



SUMMARY REPORT

SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY FORUM

Towards a Circular Economy: Building a Resilient and Sustainable Brunei

Monday, 28 October 2024



Prepared By:



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The Brunei Sustainable Economy Forum 2024 concentrated on advancing Brunei's circular economy initiatives while aligning them with the nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Organised by the ASEAN and APEC Business Advisory Councils of Brunei in collaboration with the Ministry of Finance and Economy, the forum gathered leaders from government, industry, and academia to strategise for sustainable economic transformation.

Key Highlights

The forum emphasised Brunei's commitment to embedding sustainability into its economic framework. In his keynote address, Minister of Primary Resources and Tourism, Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Dr Hj Abdul Manaf bin Hj Metussin, highlighted collaborative approaches and innovation as central to achieving a resilient circular economy.

Speakers such as Dr. Rene Van Berkel introduced the ASEAN Circular Economy Business Alliance, promoting regional collaboration. Professor Scott Valentine provided a masterclass offering strategic insights for Brunei's economic diversification, leveraging circular economy principles. Arfan Arlanda, CEO of Jejakin, presented technological solutions for enhancing sustainability and meeting regulatory standards.

The Role of the Private Sector

The private sector's role in Brunei's circular economy transition was a recurring theme. Industry leaders shared insights into embedding sustainable practices, with Tan Zhi Ying of the UN Global Compact Network Malaysia & Brunei offering a roadmap for businesses to align with global sustainability standards.

The showcase of Ocean Week Brunei, presented by Poni Group, celebrated successful public-private partnerships. Highlights included achievements from the ASEAN Business Awards and the ASEAN Blue Innovation Challenge, demonstrating the value of collaboration in sustainability initiatives.

Outcomes and Call to Action

The forum concluded with a strong call to action for collective stakeholder involvement. Outcomes included commitments to leveraging technology and innovation, fostering public-private collaboration, and adopting regional frameworks for sustainable growth. These efforts aim to solidify Brunei's leadership in sustainability while advancing its circular economy ambitions.

The Brunei Sustainable Economy Forum 2024 underscored the critical importance of shared responsibility and innovation, setting the stage for future advancements in sustainability.

[Click Here To Watch Highlight Video.](#)



WELCOME REMARKS



Haslina Taib

Chair of the ASEAN Business Advisory Council Brunei and CEO of Dynamik Technologies

Haslina Taib, Chair of ASEAN Business Advisory Council (BAC) Brunei and CEO of Dynamik Technologies, delivered the welcome remarks at the Brunei Sustainable Economy Forum 2024. She emphasised the critical importance of sustainability in fostering Brunei's economic growth and resilience, framing the forum as a pivotal platform for collaboration and innovation.

Advancing the Circular Economy

In her address, Haslina outlined the forum's focus on transitioning to a circular economy as a cornerstone of sustainable development. She underscored the need for Brunei to adopt strategies that minimise waste, optimise resources, and create a regenerative economic system. This approach, she noted, aligns with global and regional sustainability goals, particularly those of ASEAN and Wawasan 2035.

Regional Collaboration for Carbon Markets

Highlighting ASEAN BAC Brunei's initiatives, Haslina stressed the importance of regional cooperation in carbon management. She encouraged exploration of an ASEAN Carbon Market as a means of addressing climate change while fostering economic opportunities. Drawing inspiration from successful regional examples, she urged stakeholders to position Brunei as a key player in this transformative initiative.

Supporting Food Security Through Agricultural Partnerships

Haslina spotlighted ASEAN BAC's B2B Connect Initiative for Agriculture, which strengthens cross-border agricultural partnerships to promote food security and sustainability. She applauded efforts to align with the ASEAN Food Security Alliance (AFSA) and shared examples of collaboration, including Brunei's recent agreements with regional partners to enhance agricultural resilience.

Empowering MSMEs for Sustainable Growth

The remarks included a call for greater support for MSMEs, particularly in adopting sustainability reporting practices through the ASEAN Sustainability Reporting Advocacy Collaboration. Haslina highlighted the importance of reducing reporting complexities and encouraged Bruneian businesses to embrace sustainable practices to remain competitive in the evolving global market.

A Call to Action

Concluding her remarks, Haslina urged attendees to adopt innovative approaches and strengthen partnerships to address sustainability challenges. She emphasised the role of positive mindsets and collective action in achieving the shared vision of a sustainable, inclusive, and resilient Brunei.

Haslina's opening remarks set the stage for insightful discussions and collaborative action, reinforcing sustainability as the guiding principle for Brunei's economic and environmental future.



WELCOME REMARKS



Pengiran Aki Ismasufian bin Pengiran Haji Ibrahim

*Chair of the APEC Business Advisory Council Brunei (ABAC) and
CEO of Standard Chartered Bank Brunei*



Pengiran Aki Ismasufian bin Pengiran Haji Ibrahim opened the Brunei Sustainable Economy Forum 2024 with a warm welcome to all participants. He acknowledged the importance of the forum as a platform for advancing Brunei's economic diversification efforts and achieving a sustainable future through a circular economy.

Transitioning to a Circular Economy

Pengiran Aki highlighted the significance of transitioning to a circular economy as a pathway to economic resilience. This approach not only ensures environmental sustainability but also fosters innovation and collaboration. He emphasised the need for smart policies to support this transformation and preserve resources for future generations.

Urgency for Sustainable Development

Referencing the UN Emissions Gap Report 2024, Pengiran Aki underscored the global urgency for intensified climate action. He called for stronger partnerships between the public and private sectors to prioritise sustainable development, reduce emissions, and address critical climate targets.

Key Insights on Food Security

Reflecting on discussions at the Food Security Ministerial Meeting, he shared findings from the Food Security Business Perspectives Interview Series. The report stressed the role of technological innovation and trust-based partnerships in ensuring food sustainability. He also identified a need for increased awareness of APEC's food security initiatives among private enterprises, advocating for policy stability and modern regulatory standards to encourage market growth.

Call to Action

Pengiran Aki encouraged participants to engage boldly in discussions and collaborate openly to achieve a greener, more resilient future for Brunei. He thanked the sponsors and partners for their support in making the forum a success, emphasising the collective effort required to shape the nation's sustainable economic future.

Acknowledgements

The session concluded with gratitude extended to key stakeholders, including corporate sponsors, academic institutions, and media partners, for their contributions to the forum's success.





Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Dr Haji Abdul Manaf bin Hj Metussin

Minister of Primary Resources and Tourism

The Sustainable Economy Forum 2024 opened with a keynote address by Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Dr Haji Abdul Manaf bin Haji Metussin, focusing on the theme, “Towards a Circular Economy: Building a Resilient and Sustainable Brunei.” The Minister outlined the importance of adopting circular economy principles to ensure sustainable growth, resource efficiency, and resilience against global economic challenges.

Understanding Circular Economy

The Minister emphasised the transformative potential of the circular economy, which minimises waste and maximises resource efficiency. Citing global examples, such as the European Union’s Circular Economy Action Plan, he underscored the need for Brunei to embrace similar practices to foster innovation, create jobs, and address challenges such as reliance on non-renewable energy and climate change.

Key Initiatives in Brunei

The Ministry of Primary Resources and Tourism has spearheaded several initiatives aligned with circular economy principles:

- **Agriculture and Fisheries:** Projects include regenerative agriculture to enhance soil health, greenhouse precision farming for crop optimisation, and aquaponics systems combining fish farming and hydroponics. These methods increase yields, reduce waste, and support biodiversity.
- **Marine and Aquaculture Conservation:** Efforts such as the Marine Protected Areas, Rigs-to-Reef programme, and habitat restoration projects aim to preserve marine ecosystems while promoting sustainable fishing practices.
- **Forestry and Land Management:** Sustainable forestry practices include afforestation, reforestation, and the “Brunei Wood Product Logo” initiative to ensure sustainable timber production. More than 180,000 trees have been planted under the Brunei National Climate Change Policy.
- **Tourism:** Regenerative tourism is being developed to integrate environmental conservation with community-based cultural experiences, such as the Labi and Tutong Trails, which showcase local traditions while promoting eco-tourism.

Private Sector and Policy Support

The Minister highlighted the critical role of the private sector in driving sustainability through innovative business models, take-back schemes, and green technologies. Government policies, waste management strategies, and public education are fostering an ecosystem conducive to achieving circular economic goals.

Conclusion

Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Dr Haji Abdul Manaf concluded by urging collective efforts from all stakeholders to foster innovation, protect the environment, and build a resilient, sustainable Brunei. He reaffirmed Brunei’s commitment to aligning its policies with global sustainability standards, ensuring a positive trajectory toward a circular economy.

Closing Remarks

The keynote address set the stage for fruitful discussions during the forum, highlighting actionable strategies to transition Brunei into a leading example of sustainable development and circular economic practices.



PRESENTATION

The ASEAN Circular Economy and the ASEAN Circular Economy Business Alliance



Dr. Rene Van Berkel

Co-Founder ASEAN Circular Economy Business Alliance

Dr. Rene Van Berkel provided an insightful overview of the circular economy's potential to transform traditional resource utilisation in ASEAN. By shifting from a linear "take-make-waste" model to a circular approach, ASEAN countries can enhance resource efficiency, reduce waste, and address environmental challenges while supporting sustainable growth.

Purpose of the ASEAN Circular Economy Business Alliance (ACEBA)
The presentation introduced ACEBA as a platform for fostering responsible business practices in the region. ACEBA is committed to driving leadership and actionable solutions among ASEAN businesses to adopt and implement circular economy principles effectively.

Key objectives of ACEBA include:

- Promoting Shared Understanding:** Raising awareness of the circular economy's benefits among businesses and stakeholders.
- Encouraging Collaboration:** Creating partnerships to accelerate the adoption of circular models.
- Providing Practical Tools:** Developing resources and guidelines to operationalise circular economy practices.



Key Benefits of the Circular Economy in ASEAN

Dr. Van Berkel highlighted the economic, social, and environmental advantages of adopting circular strategies, including:

- Economic Resilience:** Reducing reliance on virgin materials and minimising costs through resource recovery.
- Environmental Gains:** Lowering carbon emissions, conserving biodiversity, and reducing waste.
- Social Impact:** Supporting local communities through innovative recycling initiatives and sustainable job creation.

Examples of Circular Economy Practices

The presentation featured case studies demonstrating successful circular economy initiatives in ASEAN:

- Conversion of agricultural waste into biochar-based fertilisers.
- Recycling plastics into furniture and decorative products for local markets.
- Incorporating recycled materials such as polyester into textiles manufacturing.

Call to Action

Dr. Van Berkel concluded by urging businesses, policymakers, and stakeholders to collaborate in advancing circular economy practices. He emphasised the importance of:

- Leading by example to inspire broader adoption.
- Developing and sharing innovations that demonstrate the economic viability of circular models.
- Ensuring continuous engagement and reporting to sustain momentum.

The presentation served as a powerful call to action, positioning the ASEAN Circular Economy Business Alliance as a key driver for regional sustainability and economic resilience.

How the Circular Economy is a Solution to Brunei's Economic Development Needs



Professor Scott Valentine

Professor of Entrepreneurship and Circular Economy, Universiti Brunei Darussalam and Author of the Feasibility Study on Opportunities for BIMP-EAGA to Capitalize on the Circular Economy

The masterclass, led by Professor Scott Valentine, explored the transformative potential of the circular economy in addressing Brunei's economic development needs. Focusing on resource efficiency, waste reduction, and sustainable business practices, the session aligned the circular economy framework with Brunei's National Development Plans (NDPs) and Wawasan 2035.

Brunei's Economic Challenges

Brunei's heavy reliance on oil and gas, contributing 68% of its GDP, creates vulnerability to volatile energy markets. Professor Valentine highlighted the urgent need for economic diversification and fiscal stability, noting the risks to Brunei's Sovereign Wealth Fund and future economic resilience. A transition to a circular economy was presented as a pragmatic and innovative solution.

Circular Economy in Key Sectors

Professor Valentine emphasised how circular economy practices can be applied across various sectors in Brunei:

1. **Oil and Gas:** Implementing recycling programs for waste oil and developing plastic manufacturing innovations.
2. **Food and Beverage:** Streamlining production processes and promoting waste reduction in catering and restaurant operations.
3. **ICT and Emerging Businesses:** Encouraging repair services, rental models, and advanced recycling facilities to promote entrepreneurship.
4. **Tourism and Construction:** Introducing waste minimisation strategies in construction and fostering sustainable tourism initiatives.

Strategic Recommendations for Brunei

The session offered actionable recommendations to integrate circular economy principles into Brunei's economic strategy:

- Simplifying regulatory frameworks to attract foreign and local investments.
- Creating a national department dedicated to circular economy planning and policy implementation.
- Enhancing material recycling systems and establishing material trading platforms.
- Developing public procurement policies that prioritise sustainable practices.

- Promoting capacity-building programs for entrepreneurs and SMEs.
- Encouraging cross-sector collaboration to drive innovation and technological adoption.

Expected Outcomes

Professor Valentine outlined the benefits of a circular economy for Brunei:

- Economic diversification and reduced dependency on fossil fuels.
- Strengthened local businesses and job creation through sustainable entrepreneurship.
- Enhanced environmental sustainability and alignment with global green initiatives.
- Improved fiscal stability and resilience to economic shocks.

Conclusion

The masterclass concluded with a call to action for Brunei to adopt circular economy strategies as a cornerstone of its economic diversification efforts. By embracing these principles, Brunei can achieve sustainable growth, reduce environmental impact, and secure its economic future while contributing to Wawasan 2035.



Sustainability Practice: A How To Guide for companies and their sustainability journey



Tan Zhi Ying

Head of Member Relations

UN Global Compact for Malaysia and Brunei

Tan Zhi Ying delivered an insightful presentation on incorporating sustainability into corporate strategies. Representing the UN Global Compact Network Malaysia & Brunei (UNGCMYB), she introduced a six-step framework to guide companies on their sustainability journey. UNGCMYB, launched in 2019, is part of the world's largest corporate sustainability initiative, encompassing over 22,000 businesses worldwide.

The Importance of Sustainability

The presentation emphasised the growing relevance of sustainability in business. Consumers, investors, and employees are increasingly prioritising environmental, social, and governance (ESG) criteria. For instance, 85% of investors consider ESG factors crucial in decision-making, while 83% of consumers prefer companies actively shaping sustainable practices. Sustainability is no longer optional but a “licence to operate,” aligning with global regulatory trends.

The Six-Step Sustainability Framework

1. **Learn:** Understand sustainability concepts and their relevance to business operations. Access resources such as the UNGC Academy and peer learning sessions to build internal capacity.
2. **Assess:** Evaluate current sustainability performance and identify gaps using ESG criteria and digital tools like dashboards.
3. **Engage:** Involve stakeholders such as customers, employees, and investors to address key concerns and prioritise material issues.
4. **Commit:** Publicly align with international frameworks like the UNGC 10 Principles to demonstrate accountability and purpose.
5. **Measure:** Set time-bound, specific targets and monitor progress with credible ESG data.
6. **Report:** Share achievements and targets transparently through effective communication channels, enhancing stakeholder trust.

Business Benefits of Sustainability

Adopting sustainability practices improves cost efficiency, competitiveness, and profitability. Examples included better supply chain management, enhanced consumer trust, and increased access to sustainable investments. Companies integrating sustainability into their strategies also experience long-term resilience and opportunities for innovation.

Call to Action

Tan concluded by urging businesses to embrace sustainability as a core part of their operations. Through partnerships, continuous learning, and commitment to global standards, companies can contribute meaningfully to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) while achieving commercial success.





Arfan Arlanda

Chief Executive Officer
Jejakin

Arfan Arlanda, CEO of Jejakin, delivered an insightful presentation on how companies can integrate sustainability into their operations effectively. The presentation highlighted actionable strategies for businesses to embark on their sustainability journey, aligning their efforts with global frameworks like the Paris Agreement. Jejakin, as a carbon management platform, showcased its comprehensive solutions for managing and mitigating carbon emissions, supporting organisations in meeting sustainability targets.

Key Points

The Urgency of Action

The Paris Agreement, adopted in 2015, serves as a global framework for combating climate change. Brunei's commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 20% by 2030 demonstrates the critical need for corporate action.

Jejakin's Sustainability Solutions

- **CarbonIQ:** A platform that visualises emissions sources across scopes and provides data-driven insights to guide efficient Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) strategies.
- **CarbonSpace:** Offers businesses opportunities to engage in carbon reduction initiatives such as renewable energy projects, reforestation, and carbon credit trading.
- **CarbonAtlas:** Utilises digital monitoring and reporting systems (DMRV) to ensure transparency and quality in reforestation and carbon projects.

Practical Tools for Carbon Management

Jejakin employs advanced technology, including IoT sensors, drones, and machine learning, to deliver precise environmental data. These tools enable organisations to measure biodiversity, air and soil quality, and water infiltration rates effectively.

Community Collaboration

Jejakin emphasises partnerships with local communities to ensure sustainable practices and shared benefits. These collaborations enhance livelihoods and promote environmental stewardship.

Outcome

Arfan's presentation underscored the need for organisations to adopt holistic carbon management practices. Jejakin's solutions not only simplify carbon accounting but also empower businesses to contribute to global climate goals while enhancing their operational efficiency and reputation. The session provided attendees with a clear roadmap to integrate sustainability into their business models and take actionable steps towards a greener future.



The Business View: How Can Brunei's Private Sector Get Involved?



This panel explored how Brunei's business community can adopt sustainability and circular economy practices, focusing on practical approaches, challenges, and opportunities for organisations of varying sizes.

Key Insights

The Role of Large Corporations

- Melissa Zainal Abidin of Brunei LNG highlighted the importance of integrating sustainability into core operations. Examples included waste heat recovery projects and the ongoing challenge of aligning profitability with sustainability goals. She emphasised that education and awareness among employees are crucial to fostering a culture of sustainability.
- Sufian Suyoi of TotalEnergies stressed the value of regulatory frameworks, which have driven sustainable practices in multinational corporations. TotalEnergies collaborates with the UN Global Compact to educate suppliers on sustainability standards, enhancing the entire supply chain's environmental performance.

Overcoming SME Challenges

Tan Zhi Ying outlined how SMEs often face resource and financial constraints that hinder sustainability adoption. She introduced tools like digital sustainability assessments and supply chain collaborations to support SMEs in embedding sustainable practices. Financial incentives, such as lower interest rates, can motivate smaller businesses to participate.

The Value of Collaboration

Dr. Rene Van Berkel noted the critical role of family-owned businesses in driving change, given their responsibility towards communities. He emphasised that showcasing successful local business cases could inspire broader adoption of circular economy practices across ASEAN.

Grassroots and Community Engagement

Arfan Arlanda described the importance of including harder-to-reach communities in sustainability initiatives. Through partnerships with local NGOs, his organisation trains communities to manage environmental projects like reforestation, benefiting both biodiversity and local livelihoods.

Moderator:

Allen Lai, Managing Director of Confer Sdn Bhd

Panelists:

- **Dr. Rene Van Berkel**, Co-Founder ASEAN Circular Economy Business Alliance
- **Tan Zhi Ying**, Head of Member Relations, UN Global Compact for Malaysia and Brunei
- **Sufian Suyoi**, Head of Contracts and Procurement of TotalEnergies EP (Brunei) B.V.
- **Arfan Arlanda**, CEO, Jejakin
- **Melissa Zainal Abidin**, Finance Manager of Brunei LNG Sdn Bhd

Balancing Sustainability and Profitability

Panelists agreed on the need to align sustainability initiatives with long-term profitability. While initial investments can be high, they often yield long-term savings and new business opportunities. Melissa and Tan cited examples of SMEs that achieved profitability through sustainable practices after an initial adjustment period.

Conclusion

The discussion underscored the need for collaborative efforts between large corporations, SMEs, and grassroots communities to achieve sustainability goals. Awareness, education, and strategic investments are key to overcoming challenges and unlocking opportunities. Brunei's private sector has significant potential to lead in sustainable practices, provided it leverages partnerships, frameworks, and innovative tools.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **Collaboration Matters:** Partnerships among corporations, SMEs, and communities drive sustainability effectively.
- **SME Support:** Tools like digital assessments and incentives help smaller businesses adopt sustainable practices.
- **Long-term Gains:** Sustainability investments lead to cost savings, profitability, and new opportunities.



Tahsin Wong Abdullah

*Chief Executive Officer
Poni Group*

Anna Aziz

*Chief Business Officer
Poni Group*

The presentation by Poni Group highlighted the innovative and collaborative approach of Ocean Week Brunei, an initiative designed to address marine conservation challenges. The program aims to restore Brunei's coral reefs, foster environmental stewardship, and promote a whole-of-nation approach to sustainability by involving government, private sectors, schools, and NGOs.

Marine Conservation Initiatives

The speakers shared insights on the current state of Brunei's coral reefs, pointing out issues such as bleaching, damage from human activities, and a lack of comprehensive data. To address these challenges, Poni Group has launched impactful programs including the deployment of reef balls to create habitats and promote biodiversity. The group's efforts include over 7,000 youth-driven projects, cleanups, and coral propagation activities.

Education and Engagement

Poni Group focuses on involving diverse community members, including students and professionals. Hands-on initiatives, such as building reef balls on school campuses, enable non-divers to contribute meaningfully to marine conservation. These programs not only educate participants on marine science but also instil a sense of responsibility and purpose toward environmental protection.

Achievements and Ambitions

The initiative earned the prestigious ASEAN Business Award for CSR, recognising its collaborative approach and measurable impact. Looking forward, Poni Group plans to expand Ocean Week by involving Sabah and Sarawak, scaling up reef ball deployments, and fostering international partnerships. Long-term goals include attracting global conservation leaders to amplify Brunei's role in marine sustainability.



APPENDIX

Links to Resources

Link to Speakers Presentations

<https://tinyurl.com/SustainableEconomyForum2024>

Link to Event Photos

<https://flic.kr/s/aHBqjBPNDN>

Link to Video Highlight

<https://youtu.be/KxEk7U9tWD8>

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