



Phasing out Single-Use Plastic (SUP): Creating a New Default - a Pilot Project (Phuket, Thailand)

12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION



13 CLIMATE ACTION



17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS



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KEY MESSAGES

- Phasing out single-use plastics (SUP) in Thailand demands a commitment from different sector stakeholders - the private sector, as producer and purchaser of the material, plays an influential role in providing alternatives and realising sustainable consumption and production.
- The GIZ CAP-SEA Pilot Project on reducing SUP will kick off in Phuket to explore the feasibility of SUP reduced default standards in consumer goods and draw conclusions on what is needed for SUP prevention to be more successful.
- The theory of change for effective cooperation around SUP sees the involvement of four parties: local government, community organisations, large corporations, and the wider business community.

I. THE ISSUE

Thailand has been amassing two million tons of plastic waste per year over the last ten years. To tackle the growing problem, the Thai government has issued a Roadmap on Plastic Waste Management 2018-2030 and Action Plan on Plastic Waste Management 2018-2022 as the policy frameworks to deal with Thailand's plastic waste problem.

The roadmap has the objective to reduce and stop the use of plastic and replace it with environmentally friendly materials. It includes a ban on seven plastic products by 2022 and aims at transforming Thailand to a 100 percent reusable plastic society by 2027.

The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, which proposed the roadmap, expects that this policy framework will reduce the volume of plastic waste by 0.78 million tons a year and save 3.9 billion baht in waste management costs annually. The roadmap will also help reduce the emissions of greenhouse gases to 1.2 million tons of CO₂ equivalent.¹

Meanwhile, there are a growing number of MSMEs and growing markets in alternative, environmental friendly products as realistic alternatives to plastic. These innovations contribute to the existing Thai action plans, and these actors can benefit from related measures promoting eco-design and eco-product standards to find a ready market.

The capacity of these innovative MSMEs to fully contribute however is limited due to:

1. A lack of access to market mainly due to the higher cost of plastic alternatives in comparison to traditional plastic products;
2. A lack of access to technology, research and development support to design, test, develop and scale production and manufacturing; and
3. A lack of access to funding or incentive mechanisms enabling actors (which offer these solutions) a way to compete fairly in the market.

¹ Foreign Office, The Government Public Relations, Department, Office of the Prime Minister 2019. Retrieved from https://thailand.prd.go.th/1700/ewt/thailand/ewt_news.php?nid=7831&filename=index#:~:text=The%20Cabinet%20on%2017%20April,it%20with%20environmentally%20friendly%20materials.

II. WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

The Thai private sector can play an important role in achieving its goals of phasing out SUP and actualising sustainable consumption and production. However, the business community, especially micro-small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) producing consumer goods, face barriers (those indicated above) that limit their potential to fully participate. MSMEs make up 43% of Thailand's overall GDP², hence hold a significant potential role in driving changes in consumption and production.

To reach Thailand's goal of phasing out SUP demands the knowledge, skills and influence of different sector stakeholders. Currently, several stakeholders are working on waste management and plastic reduction projects in Thailand. To streamline their efforts and tackle common goals, the German international development cooperation- GIZ - under the Collaborative Action on Prevention of Single-use plastic in Southeast Asia initiative (CAP-SEA) - collaborated with the SEED's Practitioner Labs for Policy Prototyping to map stakeholders, define scope and develop the framework for the pilot project. The CAP-SEA project aims to reduce SUP by supporting governments to develop waste reduction policies, contributing to international knowledge exchange, replicating business innovations, developing environmental standards for SUP, and promoting SUP avoidance in the market. Involving stakeholders such as the Thai Environment Institute, large corporates (Unilever,

Nestle, local malls), and smaller eco-inclusive enterprises like Fang Thai, the project is able to co-create solutions that are inclusive to the needs of the beneficiaries.

Cultivating the development of small businesses (start-ups) in SUP prevention sectors is a crucial element in the pilot.



² OSMEP 2019 "SMEs White Paper 2019". Retrieved from https://www.sme.go.th/upload/mod_download/download-20190919092631.pdf

Eco-inclusive SMEs

Eco-inclusive SMEs are enterprises who offer products and services, as well as operate business models that are environmentally beneficial and socially inclusive. These enterprises, often MSMEs, play a significant role in supporting a country to achieve its SDGs and NDCs, either through environmentally positive products and services or operating a low carbon and inclusive business model. An example of an MSME offering packaging alternatives to support the phasing out of plastics in Thailand is UseMee, incubated in the SEED Starter programme. UseMee is formed by a group of volunteers from various professions; medics, software developers, digital marketers, product designers, and food deliverers. The enterprise aims to reduce the use of single-use plastics in the food delivery system by creating an online platform that coordinates the lending of reusable food containers.

III. A SINGLE-USE PLASTIC PREVENTION PILOT PROJECT: CREATING A NEW DEFAULT

The CAP-SEA project aims to prevent SUP and create policy frameworks for plastic reuse. It supports the implementation of SUP prevention policies, such as Thailand’s Plastic Road Map and the Action Plan, by aiming for these five key results:

Result 1. The market for plastic recycling is systematically strengthened

Result 2. Local governments and civil society actors gained knowledge to foster policy instruments that stimulate plastic recycling markets

Result 3. The design of more sustainable products by traditionally heavy plastic-consuming sectors leading to improved resource efficiency.

Result 4. Business models co-developed via replication of Thai and EU models for single use plastic prevention and/or reuse are developed and tested.

Result 5. Lessons & best practices are analysed and disseminated to relevant institutions.³

The Pilot Project is one of the key activities to test this comprehensive model at a local level. It will combine the innovative strength of start-up or small enterprises with the scaling power of large corporates and local governments. Customer demands shall be met with SUP alternatives. Learnings from the pilot project will be replicated on a larger scale in other municipalities within and beyond Thailand.

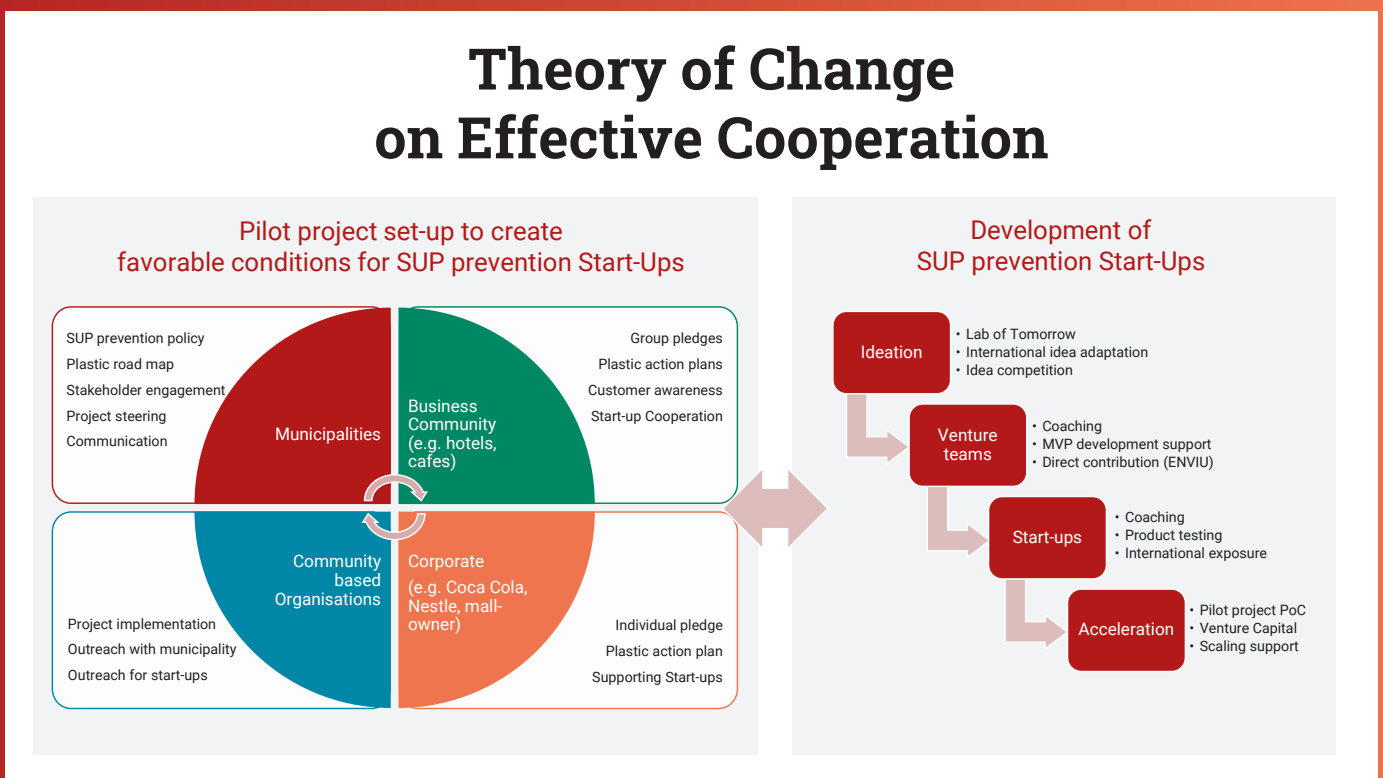
Phuket has been picked as a pilot project location to prove the feasibility of SUP-reduced default standards in consumer goods and test under which conditions SUP prevention can be (more) successful. GIZ and partners have developed a roadmap and theory of change on effective cooperation that emphasises the significance of collaboration between four actors: i) local government, ii) community organisations, iii) large corporations, and iv) the MSME community⁴.

GIZ officially launched the CAP-SEA project on 7 December 2020 with the Signing Ceremony of **Memorandum of Understanding** among seven

³ GIZ CAP-SEA Project Brief

⁴ Corporations refer to large companies and conglomerates, usually owned by stakeholders. Business community refers to smaller business entities and local SMEs.

Figure 1: Theory of Change on Effective Cooperation



key stakeholders namely; GIZ, National Science and Technology Development Agency (NSTDA), Pollution Control Department (PCD), Thai Industrial Standards Institute (TISI), Federation of Thai Industries (FTI), Thailand Business Council for Sustainable Development (TBCSD) and Thailand Environment Institute (TEI).

The pilot project in Phuket is expected to start in January 2021. Target activities include i) reduction

of foams and plastics in local markets, food courts and pedestrian areas ii) reduction of SUP items in Jungceylon and Robinson mall iii) SUP reduction in the accommodation sector iv) collaboration with the GIZ EU Marine Littering Project⁵. Start-ups and SMEs will be engaged in all activities as alternative solution providers. Incubation, business model development and match-making activities will be implemented as next steps.

IV. FURTHER IMPLICATIONS

- Eco-inclusive MSMEs supplying plastic alternative products and services would experience an increase in demand, and be driven to scale their operations, at the same time inspiring other start-ups to venture into eco-inclusive business.
- The pilot project would present real life evidence and identify success (and failure) factors that can serve as a starting point to develop a replicable concept for other local, national or regional actors to reduce SUP.
- A tested concept would attract additional resources and commitments from stakeholders in other municipalities towards SUP-elimination.
- A multi-stakeholder cooperation model streamlines the work of multiple players currently active in SUP reduction in Thailand, leading to a more efficient use of resources to realise a plastic-free future.
- SEED supports MSMEs operating in the SUP-prevention sector, through direct enterprise support, business model replication and engaging policy makers and financial institutions.

V. REFERENCES

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OSMEP 2019 “SMEs White Paper 2019”. Retrieved from https://www.sme.go.th/upload/mod_download/download-20190919092631.pdf

⁵ GIZ internal briefing notes “EU Marine Littering Brief Summary”

About the SEED Practitioner Labs for Policy Prototyping

SEED Practitioner Labs for Policy Prototyping work with policymakers and intermediaries over a multi-step collaborative process to design policy instruments which increase access to and improve the quality of support mechanisms for socially inclusive and environmentally sustainable enterprises looking to scale their environmental, social and economic impacts.



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