

Closing the Loop: Unlocking an inclusive circular economy approach

Bangkok Stakeholder Workshop

Thursday 13 September 2018, Meeting Room C, United Nations Conference Centre in Bangkok

In rapidly developing South and Southeast Asia, the majority of solid waste ends up in landfills or leaks into the environment and is lost to the economic supply chain, causing a serious threat to ecosystems, human health and wellbeing, and public budgets. Countries with fast growing markets and underdeveloped waste management systems in Asia may be responsible for as much as 60 per cent of plastic waste leakage, including India and Thailand among the top 15 polluters worldwide. Recycling activities and recovery of resources tend to be dominated by the informal sector that depends on revenue from the sale of materials. Although informal waste management, especially of plastics, limits pollution and emissions from landfills, reduces the costs and burdens on government, and provides income opportunities for large numbers of the urban poor, the potential environmental impact of linking the informal waste sector's activities to formal waste management processes remains underexplored.

The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) is gathering evidence in pilot cities in Asia to identify opportunities to return plastic resources into the production cycle and reduce plastic waste leakage into the environment and the ocean by linking informal and formal waste processes. This initiative is implemented in close partnership with the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI) Asia Centre and Bangkok Metropolitan Authority.

The project supports more inclusive and circular waste management processes to increase the rate of recovery and reduce the leakage of plastics. In two pilot cities –Bangkok and Pune, India —the project traces informal and formal waste streams and where they intersect, identifies the environmental impact of informal waste management, and explores options to link informal and formal waste management more strategically as part of a circular economy approach. Activities include two case studies for Bangkok and Pune based on a value chain analysis, a guidance tool with evidence-based policy recommendations, two city-level workshops and a regional knowledge sharing event.

This city-level workshop in Bangkok brings together public, private and community stakeholders from the informal economy, local authorities, and civil society. The aim is to present preliminary findings of data collection in Bangkok, to deepen understanding of the plastic waste value chain and actors involved, to build partnerships, and to explore opportunities to improve waste management by engaging informal waste pickers and other stakeholders in an inclusive, socially responsible manner.

The outcomes will feed into the Bangkok case study and will inform policy recommendations for the Asia Pacific region to support a more circular and inclusive economy that reduces plastic pollution.

Programme

time	topic	activities
08:30 - 09:00	Registration	
09:00 - 09:30	Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Welcome remarks by ESCAP; - Opening address by the Bangkok Metropolitan Authority; - Introduce the project team and participants, ESCAP; - Introduce the Closing the Loop project and workshop, ESCAP;
09:30 - 10:30	Approach and preliminary findings in Bangkok	<p>30 minutes – Presentation, SEI:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discuss data collection and interview methods in Bangkok; - Present preliminary findings, assumptions and gaps. <p>30 minutes – Q&A and discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clarify issues and give feedback on findings and approach; - Validate findings and analysis of waste value chain.
10:30 - 10:45	Tea Break and Group Photo	
10:45 - 12:00	Group work: interactive discussion of the waste value chain in Bangkok	<p>60 minutes – Group discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In mixed stakeholder groups, participants will zoom in on different parts of the waste value chain and discuss where and how the formal and informal intersect, existing challenges and opportunities for action; - Participants will share their experience and views from their constituencies to raise issues for consideration to improve plastic waste management within a circular economy strategy. <p>15 minutes – Share outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Groups report back to plenary to share and discuss findings.
12:00 - 13:00	Lunch	
13:00 - 14:45	Interactive discussion: opportunities to close the loop on plastic in Bangkok	<p>60 minutes – World Café:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participants rotate around stations to discuss opportunities to reduce pollution and improve plastic waste management; - Stations can cover: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Partnering with the informal sector for environmental benefits; o Implementing plastic bans & other policies; o Engaging the private sector, retailers, plastic producers; o Technology solutions for plastic treatment and recycling; o Engaging communities and youth; <p>45 minutes – Share outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Station moderators share outcomes of discussions in plenary.
14:45 - 15:00	Tea Break	
15:00 - 16:00	Policy recommendations and way forward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Summarize discussions, reflect on policy recommendations and opportunities for action identified to improve waste management, reduce pollution and link formal and informal; - Discuss how improved plastic waste management fits into a broader circular economy approach and identify next steps; - Presents next steps of the project, expected outcomes and upcoming events, including workshop feedback.

