

Joint plan to boost circularity in the plastics industry

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Introduction to the project Plan-C

Moving Plastics and mACHine iNdustry towards Circularity (Plan-C) is an ambitious initiative aimed at transforming the plastics and machinery industries in the Danube Region towards a circular economy. The project brings together 14 partners from countries including Germany, Austria, Czechia, Slovakia, Hungary, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Romania, and Moldova. By fostering transnational cooperation among plastics processors, producers, and the machine industry, Plan-C seeks to develop innovative solutions that emphasize reuse, recycling, and long-term value retention.

The core objectives of Plan-C include:

- **Co-creating circular plastic solutions** through **collaboration** and **design thinking**, resulting in practical prototypes and guidelines for SMEs.
- **Redesigning machinery** for reuse and recycling, covering the entire lifecycle and exploring digital opportunities.
- **Developing a transnational action plan** that aligns with EU regulations and national strategies, ensuring long-term impact through policy integration and SME support.

Plan-C aims to address significant barriers such as weak recycling infrastructure, outdated waste systems, and gaps in expertise. By promoting reuse, repair, remanufacturing, and smart recycling, the project aspires to accelerate clean growth in manufacturing sectors and strengthen business competitiveness across the region.

This document serves to analyse the results of the Plan-C project in the field of the plastics industry with regard to a transnational strategy. For this purpose, the most important results are briefly presented; for a detailed presentation, please refer to the separate documents on the project website.

Importance of Circularity in the Plastics Industry

The transition to a circular economy is crucial for the plastics industry, which faces significant environmental and economic challenges. Circularity in the plastics industry involves designing products and systems that prioritize reuse, recycling, and long-term value retention, thereby reducing waste and resource consumption. The EU set a goal to recycle 50% of plastics packaging by 2025, but many countries in the Danube Region face barriers such as weak recycling infrastructure, outdated waste systems, and gaps in expertise and know-how. Stricter regulations and standards for the use, production, and disposal of plastic products and pressure from international organizations present regulatory challenges for all plastic producers. The production, use, and disposal of plastics often conflict with environmental stewardship, raising concerns among oversight bodies and consumers. Furthermore, the plastics industry faces economic uncertainties, including fluctuating market conditions, supply chain pressures, and geopolitical

tensions. Higher costs due to tariffs, transportation costs, and unpredictable geopolitical risks disrupt global trade routes and production sites, creating supply chain issues. Additionally, outdated infrastructure and inefficiencies in recycling technologies, along with contamination issues, pose significant technological barriers.

And here comes the framework of circular economy in play. Key benefits of circularity in the plastics industry include environmental protection, which involves reducing plastic pollution and conserving natural resources by minimizing waste and promoting the reuse of materials. Economic efficiency is achieved by lowering production costs and creating new business opportunities through innovative business models including recycling and remanufacturing processes. Sustainable growth is enhanced by adopting sustainable practices and complying with evolving regulations, thereby improving the resilience and competitiveness of businesses.

By embracing circular principles, the plastics industry can significantly mitigate its environmental impact while unlocking new economic potentials. Initiatives like Plan-C demonstrate the feasibility and benefits of circularity, providing practical solutions and fostering collaboration across sectors to drive sustainable industrial development.

Understanding Circular Economy

The concept of a circular economy represents a transformative approach to economic development, emphasizing sustainability and resource efficiency. In the context of plastics, understanding the circular economy involves recognizing the need to move away from the traditional linear model of production, use, and disposal. Instead, it advocates for a system where plastic materials are continuously reused, recycled, and repurposed, minimizing waste and environmental impact.

A circular economy for plastics aims to create closed-loop systems where products are designed for longevity, reparability, and recyclability. This involves innovative design strategies, such as using biodegradable materials, improving recycling technologies, and fostering collaboration across industries to ensure that plastic waste is effectively managed. By prioritizing the reduction of plastic waste and promoting the reuse of materials, the circular economy seeks to mitigate the adverse effects of plastic pollution on ecosystems and human health.

In this context, companies can generate revenue by adopting innovative business models that align with circular economy principles. For instance, the product-as-a-service model allows consumers to lease products rather than purchase them outright, ensuring that companies retain ownership and responsibility for the product's lifecycle. This model not only reduces waste but also creates continuous revenue streams through leasing fees. Additionally, businesses can invest in advanced recycling technologies to transform plastic waste into valuable raw materials, which can be sold or used to manufacture new products. Collaborations across industries can also lead to the development of closed-loop systems, where plastic materials are kept in circulation, reducing the need for virgin resources and lowering production costs. These new business models not only contribute to environmental sustainability but also open up new market opportunities and drive economic growth.

In conclusion, understanding the circular economy in the context of plastics is crucial for fostering a sustainable and resource-efficient future. By shifting from a linear to a circular model, we can significantly reduce plastic waste and its environmental impact. This approach involves as key factor the design of products for durability, repairability, and recyclability, and promoting innovative recycling technologies and sustainable practices. The circular economy not only addresses the pressing issue of plastic pollution but also encourages economic resilience and growth through sustainable business models and policy frameworks. Ultimately, embracing a circular economy for plastics is a vital step towards creating a regenerative system that benefits both the environment and society.

Identified Challenges and Needs in the Plastics Producer Industry in the Danube region

The transition towards a circular economy presents both significant challenges and promising opportunities for the plastics producer industry. This chapter explores the multifaceted dimensions of this transition, focusing on legal/policy, technical, economic, societal/behavioural, and environmental aspects across various project partner countries within the project Plan-C. By examining the unique and shared challenges faced by these countries, as well as the opportunities they can leverage, we aim to provide a comprehensive understanding of the current landscape and the potential pathways to a more sustainable and circular economy. This analysis highlights the importance of innovative solutions, supportive policies, technological advancements, and increased public awareness in driving the shift towards circular practices. Ultimately, addressing these challenges while capitalizing on opportunities can accelerate progress, benefiting both the environment and the economy.

Legal/Policy:

Challenges:

Hungary: Implementation of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) systems and compliance with new legislation.

Austria: Lack of clear legal requirements, inconsistent regulations, and outdated frameworks.

Czech Republic: Complex and evolving legislation regarding sustainable plastics management.

Germany: Ambiguity in regulations hindering business investment and innovation.

Slovakia: Lack of clear legal requirements and incorporation of circular economy principles.

Romania: Strategy for circular economy lacks detailed action plans and regulatory deficiencies.

Serbia: Non-compliance with EU regulations and gaps in national frameworks.

Moldova: Ineffective economic instruments and regulatory frameworks.

Bosnia and Herzegovina: Limited incorporation of circular economy principles into existing frameworks.

Opportunities:

Hungary: Research and development in renewable materials and upcoming sustainable regulations.

Austria: Strong incentives in public procurement and standardized regulations favouring circular practices.

Czech Republic: Structured frameworks from delegated acts to guide sustainable practices.

Germany: Incentives in public procurement for circular products and clearer legal frameworks.

Slovakia: Strong incentives in public procurement and advancement in technologies.

Romania: Concrete measures under the circular economy strategy and improving regulations.

Serbia: Defining circular economy as a strategic goal and harmonizing regulatory documents.

Moldova: Introducing economic incentives and developing recycling-promoting regulations.

Bosnia and Herzegovina: Implementation of comprehensive policies and investment in waste management

Technical:

Challenges:

- Similar challenges across countries include outdated infrastructure, inefficiencies in recycling technologies, and contamination issues.
- Specific challenges like energy-intensive processes (Moldova, Slovakia) and quality degradation in recycling (Austria, Czech Republic) are prevalent.

Opportunities:

- Common opportunities include adopting new technologies for circular material use and enhancing recycling infrastructure.
- Advancements in technology (Germany, Serbia) and investment in energy-efficient technologies (Moldova, Bosnia and Herzegovina) are highlighted.

Economic:

Challenges:

- High costs and availability issues of bio-based raw materials are common challenges (Hungary, Austria, Romania).
- Funding constraints and economic barriers (Slovakia, Serbia, Moldova) are significant challenges.
- Limited integration between manufacturers, recyclers, and end-users is a shared economic hurdle (Germany, Romania).

Opportunities:

- Utilization of AI for cost efficiencies and development of new digital business models are noted opportunities across several countries (Hungary, Austria, Germany).
- Accessing EU funds and participating in circular economy programs are highlighted as opportunities (Romania, Serbia, Czech Republic).

Societal/Behavioural:

Challenges:

- Low public awareness and acceptance of new technologies are common challenges (Hungary, Slovakia, Serbia).
- Limited awareness and understanding of circular economy principles among consumers (Austria, Moldova, Bosnia and Herzegovina).

Opportunities:

- Educational programs and public awareness campaigns are identified opportunities across the region (Romania, Austria, Serbia).
- Shifting societal norms towards sustainability and promoting eco-design principles are common strategies (Czech Republic, Germany, Bosnia and Herzegovina).

Environmental:

Challenges:

- Plastic waste pollution and microplastic presence in the environment are shared challenges (Hungary, Austria, Romania).
- Greenhouse gas emissions from plastic waste incineration are noted environmental concerns (Germany, Serbia, Czech Republic).

Opportunities:

- Reducing plastic pollution through circular practices and improving waste management infrastructure are identified opportunities (Austria, Romania, Slovakia).
- Supporting initiatives for cleaning water bodies and protecting habitats are common environmental goals (Moldova, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Czech Republic).

While each country faces unique challenges in their transition towards a circular economy, there are significant similarities in the opportunities they can leverage. Common opportunities include advancing technological capabilities, implementing supportive policies, enhancing public awareness, and fostering collaboration across sectors. Addressing these challenges while capitalizing on opportunities can accelerate progress towards a more sustainable and circular economy across the region, benefiting both the environment and the economy.

Summary of the workshops and key learnings – Guideline for the plastic industry

The Plan-C project has yielded a wealth of insights through its co-creative design thinking workshops and transnational peer-level capacity building activities. These initiatives, implemented across various EU and EU-candidate countries, have illuminated both the diversity of regional contexts and the shared ambition to transition toward a sustainable, circular economy.

One of the most significant learnings from the design thinking workshops (DTWs) is the importance of regional mapping. By engaging stakeholders from industry, academia, and public authorities, the workshops provided a detailed understanding of the current state of circularity in the plastics sector across partner countries. This mapping revealed a spectrum of readiness: while some countries are already piloting advanced circular solutions, others are still in the early stages of defining regulatory and industrial frameworks. Despite these differences, all regions demonstrated awareness of and alignment with EU directives, particularly the Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation (ESPR), which has become a cornerstone for guiding sustainable innovation.

The peer review sessions further deepened this understanding by fostering mutual learning between more and less developed regions. Countries like Austria and Germany shared their experiences in integrating circular principles into business models, while countries such as Bosnia and Moldova highlighted the challenges of limited infrastructure and regulatory gaps. These exchanges underscored the value of peer-to-peer knowledge transfer, where innovation flows in both directions—less developed regions benefit from tested strategies, while more advanced regions gain fresh perspectives and novel ideas.

A recurring topic overall is the critical role of education and academia. Universities not only contributed to the technical and material aspects of circular design but also emerged as key actors in shaping future mindsets. Initiatives such as new degree programs in sustainable polymer engineering and plastics management reflect a growing recognition that long-term change requires embedding sustainability into curricula and research agendas.

From a technical standpoint, the workshops and peer reviews surfaced a range of innovative solutions. These included the use of bioplastics for automotive parts, modular and recyclable remote controls for B2B applications, and sludge dewatering systems to improve recycling efficiency. Each solution was tailored to local conditions, yet all shared a commitment to reducing environmental impact and enhancing resource efficiency.

The exchange also highlighted societal and behavioural challenges. In several regions, consumer reluctance to pay for sustainable products and the inertia of traditional business models were identified as barriers. However, the workshops revealed that when companies are shown the economic and reputational benefits of circularity, their engagement increases significantly. This points to the need for continued awareness-raising and demonstration of tangible benefits.

Guideline for Prototype development

Ultimately, the DTWs as well as peer review session led to a guideline in the plastics sector. In alignment with the European Union's evolving regulatory landscape—particularly Regulation (EU) 2024/1781—the guideline should support small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the plastics sector in adopting circular economy principles. The objective is to unify and streamline innovation processes, reduce environmental impact, and enhance competitiveness through sustainable practices.

Foundational Pillars of Circular Innovation

Circular solutions must be designed with a systemic approach, integrating the following four interdependent pillars:

1. **Recyclability** – Prioritize product designs that enable multiple recycling cycles; phase out non-recyclable materials.
2. **Recycled Content** – Mandate the use of recycled materials, especially in packaging, excluding food-contact applications.
3. **Reuse** – Define and enforce reuse standards for specific product groups and materials.
4. **Collection** – Establish robust collection and sorting systems to ensure material recovery and reintegration.

These pillars form the backbone of any effective circular strategy and must be implemented in a coordinated manner.

Implementation Framework for SMEs

To operationalize circularity, SMEs should adopt a structured approach that includes:

- **Internal Readiness Assessment:** Conduct Design Thinking Workshops (DTW) to evaluate current practices, identify gaps, and align internal capabilities with circular goals.
- **Legislative Mapping:** Utilize AI tools to interpret relevant EU legislation and standards applicable to specific product categories.
- **Impact Mapping:** Quantify the environmental and economic impact of both existing and proposed solutions using lifecycle assessments and circularity metrics.

Prototyping and Innovation Design

Prototyping should be guided by the following principles:

- **Problem Definition and Hypothesis Testing:** Clearly articulate the problem, target audience, and expected outcomes.
- **Material and Technology Selection:** Prioritize recycled, bio-based, or waste-derived materials and scalable technologies.
- **Circular Design Integration:** Ensure prototypes are modular, repairable, recyclable, and energy/resource efficient.
- **Testing and Iteration:** Implement robust testing protocols and integrate stakeholder feedback to refine solutions.

Business Model Considerations

Circular prototypes must be evaluated for:

- **Economic Viability:** Demonstrate cost-effectiveness and potential for market competitiveness.
- **Scalability:** Assess feasibility for mass production using existing infrastructure.
- **Market Entry Strategy:** Develop phased go-to-market plans, including pilot launches, crowdfunding, and strategic partnerships.

Monitoring and Verification

To ensure continuous improvement and compliance:

- **Performance Metrics:** Track mechanical performance, environmental impact, and user acceptance.
- **Circularity Indicators:** Measure waste reduction, resource efficiency, and recycled content utilization.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Collect feedback from customers, industry experts, and regulatory bodies to validate and enhance circular practices.

Finally, the collaborative nature of the Plan-C project itself emerged as a key learning. The structured interaction between regions, the integration of diverse stakeholders, and the iterative refinement of ideas through workshops and peer reviews created a dynamic environment for innovation and in a guideline for SMEs within the plastic sector. This approach not only accelerated learning but also laid the groundwork for future cooperation and policy alignment.

Transnational Strategy for Circularity in the Plastics Industry within the Danube Region

This transnational strategy proposal outlines a comprehensive approach to fostering circularity in the plastics industry across the Danube region, focusing on four key pillars: Innovation and Technology, Regulation and Policy, Collaboration, and Societal Awareness. The strategy emphasizes equitable development, harmonized regulations, cross-border cooperation, and public engagement to create a resilient and sustainable circular plastics economy. The proposed measures aim to address the country-specific challenges related to circularity, while laying the groundwork for a competitive advantage for businesses across the Danube region.

Innovation and Technological Advancement

Innovation and technological advancement are fundamental to achieving circularity in the plastics industry. Strategic investments in technology and infrastructure, particularly in economically weaker regions, are essential to ensure inclusive progress. As an example, embracing digitalization and Industry 4.0 technologies can significantly reduce costs and streamline the adoption of sustainable alternatives. These technologies enable real-time monitoring, predictive maintenance, and efficient resource management, which are critical for circular operations. Key advancements include the integration of Industry 4.0 technologies, such as artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning, and the Internet of Things (IoT), which enable smarter production processes, real-time monitoring, and predictive maintenance. Further advanced recycling technologies, including chemical recycling and enzymatic depolymerization, are expanding the range of recyclable plastics and improving material recovery rates. Bioplastics and bio-based polymers are emerging as viable alternatives to fossil-based plastics, supported by innovations in feedstock sourcing and material engineering. Additionally, 3D printing is revolutionizing product design and prototyping, allowing for material efficiency and customization. These technologies, when combined with digital platforms for waste tracking and resource exchange, are paving the way for a more circular and resilient plastics economy. However, widespread adoption requires coordinated efforts in funding, regulation, and knowledge transfer, particularly to support small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and economically weaker regions.

Many promising technologies are not yet market-ready. Targeted funding mechanisms are needed to support their development, facilitate market entry, and enable scalability. This support will help emerging solutions compete with established, less sustainable alternatives. Continuous promotion of advanced technologies—such as 3D printing, sustainable materials, and AI-driven systems—should be prioritized. These innovations can revolutionize product design, manufacturing, and end-of-life management.

Collaboration between academia, regulatory bodies, and industry is vital to foster innovation and ensure long-term market acceptance. Knowledge transfer programs should be established to bridge the gap between research institutions and SMEs, making technological advancements

accessible and applicable. Additionally, a digital platform should be developed to facilitate collaboration, allowing stakeholders to share innovations and identify opportunities to repurpose waste as valuable inputs for new products.

Regulation and Policy

A harmonized regulatory framework is crucial for the successful implementation of circular practices across the Danube region. Aligning standards and regulations, including the integration of EU candidate countries, ensures consistency and facilitates cross-border cooperation. Clear and specific rules are needed to address complex challenges such as multilayer packaging and post-use material identification. Regulations like the Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation (PPWR) are a starting point for further development.

Effective enforcement mechanisms must be established, including penalties for non-compliance by both domestic and third-country importers. To ensure broad understanding and compliance, regulatory frameworks should be accompanied by accessible, simplified explanations. These resources should be freely available and tailored to different stakeholder groups, including SMEs and local authorities.

Harmonizing waste collection and separation systems across the region will enhance material reuse and recycling. Furthermore, reducing bureaucratic burdens where possible will encourage greater participation and investment. All regulatory efforts should be aligned with EU strategies and national plans to ensure coherence and effectiveness.

Embedding circularity principles into public funding and procurement criteria is a critical lever for accelerating the transition toward a sustainable and resource-efficient economy. By integrating requirements for circular design, reuse, recyclability, and life-cycle thinking into public tenders and financial support mechanisms, governments can stimulate market demand for environmentally responsible products and services. This strategic alignment not only fosters innovation and competitiveness among suppliers but also raises awareness across industries and society about the value of circular economy practices. Public procurement, representing a significant share of GDP in many countries, has the potential to set powerful precedents and create stable markets for circular solutions. Moreover, transparent and consistent criteria can guide businesses—especially SMEs—toward sustainable practices, while ensuring that public investments contribute to long-term environmental and economic resilience. As such, circularity in funding and procurement is not merely a policy tool, but a catalyst for systemic change.

Collaboration

Collaboration is the backbone of a successful circular economy. Joint projects that bring together stakeholders from across the value chain—research institutions, industry, and financial bodies—are essential to developing not only sustainable products but also circular value chains.

Establishing dedicated circular plastics clusters or hubs can serve as focal points for coordination and innovation.

Transregional exchange programs should be promoted to ensure that all parts of the Danube region progress together. These programs can facilitate the sharing of best practices, innovations, and policy approaches. Fiscal incentives and support schemes are necessary to help companies adopt circular technologies, especially in the absence of widespread flagship projects. A digital collaboration platform can further enhance these efforts by enabling real-time sharing of resources, innovations, and waste streams.

Societal Awareness and Education

Societal awareness and education must be prioritized to support the transition to a circular economy. Awareness should be raised from early education levels through to industry professionals, emphasizing that circular economy is more than just recycling—it represents a viable business model with revenue-generating potential. Public campaigns should highlight the environmental and economic benefits of circularity, helping to create demand for sustainable products.

It is also important to communicate how circular practices can enhance resilience and reduce dependence on critical raw materials. Special attention should be given to rural and less developed areas, where awareness and knowledge of circular economy principles are often limited. Tailored training programs and communication tools—such as case-based guides, practical toolkits, and examples of flagship projects—should be developed for the plastics sector. Transparency in communicating the environmental and societal impacts of products and their value chains will further support informed decision-making and consumer engagement.

How Plan-C help to bring the whole Danube region together?

The Plan-C project demonstrates that the transition to a circular plastics economy in the Danube region is not a challenge that can be solved in isolation. It requires a coordinated, systemic approach that integrates technological innovation, regulatory alignment, societal engagement, and cross-border collaboration. The project has shown that circularity must be tailored to local contexts—what works in one area may not be suitable in another. Therefore, solutions must be co-developed with sensitivity to regional differences in infrastructure, market readiness, and policy environments.

A key insight from Plan-C is that innovation alone is not enough. Without supportive frameworks—such as clear regulations, accessible funding, and education—technologies cannot reach their full potential. The project emphasizes the importance of combining local action with regional coordination, ensuring that all stakeholders, from governments to businesses and civil society, are aligned in their efforts.

Plan-C also highlights the need for transparency and trust in material flows. The creation of a regional digital platform for secondary raw materials, for example, can significantly improve the matching of supply and demand for recyclates, reduce waste, and enhance market efficiency. At the same time, voluntary agreements or regulatory measures to standardize material inputs can improve the quality and value of recycled plastics.

Equally important is the cultural and educational dimension. Misunderstandings about circularity—such as the confusion between biodegradable and bio-based plastics—can lead to unintended consequences. Plan-C fosters a shared understanding of circular principles and promotes education across sectors and regions to build a common foundation for action.

Ultimately, Plan-C serves as a catalyst for uniting the Danube region. By facilitating the exchange of knowledge, tools, and solutions, it helps bridge gaps between countries, industries, and communities. The project lays the groundwork for a resilient, competitive, and environmentally responsible plastics economy—one that is built not on isolated efforts, but on collective ambition and shared responsibility.

Conclusion

The transition to a circular plastics economy in the Danube region is both a necessity and an opportunity. Through the Plan-C project, it has become clear that this transformation requires a systemic, inclusive, and collaborative approach that addresses the unique challenges and leverages the strengths of each region.

Key points

- The plastics industry in the Danube region faces significant environmental, economic, and regulatory challenges, including outdated infrastructure, inconsistent policies, and low public awareness.
- Circularity offers a pathway to mitigate these issues by promoting reuse, recycling, and sustainable design, while also enhancing competitiveness and resilience.
- The Plan-C project has demonstrated the value of transnational cooperation, knowledge exchange, and stakeholder engagement in driving systemic change.

Summary of Strategic Priorities

Innovation and Technology

- Invest in technology and infrastructure, especially in economically weaker regions.
- Leverage digitalization and Industry 4.0 to adopt sustainable alternatives and reduce costs.
- Provide funding for innovation to support technologies that are not yet market-ready.
- Promote continuous innovation (e.g., 3D printing, sustainable materials, AI technologies).
- Encourage collaboration between academia, regulatory bodies, and industry to foster innovation and market acceptance.
- Offer fiscal incentives and support schemes for companies adopting circular technologies.

Regulation and Policy

- Harmonize standards and regulations across the Danube region and extend them to EU candidate countries. Establish a clear regulatory framework to reduce uncertainty and encourage long-term planning.
- Develop clear rules for specific topics (e.g., multilayer packaging, material identification).

- Ensure consistent follow-up on EU regulations and apply them to third-country importers.
- Tighten the penalty system for non-compliance by governments and stakeholders.
- Provide accessible explanations of regulations to help stakeholders understand the framework.
- Develop circularity criteria for public procurement and funding programs.
- Harmonize waste collection and separation systems across the region.
- Reduce bureaucracy where possible to facilitate participation.

Collaboration

- Create a digital platform for collaboration and resource exchange.
- Initiate joint projects to build circular value chains.
- Establish dedicated circular plastic clusters/hubs to unite stakeholders (e.g., research, industry, finance).
- Foster regional exchange on innovation and policy topics.
- Develop programs to transfer knowledge from research institutions to SMEs and industry.

Awareness and Education

- Raise awareness from early education levels and within industry about the circular economy.
- Promote the business case for circularity and stimulate demand for sustainable products.
- Communicate the role of circular economy in improving resilience and reducing dependency on critical resources.
- Address knowledge gaps in SMEs and rural communities.
- Create training programs and communication tools tailored to the plastics sector (e.g., toolkits, case studies).
- Ensure transparency in how products and value chains impact the environment and society.

Call to Action

To realize the full potential of a circular plastics economy, all stakeholders—governments, industry, academia, and civil society—must act together. Policymakers must create enabling environments through clear regulations and incentives. Businesses must commit to innovation and transparency. Educators and communicators must raise awareness and build capacity. And citizens must be empowered to make informed, sustainable choices.

Plan-C has laid the foundation. Now is the time to build on it—through continued cooperation, shared responsibility, and bold action