
DRAFT CONCEPT NOTE & PROGRAMME

Asia-Pacific Green Deal for Business Roundtable
~ Changing towards a more circular economy in Asia and the Pacific
&
Consultation Meeting for South East Asian Countries
on the Pre-Zero Draft of New Declaration on 3R and Circular Economy
~ Sustainable 3R and Circular Economy Goals for Achieving Resource Efficient, Clean, Resilient, Sound Material Cycle and Low-Carbon Society in Asia and the Pacific (2025-2034)

25-26 November 2024, UN Conference Centre, Bangkok, Thailand

Co-organized by



1. Background

The Asia-Pacific being the world's most populous and dynamic region in the world, accounts for approximately two-thirds to global growth¹, and 63 per cent of the global material use². Over decades of rapid urbanization, the region has seen the creation of new urban infrastructure, a rise in people's purchasing power due to economic growth, the development of new industries, and the establishment of major manufacturing hubs. While rapid economic growth has led to higher living standards, it is also diminishing the region's resource efficiency and natural capital – shrinking forests, declining biodiversity, disappearing wetlands and water resources, among others, while resulting in growing volume and diversification waste streams such as but not limited to the municipal solid waste, industrial waste, agricultural waste, plastic waste, e-waste, and hazardous and chemical waste, among others.

Circular economy ideas have become increasingly important for waste management and business sustainability as the world grapples with resource scarcity, environmental degradation, and the need for sustainable development. Traditional linear economic models, based on "take-make-dispose" approaches, have led to excessive waste generation and inefficient resource use. In contrast, circular economy principles focus on designing out waste, keeping materials in use, and regenerating natural systems. This aligns closely with several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure), and SDG 13 (Climate Action). By adopting circular economy

¹ Regional economic outlook. Asia and Pacific: challenges to sustaining growth and disinflation, 2023.

² <https://www.unep.org/regions/asia-and-pacific/regional-initiatives/supporting-resource-efficiency#:~:text=Asia%20Pacific&text=Asia%20Pacific%20dominates%20global%20use,manufacturing%20centres%20in%20the%20region.>

practices, businesses can contribute significantly to achieving these SDGs while also improving their own sustainability and resilience. For instance, implementing waste reduction strategies and optimizing resource use directly supports SDG 12's targets of substantially reducing waste generation and achieving sustainable management of natural resources. Moreover, redesigning business processes with circularity in mind often leads to innovative solutions and more efficient infrastructure, aligning with SDG 9's focus on promoting inclusive and sustainable industrialization. These innovations can range from developing new materials and products designed for reuse or recycling to creating entirely new business models based on sharing or leasing rather than ownership. Furthermore, circular economy principles play a crucial role in addressing climate change, as outlined in SDG 13. By minimizing resource extraction and waste, businesses can significantly reduce their carbon footprint and contribute to global efforts to combat climate change. This approach not only helps mitigate environmental impacts but also offers economic benefits through increased productivity and reduced costs associated with raw material inputs and waste management. As businesses face growing pressure from consumers, investors, and regulators to improve their sustainability performance, incorporating circular economy ideas provides a practical framework for achieving long-term sustainability goals while maintaining competitiveness in an increasingly resource-constrained world.

In particular, the ASEAN region, home to vast biodiversity including one-fourth of the world's mangrove forests³ and one-third of its coral reefs⁴, faces a number of environmental challenges due to rapid population growth, urbanization, and industrialization. It has also become a major destination for global plastic waste imports. ASEAN produces 202,000 tonnes of municipal solid waste daily, a figure expected to double by 2025⁵. The region struggles with waste management due to inadequate recycling infrastructure, growing volumes of plastic and hazardous waste, and insufficient policy frameworks, funding, and public awareness, exacerbating health and environmental risks. There is an urgent need for ASEAN countries to improve their policy, programs, infrastructure, institution arrangement, financing to provide comprehensible and deliverable solutions to address and better manage waste, marine debris and plastic pollution.

Acknowledging that ASEAN leaders are taking a strong position in ongoing negotiations to develop the "Global Plastics Treaty," aiming to address plastic pollution, including marine debris, through a comprehensive approach covering the entire plastic life cycle⁶. The ASEAN Regional Action Plan for Combating Marine Debris (2021-2025) emphasizes reducing plastic waste through regional cooperation, policy enforcement, and waste reduction strategies. ASEAN countries are also implementing national waste management policies and advancing international agreements, such as the Paris Agreement, the Habitat III New Urban Agenda, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. However, there is currently no mechanism to implement these global agreements at the regional or sectoral level in Asia and the Pacific. Transformational changes in sustainable consumption, production, and waste management are essential for ASEAN and the broader region to meet these global targets. At Asia-Pacific level, the Hanoi 3R Declaration

³ http://www.ukm.edu.my/jsm/pdf_files/SM-PDF-49-9-2020/21.pdf

⁴ <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.emcon.2021.08.002>

⁵&⁷ <https://environment.asean.org/chemical-and-waste/about>

⁵https://resolutions.unep.org/incres/uploads/final_csos_joint_statement_asean_leadership_key_to_the_success_of_global_plastic_treaty_to_end_plastic_pollution_compressed.pdf

(2013-2023) and its 33 sustainable 3R goals (agreed at 4th Regional 3R Forum in Asia and the Pacific in Ha Noi, Viet Nam in 2013) was the first unprecedented voluntary commitment of Asia-Pacific countries in moving towards a more resource efficient and circular society and provided an umbrella policy framework for developing and implementing 3R policies and programs at all levels to help Asia-Pacific countries shift from linear to more resource efficient to circular economy ultimately. The new 3R and circular economy Declaration seeks to integrate sustainable consumption, production, and circular economy principles into policies and strategies. The goal is to achieve co-benefits such as protecting ecosystems, reducing waste disposal costs, lowering carbon footprints, enhancing energy security, fostering green technologies, creating eco-friendly businesses, generating green jobs, and promoting sustainable cities and human settlements.

2. Regional and subregional contexts

The Asia-Pacific Green Deal for Business

The Asia-Pacific Green Deal for Business, launched at the Asia Pacific Business Forum on 26 August 2022, recognizes that a green transformation of the economy is necessary for the well-being of all people. The Green Deal is an initiative of the ESCAP Sustainable Business Network (ESBN), an institution that gathers like-minded businesses committed to sustainability to discuss how the private sector can advance sustainable development in their countries and regions. In order to bring about the necessary green transformation of our economy, the private sector will need to work hand-in-hand with the public sector to ensure that goals around decarbonization, green infrastructure and urbanization, and green finance are aligned. Moreover, the ESBN has recently reoriented its task forces around the five pillars of the Asia-Pacific Green Deal for Business. A task force has been dedicated to the topic of Circular Economy. This task force will consider how businesses can implement the objectives of the Green Production, Consumption and Waste pillar, which are: *Changing towards a more circular economy. New circular production and consumption practices will bring new business and employment opportunities, to maximize resource efficiency and minimize environmental impacts.*

Regional 3R and Circular Economy Forum in Asia-Pacific

The high level Regional 3R and Circular Economy Forum in Asia was launched in 2009 with the financial support of the Ministry of the Environment of the Government of Japan. The primary objective of the Forum was to offer strategic policy advice to national government authorities on integrating 3Rs (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle) and the circular economy into overall policy, planning, and development. The Forum brings high-level governmental decision-makers from countries across Asia and the Pacific to discuss strategies for achieving resource efficiency, sustainable consumption and production, integrated solid waste management, sound material cycles, low-carbon initiatives, and green growth development towards creating a zero-waste society. Additionally, the Forum serves as a platform for knowledge sharing, facilitating the dissemination of best practices in 3R and circular economy areas, and addressing new and emerging issues in waste management sector. Moreover, the forum strengthens the science-policy interface, focusing on 3R and resource efficiency as fundamental drivers of economic growth, environmental protection, for improving resilience of cities and communities. Ultimately, the forum aims to advance international agendas and agreements such as the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as well as the Paris Climate Agreement, among others.

3. Objective

The objective of two closely interlinked and mutually reinforcing events are as follows.

3.1: Asia-Pacific green deal for business roundtable on 25 November focus on how the private and public sectors can deepen cooperation to ensure that circular production and consumption models are successfully deployed throughout the Asia and the Pacific region to boost growth in a sustainable manner. It further aims to address key circular economy topics relevant to Asia-Pacific businesses. Objectives include examining the regulatory landscape, exploring innovative circular business models, and discussing green finance mechanisms. The event will focus on fostering public-private collaboration and developing regional circular value chains. Participants will evaluate methods for measuring circularity and impact, as well as strategies for engaging consumers and promoting behavior change. The discussion will also cover capacity building and skills development needed to support the circular economy transition. Throughout the roundtable, attendees will assess current practices, identify challenges and opportunities, and propose solutions to accelerate circular economy adoption in the region. By bringing together diverse stakeholders, the event seeks to generate actionable insights and foster collaboration to drive circular economy initiatives across the Asia-Pacific business community.

3.2.: South East Asia Country Consultation meeting on 25 and 26 November aims to enhance the draft of the New Declaration by incorporating the perspectives of ASEAN countries given that the ASEAN region, known for its rich biodiversity, including a quarter of the world's mangrove forests and a third of its coral reefs, faces significant environmental challenges due to rapid population growth, urbanization, and industrialization. This is a third consultation meeting in series followed by SIDS (Pacific Island Countries) consultation meeting held in Apia, Samoa, on 14-17 May 2024 and LLDCs (Landlocked Developing Countries) consultation meeting held in Vientiane, Lao PDR, on 6-7 August 2024. These country consultations are expected to gather valuable inputs, feedback, and suggestions from the participating nations of the Regional 3R and Circular Economy Forum on the Pre-Zero Draft of the New Declaration on 3R and Circular Economy (2025-2034). Based on these contributions, the Pre-Zero Draft will be further revised, and the Zero Draft will be circulated among the participating countries prior to the 12th Regional 3R and Circular Economy Forum in Asia and the Pacific (expected to take place in early 2025) where it would be finally agreed.

4. Participants

It is expected that the event will be attended by approximately 50 participants, including national government representatives and private and business sectors from a list of selected Countries in Special Situations and ASEAN member States (Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam), representatives of UN, international, regional, subregional and national organizations, experts, and local participants from host country.

5. Date and Venue

The consultation meeting will be held in UN Conference Centre, UNESCAP in Bangkok, Thailand on 25-26 November 2024.

6. Language

The language of the meeting is English.

7. Organizers and Supporting organizations

The meeting will be co-organized by UNESCAP Sustainable Business Network, UNDESA/UNCRD and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE) of Thailand (tbc).

8. Programme Agenda (Provisional)

Day 1: 25 November 2024 (Monday)	
8:00-08:45	Registration
08:45-09:15 (30 min.)	Opening Session Welcome Address: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rupa Chanda, Director; Trade, Investment and Innovation Division; ESCAP George Lam, Chair; ESCAP Sustainable Business Network (ESBN) Choudhury Rudra Charan Mohanty, Environment Programme Coordinator, UNCRD-DSDG/UN DESA Opening Address: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Thailand (tbc) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group Photograph
<p>Asia-Pacific Green Deal for Business Roundtable ~ <i>Changing towards a more circular economy in Asia and the Pacific</i> 25 November 2024, UN Conference Centre, Bangkok</p>	
<p>Part 1: Spreading the Secrets of Circularity</p>	
09:15 – 09:30	Introduction of Asia-Pacific Green Deal for Business Roundtable <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sudip Ranjan Basu, Chief of Sustainable Business Network Section, Trade Investment and Innovation Division, ESCAP Anthony Watanabe, Chair of the ESBN Circular Economy Task Force
09:30 – 10:30	ESBN Position Paper: The Six Secrets of Circularity New circular production and consumption practices can create new business and employment opportunities that maximize resource efficiency and minimize environmental impacts, while advancing progress on Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 12 on Sustainable Consumption and Production. This session will hear from the ESBN circular economy task force on the six secrets of circularity: Infrastructure, Regulation, Education, Innovation, Finance and Collaboration.

	<p>Presentation by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Piya Kerdlap, Consultant; Trade, Investment and Innovation Division, ESCAP <p>Panel discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderated by Benjamin McCarthy, Associate Economic Affairs Officer; Trade, Investment and Innovation Division, ESCAP
10:30 – 10:45	Coffee/Tea Break
10:45 – 11:30	<p>Public policy: Creating the enabling environment to shift towards a circular economy The private sector has taken the lead to promote circular economy principles in its operations. However, meaningful change often requires the efforts by both the private sector and the government. This session will focus on the policy support necessary to accelerate the shift towards a circular economy.</p> <p>Panel discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderated by Anthony Watanabe, Chair of the ESNB Circular Economy Task Force
11:30 – 12:30	Lunch Break
Part 2: Sectoral Factors and Ongoing Circular Economy Research	
12:30 – 12:40	<p>Introduction to Part 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sudip Ranjan Basu, Chief of Sustainable Business Network Section, Trade Investment and Innovation Division, ESCAP • Rijit Sengupta, CEO; Centre for Responsible Business (CRB)
12:40 – 14:10	<p>Linking circular economy business practices to addressing climate impacts: examining sectoral practices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation by CRB • Panel discussion + Q&A
Part 3: Roundtable Wrap Up and Way Forward	
14:10 – 14:20	<p>Final remarks and audience Q&A</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anthony Watanabe, Chair of the ESNB Circular Economy Task Force • Sudip Ranjan Basu, Chief of Sustainable Business Network Section, Trade Investment and Innovation Division, ESCAP
Break	
<p>Consultation Meeting for South East Asian Countries on the Pre-Zero Draft of New Declaration on 3R and Circular Economy ~ Sustainable 3R and Circular Economy Goals for Achieving Resource Efficient, Clean, Resilient, Sound Material Cycle and Low-Carbon Society in Asia and the Pacific (2025-2034) 25-26 November 2024, UN Conference Centre, Bangkok, Thailand</p>	

<p>14:30-15:00 (30 min)</p>	<p>Session 1: Scope and Objective of the Draft New Declaration on 3R and Circular Economy & Purpose of the Meeting</p> <p>Presentation 1: Scope and Objective of the Successor to the Ha Noi 3R Declaration - Choudhury Rudra Charan Mohanty, Environment Programme Coordinator, UNCRD-DSDG/UN DESA</p> <p>Facilitator: Arab Hoballah, Senior SCP Expert, EU SWITCH-Asia PSC</p> <p>Open discussion and Q&A (15 min)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Are there any important elements from the viewpoint of ASEANs member countries missed out or needs to be strengthened in the pre-zero draft new Declaration? (please refer the whole draft Declaration)</i> <i>Are the proposed “strategies” to achieve the underlined goals of the new Declaration sufficient or appropriate? Is any important strategy missed out? (please refer Annex 1 of the draft Declaration)</i> <i>Are the proposed “indicators” of monitoring the progress of implementation of the underlined goals of the new Declaration sufficient or appropriate? Is any important indicator missed out? (please refer Annex 2 of the draft Declaration)</i>
<p>15:00-15:15</p>	<p>Coffee/Tea Break</p>
<p>15:15-16:15 (60 min.)</p>	<p>Session 2: Presentation of 3R/waste management activities by ASEAN member countries (5 min each)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brunei Darussalam • Cambodia • Indonesia • Lao PSR • Malaysia • The Philippines • Singapore • Thailand • Vietnam <p>Co-facilitators: Choudhury Rudra Charan Mohanty, Environment Programme Coordinator, UNCRD-DSDG/UN DESA and Arab Hoballah, Senior SCP Expert, EU SWITCH-Asia PSC</p> <p>Open discussion and Q&A (15 min)</p>
<p>16:15-17:00 (45 min.)</p>	<p>Session 3: Consultation/Open Discussion on Draft New Declaration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preamble • Declaration • Common Vision

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable 3R and Circular Economy Goals for Achieving Resource Efficient, Clean, Resilient, Sound Material Cycle and Low-Carbon Society <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cluster I: Promote Sustainable Resource Management, Resource Efficiency and Low-Carbon Society - Cluster II: Achieving Clean Environment (Land, Water, Air, Ocean) through 3R and Circular Economy <p>Co-facilitators: Choudhury Rudra Charan Mohanty, Environment Programme Coordinator, UNCRD-DSDG/UN DESA and Arab Hoballah, Senior SCP Expert, EU SWITCH-Asia PSC</p>
<p>17:00-18:00 (60 min.)</p>	<p>Session 4: Consultation/Open Discussion on Draft New Declaration (Cont...)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable 3R and Circular Economy Goals for Achieving Resource Efficient, Clean, Resilient, Sound Material Cycle and Low-Carbon Society Cont..... <p>Cluster III: Strengthen Resilience against Natural Disasters, Climate Change and Health Emergencies and Pandemics</p> <p>Cluster IV: Sound Material Cycle Society and Resource Recirculation towards Zero Waste and Circular Society</p> <p>Co-facilitators: Choudhury Rudra Charan Mohanty, Environment Programme Coordinator, UNCRD-DSDG/UN DESA and Arab Hoballah, Senior SCP Expert, EU SWITCH-Asia PSC</p>
<p>Day 2: 26 November 2024 (Tuesday)</p>	
<p>9:00–10:00 (60 min.)</p>	<p>Session 5: Consultation/Open Discussion on Draft New Declaration (Cont...)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable 3R and Circular Economy Goals for Achieving Resource Efficient, Clean, Resilient, Sound Material Cycle and Low-Carbon Society Cont..... <p>Cluster V: Cross-cutting Goals in Economic and Social Aspects</p> <p>Cluster VI: Means of Implementation - Partnerships, Technology Transfer, Research and Development, National and International Financing and Investments, Institutional Capacity Building and Information Sharing</p> <p>Co-facilitators: Choudhury Rudra Charan Mohanty, Environment Programme Coordinator, UNCRD-DSDG/UN DESA and Arab Hoballah, Senior SCP Expert, EU SWITCH-Asia PSC</p>

10:00-10:30	Coffee/Tea Break
10:30-11:30 (60 min.)	<p>Session 6: Consultation/Open Discussion on Draft New Declaration (Cont.....)</p> <p>Annex 1: Strategies to Support the Implementation of the Draft New Declaration (2024-2034) <i>Are the proposed “strategies” to achieve the underlined goals of the new Declaration sufficient or appropriate? Is any important strategy missed out? (please refer Annex 1 of the draft Declaration)</i></p> <p>Co-facilitators: Choudhury Rudra Charan Mohanty, Environment Programme Coordinator, UNCRD-DSDG/UN DESA and Arab Hoballah, Senior SCP Expert, EU SWITCH-Asia PSC</p>
11:30-12:30 (60 min.)	<p>Session 6: Consultation/Open Discussion on Draft New Declaration (Cont.....)</p> <p>Annex 2: Indicators for Tracking the Progress on Implementation of New Declaration on 3R and Circular Economy (2024-2034) <i>Are the proposed “indicators” of monitoring the progress of implementation of the underlined goals of the new Declaration sufficient or appropriate? Is any important indicator missed out? (please refer Annex 2 of the draft Declaration)</i></p> <p>Co-facilitators: Choudhury Rudra Charan Mohanty, Environment Programme Coordinator, UNCRD-DSDG/UN DESA, and Arab Hoballah, Senior SCP Expert, EU SWITCH-Asia PSC</p>
12:30 – 14:00	<p>Special launch event of the UNCTAD Digital Economy Report 2024</p>
14:00-16:00 (2 hr.)	<p>Session 7: Initiatives, Activities and Projects Undertaken by Development Partners and their Synergies with Draft New Declaration on 3R and Circular Economy (2024-2034)</p> <p>Presentations (tbc):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UN ESCAP - <i>The Asia-Pacific Green Deal for Business towards Green Transformation of the Economy</i> • UNEP - <i>Plastics wastes and pollution in ASEAN region – challenges and circular economy opportunities</i> • UNIDO - <i>Greening industries and MSMEs towards circular economy</i> • FAO - <i>Nature based solutions and bio-circular economy – prospects and opportunities in ASEAN region – by Illias Animon, Regional Focal Point for FAO’s Programme Priority Area on Bioeconomy for sustainable food and agriculture</i> • ILO - <i>Health, safety and labor issues in informal waste sector – ILO’s strategies to overcome them</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IUCN - <i>Nature based solutions towards ecosystem restoration and regeneration – from circular economy perspectives</i> • ASEAN Secretariat - <i>ASEAN transition towards circular economy – Vision and Strategies</i> • EU SWITCH-Asia - <i>EU SWITCH-Asia’s experience towards the transition of the ASEAN region to a low-carbon, resource efficient and circular society – by Zinaida Fadeeva, Team Leader, EU SWITCH-Asia Policy Support Component</i> • JICA - <i>JICA's strategy and approach towards circular economy – Experiences from ASEAN region</i> • ERIA - <i>Circular economy strategies and plans in ASEAN – what works and what does not work</i> <p>Co-facilitators: Choudhury Rudra Charan Mohanty, Environment Programme Coordinator, UNCRD-DSDG/UN DESA and Arab Hoballah, Senior SCP Expert, EU SWITCH-Asia PSC</p> <p>Open Discussion & Q&A</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>How can we strengthen the capacity of ASEAN countries in advancing 3R and circular economy approaches in the region? To this regard, what are the key policy recommendations for ASEAN countries?</i> 2. <i>How can the overarching principles of 3R and Circular Economy create meaningful synergies in accelerating the SDGs and the climate goal under the Paris Agreement?</i> 3. <i>What role the proposed new 3R and Circular Economy Declaration (2024- 2034) could play towards accelerating sound material cycle, low carbon, resilient, zero waste and nature positive societies in ASEAN region?</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interventions by development partners / donors
<p>16:00-16:30</p>	<p>Coffee/Tea Break</p>
<p>16:30-17:00</p>	<p>Closing Session</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sudip Ranjan Basu, Chief of Sustainable Business Network Section, Trade Investment and Innovation Division, ESCAP • Choudhury Rudra Charan Mohanty, Environment Programme Coordinator, UNCRD-DSDG/UN DESA

-End-