



ASEAN Circular Economy Business Alliance

Framework for Business Action for the Circular Economy in Southeast Asia

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Acknowledgement

The Framework presented in this Paper is the result of extended engagement and consensus-seeking processes with business representatives and experts - regionally and nationally - in Southeast Asia on the scope and rationale for business engagement with and action towards the Circular Economy. These engagements were informed by the 2023 working paper *“Towards a Unifying Framework for Business Action for the Circular Economy in ASEAN; working paper for reflection and engagement with business and industry”*, which is herewith being replaced by this Paper which incorporates inputs and experiences gathered on the Framework since 2023.

These engagements, the formulation of the framework and the drafting of this Paper were led by Rene Van Berkel and Thomas Thomas as part of the technical support provided to the ASEAN Circular Economy Business Alliance (ACEBA) by the EU funded SWITCH-Asia Policy Support Component.

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Synopsis

Circular Economy speaks to the imagination as the ambitious opposite of the prevailing linear *'take – make – use – throw away'* model, which continues to drive increases in the unsustainable extraction, use and wastage of materials and other natural resources. Yet in practice, Circular Economy has become to mean very different things to different people, businesses and policy makers, which impedes collective action and lends an alibi to either romanticize recycling, or green wash widely-accepted business practices and/or simply do-nothing. Arriving at a unifying framework for the Circular Economy and its criticality for Southeast Asia is essential for stepping up business commitment and action for the Circular Economy.

This Framework positions the Circular Economy as a principled approach to innovation and co-creation, aimed at breaking the dependence of products and services on the unsustainable extraction, use and disposal of materials and other natural resources. Such dependence is a root cause for climate change, loss of nature and biodiversity, and accumulation of pollution and waste – collectively, the triple planetary crises.

The Framework offers five guiding principles for business and other organisations to drive an impactful Circular Economy transformation, in short:

1. **PURPOSE:** advancing net zero for climate, nature, and environment;
2. **SCOPE:** implementing resource circularity, resource efficiency, and resource substitution;
3. **RATIONALE:** assuming responsibility for the organization's impacts on the environment and society;
4. **MEANS:** ideating and co-creating circular solutions; and
5. **DEVELOPMENT CONTRIBUTION:** creating net benefits for society and the economy.

In the absence of widely-accepted circularity metrics, businesses can already meaningfully track their own Circular Economy progress with enterprise level metrics, covering both enabling activities as well as circular results. Eight sectors are suggested as an initial Circular Economy focus for Southeast Asia, respectively: food and beverage; textile and garments; leather and footwear; furniture and homewares; automotive; electrical and electronic goods; tourism; and building and construction.

A diversity of Southeast Asian businesses already achieves tangible benefits from the implementation of Circular Economy activities that drive profitability and growth of their business, mitigate environment and climate impacts, and support communities.

The principles-based Circular Economy Framework presented here, is being used by the ASEAN Circular Economy Business Alliance (ACEBA) to inspire and facilitate business leadership, action and impact for Southeast Asia's Circular Economy transformation through advocacy, experience curation, knowledge sharing and networking.

Introduction and overview

In 2023, the ASEAN Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Network (ACN)¹ recognized the transformative potential of Circular Economy to advance responsible and inclusive business practices to simultaneously address the growing pollution and climate issues while mitigating citizens' and governments' concerns on the role of business. With the technical support from the EU SWITCH-Asia Policy Support Component (PSC) on Sustainable Consumption and Circular Economy, ACN set out to mobilize business leadership and action for the Circular Economy².

In the course of explorative discussions, the lack of clarity on aims and means for the Circular Economy and on the opportunities for business, stood out as a key challenge for meaningful business engagement. In particular, a chasm was observed between the ambition of the Circular Economy idea - specifically designing out waste and pollution through circular products and services embedded in closed loop value networks – and its early manifestations in the region, which largely display improved waste collection, recycling and management. To drive business engagement with Circular Economy, it was considered necessary to arrive at a unifying framework for business leadership and action. This Paper provides and elaborates such unifying Framework.

The Framework was constructed and validated through an extended collaborative and consensus-seeking process. First, an online regional consultation of national Circular Economy and corporate sustainability experts took place with participation from Cambodia, Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam on 19-20 September 2023. This explored Circular Economy interpretations and prevailing business concerns. Participants agreed that among the many already available definitions³, a further definition of Circular Economy would not help to get businesses engaged. Rather, participants acknowledged the diversity of Circular Economy concepts and practices, and their different applicability between sectors, business sizes and countries. Thus, recognizing that Circular Economy does not offer a 'one-size-fits-all' solution, participants felt the need to clearly articulate the overarching ambition of the Circular Economy; in other words, the meta-idea⁴ that Circular Economy solutions are expected to contribute to, or, the proverbial "*magnetic north*" for business to navigate its circularity journey.

Moreover, Participants of the consultations identified five main prevailing concerns of Southeast Asian businesses, which could be phrased as questions.

1. What is the purpose of Circular Economy?
2. What is the scope for business action towards the Circular Economy?
3. What is the rationale for business to get involved in the Circular Economy transition?
4. What are the means available to business for contributing to the Circular Economy?
5. Beyond environment and climate benefits, how does Circular Economy contribute to the development of society and the economy?

1 ASEAN CSR Network has transformed in 2024 into ARAUBA Sdn Bhd – a not-for-profit business organization that spearheads responsible and inclusive business practices in Southeast Asia.

2 <https://www.switch-asia.eu/our-work/multi-country/asean-circular-economy-pact-acep-mobilizing-business-action-for-circular-economy/>

3 See e.g.: Kirchherr, J, N-H N Yang, F Schulze-Spuntrup, M Heerink, and K Hartley (2023) *Conceptualizing the Circular Economy (revisited): an analysis of 221 definitions*, in *Resources, Conservation & Recycling*. 1070001. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.resconrec.2023.107001>.

4 Schultz, F, and S Rhein (2024), *A colourful bouquet of circular economy research directions: shifting the circular economy debates from scholarly linearity to mutual learning journey for circular applicability.*, in *Resources, Conservation & Recycling*, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.resconrec.2023.107346>.



In response, a set of five guiding principles for business action for the Circular Economy⁵ was developed as input for further national, in-person business engagements. These took place in Jakarta (Indonesia, 12 October 2023), Phnom Phen (Cambodia, 31 October 2023), Bangkok (Thailand, 2 November 2023), Manila (Philippines, 14 November 2023), and Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia, 24 April 2024). These were accompanied by individual consultations of select business membership organizations in particular in Laos and Vietnam and elsewhere in the region. These business engagements confirmed and endorsed the five Guiding Principles, and offered valuable suggestions for their further operationalization, positioning and promotion. These have been incorporated in the Framework as presented in this Paper.

In a parallel effort, Circular Economy-relevant examples were identified, analysed and published as Circular Economy business cases from Southeast Asia. By September 2025 80+ business cases have been documented and separately published covering a rich diversity of businesses (in terms of sector, product and market, business size and ownership) from Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam⁶ – and efforts were continuing to document further business cases. These business cases provide detailed testimony for the validity and applicability of the Framework, as illustrated with select business cases in the remainder of this Paper.

5 See: Van Berkel, R & T. Thomas (2023), Towards a Unifying Framework for Business Action on Circular Economy in ASEAN: working paper for reflection and engagement with business and industry, SWITCH-Asia, <https://www.switch-asia.eu/resource/towards-a-unifying-framework-for-business-action-for-the-circular-economy-in-asean/>

6 Circular Economy Business Cases from Southeast Asia, accessible from: <https://www.aceba.co/aceba/business-case/>

Shared regional policy agenda

The Circular Economy is already firmly positioned on the policy agenda in Southeast Asia through regional initiatives of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and national action plans and roadmaps in its Member States.

The 2021 ASEAN Circular Economy Framework⁷ recognises the pivotal role of Circular Economy for the ongoing regional economic integration, to contribute to resilient economy, resource efficiency and sustainable growth. This ASEAN Policy Framework centres on the creation of a conducive ecosystem for circular products and services, through: (1) standards harmonization and mutual recognition of circular products and services; (2) trade openness and facilitation in circular goods and services; (3) use of innovation and emerging technologies for greening the supply chain; (4) access to financing for green projects; and (5) efficient use of energy and other resources.

This ASEAN Circular Economy Framework is further supported by specific Circular Economy national policy commitments in seven Member States, particularly:

1. Cambodia Circular Economy Strategy and Action Plan [2021]⁸;
2. Indonesia National Roadmap and Action Plan for Circular Economy 2025-2045 [2024]⁹;
3. Circular Economy Strategies for Lao PDR [2017]¹⁰;
4. Circular Economy Policy Framework for Manufacturing in Malaysia [2024]¹¹ and Circular Economy Blueprint for Solid Waste Malaysia 2025-2035 [2024]¹²;
5. Singapore Zero Waste Masterplan [2019]¹³ and Singapore Green Plan [2021]¹⁴;
6. Thailand Bio-Circular-Green (BCG) Economy Policy [2021]¹⁵; and
7. Vietnam National Action Plan to Implement Circular Economy by 2030 [2025]¹⁶.

In terms of means of implementation, there is convergence to foster business and stakeholders' participation and operationalize green or sustainable public procurement and extended producer responsibility (EPR) to create markets for circular products and services. Business is to position itself for markets and enabling policy and related frameworks that will further reward demonstrable circularity performance in years to come.

7 AEC. (2021). *Framework for Circular Economy for ASEAN Economic Community*. Jakarta: ASEAN Economic Community. https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Framework-for-Circular-Economy-for-the-AEC_Final.pdf

8 NCSD. (2021). *Circular Economy Strategy and Action Plan*. Phnom Penh: National Council for Sustainable Development. <https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2022-06/Circular%20Economy%20Strategy%20and%20Action%20Plan%202021%20%282%29.pdf>

9 BAPPENAS. (2024). Circular Economy Strategy and Action Plan 2025 - 2045. Jakarta: BAPPENAS - Ministry of National Development Planning Agency. <https://lndi-indonesia.id/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/RAN-ES-2025-2045.pdf>

10 MNR. (2017). *Circular Economy Strategies for Lao PDR*. Vientiane: Ministry of Natural Resources, https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/publications/undp-lecb-circular-economy-strategies-for-laos-pdr-20170911_0.pdf.

11 MITI. (2024). *Circular Economy Policy Framework for Manufacturing in Malaysia*. Ministry of Investment, Trade and Industry. <https://www.nimp2030.gov.my/nimp2030/resources/NIMP%20Banner/CIRCULAR%20ECONOMY%20POLICY%20FRAMEWORK.pdf>

12 MHLG. (2024). *Building a Prosperous Future: Circular Economy Blueprint for Solid Waste 2025-2035*. Ministry of Housing and Local Government. https://www.kpkt.gov.my/kpkt/resources/user_1/GALERI/PDF_PENERBITAN/BLUEPRINT/BLUEPRINT_EKONOMI_KITARAN_SISA_PEPEJAL_DI_MALAYSIA_2025_2035.pdf?mid=740

13 MEWR (2019), Zero Waste Masterplan Singapore, Ministry of Environment and Water Resources, <https://isomer-user-content.by.gov.sg/23/85029cae-9ba1-4144-8a52-26c7f86c04ba/zero-waste-masterplan.pdf>

14 <https://www.greenplan.gov.sg/>

15 Dharmapiya, P. (ed) (2020). *Thailand's BCG Transformation: 40 case studies on the bio-circular-green strategy and the sufficiency economy philosophy in action*. Bangkok: National Institute of Development Administration. <https://sudsesc.nida.ac.th/main/images/books/Thailand%E2%80%99s%20BCG%20Transformation.pdf>; Edyveana, R., Apiwatanapiwat, W., Vaithanomsat, P., Boondaeng, A., Janchai, P., & Sophonthammaphat, S. (2023). *The Bio-Circular Green Economy model in Thailand: a comparative review*. ANRES: Agric. & Nat. Resour., 57, 51-64

16 PM(V). (2025). *Introducing the National Action Plan for Circular Economy Implementation by 2025* (decision no 222/QĐ-TTg). Hanoi: Prime Minister (Vietnam)

Diverging perspectives

The Circular Economy is positioned as the ambitious opposite of the current linear economy, which is based on taking materials from nature, making and using these in products, and discarding these products after their useful life. This linear extraction and use of materials is unsustainable, as it – globally - causes 60% of climate emissions, contributes up to 90% of loss of nature on land, and 40% of particulate matter pollution¹⁷. Materials use continues to increase steadily. The Global Materials Flow Database¹⁸ indicates that per capita domestic materials use (known as Domestic Material Input), varied sevenfold among ASEAN Member States in 2024, with all countries, except Brunei Darussalam and Singapore, having increased significantly during 2000-2024. The value-chain summarized material use for domestic consumption, known as Material Footprint, increased in all countries, except Brunei Darussalam, in the same period and shows a 12-fold difference among the ASEAN Member States in 2024. Plastics use and pollution are a profound and very visible illustration of the shortfalls of the linear economy; however, they are only part of the bigger problem of the wasteful use of all materials.

The Circular Economy concept has diverse roots, which has given rise to divergent definitions and operationalizations, each highlighting different elements, such as nature's principles, circularity practices, circular business models, and sustainable materials resource management¹⁹. In operational terms, Circular Economy envisions **circular value chains**, that bring the net use of virgin materials as well as the net disposal of waste as close as possible to zero (as articulated in the ISO59004 Guidance Standard for Circular Economy²⁰).

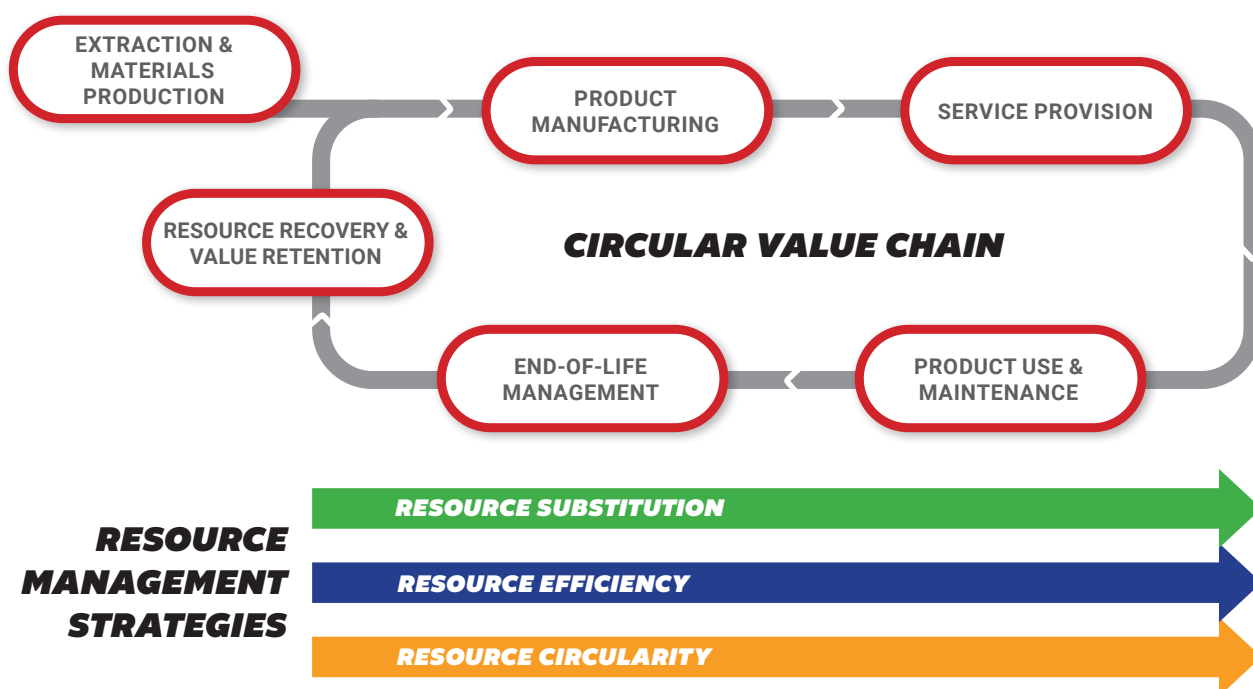


Figure 1: Circular Economy: resource management strategies driving innovation in the circular value chain²¹.

17 International Resource Panel (2024), *Bend the Trend: Global Resources Outlook 2024*, see: https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/44901/Global-Resource-Outlook_2024.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y

18 International Resource Panel (2025), *Global Materials Flow Database*, <https://www.resourcepanel.org/global-material-flows-database>

19 Van Berkel, R (2025), *Circular Economy: an introduction and overview*, SWITCH Asia, <https://www.switch-asia.eu/resource/circular-economy-an-introduction-and-overview/>; and Van Berkel (2025), *Unlocking the Circularity Opportunity: guidance to advance circular business*, ASEAN Circular Economy Business Alliance and SWITCH Asia Policy Support Component, Bangkok

20 ISO. 2024. *ISO 59004: Circular economy: vocabulary, principles and guidance for implementation*, International Organisation for Standardisation

21 Van Berkel, R (2025), *Circular Economy: an introduction and overview*, SWITCH Asia, <https://www.switch-asia.eu/resource/circular-economy-an-introduction-and-overview/>

As illustrated in Figure 1, this ambition invokes three material resource management strategies, respectively: repeatedly recovering and reusing end-of-life materials (**resource circularity**); using materials more efficiently and longer (**resource efficiency**); and switching to renewable materials and energy (**resource substitution**)²². Circular Economy thus starts with developing circular products and value chains, then fosters materials efficiency in all circular value chain stages, and ends with recovering and recycling the end-of-life materials that could not yet be avoided.



A business opportunity

A growing number of Southeast Asian business cases illustrate that business stands to benefit from adopting Circular Economy in different ways.

Firstly, using materials, energy and water efficiently - for longer and repeated use cycles - does improve profitability and competitiveness by minimizing the business costs for procuring these and for disposing of the no-longer needed materials as waste.

- [Pico Sands Hotel](#) and Pico de Loro Beach and Country Club (Philippines) achieved a reduction of food waste from over 350 g/guest to 111 g/guest during 2019-2022, realizing cumulative savings on food purchase costs of around EUR 125,000. Energy efficiency initiatives over the same period, enabled annual energy savings worth over EUR100,000 in 2022.
- The industrial symbiosis in [Nam Cau Kien Industrial Park](#) (Vietnam) diverts annually some 55,000 tonnes of steel by-product waste from landfill and thereby avoids around EUR 1.6 million in waste management and disposal costs.

Secondly, supplying circular products or services - by leveraging company's core competencies, technology, designs, value chains - opens up or expands markets.

- [Buyo Bioplastics](#) (Vietnam) combined its biotechnology and materials engineering knowledge and competencies to develop and start producing versatile bio-based and biodegradable plastics from brewery spent grains, cassava pulp and other agri- and food processing wastes.

²² Van Berkel, R. e.a (2020), *Role of Industries in Resource Efficiency and Circular Economy*, in Gosh, S.K (ed), *Waste Management as Economic Industry Towards Circular Economy*, p9 171-183, Springer Publishers, Singapore.

- **ACE** (Cambodia) combined its core expertise in biomass combustion with readily available solar technology to create an integrated off-grid home energy system that provides for clean and efficient biomass cooking, basic lighting and phone and battery charging.

Thirdly, pivoting into more circular products, services and operations - in particular for short-lived and other problematic products - is a measured response for business to recognize that countries and society at large have committed to, and are advancing, the Circular Economy.

- In response to mounting consumers' concern on plastic waste, **Unilever** (Indonesia) is pivoting into lower plastic packaging alternatives, gaining expertise and experience in using recycled and bio-plastics, refill systems and dematerialized packaging designs.
- **Burgreens** (Indonesia) capitalized on its expertise and vegan recipes from its restaurants to pivot Green Rebels for the production of frozen, ready to eat, vegan versions of popular Asian dishes which are now available in Indonesia, Philippines and Singapore serving the growing market for alternatives to meat-proteins.

Guiding principles

Circular Economy is profoundly emerging as the global community's best bet to break the vicious cycle of dependence of economy and society on the unsustainable extraction and use of materials and natural resources, or put differently: Circular Economy provides the thrust to innovate the economy and society out of the triple planetary crises of our time. This implies five guiding principles for business to get engaged meaningfully in circular solutions, in brief:

1. **PURPOSE:** advancing net zero for climate, nature, and environment;
2. **SCOPE:** implementing resource circularity, resource efficiency, and resource substitution;
3. **RATIONALE:** assuming responsibility for the organization's impacts on the environment and society;
4. **MEANS:** ideating and co-creating circular solutions; and
5. **DEVELOPMENT CONTRIBUTION:** creating net benefits for society and the economy.

Further details for the guiding principles are included in Figure 2. Table 1 includes two Southeast Asian company level illustrations of these guiding principles.

Figure 2: Guiding principles for business action for the Circular Economy



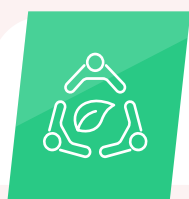
1. Net Zero for Climate, Nature and Environment

Circular Economy advances the net zero target by addressing the unsustainable extraction and use of materials and natural resources as common root cause of the triple climate, nature and pollution crises.



2. Resource Circularity, Efficiency and Substitution

Circular Economy targets closed loop use of materials and other natural resources through resource circularity, resource efficiency and resource substitution.



3. Responsible Business

Circular Economy demonstrates business taking its responsibility for the impacts on environment and society of the materials and other natural resources that are used throughout the lifecycle of its products and services.



4. Ideation and Co-creation



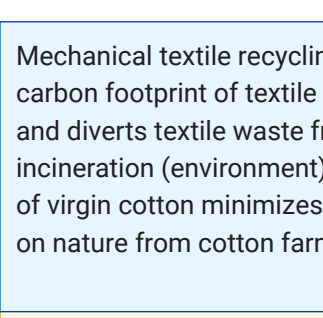
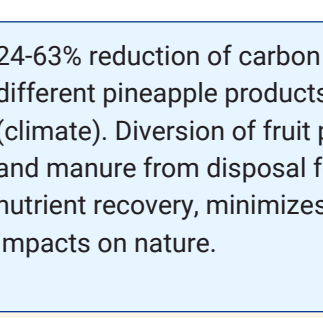





Circular Economy frames ideation and co-creation by business and in its value chains to innovate and develop circular product and service solutions.



5. Net Benefits

Circular Economy aims for net socio-economic benefit, including from de-risking the economy and society from the impacts of unsustainable extraction and use of materials and other natural resources.

Table 1: Business illustrations of the Guiding Principles for Business Action for Circular Economy (Saeng Charoen Grand (Thailand)²³ and Great Giant Foods (Indonesia)²⁴)

<div>  </div>	<div>  </div>
<div> <p>Guiding Principle</p> </div>	<div> <div> <div>  <p>Saeng Charoen Grand Co. Ltd.</p> <p>Bangkok, Thailand</p> <p>Textile and apparel, home textiles, and home decoration</p> <p>www.sc-grand.com/en</p> <p>Analysis period: 2020-2023</p> </div> <div> <p>Turning Fabric Waste into New Fabric</p> </div> </div> <div> <div>  <p>Great Giant Foods</p> <p>Indonesia (Lampung, Sumatra)</p> <p>Manufacturing</p> <p>www.greatgiantfoods.com</p> <p>Analysis period: 2010-2023</p> </div> <div> <p>Integrated Operations for Sustainable Agriculture</p> </div> </div> </div>
<div>  <p>1. Net Zero for Climate, Nature & Environment</p> </div>	<div> <p>Mechanical textile recycling minimizes carbon footprint of textile products (climate) and diverts textile waste from landfill or incineration (environment). Reducing the use of virgin cotton minimizes adverse impacts on nature from cotton farming.</p> <p>24-63% reduction of carbon footprint of different pineapple products achieved (climate). Diversion of fruit processing waste and manure from disposal for energy and nutrient recovery, minimizes pollution and impacts on nature.</p> </div>
<div>  <p>2. Resource Circularity, Efficiency & Substitution</p> </div>	<div> <p>Mechanical textile recycling recovers textile fibre (circularity), avoids re-dyeing and re-finishing (contributing to efficiency), and is partially powered by rooftop solar energy (substitution).</p> <p>Symbiotic use of processing residues as animal feed, and manure for bio-energy and bio-fertilizer production and use (circularity and substitution). Reduced use of energy, water and fertilizers from adoption of precision agriculture and improved processing technology (efficiency).</p> </div>
<div>  <p>3. Responsible Business</p> </div>	<div> <p>Third generation family business that was founded on the trade in textile rags. Some of its 240 employees are with company over 3 generations. Works with stakeholders to achieve circularity of its products.</p> <p>Adopting circularity practices has enabled the company to expand and become one of worldclass and well-respected integrated agrifood suppliers.</p> </div>
<div>  <p>4. Ideation & Co-creation</p> </div>	<div> <p>Recycled fabrics and products are co-created in partnerships with design houses and brands, and business partnerships are established to collect and recycle workwear and other commercially-used textile products.</p> <p>Synergistic operations achieved through collaborating between plantation farming, fruit and tapioca processing and livestock farming. Innovated to establish commercial bromelain enzyme extraction for value added products.</p> </div>
<div>  <p>5. Net Benefits</p> </div>	<div> <p>Created new business and market opportunities for recycled fabrics, garments and home-textiles.</p> <p>Achieving economic benefit from increased productivity and decreased fuel and fertilizer use in plantations, whilst improving conditions for plantation workers.</p> </div>

²³ <https://www.aceba.co/resource/turning-fabric-waste-into-new-fabric-and-garments/>

²⁴ <https://www.aceba.co/resource/integrated-operations-for-sustainable-agriculture/>

Focus sectors

Even though Circular Economy is principally applicable in all economic sectors, priority may be given to sectors that are most significant for the economy, trade and employment creation, are resource intensive and have shown potential for circular innovation. Hence eight subsectors are suggested as priority for engaging businesses on the Circular Economy in Southeast Asia. Individual countries are though advised to further prioritize and narrow down their priority sectors, based on national circumstances and respective business and innovation strengths and opportunities, as for example Indonesia has done in its 2025-2045 Circular Economy Roadmap and Action Plan and Thailand in its 2021 Bio Circular Green Economy policy. Serving as an inspiration for business and other stakeholders, Table 2 includes some leading business examples from the priority sectors.

Figure 3: Priority sectors for business action for Circular Economy in Southeast Asia.



Table 2: Some suggested inspirational business examples for suggested priority sectors²⁵

Sector	Company	Summary
Food & Beverage	Burgreens (Indonesia)	Vegan food for a better planet
	Great Giant Food (Indonesia)	Integrated operations for sustainable agriculture
	Phuc Singh Corporation (Vietnam)	Premium cascara tea from previously discarded coffee waste
	Vinasamex (Vietnam)	Using cinnamon waste as fuel for product drying
Textile and Garments	Pactics (Cambodia)	Sustainable transformation of travel goods manufacturing
	Pable (Indonesia)	Recycling textile waste into circular fashion
	Pan Brothers (Indonesia)	Operationalising circularity towards net zero garment-making
Leather and Footwear	MycoTech Lab (Indonesia)	Using mushrooms to produce sustainable materials from agricultural waste

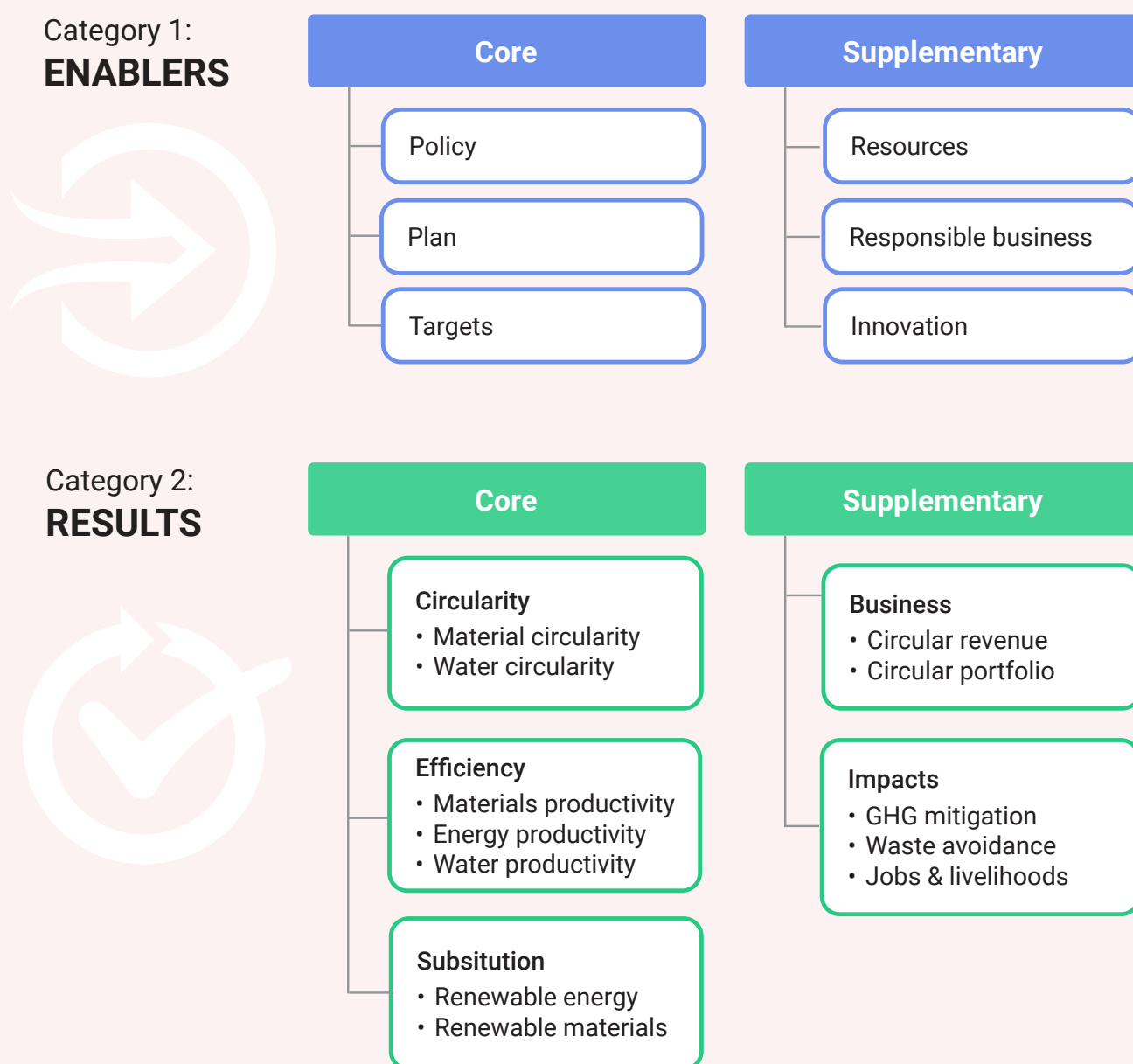
²⁵ Details of all listed business cases are accessible from: [Circular Economy Business Cases from Southeast Asia](https://www.aceba.co/aceba/business-case/), accessible from: <https://www.aceba.co/aceba/business-case/>

Sector	Company	Summary
Furniture & Homewares	Robries (Indonesia)	Unique recycled plastic home décor
	Philux (Philippines)	Timeless design and craftsmanship for circular furniture
	Norn-norn (Thailand)	Driving mattress recycling through a circular economy product subscription platform
	Sun Wu Poly (Thailand)	Recycling foam and plastic waste into home decoration products
Automotive	Electrum (Indonesia)	Two-wheeler EVs to reduce climate and air emissions
	Absolute Assembly (Thailand)	Electric vehicles for public transport
	Fortune Parts (Thailand)	Design and manufacturing of recycled plastic automotive parts
Electrical and Electronic	Renewcell (Malaysia)	Battery rejuvenation for circularity and energy efficiency in energy storage
	Converge ICT (Philippines)	Refurbishment and reuse of customer devices
Building and Construction	Wijaya Karya Bangunan Gedung – WEGE (Indonesia)	Modular: future for sustainable construction
	Cemex (Philippines)	Alternative materials and fuels for low carbon cement
	Holcim (Philippines)	Decarbonizing cement through efficiency and alternative fuels and raw materials
	Advance Prefab (Thailand)	Resource efficiency through prefabrication
Tourism	Knai Bang Chatt (Cambodia)	Circular economy in luxury hospitality
	HOMM Souvannaphoum Luang Prabang (Laos)	Championing plastic free tourism in Laos
	Pico Sands Hotel (Philippines)	Sustainable resort operations
	Sivatel Bangkok Hotel (Thailand)	Service design and waste recovery in sustainable-boutique hotel

Metrics

As Circular Economy is operationalized in different ways, there is no widely-accepted set of circularity metrics for business²⁶. In this absence it is suggested to use a set of firm level indicators for company-internal decision making and monitoring of Circular Economy progress. These cover both enablers (activities supporting the circular transition of the firm) and results (achievements made through these circularity efforts). In both categories, firms could start with core indicators and gradually extend to cover supplementary indicators. These indicators achieve harmonization and their use for internal management decisions would not require standardization, hence providing a flexible approach for firms to track progress on their own Circular Economy transition.

Figure 4: Suggested company-internal Circular Economy metrics.



26 However, World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) and One Planet Network initiated in 2023 the development of a Global Circularity Protocol for Business that would be expected to provide universal guidance on Circularity Performance & Accountability, see: <https://www.wbcd.org/actions/global-circularity-protocol/>

Moving forward

This principles-based Framework for Business Action on the Circular Economy has been adopted by the ASEAN Circular Economy Business Alliance (ACEBA) (www.aceba.co). ACEBA brings together like-minded businesses from within the region to lead-by-example for the Circular Economy. ACEBA was launched in July 2024²⁷ with the endorsements from the ASEAN Secretariat, the ASEAN Business Advisory Council and the European Union Delegation to ASEAN, and with the support of a technical advisory under the EU SWITCH-Asia Policy Support Component.



ACEBA is taking this Framework forward in its advocacy, knowledge sharing and networking activities. This includes organization and hosting of business and impact-focused regional and national webinars and workshops; identification, analysis and documentation of further Circular Economy business cases; and development of operational guidelines and implementation resources for business.

²⁷ See: <https://www.switch-asia.eu/news/asean-circular-economy-business-alliance-aceba-launched-in-support-of-regional-circular-economy-transition-in-southeast-asia/>

About



ASEAN Circular Economy Business Alliance

The ASEAN Circular Economy Business Alliance (ACEBA) is an ASEAN-centric, business-led initiative that fosters business leadership and action for the Circular Economy in Southeast Asia. ACEBA is an initiative of ARAIBA Sdn Bhd, in collaboration with national and regional business organizations, supported by a technical advisory through the EU SWITCH-Asia Policy Support Component.

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Launched in 2007, the **EU SWITCH-Asia Programme** is the single largest programmatic investment to promote and facilitate the uptake of sustainable consumption and production practices in the Asia and Pacific region. Under the current phase of its Policy Support Component (PSC), SWITCH-Asia lends advisory support to multi-country and sub-regional initiatives on policy and practices for Sustainable Consumption and Production and their contribution to Circular Economy and achievement of Nationally Determined Contributions to the Paris Climate Agreement.

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ARAIBA Sdn Bhd is a not-for profit business organization that promotes responsible and inclusive business in Southeast Asia. ARAIBA is the custodian of the Code for Responsible and Inclusive Business, developed by its predecessor ASEAN CSR Network in collaboration with the ASEAN Business Advisory Council. This Code calls on business and other organization to take responsibility for the impacts of its activities and decisions on society and environment, with a view to support sustainable development. This includes consideration of business and industry contributions to mitigate the triple planetary crisis and opportunities this presents through resource efficiency and Circular Economy - actions that cannot be seen independently from other core social responsibility subjects, particularly organizational governance, adoption of fair operating practices, labour, and community engagement and development.

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