



SEA CIRCULAR: SOLVING PLASTIC POLLUTION AT SOURCE

SEA circular is an initiative from the UN Environment Programme and the Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia (COBSEA) to inspire market-based solutions and encourage enabling policies to prevent marine plastic pollution.

Plastic waste is choking our rivers and seas, threatening ecosystems and livelihoods in South East Asia.

Striving for cleaner seas, less plastic wasted and a more circular economy requires fundamental changes throughout the plastic value chain.

It is estimated that just four Asian countries — China, Indonesia, the Philippines and Vietnam — account for about half the plastic waste that flows from land into the ocean. This is due to rapid growth in plastic production, and inadequate management of solid waste — resulting in overflowing landfill sites and plastic leakage.

At the third United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-3) in December 2017, Heads of State and Ministers of the Environment from over 140 countries declared that:

“Any threat to our environment is a threat to our health, our society, our ecosystems, our economy, our security, our well-being and our very survival.”

Plastic pollution has wide-ranging environmental, social and economic impacts, damaging marine ecosystems and biodiversity and ultimately impacting human health.

SEA circular is a working in six countries in South East Asia: Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam, from 2019–2023. The project is supported by the Government of Sweden.

The focus is on several points along the plastic value chain. Interventions are designed and implemented with an understanding of land-sea interactions, and towards a circular economy. SEA circular works with national and provincial governments, private sector corporations, civil society groups and NGOs — and many other stakeholders — to support good governance and policy making, and promote circular economy principles.

SEA circular focusses interventions on supporting market-based solutions, enhancing the science-basis for decision making, generating outreach to support awareness and behaviour change, and promoting a regional approach through collaboration and networking.



SEA circular goals:

- Increase in the variety of non-plastic and recycled plastic packaging
- Elimination of single use plastics from selected value chains
- Escalation in recycling rates and plastic segregation at source
- Strengthened policy and fiscal incentives to reduce virgin plastic use
- Growth in consumer demand for plastic pollution reduction

The overall aim is for less plastic wasted, with reduced input to, and impact on, the marine environment and its dependent people in South East Asia.

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