

Concept Note
2026 ASEAN Circular Economy Forum (ACEF)
8 October 2026
(Side Event, following the ACEF 2026 Main Forum on 5-6 October)
Best Practices on the Movement of Circular Economy Products in ASEAN and Beyond:
Recommendations for Facilitating Trade under the Upgraded ATIGA

Background:

Implemented since May 2010, the ASEAN Trade in Goods Agreement (ATIGA) is the cornerstone framework for intra-ASEAN trade, tariff liberalisation, and trade facilitation. Signed by all ten ASEAN Member States on 1 December 2009, the Upgraded ATIGA introduces new provisions on remanufactured goods, trade and environment, and other forward-looking areas, and is targeted for ratification and entry into force by end of 2026. Notably, it defines “remanufactured good” and “recovered material” for the first time (Article 2.15) and recognises circular economy (CE) as a cooperation area under the Trade and Environment Chapter. However, under Article 2.15 (Remanufactured Goods), the obligation not to restrict the importation of remanufactured goods applies immediately only to Brunei, Malaysia, and Singapore; the remaining seven Member States (Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand, and Viet Nam) will instead enter into discussions on its application within five to seven years of entry into force, with a view to concluding these within two years thereafter. Targeted capacity-building and dialogue will therefore be needed to help bring these seven AMS toward full implementation. The Upgraded ATIGA also provides, under Article 17.5 (General Review), that CE-related issues will be taken up as part of the Agreement’s general review five years after entry into force, to be concluded within three years. This event is intended as an early, evidence-building step ahead of that review. Despite these new provisions, businesses trading in remanufactured goods, refurbished goods, and recovered materials continue to face uncertainty around classification, documentation, and compliance requirements.

Addressing these challenges as well as improving public-private dialogue in ASEAN and with Germany, the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development commissioned GIZ to implement the “Promotion of Trade-related Aspects for Circular Economy in ASEAN” (TRACE) project in close collaboration with the ASEAN Secretariat (ASEC) Trade Facilitation Division (TFD) and aligned ASEAN bodies, the event aims to generate actionable recommendations that will feed directly into ASEAN’s regional CE policy agenda.

To bridge the gap between policy and practice, TRACE in cooperation with ASEC-TFD will conduct the side event “Best Practices on the Movement of Circular Economy Products in ASEAN and Beyond: Recommendations for Facilitating Trade under the Upgraded ATIGA” back-to-back with the 2026 ACEF in Bangkok under the theme “Circular Value Chains: Redesigning ASEAN Industry for a Resource-Finite Era”. Building up on Session 1 of the ACEF 2026 Main Forum (“Regional Policy Architecture”), which introduces the role of ATIGA in shaping circular trade, this event provides the corresponding technical deep dive, structured around three interconnected pillars:

1. private sector’s interest to invest more in the CE products in some sectors such as electronics, machinery, heavy equipment, automotives, in ASEAN.
2. classification, documentation, warranties, intellectual property rights (IPR), standards, and rules of origin for remanufactured goods and recovered materials under the Upgraded ATIGA; and for other CE products such as refurbished, reused, repaired goods, etc.
3. how trade facilitation and compliance systems, including risk-based verification and digital trade tools — can become active enablers of circular trade.

Full details on each pillar are set out under Key Discussion Areas below.

Objectives:

- Provide an overview of global and regional trends and best practices related to the movement of circular economy (CE) products.
- Enhance the understanding of AMS on CE products.
- Enhance public-private policy dialogue on CE products in ASEAN.
- Discuss opportunities, challenges, and recommendations for facilitating the movement of CE products in ASEAN
- Provide inputs for the discussion on the inclusion of CE elements into the 2nd Upgrade of the ATIGA

Workshop/Outreach Programmes:

1. Co-organizer:

The event will be co-organized by ASEC-TFD and GIZ TRACE as a side event of the 2026 ACEF, coordinated with ACSDSD/ACESP as ACEF's lead organiser.

2. Funding:

Funding will be provided through GIZ TRACE.

3. Schedule:

A full-day side event held on 8 October 2026, on the sidelines of the 2026 ACEF Main Forum (5–8 October 2026) in Bangkok.

4. Format:

In-person, full-day event structured around three thematic pillar sessions — each combining a short presentation, a moderated panel discussion, and open floor dialogue. The event will be held at the same venue as the ACEF 2026 Main Forum in Bangkok (venue to be confirmed by ACSDSD).

Target Participants:

The workshop is expected to gather participants from ASEAN Member States and relevant stakeholders during ACEF 2026 in Bangkok.

Participants will include both public and private sector stakeholders, such as:

1. Private Sector
 - a. Business associations and chambers of commerce.
 - b. Representatives of businesses involved in remanufacturing, recycling, refurbishment, and circular supply chains.
2. Public Sector
 - a. Representatives from CCA, ATF-JCC, and relevant agencies
3. Further Participants
 - a. International organisations.
 - b. Academic and research institutions.
 - c. Civil society organisations and development partners.

Speakers:

Tentative speakers may include representatives from:

- ASEC-TFD.
- ASEAN Member States.
- Academic and research institutions.
- International Organizations
- Private sector and industry associations.
- Relevant Dialogue Partners' ministries and associations (the EU, Japan, US, Korea, Australia, etc.,)
- Civil society organisations and development partners.

ANNEX 1:

Tentative Agenda/Programme

(Additional topics may be added by relevant pillar leads depending on session needs and priorities. The agenda/programme will be further discussed by ASEC, GIZ, and AMS for finalisation before the scheduled workshop.)

Time (GMT+7)	Activities	Speakers
08:30–09:00 (30 min)	Registration & Welcome Coffee	
09:00–09:30 (30 min)	Opening Plenary - Scene-setting: ATIGA, ACEF 2026 priorities, and the three pillars of the day - Opening Remarks by ASEC TFD - Remarks by GIZ TRACE Team	
09:20–10:30 (1 hr)	Session 1: The Private Sector Case Understanding business realities, investment opportunities, and challenges in cross-border trade of circular economy (CE) products . - Business and investment models for CE products in ASEAN and in the world - Types of CE products traded in the region and their role in promoting circular value chains, decarbonisation, sustainable development, resilient supply chains, job creation, cost/energy savings, and revenue generation. - Challenges and opportunities for the private sector in trading remanufactured, refurbished, used, repaired, and recovered goods (policy, regulatory, and operational barriers). - Real-world documentation, compliance, and operational experiences from CE businesses. - Best practices, and recommendations from the private sector that can be discussed later in the 2nd Upgrade of the ATIGA.	TBC
10:30–10:45 (15 min)	Question and Answer – Session 1	
10:45–11:05 (20 min)	Coffee Break	

Time (GMT+7)	Activities	Speakers
11:05–12:05 (1 hr)	Session 2: Identifying Remanufactured Goods and other CE Products Documentation and clear distinctions between different types of CE products across ASEAN Member States and in the world to reduce compliance uncertainty. - Concepts of CE products, including valuable waste, used goods, refurbished goods, remanufactured goods, etc. - From regulatory and business perspectives, identifying and recognising CE products in trade, including clear distinction between remanufactured goods and types of CE products - Business flows, standards, labelling, and documentation required for each category. - Rules of origin, IP rights, warranties, and customs procedures for remanufactured goods and other CE products. - Best practices in classification, identification, and implementation of CE products under national and international frameworks. - Methodologies for calculating recovered material content for rules of origin purposes. - Aligning interpretation and implementation across ASEAN Member States to reduce compliance uncertainty.	TBC
12:05–12:20 (15 min)	Question and Answer – Session 2	
12:20–13:35 (1 hr 15 min)	Lunch Break	

Time (GMT+7)	Activities	Speakers
13:35–14:35 (1 hr)	Session 3: Trade Facilitation in Practice Exploring barriers that preventing the movement of CE products in the world and in the ASEAN region; practical and scalable solutions that facilitate the movement of CE products in ASEAN with lessons learnt from other regions. - Overview of relevant international conventions and examples of CE-related provisions in FTAs - Implementing trade and investment policy instruments that can be leveraged to foster trade in CE products - Role of trade, standards, IPR, customs and other authorities in facilitating the movement of remanufactured goods and other CE products. - Measures and initiatives to facilitate the movement of CE products. . - Best practices in implementing trade policy instruments to facilitate the movement of CE products - challenges, opportunities, and recommendations for ASEAN to adopt provisions related to the movement of CE products, whilst addressing environmental and other concerns.	TBC
14:35–14:50 (15 min)	Question and Answer – Session 3	
14:50–15:10 (20 min)	Coffee Break	
15:10–16:30 (1 hr 20 min)	Closing Plenary - Synthesis, recommendations, and next steps across all three pillars - Consolidated set of actionable recommendations on the cross-border movement of CE products (valuable waste, remanufactured, refurbished, and used goods) to feed into TRACE workplan and ATIGA implementation discussions	Facilitator-led synthesis Closing remarks by ASEC and GIZ TRACE