The Circulate Initiative Launches Open-sourced Plastic Waste Climate Impact Calculator

First tool tracking market-specific environmental impact of plastic waste management in Asia

Singapore, 8 September 2021: The Circulate Initiative, a non-profit organization committed to solving the ocean plastic pollution challenge, today officially launched PLACES - Plastic Lifecycle Assessment Calculator for the Environment and Society, the first tool of its kind offering the ability to assess the climate impact of current waste management practices in Asia, from open burning to recycling. The Circulate Initiative developed the tool based on the findings of a paper published by Circulate Capital and the Singapore Institute of Manufacturing Technology (SIMTech), a unit of Singapore's Agency for Science, Technology and Research (A*STAR). The Circulate Initiative's open-sourced prototype calculator tracks the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reductions, energy and water savings of waste management and recycling solutions that prevent plastic pollution in India and Indonesia.

While the plastic waste and climate change crises are worsening, investors, entrepreneurs, policymakers and the wider sustainability industry need access to better data and tools to make decisions and measure the effectiveness and sustainability of investments and initiatives in the fight against plastic pollution in South and Southeast Asia. PLACES aims to close this gap by empowering decision-makers with reliable, market-specific data around GHG emissions, water and energy savings, and accurately measuring the tangible impact of interventions and investments in waste management, recycling and the circular economy.

Celebrating the launch of the new tool, Ellen Martin, Director of Impact and Insights at The Circulate Initiative, said, "Our ambition for PLACES is to be a catalyst for investment and positive change, and serve as the first port of call for stakeholders looking to scale solutions that prevent plastic pollution in emerging countries for the benefit of the environment, society and economy. This innovative calculator supplies the critical data needed by decision-makers to showcase how improved waste management and plastic recycling practices contribute to fighting climate change."

With mounting pressure to limit global warming to 1.5°C as urged in the 2021 Sixth Assessment Report from the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, countries are calling on emerging economies like India and Indonesia to drastically curb emissions. Plastic waste pollution contributes to climate change, while transitioning to a circular economy can reduce GHG emissions globally by 10 billion tonnes a year by 2050.[1] Using the underlying analysis behind the tool, Circulate Capital found almost 150 million tonnes of GHG would be avoided if 100 percent of plastic leakage in India and Indonesia was prevented by 2030. This is equivalent to shutting down 40 coal-fired power plants.

To calculate the impacts of recycling, users simply input factors including plastic type, tonnes of plastic waste diverted and end-of-life fates for either India or Indonesia. PLACES is based on assumptions made with the data available on the current waste management systems in India and in Indonesia, and the model is designed to be refined as more up-to-date data becomes available. The Circulate Initiative is currently exploring plans to expand the tool to include more countries in Southeast Asia to enable decision-makers across the region to have access to locally relevant data that more accurately recognizes the impacts of improving plastic waste management.

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[1] Ellen Macarthur Foundation, 2019, *Completing the Picture - How the Circular Economy Tackles Climate Change*

To access the new PLACES tool, please head to: thecirculateinitiative.org/ghg-calculator.

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About The Circulate Initiative

The Circulate Initiative is a non-profit organization committed to solving the ocean plastic pollution challenge by supporting the incubation of circular, inclusive and investible waste management and recycling systems and generating insights that accelerate investment and scale.

Find out more: thecirculateinitiative.org/

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