

CONTEXTUALIZING THE CIRCULAR FOR ACTION:

A Few Perspectives from Asian Countries



Hari Srinivas

*Professor of Global Environmental Policy
Kwansei Gakuin University
Kobe, Japan*

This presentation looks at the conceptual basis for implementing a circular economy. It looks at the definitions and convergence of existing sustainability terms and concepts within the broader umbrella of a circular economy, including, for example, 3Rs, sustainable consumption and production, and lifecycle analysis. Covering the basic principles of a circular economy, the presentation looks beyond just waste management and focusses on material efficiency as a critical element of circularity.

Operationalizing the circular economy concept requires us to look at sustainable development – consumption and production – from a cyclical perspective. Ultimately, developing and implementing multi-stakeholder policies for a CE should help us achieve sustainability, targeting all aspects of our everyday lifestyles.

Nowhere is this more true than the nexus between food, energy, water and waste – four key resources, collectively called the “FEWW Nexus”, that help us define and better understand much of our daily lifestyles and consequent environmental, social and economic problems that they generate. These four issues are prime examples of problems that will help us in operationalizing a “circular” economy.

CE policy objectives still largely concentrate on the output side of resource flows (i.e. waste, emissions, and pollution) while the input side is either completely overlooked or addressed through voluntary targets, scattered across policies. The presentation looks to transforming the CE concept to a working set of policies at the local level requires a deeper understanding of the following three “policy patterns” – (1) The Governance Pattern, covering the global-national-local levels. What kinds of CE policies and strategies will be needed at the global, national (and provincial) and local levels? (2) The Stakeholder Pattern, covering governments-private sector-civil society entities. What kinds of CE policies will have to be developed and implemented by/for governments, private sector entities, and civil society entities, and (3) The Actions Pattern, covering governance-education-technology issues. What kinds of CE policies will have to be developed for governance (laws, rules and regulations), education (including skills development, awareness raising, and capacity building, and technology. The presentation brings the three patterns together by proposing a “GET” Matrix.

