

1. INTRODUCTION

A. BACKGROUND

More than half the world's population lives in cities and it is projected that by 2030, 6 out of 10 people will be urban dwellers. Currently, about 30 per cent of the urban population lives in slum-like conditions¹. Cities in Southeast Asia have expanded rapidly and the urban population has doubled over the past 25 years. In 2013, nearly 300 million of ASEAN's populations lived in cities, of which 84 million lived in cities with over one million inhabitants.

The increasing concentration of people in urban areas reflects the spatial concentration of economic activity in urban centres which in turn has encouraged in-migration from rural areas². Currently, urban inequality is also increasing and urban development is not keeping up with the massive expansion. Differences between rural and urban areas also persist. In the next fifteen years, ASEAN's urban areas are expected to have to accommodate another 100 million people. Despite numerous planning challenges, well-managed cities and other human settlements (i.e. towns, villages, slums, etc.) can be benchmarks for innovation and ingenuity and key drivers of sustainable development.

These trends put high pressure on ASEAN Member States particularly on their urban planning on infrastructure and other public services, including green areas, farm land and public space for recreation, to make them environmentally sustainable and liveable. Accommodating such expansions in planned and coordinated urban systems that increase quality of life of urban citizens is a key challenge that requires strong policy coordination. People living in urban areas are also increasingly at risk to natural disasters, such as floods and droughts, and the impacts of climate change. Therefore, developing climate resilient and low carbon cities that support greenhouse gas reduction and climate resiliency is another key challenge.

Likewise, managing solid waste is often problematic in densely populated areas. In fact, in many developing regions, less than half of solid waste is safely disposed of. As per capita waste generation continues to rise, the collection and safe disposal of solid waste will continue to require serious attention. Urban air, land and water pollution are also a challenge in cities, causing illness and millions of premature deaths annually.

It is important to ensure that cities and urban areas in ASEAN are environmentally sustainable and climate resilient, and that they meet the social and economic needs of the people. As stipulated in the ASCC Blueprint 2025, ASEAN has committed itself to supporting environmentally sustainable cities, in particular, enhancing participatory and integrated approaches in urban planning and management for sustainable urbanisation towards a clean and green ASEAN and promoting coordination among relevant sectors to provide access to clean land, green public space, clean air, clean and safe water, and sanitation. Success of developing environmentally sustainable cities in ASEAN will also contribute to the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) which promotes the need to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable at a global level.

Various programmes and initiatives have been implemented by ASEAN to tackle urban challenges and improve environmental performance, for example, the ASEAN Initiative on Environmentally Sustainable Cities (AIESC), ASEAN Environmentally Sustainable Cities Award Programme, and High Level Seminars on Environmentally Sustainable Cities. However, by simply ensuring and maintaining good environmental

¹ UN-Habitat and UNESCAP (2015) The state of Asian and Pacific cities 2015: Urban transformations shifting from quantity to quality.

² ASEAN Secretariat (forthcoming) Fifth ASEAN State of Environment Report. ASEAN Secretariat, Jakarta, Indonesia.

performance is inadequate. ASEAN cities must strive to go beyond environmental performance and move towards achieving environmental sustainability through strengthening the capacity of national and local institutions to implement strategies and programmes towards environmentally sustainable and climate resilient cities, as well as strengthening positive economic, social and environmental linkages among urban, peri-urban and rural areas.

ASPEN provides a forward-looking plan for the next 10 years to promote cooperation and joint actions across ASEAN Member States that would allow for addressing key challenges on planning and developing environmentally sustainable and climate resilient cities. Efforts under this Strategic Priority will focus on two programmatic areas: (i) sustainable urban planning, development, and implementation, and (ii) climate resilient and low carbon cities.

B. ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The ASEAN Initiative on Environmentally Sustainable Cities (AIESC), which was endorsed by the ASEAN Environment Ministers in 2005, serves to assist ASEAN cities to pursue environmental sustainability. AIESC supports mainly small and rapidly-growing cities in regional activities that are based on the Environmentally Sustainable Cities (ESC) Key Indicators for clean air, clean land, and clean water. To recognise the efforts and identify best practices in cities towards environmental sustainability, ASEAN initiated the ASEAN Environmentally Sustainable City (ESC) Award programme and Certificates of Recognition on Clean Air, Clean Water and Clean Land. The ESC Award aims to encourage urban environmental sustainability by recognising exemplary efforts and sharing best indigenous practices to keep cities clean, green, and liveable.

The ASEAN ESC Model Cities Programme is a regional initiative aimed at promoting the development of Environmentally Sustainable Cities (ESC) across ASEAN Member States. It provides seed funding, technical assistance and other forms of support to raise local capacity for implementing innovative and voluntary bottom-up initiatives, as well as to strengthen national ESC frameworks and actions that facilitate the replication and scaling up of good practices and policies within and across countries. It also promotes city-to-city collaboration and provides a broad and inclusive platform matching ASEAN cities with interested resource partners. This programme has been realised with support from the Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund (JAIF).

The High Level Seminar on Environmentally Sustainable Cities (HLS-ESC) has been organised annually since 2010 to promote information exchange and foster concrete collaborative actions on Environmentally Sustainable Cities among East Asia Summit (EAS) countries. The Seminars typically showcase policies and legal frameworks as well as practical projects on ESC for the consideration of EAS Environment Ministers.

The Clean Air for Smaller Cities Project, with funding from the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany, supported small and medium-sized cities across 8 ASEAN Member States in the development and implementation of Clean Air Plans (CAPs), with the aim of improving air quality and supporting sustainable urban development. The Project has been able to support the implementation of ten emission inventories, development of six clean air plans and delivery of five training courses through 35 trainings.

ASEAN is also supporting the CityLinks Pilot Partnership, an 18-month technical exchange programme focusing on strengthening urban climate resilience and adaptation in selected cities across ASEAN Member States. The programme is funded by USAID, and implemented by the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) and Institute for Sustainable Communities (ISC). The CityLinks Pilot Partnership aims to define a structured and strategic approach to city-to-city learning on environmental sustainability in line with ASEAN goals and builds on the initial success of the ASEAN Environmentally Sustainable Cities Model Cities Programme (MCP). ASEAN cities will become part of an existing online knowledge network to connect practitioners and promote sustained technical exchanges.

C. OBJECTIVES

Over the next 10 years, the main objectives of the AWGESC Action Plan are:

- 1) To ensure that cities and urban areas in ASEAN are environmentally sustainable, while meeting the social and economic needs of the people.
- 2) To promote sustainable urbanisation and climate resilient cities in ASEAN towards a clean and green ASEAN.

D. MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION

ASEAN Working Group on Environmentally Sustainable Cities (AWGESC) will be the main responsible body for the implementation of the programmes and activities of this Strategic Priority Area. Other relevant sectoral bodies and/or partners will be consulted for cross-sectoral and cross-pillar activities.

The AWGESC will oversee the planning, technical and implementation issues under this Strategic Priority, while the ASEAN Environment Ministers and the ASEAN Senior Officials on Environment will provide policy and strategic guidance for its work. Lead countries of each programme/activity under the strategic priority are expected to develop proposal of detailed implementation workplan, implement the activity in coordination with AMS and ASEC, and provide regular progress updates to AWGESC.

E. POTENTIAL PARTNERS & STAKEHOLDERS

The activities under this Strategic Priority could be implemented through partnerships and regional collaborations with organisations working on environmentally sustainable and climate resilient cities and urban development. Potential partners or platforms include United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), European Union, International City/County Management Association (ICMA) and Institute for Sustainable Communities.

Activities to support planning, capacity building and knowledge exchange in ASEAN could also be implemented through cooperation and support from Dialogue/Development partners, for example, Japan, United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES), China and India.

2. PROGRAMMES AND ACTIVITIES³

Outputs and Indicators	Activities	Lead Country
Programme 1: Sustainable Urban Planning, Development, and Implementation		
Adopted (revised) ASEAN Key Indicators for Clean Air, Clean Water, Clean Land (linked with global indicators e.g. relevant SDGs)	1. Conduct a comprehensive review and revision of the existing ASEAN Key Indicators for Clean Air, Clean Water and Clean Land.	Chair of AWGESC
ASEAN Environmentally Sustainable Cities (ESC) Awards	2. Utilise the adopted indicators as the basis for: i) selection of cities for the ASEAN ESC Award and Certificates of Recognition ⁴ and ii) identification of programmes and partnership with donors for capacity building.	Chair of AWGESC
	3. Promote and support national-level initiatives on high performing and motivated cities ⁵ .	
ASEAN Guidelines on Sustainable Urban Planning and Development (includes sourcebook on ESC good practices)	4. Continue to organise regional forum on ESC, such as High-level Seminars on ESC, regularly to facilitate exchange of good practices.	Indonesia
	5. Establish or enhance good practices, such as 'Model sites' in the city (e.g. green homes/villages, schools, markets, buildings and parks).	
	6. Conduct a study on the state of urban development in ASEAN Member States including emerging issues (e.g. ageing society, tourism cities) and lessons learned on sustainable urban development.	
Enhanced capacity, leadership and expertise of ASEAN city leaders and local stakeholder organisations to improve access to clean land, green public space, clean air, clean and safe water, and sanitation.	7. Conduct training programmes on air and water quality management (consider linking with climate change issues).	TBC
	8. Promote 3R (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle) activities and conduct training programmes on waste management, recycling and upcycling.	TBC
	9. Promote urban biodiversity and greenery.	Singapore and Thailand
	10. Promote integrated coastal zone (ICM) management for sustainable coastal cities.	TBC
Enhanced support, coordination, and network for and among sub-national	11. Provide support for national and sub-national ESC initiatives.	TBC
	12. Provide capacity building programmes for sub-national governments on ESC.	TBC

³ The outputs and proposed activities here will be further confirmed by the AWGESC to accommodate future changes and are provided in detail in ANNEX 2d.

⁴ Proposed to refine the mechanism for selection of cities based on the new indicators and to include public participation (voting)

⁵ This proposed action plan would need to be consulted with all ASEAN Member States.

governments (including provinces, regions, state, districts and local level)	13. Promote city-to-city cooperation as a capacity building tool for learning and sharing expertise and experiences, such as industrial cities.	Thailand
Enhanced cross-sectoral coordination on sustainable urban planning and development	14. Provide a multi-sectoral platform to mainstream environmental considerations to other relevant sectors, such as transport and energy, for sustainable infrastructure planning.	TBC
	15. Collaborate with other relevant ASEAN sectoral bodies and support organisations (including the private sector, local government networks and non-governmental organisations) to: (i) mobilise substantial support to cities; (ii) establish networks with cities and local authorities in the country; and (iii) improve knowledge and education on sustainable development at the local level.	
Programme 2: Climate Resilient and Low Carbon Cities		
Increased number of ASEAN cities with low carbon and improved resilience capacities to climate change through better integration of climate change adaptation and mitigation in sustainable development agenda	1. Develop a baseline study on ESC and climate resiliency ASEAN's City status, especially for selected cities, including vulnerability and adaptation capacity assessments.	TBC
	2. Develop greenhouse gas and short-lived climate pollutant audits for transport, construction, energy and waste sector at selected ASEAN cities.	
	3. Promote public participation and youth engagement towards climate resilient and sustainable urbanisation.	
Demonstration of climate change mitigation and adaptation at selected ASEAN cities	4. Select pilot cities for the implementation of small scale climate change mitigation and adaptation measures.	TBC
	5. Support cities on the formulation and/or implementation of initiatives and action plan on mainstreaming climate change mitigation and adaptation, including capacity building for the city officials and other concerned stakeholders.	
	6. Pilot concrete adaptation and mitigation measures at the selected city level.	
	7. Support selected cities in exploring external funding resources and instruments for scaling-up the climate change adaptation and mitigation initiatives.	
	8. Document and disseminate good practices and lesson learnt from piloted concrete adaptation and mitigation measures.	
Enhanced coordination with ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management	9. Promote knowledge exchange between ASEAN cities, development partners and countries on climate change adaptation and mitigation.	TBC
	10. Develop joint initiatives on climate resilient cities with focus on resilient vital infrastructure, early warning systems, coastal management, urban run-off, and urban health (climate induced).	
Climate and disaster resiliency incorporated in ASEAN eco-schools, safe school initiative and ASEAN Green Higher Education concept	11. Develop a regional framework for curriculum with local contents on climate and resilient cities.	TBC

