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# Asia-Europe Environment Forum (ENVforum) Online Workshop Series On Circular Plastic Use Innovate & Change to Close the Loop

June 2021

Venue: Whova Conference App

Singapore Time (SGT) +8 UTC / Central European Time (CET) +1 UTC

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## CONCEPT NOTE

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### ABSTRACT

The Asia-Europe Environment Forum (ENVforum) Online Training on "Circular Plastic Use: Innovate & Change to Close the Loop" is a series of 3 workshops that will take place in June 2021.

The Online Workshop Series objectives are:

- To gain a better understanding of the circular economy and plastic challenge in ASEM
- To acquire experience and knowledge on brainstorming initiatives by working on specific solutions to address plastic waste
- To provide a platform for collaboration and mutual learning
- To build a community of like-minded collaborators

This training enables the learning & creative environment for innovators to work on localised, scalable and cost-efficient solutions to address environmental challenges related to plastic.

It will create an innovation handbook that will showcase plausible solutions & ideas for action on 3Rs (reduce, reuse, recycle).

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### BACKGROUND

The adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) outlined in "*Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*" presents multiple challenges for countries to implement SDGs. One of the central issues impeding the success of the 2030 Agenda is unsustainable consumption and production pattern.

While consumption and production are the building blocks of the economy and essential to economic growth and development, current consumption and production pattern is detrimental to our environment. We are facing the risk of a shortage of natural resources required to meet the existing demand. As the lack of natural resources looms, it is imperative to achieve SDG 12, "*Ensuring Sustainable Consumption and Production*," and transition from linear to a circular economy.

With its low cost of production, lightweight, and ability to withstand contamination, plastic makes its application highly essential in the industrial production and distribution of goods, including in the medical sector. While plastic has positively impacted our lives in many ways, the overconsumption of plastic and its mismanagement during its lifecycle have detrimental impacts on the environment, health, social and economy, with many cross-cutting factors. Preventing plastic waste is more than addressing it as a waste management challenge. It needs to be tackled at the various level by ensuring the representation of stakeholders involved in all stages of the plastic life cycle. The reduction of plastics must go beyond recycling and consider a systemic transition towards a circular economy.

The **Asia-Europe Environment Forum (ENVforum)** aims to contribute to this global agenda by providing a platform to strengthen knowledge exchange among officials, experts and businesses from Asia and Europe under the framework of the 2030 Agenda.

Established in 2003, the ENVforum is a partnership of the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF), Hanns Seidel Foundation (HSF), ASEM SMEs Eco-Innovation Center (ASEIC), and the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES). Since its inception 15 years ago, the ENVforum has organised over 50 high-level international meetings, roundtables, conferences and workshops, bringing together over 1,200 selected participants from governments, academia, international organisations, NGOs, civil society and the private sector. The ENVforum has produced a series of 9 prominent publications addressing essential issues related to sustainable development.

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## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This international event is a series of 3 workshops taking place virtually via Whova conferencing platform. It will gather key representatives of civil society from Asia and Europe.

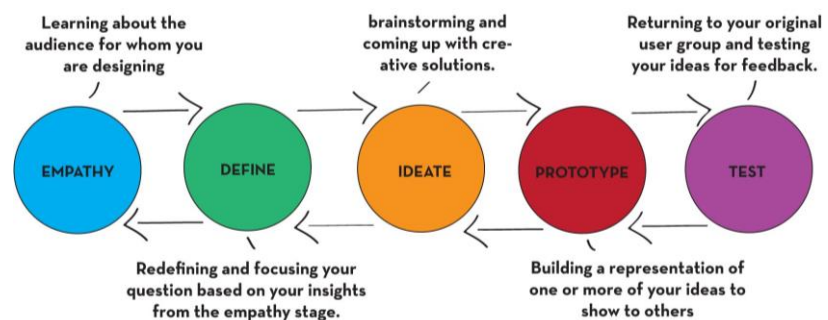
Even though plastic revolutionised many sectors and improved the quality of lives, we live in a world where global plastics production has reached 400 million tons of plastics per year. There has been a global shift in the production of durable plastic to single-use plastic. With the current consumption and waste management practices, there will be an estimated 12 billion tons of plastic litter in landfills and the natural environment. Currently, the world produces more than 400 million tons of plastics per year, with the most significant proportion of it designed for immediate disposal. Common everyday examples include plastic packaging, including foamed plastics, straws, plastic bags, and disposable cutlery. The amount of waste is becoming a recurring problem that requires innovation and a systemic solution to address it.

The project will revolve around Plastic Waste and 3Rs, looking into theory, practical examples and empowering participants to design and implement solutions resulting in reducing plastic waste.

The methodology of the event is inspired by Design Thinking. The workshops will enable the learning environment and exchange of knowledge and experiences and stimulate working on projects in teams to benefit from the diversity and different points of view.

**Design thinking** is a **human-centred approach to innovation** that draws from the designer's toolkit to **integrate** people's needs, the possibilities of *technology*, and the requirements for business success.

—TIM BROWN, EXECUTIVE CHAIR OF IDEO



Source: IDEO

The project will consist of 3 workshops inspired by the design thinking process:

1. Introduction to CE & plastic (input for empathise & define)
2. Challenge - 3R in Action (ideation & prototype)
3. Making Things Happen (prototype & test)

The programme is designed to be highly interactive; the online environment will enable to have interaction, host thematic discussions and engage both during scheduled live sessions and in between workshops.

Workshops Series participants will benefit from regional and international experts' expertise by gaining a better understanding of current plastic challenges in Asia and Europe. All attendees will be strongly encouraged to interact with one another to test their ideas and innovate for change during the workshops' interactive format.

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**OBJECTIVES**

- To gain a better understanding of the circular economy and plastic challenge in ASEM
- To implement acquired knowledge by working on specific solutions to address plastic waste
- To provide a platform for collaboration and mutual learning
- To initiate a community of like-minded collaborators

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**TIMELINE (TBC)**

April: Open Call for Participants & Selection  
May: Acceptance & pre-Workshop survey  
1 June: Workshop 1  
*facilitated team work*  
14 June: Workshop 2  
*facilitated team work*  
21 June: Workshop 3

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**PARTICIPANTS**

This workshop series will gather approximately 50 participants:

- Working professionals from ASEM countries
- Individuals interested in making a difference and shape their working environment coming from civil society, private and government sector

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**TANGIBLE  
OUTCOMES**

- Documentation of an international workshop series enabling stakeholders to exchange ideas on circular economy and addressing the plastic waste challenge
  - Network of like-minded collaborators
  - A innovation handbook showcasing the ideas developed during the project
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## The Asia-Europe Environment Forum (ENVforum) Consortium

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The Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) promotes understanding, strengthens relationships and facilitates cooperation among the people, institutions and organisations of Asia and Europe. ASEF enhances dialogue, enables exchanges and encourages collaboration across the thematic areas of culture, education, governance, economy, sustainable development, public health and media.

ASEF is an intergovernmental not-for-profit organisation located in Singapore. Founded in 1997, it is the only institution of the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM).

ASEF runs more than 25 projects a year, consisting of around 100 activities, mainly conferences, seminars, workshops, lectures, publications, and online platforms, together with about 150 partner organisations. Each year over 3,000 Asians and Europeans participate in ASEF's activities, and much wider audiences are reached through its various events, networks and web-portals.

For more information, please visit [www.ASEF.org](http://www.ASEF.org)

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Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI) is an international non-profit research and policy organisation that tackles environment and development challenges. We connect science and decision-making to develop solutions for a sustainable future for all. Our approach is highly collaborative: stakeholder involvement is at the heart of our efforts to build capacity, strengthen institutions, and equip partners for the long term. Our work spans climate, water, air, and land-use issues, and integrates evidence and perspectives on governance, the economy, gender and human health. Across our eight centres in Europe, Asia, Africa and the Americas, we engage with policy processes, development action and business practice throughout the world.

For more information, please visit [www.sei.org](http://www.sei.org)

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The Hanns Seidel Foundation (HSF) is an official German Political Foundation. It is entrusted by the German Parliament with a mandate, which lies at the core of the task of promoting democratic and sustainable structures worldwide. This mandate involves the strengthening of the relevant institutions and persons, procedures and norms and the requisite attitudes enabling such development to take place.

For more information, please visit [www.hss.de](http://www.hss.de) or [www.hss.de/southeastasia](http://www.hss.de/southeastasia)

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ASEM SMEs Eco-Innovation Center (ASEIC) was established in 2011 with the principal mandate of promoting Asia-Europe cooperation to create and enhance eco-innovation of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in both regions.

For more information, please visit [www.aseic.org/main.do](http://www.aseic.org/main.do)

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Established in 1998, the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES) is an independent, not-for-profit think tank, based in Japan. It goes beyond research to provide practical ways to protect the earth's environment and to realise greater sustainability and equity in the global community.

For more information, please visit [www.iges.or.jp](http://www.iges.or.jp)

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