

FLASH REPORT

SWITCH-ASIA REGIONAL NETWORKING EVENT 2019: SUPPORTING ASIA AND CENTRAL ASIA IN MOVING TOWARDS AN INCLUSIVE GREEN ECONOMY



Background

Through its **grants scheme** the SWITCH-Asia programme on Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) funds pilot projects helping companies to adopt cleaner technologies and more sustainable industrial practices as well as helping consumers to act more responsibly in their daily choices and lifestyles. Since 2007, this EU programme has funded more than 100 projects across a wide range of sectors (energy efficiency in industrial plants and houses, agri-food and fishing sectors, textiles and leather, tourism, logistics and freight) implemented by over 400 Asian and European partners, about 100 private sector associates, indirectly benefitting up to 70.000 micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs).

On 21st and 22nd November 2019, the **Regional Networking Event** organised by SWITCH-Asia SCP Facility took place in Hanoi, Vietnam at Pullman Hanoi Hotel. The event brought together 22 representatives from all the ongoing grant-funded projects in several countries in the region, as well as over 100 representatives of the EU Delegations in Asia and Central Asia, SWITCH-Asia National Focal Points within ministries of these countries, and selected regional and international organisations, partners and experts working in the field of SCP.

H.E. Mr. Giorgio Aliberti, Head of Delegation, EU Delegation to Vietnam highlighted in his opening remarks that “Sustainability in our societies is no longer simply about increasing efficiencies or complying with regulations, it is about making fundamental changes in the way business is done and the way the world consumes. The shift to more sustainable consumption and production models and green economy is a must”. From his side, H.E. Hoang Quoc Vuong, Vice Minister of Ministry of Industry and Trade (MoIT), Vietnam reinforced the country’s commitment to the promotion of SCP and Green Growth, while stating that “One major opportunity brought by the SWITCH-Asia Programme is the extensive learning and knowledge exchange among 24 SWITCH-Asia countries”.

Specific sessions of this event covered key thematic areas such as low carbon economy and sustainable housing, circular economy and lessons from the fashion industry, eco-innovation and design, wastes and plastics, access to finance and investments, and the importance of reporting accurate stories about sustainability issues through communication and media channels. In the closing session, rapporteurs presented outcomes in terms of priorities, challenges and opportunities in key areas of SCP, and lessons learnt, guiding the way forward for the SWITCH-Asia programme in the next years.

Key Observations

The 2-days Regional Networking Event served the purpose stressed by the Vice-Minister, in promoting extensive learning and knowledge exchange among the 24 SWITCH-Asia Countries. Representatives of SWITCH-Asia grants projects actively exchanged their work, as well as with EU Delegations, government representatives, national, regional and international organisations. Participants from Central Asia, where the programme was launched earlier July 2019, also greatly benefitted from the Regional Networking Event by gaining knowledge and providing new insights from their region.

New synergies among funded projects and regional/ international organisations were identified and discussions were held on how the SWITCH-Asia programme might contribute to the delivery of the external dimension of the **European Green Deal** and to the International Platform for Sustainable Finance launched last 18 October by the European Commission. Transitioning towards a circular economy while actively promoting climate mitigation, focusing on sustainable resource use, especially in resource-intensive and high-impact sectors such as textiles and construction, adopting clean technologies, decarbonising energy-intensive industries, supporting small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and the need for an increased access to finance and to public/private investments for the replication of project's results were identified as some of the main points of convergence.

Recommendations and Next Steps

Sustainability of efforts under the SWITCH-Asia Programme need multi-stakeholder collaboration from policy makers to practitioners on the ground. It is important to link the work being done by grants to support policy reforms towards SCP and greener economy. Among other outcomes, the following could be highlighted:

- Further assess and effectively communicate the results and impacts of SWITCH-Asia grants pilot projects, and how these align to priorities set in the European Green Deal and into the new Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) for the period 2021-2027, linking the SCP work on climate change mitigation.
- Actively involve grants through policy dialogue on developing SCP policy mechanisms such as National SCP Roadmaps and Action Plans on SCP at the national and local level.
- Further explore how to assist grants through better access to public and private investments, technical assistance on applying SCP instruments, particularly for SMEs, and providing platforms for multi-stakeholder collaboration and partnerships promoting the shift towards Sustainable Consumption and Production.

Follow-up Activities

Follow-up activities might include, but are not limited to:

- Analysis of the results of the SWITCH-Asia grants in order to provide evidence for policy dialogue activities in partner countries.
- Implementation of SWITCH-Asia Programme of work in the 24 countries to strengthen the uptake of SCP policies and the capacities of multiple stakeholders on applying SCP tools and approaches based on the demand received by national governments in Asia and Central Asia.
- Implementation of SWITCH-Asia Communications Strategy 2020 and improved reporting of grants projects.

Please find [photos](#) and [presentations](#) conducted during the event, the [media advisory](#), as well as the [Brochure](#), including the Agenda, some background information and an overview of speakers.

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