – creating scale

Dr. Rene Van Berkel, Co-convenor of ACEBA, Senior Expert of SWITCH-Asia PSC, and Thammasat University, discussed the challenge of scaling sustainability from individual companies to national progress, emphasising continuous, transformative change. He highlighted the need to replicate successful practices, set more ambitious goals, and integrate climate action with biodiversity and social responsibility. He

outlined eight mechanisms for change, including learning by doing, partnering, and replicating. He stressed that sustainable lifestyles rely not only on individual responsibility but also on accessible infrastructure, sustainable goods, and viable consumer choices. Key areas include food, housing, mobility, consumer goods, and leisure. He introduced the RED-use (Refuse, Effuse, Diffuse) and AFI (Attitudes, Facilitators, Infrastructure) frameworks to guide sustainable living. Finally, he asked participants to reflect on the following questions:

1. What are some good examples of SCP practices that have significantly progressed beyond the pilot stage in your country, through spreading, deepening, or broadening?
2. What valuable SCP practices have not yet progressed beyond the pilot stage in your country? What are conceivable ways forward?

Reflections from Participants:

The participant mentioned that successfully integrating SCP into the main policy of the nation is achievable. Many countries, including the participant's, have already included SCP, and they were particularly surprised by the inclusion of circular economy initiatives in their country's last plan. This was considered a success. However, when looking for further progress, the participant highlighted efforts to introduce green public procurement in Southeast Asia and the Asia-Pacific region, which is just beginning.

The participant said that for Cambodia's SCP practices, the country is on the right track. There are basic policies and laws in place ready to be applied to SCP, although there hasn't been a specific project targeting SCP yet. However, other government policies are aligned with SCP and the circular economy. Cambodia is committed to its NDCs, which include five main sectors: energy, industry, agriculture, forests, and waste. The goal is to achieve carbon neutrality, and with the existing policies, Cambodia hopes SCP will contribute to this success.

The participant highlighted that a successful practice that has progressed beyond the pilot stage is the prohibition of single-use plastics, starting with a ban on plastic straws. Though initially a small step, it has significantly reduced plastic use. Local government units across various cities and municipalities have followed suit by adopting ordinances to ban single-use plastics. For example, shoppers are now required to bring reusable bags instead of using plastic ones at grocery stores. This initiative, while simple, has contributed to a substantial reduction in plastic waste nationwide.

Dr. Rene Van Berkel, Co-convenor of ACEBA, Senior Expert of SWITCH-Asia PSC, and Thammasat University, provided an overview of the epitome of unsustainable consumption, focusing on the trend of fast fashion, before asking participants to engage in exercises on pivoting toward circular fashion.

An overview of the responses during the group discussion on pivoting toward circular fashion is as follows:

- *Case set 1 Pactics & Pan Brothers*: The participant emphasised the need for government intervention to support the circular fashion industry. They suggested limiting the import of second-hand clothes and increasing taxes on them to reduce the waste problem caused by cheap, easily accessible garments. They advocated for providing more vocational training in recycling, not just for clothing but also for other household items and organising campaigns to promote recycled products. Finally, they highlighted the importance of reviving traditional tailoring businesses, which have dwindled, through vocational training and incentives to bring back this valuable skill and cultural practice.
- *Case set 2 Samatoa & WACOAL*: The participant discussed various factors influencing the private sector's role in circular fashion. They emphasised the importance of government policies, particularly regarding factory operations and tax incentives to support market survival. Eco-label certifications were highlighted to encourage sustainable practices. Waste management, water consumption, and circular economy incentives were also identified as key supply-side considerations. The market needs to be incentivized to maintain sustainability. They also mentioned the role of eco-friendly lifestyles, environmental awareness, technology facilitation, eco-design, and water efficiency in promoting circular fashion. Market transformation, such as online marketplaces and supply to branded companies, was noted as essential for driving high-end, efficient products.

- *Case set 3 MYCOTECH (Indonesia) & SC Grand (Thailand)*: The participant suggested that the government should provide subsidised tax policies to encourage factories to invest in sustainable products. They emphasised the need for more communication campaigns to raise consumer awareness about sustainable fashion. For technology facilitation, the participant recommended offering training on technology transfer for producing sustainable products. Regarding market transformation, they proposed organising promotional events to highlight the advantages of sustainable products, making them more accessible and easier to sell.

X. Overview of Session 9: Elevating GPP in the ASEAN Countries

Mr. Sanjay Kumar, Senior Expert on GPP, SWITCH-Asia PSC, highlighted the importance of cross-ministry collaboration for addressing SCP, climate change, biodiversity, and SME promotion. He emphasised that procurement is a powerful tool that leverages government purchasing power to drive market transformation, decoupling growth from environmental degradation. He outlined the definition of G/SPP by UNEP, the EU, and the World Bank, linking SPP to economic, environmental, and social impacts. He compared traditional and sustainable procurement, illustrating how SPP can support national development goals, low-carbon growth, and resilient economies. He noted SPP's growing adoption globally, particularly in ASEAN, where ecolabeling plays a significant role. However, he warned against over-relying on ecolabels, advocating instead for broader strategies across all stages of procurement, especially planning. He also introduced the SSI strategy, advocating for sustainable procurement across products, services, and infrastructure, and underscored the need to communicate the tangible benefits of GPP to gain public and political support.

Reflections from Participants:

The participant raised a concern about the dilemma faced by procurement practitioners, where green procurement often isn't the cheapest option, while decision-makers tend to prioritize the principle of lowest cost in traditional procurement. The participant asked how to balance economic, environmental, and social impacts to satisfy the demand for value for money, emphasising that value for money doesn't always mean the lowest price.

The participant asked how the strategy to quantify impacts, such as greenhouse gas emissions, works, explaining that procurement officials may not have the knowledge or tools to assess these impacts effectively.

The participant expressed concern that in Indonesia, the responsibility for entering product information into the system lies with the seller, not the manufacturer. As a result, sellers or distributors often lack information about the environmental impact of the products they are selling, including their carbon footprint, making it difficult to assess the sustainability of the products.

The participant recalled a project in Thailand, the "Green Basket," which calculated the greenhouse gas reduction for various product categories. For example, it estimated how much GHG could be saved by purchasing a printer. This project relied on LCA data and provided a way to communicate the environmental benefits of green procurement, helping procurements understand the GHG reductions compared to conventional products.

The participant mentioned that in Indonesia, products are only tagged with eco-labels based on self-claim, and there is no requirement for suppliers to provide or LCA. The participant suggested that these considerations should be considered moving forward.

The participant mentioned the concept of a digital product passport, highlighting that soon, products will likely indicate their environmental impact. The EU has already adopted legislation for a digital product passport, which, once implemented, will require products entering the EU market to include environmental data, like GHG emissions. The initiative will begin with textiles and electronics, and soon, it's expected that many products will have QR codes for consumers to scan and view their environmental footprint.



- How can ASEAN promote regional collaboration to develop a standardised methodology for evaluating the environmental and social impacts of GPP programmes across member states? Here is the result:

EU Switch Asia PSC platform	Center of Excellence GPP
Facilitate discussions with the ASEAN CE and SCP Framework custodians	Joint initiative in ASEAN Secretariat between economic community and socio-economic community
Helping provide data WRI or third party	Member State can ask WG on EE to develop methodology
Connect with GPP Academy	Set the common KPI evaluating the impact for ASEAN
Set up cooperation commit to work about GPP	ASEAN Helpdesk

- In which thematic areas ASEAN should consider issuing guidance for green products and procurement scaling, expanding, and enhancing the impact of GPP? Here is the result:

Building and construction	Packaging	Energy efficiency	Construction materials
Construction, building & manufacture	Public works	Energy efficiency	Electronic
Plastic packaging	Material use	Waste management	Packaging
Fertilizer	Textile	Animal feed	Contract
Construction ICT Transport	GHGs	Infrastructure	

- What are the biggest challenges faced by SMEs in your country when trying to adopt sustainable production practices, and how can national policies address these? Here is the result:



- How can ASEAN ensure that green certifications or ecolabels are recognized across all member states to promote cross-border trade in sustainable products? Here is the result:



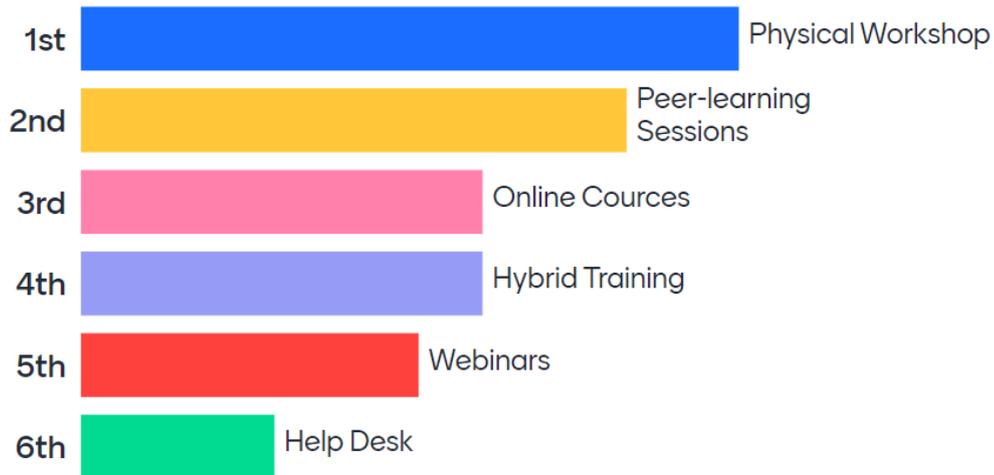
- How important is it to have mutual recognition of green certifications across ASEAN countries to facilitate cross-border procurement? Here is the result:



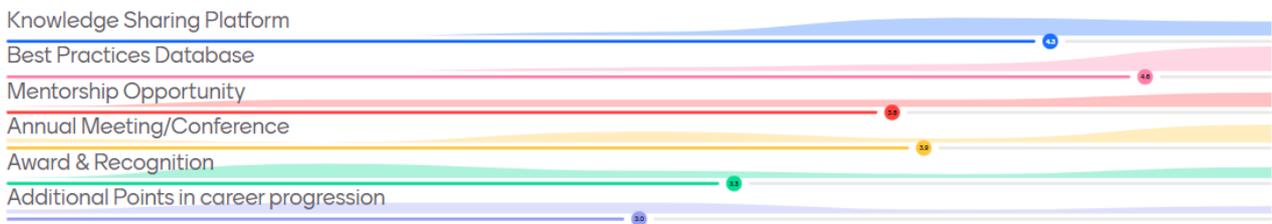
- What kinds of challenges your public procurers currently face in integrating sustainability criteria in procurement decisions? Here is the result:



- What formats do you find most effective for capacity-building (e.g., workshops, online courses, webinars, peer-learning sessions)? Here is the result:



- How can a community of practice best support your country in implementing sustainable procurement practices? Here is the result:



- How should the government or relevant authorities support public awareness efforts about green products? Here is the result:



Ms. Anabelle Llenos, Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in Philippines, wrapped up by highlighting key discussions on SDG 12, policy reporting, and mainstreaming SCP into national policies. The sessions covered topics such as resource efficiency, sustainability reporting, and GPP, with a focus on the challenges and opportunities for scaling SCP and circular economy practices across ASEAN countries.

XII. Overview of Session 11: Linking Public Finance, Public Procurement and Sustainability

Ms. Elodie Marie-Sube, EU policy development and partnership building Key Expert, SWITCH-Asia PSC, discussed the Public Financial Management (PFM) cycle, which includes policy planning, budgeting, fund execution, and revenue generation. She highlighted how GPP fits into this cycle, emphasising the need to integrate environmental impacts early in the process. Successful GPP requires accurate data, a suitable budget, and feedback loops to ensure sustainability.

She pointed out the challenge of defining 'green' and 'circular' products and stressed the importance of life cycle assessments. She also shared Catalonia's approach to climate finance and green PFM, where climate-focused spending is tracked, and GPP is monitored through a dedicated team. She stressed the need for a multidisciplinary approach, collaboration between ministries, continuous training, and market dialogue to ensure sustainable procurement decisions. While financial ministries prioritise transparency, efficiency, and cost considerations, she argued that sustainable choices can be cost-effective in the long run.

Mr. Chanon Chamnankit, Fiscal Analyst, Public Procurement Cooperation and Transparency Division, the Comptroller General's Department (CGD), Ministry of Finance in Thailand, presented the Green Products and Services Promotion Action Plan 2022–2027, focusing on increasing market availability, supporting production, and promoting consumption across sectors. The plan includes using economic tools, developing a monitoring mechanism, and launching a comprehensive action plan. He introduced a draft GPP framework, which includes piloting green procurement for less common products and gradually expanding it. Three procurement mechanisms were outlined: using Green Basket methods, competitive selection, and specifying green standards in procurement terms.

An overview of the responses during the World Café discussion is as follows:

- *Topic 1 Challenges and Institutional mechanisms for success:* The participants discussed several challenges in adopting GPP. Key issues included ensuring all stakeholders, such as auditors and law enforcement, understand GPP, particularly regarding pricing. There were also challenges in integrating GPP into procurement systems, developing clear policies, and establishing monitoring and evaluation processes. Recognizing and rewarding GPP participants, suppliers, and procurers was also highlighted. Additional challenges included managing the cost of green products within public budgets and expanding the market to provide a variety of green product options. Participants emphasised the need for continued support after transitioning from law to policy, educating procurement staff on sustainable consumption and circular economy principles, and providing clear guidance and references to help staff choose green products.
- *Topic 2 Skills Development for sustainable procurement:* The participants highlighted the importance of skill development for sustainable procurement, stressing the need to raise awareness among policymakers about the benefits of green products. They also emphasised the need to build the capacity of companies to produce these products, as many require training to meet demand, thus providing agencies with more sustainable procurement options. One participant focused on the importance of upscaling knowledge from policymakers to those implementing procurement practices, stressing the need for technical training to foster awareness and shift mindsets. This mindset change was identified as a crucial element in developing effective sustainable procurement practices.
- *Topic 3 Creating a dialogue with the private sector:* The participant emphasised the importance of involving the private sector in GPP, particularly suppliers of goods and services to the government. They suggested creating a platform to share information on green production and providing access to funding that supports businesses in transitioning to more sustainable practices. Additionally, they highlighted the need to shift the mindset of private sector actors, especially those contributing to pollution and carbon emissions, and stressed the importance of including technical teams actively involved in the GPP process.

XIII. Overview of Session 12: Regional Synergy in Harmonizing Eco-labels to Enhance GPP

Dr. Lunchakorn Prathumratana, Senior Expert on GPP, and Project Manager, SWITCH-Asia PSC, discussed the three types of eco-labels identified by ISO and their role in GPP. She illustrated the synergistic effect of the voluntary EU Ecolabel and EU GPP policies on market greening, showing how government demand for eco-friendly products led to a supply push as manufacturers aimed to meet stricter environmental criteria. She emphasised the need to harmonise Type I eco-labels across ASEAN countries and promote Mutual Recognition (MR) to streamline the eco-labeling process. She highlighted the benefits of Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRAs) for GPP, including simplified procurement, greater access to sustainable products, and reduced administrative costs. She also explained the four levels of MR, from recognizing test reports to achieving full mutual recognition. She concluded by sharing the status of MRAs for Type I eco-labels in ASEAN, supported by real-world examples.

Reflections from Participants:

The participant asked whether there is a formal mechanism or certifying body within ASEAN to enable mutual recognition of each member country's eco-labels, allowing them to be accepted in other ASEAN countries. The participant inquired about how such a mechanism would work and if a certifying body exists to facilitate this cross-recognition of eco-labels.

The participant asked for clarification on the table showing each country's MRAs, noting that Thailand has agreements with multiple countries. Specifically, the participant wanted to understand Thailand's criteria when forming MRAs, given that standards vary by country. The participant also asked if Thailand uses consistent criteria across the four types of MRAs or if there are differences, considering the variety of labels across countries.

The participant shared updates on Lao PDR's progress in establishing a GPP roadmap, focusing on transparency for their future green label. Learning from other countries, they decided to place the national green label under the Ministry of Industry and Commerce. This Technical Working Group will oversee high-standard criteria, initially supporting domestic SMEs. The plan is awaiting ministerial approval, with expected updates by year-end, including evaluations for expanding beyond industrial sectors to cover services like tourism.

Dr. Lunchakorn Prathumratana, Senior Expert on GPP and Project Manager of the SWITCH-Asia PSC, asked participants to engage in a group discussion reflecting on the following questions:

1. What difficulties do you face when using eco-labels in GPP in your country, especially when buying products from other countries?
2. What important things should we think about before creating agreements to recognize eco-labels between countries? What could be done at the ASEAN level?
3. Which product categories would benefit most from mutual recognition of eco-labels in public procurement?

An overview of the responses during the group discussion is as follows:

- *Group 1:* The participant addressed three questions. In response to the first question, they highlighted Laos' efforts to establish its own green label, noting the role of the Lao Green Cart and directories in promoting eco-friendly products and services for public procurement. They also pointed out the challenge of regulatory differences among ASEAN members. For the second question, the participant suggested that ASEAN countries adopt a unified eco-labeling system to simplify integration and ensure consistency across member states. Regarding the third question, they explained that the benefits of mutual recognition depend on product categories and the varying capabilities of each country.
- *Group 2:* The participant addressed three questions. In response to the first question, they discussed the challenges in Indonesia, where the local content policy poses a barrier to importing eco-labeled

products. In Malaysia, the issue lies in harmonising various eco-label standards, while Timor-Leste currently lacks certification. For the second question, the participant emphasised the importance of considering each country’s capacity, market conditions, and business landscape. Regarding the third question, they noted that products with high public procurement value and added value, such as electronics and ICT in Malaysia and construction products in Indonesia, would benefit most from public procurement.

XIV. Overview of Session 13: Regional Synergy in GPP and Climate Change – Reducing GHG Emissions through GPP and Eco-labelling

Ms. Cecile Leroy, Programme Manager of the EU SWITCH-Asia and EU Green Deal EU Delegation to Lao PDR, expressed gratitude to everyone for attending the 3-day workshop in Laos, emphasising the value of face-to-face interaction despite the availability of digital tools. She thanked the participants, the Switch-Asia team, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of Laos, and others for their support. She also recognized Mr. Nakhalin for his leadership in organising the 12th ASEAN+3 LP on SCP. She reaffirmed the importance of SCP in addressing global challenges and conveyed her appreciation to all involved.

Mr. Sanjay Kumar, Senior Expert on GPP, SWITCH-Asia PSC, discussed the progress since the Paris Agreement, expressing concerns about whether current efforts will meet the 1.5°C target as global temperatures approach this threshold. He pointed to reports from organisations like Climate Action Tracker, which show that commitments are insufficient. He stressed that governments must act on climate change due to growing consumer pressure and new regulations like the EU’s CBAM. He also highlighted the significant role of financial institutions in prioritising sustainability to manage climate risks. He emphasised that public procurement decisions contribute about 15% of global GHG emissions. He urged procurement to focus on areas like defence, transport, and construction. He explained the difference between carbon neutrality and net zero, stressing the need for organisations to collaborate with suppliers and clients to reduce Scope 3 emissions. He also outlined the importance of setting clear GHG reduction targets, using frameworks like the SBTi, and aligning reporting with third-party tools. Finally, he shared case examples of demand aggregation for LED bulbs and blended cement, and discussed embedding GHG emissions in selection criteria, citing the UK Public Procurement Note and Belgium’s CO2 Performance Ladder. He concluded that transforming supply chain environmental impacts requires board-level support and collaboration across sectors.

XV. Overview of Closing Session

- What did you like about the ASEAN+3 SCP Leadership Programme? Here is the result:



From **Indonesia**: She mentioned that the situation is challenging due to the ongoing separation of ministries. The immediate action they may plan to take is to approach the ASEAN Secretariat regarding the arrangements for SCP within ASEAN. As for the national policy, they will wait until the ministry's structure is fully established before proceeding.

From **Malaysia**: She said they will try to set up a committee in Malaysia to discuss the ASEAN Academy, which was their main goal during the previous conference in Shalom. Their target is to establish hubs for the GPP Academy.

From **Vietnam**: She said that the country has developed a national action plan for implementation, which is expected to be approved by the end of this year. Once the action plan is approved, they will likely need more technical support to develop the guiding documents for its implementation.

From **Thailand**: He said that he believes it is very beneficial for the country, as they are in the process of restarting the GPP this year and plan to implement it next year.

Mr. Sounadeth Soukchaleun, Deputy Director General, Department of Planning and Finance, MoNRE and **Dr. Zinaida Fadeeva**, Team Leader of SWITCH Asia PSC, presented the certificates of Attendance to the participants.

Mr. Sounadeth Soukchaleun, Deputy Director General, Department of Planning and Finance, MoNRE, thanked participants for joining the 12th ASEAN Plastic Leadership Programme on SCP. He reflected on the rich discussions and insights gained, particularly around circular economy, SCP, and climate action. Key topics included policy coherence, practical SCP case studies, and the implementation of GPP in ASEAN. He highlighted Lao PDR's significant progress in integrating SCP principles into national policies, such as the SCP roadmap and national plastic action plan. He emphasised the need for continued action, including a new ASEAN working group on SCP and CE, regional cooperation, and monitoring progress. He extended gratitude to partners and proposed Malaysia as the host for the 13th ASEAN Leadership Programme.

Mr. Michael Siegner, Resident Representative, Hanns Seidel Foundation in Vietnam expressed his hope that participants would apply the skills and information learned during the past three days in their home countries. He thanked the hosts in Lao PDR for their warm welcome and excellent hosting and acknowledged the contributions of the Switch Asia Programme PSC, experts, and the EU delegations involved. He reflected on the success of the interactive sessions and mentioned the long journey to hosting the event after plans for 2020 and 2021 were delayed. He highlighted the challenges faced by sustainable businesses, particularly eco-labeling and access to finance, and emphasised the importance of continuing to support startups in ASEAN countries.

Ms. Loraine Gatlabayan, Strategic Partnerships Expert at SWITCH Asia PSC, shared that the leadership programme is very meaningful to her, having worked with Switch-Asia Programme since 2013, supporting the development of SCP Action Plans in ASEAN. She emphasised the growing importance of advancing SCP policies with the CE now at the forefront of the global agenda, crucial for achieving SDGs and climate change goals. She expressed appreciation for the programme's discussions on moving forward and hoped Switch-Asia Programme could continue supporting regional and national efforts to create tangible impacts in communities.

Ms. Cosima Stahr, SCP Policy Options and SDG12 Progress Key Expert, SWITCH-Asia PSC, expressed appreciation for Loraine's excellent coordination and shared her positive experience working with colleagues. She also praised the participants' engagement, particularly in the complex topic of SCP, noting how impressive it was to see their involvement. She commended the team for their facilitation and highlighted the strong collaboration between them and the engaged audience, emphasising how the topic is gaining momentum.

Ms. Elodie Marie-Sube, EU policy development and partnership building Key Expert, SWITCH-Asia PSC, expressed appreciation for the active participation throughout the programme, noting everyone's strong interest in the topics. She emphasised the importance of continuing the discussion on GPP and its connection to national policies. She shared her intention to meet with the CEO of the Malaysia Green Technology Corporation about the GPP Academy, believing it to be a promising avenue that could lead to concrete outcomes.

Dr. Lunchakorn Prathumratana, Senior Expert on GPP, and Project Manager, SWITCH-Asia PSC, mentioned that this was her first time participating in the leadership programme and expressed being impressed by the active engagement of the participants over the three days. Despite the differences between countries, she noted that they share common goals, and she believes Switch-Asia Programme can serve as a platform to help participants share knowledge and practices, ensuring no one is left behind.

Mr. Sanjay Kumar, Senior Expert on GPP, SWITCH-Asia PSC shared that his biggest takeaway was meeting so many people in person, which allowed him to learn about regional developments, especially regarding GPP. He appreciated the opportunity to enhance his knowledge on GPP and expressed gratitude for the insights shared, looking forward to continued collaboration and support.

Dr. Zinaida Fadeeva, Team Leader of SWITCH Asia PSC expressed deep gratitude for the active participation, friendships formed, and productive discussions throughout the programme, highlighting its impact on ASEAN's SCP and GPP ambitions. She emphasised the importance of building connections and addressing shared challenges, especially in GPP, CE, and SCP. The commitment to support ASEAN's leadership journey continues, with plans for ongoing technical advisories, networking, and knowledge-sharing platforms. She concluded by thanking all collaborators and co-hosts and wishing everyone health, peace, and safe travels.



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