

Plastics recyclers can contribute up to RM20 billion to economy - White Paper

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KUALA LUMPUR: Plastics recyclers could potentially grow their contribution to the country's economy by three to four times, to an estimated RM15 billion to RM20 billion annually.

This could be achieved with increased investments in better technology, infrastructure and upgraded capacity, according to the Malaysian Plastics Manufacturers Association (MPMA) and the Malaysian Plastics Recyclers Association (MPRA).

In a white paper published today, the associations said Malaysia needs an advanced, modern plastics recycling industry to develop into a sustainable economy.

In the meantime, policies and practices to support viable recycling industries for all materials are crucial to strengthen Malaysia's waste management system.

Suitable policies would prevent improperly disposed plastics from polluting the environment, they said in the joint white paper entitled 'An Advanced Plastics Recycling Industry for Malaysia'.

The white paper noted the plastics recycling industry has contributed RM4.5 billion to the economy, representing an opportunity for growth by converting waste to wealth.

The plastics industry is also part of a Steering Group to set up a Malaysian Plastics Pact, a national initiative for constructive dialogue among stakeholders including non-governmental organisations and the public.

MPMA vice president C. C. Cheah said the pact, with the aid of the Global Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP UK), would create a platform to discuss and agree on local targets, for example increasing recycled content in plastic packaging.

"We alone cannot solve the issue of plastics pollution, but by working together with the plastics industry's stakeholders, we can build an advanced plastics recycling industry to counter plastics pollution.

"We must address the issue of human behaviour, and not demonise any particular material or industry," he said.