

Flash Report

Webinar on Innovations and Startups for Circular Economy



Date: Wednesday, 16 December 2020 | 14.00 hrs.

Venue: Hybrid from Asian Institute of Technology (Smart Lab and Entrepreneurship Center)

Disclaimer

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List of Acronyms:

AIT	Asian Institute of Technology
CE	Circular Economy
EE	Energy-Efficient
EU	The European Union
SCP	Sustainable Consumption and Production
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SWITCH-Asia RPAC	SWITCH-Asia Regional Policy Advocacy Component
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme

Background:

Circular economy approach is gaining momentum for improving resource efficiency and to reduce pollution through sustainable consumption and production. To accelerate the implementation of circular economy model, innovative approaches are required for products and services. The innovations in technology are key to increase resource efficiency and to reduce pollution through the lifecycle of a product and service. These innovations are accelerated by creating innovative environment that is comprised of policies, financing, and demand. Innovative policies are required to support the innovations to foster and materialize through green products, services and business models. To sustain the innovations and mainstream those, financing is required. The conventional financing mechanisms may not work due to unpredictability and also due to the fact that many innovations are through the startups which may not have previous history to support borrowing through conventional financing opportunities. Hence, innovative financing is also key for the innovations for circular economy. Last and the most important accelerator for the innovations and startups is demand based on transformation to sustainable consumption practices as a result of sustainable and low carbon lifestyles. Therefore, this regional dialogue is among the innovation labs including the startups, businesses and investors to mainstream and scale up the innovations and startups, and policy makers for creating enabling environment including through regulatory and incentive mechanisms for promoting sustainable consumption.

Objective of the event:

To identify the pathways in accelerating innovations for circular economy. The pathways include the enabling environment and capacity building for green startups, innovative policies and financing mechanisms, and creating demand for innovations sustainable consumption as a result of sustainable lifestyles.

Focus areas for the dialogue:

1. Enabling environment for innovations for circular economy
2. Capacity building for green startups
3. Innovative policies and financing mechanisms to support the innovations
4. Demand creation through sustainable consumption and sustainable lifestyles
5. COVID-19 response through green innovations

Logistical information about the event

The organization of Webinar on Innovations and Startups for Circular Economy was organized as a hybrid-event via live broadcasting from Asian Institute of Technology (AIT).

Review on Participants:

The webinar attracted 375 registered participants. More than 10,000 viewers online through Zoom and Live broadcast on the Facebook's Page of EU SWITCH-Asia, AIT Entrepreneurship Center and their networks.

Summary of Key Messages:

Welcoming Remarks



Dr. Mushtaq Ahmed Memon

Regional Coordinator Resource Efficiency in Asia Pacific, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

As we look at the mainstreaming SCP or importantly the SDG 12 to achieve many international/ national goals including climate change, biodiversity, plastic pollution, food waste, carbon neutrality, and so on, the governments, private sector, and consumers are looking for better solutions, one, to improve quality of life, cater safer environments including transportation and food and also help in achieving the global goals on environment and sustainable development. Young researchers are coming up with startups and there is a rise of social enterprise that are going to make a change locally and scale up to global level. Few important things we have learned: timing is very important and teams, timing for introducing new products and services and what kind of team we have.

Innovative Policies and Financing Mechanisms for Green Innovations and Startups



Ms. Nelly Andrade

Head of Global Programs, Hult Prize Foundation

Hult Prize is a community of changemakers that believe that anyone have the power to change the world. Every year Hult Prize launch a challenge that gives out 1 million dollars to the startup that brings the most innovative solutions and launch a bunch of activities the whole year. At Hult Prize, they believe that the future of business, in the next decade or so, will be directed to the companies that either bringing social changes like the circular economy or something related to the environment or focusing on food for good (Hult Prize challenge 2021). Hult Prize has its doors open to all startups and it's a place for everyone to participate lead a generation to change the world.

SWITCH-Asia Experiences



Dr. Arab Hoballah
Team Leader, EU-SWITCH-Asia SCP
Facility

SCP is at the basics of all those strategies that we have been developing for the last 30 years, would it be on sustainable development, circular economy, green economy, if we look in detail, between 30 years ago and now, 80-90% we have been talking about the same because we have not implemented properly. The missing link is the SCP, how can we effectively deliver those strategies without properly looking at our consumption patterns and production process. A transition period needs to factor in: knowledge (creation), innovation (incentives), products (design), consumers (behavior), business models (sharing products to services).

Creating Demand Through Sustainable Consumption and Sustainable Lifestyles



Ms. Moh Suthasiny Sudprasert
Co-founder, Happy Grocers, Thailand

Happy Grocers is a startup based in Bangkok where they source organic produces directly from the farm and deliver to customer either through home delivery or grocery truck. Happy grocers create a movement for conscious consumers that influence farmers do agriculture to be more organic. It started during the pandemic after Moh lost her job related to tourism, most-hit sector. Her startup has many customers during lockdown but once the lockdown was over, people started going outside again, their sales went down drastically. With the concept of adaptability, they came up with the idea of grocery truck where they keep concept of delivery to consumer but they bring the truck to condo, offices so customers can see and select the produce and they can talk to customers as well.

Learning from UNEP Startups, “Low Carbon Lifestyle Challenge”



Ms. Kai Kai Yang
CEO, Dipole

Prosumer era of future energy, building a future-oriented energy service company that combines architecture, transportation, communications and finance to end users. By 2020, onshore wind and solar PV will be a less expensive source of new electricity than the cheapest fossil fuel. Everyone can produce and consume solar if you have rooftops. Currently Dipole is building the platform in a local community in Bangkok. For this project, they also got shortlisted in Thailand energy regulation council sandbox last year.



Ms. Linh Le
Founder, Ayacup, Vietnam

AYA cup, to replace disposable plastic cups use for take away and home delivery by using a reusable cup service. Their mission is to remove Vietnam on the list of top countries polluting the ocean. How to solve the plastic problem? By creating a system encouraging the people to reuse in their daily lifestyle, we can help prevent waste from going to the landfills. AYA’s low carbon footprint supply chain is based on three main principles of circular economy.

Innovation Labs and Startups for Green Innovations

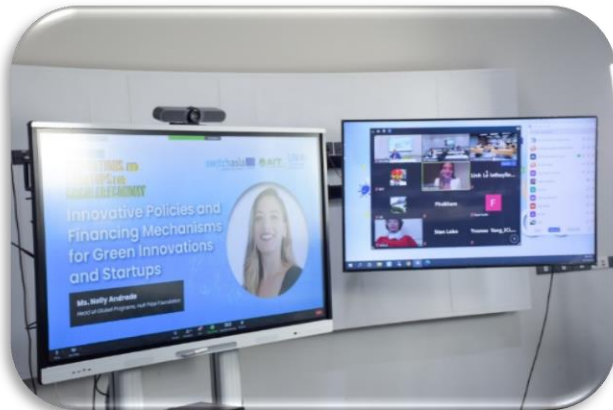


Prof. Dieter Trau

Director, Entrepreneurship Center, Asian Institute of Technology (AIT)

AIT Entrepreneurship Center is breeding ground for future business leaders to create innovations and businesses with the ultimate goal of enhancing economic and social development. It is also a learning center where everyone can come to share their knowledge. Three current innovations at AIT related to circular economy includes: Zero Food Waste: Decentralized Anaerobic Digestion for waste treatment and resource recovery; Zero Can Waste; Can Crusher, a reverse vending machine that crushes cans in seconds and facilitates on the spot waste segregation; and Zero Plastic Bottle Waste: Plastic to Brick project, shredded plastics are added to sand/ concrete mixture to make bricks.

Snapshots of the Event



Annex:

Annex 1: The Final agenda

Time (IST)	Theme
1400-1405	Opening and moderation Dr. Mushtaq Memon Regional Coordinator Resource Efficiency in Asia Pacific United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
1405-1415	Innovation Labs and Startups for Green Innovations Prof. Dieter Trau Director, AIT Entrepreneurship Center
1415-1425	Innovative Policies and Financing Mechanisms for Green Innovations and startups Ms. Nelly Andrade Head of Global Programs, Hult Prize Foundation
1425-1435	Creating Demand Through Sustainable Consumption and Sustainable lifestyles Ms. Suthasiny Sudprasert Social Impact Strategy and Marketing Happy Grocers, Thailand
1435-1445	SWITH-Asia Experiences Dr. Arab Hoballah Team Leader EU-SWITCCH-Asia SCP Facility
1445-1455	Learning from UNEP Startups," Low Carbon Lifestyle Challenge" Ms. Kai Kai Yang CEO, Dipole Ms. Linh Le Founder, Ayacup, Vietnam
1455-1515	Q&A
1515-1520	Closing and Next Steps Dr. Mushtaq Memon

For more information

SWITCH-Asia event page:

URL: <https://www.switch-asia.eu/event/webinar-innovations-startups-for-circular-economy/>

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