



Compliance & Risks

Closing the Grace Period: Preparing for Asia's 2026 Sustainability and Safety Mandates

Authors:

Lynn Chiam, Regulatory Compliance Specialist, Compliance & Risks

Giselle Chia, Regulatory Compliance Specialist, Compliance & Risks



7th April 2026

- Further regulatory developments may have occurred after publication.
- To keep up-to-date with the latest compliance news, [sign up to our newsletter](#).

Table of Contents

Closing The Grace Period: Preparing for Asia's 2026 Sustainability and Safety Mandates

01

Introduction

02

The Shift Toward Mandatory Circular Economies

03

Regional Phase-Outs of Mercury and Hazardous Substances

04

Advancements in Battery Safety and Traceability Standards

05

Evolving Requirements for Renewable Energy and Digital Connectivity

06

Digital Quality Management and Traceability in Emerging Markets

07

The Rise of AI Governance and Cybersecurity Frameworks

08

Webinar Q&A

09

Conclusion

01. About The Authors



Lynn Chiam

**Regulatory Compliance Specialist,
Compliance & Risks**

Lynn is a Regulatory Compliance Specialist at Compliance & Risks, focusing on regulatory developments in China and Malaysia. She supports clients on topics such as food contact materials, chemicals, and transport of dangerous goods, translating complex regulations into practical guidance.

She is a qualified barrister with a strong legal research background, having previously worked in law firms on civil law matters.

Lynn is fluent in English, Mandarin, and Malay, enabling her to interpret and apply regional regulatory requirements effectively.



Giselle Chia

**Regulatory Compliance Specialist,
Compliance & Risks**

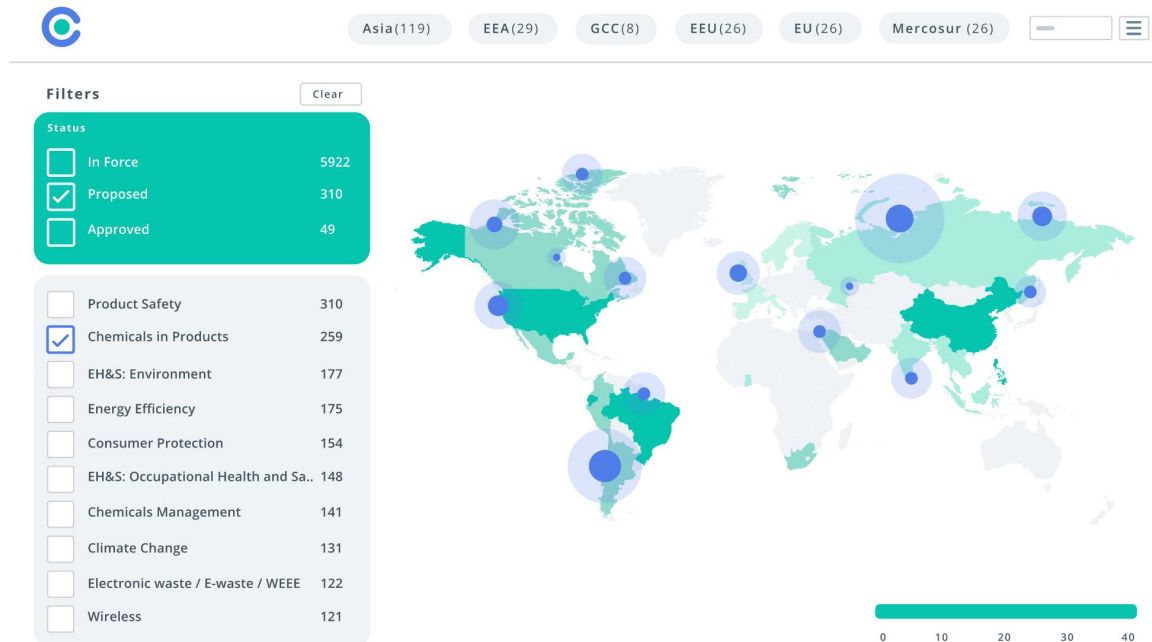
Giselle is a Regulatory Compliance Specialist advising multinational clients on global product and ESG regulations, with a focus on Taiwan and ASEAN markets. She specializes in areas such as cybersecurity, ecodesign, and energy efficiency, helping companies navigate market access requirements.

She is a qualified barrister with a strong foundation in legal research and regulatory interpretation.

Giselle is multilingual, with proficiency in Mandarin, English, Bahasa, and Cantonese, supporting accurate analysis of regional regulations.

Unlocking Market Access

Compliance & Risks empowers global enterprises to unlock market access and confidently navigate regulatory complexity. With a 20-year legacy in regulatory intelligence, we help beloved global brands manage product and corporate sustainability obligations, transforming compliance into a force multiplier for enterprise growth.



Our solution includes:

- **C2P:** The most advanced product compliance and corporate sustainability software on the market, helping you streamline your compliance process and unlock market access around the world.
- **Regulatory Content:** We provide the broadest and most comprehensive product compliance regulatory content on the market, monitoring 195+ countries, 20 industry sectors, 45 topics and 115,000+ regulatory sources.
- **Ask our Experts:** Direct access to our team of experts for support
- **C&R Sustainability:** Our new platform doesn't just track regulatory change; it generates intelligence next steps, tailored to your business. It's not just a dashboard. It's your ESG compliance brain: AI-native, human-verified, globally aware and ready with answers. Try a free trial [here](#).

Why choose C2P?

- ✓ **Stay ahead** of regulatory changes with the world's most comprehensive regulatory database
- ✓ **Avoid delays** with alerts of changes to regulations & requirements in real time
- ✓ **Improve efficiency with powerful collaboration and workflow tools** to keep compliance evidence up-to-date & live linked back to Regulations, Standards & Requirements

[Contact us](#) to speak to one of our team today to learn how you can simplify your regulatory compliance process.

Important Notice: All information provided by Compliance & Risks Limited and its contributing researchers in this report is provided for strategic and informational purposes only and should not be construed as company-specific legal compliance advice or counsel. Compliance & Risks Limited makes no representation whatsoever about the suitability of the information and services contained herein for resolving any question of law. Compliance & Risks Limited does not provide any legal services.

© 2026 Compliance & Risks Limited. All rights reserved



01. Introduction

The regulatory environment in Asia is no longer characterized by slow-moving conceptual discussions; instead, it has entered a phase of rapid, mandatory implementation.

Governments are now compelling manufacturers to integrate sustainability, safety, and security into every stage of a product's life cycle, from initial design and development to end-of-life management.

These trends are broadly categorized into four key themes: sustainability integration, stricter chemical management, enhanced safety and quality standards for high-tech goods, and the new policy area of digital security and AI governance.

This comprehensive guide, based on our recent webinar ["Asia Product Compliance: Regulatory Trends in Major Markets in 2025 & 2026"](#) provides a comprehensive analysis of product compliance trends for 2025 and 2026 across seven key Asian markets: China, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, Hong Kong, and Vietnam.

The primary drivers of these changes are the integration of sustainability into the entire product life cycle, aggressive phase-outs of hazardous chemicals like mercury, and the establishment of robust governance for digital security and Artificial Intelligence. Manufacturers and importers must act immediately to navigate these shifting requirements, as many critical deadlines are set for 2026 and 2027.

This shift is heavily influenced by global movements, such as the EU's Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation (ESPR) leading to a high degree of international alignment in requirements for digital product passports and resource circulation; the Minamata Convention's mandate leading to the worldwide phase-out of specific mercury-containing products; the EU's Cyber Resilience Act (CRA) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) Act leading to a more stringent approach to regulate digital products and AI-embedded products.

For businesses operating in economic giants like China, Japan, and South Korea, as well as significant players like Taiwan and Singapore, staying ahead of these dynamic trends is essential.

The message from regulatory specialists is clear: companies must act now to adjust supply chains and product designs, as grace periods for these new mandates are notably short.

02. The Shift Toward Mandatory Circular Economies

The transition to a circular economy has moved from a voluntary concept to a matter of mandatory compliance across major Asian economic powers.

China has accelerated this movement by developing a unified framework for a product carbon footprint (PCF) management system, initiating mandatory-oriented pilot programs for PCF labeling and certification.

Initially, 12 product categories are subject to this new system, including lithium-ion batteries, IT equipment, and various consumer electronics.

The trial implementation rules set out product-specific requirements necessary to execute the general certification framework.

Simultaneously, Taiwan and Japan are implementing rigorous frameworks to ensure resource circulation. Taiwan's "2050 Circular Economy Roadmap" proposes a dual governance framework that involves a complete overhaul of the Resource Recycling Act into the Resource Circulation Promotion Act.

This new act introduces mandates for ecodesign and digital product tracking similar to the EU's Digital Product Passport (DPP).

Japan's system for strengthening resource circulation becomes fully enforceable in April 2026, mandating the use of recycled materials in specific products such as automobiles, plastic containers, and home appliances.

South Korea is emerging as a regional pioneer through its "Right to Repair" bill, introduced in late 2025.

This legislation aims to extend product lifespans by mandating that producers provide repair information and manuals to consumers.

It also establishes a repairability rating system where products are classified and labeled based on the ease of repair and the availability of spare parts.

These collective efforts signify that sustainability now requires radical transparency across the entire product life cycle, moving beyond simple waste management to fundamental changes in product design.



03. Regional Phase-Outs of Mercury Hazardous Substances

Asian markets are aggressively aligning with international treaties, specifically the Minamata and Stockholm Conventions, to phase out mercury-added products and other persistent organic pollutants (POPs).

China has adopted implementation rules that prohibit the production and trade of 12 types of mercury-added products, with critical deadlines ranging from late 2025 to 2027.

These prohibitions effect button cells, specific capacitors, and various types of fluorescent lamps. Furthermore, China now prohibits the use of mercury catalysts in polyurethane production and prevents the assembly of new products containing restricted mercury components.

Japan, Hong Kong, and Taiwan are following similar staggered phase-out schedules targeting various lighting and battery categories.

Japan's phase one, which began in early 2026, blocks the import and export of products like zinc-air button batteries and specific fluorescent lamps used in displays.

Hong Kong's amendment to the Mercury Control Ordinance targets 16 product categories in stages, with the first phase taking effect in December 2025.

Taiwan is moving to add substances like Dechlorane Plus and UV-328 to its list of controlled toxic chemicals, effectively banning their use in manufacturing and imports.



Singapore and Vietnam are also tightening chemical management protocols.

Singapore has limited exemptions for hazardous chemicals like Dechlorane Plus to high-reliability sectors such as aerospace and medical devices, while requiring specific licenses for handling substances like MCCPs.

Vietnam's new Chemicals Law, effective as of 2026, regulates the entire chemical life cycle and mandates that producers implement strict control processes for hazardous substances in finished goods.

Because regional grace periods are remarkably short, businesses are urged to audit supply chains immediately to secure alternative materials.

04. Advancements in Battery Safety and Traceability Standards

Driven by a shift in focus from electric vehicles to stationary energy storage applications, China is introducing rigorous new safety and traceability standards for lithium-ion batteries.

The Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (MIIT) has proposed mandatory national standards, such as GB 40156, to introduce more rigorous testing to mitigate risks.

These tests include evaluations for overcharge, crush, nail penetration, and thermal propagation specifically for batteries and battery packs used in stationary power supplies, IT equipment, and laboratory devices.

In addition to safety testing, China is implementing coding regulations to ensure the full-cycle traceability of batteries.

This draft standard provides the identifying methods and coding structures necessary for tracking batteries within China and in overseas markets, particularly to align with EU requirements.

These standards apply to lithium-ion cells, modules, and packs, though they specifically exclude batteries used in automotive applications.

This regulatory push signals a focused effort by the Chinese government to enhance the monitoring and safety of energy storage systems and consumer electronics across residential and commercial environments.

05. Evolving Requirements for Renewable Energy and Digital Connectivity

As renewable energy adoption surges, Taiwan has introduced mandatory inspection requirements for all photovoltaic (PV) inverters under 100 kilowatts.

To gain market access, these inverters must meet five critical benchmarks: safety, electromagnetic compatibility (EMC), grid connectivity, cybersecurity technical specifications, and restricted substances disclosure.

Information regarding restricted substances must be displayed directly on the product or packaging, or via a URL that is clearly indicated on the device.

Manufacturers must complete type testing at designated laboratories before the enforcement deadline of July 1, 2027.

Simultaneously, South Korea is focusing on reducing the environmental footprint of electronic production by mandating standardized charging interfaces.

Following the EU's lead, South Korea will require portable electronic devices - including mobile phones, tablets, laptops, and gaming consoles - to be equipped with USB Type-C receptacle connectors.

This mandate takes effect in November 2026, after which non-compliant products will be prohibited from sale.

These regulations reflect a broader trend of integrating technical standardization with environmental goals in the high-tech sector.

06. Digital Quality Management and Traceability in Emerging Markets

Vietnam is modernizing its regulatory infrastructure through the implementation of an amended Law on Product and Goods Quality.

This transformation centers on a national digital quality management platform and a new three-tier, risk-based classification system for goods.

Low-risk goods may use self-declaration, while high-risk products face mandatory third-party certification and strict traceability requirements, including mandatory barcodes.

Vietnam is also introducing digital product passports and electronic labels to streamline compliance tracking. While existing goods labeled before January 2026 may circulate for a transition period of two years, the new labeling and packaging rules will be fully effective by January 2028.

Similarly, Singapore is transitioning from physical safety brochures to mandatory digital QR code advisories for products like toughened glass gas hobs. Registered suppliers must affix these QR codes directly to the appliance or print them in the manual by July 2026.

This change provides a permanent safety touchpoint for consumers, as physical brochures are often discarded.





07. The Rise of AI Governance and Cybersecurity Frameworks

The digital landscape in Asia is rapidly shifting from voluntary guidelines to mandatory "security by design" and robust governance for Artificial Intelligence.

China has proposed a voluntary cybersecurity labeling system for Internet-connected products, using a star-based rating to indicate whether a product meets basic (national), enhanced (national), or leading (international) security standards.

Consumer connected cameras are identified as the first batch of products for this system.

Taiwan is also adding cybersecurity testing to its mandatory prodnetwork products and audiovisual products with network connectivity, including routers, smart speakers, and connected televisions, with enforcement beginning in January 2028.

In the realm of AI, South Korea, Japan, and Vietnam have enacted national laws.

South Korea's AI Framework Act, effective as of January 2026, imposes transparency and safety responsibilities on developers of high-impact and generative AI, including requirements to notify users and label AI-generated content.

Vietnam's AI law, effective as of March 2026, utilizes a risk-based classification similar to the EU AI Act and prohibits deceptive AI practices.

In contrast, Japan maintains a "light touch" regulation focused on promoting R&D while defining the responsibilities of stakeholders using AI-related technologies.

These frameworks signal a significant shift toward mandatory operational requirements for digital products.

08. Webinar Q&A

During the live webinar, numerous questions were sent in by our live audience. Our webinar presenters, [Lynn Chiam](#) & [Giselle Chia](#) provided expert answers to the most popular queries below.

Q1. For electrical scientific instruments which are labeled and are CE compliant (non medical device), are there any projected changes in China which would require additional certification or labeling in order to continue market access?

China does not automatically require additionally certification just because the product is CE-compliant. Instead, access into the Chinese market will require the product to be tested and certified according to the domestic regulations. The most critical one would involve China RoHS 2.0, Standard GB 26572-2025 (the requirements for the limits of hazardous substances in EEE and labelling requirements) and undergoing CCC certification.

Q2. With regard to Chemicals Law in Vietnam, what products are in scope for the final product testing? Are industrial products like tractors or building machines in scope? Are imported products should be tested and for which parameters?

Under Vietnam's new Chemicals Law implementing Decree 26/2026/NĐ-CP, "final product testing" is driven by the presence and control of hazardous chemicals in products/goods, rather than by broad product categories, meaning products are in scope when they contain hazardous chemicals above regulated thresholds or are manufactured using such chemicals in ways that leave residues or emissions in the final article.

Industrial machines themselves are not subject to a blanket testing obligation under this Decree, but specific components (e.g. coatings, oils, treated plastics) can be in scope if they fall under the national list of hazardous chemicals in products/goods or product-specific technical regulations issued by competent ministries.

For imports, the Decree distinguishes between chemicals (which require prior import declaration via the National Single Window with certain exemptions) and products/goods containing hazardous chemicals, where importers must know and declare the hazardous chemical content and concentrations into the sectoral chemical database and disclose them, and must ensure compliance with any applicable Vietnamese technical regulations that define concrete test parameters such as substance types, limit values, and analytical methods, so in practice imported products are not automatically tested by the State under this Decree but importers often need testing or robust supplier documentation to meet these disclosure and concentrations obligations.

Q3. In South Korea, if a scientific instrument cannot be repaired, is a replacement an acceptable remedy under the relevant regulations?

Based on this South Korea's [Consumer Dispute Resolution](#) Information Booklet (drafted as of 15 April 2025): When repair is not possible, alternative compensation such as replacement or the refund of purchase price can be provided.

Q4. Do you have any information on China Standard GB 44499-2024?

You may search for standard GB 44499-2024 in C2P with its title, "China: Energy Saving and Environmental Protection Specification for Household and Similar Electrical Appliances, Standard GB 44499-2024".

The standard defines the terms and general principles of the energy saving and environmental protection of household and similar electrical appliances. The standard applies to the different stages of an appliance's life cycle including their production, installation, recycling and reuse. 'Household and similar electrical appliances' are defined so as to refer to electrical appliances used by non-professionals in homes, apartments and similar premises (such as shops, light industry etc.) with a rated voltage not exceeding 250 V for single-phase alternating-current-powered appliances, and 480 V for other appliances. The standard will enter into force on 1 September 2026. For products manufactured or imported before the official implementation date, the standard allows a grace period, becoming mandatory starting from 1 September 2027.

Alternatively, you may preview the standard [here](#).

Q5. Is Asia Right to Repair also aimed at consumer electronics rather than B2B?

Yes. Asia R2R is also primarily aimed at consumer electronics. Both the [South Korea](#) bill and the [Philippines bill](#) explicitly aim to promote the consumer's right to repair. The Philippines bill explicitly cites everyday electronic gadgets like mobile phones, tablets and laptops.

Interestingly, the Philippines bill explicitly includes medical devices, often used in B2B (hospital) settings, under its coverage. "Owner" is broadly as any person who owns or leases equipment purchased or used in the country, which could include businesses. On the other hand, the South Korea bill applies to "business operators" who produce products designated by Presidential Decree. Industrial or B2B products could be covered in those future decrees.

In conclusion, the language of the bills focuses on consumers (current justification is centered on consumer protection), but they include provisions that could potentially/technically extend to B2B contexts.

Q6. Is the Vietnamese Law on chemicals also valid for substances in products such as sealants, wires et.al or only for substances in chemicals?

Yes, the Vietnamese Law on Chemicals apply to substances contained within products and goods. Sealants and wires are considered consumer industrial products. If they contain hazardous substance, then these products would be subjected to the control measures and disclosure obligations.

Q7. Is there a distinction between consumer and commercial products in these requirements?

Most of the requirements mentioned under Theme 1 (Product Sustainability and Resource Circulation) would apply to both consumer and commercial products (no explicit distinction is made between both). However, Asia R2R is explicitly aimed at promoting consumers' right to repair, and therefore would target consumer products only.

Q8. Can you speak on the implications of these changes for the MecTech industry in these markets?

The MedTech Industry would face pressure to phase out specific chemicals such as the temporary exemptions for POPs in medical devices. Multiple markets are accelerating the prohibition on mercury added-products. This includes phase-outs of various fluorescent lamps which are used in medical lighting in China, Japan, Hong Kong and so on.

Q9. For China - button cells, capacitors switches - can you provide more detail please e.g. what are they and what if they are incorporated into a saleable CE approved system?

The products that have been phased out since 31 December 2025 are:

- Button cell zinc-silver oxide batteries and button cell zinc-air batteries with a mercury content of less than 2%;
- Cosmetics, including skin lightening soaps and creams, with exceptions for eye cosmetics using mercury as a preservative without effective and safe alternatives, and cosmetics, soaps, and creams containing trace mercury contaminants;
- Additionally, the import/export of very high-precision capacitance and loss measuring bridges, and high-frequency radio-frequency switches and relays for monitoring instruments (excluding those used for research and development purposes), where each bridge, switch, or relay has a maximum mercury content of 20mg, will be prohibited.

Critically, the regulation explicitly forbids incorporating any of these prohibited mercury-added products into assembled systems; this means that even if a system is CE-approved or intended for sale, it cannot contain these specific banned components after the 2025 deadline. These restrictions are part of a broader effort to implement the Minamata Convention on Mercury.

Q10. To what types of products does PCF apply to in China?

In China, the MIIT published the Product Carbon Footprint Label Certification Pilot Certification Catalog. The first batch of products include:

- Lithium-ion batteries;
- Photovoltaic modules;
- Iron and steel products;
- Textile products;
- Room air conditioners;
- Desktop microcomputers;
- Laptops;
- Small electric power motors;
- Tires;
- Electrolytic Aluminum;
- Cement; and
- Wood-based panels and wooden floors.

Q11. Can you elaborate on initiatives by the Asian companies and governments on safer and more sustainable chemicals? (e.g. similar to the Safe and Sustainable by Design Framework in the EU or the substitution centres that are starting in EU countries)

In Asia, there are currently no initiatives similar to the EU SSbD.

The EU SSbD framework itself is a voluntary recommendation rather than a binding legislation, whereas most Asian initiatives are mandatory and focus on green chemistry and chemical management, making direct comparisons more difficult.

Some of the important/recent Asian initiatives are summarized as follows:

1. China's [Law on the Safety of Hazardous Chemicals](#), coming into force on 1 May 2026, mandates the digital tracking of chemicals from production to disposal. China is also pushing for cleaner production through its new [Ecological and Environmental Code](#), encouraging factories to swap out toxic solvents and heavy metals for green alternatives to avoid high pollution taxes.
2. South Korea's K-REACH is undergoing significant evolution. In August 2025, Korea implemented a new toxic categorisation system, labelling chemicals not just as bad, but based on how they are bad (e.g., chronic vs. acute threat).
3. Japan promotes [Green & Sustainable Chemistry \(GSC\)](#) through the Green & Sustainable Chemistry Network (GSCN), whose main mission is to promote R&D on GSC as a center of network. It focuses on developing safer materials, cleaner manufacturing, and reducing hazardous waste.



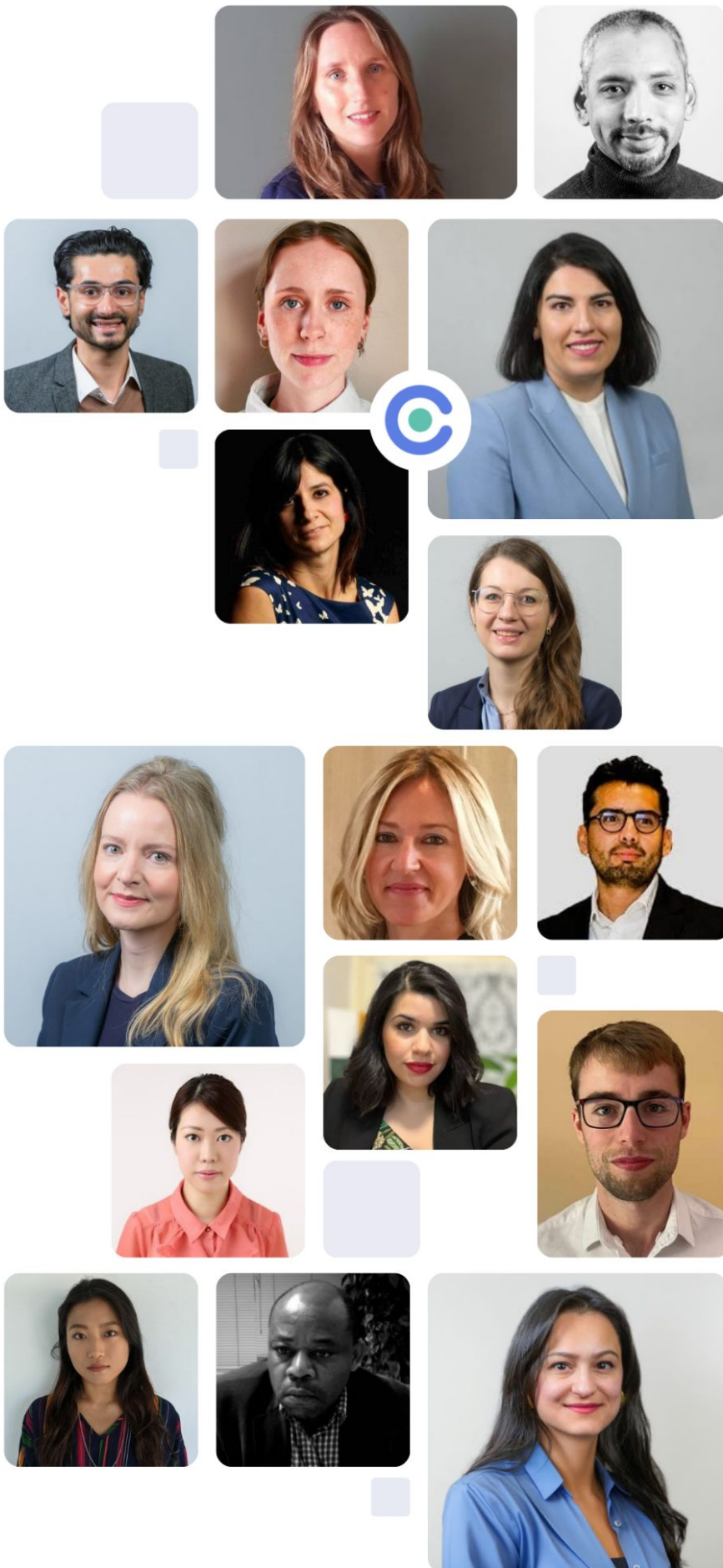
09. Conclusion

The regulatory trends of 2025 and 2026 demonstrate that Asia is a leader in mandatory sustainability and digital governance.

From the aggressive phase-out of mercury to the complex requirements of AI transparency and battery traceability, the burden on manufacturers to maintain market access has never been higher. As grace periods shorten and standards become more technically demanding, the cost of manual tracking and non-compliance poses a significant risk to global operations.

Compliance & Risks' [C2P platform](#) helps automate the tracking of these specific regulations by providing a comprehensive database of over 115,000 historical and current regulations. The platform offers early warning alerts for upcoming deadlines - such as the 2026 mercury phase-outs or the 2027 PV inverter inspections - and includes productivity workflow tools to assess the impact of these changes on specific product lines.

By leveraging C2P, global organizations can stay ahead of the dynamic regulatory landscape in Asia, ensuring their products remain safe, sustainable, and compliant in every major market.



Add 80+ Experts to Your Team

Stop Drowning in Regulatory Updates and Get Back to Business.

Feeling overwhelmed by the ever-changing world of global regulations? You're not alone. Keeping up with complex legislation like ESPR, RoHS, and China RoHS can feel like a full-time job, draining valuable resources from your core business.

What if you could add **80+ compliance experts** to your team?

With our Ask the Experts service, you can. Our global team of **50+ subject matter experts** and **30+ knowledge partners** provides unparalleled expertise across a diverse range of products, geographies, and policy areas. We monitor regulatory changes daily and provide clear, concise answers to your most pressing compliance questions.

Gain instant access to:

- **In-depth knowledge:** Our experts possess deep understanding of complex regulations, including ESPR, RoHS, and China RoHS.
- **Rapid response:** Get quick answers to your questions, often within 30 minutes, freeing up your team to focus on other priorities.
- **Confidence and clarity:** Navigate regulatory complexities with assurance, knowing you have a team of experts backing you up.

Boost your compliance capabilities without expanding your headcount.

Empower your business today - begin your journey and **speak to a regulatory expert.**

OUR NUMBERS

300+

CUSTOMERS WORLDWIDE

195

COUNTRIES COVERED

115,000+

REGULATIONS