

ENVIRONMENT

Plastic fantastic for new roads



Executives stand united in their partnership to explore and develop the use of plastic waste in asphalt for road construction. From left, Chatchai Luanpolcharenchai, president of Dow Thailand Group; Niwes Nantachit, president of Chiang Mai University; Sarawut Songsivilai, director-general of the Department of Highways; Pathom Chaloeywaes, director-general of the Department of Rural Roads; and Roongrote Rangsiyopash, president and CEO of SCG.

POST REPORTERS

The Department of Highways, Department of Rural Roads, SCG, Dow Thailand Group, and Chiang Mai University have announced a partnership to explore and develop the use of plastic waste in road construction.

The partnership aims to set a new standard for state roads while achieving a goal to promote effective waste management and resource efficiency, in line with the Circular Economy principle and follow the government policy of BCG (Bio-Circular-Green Economy).

This partnership's focus is to provide resources and support on the academic and managerial aspects of the project.

Based on their experience and know-how from the recycled plastic road project initiated in 2018, SCG and the Dow Thailand Group plan to further their research and development through laboratory-based experiments and on-site testing on private land such as RIL



Workers pave a road with asphalt made from plastic waste which will help promote effective waste management. PHOTOS BY DEPARTMENT OF HIGHWAYS

Industrial Estate in Rayong and Amata City in Chon Buri.

Chiang Mai University will also join the research study and focus on the production process's academic and environmental impacts. At the same time, the Department of Highways and the Department of Rural Roads will provide support and consultation on the standardisation of plastic waste use as an ingredient in asphalt.

About 3 tonnes of plastic waste, equivalent to nearly 900,000 plastic bags, is estimated to be used for every 1 kilometre with a 6-metre road width. To date, through the partnership of SCG, the Dow Thailand Group, and other companies from the private sector, 23 tonnes of plastic waste have been used to construct a 7.7km prototype asphalt road.

Department of Highways direc-

tor-general Sarawut Songsivilai said: "It will be an important starting point for the future of utilising waste plastic in construction and maintenance of the routes under the Department of Highways that will benefit the economy, society and the environment to achieve the aim of jointly developing the nation to create stability, prosperity and sustainability under the 20-year national strategy."