



Overview of the ASEAN ESC Model Cities Programme Year 1 (2011/12)

PROJECT NAME:
PROMOTION OF ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE CITIES (ESC)
IN ASEAN COUNTRIES

(“ASEAN ESC MODEL CITIES PROGRAMME”)

PROJECT NO.: ENV/EVN/10/006/REG

a) Background

The JAIF-funded project ‘Promotion of Environmentally Sustainable Cities (ESC) in ASEAN Countries’ (hereafter ‘**ASEAN ESC Model Cities Programme**’) is a programme of the ASEAN Working Group on ESC (AWGESC), with the ASEAN Secretariat and the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES) serving as the Regional Secretariat (RS) working with appointed National Focal Points (NFPs), selected local governments and other relevant stakeholders in participating countries.

The programme was conceived an umbrella initiative to pursue the five activities for promoting ESC recommended by the 1st High Level Seminar (HLS) on ESC (2 – 4 March 2010, Jakarta, Indonesia), which was organised under the framework of the East Asia Summit Environment Ministers Meeting (EAS EMM)¹.

The programme’s objective was to **promote the development of ESC in ASEAN countries through strengthening national ESC frameworks and building capacity of local governments**. Based on proposals of national and local governments, the programme provided seed funding, technical assistance and others forms of support to national and local activities which contribute to the realisation of ESC visions and goals. The implementation period for Year 1 was from April 2011 – March 2012 , with cost-sharing by participating governments and IGES, as well as in-

The programme commenced with a Call for Proposals issued in early May 2011. Proposals received from national and local governments were approved at the programme’s Inception Workshop and Launch (21 – 22 June 2011, Bangkok, Thailand). After funding arrangements were confirmed, implementation of activities began around September 2011 and concluded in March 2012.



Representatives of National Focal Points, ASEAN Secretariat, IGES and ESCAP (event co-organiser) at the Inception Workshop of the ASEAN ESC Model Cities Programme Year 1

b) Outputs

Funding assistance has been extended to **8 national governments** and **14 cities** (Table 3), supporting national and local capacity building in various ESC sectors, including solid waste management, water and sanitation,

¹ The EAS participating countries are the 10 ASEAN member states (Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam) plus Australia, China, India, Japan, Korea, New Zealand, Russia and United States. Russia and United States became participating countries in 2011.

urban greenery and low-carbon city development. The programme also helped to spread the concept of ESC and supported the development of community-led institutional structures for bottom-up environmental protection in certain cities. Overall, more than 15,000 persons have participated in the programme's activities.

Table 1: Summary of Main Achievements of Programme National Focal Points and Selected Local Model Cities (Year 1)

Country	National Focal Points / Model Cities	Main Achievements
Cambodia	National Focal Point (Ministry of Environment)	Helped to streamline ASEAN ESC Indicators and framework into a new nationwide ESC Campaign (Clean City Campaign)
	Phnom Penh	Initiation of a pilot plastic bag reduction campaign
	Siem Reap	Introduced waste segregation and composting projects in pilot communities
Indonesia	National Focal Point (Ministry of Environment)	Contributed to a nationwide roll-out of piloting waste banks in 16 cities
	Palembang	Establishment of 5 pilot waste banks within the city
	Surabaya	Establishment of 50 pilot waste banks within the city
Lao PDR	National Focal Point (Department of Housing and Urban Planning, Ministry of Public Works and Transport)	Strengthened project management skills of Xamneua District Municipality's staff, as well as initiating mini demo-projects in waste management, wastewater treatment and urban greenery
	Xamneua	
Malaysia	National Focal Point (Department of Environment, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment)	Expanded the capacity and improved the techniques of North Kuching city's composting centre and home-based composting campaign.
	North Kuching	
Myanmar	National Focal Point (Ministry of Environmental Conservation and Forestry; Ministry of Border Affairs)	A 10-day training programme for 10 officials on sustainable water distribution and quality management by Penang Water Agency, Malaysia
	Yangon	
Philippines	National Focal Point (Environmental Management Bureau, Department of Environment and Natural Resources)	Oriented 16 local governments on the ESC framework and concepts.
	Palo, Leyte	Piloted EM Bokashi composting in 16 communities and established waste banks in schools
	Puerto Princesa	Trained municipal officers and local communities on home and large-scale composting methods as well low-cost and decentralised wastewater treatment.
Thailand	National Focal Point (Office of Natural Resources)	Disseminated the good ESC practices of the selected cities to others

	and Environmental Policy and Planning, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment)	
	Mae Hong Son	Trained communities in waste segregation and composting as well as launched a city-wide grease trap management campaign
	Muangklang	Trained city stakeholders on 'Green, Clean and Low Carbon' city development and organised a study course for farmers on sustainable urban organic agriculture
	Phitsanulok	Revised and enhanced the curriculum of the Phitsanulok Model Community-based Waste Management and increased the number of trainers.
Viet Nam	National Focal Point (Vietnam Environment Administration (VEA))	Conducted baseline research and proposed a set of national ESC indicators suitable for Viet Nam's context
	Cao Lanh	Supported capacity building of municipal officers and raised the awareness, knowledge and capacity of city stakeholders on sustainable city development
	Danang	Established a pilot Environmentally Friendly Residential Area in the city

Meanwhile, the participating national governments established country-based national ESC Model Cities programme in the respective countries. In line with the programme's initiation strategy, several national programmes were streamlined with relevant ongoing national ESC initiatives, such as Indonesia (Adipura Environmental Awards), Malaysia (Bandar Lestari Sustainable City Awards) and Thailand (various national sustainable city awards). In Cambodia, the programme contributed to the launch of a new nationwide ESC campaign (Cambodia Clean City Campaign), while in Viet Nam, the programme helped to formulate a proposed set of ESC indicators suitable for Viet Nam.

In parallel with proponents' activities, the RS developed a **programme website** and a **prototype 'Sustainable Cities Asia Knowledge Hub'**, which consists of a database and an interactive online map. In line with the needs expressed by proponents, the Knowledge Hub aims to help users identify linkages and opportunities for collaboration among relevant stakeholders working on the theme of sustainable city development. The prototype version would undergo further development and is planned to be rolled out in Year 2.

While participating in ground activities, the RS also took the opportunity to survey the capacity building needs of selected local governments to identify priorities. Meanwhile, various forms of collaboration and linkages were explored with 13 stakeholders, some of which led to the mobilisation of additional resources (financial and in-kind) (Summarised in the table below).

Table 2: Summary of Additional Resources Mobilised through Linkages and Collaboration with Supporting Organisations

Supporting Organisations	Types of linkages and collaboration
United Nations Social and Economic Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)	Organising the Inception Workshop and Launch of the programme at the Fifth Asia-Pacific Urban Forum in Bangkok, Thailand (21 – 22 June 2011)
Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)	Participation costs of 1 representative from Kuching North (Malaysia) to attend a 1-month training course on Low Carbon City Development held from 26 Sep – 21 Oct. 2011 in Kitakyushu, Japan. Established linkages with JICA Lao PDR Project for Narrowing the Development Gap towards ASEAN Integration (LPPE)
Clean Air Initiative for Asian Cities (CAI-Asia)	Co-organised a Consultative Session on Country-based ESC Awards Programmes as a breakout session during the Better Air Quality Conference (BAQ) in November 2010 in Singapore Consultations on developing a knowledge base and map for sustainable city initiatives in the region
Penang Water Utility (PBA)	
USAID/ ECO-Asia Waterlinks Programme	Designed a tailor-made training programme on water distribution and quality management for Myanmar city officials
Sasebo (Environmental NPO in Nagasaki)	
Nonthaburi Municipality, Thailand	Provided training to North Kuching Municipality on expanding and enhancing home-based composting and operations of the city's composting centre
Governments of Australia, Cambodia, Japan and Thailand	Co-organising the programme's Grand Regional Seminar (linked with the 3 rd High Level Seminar on ESC)

The programme's **Grand Regional Seminar** (6 - 8 March 2012, Siem Reap, Cambodia) was incorporated with the **3rd High Level Seminar (HLS) on ESC** under the EAS EMM framework. The event was hosted by the Siem Reap Provincial Government and co-organised by the Governments of Japan, Cambodia, Australia and Thailand. An 'Informal Network Meeting for Local Governments' (supported by Kitakyushu City) was also held back-to-back with the Grand Regional Seminar. Participating countries and selected local governments presented their achievements and exchanged knowledge and experiences with a wide range of stakeholders from other East Asian cities, international development organisations, NGOs and the academia.



Photo: Participants of the programme's Grand Regional Seminar, which was incorporated with the 3rd High Level Seminar on Environmentally Sustainable Cities (HLS ESC). The seminar was attended by representatives from 14 national governments, 43 local governments and 44 supporting organisations

c) Achievements

Over a brief period of about 5 – 6 months, within expectations, many activities were organised to raise the capacity of local government officers, community members and other stakeholders. Beyond the individual ground activities, the programme also developed itself as a broad platform and service provider for catalysing, replicating and scaling up good ESC practices and policies in collaboration with stakeholders who are interested to work with leading sustainable cities in the region.

i) Achievements of Frontrunner Cities

Among the 14 selected cities were some well-known, award-winning 'frontrunner' green cities which have been active in other city networks and possess significant experience and skills in participating in such environment and sustainability programmes. These include Surabaya and Palembang in Indonesia; Mae Hong Son, Muangklang and Phitsanulok in Thailand; North Kuching in Malaysia and Puerto Princesa in the Philippines. These cities were apt at utilising the demand-based approach of this programme to organise initiatives that would not be supported by their regular budgets or by other organisations. Some cities effectively synergised programme activities with ongoing green initiatives that involved a broader range of stakeholders, thus enlarging the impacts. For example:

- In Philippines, local government budget regulations prevent municipalities/cities from using municipality funds to support initiatives in selective barangays (villages). However, once a particular barangay has been successful at implementing a good practice, the city is allowed to follow up on this by mobilising its own funds to support replication in other barangays. Hence, Puerto Princesa used

this programme's funds to assist a few 'model' barangays implement pilot activities. In that sense, although the assistance given by the programme was not very large, it functioned essentially as 'seed funding'.

- In Thailand, Mae Hong Son had been experimenting for some time with grease trap installations, but only at a demonstration level as this initiative was not prioritised by the municipal budget. With this programme's support, the municipality managed to scale its experimental initiative into a larger grease trap programme covering a large number of households.
- Muangklang is arguably Thailand's most famed 'low-carbon' small city, receiving thousands of visitors each year from Thailand and other countries at its Regional Low Carbon Learning Centre. Besides organising training events under this programme, the Mayor contributed the municipality's budget on top of the programme's funds to publish an English version of its good practices booklet so that its knowledge and low carbon philosophy can be disseminated to a regional and global audience.
- Phitsanulok Municipality is one of Thailand's most pioneering cities in terms of 3Rs management. Due to a lack of funding, it had not been able to revise its famous but outdated community-based waste management (CBM) curriculum which has been adopted by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment in the national Local Agenda 21 campaign. The programme's funds enabled them to revise and enhance the CBM curriculum which will benefit more Thai municipalities in time to come.
- Surabaya is one of Indonesia's top green cities and is well known for its successful implementation of a community-based composting which addressed the problem of organic waste. The municipality combined the programme's training activities on waste banks with its citywide Surabaya 'Green and Clean' Campaign initiated in 2005, which enjoys strong support from the private sector (Unilever and Jawa Pos, a regional newspaper). In fact, the establishment of waste banks was made one of the official criteria for its 'Greenest and Cleanest' contest which rewards the greenest communities annually with an award and other prizes. Although the waste bank concept was already known among the local community, this programme provided the catalyst to formally train communities and establish pilot waste banks on a wider scale.



Left to right: Cao Lanh City's (Viet Nam) newly established citizen-led environmental protection units who will lead ESC activities develop and implement future ESC projects in pilot communities; City officials from Myanmar cities at a lecture for Water Supply and Quality Management Training Course in Penang, Malaysia; Villagers of Kampung Muara Tebas, pilot community in North Kuching (Malaysia) participating actively in the EM Bokashi training workshop taught by experts from Japan and Nonthaburi Municipality, Thailand.



Left to right: Villagers in Xamneua Town (Lao PDR) learning during a workshop on composting and proper waste management; School children who participated in Muangklang City's (Thailand) low carbon city project; Citizens of Palo, Leyte (Philippines) learning how to produce useful EM (Effective Microorganisms) liquid from food and organic waste.

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ii) Achievements of Other Cities

On the other hand, another group of cities selected under this programme were highly motivated including cities in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Viet Nam. Similar to the group of advanced cities, these cities used the programme funds to organise under-supported initiatives, primarily small-scale demonstration activities and broad public education campaigns that would otherwise have not materialised due to lack of domestic budget or incompatibility with funding priorities of other organisations. The programme's funds provided the impetus for these cities to take the initial step towards urban sustainability, and ultimately co-fund these activities with their own resources.

For these cities, it must be noted that equally valuable to the achievement from capacity training activities organised was the process of participating and managing this project. Essential project management skills such as proposal writing, planning, coordinating stakeholders, implementation as well as monitoring and evaluation were strengthened, which is expected to increase the likelihood of these cities to draw from other sources of assistance for future activities.

iii) Institutional Achievements

Though less tangible, from the institutional perspective the programme has contributed to some meaningful achievements at the national and regional level.

First, this programme's regional network and multi-level, multi-stakeholder framework has helped to carve out or strengthen alternative mechanisms of communication and interaction.

- A primary mechanism enables **cooperation between cities**, especially on a mentor-recipient basis (twinning). Cities within a country or across countries usually do not engage with each other through traditional institutional structures, but cross-city learning was actively facilitated by this programme. The outcomes have been highly positive as concrete occurrences of city-to-city learning have transpired under this programme, for example, transfer of composting techniques and approaches from Nonthaburi Municipality (Thailand), Kitakyushu City (Japan) and Sasebo (an NPO based in Nagasaki Prefecture, Japan) to North Kuching (Malaysia), replication of Yogyakarta's waste bank model to Surabaya and Palembang (Indonesia) and Palo Municipality learning from Puerto Princesa on composting methods.
- A secondary mechanism was also established between **other supporting stakeholders**. By assigning an aspirational and prestigious title (Model Cities) to the selected cities and providing them a platform to promote their achievements, this programme helped to attract resources from other organisations such as ESCAP, JICA and others which may approach the 'good' cities in the form of projects, or offer capacity-building and networking opportunities such as seminars and training courses targeted at local governments. This is in support of a growing trend for organisations to work at the local level, which is essential for actual implementation of policies and realisation of impacts.
- A third mechanism is at the country level, through the enhancement or establishment of country-based national Model Cities programmes. In most countries, the **national-local channels of communication** are usually weak. This channel was strengthened through the national Model Cities programmes, where national governments are encouraged to embrace the roles of the promoter, nurturer and facilitator, rather than as a regulator and instructor. During the Call for Proposals, they were required to actively engage the largest possible number of local governments, and during project implementation their role was to understand local demands and monitor the progress being made, which would help to foster a more collaborative as opposed to a top-down relationship between national and local actors. Ultimately, the national governments are recommended to establish and play an active role in a nationwide city platform, which would also form the basis of the regional ASEAN city network.

iv) ASEAN and EAS Collaboration Platform

Finally, underpinning the achievements at all levels was the programme's ASEAN and EAS cooperation framework which is based on principles of equal contribution and participation. The programme's regional framework instilled among members a spirit of fellowship and receptiveness to new ideas. National governments and cities feel more motivated to undertake further improvements or attempt new approaches

when they see the accomplishment of their peers in the region. Meanwhile the inclusiveness of the ASEAN and EAS periodical reporting mechanism (involving all member and participating countries from the Working Group, to the Senior Officials and then to the Ministers) instilled an expectation to maintain a momentum for sustaining actions.

In essence, the programme has resulted in the development of a broad platform under the ASEAN and EAS framework for making constructive comparisons and drawing references. This platform had the potential to grow and become self-sustaining as long as ASEAN members and EAS participating countries provide enough commitment to the important agenda of urban sustainability.

d) Way Forward

The outputs and achievements of the programme was reported to the following ASEAN meetings:

- 22nd ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on the Environment, 5th ASEAN-Japan Dialogue on Environmental Cooperation, 8th ASEAN Plus Three Senior Officials Meeting on the Environment and Officials Meeting for the 3rd East Asia Summit Environment Ministers Meeting held in September 2012, Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam.
- 13th Informal ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on the Environment and 10th ASEAN Plus Three Environment Ministers Meeting held in Phnom Penh, Cambodia in October 2011.

Based on the positive performance of the programme, these meetings endorsed preparations for extending the programme into Year 2. Subsequently, in January 2011 the RS commenced drafting a proposal for Year 2 activities.

At the programme's Grand Regional Seminar (3rd HLS ESC) (Siem Reap, Cambodia, 6 -7 March 2013), as well as the 4th HLS ESC (Hanoi, Viet Nam, 21 – 22 March 2013), proponents expressed strong interest to continue programme into the next year. Various forms of supports and potential ideas for collaboration with this programme were presented by representatives of supporting organisations.

At the time of writing this paper, the draft proposal for programme extension into Year 2 has been submitted to JAIF for consideration. While waiting for response from JAIF, the Regional Secretariat continued to conduct research, exploring collaboration with potential partners and consolidating feedback and lessons gained from Year 1's implementation towards improving implementation in Year 2.

For more details and photos of selected Model Cities, kindly visit the programme's website at <http://modelcities.hls-esc.org>