

NEWS DIGEST

Workshop on Sustainable Consumption Held by the OECD and ASEAN

On 8 February 2022, the OECD and ASEAN organized a Virtual Event on Nudging Consumers Towards Greener Choices. The event aimed to explore sustainable consumption efforts pursued by the OECD and ASEAN countries from the public and private sectors – for example encouraging online platforms to reduce single-use plastics – as well as identify gaps between the sentiment and action of consumers towards buying more sustainable products. Discussions on eco-labelling schemes as well as the risk of greenwashing were also high on the agenda.

Experts Discussed Sustainable Consumption Strategies at the 3rd ACPC

The issue of sustainable consumption became one of the topics discussed in a thematic session at the 3rd ASEAN Consumer Protection Conference (ACPC), held virtually on 28 June 2022. The speakers shared what actions could be taken to increase consumer engagement and education for a green transition. For this, understanding what prevents consumers from purchasing more environmentally friendly products is key. On the same occasion, the ASEAN Sustainable Consumption Toolkit was also launched by the ASEAN Committee on Consumer Protection (ACCP). Stay tuned at <https://aseanconsumer.org/> to access the Toolkit.

BUYER BEWARE

Since PROTECT Pulse on Sustainability 1.0 was out in November 2020, attention to sustainable consumption grown globally.

Governments across ASEAN have started to incorporate sustainability into consumer protection policies and discussions. However, more steps need to be taken to empower not only consumers, but also businesses so that **they can provide consumers with more sustainable products and services.**

Read up in this edition on what recent initiatives have been embarked upon by stakeholders in ASEAN towards making sustainability the easy choice.

Happy reading!

Thailand Seeks Sustainable Tourism

The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) is entering the [third phase of partnership](#) with the Thai Organic Consumer Association in which TAT is investing in the platform that connects hotels, restaurants, businesses, and consumers with organic farmers. As “best practice” in reducing their carbon footprint, participating businesses will receive Earth Points that can be converted to Carbon Footprint Points. This is in line with Thailand’s commitment to no longer rely on tourist numbers but become a destination that provides quality food and experiences as well as an eco-system that supports the environment.

Indonesian Government Raising Tourist Entrance Fees to Conserve Nature

The Indonesian government has ordered restricted access to Komodo Island by [increasing the entry fee](#) for full-year access of IDR 3.75 million per visitor starting on August 2022. The government claims that the new tariff aims to highlight Indonesia’s sustainability and conservation attempts in the area as well as help fund a number of environmental projects e.g., Komodo habitat restoration. Although the Ministry of Tourism hopes the policy will still attract eco-conscious tourists, the plan was met [doubts from tourism experts](#) and the public.

Indonesian Youth Urged to Raise Awareness on Circular Economy

Environmental issues have become the focus of a number of G20 working groups under the Indonesian presidency in 2022. At the Third Pre-Summit Youth 20 (Y20) in May 2022, the topic of [circular economy was in the spotlight](#). The panellists talked about the importance of transforming the take-make-dispose consumption cycle to be more sustainable as the key to successful implementation of circular economy. Raising consumer awareness of circular economy can also result in behavioural changes e.g., spreading new mindsets through social media challenges.

Businesses Collaborate with WWF to Launch Green Campaigns

Malaysia Airlines (MAB) together with WWF-Malaysia recently has been encouraging its passengers to [donate to planting gaharu trees project](#) when they make bookings on the MAB website. According to WWF-Malaysia, planting gaharu trees will provide an expanded habitat for orangutans and also generate incomes for local communities at the same time. Travel brand Agoda and WWF-Singapore also have [launched a campaign to offer discounted deals](#) highlighting responsible tourism in June 2022. The campaign is aimed at travellers interested in travelling sustainably. Meanwhile WWF-Philippines and Globe have created an [e-learning platform called “Camp Kalikasan”](#) to make environmental education more accessible to the public. Upcoming modules cover sustainable consumption and lifestyles.

Bank Initiative to Boost Awareness on Sustainability Topics in Brunei

Bank Islam Brunei Darussalam (BIBD) [recently announced its Sustainability Framework](#) with one of the pillars being “Responsible Entrepreneurship”, in which the bank engages with businesses and NGOs to educate and help them adopt more eco-conscious business decisions. The bank also held “Eco-Chat” as part of the SME 360 campaign to feature talks on topics such as the circular economy, plastic pollution, sustainable food production and consumption, as well as sustainable fashion. In addition, [women leaders also joined the sustainability talk](#) in conjunction with the celebration of International Women’s Day.

Essay Competition in Singapore to Discuss Environmental Sustainability

On 7 February 2022, the Competition and Consumer Commission of Singapore (CCCS) and the Economic Society of Singapore (ESS) [launched the 5th CCCS-ESS Essay Competition](#) on the topic of “Environmental Sustainability: The Role of Competition and Consumer Protection Laws and Policies.” The essay competition invited participants to share ideas, among others, on how businesses can collaborate and compete fairly in achieving sustainability goals and how consumers can be protected against greenwashing. This follows on the trend to treat sustainability as a cross-cutting issue in economic policies, which is presently much debated, for example in the European Union.

More Affordable Solutions for Plastic Reduction Offered by Retailers in Vietnam

A number of ministries and retailers in Vietnam discussed innovative solutions to substitute single-use plastics at [Vietnam Investment Review's talk show](#) on 23 June 2022. One of the solutions shared by AEON Mall is the [rent-a-bag programme](#). Since consumers often forget to bring a bag when shopping, customers can borrow eco-friendly bags at the checkout counter for a deposit fee of VND5,000 (22 US cents) per bag instead of spending VND20,000 (87 US cents) to buy a new eco-bag. Customers will get their deposit fees back on their next purchases.

Campaign to Reduce Consumption of Bushmeat Launched in Cambodia

The Cambodian Ministry of Environment – in collaboration with USAID, WWF-Cambodia, and other environmental organizations – launched the [“Protect Our Wildlife: Reduce Buying and Eating Bushmeat”](#) campaign in June 2022 to transform consumer preferences on the consumption of bushmeat and help mitigate biodiversity loss. With a view to increasing public commitment on nature conservation, the campaign targeted and involved especially young consumers and called on them not to sell, buy or eat bushmeat.

