

ASEAN Working Group on Environmentally Sustainable Cities (AWGESC)

DATE ESTABLISHED

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DENR Asst. Sec. Corazon Davis and Raquel Ortega (EMB) attend the 10th High-level Seminar on Sustainable Cities in Bali, Indonesia on 21 January 2019. [Raquel Ortega]

The ASEAN Working Group on Environmentally Sustainable Cities (AWGESC) was established as an ASOEN subsidiary body to intensify cooperation in addressing problems associated with urban environmental management and governance to achieve sustainable development as well as promote a clean and green environment. It oversees the planning of and addresses technical and implementation issues related to the Environmentally Sustainable Cities (ESC) Strategic Priority of the ASEAN Strategic Plan on Environment (ASPEN) 2016–2025.

The ASEAN Initiative on Environmentally Sustainable Cities (AIESC), endorsed by the ASEAN Environment Ministers in 2005, supported small and rapidly-growing cities in regional activities that are based on the ESC Key Indicators for clean air, clean land, and clean water.

ASEAN Model Cities began in 2008, when the East Asia Summit Environment Ministers Meeting (EAS EMM) was first convened. The ministers agreed that 'Environmentally Sustainable Cities' would be the immediate priority for regional collaboration. The "ASEAN ESC Model Cities Programme" was launched in 2011 with core funding from the Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund (JAIF). 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.

The High-Level Seminar on Sustainable Cities (HLS ESC) has been organized annually since 2010 in parallel with Model Cities as ASEAN's main regional networking and reporting platform for ESC.

At the 9th EAS High-Level Seminar on Sustainable Cities (HLS-SC) held on 8-10 March 2018 in Siem Reap, Cambodia, the ASEAN SDGs Frontrunner Cities Programme was endorsed. It aims to scale up the ASEAN ESC Model Cities Programme by facilitating the implementation of SDGs by frontrunner cities (FC). For the Philippines, the FC candidate is San Carlos City with General Mariano Alvarez (GMA) Cavite, while the Model City that will also receive funding with a grant from the Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund (JAIF) is Valenzuela City.

COMMITMENTS

In the ASEAN Strategic Plan on Environment (ASPEN) 2016–2025, AWGESC is the main implementing body of Strategic Priority 4 on Environmentally Sustainable Cities. Its objectives are to ensure that cities or urban areas in ASEAN are environmentally sustainable, while meeting the social and economic needs of the people and to promote sustainable urbanization and climate resilient cities towards a clean and green ASEAN. The programs under this priority are (1) Sustainable Urban Planning, Development, and Implementation and (2) Climate Resilient and Low Carbon Cities.

The outputs or indicators and the corresponding related activity or activities for each are found below.

Programme 1: Sustainable Urban Planning, Development and Implementation

Output 1. Adopted (revised) ASEAN Key Indicators for Clean Air, Clean Water, Clean Land (linked with global indicators e.g. relevant SDGs) - Conduct a comprehensive review and revision of the existing ASEAN Key Indicators for Clean Air, Clean Water and Clean Land. This will be led by the chair of the AWGESC.

Output 2. ASEAN Environmentally Sustainable Cities (ESC) Awards - These will be led by the chair of the AWGESC.

- a. Utilize the adopted indicators as the basis for: (i) selection of cities for the ASEAN ESC Award and Certificates of Recognition and (ii) identification of programmes and partnership with donors for capacity building; and
- b. Promote and support national-level initiatives on high performing and motivated cities.

Output 3. ASEAN Guidelines on Sustainable Urban Planning and Development (includes sourcebook on ESC good practices)

- a. Continue to organize regional fora on ESC, such as High-level Seminars on ESC, regularly to facilitate exchange of good practices;
- b. Establish or enhance good practices, such as 'model sites' in the city (e.g. green homes/villages, schools, markets, buildings and parks; and
- c. 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.

Output 4. Enhanced capacity, leadership and expertise of ASEAN city leaders and local stakeholder organizations to improve access to clean land, green public space, clean air, clean and safe water, and sanitation. The following activities will be led by Singapore except for (c) which will be co-led by Thailand:

- a. Conduct training programmes on air and water quality management (consider linking with climate change issues);
- b. Promote 3R (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle) activities and conduct training programmes on waste management, recycling and upcycling;
- c. Promote urban biodiversity and greenery; and
- d. Promote integrated coastal zone (ICM) management for sustainable coastal cities.

Output 5. Enhanced support, coordination, and network for and among sub-national governments (including provinces, regions, state, districts and local level).

- a. Provide support for national and sub-national ESC initiatives;
- b. Provide capacity building programmes for sub-national governments on ESC; and
- c. Promote city-to-city cooperation as a capacity building tool for learning.

Output 6. Enhanced cross-sectoral coordination on sustainable urban planning and development

- a. Provide a multi-sectoral platform to mainstream environmental considerations to other relevant sectors, such as transport and energy, for sustainable infrastructure planning; and
- b. Collaborate with other relevant ASEAN sectoral bodies and support organizations (including the private sector, local government networks and non-governmental organizations) to: (i) mobilize 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

Output 1. 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

- a. Develop a baseline study on ESC and climate resiliency ASEAN City status, especially for selected cities, including vulnerability and adaptation capacity assessments;
- b. Develop greenhouse gas and short-lived climate pollutant audits for transport, construction, energy and waste sector at selected ASEAN cities; and
- c. Promote public participation and youth engagement towards climate resilient and sustainable urbanization.

Output 2. Demonstration of climate change mitigation and adaptation at selected ASEAN cities

- a. Select pilot cities for the implementation of small scale climate change mitigation and adaptation measures;
- b. 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;

- c. Pilot concrete adaptation and mitigation measures at the selected city level;
- d. Support selected cities in exploring external funding resources and instruments for scaling-up climate change adaptation and mitigation initiatives;
- e. Document and disseminate good practices and lessons learned from piloted concrete adaptation and mitigation measures; and
- f. Promote knowledge exchange between ASEAN cities, development partners and countries on climate change adaptation and mitigation.

Output 3. Enhanced coordination with ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management. 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).

Output 4. Climate and disaster resiliency incorporated in ASEAN eco-schools, safe school initiative and ASEAN Green Higher Education concept. Develop a regional framework for curriculum with local contents on climate and resilient cities.

UPDATES

ASEAN gives the Environmentally Sustainable Cities (ESC) Award to recognize cities that are clean, green and livable while being centers of economic and industrial activity. During the 4th ESC Awards held in Brunei Darussalam on 13 September 2017, San Carlos City once again received the ESC Award for the Philippines.

The ASEAN ESC Model Cities Programme, a regional initiative aimed at promoting the development of Environmentally Sustainable Cities (ESC) across ASEAN countries, is now on its third year. The program promotes innovative and voluntary bottom-up initiatives on solid waste management through capacity building, training and other methods to promote environmental sustainable cities. EMB Region 9 and Dipolog City hosted the Model Cities Year 3 National Conference on 28–30 March 2017. There were around 60 representatives from 20 Philippine 'Model cities', including Davao City, Calapan City, San Carlos City, Cebu City and others. Thailand's National Focal Point on Model Cities shared experiences from Thailand. Calapan, Davao and Dipolog Cities shared the progress of their sustainable city programs. Davao City presented its model of localizing the UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDGs). The city government had conducted an extensive baseline evaluation of the city's poli-

cies and quantitative indicators in relation to all 17 of the SDGs—a first among ASEAN’s Model Cities.

NEXT STEPS

1. The DENR shall coordinate with the DILG and the League of Cities for possible replication of the initiatives in other secondary cities or cities exhibiting fast urbanization rate. The League of Cities may render support to the DENR and DILG in promoting the gains realized in the model cities. The ASEAN ESC initiatives and strategies may also be tested in the context of Water Quality Management Areas (WQMAs), or in other environmental quality management areas created by existing environmental laws in order to strengthen environmental planning and implementation in those areas;
2. The relevant ESC strategies and activities shall be mainstreamed into the regular activities and plans of the EMB Regional Offices as may be deemed necessary;
3. Implementation of the ASEAN SDGs Frontrunner Cities Programme (2019-2020) in the country. Since the Philippine Development Plan (PDP) serves as the country’s roadmap in achieving the SDGs, the ASEAN SDGs Frontrunner Cities Programme framework may serve to strengthen the country’s capability in implementing the PDP and, consequently, achieving the SDGs. The roles and responsibilities of national agencies and local government units in implementing the Programme should be clearly specified at the outset.
4. Preparations for the hosting of the 11th EAS High-Level Seminar on Sustainable Cities by the Philippines in 2020. Meetings in preparation for the Philippines’ hosting are being conducted. Tasks and responsibilities of concerned DENR and EMB officials and personnel have been initially identified and will be firmed up as soon as funding, logistical and technical aspects have been finalized. There is a need to finalize the agreement with the ASEAN Secretariat and other development partners with regard to cost- or resource-sharing in organizing this event.
5. If the Philippines shall be designated as the lead country in the Implementation of the activities under ASPEN’s Strategic Priority 4 on Environmentally Sustainable Cities, it will have to spearhead their operationalization in the country and oversee related efforts in other ASEAN Member States. There is a need to review the requirements and scope of work to be appropriated to the national agencies and the cities to be piloted in the implementation of the activities. There is a need to undertake the necessary preparatory activities such stakeholders’ consultation, research, coordination, IEC

work, among others, to properly operationalize the said ASPEN Strategic Priority in the country.

FOCAL OFFICE

DENR Environmental Management Bureau
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MEETINGS ATTENDED

- 10th EAS High-Level Seminar on Sustainable Cities, 20–24 January 2019; Bali, Indonesia – DENR Asst. Secretary Corazon C. Davis and Ms Raquel Smith C. Ortega (EMB)
- 16th Meeting of the ASEAN Working Group on Environmentally Sustainable Cities (AWGESC), 2–3 May 2018; Balikpapan, Indonesia – Engr. Jean Boromeo (EMB)
- 9th EAS High-Level Seminar on Sustainable Cities, 8–10 March 2018; Siem Reap, Cambodia – Asst. Secretary Corazon C. Davis and Ms. Raquel Smith C. Ortega (EMB)
- 8th EAS High-Level Seminar on Sustainable Cities (formerly the 'High Level Seminar on Environmentally Sustainable Cities'), 7–10 February 2017; Chiang Rai City, Thailand – Ms Raquel Smith C. Ortega (EMB) and Ms. Karen C. Tandang (EMB Reg. 9)
- 7th High Level Seminar on Environmentally Sustainable Cities (HLS ESC), 3–4 March 2016; Hanoi, Vietnam – Reg. Dir. Clarissa Jacqueline A. Caanacan (EMB Reg. 9) and Ms Raquel Smith C. Ortega (EMB)

SOURCES/RELEVANT LINKS

<https://aseanmodelcities.org/>
<http://cleanairasia.org/node119/>