



## Sustainable Consumption in Asia

### *IGES' Current and Future Research*

**Magnus Bengtsson**

Project Manager

*Integrated Waste Management and Resource Efficiency*

## The Asia-Pacific Region Growth and Diversity



- The Asia-Pacific region is home to **4.1 billion people** – more than 60 per cent of the world's population
- More than **40%** are living in **urban** areas
- The region's real **GDP** nearly **doubled** between 1990 and 2007
- Copper consumption in China is expected to increase from 2 million tons (Mt) in 2000 to 5.6 Mt in 2020
- But still, **950 million people** are living in absolute **poverty** (<\$1.25/day)

## The double challenge of sustainable consumption in Asia:

- Lift the 950 million poor out of poverty – increased consumption needed for better living



What does it mean for people in Asia to live sustainably?



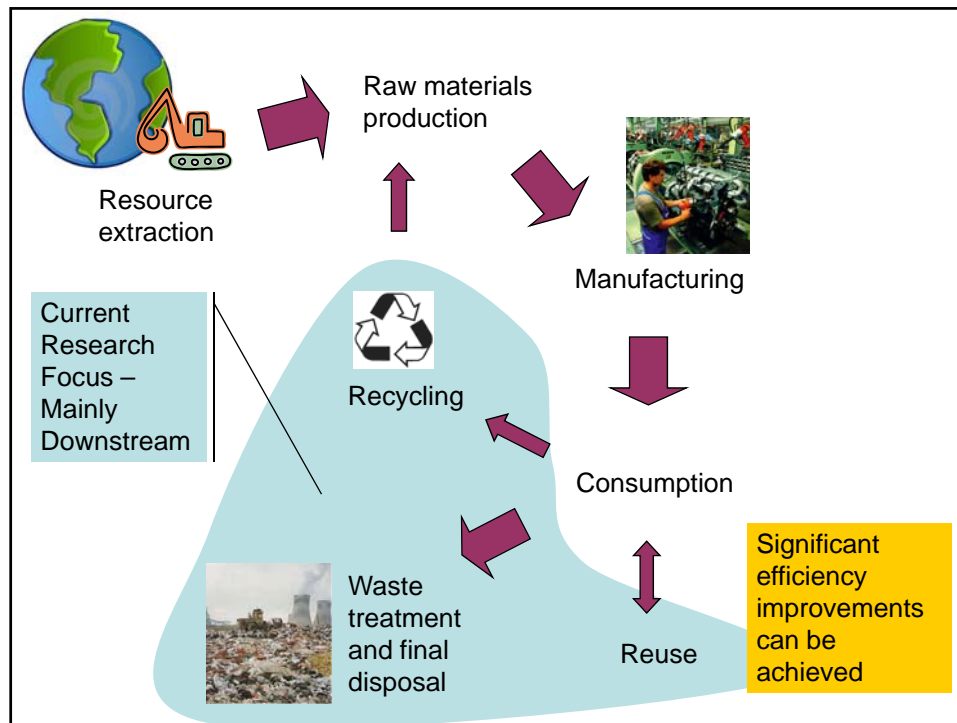
- Rethink our image



## Current Research Approach of the Project

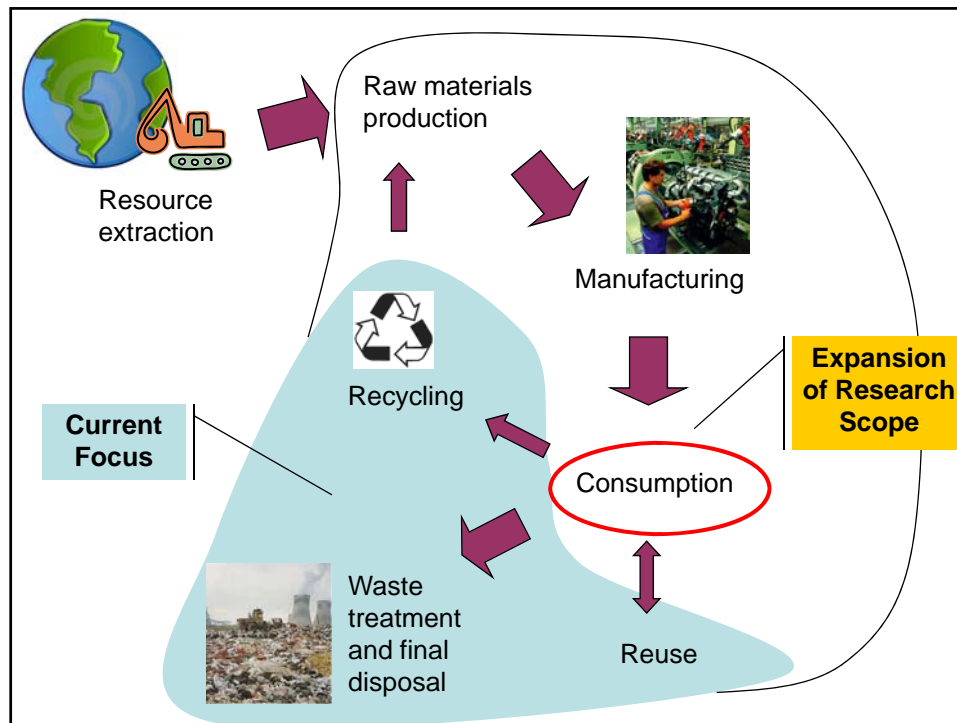
- Since 2007, IGES project on **Integrated Waste Management and Resource Efficiency** is conducting policy research on waste management and resource efficiency, mainly focusing on the **3Rs (reduce, reuse, recycle)**
- Enhanced **resource use efficiency** is a major objective





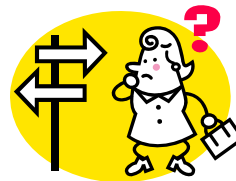
## Shifting Focus Upstream

- However, **more radical improvements** in resource efficiency **require fundamental changes in Consumption and Production**
- Furthermore, tackling the urgent “**double challenge**” of Sustainable Consumption in Asia **requires a focus directly on Consumption and Production**
- In line with this, from **2010**, this project will be re-launched as the **Sustainable Consumption and Production project**



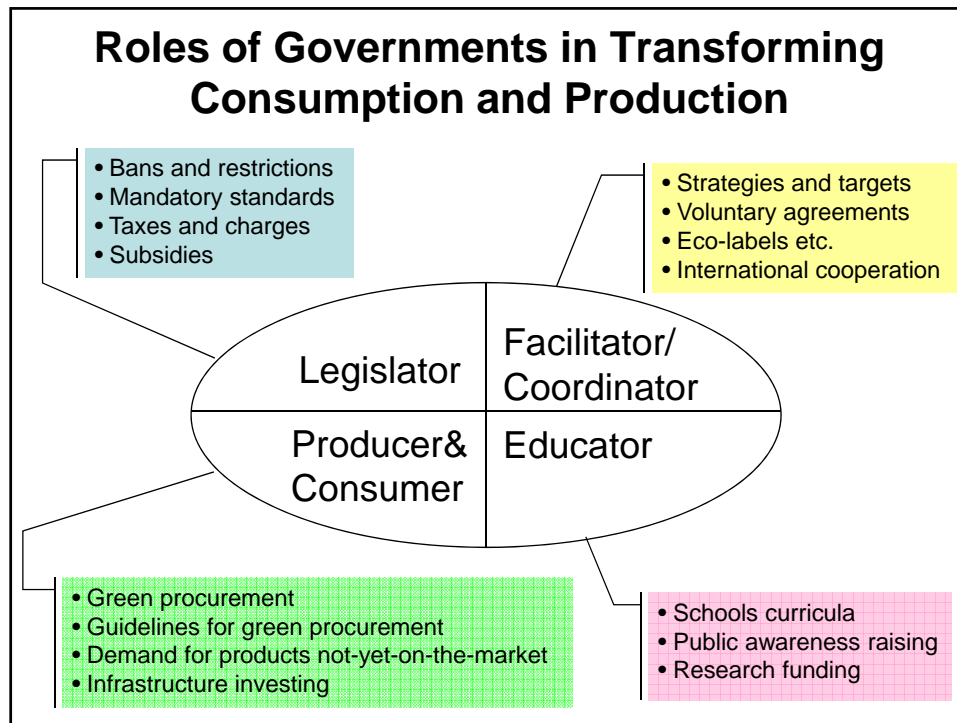
## Consumer Behaviour and Natural Resource Utilization

- **Buying decisions**
  - What to buy
  - How much/many
  - New or used
- **Use decisions**
  - Use pattern
  - Maintenance and cleaning
  - Replacement frequency
  - Repair
- **End-of-life decision**
  - Sell/donate as second-hand
  - Disposal route – recycling or waste treatment
  - Source separation of waste and recyclables



### Policy research questions:

- How do these decisions influence resource use?
- How much can individual consumers realistically achieve?
- How can public policies and actions taken by other actors, such as civil society groups, affect these decisions?



## Towards an Action-Oriented Research Agenda

- How can politicians and policy-makers be made more interested in SC and what policy approaches and tools are likely to be effective?
- How can the business community be engaged? How can SC be compatible with good business opportunities?
- How can consumers become aware of the political dimension of consumption and act as consumer-citizens?
- How much can well informed and motivated consumers achieve and to what extent are they locked into unsustainable structures? How can structural barriers be reduced?
- How can we find development pathways which allow people to express their individuality and to show their social status through other means than by consuming products that require high input of natural resources?
- What roles can researchers and organisations like IGES have in creating impetus for a transition towards SC?

Thank you for your attention!

## **IGES Third White Paper – to be published in June 2010**

**Theme: Sustainable Consumption in Asia**

*Some topics to be covered:*

- Renewable energy sources enhancing communities' self-sufficiency
- Reduction of plastic packaging: the role of actors and policies
- Local initiatives to strengthen SC
- International trade rules promoting sustainable production and consumption of tropical timber
- Household consumption and climate change
- Consumer choice and the role of education
- Economic instruments for water demand management