



# **ASEAN** AND SUSTAINABLE **DEVELOPMENT** LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND IN OUR COMMUNITY

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Promoting Complementarities  
between the ASEAN Community Vision 2025  
and the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Progress Report  
November 2022

ASEAN–Thailand

# PROGRESS REPORT

PROMOTING COMPLEMENTARITIES  
BETWEEN THE ASEAN COMMUNITY VISION 2025  
AND  
THE UN 2030 AGENDA  
FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

NOVEMBER 2022  
ASEAN-THAILAND

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# **PROGRESS REPORT PROMOTING COMPLEMENTARITIES BETWEEN THE ASEAN COMMUNITY VISION 2025 AND THE UN 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

The “Progress Report on Promoting Complementarities between the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” is an annual publication by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand in the capacity of the ASEAN Coordinator on Sustainable Development Cooperation. The Report is intended to take stock of progress made over the year and suggest potential way forward in promoting complementarities between the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development or the so-called *Complementarities Initiative*.

This sixth edition of the Progress Report covers the period from October 2021 to September 2022. Despite a certain degree of recovery and re-opening, this period has seen many ASEAN Member States still grappling with multi-dimensional impacts caused by the COVID-19, as well as challenges posed by geopolitical tensions, rising poverty and inequality, environmental degradation, and supply chain disruption, among others. These have directly affected ASEAN’s ability to implement the Complementarity Roadmap and to promote SDGs in the region. At the same time, it has also compelled us to redouble our efforts to build back better, and reinvigorate this Decade of Action to deliver the SDGs.

At this important juncture, where urgent actions are needed to accelerate the effective implementation of the SDGs and ensure a more sustainable post COVID-19 recovery, enhancing multi-stakeholder engagement and partnerships is an indispensable prime mover to translate the global vision to actions on the ground. ASEAN could also leverage the potential of digital technologies and innovation to facilitate and accelerate the achievement of SDGs in the region. Emphasis must also be placed on improving institutional framework of ASEAN through streamlining and enhancing coordination among relevant sectoral bodies and institutions to ensure that sustainability and resilience will remain at the heart of ASEAN Community building efforts. As ASEAN Coordinator on Sustainable Development Cooperation, Thailand will continue to work closely with all ASEAN Member States, the ASEAN Secretariat and other interested partners towards this end.

## **II. The Sixth High-Level Brainstorming Dialogue on Enhancing Complementarities between the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (HLBD)**

On 30 May 2022, Thailand and ESCAP jointly organised the 6<sup>th</sup> HLBD in a hybrid format at the United Nations Conference Centre in Bangkok and via videoconference. The Meeting was co-chaired by H.E. Mr. Don Pramudwinai, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand, and Ms. Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of ESCAP. Participants included Dato Lim Jock Hoi, Secretary-General of ASEAN, as well as high-level representatives from ASEAN Member States, development experts from UNDP, UNEP, UNCDF, FAO, the World Bank, and the Asian Development Bank. Representatives of

China, Japan, the Republic of Korea, and the European Union, as ASEAN's Dialogue Partners, Switzerland and Norway, as ASEAN's Sectoral Dialogue Partners, as well as Germany, France and Italy, as ASEAN's Development Partners, were present as Guests of the Co-Chairs.

The annual HLBD continues to serve as an important platform for ASEAN, UN agencies, and other external partners of ASEAN to advance cooperation in promoting the Complementarities Initiative. This year's HLBD also aimed to enhance actions and implementations of the Complementarities Roadmap, with a view to recovering lost progress due to COVID-19 and accelerating efforts in attaining the SDGs and robust post-pandemic recovery in a synergised and complementary manner. The Co-Chairs' Summary of the 6<sup>th</sup> HLBD appears in [Appendix 1](#). Key points of the Meetings are as follows:

#### **a. Opening Remarks by Co-Chairs**

As the COVID-19 pandemic scaled back progress towards achieving the SDGs in the region, there is an urgent need to mainstream pathways to sustainable development by prioritising inclusive, resilient and sustainable development rather than economic growth alone. In this regard, the Co-Chairs also suggested specific ideas and policy areas where ASEAN should undertake in order to build back better from the multi-dimensional impacts of COVID-19 and achieve the SDGs, including (a) accelerating the implementation of ASEAN Member States' and external partners' sustainability and green policies through exchanging best practices and lessons learnt, transfers of technological and scientific resources to enhance capacity of ASEAN; (b) mainstreaming sustainable development and sustainability into ASEAN's cooperation with external partners which could support the implementation of the ASEAN Complementarities Roadmap and ASEAN Vision 2025; (c) emphasising youth empowerment and engagement in development policy formulation to ensure that they are the true beneficiaries of development gains; and (d) fostering a peaceful environment and enhancing partnerships to ensure human security, global peace and prosperity as well as the sustainability of the planet.

#### **b. Progress on Implementing Actions under the Complementarities Initiative**

The Meeting noted the progress made on the Complementarities Initiative presented by ESCAP, the ASEAN Secretariat, Cambodia as the ASEAN Chair in 2022, and the ASEAN Centre for Sustainable Development Studies and Dialogue (ACSDSD). The Meeting also welcomed the work of the ACSDSD in contributing to the SDGs implementation such as research and studies, networking, capacity-building and policy dialogue.

#### **c. Accelerating the Implementation of the Complementarity Roadmap**

The Meeting underscored the need to link the areas of cooperation with various development strategies to strengthen regional collaboration and stressed the importance of fostering inclusive, multi-stakeholder, multi-sectoral, and multi-generational SDG partnerships. The Meeting also suggested that, as ASEAN begins drafting the ASEAN Community's Post-2025 Vision, new modalities of regional engagement might be envisioned to include engaging prime movers of the SDGs beyond the governmental sectors. This will help to mainstream the SDGs in ASEAN, increase community engagement and ensure that the Complementarities framework reflects the principles enshrined in the SDGs and the ASEAN Charter in creating a people-centred and people-oriented community that leaves no one behind.

### III. ASEAN CENTRE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STUDIES AND DIALOGUE (ACSDSD)

In 2022, the ASEAN Centre for Sustainable Development Studies and Dialogue (ACSDSD) carried out a number of activities under its two core areas of work, namely: 1) research and studies and, 2) dialogue. The emphasis of the Centre's work this year was to carry on the projects delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The ACSDSD also held a number of outreach and networking events in 2022.

#### a) **Research and Studies**

*Scholarships:* In September 2022, the ACSDSD awarded 3 PhD scholarships to students from Thailand and Myanmar who will pursue their studies on sustainable development in the context of ASEAN at the College of Management, Mahidol University (CMMU).

*Research Grant:* The ACSDSD is in the process of calling for proposals for the research grant for 2022. The ACSDSD is seeking proposals that focus on promoting synergies between the Complementarities Roadmap and the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework with emphasis on the issues of digitalization or resilience.

A number of past research papers sponsored by the ACSDSD have been successfully published in academic journals. These include (1) a research on “*COVID-19 Impacts and Sustainability Strategies for Regional Recovery in Southeast Asia: Challenges and Opportunities, (August 2021)*”<sup>1</sup>; (2) a research article entitled “*Impacts of COVID-19 on Sustainable Agriculture Value Chain Development in Thailand and ASEAN, (October 2022)*”<sup>2</sup>; and (3) a research titled “*Sustainable Supply Chain Management in a Circular Economy: A Bibliometric Review (July 2022)*”<sup>3</sup> by Ms. Monrudee Theeraworawit, who has been awarded a PhD scholarship from the ACSDSD in 2021.

In addition, the ACSDSD has undertaken a joint project together with the CMMU, and the University of New South Wales, Australia, in developing an ESG Tracking System. The objective of the project is to analyse and study business models that adopt environmental, social and good governance frameworks, which is related to the implementation of SDGs 4, 5, 12 and 13. Data from the sustainable development reports of leading companies are used to analyse their strengths and weaknesses in the companies' ESG policy framework, and to help set good standards for companies in South East Asia. The data will also feed into the ASEAN Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform hosted by the ACSDSD, as examples of companies that implement the ESG concept and circular economy approach.

#### b) **Dialogue and Related Activities**

1. *Forum on Sustainable Production and Consumption, Best Practices and Ideas from Italy and ASEAN:* On 29 March 2022, the ACSDSD, in collaboration with the Embassy of Italy in Bangkok organized a public forum to discuss and showcase how business organisations in Italy and countries in South East Asia plan, execute and promote sustainable production and consumption. Issues addressed at the event included the reduction of food waste, raising the awareness of school and university students on the adoption of new production and consumption paradigms and sustainable production by innovative companies. Full report of the Forum appears as [Appendix 2](#)

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<sup>1</sup> The publication can be accessed via <https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/13/16/8907>

<sup>2</sup> The publication can be accessed via <https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/14/20/12985>

<sup>3</sup> The publication can be accessed via <https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/14/15/9304#>

2. ASEAN Networking Symposium on the Implementation of the Complementarities Roadmap in Support of COVID-19 Recovery: On 7 September 2022, the ACSDS, in cooperation with the UNESCAP, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand, the ASEAN Secretariat, the Asia Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation, organised this event to provide a networking platform for relevant ASEAN Sectoral Bodies, Centres and Institutes to enhance collaboration on their efforts to promote sustainable development. It also provided an opportunity to discuss and identify priority areas where additional support may be needed for ASEAN to advance further on sustainable development. Ninety-four participants attended the Symposium. Participants discussed the most critical priorities in each of the five priority areas under the Complementarities Roadmap; namely, 1) poverty eradication, 2) infrastructure and connectivity, 3) sustainable management of natural resources, 4) sustainable consumption and production, and 5) resilience. As a follow-up to the Symposium, the ACSDS will conduct further study and analysis of the issues raised with a view to producing a strategic plan for future action. These studies will be completed by the end of 2022.

3. ASEAN Circular Economy (CE) Stakeholder Platform: In 2022, the ACSDS continued its consultation with the Enhanced Regional EU-ASEAN Dialogue Instrument (E-READI) on the establishment of the ASEAN Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform. The Strategic Scoping Workshop on Operationalising the ASEAN Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform was held in Bangkok on 14-15 September 2022 and culminated with the ceremonial inauguration of the CE Stakeholder Platform Secretariat at the ACSDS on 15 September 2022. This knowledge and information sharing portal will undergo further technical development during October to December 2022 and is expected to be established by the end of 2022. A detailed work plan for 2023 is being developed. The Report on the Strategic Scoping Workshop appears as Appendix 3.

### c) **Outreach and Networking**

1. The Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) on Sustainable Management for International Business and Startups: This project is a collaboration between CMMU and ACSDS. The project aims to present knowledge on the development of start-up business models and international business models that apply environmental, energy and social development frameworks in doing business. In doing so, it includes the application of social innovations to tackle environmental issues, waste and water management. The course is now publicly available online and members of higher education in South East Asia through the UI Green Metric system<sup>4</sup>.

2. ACSDS and CMMU organised a public event to celebrate the 2022 International Women's Day on 8 March 2022. The event included live interviews with women from South East Asia (Viet Nam, Thailand and Lao PDR) on the role of women and issues related to SDG 5 Gender Equality. Two interviews were recorded and are publicly available for education and learning purposes.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> The course can be accessed at: <https://bit.ly/3Naxp8k>

<sup>5</sup> Clip 1: Professor Ngan Collins <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eGi6NpTne6A&t=32>; and  
Clip 2: Ms. Priya Sharma <https://youtu.be/lc6dLhTMoXk>

## **IV. CONCRETISING REGIONAL COOPERATION AND PARTNERSHIP: HIGHLIGHTS OF OTHER RELEVANT ACTIVITIES**

ASEAN's sustainability agenda has continuously been advanced and achieved through the implementation of cooperation projects and activities that generate concrete results and benefits for the peoples of ASEAN. This also requires strong partnerships among all ASEAN Member States and between ASEAN and interested external partners. A number of initiatives and activities undertaken are worth highlighting as follows:

### **a. The 3<sup>rd</sup> ASEAN-EU Dialogue on Sustainable Development**

Following the 2<sup>nd</sup> ASEAN-EU Dialogue on Sustainable Development in Brussels in February 2020, Thailand and the EU jointly organised the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of this Dialogue on 18 November 2021 via videoconference. The event brought together representatives and experts from ASEAN and EU Member States, the European Commission, the European Investment Bank (EIB), the ASEAN Secretariat, UN agencies, the private sector, civil society organisations and youth representatives from Southeast Asia. One of the key outcomes of the meeting was the launch of the “**Green Team Europe Initiative (TEI)** in partnership with ASEAN/Southeast Asia”, with the participation of Austria, Denmark, France, Germany, Romania, and the European Investment Bank.

The Dialogue highlighted four key factors that are crucial to promoting sustainable development in the region, namely: (1) a coordinated global response, ambitious policies and enhanced collective efforts to address global challenges of robust and green recovery, climate change and environmental degradation; (2) cooperation in the development of digital infrastructure and ecosystem, digital transformation, and digital literacy and inclusiveness; (3) inclusive human capital development, gender equality and women's economic empowerment in bridging development and gender gaps and ensuring a more equitable society; and (4) Promoting the entrepreneurship and financial inclusion for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), women and other vulnerable groups. Summary report of the Dialogue appears as Appendix 4. The 4<sup>th</sup> edition of the ASEAN-EU Dialogue on Sustainable Development is expected to be held in Brussels in June 2023.

### **b. The 6<sup>th</sup> ASEAN-China-UNDP Symposium: Reducing Inequality in the Decade of Action to Achieve the SDGs and Recovery from COVID-19 Pandemic**

The ASEAN Secretariat, China and UNDP co-organised this symposium on 7 December 2021 via videoconference. The symposium served as a platform to stimulate exchange of experiences, views and strategies to mitigate existing inequalities, emerging inequalities resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, and to safeguard the progress of SDGs implementation. The discussion focused on identifying potential policy solutions and pathways that would leverage regional cooperation in order to achieve SDG Goal 10. A policy brief was issued as an outcome of this symposium<sup>6</sup>. It outlines and elaborates on approaches to reducing inequality in the ASEAN region to achieve the SDGs, discusses specific dimensions of the differential impacts on the population which cover five key issues: jobs, social protection, education, health and food security, as well as suggests a series of exit indicators that ASEAN countries may consider monitoring.

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<sup>6</sup> The policy brief can be downloaded from <https://www.undp.org/asia-pacific/publications/reducing-inequality-decade-action-achieve-sdgs-and-accelerate-post-pandemic-recovery>



### **c. UNGA77 Side Event “Regional Pathways to the Global Goals: ASEAN’s Approach towards SDGs Implementation and Sustainable Post-COVID 19 Recovery”**

Thailand, in the capacity of ASEAN Coordinator on Sustainable Development Cooperation, in collaboration with the ACSDS, organised this side event on 22 September 2022, on the margins of the UNGA77 High-level Week. The objective of this event was to exchange ideas and views on approaches to regional collaborations and partnerships in advancing the sustainable development agenda particularly in the context of the post-COVID-19 recovery. The event saw participation of high-level representatives of ASEAN External Partners such as Australia and the EU, as well as experts from international organisation and civil society organisation. Four key points were highlighted as policy pathways for ASEAN, namely: (1) enhancing synergies between various policy frameworks; (2) addressing both short-term challenges in protecting vulnerable groups and long-term aspect in promoting efficient resources management, ensuring inclusivity, and building resilience; (3) unlocking new sources of finance and enhancing multi-stakeholder engagements; and (4) enhancing collaboration and partnerships through knowledge sharing, transfer of technology and innovation, resource mobilisation and SDGs financing, as well as capacity building. Summary of the side event appears as [Appendix 5](#).

### **d. ASEAN Bio-Circular-Green Economy (BCG) Knowledge Sharing Webinar Series**

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand, together with the ACSDS, the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation of Thailand, and the ASEAN BCG Network, jointly organised this webinar series with the aim to encourage exchanges of knowledge and best practices in BCG-related fields to support capacity-building for ASEAN Member States. Three webinars have been successfully organised in 2022, where experts from ASEAN’s external partners were invited to share their expertise and best practices in each session. Session 1 was organised on 14 March 2022, providing an introduction to the BCG Economy concept and showcasing practical application of the BCG concept in Thailand. Session 2 entitled “Planting the Seeds for Sustainable Agriculture in ASEAN” was organised on 19 May 2022 with participation of experts from Switzerland and New Zealand; while Session 3 on “Accelerating Clean Energy for a Greener ASEAN” took place on 16 September 2022 with the participation of experts from the EU and Norway. The fourth session will focus on sustainable tourism, and is expected to be held during the first semester of 2023.

## **V. RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **A. Enhancing Multi-Stakeholder Engagement**

The Complementarities Initiative and the UN 2030 Agenda are both predicated upon the interconnectedness of prosperous business, a thriving society and a healthy environment. These three sectors represent key development actors, and must move together to ensure progress and long-term sustainability. Furthermore, given the multi-disciplinary and cross-cutting nature of the Complementarities Initiative and the SDGs, their effective implementation requires a higher level of cooperation and collaboration among civil society, business, government, NGOs, foundations, academia, and youth, among others, for its achievement.

ASEAN must, therefore, leverage the potential of multi-stakeholder engagements to best harness and optimize available resources, translate policy into actions, and drive forward real changes required to deliver the SDGs and impact people’s lives on the ground. This can be achieved through a number of approaches such as (1) a constant public-private policy dialogue to discuss business enabling environment and stimulate investment; (2) engage all sectors in development planning and support priorities and interests mapping of various stakeholders;

(3) create in-country platforms to drive partnership action and connect existing platforms and programmes to international support mechanisms; (4) coordinate and harmonise results measurement frameworks in order to reduce duplication of efforts; and (5) support institutional capacity building and raising awareness on the implementation of the Complementarities Initiative and the SDGs.

## **B. Leveraging Digital Technologies and Innovation to Achieve Sustainable Development**

The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the use of digital technology and the advent of the 4IR. Digital technology and innovation can help accelerate progress towards the SDGs. Indeed, Science, Technology and Innovation, together with Financing for Development, were identified by the UN as one of the two main “means of implementation” to achieve the SDGs by 2030 as it cuts across all Goals.

Being the world’s fastest growing internet market with well-developed ICT cluster and a good track record of innovation and investment in new technology, ASEAN is well placed to leverage and harness the potential of digital technology and innovation to support implementation of the Complementarities Initiative and the SDGs. To this end, governments and stakeholders can work together to (1) develop the foundational building blocks for sustainable, technology-led economies; (2) enhance the capacity of people and institutions to thrive in a resilient society in the face of technological disruption; and (3) harness disruptive technology, data, and expertise to solve development challenges and manage risks through collaborations.

## **C. Strengthening ASEAN Institutional Framework and Capacity**

As ASEAN embarks on the drafting of the Post-2025 Vision, resilience and sustainability must remain at the heart of ASEAN Community building. Although cooperation to promote sustainability and resilience have been incorporated into the blueprints of all three community pillars, effective coordination among various sectoral bodies and institutions is still lacking resulting in slow progress in the implementation. Moreover, inadequate capacity, such as lack of information, data, funding and organisation support, as well as inadequate monitoring mechanism limit the ability of ASEAN to identify risks and cohesively respond to the increasingly complex challenges facing sustainable development.

Looking ahead, the development of ASEAN Community’s Post-2025 Vision offers an opportunity for ASEAN to strengthen institutional framework and improve operational paradigm. In order to effectively promote sustainability and resilience in ASEAN Community integration, ASEAN needs to adopt balanced, coherent and coordinated actions *across*, as well as *within*, all three pillars. This will help ensure that ASEAN’s policies and actions to promote sustainable development and resilience are streamlined and provided with effective support for national and sub-national implementation. To this end, a number of approaches can be envisaged such as (1) enhancing capacity of the ACSDDSD to increase engagement and coordination with relevant sectoral bodies and SDGs-related institutions in ASEAN; (2) strengthening overall institutional capacity of ASEAN’s Secretariat for effective data collection, results monitoring and evaluation; and (3) continuing to promote inter-relationships and complementarity approaches between ASEAN Post-2025 Vision and the SDGs.

## **Appendix 1:**

### **Co-Chairs' Summary of the 6th High-Level Brainstorming Dialogue on Enhancing Complementarities between the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

**Co-Chairs' Summary**  
**of the 6<sup>th</sup> High-Level Brainstorming Dialogue on Enhancing Complementarities**  
**between the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and**  
**the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

**30 May 2022**

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1. Thailand and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) jointly organised the 6<sup>th</sup> High-Level Brainstorming Dialogue on Enhancing Complementarities between the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (HLBD) on 30 May 2022 in a hybrid format with speakers and participants attending at the United Nations Conference Centre in Bangkok and via videoconference.

2. The Meeting served as a platform for ASEAN, UN agencies, and other external partners of ASEAN to further advance cooperation in promoting complementarities between the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Complementarities Initiative). This year's HLBD also aimed to enhance actions and implementations of the Complementarities Roadmap, with a view to recovering lost progress due to COVID-19 and accelerating efforts in attaining the SDGs and robust post-pandemic recovery in a synergised and complementary manner.

3. The Meeting was co-chaired by His Excellency Mr. Don Pramudwinai, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand, as the ASEAN Coordinator on Sustainable Development Cooperation, and Her Excellency Ms. Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of ESCAP. His Excellency Dato' Lim Jock Hoi, Secretary-General of ASEAN, also participated in the Meeting as did high-level representatives of ASEAN Member States and development experts from UNDP, UNEP, UNCDF, FAO, the World Bank, and the Asian Development Bank. Representatives of China, Japan, the Republic of Korea, and the European Union, as ASEAN's Dialogue Partners, Switzerland and Norway, as ASEAN's Sectoral Dialogue Partners, as well as Germany, France and Italy, as ASEAN's Development Partners, were present as Guests of the Co-Chairs.

4. The Co-Chairs recognised that the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the weaknesses in the current economic model and the vulnerabilities of existing social and health infrastructure, scaling back the hard-earned progress made in pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals in the region. Thus, to reverse the regressing trend in the SDGs, there is an urgent need to mainstream pathways to sustainable development by prioritising inclusive, resilient and sustainable development rather than economic growth alone. In this regard, the Co-Chairs urged ASEAN and its partners to strengthen their cooperation to promote a sustainable development path that balances preserving the ecosystem, and ensuring sustainable and inclusive socio-economic development.

Towards this end, ASEAN could explore alternative strategies, including the Bio-Circular-Green Economy, to complement regional efforts to advance Sustainable Development Goals and propel ASEAN Community building towards a more sustainable and resilient future.

5. The Co-Chairs also suggested specific ideas and policy areas where ASEAN should undertake in order to build back better from the multi-dimensional impacts of COVID-19 and achieve the SDGs, including (a) accelerating the implementation of ASEAN Member States' and external partners' sustainability and green policies through exchanging best practices and lessons learnt, transfers of technological and scientific resources to enhance capacity of ASEAN; (b) mainstreaming sustainable development and sustainability into ASEAN's cooperation with external partners which could support the implementation of the ASEAN Complementarities Roadmap and ASEAN Vision 2025; (c) emphasising youth empowerment and engagement in development policy formulation to ensure that they are the true beneficiaries of development gains; and (d) fostering a peaceful environment and enhancing partnerships to ensure human security, global peace and prosperity as well as the sustainability of our planet. The Meeting had wide-ranging and in-depth discussions on existing initiatives that are helping to promote sustainable development in line with the Complementarities Initiative and Complementarities Roadmap and how these could be scaled up to ensure full implementation of the SDGs in ASEAN, helping the region to recover better and fairer from COVID-19 and be well-prepared for future shocks and crisis.

6. The Meeting noted the progress made on the Complementarities Initiative presented by ESCAP, the ASEAN Secretariat, Cambodia as the ASEAN Chair in 2022, and the ASEAN Centre for Sustainable Development Studies and Dialogue (ACSDDSD). The Meeting also welcomed the work of the ACSDDSD in contributing to the SDGs implementation such as research and studies, networking, capacity-building and policy dialogue.

7. The Meeting also discussed concrete ideas and approaches to implement the Complementarities Roadmap. The Meeting took note of initiatives from China, the European Union, France, Japan, Switzerland, the ADB, the World Bank, FAO, UNEP, the OECD, UNCDF, and ESCAP on enhancing sustainable development cooperation in ASEAN and plans to support the implementation of the Roadmap across the five priority areas of poverty eradication, infrastructure and connectivity, sustainable management of natural resources, sustainable consumption and production, and resilience.

8. ASEAN Member States reaffirmed the HLBD as an important platform to share knowledge and best practices, and looked forward to scale-up cooperation among ASEAN Member States and with external partners, including collaboration with UN agencies, in the implementation of the Roadmap and underlined the need for effective monitoring and evaluation of its implementation including through the ASEAN-UN Plan of Action.

9. The Meeting underscored the need to link the areas of cooperation with various development strategies to strengthen regional collaboration and stressed the importance of fostering inclusive, multi-stakeholder, multi-sectoral, and multi-generational SDG partnerships. The Meeting also suggested that, as ASEAN begins drafting the ASEAN Community's post-2025 vision, new modalities of regional engagement might be envisioned to include engaging prime movers of the SDGs beyond the governmental sectors. This will help to mainstream the SDGs in ASEAN, increase community engagement and ensure that the Complementarities framework reflects the principles enshrined in the SDGs and the ASEAN Charter in creating a people-centred and people-oriented community that leaves no one behind.

10. The Meeting commended the efforts of Thailand, as the ASEAN Coordinator on Sustainable Development Cooperation, and ESCAP in promoting the Complementarities Initiative. The Meeting recognised the importance of potential cooperation between ASEAN, UN Development System and other international organisations and stakeholders in achieving sustainable development in the region.

11. The participants expressed their appreciation to the Royal Thai Government and ESCAP for hosting this High-Level Brainstorming Dialogue and looked forward to the Dialogue next year.

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## **Appendix 2:**

### **Project Report:**

#### **ASEAN-Italy Forum on Sustainable Consumption & Production (SDG 12): Best Practices & Ideas**

## PROJECT REPORT:

### ASEAN-ITALY FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION & PRODUCTION (SDG 12): BEST PRACTICES & IDEAS

*CONSUMO E PRODUZIONE SOSTENIBILI :  
MIGLIORI PRATICHE & IDEE  
29 March 2022*



in collaborazione con



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Ministero degli Affari Esteri  
e della Cooperazione Internazionale



## Overview

The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) link economic, social, and environmental dimensions of development, moving beyond the narrower focus on generic poverty and human development, and integrating the environment agenda as the core for SDGs. At present, the combined agenda now includes a focus on achieving sustainable consumption and production (SCP) patterns (SDG 12).

In fact, there are various dimensions to identify actions that lead to the achievement of SDG 12. Indeed, SCP requires a fundamental shift in the way consumers and producers use services and products, including product lifecycle thinking. SCP means trying to “[do] more and better with less” – increasing quality of life while decreasing the impact of production on the environment due to pollution, waste, and degradation.

Indeed, the regional approach is necessary to effectively implement SDG 12, especially in Southeast Asia where the pace of consumptions and production among citizens of ten nations member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has been growing rapidly. Rapid economic growth, including in the Lower Mekong countries (LMCs), is expected to contribute to increased consumption in the region. Debt-fuelled consumption is on the rise along with the region’s rapid development; consumer debt in Thailand is the highest in the LMCs and the Asia-Pacific region. While promoting household consumption is often an important part of national policies on economic growth and poverty alleviation, increased consumption also has significant environmental impacts. Obviously, public policies need to address both continued economic development and poverty alleviation while ensuring environmental sustainability and responsible consumption and production in the region.

Globally, it is quite evident to witness the relationship between regional economic growth and the patterns of unsustainable consumption and production that make inequality and environmental degradation worse. Regional progress on SCP has gone backwards, and the region urgently needs to reverse material consumption and footprint trends to meet SDG 12, despite progress on individual targets.



Within the Southeast Asian region, progress has been stagnant for SDG 12. However, the importance of the concept is recognized by member countries and SCP is one of the five named priority areas for the ASEAN Vision 2025. ASEAN countries also issued a joint statement on the implementation of SCP among ASEAN countries in 2013. A variety of initiatives have been developed to support implementation of the goal. One important aspect is to promote lessons learnt among business sector in the region as well as partners of ASEAN. Issues such as reporting system for SCP, innovation for sustainable production, as well as awareness raising for young consumers in the region can be promoted to accelerate the achievement of SDG 12.

This forum, therefore, is timely and relevant to the regional and global changes in sustainable consumptions and production. The forum will encourage actors from the region and Italy to discuss and identify emerging trends and strategic gaps, demonstrate and showcase the benefits of sustainable consumption and production to build greater momentum for change, and guiding and supporting the implementation of policies and practices.

## ASEAN and Italy in the SCP Context

Italy is a global player, actively contributing to the frameworks for sustainable development. It has developed a national strategy to implement the 2030 Agenda, submitted a voluntary national review of SDG progress in 2017, and shared its experience on introducing well-being indicators to guide national budgeting with UN member states.

Italy is also contributing to the follow-up of the Paris Agreement on climate change and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction which plays a pivotal role in advancing SDG 12 worldwide. Apart from that, Italy's commitment to sustainable production and consumption can be witnessed in various dimensions. Italy's profile on the global sustainability stage has been cemented in recent years as it has embarked on a path to net zero. The commitment to take a proactive role as the co-chair (with the UK) for the UN Climate Change Conference (COP26) confirms Italy's commitment to sustainable actions from both consumers and producers' sides. When we closely examine the country's public policies, manufacturing has been identified as a target area, and powered by new technology and industrial innovation across the country, on SCP.

Italy has committed to raising the share of renewable energy to 30 per cent of the national gross final consumption of energy and to steadily reducing energy consumption by 2030. Foreign and domestic investment, particularly from SMEs, has been attracted to the sector by recent incentives, such as the 'Industria 4.0 plan', and funding for companies investing in research and development with a focus on smart machinery.



Policymakers and businesses alike have recognised the need for change, with major players in Italian industry embracing new methods of de-carbonising their operations and citing carbon-neutral production as a serious target. Recent developments in industrial processes, a renewed commitment to sustainable industry and an increased focus on carbon footprint management are transforming Italy's manufacturing sector. Process innovation in factories across the country is offering Italian companies the opportunity to develop and use environmentally friendly materials, reusing goods and packaging to avoid landfill, de-carbonising processes and using technology and different forms of innovation to increase the efficiency of plants. It is, therefore, obvious that there are plenty of 'best practices' to learn from Italy. Setting priorities that match SDG 12 in Southeast Asia and Italy, and create a regional platform to collaborate with the members of ASEAN would enable Italy to link its global competencies and local wisdoms, bring Italian learning and expertise to the table and more easily build coalitions across Southeast Asia.

As the development partner of ASEAN, the Embassy of Italy in Thailand (with a strong support from Italy's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, and ASEAN Centre for Sustainable Development Studies and Dialogue (ACSDSD), in conjunction with regional and Italian stakeholders, initiated a public forum to discuss and showcase how business organisations from Italy and members of Southeast Asian nations plan, execute, and promote sustainable production and consumption.

## Key Issues from the Forum

There were participants from various industry (i.e. tourism, food, fashion) from Italy and ASEAN nations. Issues addressed at the event included: the reduction of food waste, raising the awareness of school and university students on the adoption of new production and consumption paradigms, and sustainable production by innovative companies. Lastly, a group of Indonesian and Thai researchers presented a study on the transformation of consumption patterns among young people in some ASEAN countries. These are key messages from the forum.

## CONSUMERS AND PRODUCERS: MINDSET AND CONTEXT

Purchasing and consumption choices are very important both from an environmental and social point of view. It is evident that consumer demand toward products from sustainable business organizations has drastically changed in recent years in most developed countries, including Italy. Consumers take more interest in aspects like quality, origin and organic production and apparently less interest in ‘strictly’ environmental concerns that are more “altruistic”

Consuming responsibly, wondering what the true cost of the products we buy is, recognizing that what we buy is the result of the work of a chain of people that can affect the health and well-being of people and the planet, is now a practice popular among Italians. In Italy, consumers are increasingly demanding ‘good’ products: both good in terms for the consumer and good for the community and/or environment. This growing trend represents an opportunity for companies, both in terms of greater sales potential, and also to create the basis for the company’s sustainable growth.



Participants from Italy agreed that younger consumers ponder sustainability aspects when they consider buying products. Delegates from the fashion industry raise their concerns on how quickly the young consumers can adapt to, and search for, sustainable fashion in Italy. The dimensions of ‘sustainable fashion’ that trigger modern consumers can be multi-facet, i.e. animal rights, fair trade, human rights due diligence, environment, and economic issues. In fact, similar issues were raised by the speakers from Thailand when we focus on reaction and roles of consumers in the current global environment and economic issues. It is clear that sustainable mindset has been instilled in the mindset of this generation globally. The matter of how industry can respond to them should be acted immediately.

There are several issues from Italy regarding how policy makers, the industry, and the community can work together to promote sustainable production and consumption. An example includes the Milan Food Policy, a sustainable food system that promotes inclusiveness, sustainable, and actionable policies. Indeed, this is a good example how first step can be taken by the municipality to make its food system more sustainable, resilient, and equal for all.

The policy is the result of growing awareness among relevant actors and civil society of the challenges presented by climate change and the need for responsible management of resources. We also learn that the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact is an international agreement among cities from all over the world, committed "to develop sustainable food systems that are inclusive, resilient, safe and diverse, that provide healthy and affordable food to all people in a human rights-based framework, that minimize waste and conserve biodiversity while adapting to and mitigating impacts of climate change".

The key point that links producers and consumers in the setting such as urban is one important message from the pact: Acknowledging that cities which host over half the world's population have a strategic role to play in developing sustainable food systems and promoting healthy diets, and because while every city is different, they are all centres of economic, political and cultural innovation, and manage vast public resources, infrastructure, investments and expertise.



### Innovation for Sustainable Consumption and Production

We learn from all presenters that collaboration at both local and international levels must be initiated at certain point of time. In fact, if we need to response to changes in production and consumption, it is important to think about changes at different levels. A case study of City of Milan helps us to understand that leaders and leadership can promote social innovation through policies and social collaboration such as sustainable supply chain for food, planning for resources and consumption, and joint efforts among leaders who are action-oriented in their leadership on sustainability.

In case of Indonesia (Jakarta), we learn that Indonesia is the second-largest contributor of food waste in the world after Saudi Arabia. Similar to most developing countries worldwide, industrialisation, urbanisation and the growing middle-class population may contribute to changes in food consumption patterns among Indonesians. Marketing tactics such as the promotion of impulse buying, marketing and “buy one get one free” promotions may contribute to such change. The situation is getting worse since the outbreak of Corona Virus worldwide that promote unsustainable consumption, and the usage of non-recyclable plastic containers among Indonesian consumers. Among the researchers from Southeast Asia, ideas related to social innovation such as the promotion of traditional local markets, mobile vegetable vendors, and direct green platforms to farmers in the region can offer a solution to reduce the over-purchasing and unsustainable consumption habit. These types of retailers may help consumers curtail impulse buying by providing seasonal offerings and options to buy food in small amounts.

Social and product innovation through engagement with the local producers and consumers were raised by participants from Italy, Thailand, and Indonesia. For instance, Miomojo, an Italian brand that creates a kinder, more sustainable world. The focus from this company is to produce innovative, cruelty-free products that never harm animals. This point goes in line with the need from young consumers worldwide who also search for sustainable producers and products.

Another example is Orange Fiber from Italy has developed technology that patented and produces sustainable fabrics from citrus fruit by-products. They engaged with the producers from Catania as well as the designers worldwide to reconfirm the quality and value of sustainable production. It is important to be innovative in their fully traced and transparent supply chain, in order to transform this by-product into the perfect ingredient for conscious designers.



We also learn from the presenters that what accelerate sustainable consumption and production may include: the regulatory framework with a clear aim of improving coherence and consistency with the overall objectives, business actions that promote a simplification process, the implementation of economic instruments to support the transition towards a circular economy and business model (in Southeast Asia), and ongoing communication and awareness raising to promote ownership and active participation of citizens, central and local administrations, to show case the opportunities and benefits linked to sustainable production (i.e. activities related to policy, actions on circular economy), and enhance cooperation and support among different actors (public, private, research, academia) will help the region to successfully achieve the national and regional goal on SDG 12. It is suggested that research to foster innovation and new technologies, to increase competitiveness in industrial sectors, energy, and services in order to meet the new needs of the new system such as circular economy, sustainable consumption, and technology disruption.

Lastly, stories from Moreloop and Sivatel from Thailand also confirm that inclusive business model that support engagement among producers and consumers will promote adaptability and potential benefits and incentives for both sides. For instance, Moreloop can generate good image and revenues at the same time by buying high-quality waste at a fair price, then resells them for profit as input to new products, pursuing a circular economy model. This business model certainly prevents surplus fabrics ending up in Thailand's landfill. It also promotes sustainable production by creating values for surplus fabrics. This model allows business to engage with young fashion designers or small-medium enterprises, repurposing surplus fabric as products for corporate clients, and creating its own products for consumers.

## Conclusion

The event was closed by the Ambassador of Italy in Bangkok, Lorenzo Galanti. He underscored that the presentations and discussion had highlighted the key role played by the private sector, not just in identifying opportunities and innovative technologies to tackle the issue of waste but also in contributing, along with civil society organisations, to the creation of an informed market.



Professor Vichita Ractham, the executive director of ACSDSD addressed that it is important for organization such as ACSDSD to promote collaboration among stakeholders in the region and the world, if we are serious about achieving our target by 2030. This forum is one mechanism to promote dialogues and best practices among members of ASEAN and Italy. This forum can be seen as a platform that engage producers, consumers, and the the global citizens who aim to make a true sustainable world for the next generation. In sum, we must rethink commercial and residential energy use, transportation, and food waste. The more we discuss and act, the more we will elevate this important issue to the next level.

## Il Forum di Produzione e Consumo Sostenibile (SDG 12)

Oggi, le risorse consumate dalla popolazione mondiale sono più di quelle che gli ecosistemi sono in grado di fornire. Affinché lo sviluppo sociale ed economico possa avvenire in un quadro di sostenibilità, la nostra società dovrà modificare in modo radicale il proprio modo di produrre e consumare beni. È importante supportare i Paesi in via di sviluppo nel potenziamento delle loro capacità scientifiche e tecnologiche, per raggiungere modelli di consumo e produzione più sostenibili.

L'Ambasciata d'Italia a Bangkok, in collaborazione con l'Associazione delle Nazioni del Sud-est asiatico (ASEAN), ha organizzato la scorsa settimana un seminario dedicato a consumo e produzione sostenibili, spreco alimentare, economia circolare e sviluppo.

Il Forum "Sustainable Production and consumption, Best Practices and Ideas from Italy and ASEAN" moderato da Nattavud Pimpa, Chair in sostenibilità presso la Mahidol University di Bangkok, è stato introdotto da Gabriella Biondi, Direttrice Centrale per i Paesi dell'Asia e il Pacifico, e Usana Berananda, Direttrice Generale del Dipartimento ASEAN del Ministero degli Affari Esteri thailandese. Berananda, nel suo intervento, ha ricordato il modello Bio-Circular and Green (BCG) thailandese, modello nazionale di sostenibilità, fondato sulla "sufficiency economy philosophy" coniata da re Rama IX dopo la crisi finanziaria del 1997. Diversi i temi al centro dei lavori: la riduzione dello spreco alimentare, la sensibilizzazione all'adozione di nuovi paradigmi di consumo e produttivi presso studenti delle università e delle scuole e le produzioni sostenibili di aziende innovative.







ACSDSD sincerely thank our partners for this event:



miomojo



ORANGE FIBER



Prepared by: Nattavud Pimpa, CMMU and ACSDSD ([Nattavud.pim@mahidol.ac.th](mailto:Nattavud.pim@mahidol.ac.th))

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## **Appendix 3:**

### **Event Report:**

#### **ASEAN Circular Economy (Ce) Stakeholder Platform: Strategic Scoping Workshop on Operationalisation and Inauguration of the Platform's Secretariat**



# Event Report

## **ASEAN CIRCULAR ECONOMY (CE) STAKEHOLDER PLATFORM: STRATEGIC SCOPING WORKSHOP ON ITS OPERATIONALISATION AND INAUGURATION OF ITS SECRETARIAT**

Supported by the Enhanced Regional EU-ASEAN Dialogue Instrument (E-READI)

14-15 September 2022 | Bangkok, Thailand and Online

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## **1. ASEAN Circular Economy (CE) Stakeholder Platform: Strategic Scoping Workshop on its Operationalisation and Inauguration of its Secretariat**

On 14-15 September 2022, the Strategic Scoping Workshop for Operationalising the ASEAN Circular Economy (CE) Stakeholder Platform took place in Bangkok, Thailand. The event culminated with the ceremonial inauguration of the CE Stakeholder Platform Secretariat at the ASEAN Centre for Sustainable Development Studies and Dialogue (ACSDSD) in the College of Management, Mahidol University (CMMU), on 15 September.

As part of the ongoing cooperation between ASEAN and the EU, the ASEAN CE Stakeholder Platform is established to support a transition to sustainable consumption and production and a circular economy in the ASEAN region. In 2019, the Enhanced Regional EU-ASEAN Dialogue Instrument (E-READI) commissioned a study on circular economy and plastics (A Gap Analysis in the ASEAN Member States / AMS), which made salient recommendations, including establishing an ASEAN CE Stakeholder Platform. The scoping workshop identified the platform's strategic focus areas (sectors, materials, stakeholders) and explored how it could effectively engage a wide range of AMS stakeholders while considering existing initiatives. It outlined critical steps on how the platform could effectively improve access to information and knowledge on circular economy relevant to the ASEAN region.

Forty-eight participants attended the scoping workshop, and eighteen participants joined the ceremonial inauguration of the CE Stakeholder Platform Secretariat, including key circular economy experts, policymakers, representatives from ASEAN and AMS public administration, MSME & private sector, civil society, academia and intergovernmental organisations. Considering the cross-sectoral nature and approaches necessary to implement Circular Economy, this included participants representing five different ASEC Divisions from the Socio-Cultural and Economic Community Pillars (Environment, Poverty Eradication and Gender, Food Agriculture and Forestry, Science & Technology and Analysis & Monitoring on Finance and Socio-Economic Divisions). The workshop and inauguration were jointly organised by the ACSDSD, the Delegation of the European Union to ASEAN and the ASEAN Secretariat (ASEC) and carried out in the framework of E-READI and in collaboration with the Delegation of the European Union to Thailand.

## **2. Background**

The ASEAN region is undergoing rapid modernisation and urbanisation, resulting in surging demand for natural resources and a growing generation of waste. This development is having an increasing impact on the region's ecosystems and harming the well-being of many communities.

In recent years, the concept of circular economy has gained substantial interest not only as a response to resource scarcity and waste issues but also due to its potential to stimulate innovation and entrepreneurship and generate new employment opportunities. Many private companies in various industries and a growing number of governments have embraced circular economy principles and devised plans to turn those principles into transformative action.

The EU's first Circular Economy Action Plan, launched in 2015, received international attention due to its comprehensive scope and high ambition. In March 2020, the EU adopted its second Circular Economy Action Plan with revised targets and more specific actions addressing all the key life-cycle stages of products in priority sectors. To facilitate stakeholder engagement for the implementation of the Action Plans, in 2017, the EU established a [Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform](#), which provides access to good practices and strategies through a knowledge and information portal and organises an annual conference.

The need to shift to a more circular economy in ASEAN is increasingly recognised at regional and national levels. For example, in 2021, the ASEAN Economic Community adopted a Circular Economy Framework, which covers standards harmonisation, trade facilitation, innovation and digitalisation, finance and investments, and resource efficiency. An implementation plan and complementary work programme are currently under finalisation. Before the adoption of this Framework, circular economy principles had mainly been applied to plastics and marine litter. In the 2019 Bangkok Declaration on Combating Marine Debris in the ASEAN Region and the 2021 launching of the ASEAN Regional Action Plan on Combating Marine Debris, leaders agreed to prioritise approaches such as circular economy. Meanwhile, several AMS are now exploring how to apply circular economy ideas nationally to various materials and sectors. Indonesia, for example, has taken steps to formulate a national strategy for a circular economy.

Responding to the increasing interest in the circular economy approach and the need to share experiences and good practices, circular economy has been taken up as a theme of EU-ASEAN cooperation. The Enhanced Regional EU-ASEAN Dialogue Instrument (E-READI) supports the facilitation of an ASEAN-EU Dialogue on Environment and Climate Change, with 'Circular Economy' being one of the specific areas addressed under that dialogue, endorsed by the ASEAN Senior Officials on the Environment (ASOEN) in September 2018.

Supported through E-READI, in 2019, the EU and ASEAN launched a regional gap analysis on the state of circular economy for plastics in the ten AMS, which suggested that establishing an ASEAN platform for circular economy could be a practical and beneficial next step. Thus, the Strategic Workshop on the Operationalising of the CE Stakeholder Platform was held to gain insights from relevant stakeholders on what would be best needed for establishing the upcoming ASEAN CE Stakeholder Platform.

### 3. Objectives & Guiding Questions

#### Overarching objectives of the Strategic Scoping Meeting

- Help identify strategic focus areas (sectors, materials, stakeholders) for the ASEAN CE Platform, considering existing initiatives.
  - Explore how the ASEAN CE Platform could effectively engage various policymakers in the ASEAN Member States (include a chat function portal in the knowledge and information sharing portal).
  - Advice on how the ASEAN CE Platform could be anchored in the ASEAN regional structure and work effectively across the pillars/communities.
  - Generate ideas for activities of the ASEAN CE Platform in its first three years of operation.
  - Identify ways for the ASEAN CE Platform to reach out to and involve private sector companies and non-state actors.
- Discuss how to ensure buy-in from AMS governments and the long-term sustainability of the ASEAN CE Platform, including adequate and predictable funding.

#### Guiding Questions:

- How should the CE Stakeholder Platform perform, and what shall it do?
- What information and knowledge should the CE Stakeholder Platform develop and/or deliver?
- Who should be involved with the CE Stakeholder Platform? And how to engage the stakeholders?
- Who will be the 'Champions' of the CE Stakeholder Platform in which thematic area?
- Who will contribute to the online knowledge and information-sharing portal?

### 4. Activities

The Strategic Scoping Workshop on Operationalising the ASEAN Circular Economy (CE) Stakeholder Platform took place in the Hotel Amari Watergate, Bangkok, Thailand, in hybrid mode on 14-15 September 2022. The workshop was conducted for one and a half days, followed by the ceremonial inauguration of the ASEAN CE Stakeholder Platform Secretariat at the ACSDS, College of Management, Mahidol University, on the afternoon of 15<sup>th</sup> September.

#### DAY 1

##### Welcome Remarks

**Mr Bolbongse Vangphaen**, the Deputy Director-General Department of ASEAN Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kingdom of Thailand, opened the workshop with his welcoming remarks, followed by **H.E. Igor Driesmans**, Ambassador of the

European Union to ASEAN through a pre-recorded video that was screened at the workshop.



Figure 1. Mr **Bolbongse Vangphaen**, Deputy Director-General Department of ASEAN Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kingdom of Thailand, and **H.E. Igor Driesmans**, Ambassador of the European Union to ASEAN.

Their welcome remarks were followed by remarks from **Chirachai Punkrasin**, ACSDSD's Executive Director and **Dr Vong Sok**, the Head of the Environment Division, ASEAN Secretariat.



Figure 2. **Chirachai Punkrasin**, Executive Director of ACSDSD and **Dr Vong Sok**, the Head of the Environment Division, ASEAN Secretariat.

## Presentations

The programme continued with a series of presentations with the following sequence and topics:

1. Presentation on “Circular Economy related Initiatives in the Environment Sector” by **Dr Vong Sok**, Head of Environment Division, ASEAN Secretariat.
2. Presentation on “The ASEAN Economic Community Circular Economy Framework” by **Ms Joy Sinay**, Senior Officer for Analysis & Monitoring of Finance and Socio-Economic Issues Division, ASEAN Secretariat.
3. Presentation on “The Green Team Europe Initiative (TEI) in Partnership with ASEAN” by **Mr Andreas Unterstaller**, Programme Manager at the Delegation of the European Union to ASEAN.



4. Presentation on the “ASEAN Network on Bio-Circular and Green Economy” by **Ms Papawee Nupason**, International Relations Officer, Thailand National Science and Technology Development Agency (NSTDA).
5. Presentation on the “The ASEAN Circular Economy Platform” by **Mr Joerg Meier** and **Mr Magnus Bengtsson**, E-READI.

### Consultative “CARAVAN” session

One central element of the interactive workshop was a Consultative Session using the Caravan method. During this session, three facilitators led discussions in parallel groups. Participants visited the three stations in turn. Each station visit lasted some 20-25 minutes. Half of the time was dedicated to an introductory presentation followed by the participants' comments, questions, and insights. The stations were divided into the following thematic areas:

#### **Station 1**

Topic: Strategic Focus Areas and Activities for the CE Platform

Facilitator: Imelda Bacudo, E-READI Senior Non-Key Expert on Agriculture and Climate Action

Guiding Questions:

1. What could be the CE Platform’s Strategic Focus Areas?
2. How should the CE Stakeholder Platform perform, and what could it do?
3. What information and knowledge could the CE Stakeholder Platform develop and/or deliver?

Key insights from participants:

- Focusing on information exchange, especially on good CE practices, highlighting the value of ASEAN by facilitating exchange through a regional approach;
- Based on these exchanges, guidance to member states can be produced. This can facilitate evidence-based CE policy-making and legislation;
- The platform should collect relevant existing information on CE and make this information easily accessible;
- The platform should facilitate conversations on CE;
- Characteristics of the platform should be inclusive, considering regional and national contexts;
- The platform could facilitate harmonisation and standardisation related to CE, for example, related to statistics, materials and products, labelling criteria and trade rules, and investments.
- It was also suggested that the platform should come up with tools that highlight the economic and business values of CE approaches to influence policymakers and promote best practices;

The three Caravan Groups commented that the various thematic areas are plentiful and have suggested that priorities are already expressed in various ASEAN Working Groups Programs/Plans of Actions. This is a good reference point to start prioritisation.

The groups mentioned the priority areas of plastic and marine pollution, electronics, medical waste, garments/fashion pollution, and industrial waste/construction; and highlighted the importance of reduction of consumption.

## **Station 2**

Topic: Collaboration and Synergies

Facilitator: Janice Apilado, E-READI Senior Non-Key Expert on Communication and Outreach

Guiding Questions:

1. Who should be involved with the CE Stakeholder Platform? And how to engage the stakeholders?
2. Who will be the 'Champions' of the CE Stakeholder Platform in which thematic area?
3. How to add value at regional and national levels?

Key insights from participants:

- The participants think that the ASEAN CE Stakeholders Platform should engage the following actors and groups:
  - The ASEAN Secretariat – to lead and champion this movement among the AMS;
  - National Governments – have access to the services linked to circularity, including Ministries of Agriculture, Environment, and Natural Resources but also those that set the standards like Trade, Industry and Finance;
  - Private sector – particularly the FMCG and companies that are the biggest waste producers. Start-ups and SMEs to focus on a circular business model;
  - CSOs/NGOs – especially those that are already working on circular economy projects;
  - Academia and think-tanks – to ensure cutting-edge solutions and research are available as we move towards circularity;
  - EU and other regional organisations – for cross-border learning;
  - International Organizations and Development Banks.
- The ASEAN CE Stakeholders Platform should be cognizant of the operating environment and status of the transition to a circular economy in ASEAN. Multisectoral collaboration, including inter-ministerial engagement, will be critical. However, individual ministries don't necessarily have mandates to push this cross-cutting agenda forward. It is then essential to identify and engage stakeholders already proponents of CE to ensure commitment and outreach.
- In terms of engagement, the ASEAN CE Stakeholders Platform could look at skills sharing, policy guidance, information awareness and co-creation of projects and content with target stakeholders. According to participants, it is also essential to be inclusive in this stakeholder platform. For example, Informal settlers, faith-based organisations, and community leaders could be leveraged for behaviour change components at the local level if needed.
- For CE Champions, the following are proposed:

- Stakeholders of existing CE projects – Amuse, 3RproMar, Alliance to End Plastic Waste, STEAM Platform, EcoDesign Network, upcoming TEI
- 7 Female Winners of US-ASEAN Circular Economy Prize
- Dr Bijan of BCG
- Private sector companies, including FGC (Thailand), Schneider (Indonesia), IKEA and H&M
- ASEAN Working Groups and National Focal Points for AEC Pillar
- Participants agreed that the CE Platform needs multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary champions/leaders. Someone visionary who can see the big picture of the CE future and lead and inspire others to that future.
- To add value at the regional and local levels, participants agreed that the ASEAN CE Platform should support the following:
  - Standardising definitions, policy and understanding of CE concepts in ASEAN;
  - Promoting and sharing best practices among AMS;
  - Data collection and making it accessible;
  - Capacity building;
  - Making it a platform of opportunity – with good information and incentives for stakeholders;
  - Provide room for dialogue and synergies to ensure alignment between different CE movements in the region;
- Everyone agreed that the ASEAN CE Platform would play a catalytic role in the CE ecosystem. Its Secretariat must be equipped and supported to implement this vital task effectively. The participants expressed their willingness to work with the Secretariat after the scoping workshop to ensure the continuity and sustainability of this undertaking.

### Station 3

Topic: Knowledge and Information Portal

Facilitator: Mr Treesuvit Arriyavat, ACS DSD Communications and Engagement Specialist

Guiding Questions:

1. Who will contribute to the online knowledge and information-sharing portal?
2. In the first year after the establishment of the Platform, what types of information/material do you think should be prioritised for providing on the web portal?
3. Which functions or contents would many users appreciate finding on the Platform's web portal?

Key insights from participants:

The inputs from this discussion station can be divided into four categories: priority area, to consider, content, and functions.

- Priority Area
  - To set clear objectives of the portal about the identification of the key selling points of the platform;

- To establish a proper workflow (clearing house mechanism) to manage and monitor contents in the portal;
- To prioritise content by period (quarterly). To be able to focus on a specific group in each period;
- To get support from ASEC in reaching out to governments of ASEAN Member states;
- To actively consult relevant departments at ASEC on “How can different ASEAN pillars benefit from the portal/ platform?”
- To request ASEAN member states for recommendation or nomination of relevant organisations or persons;
- To actively seek ways to create effective role sharing and synergies with similar initiatives.
- To Consider
  - The role of dialogue partner (EU) in platform and portal. For example, how the portal can be utilised by Team Europe Initiatives (TEI) and other initiatives;
  - Consider the implications of Circular Economy practices (and/or standards on EU-ASEAN trade (supply chain) and investment;
  - Consider an engagement plan for stakeholders (e.g., Thinktank, policymaker, academia, government agencies, independent consultant).
- Content
  - The portal could include relevant guidelines, national (or) sub-national plans, policies, and standards of each AMS;
  - ASEAN policy mapping;
  - The directory of CE projects by thematic area (e.g., list of sectors, cross-sector CE projects, list of stakeholders involved in each project);
  - The directory of CE experts;
  - Policy research/ case study on the implementation of CE-related policy;
  - Business research/ case study on the implementation of CE-related strategy in business;
  - Relevant statistics.
- Functions
  - To add “call for collaboration” or “interactive stakeholder volunteer corner” functions where users can engage in one another program/ event;
  - To develop an ASEAN joint standard certification function.

### Interactive Fishbowl Discussion

The workshop continued with an Interactive Fishbowl Discussion: “Making the CE Platform a people-to-people platform engaging ASEAN stakeholders”. The participants were seated in a larger outer circle and a smaller inner circle. The inner circle was reserved with limited seats for selected participants to share their thoughts on the establishment of the ASEAN CE Stakeholder Platform, while participants in the outer ring could actively listen and were free to join the inner circle when they had thoughts to share or questions to ask.

These are some of the key insights from the Fishbowl discussion:

- With limited resources, a strategic priority setting is needed in the early stages of the CE Platform. Initial expectations need to be realistic. The Platform needs to be nurtured over time to be better resourced, connected, and impactful.
- The Platform can stimulate networking and exchange among national policy think tanks and help disseminate regional insights. This can speed up the adoption of evidence-based policies. Similarly, the Platform can engage with communities and start-ups promoting CE practices “on the ground,” synthesise their experiences, and identify what policy changes could facilitate more widespread adoption of such practices.
- The Platform can facilitate the transfer of policy experiences from the EU and European countries, considering the differences between the two regions. For example, given the challenges related to policy enforcement in ASEAN, stimulating voluntary efforts through the sharing of good practices might be more effective.
- The Platform can help connect various initiatives related to CE in ASEAN, ensuring they are in sync. This applies to ASEAN initiatives and EU-supported projects and facilities. The mapping of existing initiatives and providing a good overview of who is doing what would be valuable. To play this role, the Platform should maintain a dialogue with multiple relevant divisions in the ASEAN Secretariat.
- The EU is stepping up its collaboration on CE with ASEAN, and new and emerging projects may expect the Platform to become a mechanism for connecting with various stakeholders across the region and for disseminating key results and lessons learnt. Some of the new and emerging initiatives, not only those supported by the EU but also other partners, may be able to contribute in-kind or financial resources to the Platform if its activities align with their objectives.
- Technical standards, green procurement, and product labelling/scoring relevant to CE are closely related areas where work is ongoing at the national level and where the Platform could facilitate upscaling to the regional level. This need is already recognised in the Circular Economy Framework for the ASEAN Economic Community.

The first day ended with a reflection on the previous sessions and what to look forward to on the second day of the workshop.

## DAY 2

### Steps ahead for establishing the ASEAN CE Stakeholder Platform

Day two of the workshop started with a summary of the first day and an outlook for the second day. It was followed by an open brainstorming discussion with the following questions and responses:

1. How can we create synergies between existing and upcoming initiatives?
  - Identify and link existing national and sub-national initiatives;
  - Cooperation and coordination with existing initiatives developed by the government, regional organisations, and international organisations in the region. Such as with UNEP, GIZ, ASEAN COSTI, TEI, etc.;

- Involvement of the academia and private sectors to cut the gap amongst different stakeholders;
  - Visualisation of the CE ecosystem and mapping of sectoral initiatives in the ASEAN region.
2. What can everybody contribute to the knowledge portal?
    - Share information on the existing initiatives in the region;
    - Facilitation of information mirroring based on the Switch Asia – Green Growth Knowledge Platform;
    - Involvement in the annual workshop series back-to-back with the yearly EU-ASEAN Circular Economy Conference. Support of the three institutions on knowledge hub;
    - Held a jointly organised annual conference.
  3. What could be joint actions? What are the pilot project ideas?
    - Mapping study of the existing CE initiatives to identify and develop pilot programmes to fill in the gaps;
    - Build visibility and exposure presence in major regional events and creation of awareness;
    - More systematic discussion amongst major CE initiatives.
  4. How can we kick-start the stakeholder engagement group?
    - To have stakeholders engaged who are passionate about CE;
    - Keep the ball rolling by starting with simple initiatives and low-hanging fruits. Support ACSDSD through and with existing initiatives. Look at a small group of people who can support the job of the CE Platform;
    - Gender and age balance group of champions and thought leaders;
    - Approach through organisations and keep the process informal;
    - Need for synergies throughout the 'ASEAN Universe'. There is hope that the CE Platform is not creating more difficulties in that Universe but helps to ease coordination.
  5. How can we ensure or contribute to sustainable financing?
    - The involvement of various stakeholders, including the private sector, to secure financing:
    - Support from the AMS government to ease the burden of the ACSDSD.

Furthermore, the morning of day two served to reflect, conclude, and discuss the steps ahead for establishing the ASEAN CE Stakeholder Platform, one of the main questions being the sustainable long-term funding for the CE Stakeholder and its secretariat hosted by the ACSDSD. Considering organising back-to-back events or getting funding from other existing and upcoming initiatives with interest in collaborating with the CEW Platform and lobbying for Private Sector funding were some of the ideas raised.

The workshop ended with closing remarks by Mr **Joerg Meier**, Key Expert on ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community, E-READI; **Chirachai Punkrasin**, Executive Director of ACSDSD; and Dr **Vong Sok**, Head of Environment Division, ASEAN Secretariat.

## CEREMONIAL INAUGURATION OF THE CE STAKEHOLDER PLATFORM SECRETARIAT

The ceremonial inauguration of the Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform Secretariat was conducted at the College of Management Mahidol University (CMMU) in Bangkok, Thailand, on the afternoon of 15<sup>th</sup> September, 2022. The programme consisted of congratulatory remarks by:

- H.E. David Daly, Ambassador of the Delegation of the European Union to Thailand;
- Mr Bolbongse Vangphaen, Deputy Director-General Department of ASEAN Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kingdom of Thailand;
- Dr Vong Sok, Head of ASEAN Secretariat Environment Division;
- Assoc. Prof. Vichita Ractham, Dean, College of Management Mahidol University
- Chirachai Punkrasin, Executive Director of ACSDSD.

The inauguration ceremony ended with a ribbon-cutting ceremony to mark the opening of the ASEAN Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform Secretariat.



Figure 3. **Dr Vong Sok**, Head of Environment Division, ASEAN Secretariat, **Mr Bolbongse Vangphaen**, Deputy Director-General Department of ASEAN Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kingdom of Thailand; **H.E. David Daly**, Ambassador of the Delegation of the European Union to Thailand; **Chirachai Punkrasin**, Executive Director of ACSDSD and **Associate Prof. Vichita Ractham**, Dean, College of Management Mahidol University.

## 5. Achievements and Next Steps

The workshop's primary objective was to discuss and agree on the roles or functions of the ASEAN CE Stakeholder Platform. During the workshop, participants agreed that through an information and knowledge sharing portal, the ASEAN CE Stakeholder Platform would raise awareness of the relevance and benefits of circular economy practices, help identify and advocate for supportive public policies and actions at regional and national levels and serve as a node for exchanging experiences with the EU and other stakeholders. The workshop defined recommended steps to be implemented by the CE Stakeholder Platform Secretariat.

Under E-READI, it is foreseen to further support shaping the strategy and work plan of the ASEAN CE Stakeholder Platform Secretariat. The secretariat's main activities will include developing and managing the knowledge and information sharing portal, including the possibility of creating a portfolio of collaborative projects, convening and collaborating with the Stakeholder Engagement Group, and organising an annual EU-ASEAN circular economy conference. The latter could be implemented in partnership with ASEAN institutions, business-related organisations in ASEAN, the European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform, and the TEI EU-ASEAN partnership. The EU will also highlight the CE Stakeholder Platform Secretariat opening at the EU-ASEAN High-Level Dialogue on Environment and Climate Change on 6 October 2022.

### **Strategic Priority Areas for Engagement**

For the first three months of its operation (October to December 2022), the platform secretariat will coordinate the portal development with an ICT expert. Simultaneously, the platform secretariat will consider and formulate the strategic priority areas of engagement for a different group of stakeholders to the ASEAN circular economy, for example, national policy-makers/ think-tanks, national focal points, or chairs of the seven ASEAN work groups under ASEAN Senior Officials on Environment (ASOEN), and multiple relevant divisions in the ASEAN Secretariat. The platform secretariat will work with the ASEAN Secretariat (specifically the Environmental Division) to request support, guidance, and collaboration with relevant parties.

In addition to the engagement with the national and regional governmental entities, the platform secretariat will also consider appropriate and effective ways to engage with communities and start-up/private companies of different sizes in promoting CE practices “on the ground,” synthesise their experiences, and identifies what policy changes could help the adoption of such practices.

Furthermore, the platform's secretariat aims to amplify ongoing work/projects relevant to CE at the national level. This is one of the possible areas the Platform can facilitate upscaling to the regional level.

In short, the platform secretariat will prioritise its target for engagement, identifying, and screening strategic partners for the first three months.



## **The Stakeholder Engagement Group**

During the formulation of the strategic priority areas of engagement, the platform secretariat will actively seek and recruit suitable persons (or) organisational representatives for the Stakeholder Engagement Group of the ASEAN CE platform (the strategic partner of the platform on different stakeholder groups and sectors, e.g., private sector champion for plastic waste management, policymaker champion, etc.). Furthermore, the platform secretariat will work in consultation with E-READI on the composition and the terms of reference (ToR) for the Stakeholder Engagement Group of the platform. Ideally, the TOR will specify the roles and responsibilities of the stakeholder engagement group's committee, as well as the duration of the position.

To provide some credential/platform title for the stakeholder engagement group, the platform's secretariat needs to consider the form of the appointment. (The formal appointment could enable engagement of some group of stakeholders - e.g., Academic institutions)

Some participants from the strategic scoping workshop on operationalising the ASEAN Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform have expressed interest in joining the stakeholder engagement group. For example, relevant national authorities or the ministry of ASEAN member states (Pollution Control Department, Ministry of Natural Resource and Environment, Thailand), the regional director of Indorama, existing CE initiatives in ASEAN (Stream platform, Vietnam Circular Economy Hub), etc. These expressions of interest in joining the stakeholder engagement group serve as a starting point for a different group of stakeholders to engage with the platform. The platform secretariat and E-READI will have to consider and discuss the expectation and possible contributions from each group of stakeholder engagement group.

## **Next Steps and Targets**

By the end of 2022, the platform secretariat aims to have the knowledge and information sharing portal (website) established with initial contents from the national and regional governmental entities (e.g., Relevant national plan of the ASEAN Member States and relevant reports from the ASEAN Secretariat), as well as contents from existing initiatives related to CE in ASEAN both by ASEAN and the EU supported projects.

By the end of 2022, the platform will be able to establish a network consisting of AMS national and regional governmental agencies related to CE, some of the ongoing CE initiatives and platforms in ASEAN, as well as a few CE champions from the private sector of different size with solid CE practices. In addition to the network of CE stakeholders, the platform should have already established a small group (6-7 persons) of stakeholder engagement group's committee (or strategic partners) with official appointments and clear roles and responsibilities. This stakeholder engagement group's committee will serve as an advisory board and advise and recommend the platform on various matters.

In the first quarter of 2023, with the initially developed network of the ASEAN CE Stakeholder platform and the stakeholder engagement group's committee. The platform secretariat can start stimulating networking and exchange, disseminate insights across the region, and help connect and synchronise various initiatives related

to CE in ASEAN. The platform secretariat will work closely with the stakeholder engagement group's committee and the E-READI.

Possible activities for the first quarter of 2023 are mapping existing initiatives and relevant policies to provide an overview of who is doing what related to CE in ASEAN. In addition to the directory of CE projects in ASEAN, the platform's secretariat will also start to gather good CE practices in this quarter.

A detailed work plan for the remainder of 2022 and 2023 will be developed by the end of October 2022.

## 6. Annexes

- [List of participants](#)
- [Photos taken during the event](#)
- [Event Highlight Video](#)
- [Presentations from all speakers participating during the event](#)
- [Event Agenda](#)
- [Evaluations and Infographics](#)

## **Appendix 4:**

### **Summary Report of the 3<sup>rd</sup> ASEAN–EU High-level Dialogue on Sustainable Development**

**Summary Report**  
**3<sup>rd</sup> ASEAN-EU Dialogue on Sustainable Development**  
**18 November 2021 via videoconference**

On Thursday, 18 November 2021, the third ASEAN-EU Dialogue on Sustainable Development took place virtually. It was hosted by the Kingdom of Thailand in its capacity as the ASEAN Coordinator on Sustainable Development Cooperation and co-chaired by the EU and Thailand. The event brought together representatives and experts from ASEAN and EU Member States, the European Commission, the European Investment Bank (EIB), ASEAN Secretariat, UN agencies, the private sector, civil society organisations and youth representatives from South-East Asia. This event was jointly opened by H.E. **Mr. Don Pramudwinai**, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand (DPM) and H.E. **Ms. Jutta Urpilainen**, Commissioner (Csr) for International Partnerships. The “**Green Team Europe Initiative** in partnership with ASEAN/South-East Asia” was also launched at the high-level segment, which was broadcasted to the public. Three closed thematic sessions at senior officials’ level were followed, focusing on i) green recovery, climate action, environment, and Bio-Circular-Green Economy; ii) research, innovation, sustainable growth and digitalisation; and iii) gender equality, women’s economic empowerment, and inclusive human development.

**High-Level Segment**

In their opening remarks, DPM Pramudwinai and Csr Urpilainen insisted on the importance of the strategic partnership between ASEAN and the EU. DPM Pramudwinai underlined Thailand’s commitment to reaching carbon neutrality in 2050 and net zero emissions by 2065. He also stressed the need of a paradigm shift towards a more sustainable living and striking a “Balance of All Things” for a sustainable future for all, and suggested the Bio-Circular-Green (BCG) Economy Model as one of the tools contributing to this end. Csr Urpilainen underlined the EU’s support for ASEAN in addressing the COVID-19 pandemic and the opportunities for enhanced cooperation for post-COVID-19 recovery (including ‘Build Back Better’). She also stressed the importance of involving and empowering youth. Csr Urpilainen launched the **Green Team Europe Initiative** (TEI) with a one-minute video presentation. The TEI will strengthen the EU’s partnership with the ASEAN region in such areas as climate action, environmental and biodiversity protection, clean energy transition, disaster resilience, prevention of illegal logging, wildlife tracking and pollution reduction (Austria, Denmark, France, Germany, Romania, and the EIB are participating in the TEI). EIB Vice-President Peeters and the ASEAN Secretary-General also spoke at the launch event and expressed strong support for the TEI. The high-level session was concluded with group photos of the participants.

**1<sup>st</sup> session: Green Recovery, Climate Action, Environment and Bio-Circular-Green Economy**

In her opening remarks, **Ms. Chulamane Chartswan**, Deputy Permanent Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Thailand, underlined Thailand’s commitment to foster closer partnerships in advancing the sustainability agenda in ASEAN and beyond. She underlined the importance of ongoing ASEAN-EU cooperation programmes and the launch of the TEI. She also expressed her appreciation for the EU’s support for the establishment of the ASEAN Circular

Economy Stakeholder Platform at the ASEAN Centre for Sustainable Development Studies and Dialogue.

The first speaker, **Dr. Kanchana Wanichkorn, Vice President of the Office of National Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation Policy Council of Thailand**, addressed the BCG Economy Model as a tool for Thailand to achieve balanced and sustainable growth, which can be another area of cooperation within ASEAN and with the EU. She shared successful BCG initiatives in Thailand, such as the Green Energy Transformation for local communities and the Circular Design and Solution platform, which enables participants from the private sector to develop their business models from linear to circular design. As Thailand would host the APEC Chairmanship in 2022, the BCG Economy would be a key theme for cooperation among APEC Member Economies.

**Mr. Patrick Child, Deputy Director-General, Directorate-General for Environment, European Commission**, stressed that green transition is more relevant post-COVID than ever. He underlined how the EU sees the recovery from the COVID crisis as an opportunity to rethink our policies and economic systems in line with the European Green Deal, including through tax systems, enabling laws and regulations and the role of the private and financial sectors. He underlined the opportunity to strengthen the ASEAN-EU partnership towards such transition at the global level, and highlighted two specific areas of cooperation: 1) biodiversity and forests (in particular the Commission's new deforestation legislative proposal), and 2) circular economy and plastics.

During the open floor, **H.E. Mr. Marek Libřický, Ambassador of the Czech Republic to Thailand**, highlighted that sustainable development is a key area of cooperation and in line with the EU's Indo-Pacific Strategy and underlined the importance of good governance, people's participation and SDG16. **Dr. Vivi Yulaswati, Senior Advisor to the Minister of Planning and Head of SDGs National Secretariat of Indonesia** stressed the importance of investment in low-carbon and climate resilient development. She also expressed hope that ASEAN and the EU can work on capacity building programmes for SMEs to comply with EU green standards. **H.E. Mr. Lars Bo Larsen, Ambassador of Denmark to ASEAN**, congratulated ASEAN on the adoption of the Framework for Circular Economy for the ASEAN Economic Community, and expressed his wish to work with ASEAN on this area in any way possible. **Mr. Che Kodir Bin Baharum, Director of Environmental and Natural Resources Division, Prime Minister's Department of Malaysia**, acknowledged the importance of addressing issues of unsustainable development, socioeconomic activities and impact on environment and biodiversity. He stressed Malaysia will put forward measures to strengthen green growth in the country and the transition towards circular economy.

**Mr. Luca Lazzaroli, Director-General and Deputy Head of Operations, EIB**, highlighted the importance of the Green Deal and the sustainable growth and development component of the TEI. He also encouraged more EU Member States to join the TEI. **Dr. Nuki Agya Utama, Executive Director of the ASEAN Centre for Energy**, stressed the importance of strengthening the transition towards low-carbon energy systems, improving energy efficiency in the transport and industrial sectors, and cooperation on human resource for power generation. **Mr. Namit Agarwal, Regional Public Policy Lead, World Benchmarking Alliance (WBA)**, underlined the ASEAN region is not on track to achieve the 2030 Agenda. He added that WBA is keen to further promote the private sector's role in contributing to sustainability. **Mr. Mahamadou Tounkara, Director of Governance, Strategy, Partnerships and Communications Division, Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI)**, affirmed that GGGI is interested in the TEI and would like to contribute to the discussions. He highlighted GGGI

plans to mobilise 3 billion US dollars to finance green and climate-related investments until 2025 for their members.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Session: Research, Innovation, Sustainable Growth and Digitalisation**

In her opening remarks, **Ms. Marjeta Jager, Deputy Director-General, Directorate-General for International Partnerships, European Commission**, underlined that the EU is very active in the areas of research, innovation, sustainable growth and digitalisation within the framework of the strategic partnership with ASEAN. She shared examples of innovative EU projects and underlined that the EU looks forward to intensify cooperation in science, technology and innovation with ASEAN.

**Mr. Satvinder Singh, Deputy Secretary-General of ASEAN for the ASEAN Economic Community**, addressed how the pandemic has challenged our societies. Research, innovation and digitalisation have helped us survive these hard times and prepare for the future. R&I was essential for investment in technology, future capabilities and growth and for achieving the 2030 agenda. He stressed the journey towards carbon neutrality has begun and remarked that “speeds might be different within the ASEAN region, but the destination is set”. Finally, he underlined the importance of the private sector in this paradigm shift and that digitalisation would be one of the key enablers.

**Mr. Jean-Eric Paquet, Director-General, Directorate-General for Research and Innovation, European Commission**, started by anchoring R&I into the Sustainable Development Goals and the transition towards the 2030 Agenda. He further stressed the need to continue investing in effective solutions (example of Pfizer/BionTech mRNA vaccine). Moving to net zero economies could not happen overnight, it was positive to see many countries setting 2050 objectives. Still, progress was needed between now and 2030.

**Director Dr. Christelle Roy, CNRS (French National Centre for Scientific Research) - Direction Europe de la recherche et coopération internationale (DERCI)** highlighted that the research community was eager to strengthen the partnership with ASEAN. She saw a lot of potential for this. **Dr. Nele Leosk, Ambassador-at-Large for Digital Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Estonia**, informed that Estonia’s major trademark is digital transformation and discussed how technology and digitalisation have played a crucial role in helping us survive the pandemic. She also stressed that it is crucial to ensure growing digital society is democratic. **H.E. Mr. David Daly, EU Ambassador to the Kingdom of Thailand**, gave examples of how the scope of bilateral Thai-EU dialogues were expanded to the ASEAN-EU level (such as on IUU fishing and migration rights). He stated that when we tackle global issues together, we see positive spillover effects into other sectors.

**Dr. Non Arkaraprasertkul, Senior Expert in Smart City Promotion, Digital Economy Promotion Agency of Thailand**, talked about “smart environment” and stressed how it does not matter if a city is “smart”, because if the applicable environmental standards are not good enough, it will be of no use, as no one will want to live in the city. **Ms. Dwi Fitri Arrisandi, Country Representative Erasmus Mundus Association Indonesia** stressed how youth appreciate the possibility to be able to study abroad but lack career perspectives when returning home. She called for support for education and further access to the labour market, as well as highlighted digitalisation as a possible solution to enhance youth’s interest in career in the agricultural sector. Finally, **Mr. Stéphane Dovert, Conseiller de Coopération / Directeur de l’Institut Français d’Indonésie, Embassy of France to Indonesia and Timor Leste**, commended the TEI and underscored the importance of promoting joint research and study programmes which could lead to more joint patents between the two regions. He also stressed

the importance of cooperation on the development of digital infrastructure and ecosystem, digital literacy and digital inclusion.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Session: Gender Equality, Women's Economic Empowerment, and Inclusive Human Development**

In her opening remarks, **Ms. Usana Berananda, Director-General of the ASEAN Affairs Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand**, underlined the key policy objective of equal opportunities for everyone, especially MSMEs, women and other vulnerable groups in order to leave no one behind. She addressed the jointly launched ASEAN Gender Outlook performed by the ASEAN Committee on Women, the ASEAN Secretariat, and UN Women, which showed ASEAN's progress towards the SDGs through the gender's lens. She stressed that more needed to be done to narrow the gender and development gaps. To do so, ASEAN and the EU should enhance cooperation on education and training, gender equality, women's economic empowerment and financial inclusion.

**Ms. Nita Yudi, Chairperson of ASEAN Women Entrepreneurs Network (AWEN)**, spoke about the work of AWEN and its main aim: to promote and empower women in the South-East Asia region. Through their work, women have been offered trainings, seminars and workshops – both offline and online. She underlined the importance of enhancing female entrepreneurs in the region and provide them with the necessary support, especially during the pandemic. Further, she highlighted how AWEN hopes to be able to continue its work with further support from the EU and ASEAN.

**Ms. Chiara Adamo, Acting Director for Human Development, Migration, Governance and Peace, Directorate-General for International Partnerships, European Commission**, stressed the negative impact of the COVID crisis on gender equality worldwide. She underlined how empowering women and promoting gender equality is crucial to achieve the SDGs. She further highlighted the newly adopted Action Plan on Gender Equality (GAP III), which provides an operational roadmap for the EU to work together with all stakeholders, and elaborated some planned EU priorities in the ASEAN region related to this topic at the bilateral level. To conclude, she proposed to start technical work to establish a joint ASEAN-EU regional set of priorities for cooperation on gender equality up to 2025.

The floor was opened by **Ms. Sunee Srisangatrakullert, Deputy Director-General of the Department of Women's Affairs and Family Development, Ministry of Social Development and Human Security of Thailand**, who emphasised the importance of empowerment of women and girls and including them in decision-making processes. **H.E. Mr. Jon Åström Gröndahl, Ambassador of Sweden to Thailand**, highlighted the fact that gender equality is an engine driving development and directly pertains to the issues of human rights and justice. He presented Sweden's feminist foreign policy and the need to invest in women empowerment to achieve results. He also stressed Sweden's willingness to continue cooperation on these issues. **Dr. Vivi Yulaswati, Senior Advisor to the Minister of Planning and Head of SDGs National Secretariat of Indonesia**, raised the issue of informal work and how it has increased during the pandemic, especially for women. **Ms. Ryce Chanchai, ASEAN Governance, Peace and Security Lead, Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, UN Women**, underlined the importance of gender data and statistics for tracking progress towards the SDGs as well as gender mainstreaming into key regional priorities under the Complementarity Roadmap. ASEAN has potential to engender environment and disaster statistics for evidence-based policy implementation. She also stressed the need to ensure that climate change policy dialogue put stronger considerations on social equity and the gender perspective to leverage women's critical contribution to climate change mitigation and



adaptation, renewable energy and conservation of environment and biodiversity. Furthermore, addressing the issue of women's unpaid care work and leveraging the use of digitalization will be key for economic transformation that promote greater economic participation and empowerment of women in COVID-19 recovery in line with the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework. UN Women stands ready to support ASEAN to advance these initiatives. **Mr. Benjie Allen D. Aquino, Member of the EU Youth Sounding Board<sup>1</sup>**, speaking in his own personal capacity, highlighted the challenges on ensuring the rights of the LGBTQI+ community in the ASEAN region and the criminalisation of same-sex relations. He also underlined the need to address the issue of child marriage in certain countries, which has negatively impacted the lives of young girls.

### **Closing Remarks**

In her closing remarks, **Ms. Marjeta Jager, Deputy Director-General, Directorate-General for International Partnerships, European Commission**, expressed her gratitude for the useful exchanges during the dialogue and for the particular attention that had been paid to the important topics of gender and youth participation. She also underscored the three main priorities for the EU's cooperation with ASEAN at the regional level during the EU's current budgetary cycle, namely i) implementing the ASEAN-EU Strategic Partnership; ii) green and inclusive sustainable development; and iii) sustainable connectivity. She informed that the EU aimed to host the 4<sup>th</sup> ASEAN-EU Dialogue on Sustainable Development in 2023 and expressed her hope it could be held in person. **Ms. Usana Berananda, Director-General of the ASEAN Affairs Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand**, concluded by expressing her appreciation to all participants. She stressed that the collective efforts demonstrated today provide a solid foundation in the pursuit of a balanced, inclusive and people-centered development and sustainability. Finally, she underlined the potential of deepening the ASEAN-EU cooperation on the green agenda and stated that she looked forward to the next Dialogue in 2023.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/youth-sounding-board\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/youth-sounding-board_en)

## **Appendix 5:**

**Summary of the UNGA77 Side Event  
“Regional Pathways to the Global Goals:  
ASEAN’s Approach towards SDGs Implementation and  
Sustainable Post-COVID-19 Recovery”**

## Information Note

Summary of the UNGA77 Side Event “Regional Pathways to the Global Goals: ASEAN’s Approach towards SDG’s Implementation and Sustainable Post-COVID19 Recovery”

22 September 2022, 13.15-14.45 hrs,  
Permanent Mission of Thailand to the United Nations, New York

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1. Thailand, in the capacity of ASEAN Coordinator on Sustainable Development Cooperation, in collaboration with the ASEAN Centre for Sustainable Development Studies and Dialogue (ACSDSD), organised a side event “Regional Pathways to the Global Goals: ASEAN’s Approach towards SDGs Implementation and Sustainable Post-COVID 19 Recovery” on 22 September 2022, on the margins of the UNGA77 High-level Week, at the Permanent Mission of Thailand to the United Nations. The objective of this event was to exchange ideas and views on approaches to regional collaborations and partnerships in advancing the sustainable development agenda particularly in the context of the post-COVID-19 recovery.

2. The event comprised a High-level Segment with remarks from H.E. Mr. Don Pramudwinai, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand, Senator the Hon. Penny Wong, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Australia, H.E. Dato Lim Jock Hoi, Secretary-General of ASEAN, and Mr. Achim Steiner, UNDP Administrator. This was followed by a panel discussion moderated by Mr. Chirachai Punkrasin, Executive Director of the ACSDSD. Panelists during the panel discussion included (1) Mr. Tri Tharyat, Deputy Minister for Multilateral Cooperation Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Indonesia; (2) Ms. Belen Martinez Carbonell, Managing Director for Global Agenda and Multilateral Relations, European External Action Service; (3) Mr. Lucas Tavares, Senior Liaison Officer, FAO Liaison Office with the UN; and (4) Ms. Elizabeth Yee, Executive Vice President, Programme Strategy, the Rockefeller Foundation. The event was attended by representatives from ASEAN Member States, ASEAN’s External Partners and UN agencies.

3. During the High-level Segment, speakers recognised that the world is currently facing multidimensional challenges that have scaled back the hard-earned progress made in pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals. These challenges include the COVID-19 pandemic, conflicts, climate change, and supply chain disruption, among others, resulting in the Human Development Index being set back to the 2016 level. There is, therefore, an emphatic need for a major shift in mindset towards collaboration and for accelerating concrete actions to recover lost progress and rebuild the momentum of global sustainable development.

4. Key elements for taking forward SDGs implementation were highlighted. In his remarks, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand underlined the importance of (1) **fostering a peaceful environment** conducive to sustainable development, as the two agendas are mutually reinforcing; and (2) **enhancing partnerships** for the 2030 Agenda through synergies, whole of society approach, and multi-stakeholder engagement. In the same vein, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Australia stressed the importance of partnerships in accelerating SDGs implementation, with a view to ensuring a stable, peaceful and prosperous region, while reiterating Australia’s readiness to deepen engagement and cooperation with ASEAN in this area.

5. Regional collaboration and partnerships, both within and beyond the region, have underpinned ASEAN’s COVID-19 recovery efforts. The Secretary-General of ASEAN, in his remarks, stressed the importance of adopting a whole-of-ASEAN approach and noted that ASEAN’s efforts in enhancing SDGs implementation and pursuing sustainable post-COVID 19 recovery have been guided by two inter-related frameworks namely the **Complementarities Initiative**, which underlines complementarities between the ASEAN Vision 2025 and the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the **ASEAN**

**Comprehensive Recovery Framework (ACRF).** These frameworks, and their associated mechanisms and dialogues, have helped to mainstream sustainability into national development plans, ensure coherence among national policies of ASEAN Member States, and demonstrate ASEAN commitments to holistic approach to inclusive development.

6. In moving forward, speakers encouraged ASEAN and partners to turn challenges into opportunities by enhancing collaboration and partnerships to accelerate progress on the SDGs.

7. The subsequent panel discussion further elaborated on possible policy pathways for ASEAN and External Partners to achieve this objective. **Four points were highlighted.** Firstly, **enhancing synergies between various policy frameworks** is crucial in order to ensure the co-benefits and multiple impacts of sustainable development projects. In illustrating this point, the representative from the European Union highlighted the synergies between the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific and the EU Strategy for Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific which have translated into cooperation in areas of mutual benefits such as economic integration, climate change mitigation and adaptation, disaster risk reduction, and digital connectivity. Representative from Indonesia also echoed the importance of promoting complementarities and synergies between different processes as a basis for enhancing partnerships, which will also be central to Indonesia's Chairmanship of ASEAN next year.

8. Secondly, policy responses to post-COVID 19 recovery must **address both short-term and long term aspects.** In the short term, there is a need to **protect vulnerable groups** who are most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and most susceptible to climate change impacts; whereas in the long term, policy must gear towards more **efficient resources management, ensuring inclusivity, and building resilience.** These elements have been reflected in a number of programmes undertaken by ASEAN's partners, including the Global Food Import Financing Facility by the FAO which aims at supporting economically vulnerable countries, and the Asian Impact Leaders Network launched by the Rockefeller Foundation in collaboration with the Asian Venture Philanthropy Network which provides a platform for collective actions among leaders from governments, private sector, and NGOs.

9. Thirdly, **unlocking new sources of finance and enhancing multi-stakeholder engagements** remain crucial to achieving the SDGs. In view of this, the representative from Indonesia emphasised the 4P approach – public, private, people, partnership – as one of the most effective in SDGs implementation. In the same vein, the UNDP Administrator and the representative from the Rockefeller Foundation highlighted the important role private sector can play in increasing financial flows to the SDGs and thereby accelerating policy implementation on the ground.

10. Lastly, collaboration and partnerships can be realized through **a number of actions such as knowledge sharing, transfer of technology and innovation, resource mobilisation and SDGs financing, as well as capacity building.** These can focus on priority areas such as open trade, enhancing social protection, digital technology and innovation, and green economy. These are the areas for which, according to the UNDP, increase in investment can enable countries to exceed pre-pandemic development trajectories.

11. In closing, the Executive Director of the ACSDDSD reiterated ASEAN's readiness to cooperate and reinforce partnerships with all stakeholders in driving forward sustainable development agenda in the region and beyond, including through activities in collaboration with the ACSDDSD. Participants also commended Thailand's leading role in organising this event which served as a platform for dialogue and open doors for further cooperation between ASEAN and its partners.

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Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kingdom of Thailand

443 Sri Ayudhya Rd., Bangkok 10400

 ASEANThailand.MFA

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