

REGIONAL DIALOGUE TO PROMOTE THE UPTAKE OF ECO-DESIGN APPROACHES TO GREEN THE SMES IN ASIA

TUESDAY
30 NOVEMBER 2021
13:30-16:30 HRS.
(BANGKOK TIME)

BACKGROUND

Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) in Asia play an important role in driving economy, employment and innovation and therefore are core engines of transition to green growth. In the Asia-Pacific, SMEs account for approximately 97% of all enterprises, two-thirds of employment and around 30 to 60 percent of GDP (Anbumozhi, 2019). Reducing the aggregate environmental impact of SMEs through achieving and going beyond environmental compliance in both manufacturing and services is therefore a key success factor in greening the economy.

According to NRC (2017), green SME is an enterprise whose business model includes:

1. Any product, process or service designed with the primary purpose of contributing to remediating or preventing any type of environmental damage.
2. Any product, process or service that is less polluting or more resource-efficient than equivalent normal products that furnish a similar utility.

In addition to the significance of their environmental footprints, SMEs also play an increasingly important role in driving innovation in products as well as business models.

It became evident that, to move towards a green and circular economy, attention should be given to pioneer SMEs who have developed circular business models, contributing to the increased use of renewable energy, improved recycling and waste management. Green SMEs would therefore not only be an essential element of the economy but could also drive innovation and competition and thereby help to address economic, environmental, and social challenges of Asia.

Eco-design is a proactive approach in designing products and services that use minimum resources and energy and have minimum negative environmental and social impacts throughout their life cycles while meeting the users' needs of functionality and quality. The practices are considered interventions from conception to development or from use to end-of-life, starting from design materials extraction, production, distribution, use, and end-of-life. An example includes selection of low-impact resources and processes, extending the lifespan of the material, system design for eco-efficiency, life cycle design, minimizing resource consumption, production lifetime optimization, etc. (Hilal Bugali, 2013).

In 2020, the EU SWITCH Asia RPAC in partnership with Thailand Environment Institute (TEI) successfully organized a regional dialogue to enhance awareness and knowledge on eco-design as an efficient path to achieve sustainable development. The dialogue highlighted that supporting facilities for Asian SMEs could be one of major thrusts in promoting eco-design and Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) patterns in Asia. As the region is today a fast-growing base for the manufacture of various kinds of products for the world, there is a clear need to enhance capacities of the Asian SMEs in dealing with increasingly stringent environmental legislation and certification requirements. The willingness and capability of SMEs to adopt sustainable practices and seize green business opportunities however generally face size-related resource constraints, skill deficit and knowledge limitations. There would thus be specific challenges for SMEs in making the transition towards green and circular economy approach and thereby different supporting measures are needed to enhance this uptake.

OBJECTIVES

- To continue the discussion on how to increase the understating of the eco-design approaches for their promotion and uptake by the SMEs in Asia.
- To facilitate exchange of knowledge and good practices in the region that will deep dive on implementation challenges and benefits of adopting/instilling the eco-design thinking for the key sectors in Asia.
- To further gather perspectives on enabling factors/solutions that influence/support SMEs to incorporate eco-design approaches in their businesses.



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CONTACT

Dr. Mushtaq Ahmed Memon

Resource Efficiency Sub programme Regional Coordinator, UNEP Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific
Project Manager, EU SWITCH-Asia Regional Policy Advocacy Component (RPAC).

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AGENDA

Opening Session

- 13.30-13.35 **Remarks by RPAC**
Dr. Mushtaq Memon
Project Manager, the EU SWITCH-Asia RPAC
- 13.35-13.40 **Remarks by TEI**
Dr. Wijarn Simachaya
President of Thai Environment Institute (TEI) and the Secretary-General of Thailand Business Council for Sustainable Development (TBCSD)
- 13.40-13.45 **Remarks by AIT**
Prof. Dieter Trau
Dean, AIT School of Engineering and Technology
Director, AIT Entrepreneurship Center
- 13.45-13.50 **Opening Remarks**
Thibaut Portevin
Head of Cooperation, Delegation of European Union to ASEAN
- 13.50-14.00 **Circular Design-An Intervention from the Ellen MacArthur Foundation**
Chuan Fan
Project Manager for Learning and Design
Ellen MacArthur Foundation

Session 1: Potential Sectors for Greening SMEs in Asia

- 14.00-14.10 **Eco-design Approaches in Asia**
TEI
- 14.10-15.10 **Breakout rooms to discuss potential sectors on their implementations***
- Breakout room 1**
Moderator:
Assoc. Prof. Naragain Phumchusri
- Electronics
 - Construction
 - Alternative Energy/Development (e-Vehicle)
 - Agriculture (resource efficient use)
- Breakout room 2**
Moderator:
Prof. Vilas Nitivattananon
- Service (tourism and logistic)
 - Textile
 - Packaging
 - Household/personal use

15.10-15.20

Plenary Discussion**

Tunnie Srisakulchairak
SWITCH-Asia RPAC

Session 2: Enabling Factors to Enhance the Eco-design Approaches

- 15.20-15.30 **The Green Startup Toolkit**
Dr. Lakeesha Ransom
Faculty, AIT School of Management
- 15.30-15.40 **Enabling Factors to Green SMEs**
Pavitra Mohanraj
Technical Expert, FICCI and Founder Infinitive
- 15.40-16.20 **Breakout rooms to deep dive into the identified factors***
- Financial mechanisms
 - Policy and Regulation
 - Technology and Innovation
 - Education & Skills
 - Gender and Vulnerable groups
- Breakout room 1**
Moderator:
Dr. Chaiyod Bunyagidj
- Breakout room 2**
Moderator:
Prof. Dieter Trau
- 16.20-16.25 **Plenary Discussion****
Tunnie Srisakulchairak
SWITCH-Asia RPAC
- 16.25-16.30 **Conclusion and Closing**
Dr. Mushtaq Memon

*Participants are requested to join their chosen breakout room

**Participants are requested to come back to main room



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