

EU Global Gateway Multi-Stakeholder Consultation in Central Asia: Strengthening Policy Ambitions through Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) and Circular Economy (CE)



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22-23 May 2025 • Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan
EVENT SUMMARY REPORT

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I. SUMMARY



Rationale

The Central Asian region, with its abundant natural resources and rapid economic transformation, faces mounting sustainability challenges. The region's dependence on resource extraction industries, combined with increasing climate vulnerabilities such as water scarcity, desertification, and extreme weather events, underscores the urgency of integrating sustainability principles into economic and climate policies.

Central Asian countries are increasingly aspiring toward greener, low-carbon development pathways, recognizing the urgency of addressing climate and environmental challenges while pursuing sustainable economic growth. Several countries in the region have adopted national strategies or roadmaps on green economy and climate action - Kazakhstan was among the first in the region to adopt a Green Economy Concept in 2013, while Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan have recently integrated circular economy principles into national development plans. The government of Turkmenistan has expressed an interest in the area of Circular Economy and facilitates regional alignment of climate work. Renewable energy targets, efforts to improve energy efficiency, and emerging climate legislation reflect the growing commitment to a more sustainable future.

Within this context, the adoption of circular economy principles - such as resource efficiency, waste reduction, and material recovery - is gaining traction, especially in key sectors like construction, food systems, manufacturing and waste management and recycling. Policy tools such as green public procurement (GPP) and extended producer responsibility (EPR) are supporting the transition to more circular and resilient supply chains, facilitating the region's integration into sustainable trade and production networks.

These developments towards circular economy strongly align with the broader goals of the EU Global Gateway, which places circular economy and resource efficiency, along with pollution and greenhouse gas emission reduction, at the core of its green and sustainable development agenda. By fostering policy dialogue, knowledge exchange, and legislative engagement, the Global Gateway can support Central Asia's transition toward circular value chains - enhancing regional sustainability, economic resilience, and alignment with global green economy standards.

Event Introduction



Organised by the European Union's SWITCH-Asia Policy Support Component (PSC) in partnership with the Central Asia Regional Environmental Centre (CAREC), the **Multi-Stakeholder Consultation in Central Asia: Strengthening Policy Ambitions through Sustainable Consumption and Production and Circular Economy** was held on 22-23 May 2025 in Park Hotel, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

In the event, the first regional dialogue on "sustainable consumption and production (SCP) and circular economy CE)" brought together participants representing Parliamentarians, Government representatives, experts, and stakeholders from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.

The event was one of the activities hosted as part of the joint partnership of CAREC and SWITCH-Asia Policy Support Component's Technical Advisory (TA) on "[Circular Economy Policy Dialogues with the Parliamentarians' Platform in Central Asia](#)" The TA aims to collaboratively identify impactful Circular Economy topics and (policy) solutions for Central Asian countries, aligning with regional and national priorities and fostering the engagement of Parliamentarians. Under the TA project, the regional dialogues will be held twice a year for the duration of two years.

Contributions were provided from other Technical Advisories active in Central Asia, to present a variety of topics to Parliamentarians, such as [Extended Producer Responsibility](#), [Sustainable/Green Public Procurement](#), [Buildings & Construction](#), [Climate Change, Circular Economy and SCP](#) and [Strategic Foresight for a Circular Economy in Tourism and Food](#). The topics – covering strategic for CE policies and important for Central Asia region sectors – are also areas where SWITCH-Asia supports the region through the TAs.

This TA also builds on the results of past projects under the SWITCH-Asia programme in Central Asia, including [PERETO](#), [SET](#), [REAP](#), [MOST](#), [GREEN TOUR](#) and [SUSTOUKA](#).

The Objectives of the regional dialogues are as follows:

- **Promote a shared understanding of Circular Economy and build momentum for regional action**
Foster a common understanding among Central Asian Parliamentarians and stakeholders of the importance of Circular Economy for sustainable development in the region, and initiate a process toward collective action, further national dialogue, and coordinated regional engagement.
- **Facilitate Parliamentary Dialogue and regional exchange for informed action**
Start a process of structured dialogue and peer exchange among Parliamentarians across Central Asia, supported by experts and stakeholders, to share experiences, lessons from technical assistance, and opportunities for CE policy innovation tailored to national contexts and regional cooperation.
- **Strengthen Parliamentarians' role in scaling Circular Economy practices through stakeholder engagement**
Support Parliamentarians with insights and partnerships necessary to champion the replication and scaling of CE and SCP practices in key sectors such as construction, food, and tourism - leveraging tools like Green Public Procurement (GPP), Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), and public-private collaboration. The subsequent three dialogues will be conducted in different Central Asian countries.

Summary of Session, Contributions and Discussions

The opening of the 2-day event was conducted by Mr. Sanzhar BOLOTOV, Deputy Minister of Economy and Commerce of the Kyrgyz Republic and SWITCH-Asia National Focal Point, Hon. Dinara ASHIMOVA, Deputy of Jogorku Kenesh of Kyrgyzstan, Leader of the Parliamentary Fraction "Yiman Nuru, Mr. Stefano CORRADO, Programme Manager at the EU Delegation to the Kyrgyz Republic.

After their words of welcome, other representatives spoke about the needed reflections and discussions regarding SCP and circular economy, including strategic directions, key opportunities for action, and pathways for policy and legislative development on advancing the circular economy agenda in the region

Presentations by issue experts allowed for a shared understanding of key concepts and informed discussions. The presentations focused on SCP and Circular Economy issues and the inter-linkages with climate change and sustainable development

Parliamentary representatives from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan presented their views on key policies and initiatives in the country that could develop a circular economy in the Central Asian countries. Afterwards, discussions with experts from various SWITCH-Asia Technical Advisory projects were conducted for providing practical insights from ongoing work in areas such as sustainable tourism, circular economy in construction, green public procurement (GPP), strengthening NDCs through sustainable consumption and production (SCP) and extended producer responsibility (EPR).

A Meeting of the Parliamentarians and country bilateral engagements was also held to discuss key issues for bilateral relations between the countries, priorities for national and regional actions and options for legislative pathways for the transition to a circular economy.

The following key issues were presented and discussed during the sessions:

- **Importance of SCP and Circular Economy:** Transition from linear to circular production and consumption systems, including through reduce, reuse, repair, refurbish, remanufacturing, recycle and associated practices. Emphasis on sustainable consumption and production to decouple well-being and economic growth from increased and unsustainable materials use.
- **National Initiatives and Sectoral Focus:** Highlighted policies and practices in from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan and opportunities in promoting Circular Economy principles and sectoral issues where circular economy is important such as agriculture and food production, construction, tourism, textiles, waste management, and renewable energy.
- **Environmental Cooperation and Sectoral Opportunities:** Addressed issues to introduce or scale up circular economy policies and practices in agriculture, water management, tourism, textiles, construction, and waste management, emphasizing need for national and regional strategies and continued dialogue.
- **Legislative and Policy Frameworks:** Integrating circular economy into national economic, environmental and innovation policies, particularly for meeting climate commitments through circular economy practices for climate mitigation and adaptation. Look at opportunities to develop or improve green public procurement and promote lifecycle approaches.
- **Using international good practice approaches:** Circular economy roadmaps, green public procurement, and extended producer responsibility can significantly advance the transition to a more sustainable and circular economy. This requires policy frameworks that promote sustainable design and production, and support infrastructure and technologies for reducing, reusing, and recycling materials.
- **Regional Priorities and Strategic Significance:** Central Asia's shared environmental and legislative challenges require legal frameworks, regional coordination, and infrastructure investment. Key regional priorities mentioned are on developing regional standards, addressing transboundary water policies, and establishing eco-industrial parks. Importance of knowledge sharing and policy harmonization was also mentioned. There is emphasis on potential regional financing mechanisms or potential blended finance models that could support circular economy initiatives in Central Asia, especially in SMEs and municipal-level waste systems.

Next steps

A **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** that supports the establishment of the Inter-Parliamentary Platform on Circular Economy in Central Asia was drafted for further consultation and adoption. The Platform is intended to provide a structured space for enhanced cooperation between the parliaments of the Central Asian countries in the field of promoting the circular economy to exchange legislative initiatives, best practices and coordination of efforts governing SCP, CE and resource conservation. Representatives of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan supported the proposal. The Uzbekistan representatives proposed to postpone their approval to the next meeting after internal consultations, which the Tajikistan and Turkmenistan representatives supported.

The drafted MoU will be circulated to countries before the next regional meeting. This will provide the opportunity for countries to conduct consultation and to have the draft pre-approved for signing in the next regional meeting. SWITCH-Asia National experts will support members of the Parliament with additional information about the process and revising the draft version of the MoU and also to facilitate the consultation on identifying gaps, opportunities, and priority areas for parliamentary dialogue, strategic alignment, and informed engagement in national and regional CE processes. SWITCH-Asia and CAREC will also support consultations to be held with Members of Parliament to identify the areas of their interest to create space and opportunity to discuss those suggestions during the next meeting.

II. HIGHLIGHTS OF THE SESSION PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

A. Welcome and Opening Remarks



Mr. Sanzhar BOLOTOV, Deputy Minister of Economy and Commerce of the Kyrgyz Republic, and SWITCH-Asia National Focal Point welcomed participants on behalf of the Kyrgyz government and expressed appreciation to the EU, CAREC, and SWITCH-Asia for organizing the event. He highlighted the importance of the meeting to facilitate dialogue towards a common ground that could strengthen the region's partnership towards a sustainable future through the advancement of circular economy initiatives. He emphasized the importance of integrating circular economy principles into national economic strategies. He mentioned the government's commitment to transformative approaches that align with sustainable development goals and enhance Kyrgyzstan's leadership role in promoting circular practices in Central Asia. He underscored the timely launch of the parliamentary platform as a tool to strengthen regional cooperation, synchronize policies, and support legislative efforts. His brief address set a forward-looking tone for the discussions, affirming the country's readiness to support regional and international efforts toward a greener, more resilient economic future.



In his opening remarks at the high-level event in Bishkek, **Mr. Stefano CORRADO, Programme Manager at the EU Delegation to the Kyrgyz Republic** welcomed participants from Central Asian countries and international guests. He emphasized the importance of integrating SCP, and circular economy principles into national policies, noting the region's growing experience with green initiatives. Mr. Corrado highlighted progress in countries such as Uzbekistan's energy efficiency efforts in public buildings Kyrgyzstan's green taxonomy and green economy strategy. He acknowledged the contribution of SWITCH-Asia experts and encouraged active participation in the discussions. Stressing the European Union's support through the Green Deal and Global Gateway, he called for strong parliamentary leadership to enact forward-looking policies. Mr. Corrado reaffirmed the EU's commitment to working alongside Central Asia in the transition toward a sustainable, climate-resilient, and circular economy.



Hon. Dinara ASHIMOVA, Deputy of Jogorku Kenesh of Kyrgyzstan, Leader of the Parliamentary Fraction "Yiman Nuru" welcomed participants and expressed deep appreciation for the facilitation of a platform that allows legislators from Central Asia to exchange experiences and best practices. She emphasized the region's interdependence, especially regarding climate resilience and environmental protection. Kyrgyzstan, as an upstream country and one of the sources of Central Asia's waters, plays a pivotal role in providing regional water security. She stressed the urgency of preserving glaciers, implementing circular economy models, and addressing inherited environmental challenges. She called for a parliamentary solidarity platform for collaborative law-making. Praising the legislative advances in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, she also introduced Kyrgyzstan's draft Climate Action Law, advocating for the integration of circular economy principles. She stated, "Legislators of Central Asia must become pioneers and ambassadors in advancing the circular economy in their countries and give impetus to the creation of a unified circular economy system across Central Asia by developing uniform model laws and standards."



Mr. Amankan KENJEBAEV, Chair of the Committee on Agriculture, Water Resources, Environment and Regional Development of the Jogorku Kenesh of Kyrgyzstan extended greetings on behalf of the national parliament and thanked SWITCH-Asia, CAREC, and partners for organizing the event. He highlighted the nation's commitment to green development, referencing the country's adoption of the green economy concept and the integration of sustainable development principles. Against the backdrop of serious environmental challenges, he stressed the urgency of taking practical steps toward SCP. He noted that expert analyses have already revealed emerging elements of the circular economy in sectors like textiles, construction, food processing, and tourism. He stressed the important role of legislators and underlined the value of regional platforms and knowledge exchange as means of accelerating the transition to a circular economy through unified efforts across Central Asia, turning challenges into opportunities for a more sustainable and secure future. He welcomed delegates from all participating countries and acknowledged the importance of building cross-border cooperation to turn environmental challenges into opportunities for sustainable growth.



Mr. Zafar MAKHMUDOV, Executive Director, CAREC thanked the EU, SWITCH-Asia, and the Kyrgyz government for supporting the event. He highlighted CAREC's successful implementation of the Resource Efficiency in Agricultural Production and Processing (REAP) project, implemented with funding support from EU SWITCH Asia Programme, which engaged over 500 Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. The project contributed to reduced energy use, waste, and improved water management, advancing the shift to a green circular economy. He emphasised the need to implement circular economy practices across all levels—from local communities to institutional and policy frameworks. He stressed the importance of Parliamentarians regarding the integration of circular economy issues into legislative initiatives. CAREC proposed a transitional support mechanism to maintain momentum and ensure continuity in SWITCH-Asia's regional programs. He highlighted the importance of the circular economy as a key driver of the Green Transition in Central Asian countries, as it offers not only sustainable solutions but also pathways to resilience and economic growth. The Parliamentarians play a key role that could facilitate the development of legal mechanisms on SCP and CE for the long-term.



Dr. Zinaida FADEEVA, Team Leader, SWITCH-Asia Policy Support Component welcomed delegates and acknowledged Kyrgyzstan's hospitality and leadership. She emphasized the broader EU agenda supporting the transition to SCP and Circular Economy across 42 countries in Asia and the Pacific through the EU SWITCH-Asia Programme. She encouraged a contextualized approach to circular economy policymaking and underlined the two-day meeting as a foundational step in building understanding and partnerships across the region. She mentioned the commitment of SWITCH-Asia together with its partners such as CAREC in supporting the lawmakers in Central Asia to advance the circular economy agenda towards climate action and green transition.



Ms. Loraine GATLABAYAN, SWITCH-Asia PSC Expert provided an overview of the stakeholder consultation programme. She introduced the key objectives of the event and the opportunity to engage in policy dialogue, knowledge sharing, and exchanges on legislative initiatives among Parliamentarians to support the advancement of circular economy policies and practices.

B. Session 1: Circular Economy as a pathway to net zero and green growth

Session 1, moderated by **Mr. Zafar MAKHMUDOV (Executive Director, CAREC)**, introduced the session aimed to introduce key concepts and frameworks (CE and SCP). He highlighted the importance of switching to renewable resources, improving resource efficiency, and adopting circular practices to drive low-carbon transformation and achieving Green Economy goals in Central Asia. Key players such as business and industry have a pivotal role in this transition by developing and delivering circular products, services, and supporting systems for production, distribution, and recovery. As key stakeholders, their needs must be considered in shaping effective and enabling circular economy policies.



Dr. Zinaida FADEEVA, SWITCH-Asia PSC stressed that circular economy is not merely about waste recycling, but a systemic approach focused on product design, lifecycle extension, and new business models. She presented the SWITCH-Asia Programme, which has been active since 2007. It is the EU's largest initiative promoting SCP across 42 countries in Asia, Central Asia, the Middle East, and the Pacific. She outlined its two key components: grants programme that funds pilot projects helping companies and other organizations adopt cleaner technologies and sustainable practices, and a Policy Support Component that assists governments and organisations to transition toward low-carbon, resource-efficient, and circular economies by fostering innovation, policy reform, and stronger partnerships across the region. She mentioned the various Technical Advisories active in Central Asia, to be further elaborated with the Parliamentarians and stakeholders, such as [Extended Producer Responsibility](#), [Sustainable/Green Public Procurement](#), [Buildings & Construction](#), [Climate Change](#), [Circular Economy and SCP](#) and [Strategic Foresight for a Circular Economy in Tourism and Food](#). She underlined the availability of translated resources and encouraged participants to use existing tools and materials. She highlighted the event as one of the activities under the joint partnership of CAREC and SWITCH-Asia PSC's Technical Advisory on "[Circular Economy Policy Dialogues with the Parliamentarians' Platform in Central Asia](#)", which aims to collaboratively identify impactful Circular Economy topics in Central Asian countries, aligning with regional and national priorities and initiate Parliamentarians' engagement. These initiatives are built on the past results of SWITCH-Asia funded projects in Central Asia, such as [PERETO](#), [SET](#), [REAP](#), [MOST](#), [GREEN TOUR](#) and [SUSTOUKA](#).



Dr. Rene VAN BERKEL, Senior CE Expert for the SWITCH-Asia PSC and Member of the International Resource Panel provided an in-depth overview of Circular Economy (CE) concepts and practices, framing CE as a critical evolution from the traditional linear "take-make-use-dispose" model toward a regenerative "recover and repeat" approach. He stressed that "Material use globally and in Central Asia is experiencing high and unsustainable growth, exceeding climate and other planetary boundaries essential to human life". He elaborated that CE approaches enable the decoupling of economic growth from resource use and environmental degradation. He presented industry good practices from Southeast Asia—including from agriculture, construction, and manufacturing, such as waste-to-product innovations, use of renewable energy, and circular business models. He highlighted the importance of engaging businesses in CE, encouraging them to adopt CE not only for environmental responsibility but also for cost savings, new opportunities, and long-term viability. He concluded by stating that CE can act as a vital, scalable solution for sustainable development, requiring both innovation and systemic change.



Mr. Arab HOBALLAH, Senior SCP Expert for the SWITCH-Asia PSC emphasized the role of businesses and SMEs in driving the transition toward SCP and CE in Central Asia. Businesses are seen not only as contributors to environmental challenges but also as key agents of change, capable of transforming ecological risks into economic opportunities through eco-innovation and eco-design. Their interventions help to reduce environmental impacts, improve production efficiency, and support sustainable product lifecycles. Eco-innovation encourages systemic change across value chains, while eco-design targets the lifecycle stage where most environmental

impacts are determined. He stressed the need for enabling policies, legal frameworks, and public-private partnerships to support SMEs—who form the backbone of Central Asian economies—in adopting circular practices. Strategic support structures like incubation and acceleration programs are vital for fostering green entrepreneurship.



Mr. Kanat SULTANALIEV, Expert for the SWITCH-Asia PSC and Executive Director of the Tian Shan Policy Center at the American University of Central Asia highlighted the strategic importance of the region and the urgent need for transitioning to a CE. Central Asia, with its vast resources and ecological diversity, faces shared challenges such as climate risks, resource scarcity, and growing waste. He stressed that CE offers a sustainable development model focused on resource efficiency and waste minimization. A review was presented on the national initiatives across Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, showcasing policy strategies, sectoral priorities (agriculture, construction, tourism, textiles, food), and infrastructure needs. Kazakhstan stands out with its advanced CE policy frameworks, while Kyrgyzstan emphasizes sustainable tourism and green procurement. Tajikistan and Turkmenistan have integrated CE into national strategies, focusing on agriculture, water, and energy. Uzbekistan’s green transition includes CE integration across sectors with private sector engagement. Shared challenges include insufficient legal frameworks, limited infrastructure, and low public awareness. He stressed the need for systemic approaches, cross-sectoral collaboration, and stronger investments to scale CE practices regionally.

C. Session 2: Country reflections on Circular Economy practices in Central Asian Countries

In the 2nd session, **Dr. Zinaida FADEEVA** moderated the presentations by parliamentary representatives on key policies and initiatives in the country that could contribute to and develop a circular economy in Central Asian countries. Circular economy roadmaps, green public procurement, and extended producer responsibility were mentioned as having significant potential for advancing the transition to a more sustainable and circular economy. This requires policy frameworks that promote sustainable design and production, and support infrastructure and technologies for reducing, reusing, and recycling materials.



Kyrgyzstan: Ms. Dinara ASHIMOVA, Deputy of Jogorku Kenesh of Kyrgyzstan, Leader of the Parliamentary Fraction “Yiman Nuru”

Deputy Ashimova provided an update on the country’s policy landscape related to the circular economy, highlighting the National Development Strategy to 2040 and the Sustainable Tourism Development Programme for 2025–2030. She identified four priority sectors: textile, tourism, food, and construction. Key challenges were discussed, such as the dependence on imported textile materials (primarily from China), outdated machinery in the garment industry, and significant post-harvest losses in the food supply chain. Nonetheless, the speaker noted potential in leveraging local raw materials like wool and enhancing digitalization and reuse practices in the textile sector. She underscored the need for continued work on resource efficiency, particularly in traditional and underdeveloped areas of production.



Kazakhstan: Mr. Arman KALYKOV, Deputy of the Mazhilis of the Parliament Republic of Kazakhstan

Deputy Arman Kalykov highlighted Kazakhstan’s strategic commitment to advancing the circular economy as part of its broader sustainable development and low-carbon transition agenda. He underscored that Kazakhstan is at a pivotal moment where policy interest in circular economy solutions is growing, and that this momentum must be supported through practical legislation, capacity building, and international cooperation. Mr. Kalykov emphasized the importance of leveraging expert knowledge and cross-border exchanges, particularly with the European Union, to align national standards and regulatory frameworks with best practices. He also stressed the need to integrate circular economy principles into key economic sectors such as

agriculture, waste management, and construction, which are critical for achieving the country's zero-waste and carbon neutrality objectives.

During the discussion, Mr. Kalykov expressed strong interest in Kazakhstan taking on a leadership role in the region by potentially hosting the next high-level meeting on circular economy in October 2025. He acknowledged the challenges the country faces, including a lack of investment, limited availability of qualified specialists, and the need for stronger technical and scientific support. He called for the development of national standards based on successful international models and proposed strengthening educational and training programs to promote the principles of the circular economy. Mr. Kalykov's remarks reflected a forward-looking perspective and a firm parliamentary commitment to embedding circularity into Kazakhstan's economic policy, legislative reforms, and regional cooperation efforts.



Uzbekistan: Mr. Zakirjon RAKHMANOV, Chairman of the Fergana regional branch of the Nuroniy Foundation, member of the Senate Committee on Agrarian, Water Management and Ecology

Senator Rakhmanov stated that “Uzbekistan has declared 2025 as the Year of Environmental Protection and the Green Economy, with special focus on water resource management and introduction of modern water-saving technologies in the country”. He emphasized that the development and effective use of alternative energy has become a state policy, which has already attracted foreign investors. He stated that as Parliamentarians, it is crucial not only to adopt laws that support green development, but also to respond in a timely manner to the need for amendments. “Our monitoring system helps assess how laws are implemented on the ground and gathers feedback from the people they are designed to serve.” He emphasized the importance of engaging local communities in environmental initiatives, particularly in waste management.

Mr. Rakhmanov noted that Uzbekistan has numerous waste processing facilities, but there is a need to extend support and develop partnerships with smaller enterprises to broaden impact. He stressed that listening to the population's concerns and integrating their suggestions into environmental strategies - especially for waste recycling - would be essential.



Tajikistan: Mr. Amirzoda Orif HAMID, Chairman of the Environmental Commission, member of Majlisi Oli of Tajikistan

Mr. Hamid stated, “Tajikistan has adopted nearly 20 laws and over 20 national strategies and government programs related to ecology and climate, reflecting the country's strong commitment to advancing the green agenda and integrating circular economy principles.” He noted that Tajikistan faces significant challenges due to its mountainous geography and vulnerability to climate change, which affect agricultural productivity and water resources. In his intervention, Mr. Hamid underscored the necessity of regional cooperation and the harmonization of environmental legislation across Central Asia. He highlighted the importance of integrating scientific research into environmental policy and advocated for enhanced collaboration between governmental bodies and academic institutions. He also discussed Tajikistan's efforts to strengthen its waste management systems and promote eco-innovation. Recognizing the importance of youth engagement, he called for educational initiatives to raise awareness of circular economy principles among the younger generation. Mr. Hamid concluded by expressing support for the creation of a regional parliamentary platform that would enable continuous dialogue and knowledge sharing on environmental and circular economy issues.



Turkmenistan: Mr. Begench GURBANGELDIYEV, Deputy of the Committee of the Mejlis of Turkmenistan on Economic Issues

Deputy Gurbangeldiyev emphasized Turkmenistan's strategic commitment to sustainable economic growth and environmental responsibility. He highlighted the country's legislative and policy frameworks aimed at promoting green development and transitioning to a circular economy. He stressed that environmental protection and rational use of natural resources are central to Turkmenistan's national policy. He noted that Turkmenistan has adopted laws and national strategies to enhance environmental sustainability, including legislation on environmental protection, air and water quality, and waste management. He shared that the Mejlis (Parliament) plays a crucial role in aligning national development goals with environmental imperatives, actively integrating sustainability principles into economic planning. He also emphasized the value of international cooperation and knowledge exchange, expressing Turkmenistan's readiness to participate in regional initiatives that foster circular economy practices. The deputy concluded by expressing support for further dialogue among Central Asian Parliamentarians to share experiences and legislative approaches for sustainable development.

D. Session 3: Circular Economy Policy Deep dive

Mr. Arab HOBALLAH moderated the session. The Session discussed different policy options that can help unlock the benefits of a circular economy. It gathered insights from policy development and implementation experiences in Central Asia and explored policy tools that would be best adapted to the Central Asian context. The panellists highlighted the strong interlinkages between the circular economy, climate change, and socio-economic development. Some key policy initiatives, like Circular Economy roadmaps, green public procurement, extended producer responsibility, and market development for secondary materials involve multifaceted approaches, which were explored in this session.



Presentation from Dr. Rene VAN BERKEL, Senior CE Expert for the SWITCH-Asia PSC

About 80 countries now have national roadmaps for advancing Circular Economy. Central Asia is lagging for the moment. Nearly all these plans were developed post 2015 and are being supported by regional frameworks. While such strategies are still emerging in Central Asia, the global trend - particularly since 2015 and national practices related to avoidance of waste and efficiency practices - reflect a strong momentum supported by regional frameworks and cooperation mechanisms. These roadmaps include many policy actions such as technology exchange, standards, products requirements, fiscal instruments and influencing consumption patterns. Circular Economy policies may help to disincentivise linear flows or incentivise circular flows. No policy instruments are Circular Economy specific, but many can be used to reinforce circularity. Regulatory instruments include the "polluter pays" principle, material and process standards, as well as enforcement mechanisms, while economic instruments include green public procurement or fiscal incentives. Multilateral Development Banks are working to unlock circular economy financing, through advisory support or financial support. Environmental Policy is a good starting point, but a sharpened focus on some policies such as green public procurement, extended producer responsibility and target setting can help accelerate the transformation. He also stressed that unlocking CE financing should not rely solely on public funds but rather on strategies that attract private investment and support innovation.

Panel discussion:



Mr. Dilovarsho DUSTZODA, SWITCH-Asia Climate Change expert, noted that Central Asian countries have very different geographical features and are therefore very differently impacted by climate change. In terms of mitigation the sectors covered by SWITCH-Asia, such as construction, agriculture and manufacturing are dominant GHG emitters. These sectors can be transformed through circular practices that mitigate GHG emissions. Sustainable Consumption and Production will help reduce the pressure on natural resources, in particular water for the agriculture and energy sectors. All of the capitals of Central Asian countries are growing fast, and there is a need to consider these issues. This platform of Central Asian Members of Parliament could support the integration of SCP and CE into NDCs. This year, all Central Asian countries will need to present new NDCs by September; he stressed the importance of the moment to consider integrating SCP and CE.



Dr. Thomas LINDHQVIST, SWITCH-Asia Policy/EPR Expert explained that waste is increasing with increasing consumption that is also fuelled by increasing variety of products. To better collect this waste, the cost of collection should be borne by producers. He stressed the importance of changing and requiring that the recovered materials should be of good quality for valuable secondary and further uses. He stressed the importance of high-quality secondary materials and the need for producers to bear waste collection costs. He stated that the need for policies that make Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) effective as a circular economy approach, where products are used durably and materials are returned to high-quality, prolonged and repeated use, and not only support better waste collection and management.



Mr. Nurgali RAKHMANOV, Green Public Procurement Expert underlined that introducing environmental criteria in procurement entails understanding the market and the requirements of buyers. Each buyer must check many technical criteria, which can be challenging. Therefore, introducing pricing parameters while development “green directories” for buyers could lighten the process and therefore can help to make green public procurement a reality. With circular principles, the government can significantly reduce CO₂ emissions through its procurement; GPP has a lot of potential to facilitate the long-term achievement of national climate targets. Answering a question about an example of green public procurement, Mr. Rakhmanov explained that large national companies in Kazakhstan introduced environmental criteria about the duration of use of products and energy efficiency, based on existing standards.

E. Session 4: Circular Economy Deep dive – sector perspective to unlock circular economy opportunities

The moderator, **Ms. Elodie MARIE-SUBE** (Expert on EU Policy for SWITCH Asia PSC) introduced the session with a focus on application of CE in the Construction & Building sector and the Tourism sector including its food and beverages supply chain in Central Asia. The session presented in-country learnings and gathering of insights on how policies can support Circular Economy practices in these two sectors. Making key sectors like construction and tourism more circular can lead to transformative impact also of relevance for other sectors. In tourism, sustainable inputs and practices reduce waste and resource consumption across interconnected areas, food, energy, transport, and can catalyse broader circular shifts. In construction, embedding circularity through material reuse, efficient maintenance, and resource-smart design helps governments achieve both socio-economic development and sustainability targets.



Mr. Alexander BELYY, Senior Construction and Buildings Expert and Executive Director, Kazakhstan Green Building Council presented initiatives for advancing circular economy (CE) practices in Kazakhstan’s construction sector. He defined CE in construction as a resource-oriented approach that emphasizes material durability, modular building, waste management, eco-design, and efficient land use. With buildings accounting for over 43% of national energy consumption and facing challenges like poor regulation and resource inefficiency, CE is seen as essential. Key barriers include fragmented regulations, low awareness, and insufficient infrastructure. He presented some pilot projects that illustrated CE action, including “Ergodom” in Almaty and “Ergonomika” in Karaganda, which integrate renewable materials, waste separation, and energy-saving technologies. A large-scale retrofit in Astana demonstrates how CE can reduce emissions and utility costs while improving living standards. He also mentioned the OMIR green building standard and highlights the need for education and policy support. Overall, CE is positioned as both a sustainability imperative and a driver of competitiveness in Kazakhstan’s built environment.



Ms. Tatyana KHODOROVSKAYA, Expert on CE and Tourism and Ms. Yelena MUZYKINA, Senior Strategic Foresight expert, KAGIR, outlined the strategic vision for developing circular and sustainable tourism across Central Asia—specifically in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan—toward 2040. For Kazakhstan, they emphasized the creation of a Ministry of Tourism, digital transformation, eco-friendly transport, infrastructure upgrades, cultural preservation, and financial incentives for sustainable tourism businesses. In Kyrgyzstan, recommendations focused on institutional strengthening, education reform, incentives for SMEs to adopt circular models, eco-financing, awareness campaigns, and the establishment of national certification standards. Tajikistan’s roadmap included gradual implementation of circular practices, local community engagement, eco-certification, and smart resource management, while addressing legal, financial, and environmental risks. Uzbekistan’s vision centred on educational reform for green skills, tourism diversification (eco, gastro, agro tourism), infrastructure innovation, and climate adaptation. Across all countries, the strategy presented emphasized reducing ecological impact, enhancing policy coherence, fostering local capacity, and mobilizing partnerships for sustainable tourism that supports economic growth and environmental resilience. Ms. Muzykina stressed that in times of uncertainty and rapid change, foresight should become our daily tool, not a luxury commodity, whether we are dealing with the futures of tourism, the circular economy, agriculture, or state strategy.



Central Asian reflections

After the presentations, **Mr Kanat SULTANALIEV, Executive Director, Tian Shan Policy Center, AUCA**, moderated the panel discussion.



As a panelist, **Mr. Saken KALKAMANOV, Acting Chairman of the Management Board, NJSC (International Green Technologies and Investment Projects Center) and SWITCH-Asia NFP National Focal point Kazakhstan** shared Kazakhstan’s progress on circular economy initiatives. He highlighted a pilot project in national parks that replaced traditional waste bins with separate collection points, significantly improving cleanliness and public awareness. He also mentioned a sustainable eco-hotel and an upcoming eco-school project in Astana that will utilize carbon markets to fund green construction. Mr. Kalkamanov also emphasized the importance of adopting Best Available Techniques (BAT), noting that 20 sector-specific manuals are already available. He encouraged Central Asian countries to use these tools to avoid repeating Kazakhstan’s early mistakes. He stressed that “It is important not only to develop new environmental initiatives but also to scale up existing mechanisms. Kazakhstan supports the implementation of circular approaches in construction as a foundation for sustainable growth and regional integration.”

F. Bilateral engagement with Parliament representatives

In this session, Members of Parliament from each participating country have engaged, simultaneously, in parallel group discussions with national and international experts to explore opportunities for advancing the circular economy in their respective contexts and to identify priorities for next steps.

Discussion of each country included briefing from the national experts of policies and practices on CE and discussion on key areas including GPP, EPR, CE in building and construction, in tourism, and engagement with business sector.

Highlights of Bilateral Engagement on Circular Economy by Country

KAZAKHSTAN

Climate Change and CE: Kazakhstan is actively preparing for its 2025 NDC submission, with SWITCH-Asia experts providing support in integrating CE and SCP principles into its national climate strategy. The Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources is collaborating with the SWITCH-Asia team to ensure climate action is consistent with circular economy goals. This includes identifying relevant sectors, proposing roadmaps, and ensuring technical support is aligned with existing policy commitments.

Business and Innovation: Parliamentarians and national experts emphasized Kazakhstan's strategic direction toward a low-carbon economy, with CE seen as a core enabler. Deputy Kalykov emphasized readiness to host future CE-focused events and stressed the need for domestic standards aligned with international practices. Challenges include insufficient investment, technical capacity, and awareness among SMEs. Capacity-building and tailored training programs are being considered to close these gaps.

EPR: Kazakhstan began implementing EPR in 2024, introducing product pricing adjustments to fund waste management. Key sectors include electronics and ICT waste, with Kaztelecom identified as a major generator. Plans are underway to formalize EPR in procurement regulations and embed it within the Environmental Code. The country also explores partnerships with large multinational companies to pilot responsible production and recycling systems.

Construction: Kazakhstan has a substantial challenge in managing construction and demolition waste, with inefficiencies in both material use and disposal. Opportunities lie in valorising mining byproducts and industrial waste, though regulatory classification as 'hazardous' limits material reuse. There is a direct presidential mandate to improve energy efficiency in building renovations, and modular construction is under review despite public scepticism. Public education and regulatory reform are needed to unlock the sector's circular potential.

Tourism and Food: Professional development in tourism is limited by the absence of CE curricula in vocational education. However, businesses are receptive to energy and water-saving initiatives, as demonstrated in pilot trainings. The tourism sector is recognized as a potential leader in adopting circular practices, including sustainable hospitality, waste segregation, and responsible food sourcing. Universities are being encouraged to develop CE-specialized programs in tourism and hospitality.

Green Public Procurement (GPP): While not as advanced as Kyrgyzstan in regulatory reforms, Kazakhstan sees GPP as a tool for CE advancement. Experts proposed embedding product lifecycle responsibilities in public procurement contracts, particularly for electronics and construction materials. Policy advocacy is ongoing to operationalize this at the national level.

UZBEKISTAN

Climate Change and CE: Uzbekistan is preparing to update its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement, led by the Ministry of Ecology, Environmental Protection and Climate Change. The SWITCH-Asia team is supporting this process by assessing how Circular Economy (CE) and Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) principles are reflected in national climate strategies and offering recommendations for their integration across sectors. The team also proposes developing a roadmap or implementation plan and is currently seeking an expert based in Uzbekistan to support these efforts.

Business and Innovation: Uzbekistan's innovation ecosystem is robust, with support from the Ministry of Higher Education and its innovation agency. CE is being proposed as a selection criterion for startups in accelerator programs. Promising sectors include organic agriculture, packaging, and industrial symbiosis (e.g., using industrial slags in cement or biochar production for farming use and carbon sequestration). Access to public labs and patenting services is being considered to fast-track environmentally innovative SMEs.

EPR: Although EPR legislation is not yet in place, Uzbekistan is exploring implementation, especially in tourism, where waste generation is rising. Models under consideration include municipal coordination or direct business-led systems supported by international corporations (e.g., Coca-Cola). Emphasis is placed on transparency, fairness, and developing systems that reward sustainable practices.

Construction: Material reuse is often driven by economic necessity rather than policy, but there is growing awareness of CE opportunities. The country lacks formal waste classification systems and standards for secondary materials. Processing facilities for different waste streams are limited. Introducing CE standards into construction regulations is under consideration.

Tourism and Food: Businesses trained under the MOST project have adopted resource efficiency practices. Cultural projects, such as an interactive museum and inclusive tourism offerings, showcase potential for innovation in sustainable tourism. CE principles are promoted among hotel staff and guides. A foresight session identified future sector challenges, emphasizing capacity to manage tourist flows and environmental impacts.

Foresight and Strategic Planning: Uzbekistan is a regional leader in using foresight tools, demonstrated by the session at the Academy of Public Administration. Long-term scenario development is becoming part of policy design, particularly for tourism.

KYRGYZSTAN

Climate Change and CE: The Parliament supports alignment of national climate goals with CE initiatives (including through the draft Law "On Climate Activity"). The country recognizes its vulnerability to climate change impacts, particularly in tourism and agriculture, and seeks to integrate CE into national development strategies.

GPP: Kyrgyzstan has made notable progress. Experts proposed revising Public Procurement Law No. 27 to include GPP principles. A 1% price preference was suggested for suppliers offering internationally certified eco-products (e.g., ISO 14024, EU Ecolabel). The creation of an accredited national certification body, possibly under the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Ministry of Economy and Trade, is under consideration.

Tourism and Food: Tourism policy includes CE considerations in infrastructure and education. Local government mandates, awareness campaigns, and technical training are proposed to support sustainable tourism. Proposals include a Zero Waste Fund law, which would introduce CE responsibilities for municipalities and large hotels, along with funding mechanisms sourced from the state, donors, and tourism levies.

Business and Legislation: Parliamentarians discussed embedding CE into national law and requested technical support for drafting legislation. Emphasis was placed on practical implementation strategies and linking CE with economic development goals.

TAJIKISTAN

Climate Change and CE: Tajikistan's participation in SWITCH-Asia consultations revealed strong interest in linking CE to climate policy. NDC integration, supported by SWITCH-Asia experts, is underway. Parliamentarians expressed commitment to follow-up actions.

Business and Innovation: Due to limited data on material flows, estimates are based on global databases. Tajikistan seeks sectoral case studies to assess economic potential. Cement was identified as a CE priority, with attention to alternative fuels, clinker substitutes, and energy efficiency. Business dialogue and support for CE entrepreneurship are proposed.

Construction: Dushanbe's urban expansion and demolition of Soviet-era buildings provide a basis for CE practices, including resale of reclaimed bricks and wood. However, demolition is often led by profit-seeking

intermediaries. Formalization, regulation, and waste audit reform are critical next steps. Traditional materials like *kerpic* offer energy-efficient alternatives.

Parliamentary Engagement: The delegation plans to initiate a CE resolution and host parliamentary hearings. SWITCH-Asia will support presentations and expert engagement. A national CE roadmap, inclusive of multi-sector and business consultation, is in development.

TURKMENISTAN

Climate Change and CE: CE is not yet formalized in national climate policy, but the country is using innovation-driven approaches to transition. Government initiatives like Arkadag smart city demonstrate potential for CE integration in infrastructure.

Business and Innovation: Government support for agricultural modernization (e.g., drones, irrigation tech) and industrial upgrades is a key CE enabler. Circularity in cotton processing and traditional practices (e.g., soap from cotton oil byproducts) were highlighted. Participation in global innovation forums is encouraged.

Construction: Traditional building materials and architectural practices favour longevity. While reuse exists (e.g., marble panels), concrete waste management needs improvement. Regulatory improvements are needed to scale CE in construction. The Ministry of Construction prioritizes reuse, supported by the Academy of Sciences. Demolition standards and material recovery systems need development.

Tourism and Strategic Planning: Turkmenistan is exploring foresight tools for long-term CE planning. Strategic thinking in tourism and other sectors can benefit from scenario planning and anticipatory policy design. Delegates expressed interest in adopting CE strategies beyond tourism, indicating growing cross-sectoral awareness.

Parliamentary Engagement: While Turkmenistan has not committed to CE legislation, officials favour enabling innovation environments. A regional repository of CE strategies is being explored to tailor solutions to Turkmenistan's context. Practical demonstration projects are preferred over regulatory mandates at this stage.

These are preliminary insights that would benefit from further thinking and verification before informing policy decisions.

G. Final Reflections and Concluding Remarks

Dr. Zinaida FADEEVA, Team Leader, SWITCH-Asia PSC concluded by highlighting that the project's accumulated knowledge and tools are ready to be applied for promoting circular economy approaches in Central Asia. She acknowledged that SWITCH-Asia will continue to be a platform and partner for further implementation, especially through its policy support activities. Dr. Fadeeva encouraged participants to remain active in knowledge-sharing and contributing to legislative initiatives, and reiterated SWITCH-Asia's readiness to help implement circular economy approaches aligned with national goals. She thanked all country representatives and reaffirmed that the true work of policy transformation and practical application now lies ahead.

Note: Parallel Meetings held during the regional dialogue

A closed-door meeting of Parliamentarians was held and a meeting to discuss the various SWITCH-Asia Technical Advisories in Central Asia attended by experts and participants.

Attachment: Draft Memorandum of Understanding (Russian)

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