

SWITCH-Asia Myanmar Country Consultation - Concept Note

Context:

Although precise numbers are always changing in these dynamic industries, the garment, footwear, textile and food processing industries are thought to collectively employ over two million individuals in Myanmar across thousands of industrial facilities. The economic importance of these sectors and the environmental impacts of business activity deserve greater attention.

In 2015, the Environmental Conservation Department issued Notification No. 616/2015 on Environmental Impact Procedures (2015) as well as the National Environment Quality (Emission) Guidelines. Implementation of the Environmental Impact Procedures has been constrained not only for planned investments but for existing industrial facilities. So far, regulations and procedures are not well understood or applied by the private sector and review/assessment of plans at ministry level is compounded by limited capacities and low quality of document submitted. Therefore, an opportunity exists to steer the process in a more effective and positive direction through discussing how the process (template, guidelines e.g.) could be improved and bringing greater awareness and capacity at many levels.

Location & date:

July 3rd & 4th in Naypyitaw, venue TBC

Two-day event. SWITCH-Asia public-private dialogue on Environmental Management Plans (EMPs), environmental impact assessments (EIAs) and initial environmental examinations (IEEs) in two key sectors: the garment & textile and food & beverage industries.

Local organizers: Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation (hosting), SMART Myanmar (partners sequa & MGMA), Tha Bar Wa (partners WWF & MFPEA), EU Delegation to Myanmar, SWITCH Asia SCP Facility

Expected participants (approx. 70 persons total):

- Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation (ECD DG level and staff from the EIA division, ECD staff from Yangon and Mandalay region)
- Ministry of Investment and Foreign Economic Relations (DG level from DICA)
- Ministry of Industry (DG level)
- Ministry of Electricity & Energy (DG Level)
- Members of Parliament
- EU Delegation to Myanmar
- Myanmar Garment Manufacturers Association

- Myanmar Textile Manufacturers Association
- Myanmar Food Processors & Exporters Association
- Myanmar Industry Association
- Myanmar Chemical Industry Association
- Myanmar Industries Association
- Myanmar Environmental Assessment Association
- Mandalay Weaving Businesses Association
- Myanmar Engineering Society
- UNIDO
- JICA
- IFC
- YCDC
- MCDC
- UNEP
- SWITCH project staff, GIZ projects/Solidaridad
- Selected participants from civil society organizations
- Academia (Yangon Technological University and Mandalay University)
- Selected private sector experts, such as Myanmar Water Engineering Co., Ltd. (wastewater expert)

Objectives of the event:

1. Bring awareness to private sector stakeholders on EMP requirements and more generally on environment sustainability
2. Encourage technical discussions among various stakeholders groups with a view of improving EMP preparation, submission and review processes
3. Identify areas of support which the SWITCH programmes (SMART Myanmar and Tha Bar Wa) and the SWITCH SCP Facility could possibly provide.

Some expected outcomes:

- Template for environmental management plans (EMPs) for "light industries" and current procedures are evaluated & potential improvements to existing processes are discussed.
- Enforcement and accountability issues are discussed and clarified.
- Clarification on how traditional/cottage industries will be handled in terms of non-compliance with new emissions and water quality standards.
- Mechanisms for public-private consultation are strengthened.
- Greater clarity is provided for investors and business associations on the development and promulgation of new environmental regulations and water quality standards.
- Discussion on the growing problems of water over-extraction and groundwater management, and wood fuel and coal usage by factories. Steps are made towards addressing these concerning issues.
- Clarify roles and responsibilities of different institutions on monitoring and accountability.

Focus for Day 1 - Opening Ceremony and focus on environmental regulations impacting the garment/textile and food & beverage industries, including emissions guidelines and standards, EIAs, EMPs and IEEs

- Opening by Minister of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation and EU Ambassador (TBC)
- Presentation by ECD on current legal requirements and constraints for environmental management. Especially, ECD can explain existing requirements and procedures around EIAs, EMPs and IEEs.
- Presentation from different industry associations (MGMA, MTMA, MFPEA, MIA) on environmental issues and challenges they face in complying with national environmental safeguards.
- Sharing of lessons learnt from other countries on system-level implementation of new environmental safeguards (SWITCH-SCP or other)
- Presentations from Tha Ba War and SMART Myanmar to contextualize environmental issues in Myanmar and brief about support to industry provided by SWITCH Asia projects. SMART to provide examples from garment/textile/footwear, Tha Bar Wa from food & beverage; SWITCH-SCP to share selected experience & learnings from other countries.
- Discussions and group work in the afternoon on specific issues.

Focus for Day 2 - focus on EMPs specifically, especially how to pilot new approaches to ensure effective and transparent EMPs

- GIZ led working group on environmental management plans for garment & textile industries to convene in the morning.
- Tha Ba War to organize a new working group on environmental management plans in F&B industry.
- In the afternoon, both groups convene to discuss recommendations with MoNREC on EMPs. Target to develop & pilot improvements and greater consistency in the approach of MoNREC towards EMPs. Major target: to bring transparency, consistency and greater efficacy to the EMP process.