



India – Australia Industry and Research Collaboration for Reducing Plastic Waste

The 'India – Australia Industry and Research Collaboration for Reducing Plastic Waste' project conducted a high-level round-table discussion on 9 December 2021, to share early findings of the ongoing scientific study that aims to support India's national commitment to reduce plastic waste, and co-develop a road map for transition to a circular economy in the plastics sector.

Participants at the high-level round-table included representatives from relevant government departments, industry, and policy think tanks active in this sector. The purpose was to promote the early findings of the study to form partnerships to fulfill the national objective of zero plastic waste in India. It is hoped that through collating insights from the round-table, dialogue is initiated to create long-term plastic management solutions, as well as new technology and business models to aid in the innovation of plastic supply chains in India.

The speakers for the event included Dr. Heinz. Schandl and Dr. Paul. Bertsch (Science Director, CSIRO-Australia), Shri. J.B. Ravinder, Joint Adviser, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs), Government of India, Dr. Rita Dhodapkar, Principal Technical Officer, Science Secretary, CSIR-NEERI, Government of India, Mr. Atul Bagai, Country Programme Manager, United Nations Environment Programme, Dr. D. Dutta, CSIR-NEERI, Ms. Gitika Goswami, AVP & Lead, Policy Research and Planning, Development Alternatives Group, Dr. Ashok Khosla (Chairperson, Development Alternatives Group) among others.

The discussions covered the dimensions :

- Role of Circular Economy
- Comprehensive knowledge base of plastics material flows
- Key data availability challenges along the plastic value chain
- Current policies and Initiatives in plastic waste management

One of the main issues that emerged during the discussions was that the plastic production has increased tremendously because of its customer-oriented properties. There are also some gaps in the data collection, lack of technical knowledge, and lack of policies targeting the reuse and repair. However long- and short-term impacts on environment need to be calculated and also Interventions are required that are acceptable by the society and simultaneously reduces the impact on environment.

In addition, it was agreed by all members to get Information on the present status of plastic waste management with respect to the status of EPR, circular economy practices, end life of plastics, other policy regulations; needs to be detailed first and also clear-cut ideas on up-cycling of plastic waste. Few Policies needs to be aligned with the kind of development of technology and innovations available and currently, there is only permission to convert plastics into fibre. Science, industry, and strong policy support need to come together. Life cycle assessment and circular economy roadmap are significant for any technological solution.