

Flash Report

The Policy Dialogue on How Sustainable Consumption Contributes to Circular Economy in China



October 13, 2020, 14:30 PM - 16:30 PM Beijing Time, Online via Tencent

Meeting Link: <https://meeting.tencent.com/s/rQUcvtztM3P1>, Meeting ID: 462 807 519

Table of Contents

List of Acronyms.....	3
Background	4
Summary of key messages	4
Press release	5
Annex:	5
Annex I:	6
Annex II:	8

List of Acronyms

CCEA	China Circular Economy Association
CCFA	China Chain Store and Franchise Association
CCICED	China Council on International Cooperation for Environment and Development
CE	Circular Economy
CEC	China Environmental United Certification Center
EU	European Union
EUD	European Union Delegation
MEE	Ministry of Ecology and Environment of China
SCP	Sustainable consumption and production
SPP	Sustainable Public Procurement
SWITCH-Asia RPAC	SWITCH-Asia Regional Policy Advocacy Component
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme

Background

As a response to the challenges identified to promote sustainable consumption in China, SWITCH-Asia Regional Policy Advocacy Component (SWITCH-Asia RPAC) funded by European Union (EU) held a National Policy Dialogue on Sustainable Consumption for Policy Makers and Stakeholders in China in collaboration with the China Environmental United Certification Center (CEC) on 25 April 2019. The main insights of that Dialogue together with the results of an analysis of the current status on sustainable consumption in China have been detailed in a report titled as 'Analysis Report of the Current Situation on Sustainable Consumption in China' in English and Chinese. This report provides an overview of the sustainable consumption policy framework in China. And it proposes policy recommendations that would be useful to both policymakers and practitioners in China or other Asian countries in similar circumstances.

Based on key findings of this report, SWITCH-Asia RPAC organized the National Policy Dialogue on How Sustainable Consumption Contributes to Circular Economy in China (a webinar) on October 13, 2020.

Objectives of the event

The main objectives of the dialogue are to launch the report of 'Analysis Report of the Current Situation on Sustainable Consumption in China' and share its key findings, and to initiate thinking of how to promote circular economy (CE) through sustainable consumption in key areas and sectors.

The dialogue involved wide spectrum of around 60 participants, including EU delegation to China, governments, inter-governmental organizations, UN agencies, private sectors, civil society and academia.

Summary of key messages

The EU Delegation to China and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) officially opened the dialogue.

Ms. Feng Mei from the EU Delegation to China reinforced the importance of SWITCH-Asia's role in promoting circular economy and highlighted that SWITCH-Asia will maintain a high consistency with the targets of European Green Deal including the priorities of textile and leather products, building and construction, agriculture and food, and plastic electronic waste. She noted SWITCH-Asia will also continue to focus on small and medium enterprises' low carbon transition and green financing.

Ms. Wang Qian from UNEP China Office highlighted that SCP is an important opportunity for "Build Back Better" after the COVID-19 pandemic, and encouraged collective and innovative efforts from stakeholders and partners through information exchange on the links between sustainable consumption and circular economy. She noted this report has valuably contributed to the policy recommendations on SCP to China's State Council through collaboration with the Special Policy Study on green transition of the China Council on International Cooperation for Environment and Development (CCICED).

At the dialogue, one of the main authors from CEC shared the key findings of 'Analysis Report of the Current Situation on Sustainable Consumption in China'. The whole picture on status, policy framework and challenges on sustainable consumption in China were elaborated, followed by the policy recommendations proposed in the report. The 6 experts from governments, academia and

civil society welcomed the comprehensive information and analysis on the policy framework of sustainable consumption in this report, and highlighted the policy recommendations related to sustainable public procurement (SPP) and priorities identified on food system and plastic waste management during their presentations.

The information and points on how sustainable consumption contributes to circular economy with practices and cases study were shared by the experts from the various aspects, covering 'zero-waste' pilot city program, SPP, consumer information tools, reducing food waste and plastic waste. Reducing food waste at source generation, food culture change, reducing excessive food packaging and enlarging the scope of SPP were highlighted by the experts for promoting sustainable consumption towards circular economy in China, which are very relevant to the priorities set out in the European Green Deal.

Press release

The prominent Chinese media reported on the dialogue in Chinese. The web links to the Chinese articles titled as 'SWITCH-Asia: Policy Dialogue on Sustainable Consumption in China Held' from China Daily and China News are pasted hereunder for easy reference.

China Daily: <http://cn.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202010/13/WS5f859324a3101e7ce972910f.html>

China News: <http://www.chinanews.com/gj/2020/10-13/9311966.shtml>

Annex:

Annex I: Summary of Presentations

Annex II: The Final Agenda

Annex I:

Summary of Presentations

The key findings of 'Analysis Report of the Current Situation on Sustainable Consumption in China'

As one of outputs of SWITCH-Asia RPAC in China, the key findings of 'Analysis Report of the Current Situation on Sustainable Consumption in China' was shared by one of main authors from CEC. The whole picture on status, policy framework and analysis, and challenges on sustainable consumption in China were introduced firstly, followed by the key policy recommendations in the report. China has announced a series of policies and measures in many sectors and various aspects to improve the consumption of sustainable products and service, and has received positive results. The macro-level economic policy and incentive instruments are two main ways to promote sustainable consumption in China.

Considering China's technical and economic challenges, together with the social obstacles that hinder its policy implementation, specific recommendations are proposed to address the sustainable consumption approach in the report. The key policy recommendations are proposed: 1) Speed up the establishment of a sound policy framework on sustainable consumption; 2) Establish a market-based, consumer-based and government-led promotion mechanism; 3) Focus on improving environmental quality as a key to promoting sustainable consumption; 4) Improve market and economic incentives; 5) Establish mechanism for information dissemination and encourage stakeholder participation; 6) Improve sustainable supply chain management through consumer information tools.

Policies and Practices on Sustainable Consumption towards Zero-Waste at City Level

The policies and practices on sustainable consumption in "zero waste city" pilot program was shared by the representative from MEE. The "zero waste city" pilot program was announced by China's State Council in 2019, looked as China's actions towards SDG 12.4 and 12.5, with aims to create an urban development model that minimizes the negative environmental impact of waste at its whole life cycle. It has set promoting green lifestyle as one of the four pillars, together with minimization of waste generation, promotion of recycling, minimization of landfill. The various actions to promote green lifestyle have been practiced in pilot cities, including reducing single-use plastic products in hotels and restaurants, green office with paperless, use of green packaging for delivery, development of green shops, and separated collection of municipal waste, which will contribute to circular economy in different areas.

SPP China's Governmental Green Procurement and its Link with Circular Economy

The policy framework on governmental green procurement in China is outlined by the expert from Environmental Certification Center of MEE. Currently, China's governmental green procurement is based on eco-labeling certification and energy and resource conservation certification. The benefits to environment and GHG based on eco-labeling certification are shared with detailed data. She highlighted China has made good progress on SPP, and suggested to expand the scope of SPP in order to further promote CE.

Promoting Circular Economy through Sustainable Public Procurement

Sustainable consumption's role to the transformation of production is highlighted by one professor from Renmin University. She analyzed how to increase use of relevant green standards and consumption of green products by SPP with cases. The leading role of SPP to increase consumers'

willingness to choose sustainable products and to accelerate circular economy is highlighted with some suggestions, including reduction of excessive food packaging and expanding the scope of SPP.

Promoting Circular Economy by Sustainable Food System and Reducing Food Waste

The characters on food waste (generated from restaurants and kitchens) in China are outlined by one professor from Tsinghua University based on literature data. Currently, food loss and waste in China happen in both harvest and processing, and retails and consumption, and most food waste in China occurs in restaurants, canteens and friends' parties, rather than from home. The level of kitchen waste (food waste from kitchen) recycling and its feasibility in China was analyzed, covering source reduction, feed hungry people, feed animals, industrial uses, composting and landfill. The contributions of recycling of kitchen waste (food waste) to reducing Green House Gas (GHG), circular economy and restoration of ecosystem are shared based on one ongoing project. Finally, food culture change and supply of clean-vegetables in market are suggested as entry points for reducing food waste. It is also suggested to integrate reducing food waste into existing national environmental actions with clear responsibilities set for stakeholders, including separated collection of municipal waste, 'zero-waste' pilot city program, and plastics management.

Promoting CE by Reducing and Recycling Plastic Waste

The representative from China Circular Economy Association (CCEA) shared their actions to encourage reducing plastic packaging in collaboration with e-commerce, food delivery and logistics enterprises, and activities to promote separated collection and recycling of plastic waste. The recommendations from the association on circular economy and plastics for next national 5-year's plan has been shared, including upgrading of industrial park, development of circular city focusing on separated waste collection and recycling, improving circular economy in rural areas, and advancing legislation on circular economy. Collective efforts and collaboration from all stakeholders are critical to achieve circularity of plastics and minimize negative impacts to environment.

Promoting Circular Economy by Information Tools and Activities by Retails

The representative from Chain Store and Franchise Association (CCFA) shared their activities to guide retailers and consumers to practice sustainable consumption and green lifestyle, including guidelines on green shops and supermarkets, certification of forest friendly products, the use of green cooling technology and equipment's in supermarkets. The cases on energy conservation, reducing plastic straw and un-degradable plastic bags, reducing food waste, providing eco-designed products and recyclable products from retails have been shared. She noted more actual guidance for retails to improve sustainable consumption are needed.

More information about the presentations, please see PPT documents (in Chinese) attached separately.

Annex II:

Agenda

14:30 Opening Remarks

Ms. Feng Mei, SWITCH-Asia Program Officer, EUD China

Ms. Wang Qian, Programme Management Officer, UNEP China Office

14:40 Key Findings of 'Analysis Report of the Current Situation on Sustainable Consumption in China'

Mr. Zhou Caihua, CEC

15:00 Policies and Practices on SC in China

- Policies and Practices on Sustainable Consumption towards Zero-Waste at City Level
Dr. Teng Jingjie, National Management Center for Solid Waste and Chemical, Ministry of Ecology and Environment (MEE)
- China's Governmental Green Procurement and its Link with Circular Economy
Ms. Dingling, Chief of Governmental Green Procurement, Environmental Certification Center

15:30 Experts' insights: How SC contribute to CE

- Promoting circular economy by sustainable food system and reducing food waste
Prof. Liu Jianguo, Tsinghua University
- Promoting circular economy through sustainable public procurement
Prof. Li Yan, Renmin University
- Promoting circular economy by information tools
Ms. Wang Wenhua, Director of Sustainable Consumption Unit, Chain Store and Franchise Association
- Promoting CE by sustainable consumption in sectors
Mr. Zhao Kai, Deputy Director, China Circular Economy Association

16:30 Q & A

16:40 Closing

Ms. Zheng Lixia, National Coordinator for China, Switch-Asia RPAC, UNEP China Office

For more information

<https://www.switch-asia.eu/>

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