

## **Promoting Circular Economy in Vietnam's Plastic Industry**

### **Abstract**

Vietnam's rapid economic growth has led to a severe plastic pollution crisis, with its plastics industry operating on an unsustainable linear model characterized by low recycling rates and significant environmental leakage. This paper investigates the current state of Circular Economy (CE) adoption in Vietnam's plastic industry, analyzing the key factors and systemic barriers that impede its transition toward sustainability. The study employs a qualitative, inductive methodology, synthesizing secondary data from government reports, industry publications, and academic literature from 2018 to 2023. The findings reveal that CE implementation is nascent and fragmented. Progress is hindered by a combination of weak policy enforcement, particularly regarding Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR); significant financial and technological barriers for a sector dominated by small and medium-sized enterprises; and a persistent gap between consumer awareness and pro-environmental behavior. The analysis highlights a critical dependency on a low-tech, informal recycling sector and a failure of current incentives to drive systemic change. This research contributes a detailed, context-specific analysis of these interconnected barriers, moving beyond broad policy assessments. It provides actionable recommendations for government, industry associations, and businesses to foster a circular plastics ecosystem, offering a practical framework for other developing nations facing similar challenges.

**Keywords:** circular economy, plastic industry, Vietnam, recycling, sustainability