

The Afeka Institute of Circular Engineering and Economy joins UNIDO in EU project to develop a circular plastic value chain in Israel

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Under the framework of the EU funded SwitchMed programme, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) launches the MED TEST III project in Israel to support the plastic value chain in Israel. For this project, the Afeka Institute of Circular Engineering and Economy has been selected to lead a consortium of experts, including the Manufacturers Association of Israel, and European partners to create a conducive and enabling environment for recycling plastic in Israel.

The plastic industry in Israel employs about 25,000 people in 400 companies, and with a turnover of 5 billion Euro per year, it contributes 5-6% to the national GDP. Out of the 1 million tons of plastic waste that Israel generates each year, merely 6% get recycled. Less than 50,000 tons of recycled plastic resins are annually produced in Israel, while the demand for recycled resins from the local plastic industry is estimated to be over 120,000 tons and is continually growing. Inadequate standards, guidelines and business linkages constrain the development of a value chain that can re-use and recycle plastic waste as a resource for the local plastic value chain. This pattern not only creates significant amounts of waste, but also results in an economic loss for the society.

“We know how to dispose plastic waste correctly, we know how to recycle it, but it is a complex value chain where every detail matter. As an international organization, UNIDO has the ability to provide technical assistance and to connect industries, policymakers and international leading experts to find efficient solutions that can strengthen effective systems and institutions and can turn the problem of plastic waste into an opportunity for Israel.” says Roberta De Palma, Chief Technical Advisor, UNIDO.

Beginning in 2020, the MED TEST III project in Israel will for the next year deliver actions that can improve the circularity of the plastic value chain in Israel, tackling its technological and systemic challenges. This includes the mapping the value chain for recycled plastics, developing guidelines for the design of recyclability of plastic packaging, and introducing standards and policy incentives that can encourage industries to develop better recycling practices for plastic packaging in Israel.

„We thank UNIDO for the vote of confidence and are happy to put the principles of the circular economy to practice in a fascinating domain, such as the plastic sector in Israel. The consortium delivers first-class expertise in the Israeli plastic and packaging sectors, as well as global expertise from the best companies and academics in this field. Afeka Institute of Circular Engineering and Economy (AICEE) will be working with all the plastic stakeholders to create opportunities and solutions that fit the Israeli circumstances while leaning on experience gained in the world, “says Avi Blau, head of the institute.

The SwitchMed Programme was launched in 2013 by the European Union to accelerate the shift to sustainable consumption and production patterns in the Southern Mediterranean region. The Programme aims to support productive, circular economies in the Mediterranean by changing how goods and services are consumed and produced so that human development is decoupled from environmental degradation.

Through policy development, demonstration activities and networking opportunities, SwitchMed support and connects policymakers, small and medium-sized enterprises, industries, start-ups and entrepreneurs. In this way, it helps to scale-up social and eco-innovations.

SwitchMed is funded by the European Union and is implemented under the lead of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), in cooperation with the Regional Activity Centre for Sustainable Consumption and Production of UNEP-MAP (SCP/RAC), and the United Nations Environment Programme Economy Division.

For more information visit SwitchMed.eu or contact:

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