

# SEA<sub>of</sub> Solutions

partnership week for marine  
plastic pollution prevention

**24-26 NOVEMBER 2020**

REPORT /

Coordinated by:



Supported by:



Co-hosted by:



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**How can we  
now progress  
towards less  
plastic  
wasted?**

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## About/

SEA of Solutions 2020 is the annually held partnership week convened by SEA circular – an initiative from the UN Environment Programme and the Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia (COBSEA), with support from the Swedish Government.

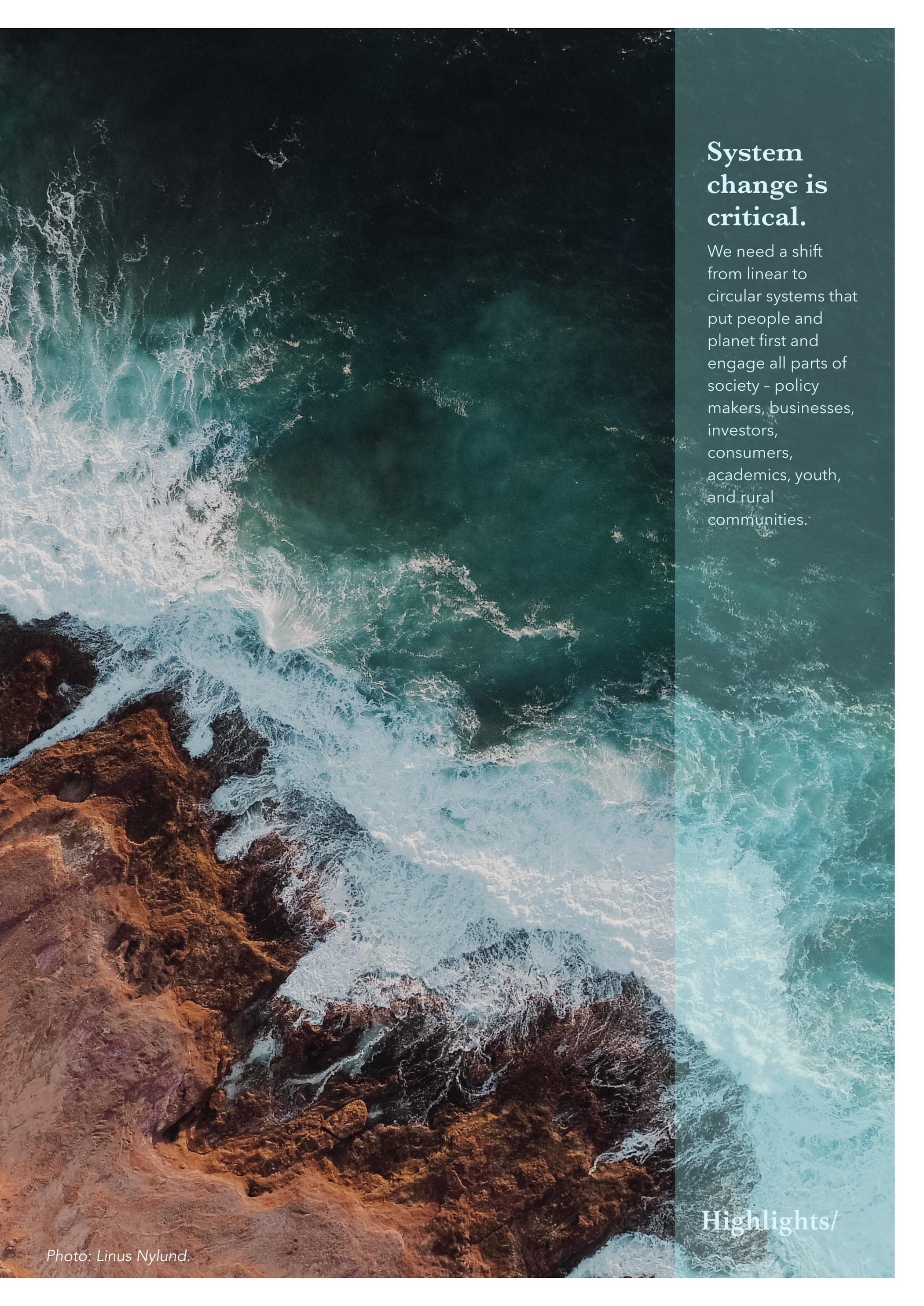
The event is designed to inspire market-based solutions and encourage enabling policies to prevent marine plastic pollution in South East Asia. SEA circular works in partnership with governments, businesses, civil society, development partners, academia, UN agencies and the media to solve plastic pollution at source.

## Purpose/

SEA of Solutions 2020 brought together governments, business leaders, scientists, UN agencies and community groups, to dialogue on solutions for marine plastic pollution.

With over 800 participants from the region and globally, with 130 speakers in 21 sessions and side events and 19 exhibition booths, highlighting solutions to prevent marine plastic pollution, the hybrid SEA of Solutions event was a success in sparking conversations and laying the path for future collaborations.

More than 500 organizations, including over 250 companies, NGOs, governmental bodies sent representatives from across the region to this monumental event, fostering partnerships in the region to combat the transboundary problem of plastic pollution together.

An aerial photograph of a rugged coastline. The left side shows dark, jagged rocks meeting the sea. The water is a deep, dark teal, with white foam from breaking waves cascading down the rocks. The right side of the image is a vertical strip of lighter, turquoise water with white foam, suggesting a different part of the shore or a different wave pattern. The overall mood is powerful and natural.

## System change is critical.

We need a shift from linear to circular systems that put people and planet first and engage all parts of society - policy makers, businesses, investors, consumers, academics, youth, and rural communities.

Highlights/

750

**750** participants in attendance from more than 50 countries; two-thirds from the Asia-Pacific region. 250+ delegates from the private sector.

**At a glance/**

*Photo: Juanma Clemente Alloza.*

137 

There were **137** different **speakers** across 5 plenaries, 10 parallel sessions and 11 side events.



Photo: Linus Nylund.

**At a glance/**

3382

**3382  
connections**

were made  
across the Sea of  
Solutions 2020  
event platform!  
These included  
virtual messages  
sent, business  
cards  
exchanged,  
photos shared,  
profiles viewed  
and meetings  
confirmed.

**At a glance/**

*Photo: Hiroko Yoshii.*



**Zoom  
recordings**  
of all **26** sessions  
are now available  
on our event  
platform.

## 27 scalable pledges

were made. Coming from private sector companies, environmental organizations and dedicated individuals alike, pledges included commitments to develop reuse models and plastic alternatives, to enhance marine research, and to foster local solutions and youth engagement.



DAY 01 /

## In summary:

> How far has the needle moved on these issues, impacted by COVID and the higher demand for plastic: The crisis calls for a sound response, more circularity, less single use and hard-to-recycle plastics, product redesign and innovation, better regulation that is enforceable and less confusing, labelling rules, better waste segregation, and informal recycling services

## The Plastic Pandemic/

### Is less plastic wasted even possible during COVID-19?

“

We already have a foundation from which to build on. Governments can **act now** to **deliver policy, coordinate internationally** and **harmonize efforts**. But these can only be as effective as the underlying science is strong. Businesses, need to neutralize plastic, and adopt circular models and innovation. Societies and communities must mobilize. All of us play an integral role.”

**Inger Anderson,**  
ED of the UN Environment Programme

“

By 2030 all plastics packaging placed in the EU market will be either reusable or recyclable. **Concrete actions** will include new **mandatory requirements for recycled content and special attention on micro plastics** as well as bio based and biodegradable plastics – work it will be doing in **collaboration with the other regions**. The **EU's continuing partnership with countries in the ASEAN region** already contributes to the implementation of multilateral agreements. It has also initiated the project 'Rethinking Plastics' co-financed by the EU and Germany together with China, Indonesia, Japan, Philippines, Thailand, Singapore and Vietnam, which **provides mutual opportunities for global transformation** to address the problem of plastic waste and marine litter which especially threatens health and environment with the pandemic.”

**Igor Dreisman,**  
EU Ambassador to ASEAN

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## The Plastic Pandemic/

### Is less plastic wasted even possible during COVID-19?

“ **Collaboration, cooperation and coordination** are important if we are to make progress. Turn the **setbacks into comebacks**. Solutions must protect environmental rights, **women, children and social groups** for a just and green recovery.”

**Ann Mawe**  
from Sweden

“ Viet Nam will continue to **combat plastic pollution** with **reforms and practices**, including legislation which addresses waste issues, reuse, recycling, and **advancement of a circular economy**.”

**Minister Tran Hong Ha**

“ On Jan 2021, almost all governments will be bound by the Basel Convention’s Plastic Waste Amendments, which create the **necessary conditions for more transparent trade** of plastic waste, encourage stakeholders to **strengthen capacities for recycling**, phase out toxic additives, and incentivize innovation for redesign.”

**Rolph Payet,**  
Executive Secretary, Basel Rotterdam Stockholm Conventions

“ On a pledge made at SoS2019, Coca-Cola has transitioned approximately 70% of its Sprite volume across ASEAN to **transparent PET packaging**, and will complete the rest by the first quarter of 2021. The company publicly expressed its support to the call for a UN Treaty on Plastic Pollution.”

**Belinda Ford,**  
Coca-Cola

“ To improve the **livelihoods of waste collectors**, it is necessary to remove the societal stigma of their work and waste in general, and **acknowledge their importance in the labor force**.”

**Nalini Shekar**  
Hasiru Dala

“ Through simple **mobile apps on smartphones** 6,000 waste collectors in Makassar and Bali, Indonesia are inspiring us all.

**Hamish Daud Wylie**  
Co-founder of Indonesian Ocean Pride and OCTOPUS

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## Making the most of international and regional agreements and mechanisms

### In summary:

> There already are a number of international frameworks that have been created to address the transboundary challenge of plastic pollution and guide concerted action on marine litter and plastic pollution. Nations are already working together to take stock of marine litter action and identify effective global responses. But to make the most of these existing frameworks and mechanisms, what else is needed? Information and regulation, alignment of approaches (policy and standards), along with building and implementing collaboration.

> Critical **information** should be readily available, especially where multiple countries are concerned.

> The **proper legislation framework** for the efficient and well-designed collection system of plastics will spur investments. Business needs **global guidelines**, models that work. A multilateral treaty that can provide the guidelines to. Alignment of metrics should be considered.

> We need a **global institution to coordinate** efforts, to oversee a treaty which should be “very realistic and achievable” and one that brings everything together (industry, legislators, law enforcement). It need not necessarily follow UN conventions function (diplomatic conferences).

> **Capacity building programs** which are concrete and specific enough to address the needs of a region. With trade relationships, address labelling and production standards at the regional level to achieve significant changes in what countries do.

> As developing countries have an inordinately greater burden of implementation, **collaboration** is important. Review the establishment of a regional environmental crime unit, building capacity to handle implementation.

> Build on the extensive network of experts, making use of the tools that we have. Digital transformation mindset and technologies can help.

## In summary:

> Small-scale, community-based approaches provide innovative solutions to improve waste management, reduce plastic pollution, and create additional benefits like income opportunities from recycling/upcycling plastic. Most investments and regulations however, favour high urban areas with big populations where the reward-to-risk ratio is higher. Nevertheless, with around 45% of all ocean plastic pollution originating from rural and island locations (which usually have low population and low plastic densities), it is important that rural and island locations also get a fair opportunity to tap into investments. How can small-scale projects become successful and impactful to address community needs and be part of solving plastic pollution?

## Every little helps – Replicating off-the-grid innovation and small-scale solutions

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## Plastic protection without pollution

### In summary:

> The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the ways plastics are produced, used and disposed of. Challenges are presented by the increased consumption of single use plastic products for sanitation, hygiene, safety, and disposing of hazardous plastic waste. Nevertheless, the actions needed to reduce plastic pollution remain the same: improvement in waste management (segregating hazardous and non-hazardous wastes at the point of generation), awareness about individual and collective responsibilities in reducing plastic pollution, and basic hygiene and sanitation practices.

> In the short-term, people will be working and consuming from home, so how food and products are packaged, sold, and delivered needs to be addressed. For the food industry, actions include refining packaging formats and designs, advocating for source segregation. Businesses would report their waste, usage, and management, and advocate with Asian food contact regulators on standards on recycled material for food packaging.

> There is the incorrect assumption that single-use plastics prevents transmission. There are ways to stay safe and clean without the use single-use plastics. The importance of coordinated pandemic communication cannot be understated, where experts should be able to advise markets and consumers about differentiation of plastic usage that is necessary.

> Safety or hygiene cannot be determined by an item being disposable or reusable, but rather by how they are packaged and how containers are managed and handled. The public has to be reassured that “based on the best available science and guidance from public health professionals, it is clear that reusable systems can be used safely by employing basic hygiene”.

> We also need to create awareness on how to get rid of pandemic-related plastics like masks (i.e., wrap the masks in tissue paper). We need to provide waste management guidelines during the pandemic.

> Governments and businesses could get back on track with a recycling law or an Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) scheme that is not totally left to the producer, but instead, involves other stakeholders. It is important, however, to clearly define roles for this to be effective.

> The **session ended with another poll:** (Complete the statement) – “Staying clean and safe is possible without plastic pollution if we have more of ....”

- Responsible consumers
- Innovate technologies (responsible businesses)
- Better waste management and segregation
- Consumer and social responsibility
- Awareness

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## Localizing action – Reducing plastic leakage in cities and municipal waterways

### In summary:

> Towns and big cities near waterways are major sources of marine litter and an important focal point in preventing leakage into the environment. While framework policies are often made at the national level, implementation of waste management falls largely within the jurisdiction of cities and municipalities. In this session, speakers shared their organization's **good practices, common challenges, and replicable solutions** to reduce plastic pollution at the city level.

> Actions can be localized and multiplied for a bigger impact.

> Cities need **information and data** to enable evidence-based planning for waste generation. Especially with the limitations of COVID, transition to a **more digital-infrastructure system is useful**, such as an innovative remote sensing tools to monitor ocean bound plastic in real time.

> **Partner with universities** to have access to experts and their research finding.

> Information from primary surveys and remote sensing technology can be complemented by **citizen science**, which should be encouraged as it provides verification for data gathered. Involving people and communities in data gathering helps build awareness about the environmental impact of plastic use and littering. The challenge is to harmonize definitions terminology.

> Planning and projects have to be **more holistic**. As well, upstream/downstream municipalities have to be coordinated as hydrological systems do not match physical boundaries of cities and municipalities.

- 
- > **Involve the smallest government offices** and the communities they serve, so that they take ownership of the projects.
  - > **Empower people** with the idea that they can better themselves. Engage the community. Banjarmasin uses ceremonial-casual consensus building. When they did, the city government offered an alternative to the use of SUP.
  - > Banning products works better if there are **alternatives** provided: Banjarmasin was the first Indonesian city to ban the use of plastic bags (2016). They engaged the community and encouraged the use of locally-sourced grass-woven baskets as alternatives. This generated jobs and the formation of craft cooperatives.
  - > Key partnerships lessons: engage leadership to champion initiatives, importance of monitoring and measuring, refine message communication, integrated planning, dedicated planning from local budgets, capacity building + holistic approach vs siloed efforts (continued communication between the local bodies).

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**Asian Research Institute for Environmental Law:** Looked at enforcement and compliance mechanisms, including innovative approaches to addressing sea-based plastic waste and minimise the illegal trade in waste and plastics. These included discussions on policy, collaborative enforcement, and accessible technology (blockchain).



Where people focus and where politicians focus, there will be action.”

**Matthew Baird,**  
ARIEL



To combat illegal waste trade effectively in Asia, we need a better understanding of international legal frameworks, and national legislation to implement frameworks, as well as effective funding and capacity for enforcement.”

**Georgina Lloyd,**  
UNEP



The adoption of the Plastic Waste Amendments has made the Basel Convention the only global legally binding instrument that currently and specifically addresses plastics waste.”

**Rolph Payet**  
Executive Secretary, Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions



By creating a binding framework for the control of export of plastic waste, the Plastic Waste Amendments will provide a powerful incentive for the private sector – but also for governments and other stakeholders – to strengthen capacities for the separate collection and recycling of plastics. Further, by encouraging the expansion of infrastructures for the environmentally sound management of plastic waste, the Plastic Waste Amendment will also help create jobs and economic opportunities, not least by incentivizing innovation, such as in the design of alternatives to plastic and the phase-out of hazardous additives. “

**Ross Bartley**  
Trade & Environment Director, Bureau of International Recycling

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**Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia:**

Importance of expanding waste collection services to small and medium sized cities, and rural areas; and the importance of policymakers formulating and implementing effective schemes which include inter-municipal cooperation and clustering of municipalities to expand waste management options for areas with limited or no infrastructure.

“ Regional waste management is a worthwhile investment for countries in Southeast Asia to look at.”

**Dr. Michikazu Kojima,**  
ERIA

“ If waste segregation is implemented, only a very small percentage would remain for the local authorities to worry about.”

**Dr. Vella Atienza,**  
Associate Professor, University of the Philippines

**Environmental Justice Foundation:** The session shared existing community-based efforts as well as initiatives designed to mitigate plastics and especially fishing net waste in our oceans; highlighting opportunities to expand and showcase avenues for collaboration across multiple levels.



DAY 02 /

# Financing 'Build Back Better': risk and opportunities for investment in plastic pollution and marine litter reduction

Pathways and interventions to accelerate investment included:

## In summary:

> The COVID-19 pandemic has brought about increased plastic use, exposing the inadequacy of systems for waste management and recycling. It highlighted the need for investment in infrastructure. Perspectives from the multilateral financing organizations, OECD, ADB and the World Bank, and other programmes who are working directly with businesses and insurance companies, addressed whether the pandemic derailed or enabled investment, and how fiscal stimulus packages and direct financing/investment can be effectively leveraged.

> **Good governance** can enable holistic, cross-sectoral, national, sustainable ocean economy and financing strategies as they establish expectations for investors and provides clear rules. This can encourage innovative finance models that can redirect private finance and ensure that investments are not overburdened with bureaucratic red tape. **Inclusion** An approach that brings communities into the planning process. Solutions will only work when all levels (national, local, municipal) communities are involved. Develop project aggregation techniques to be bundle groups of smaller projects together.

> **Robust analytics** are critical to inform effective investments. Upstream (alternative materials and product re-design), midstream (smart regulations to decouple the current recycling market from virgin plastics), and downstream solutions (waste management solutions and clean ups), all need to be funded.

> **Mobilizing and diversifying sufficient financial resources** in private, community and government sectors, especially considering national resources and international assistance is not currently adequate. Also, important to connect manufacturers and traders to the impact of plastic pollution.

> As risk managers and investors managing over USD30T in assets, insurance companies face physical risks (clogged drains, microplastics that impact populations), transition risks (moving from plastic to plastic-free alternatives, zero-leakage plastic economies), and liability risks (human health, employment, environment i.e., employers' liability insurance, pollution liability insurance); these can only be mitigated with **transparency and clear rules of engagement**.

> With so many actors working towards addressing the problem, there is need for **coordination**. A **convening platform** that brings together the private sector can rationalize the use of the limited financial resources from funders, investors, and venture capitalists who are looking at solutions that have the greatest impact.

> **Governments can de-risk private finance** and give certainty and confidence for private investments with clear plans, clear communications, clear commitments, clear directions, and clear budget allocations. Project-specific risk reductions include offering credit enhancements, taking first-loss positions, and granting loan guarantees.

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“ There’s no shortage of capital looking for a home. But consistently, we’re hearing about the need for the enabling environment.”

**Anthony Cox,**  
OECD

“ We are all part of the solution. No single nation, country, citizen can address the problem alone.”

**Jacob Duer,**  
President and CEO, Alliance to End Plastic Waste

“ If we want to shift billions and use the full weight of money and financial markets, we need disclosure, greater transparency and accountability on the plastic footprints, and transition strategies of companies.”

**Hermelo Bacani,**  
Programme Leader, UNEP Finance Initiative

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## Environmental Innovation, digital transformation and frontier technologies to tackle plastic pollution

### In summary:

> Digital technology and the internet enhance traditional approaches and can connect stakeholders in real time across the globe. Digital transformation for data, knowledge management and partnerships are within our grasp but would have to be made feasible and affordable with incentives and investments.

> Coordinating digital resources and supporting digital interactions through a digital multi-stakeholder platform provides a one-stop shop for curated, high-quality data related to plastic pollution and marine litter that can be easily accessed. (Phase 1 to be released, UNEA 5)

> Citizen science is starting to gain maturity and is a huge opportunity to collect data and bring people into the process through outreach and education. It is mostly invisible however, and will need to be funded and linked to national schemes and reporting strategies to be recognized as a clear means to augment data.

> Do we need to build more, can't we use what we have today? Innovation itself is not rocket science and should be simple and user-friendly. Technology is not expensive, especially if we use open-source technologies that will be sustainable for developing markets.

> The use of blockchain technology allows plastic pollution issues to be tackled in a systematic way as it streamlines collaboration, and incentivizes organizations to partner and address problems together as a group. Awareness of its use as a digital public infrastructure (without need for the middle-man) is increasing. Such open-source movements are taking over the proprietary models, which enable participation and bottom-up movements.

> Overwhelmed and inadequate waste systems can be enhanced with the participation of informal communities working within a framework of unified and digitalized recycling standards. Malaysia's largest recycling company curated an internal standard that is now being used by almost 28,000 recyclers, and which supported working with authorities to craft the relevant policies to formalize the informal community's role.

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## Taking responsibility – Business models and incentives for plastic neutrality

### In summary:

> Economic incentives are an indispensable part of solution-creation. Many innovations and schemes require collaboration and the backing of policies to encourage segregation and collection of waste. This will transform industry and public behaviours and perceptions, promoting plastic circularity. Businesses and producers have opportunities to reduce their plastic footprints now. A hierarchy of options from reducing to reusing materials can be enabled by business models from Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) schemes that leave no one behind, plastic neutrality and credit programs that can generate additional financial flows and involve communities, and other models that mitigate fluctuating market prices for recyclables, helping address challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. In this session, speakers discussed whether such incentives can bring about transformational change by roping in the business sector.

> Any model that can support improved collection to improve the global 9% recycling rate, is a good start. Success will be reliant on having everyone in the conversation playing by the same rules.

> **EPR** is an environmental policy instrument that makes the companies that put packaged products in the market responsible for the collection, sorting, and end-of life management of the resulting waste. How would you engage the private sector? Have the same conditions and requirements for all players.

> **EPR** should not necessarily be legislated, but instead can be adopted by producers on a voluntary basis. Government and industry should work together, with everyone in the value chain (not only the manufacturers) bearing the responsibility to fix the problem. **Reuse** is a good solution, with return-deposit schemes for bottles and returnable PET providing a low carbon footprint solution.

> Credit actions that incentivize local collection and recycling capacities and avoid and reduce plastic use, overlaps and supports the purpose of EPR schemes.

> The use of plastic credits is now being introduced as there is a policy vacuum. There are risks with such voluntary mechanisms and hence **success would be dependent on what plastic offset/plastic credit standards are set up**, how these are coordinated and then adopted. Each credit generated should be managed, as it can be an opportunity for greenwashing. More than the use of credits (which should be the last resort for companies and organizations looking to offset), schemes should also be focused on reduction and reuse targets (not only recycling).

> *A plastic credit is a transferrable unit representing 1MT of collected and/or recycled plastic beyond business as usual (BAU) scenario.* The first world-wide crediting Plastic Standard and the Guidelines for Leadership in Corporate Plastic Accounting (Guidelines) will launch in 2021, created and managed by respected NGOs with broad stakeholder input. The Standard and the guidance will be used to independently assess and transparently report on the effectiveness of waste reduction actions and any associated claims that corporates may make regarding the mitigation of their plastic footprints.

## Taking responsibility – Business models and incentives for plastic neutrality

### In summary:

> Information on packaging is often misleading consumers to believe that packaging is recyclable or is using “greener” raw materials, but often gives little or no information on how to separate and sort products for correct disposal and recycling. With recycling not well understood in South-East Asia and relying heavily on informal activities, improved product identification and labelling, lightweight plastic primary packaging, and designing for easy separation and recycling are key actions businesses and producers can take now.

> Plastic producers and users should **design INTO recyclability**: rethink packaging, design it into the process with recycling in mind, design for what your local waste management ecosystem and what recyclers can recycle, and at a profit. If there’s no valuable material in the product, these businesses will only think of the cheapest way to dispose of it.

> Design for products should suit the markets where they will be consumed; to **match the infrastructure and recycling capabilities that are in place**. EPR is good but also necessary to ensure that the money raised goes to fund the infra where it’s required (managing the waste and improving recycling).

> A number of social enterprises are matching entrepreneurs with recyclers and into the global supply chain (social plastic), supported by blockchain-based applications.

> Products using multi-layer materials/flexibles do not have a lot of value and present minimal recycling options. While the solution is to convert them to monomaterials, simple labelling would also support ease in collection, identification, and recycling of these materials.

> The **use of monomaterials and clear or embossed labelling** that is easy to prep (i.e., removing labels and the glue, which is a contaminant in recycling) presents better income opportunities and hence incentives, for waste collectors.

> **Price stability** of the collected raw material is a big factor for wastepickers. A market-based and predictable price boosts incomes, as it also supports preventative healthcare, education, identity cards, and financial inclusion, investing in them to boost their income. Plastic waste can and should be an enabler.

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> Government can encourage the use of specific types of plastics, or declare levels of post-consumer plastic requirements for use in products. This would **homogenize the range of plastic materials** that can be recycled, increase the street value, match waste management systems, and ensure level playing fields. For businesses that are unable to comply, a tax or fund can be instituted.

> **Refill system models** are another option, except that consumers believe these options should be cheaper when actually, they are not.

> A number of companies are targeting 100% recycled PET use and becoming fully circular by 2025. These efforts can be supported by a **coherent, standardized system** which valorizes the second-life of the materials.



Manufacturers are currently only incentivized to make packaging cheaply, instead of towards designing where there's value in the packaging itself. The incentive to deal with end of life is not embedded in the economics, so we either have to use a tax, or embed the cost into the product itself."

**Tom Szaky,**  
CEO and Founder, TerraCycle

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## Leaving no one behind – Protecting those most vulnerable to pollution in times of COVID

### In summary:

> We all have the right to a safe and healthy environment that is threatened by plastic pollution. The rights, needs and interests of disadvantaged social groups who are especially exposed to plastic waste and marine litter, like informal wastepickers and coastal communities, are under particular threat. These risks to health, livelihoods, and wellbeing are exacerbated even further by the pandemic.

> Instead of looking at waste as a problem to be solved, we should ask how this resource can be empowering for the informal sector. Looking at their work as an essential service instead of a nuisance, having them seen as having a viable, recognized occupation provides dignity for the informal sector.

> A wastepicker's pain points: lack of recognition, clear absence of safety where they work, financial instability, a package of stigma. Solutions: a business model that promotes a sense of belonging (treat the wastepickers with respect), safety at work (tools like shoes, gloves, pants), waste segregation at source, labelling hazards (i.e. broken glass), financial support through project /product fees.

> Balance social and environmental responsibility. Inclusivity, working with persons with disabilities to upcycle plastic for sustainable clothing, or with fishing communities in the Philippines connecting directly to the global markets (no middleman, fishermen sell the nets for a fair price), are some of the projects shared in the session.



We need to decide how we shape our future, design our cities. We can't retrofit out problems anymore."

**Malti Gadgil,**  
Program Manager Asia, Plastic Solutions Fund

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**Plasticity:** Highlighted the need and importance for commitments on plastic pollution, the need for metrics in order for businesses to understand their products (packaging) plastic impact, and the support required from governments so that they think of plastic, not as a problem, but an economy for trade advantage.

“ The circular economy is not circular and it is not an economy – not yet. To overcome the barriers to circular economy, we must address the market failures. Critical to this is collaboration, measurement and practical on ground business-oriented solutions.”

**Trish Hyde,**  
Founder & CEO The Plastics Circle

“ National changes (for improving plastic pollution) does require expertise and use of global best practices, and this partnership with CAPP (Commitments Accelerator for Plastic Pollution) can go a long way in creating programs with speed, efficiency and better management.”

**Joshua Wycliffe**  
Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Waterways and Environment, Fiji

**WWF:** Introduced tools for businesses that support how they might move away from plastic to alternative materials, with an awareness of the environmental burdens that accompany such choices. The open-source Alternative Materials Tool and instructions about its use (especially how varying waste management systems in different countries would affect material selection) was highlighted.

**3Ri / South Pole:** There are three clear concepts in plastic stewardship: 1) **plastic footprint and leakage**, 2) **mitigation activities** (Following a mitigation hierarchy including both within and beyond supply chains, of which plastic credits/offsets are last options) and 3) **leadership claims**. There is clear interest from industry to work in this area. The **Guidelines for Corporate Accounting** follow a clear mitigation hierarchy of activities that companies can utilize to address their plastic footprint. Private companies can take multiple actions in parallel to reduce and address their footprint – including direct action to reduce plastic usage, rethink and redesign packaging, and increase recycled content, as well as investing in plastic collection, recycling and education initiatives within and beyond their own supply chains.



DAY 03 /

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**Albiza:** Presented how firms might choose alternatives to producing plastic waste (dictated by economic decisions, and ensuring longevity and non-contamination of the product, often through long and difficult distribution channels) and move towards a circular approach starting from footprinting.

**OPRI:** National, regional and global dimensions of policies and challenges; developing multi-stakeholder partnerships for eliminating marine plastics through innovative policies, business model transformation, consumers' behavioural changes, and innovation and technological advancement in the East Asian Region.

**RC3S:** Building strong networks of action are critical to scale collaboration on good practices/knowledge management in coastal and marine pollution and degradation control.

**CL2B:** Highlighted the Vietnam recycling plastic market and the gaps in waste management infrastructure, information and supportive legal framework.

## In summary:

> Scientific research on marine litter from the region and beyond has flourished in recent years, yet significant gaps remain in areas that speak to policy priorities. Intensified research, investment in science (including citizen science), and a reframing of the research agenda, are needed to better understand sources, pathways, results and impact of pollution and reduction measures. Bringing science and policy together is critical for effective and evidence-based decision making.

## How can we bridge the science-policy divide?

> There is a science-policy divide across different bodies of research, requiring an interdisciplinary approach. Questions that policy people need answered are different from those asked by scientists, regulators, etc. It is important then to unify all these as much as possible, by **developing more integrated and comprehensive working research networks and channels accessible to relevant government entities.**

> **Alignment of methodologies and approaches** to monitor the sources, flows and impact of marine litter, allows for data comparison and transboundary action. Better if some form of **data harmonization** can be used, so that countries can be guided by a 'standard' (GESAMP guidelines for monitoring assessment programs), and not develop their own standards in isolation. Working collectively also identifies typical policy concerns and matches them with recommendations using country's shared experiences.

> Catalysing interdisciplinary research on marine litter, **engaging communities, and creating dialogue with policy makers.** A knowledge platform might support good communications between scientists and policy makers, especially to understand what the other party needs (policy makers need "satisfactory" data in the short term in order to make decisions that scientists might be averse to provide without 100% accuracy)

> Citizen science is an opportunity for on-the-ground data collection, but challenges remain to bring together citizen science data and decision making.

> Global and regional guidance exists and efforts are ongoing to improve monitoring systems, including through regional mechanisms and knowledge centres. Science and policy coordinated at the regional level through intergovernmental mechanisms. We still need to bridge: science-informed policy decisions, new technologies using specialized agencies and conventions. There is often an institutional disconnect in countries to deal with different international mechanisms and agreements (i.e. different focal points/agencies) and hence efforts to address this gap are important.

## Efficacy of green alliances (corporate-NGO partnerships) in reducing plastic waste

### In summary:

> With plastic waste primarily originating from the commercial world, “green alliances” can be effective in solving the problems of marine litter and plastic pollution, helping move the needle in the plastic pollution problem.

> Alliances are a benefit in that they can bring multiple stakeholders together, especially in **creating standards** which, if established consensually, allows all to **play by the same rules**. Synergies with other companies on joint product design/redesign for example, becomes possible. It would be important to include the informal sector into these alliances, to ensure that the social impacts are addressed.

> More organizations in an alliance can **help raise awareness** (sustainable palm oil) especially for industry players that want to learn more about sustainability. Practical business guidelines were helpful for companies to make their cases to higher management. **Sectoral collaboration** becomes possible and allows for individual companies to know what practical solutions they might commit to. To be effective, such alliances/partnerships should offer practical solutions, including tools, plastic material alternatives, and information to debunk misconceptions.

> Stronger is better: More business players in an industry can **lobby and coordinate with the government** for their national plans. Green alliances create catalytic action, impacts can have a domino effect as they can make people aware (i.e., consumers). A major company committing/pledging has as impact so that other businesses follow suit (pressure, competition).

> Other businesses follow other businesses, which can lend **scale to sustainable action** (aside from also levelling the playing field). **Knowledge sharing**, especially that of science-based guidance/shared resources, can be shared between NGOs or businesses with other businesses (useful for smaller businesses that cannot have an R&D group, for example).

> Especially during this time when we have to deal with the impacts of the economic slowdown and business closures caused by COVID-19, businesses need help to be able to navigate how sustainability can benefit them equally, even as they try to survive.

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## Promoting partnership for combating marine plastic litter in Viet Nam (Technical Session, VASI)

“ In Vietnam, it is also important to engage different stakeholders, including government agencies, businesses, NGOs, academia and the people; recognizing that joining hands in partnership between formal and informal sectors in dealing with waste and plastic is one of the key points for success. Cooperation models should continue.”

**Le Minh Ngan,**  
Deputy Minister, MONRE

**Prof. Vu Dinh Hieu, Deputy Director, Institute of Marine and Island Research** presented the country's national action plan on minimizing marine plastic debris, reiterated the need for common legal and institutional frameworks, strengthen publicity, raise the people's awareness on the matter of plastic and marine litter, and shared the country's vision for the institution of an International Centre for Marine Plastic Debris. By 2025, Viet Nam has also pledged to reduce plastic waste by 50% and by 2030, by 75%.

UNDP and WWF-Vietnam shared details of their programmes, as did a representative from one Viet Nam's largest plastic conglomerate companies that is looking at transferring and developing technology for biodegradable fishing gear (using PBS and PBAT polymers), which came with its recent acquisition of a Korean company that leads in the space.

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## High-level Panel on Plastic Pollution and the COVID-19 Pandemic - A Cohesive and Responsive ASEAN

### In summary:

> Ministers in the region share their thoughts on tackling marine plastic pollution, catalysing solutions through policy and fiscal reform, and their governments' vision for collective efforts at the international level; including through the UN Environment Assembly and the Ad-hoc open-ended Expert Group on marine litter and microplastics, as well as through delivering on commitments such as the G20 Osaka Blue Vision, the Bangkok Declaration on Combating Marine Debris in ASEAN Region, ASEAN Framework for Marine Debris, and COBSEA Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter. Reflections on these statements follow, on the ways progress can be attained, especially in identifying collaboration pathways to further accelerate efforts in the region.

01 Algor Driesmans, Ambassador of the European Union to ASEAN

02 Ann Måwe, Ambassador of Sweden to Viet Nam

03 Isabella Lövin, Minister for Environment and Climate, and Deputy Prime Minister, Sweden

04 Sao Sopheap, Secretary of State of the Ministry of Environment, Cambodia

05 Dr. Ir. Siti Nurbaya, Minister of Environment and Forestry, Republic of Indonesia

06 YB Dato' Sri Tuan Ibrahim Tuan Man, Minister of Environment and Water, Malaysia

07 Ohn Winn, Union Minister for Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation, Myanmar

08 Grace Fu Hai Yien, Minister for Sustainability and the Environment, Singapore

09 Moon Seong-Hyeok, Minister of Oceans and Fisheries, Republic of Korea

10 Le Minh Ngan, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Viet Nam

11 Dato Seri Paduka Ar. Haji Marzuke Haji Mohsin, Deputy Minister of Development, Brunei Darussalam

12 Kondo Tomohiro, Vice Minister for Global Affairs, Ministry of the Environment, Japan

## In summary:

> This session raised collective regional voices for solutions to the plastic pollution and marine litter challenges, and featured messages of urgency, pledges, announcements and commitments from various perspectives; of national governments, the private sector, social enterprises and community groups, youth -- focusing on ways forward and immediate collective actions, taking on each stakeholders' responsibility and role with more urgency and effort.

## Voices for Solutions

Throughout South-East Asia, there are countless initiatives and plans to avoid plastic becoming waste. In regards to marine litter and less plastic wasted, we can see that building back better will certainly take wide-scale involvement. Multi-stakeholder action along the entire plastic value chain is crucial. Top-down engagement for measurable circularity is vital for real long-term economic sustainability. We must consider the interests and roles of multiple stakeholders: governments, business, researchers, consumers, international organizations, all groups in society, leaving no one behind, and protecting the livelihoods of all. **We need to scale up our commitments to really move the needle**, by doing what we all can, by collaborating and working together.

“ On behalf of MONRE, pledge to invest Viet Nam's best capacity in implementing the following: regional and national partnerships in combatting marine plastic litter, research and info sharing on new technologies, environmental and economic recovery during COVID-19, formation of the blue alliance between authorities, enterprises and NGOs, global agreement on marine plastic litter management.”

**Nguyen Que Lam,**  
Deputy Director General, Vietnam Administration of Seas and Islands (VASI)

“ As a manufacturing company, commitments to continue marine plastic waste reduction by focusing on research and development of environmentally-friendly products. Will also support the government and relevant organizations.”

**Nguyen Le Thang Long,**  
Head of R&D Department, An Phat Holdings

“ I pledge to continue driving Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group's ambitious goal of eliminating all single-use plastic from our premises by the end of March 2021 and beyond, by collaborating and providing leadership to colleagues, suppliers and industry peers to establish responsible procurement as the new normal. We will progress towards this goal by initially focusing on eliminating 60 of the most commonly used single-use items in our hotels, which are estimated to make up 95% of the total single-use plastic items used at our hotels, and replace with reusable or unprocessed plant-fiber based eco alternatives where possible. **Hygiene and high sanitary standards can be maintained without single-use plastics.**

**Nguyen Le Thang Long,**  
Head of R&D Department, An Phat Holdings

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“ WIEGO will continue to organize wastepickers across the world, build partnerships with manufacturers (especially) and find a way for EPR. The vision is for wastepickers in the entire global south are organized and integrated into the waste management system.”

**Kabir Arora,**  
Women in Informal Employment Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO)/ Global Alliance of Wastepickers

“ As an organisation, we don't use plastic very often, but I would still like to make the pledge to completely eliminate unnecessary plastics in 2021. I would also like to pledge our ongoing commitment to building projects, removing and preventing ocean plastic pollution, as well as supporting and championing the communities we work with.”

**Tom Peacock-Nazil,**  
Seven Clean Seas

“ To further advance our pledge for #CleanSeas, CORA is honoured to announce a grant partnership for USAID's “Clean Cities, Blue Ocean” Program. By working side by side with the government of the Philippines, the private sector, schools, and local communities, CORA pledges to reduce plastic pollution at the source, and divert recyclables from landfills towards circular innovations and pathways forward, and that also greatly empower women waste champions to serve as leaders in building a more sustainable future for all.

**Antoinette Taus,**  
Founder, Communities Organized for Resource Allocation (CORA), Philippines

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“ I, on behalf of the Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union of Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, pledge to: never stop learning and researching for advanced technologies to combat marine plastic pollution; and constantly uphold the spirit of environmental protection for our motherland. We pledge to bring our young and enthusiastic wisdom and talent to contribute to making Vietnam a regional leading and pioneering country in marine plastic debris management in year 2030!

**Nguyen Thi Quynh Anh, Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment**

“ BBPB Bali will continue building the momentum through the eyes and perspectives of young people – workshops and online campaigns. BBPB Bogor will continue collaborating with NGOs and to maximize the time and opportunity to do online outreach. BBPB Surabaya will be working with the government to reduce the use of plastic bags. This generation can change the world, and we encourage the youth to help us change the world.

**Melati Wijzen, Kevin Fernando, Amrita Wikara, Bye bye Plastic Bags (Bali, Surabaya and Bogor), Indonesia**

## OUTCOMES

A/ 01, 02

### Managing COVID-19-related waste

and identifying ongoing efforts and multi-stakeholder responses and solutions, with a focus on reduction and recycling:

01. Local, regional and international **partnerships are key to efficient knowledge-sharing** and the **replication of good practices**. Nevertheless, there is often an institutional disconnect in countries to deal with different international mechanisms and agreements. With issues like illegal transport or waste crimes, critical **information is often not available** to stakeholders early enough to take effective action.> Address this by **reducing the complexity of the information** with better communication, include actionable next-steps.

> Basel Convention Plastic Waste Amendments will create the conditions for the global trade in plastic waste to become more **transparent**.

> **Policy frameworks** are in place. Consider a global treaty bringing industry, law enforcement, communities together.

02. We need **enabling systems of governance and infrastructure** that ensure the demand and high-quality supply of recyclates and prevent waste leakage by putting in place **simple, convenient and effective waste collection and management systems**, and removing regulatory barriers to the use of recycled materials in packaging/products.

> Work with international organizations and NGOs to target **holistic waste management systems** to address source segregation, discharge, collection, transportation, treatment and disposal.

> Establish a common legal **institutional framework** for the extended responsibility of plastic products producers.

> Develop a national system of **standards** and technical regulations on plastics and microplastics.

> Enhance efforts for **sustainable consumption and production** of plastic products with public education campaigns.

> Establish appropriate **mechanisms** to allow plastic manufacturers to participate in environmental protection activities.

> Incorporate marine plastic waste in **national marine law** with measures to separate and dispose of hazardous waste and increases related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

> Establish a regional international **research center** to **share information**, knowledge, experience, and technology.

## OUTCOMES

03, 04

03. While national marine litter action plans are in place or under development, many local governments still lack the **capacity, frameworks and systems** to implement them.

> Capacity building, **technology transfer**, and agreements to support and enable this are crucial

> Partnering with local universities and organizations to **collect data on the ground, build awareness/capacity** and **support enforceable regulations** is key. 4. With COVID-19 creating '**new norms**' of plastic consumption, use of single-use plastics including personal protective equipment (PPE) is on a steep rise. COVID-19 has disrupted the food packaging, health, e-commerce, plastic packaging and plastic recycling sectors.

04. With COVID-19 creating '**new norms**' of plastic consumption, use of single-use plastics including personal protective equipment (PPE) is on a steep rise. COVID-19 has disrupted the food packaging, health, e-commerce, plastic packaging and plastic recycling sectors.

> Many companies are already exploring ways to address this. **Clear regulations** from government will level the playing field and incentivize greater sector action.

> Presenting **alternatives to single-use plastic that benefits citizens** are necessary to make bans and restrictions implementable. Increasing awareness, education, citizen engagement and ownership are important success factors.

## OUTCOMES

05, 06

05. **Plastic protection without pollution.** Consumers responsible for **sustainable plastic consumption**, industries should promote innovations and adaptation of smart plastic waste management, and governments should create a conducive environment.

> Scientific evidence shows that reusable models are capable of providing the **same level of hygiene** as single-use plastics. Technology and solutions are available to meet hygiene needs while reducing environmental impact.

> Propose **plastic recycling legislation and regulation** in South-East Asian countries.

> Continuously **advocate applying recycling material** where possible, including for food packaging. These can be supported by loop packaging systems, RFID-tagging for plastics.

> **New business models of packaging** (design for hygiene and sustainability) and mobile applications to track and monitor **safe disposal** of packaging waste.

06. **Information** on packaging recyclability is often **misleading**, and often gives little or no information on how to separate and sort products. Shifting to more **sustainable lifestyles** must be as **simple and transparent** as possible for consumers.

> Efforts to recycle plastic correctly can be successful if **easy to understand, convenient and affordable**. Make it easy for people to bring packaging to a place where it can be effectively collected and recycled. Enable the role of informal waste workers to collect and monetize waste resources through simple systems and technology.

> **Standardization of labelling and production standards** in ASEAN would create predictability and transparency, de-risking investments in circular product design and simplifying waste management.

> Efforts to **engage consumers and incentivize behaviour change** to reduce consumption of single-use or hard-to-recycle products need to be easy to understand and speak to consumers' interests and needs.

## OUTCOMES

07, 08

07. Cities need **data** for **evidence-based planning** related to waste generation, composition, volume of waste uncollected and leaked into waterways, waste streams and spatial waste distribution.

> **Digital** multi-stakeholder **platforms** that integrate high-quality data from many sources to support digital interactions, identify gaps and facilitate target setting available soon, allowing users to map and visualize data and interact.

> **Citizen science** is becoming accessible through digital technology, and an opportunity to ground-truth secondary data analysis and involve people in the process. Challenges to data quality and accessibility remain but can be addressed.

> We need business models that **create data-based revenue streams**, including use of AI, digital platforms and innovative, inexpensive, sustainable open-source technology to share data and knowledge.

> **Blockchain** enables us to create digital infrastructure with **accountability**, streamlined collaboration, and **incentives** for organizations to partner and tackle problems as a group – without a ‘middleman’.

> Robust **analytics** inform effective investment decisions and enable more financing opportunities.

08. Plastic pollution creates **physical risks, economic losses, transition risks, and liability risks**. Multilateral development banks, private sector alliances, and the insurance industry have the power to de-risk investments and shift assets toward a circular economy.

> There’s no shortage of capital, but consistently, we’re hearing about the need for **enabling the environment for investments**, and for getting companies to understand, disclose and communicate their risks.

> Governments can **de-risk private finance** by introducing clear plans, communications, commitments, directions and clean budget allocations to enable confidence for effective financing pipelines and to leverage private sector investment.

> **Financial incentives** for smaller community-scale solutions and models that can easily be replicated through grants and impact investments are needed.

## OUTCOMES

B/

B: Transformation through footprint measurement, reporting, and disclosure, plastic neutrality and monetizing waste for communities and businesses:

Business representatives shared the societal concern over the damage of plastic pollution to the environment and to people and showcased a range of ways to solve the problem. **Innovative technology, enabling regulations** and **economic incentives** were highlighted as an indispensable part of solution-creation.

- 1 > Plastic footprinting
- 2 > Plastic credits and neutrality
- 3 > Extended producer responsibility
- 4 > Use of alternative materials and designing for sustainability
- 5 > Harmonized regulations and standards
- 6 > Levelling the playing field for players in an industry with global guidelines and models that work

## OUTCOMES

C/

C: Policies and incentives towards less plastic wasted through a deeper understanding of market perceptions and consumer behaviour.

Solutions include placing more **value on plastic itself** and holding accountable businesses producing waste. To improve the livelihoods of waste collectors, it is necessary to understand the informal waste management sector, remove the societal stigma of their work and waste in general and **acknowledge their labour** as a public service. Solutions can also be found through awareness raising and capacity building for governments and businesses, allowing waste collectors to form unions and build markets to recycle plastic.

1 Demand that action be taken by governments. There is genuine opportunity for waste reduction, segregation at source, waste collection, labelling, imposing littering fines and charges.

2 There is a **science-policy divide** and one across different bodies of policy. Scientists and policy makers need to 'speak the same language'. It is key to translate the data into **tangible findings that speak to policy questions** and are **easy to access and understand** by markets and consumers.

3 The **most severe impacts** of environmental degradation will be felt by **young people, future generations, and disadvantaged groups**. Governments and plastic producers/industry are key duty bearers with the responsibility to protect the rights of consumers and those most exposed and vulnerable to plastic pollution and marine litter. Preventing plastic pollution is a **human rights issue** and it is **everyone's business**.

4 To leave no one behind, it is crucial that rural and remote/island locations have **access to financing and solutions that work** for and empower smaller communities.

5 We need a **shift in mindset** to recognize informal waste management as a public service and develop integrated solutions that promote respect and protect those most vulnerable and exposed to (hazardous) waste.

## COMMITMENTS

Viet Nam is investing in regional and national partnership in combating marine plastic litter, research and information sharing new technologies for marine environmental protection and circular economy transition, formation of a blue alliance between authorities, enterprises and NGOs and a global agreement on marine plastic litter management. Viet Nam aims to be a regional pioneer in marine plastic litter management.

The Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group will eliminate all single-use plastic from its premises by the end of March 2021 and beyond, by collaborating and providing leadership to colleagues, suppliers and industry peers to establish responsible procurement as the new normal.

Unilever will collaborate with partners and stakeholders by 2025 to: a) use 100% recyclable, reusable, or compostable packaging, b) build from its current position as the first users of recycled plastic in Home & Personal Care categories, to create further demand by using at least 25% PCR in its total portfolio, c) Pro-actively Pilot and share learnings for “Less Plastic” business models, d) help collect and process more plastic than we sell while contributing to higher value circular models.

Heng Hiap (HHI) pledges to recycle cumulatively 30,000 tons of Ocean Bound Plastic by the year 2025. HHI will be partnering with NGO, local community and stakeholders to clean up the ocean plastic scrap as well as secure 225 spots to collect the ocean plastic scrap every month.

*SEA of Solutions in an annual partnership event on preventing plastic pollution organized by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific and the Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia (COBSEA) under the SEA circular project, with support from the Government of Sweden.*