Task Force 3: E-Waste in Singapore, shifting towards circular economy

Executive Summary

The e-waste issue is an emerging problem that is situated at the global, regional, domestic and individual levels. With the absence of an enforceable international law that exacerbates the transboundary illegal dumping of e-waste; the gaps in pre-existing infrastructure to manage the growing volume of e-waste; the inadequate disposal processes which introduces health hazards to those involved in disassembling e-waste; and the general lack of awareness and knowledge regarding e-waste management, e-waste is a problem worth tackling.

This Task Force aims to adopt the circular economy model as the overarching strategy to manage the e-waste problem in a sustainable fashion within the Singapore context. In a nutshell, a circular economy is one that turns end-of-life products into resources for new products, ultimately closing the production loop and designing waste out of the system.

With the circular economy model in mind, the report proposes three key policy recommendations to address the e-waste problem in Singapore. The three recommendations are designed to complement each other and aims to produce solutions for the long, medium and short terms respectively.

The first recommendation focuses on formal education in Singapore and aims to be a long-term policy solution to deliver curated knowledge on the environment and inculcate an environmentally conscious next generation of Singaporeans. This solution will include the inclusion of new content in the Character and Citizenship Education (CCE) syllabus and hands-on learning experiences, among others, and aims to heighten awareness regarding sustainable growth and development among students. The second recommendation is the Punggol Pilot Project that aims to synergize consumers, collectors, recyclers and businesses to address the e-waste problem in an integrated fashion. This medium-term policy solution proposes a seamless

e-waste collection hub, a Repair Café as well as promotes sustainable recycling businesses. The third recommendation intends to introduce non-profit Producer Responsibility Organisations (PROs) that serves as the short-term solution for the e-waste problem. The objective is for PROs to shoulder the responsibility of their member companies and meet their Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) obligations.

Taken together, these three policy recommendations aim to provide solutions that enable Singapore to effectively manage its e-waste as it transits into a "Smart Nation". Moving forward, the Task Force hopes that these policy recommendations will be successful in the Singapore context and be adopted in other parts of the world.