

## **ASEAN-U.S. Environment and Climate Work Plan**

### **Preamble**

Recognizing the commitment made in the Plan of Action to Implement the ASEAN-US Strategic Partnership (2021-2025) and its Annex to cooperation on environment and climate change; Recognizing that ASEAN-U.S. summit as well as senior official and ministerial meetings have reinforced a shared commitment to climate action, supporting a green economic recovery and cooperation on mitigation, adaptation, technology development and transfer under mutually agreed terms and conditions, finance, capacity building, and climate-resilient cities;

Recognizing that these areas align with and support strategic priorities under the forthcoming ASEAN strategic plan on environment, the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Blueprint 2025 and sustainable development and climate change priorities in the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific;

Recognizing the ASEAN Working Group on Climate Change Plan of Action (AWGCC) 2019-2025 and supporting its eight core themes: climate change adaptation; long-term planning and assessment of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs); climate change mitigation; climate modelling and assessment; measurement, reporting, and verification and stocktake of greenhouse gas emissions; climate financing and market; cross-sectoral coordination; and technology transfer.

Recognizing ASEAN's commitment to a "more sustainable and resilient future" under the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework;

ASEAN and the United States at the ASEAN-U.S. Ministerial Meeting on Climate and Environment in August 2023 stated their intention to develop and implement this five-year ASEAN-U.S. Environment and Climate Work Plan.

### **Four Areas of ASEAN-U.S. Cooperation**

This ASEAN-U.S. Environment and Climate Work Plan incorporates the eight core themes of the ASEAN Working Group on Climate Change Plan of Action and priority areas under the ASEAN-U.S. Strategic Plan of Action into four ASEAN-U.S. climate and environment priorities.

This Work Plan focuses on sustained engagement, cooperation and capacity-building to support ASEAN Member States to achieve targets and objectives under the ASEAN Working Group on Climate Change Plan of Action, the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Blueprint 2025, the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific, and the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework. The Work Plan will support efforts to pursue the highest possible ambition in responding to climate change, including the fulfilment of Nationally-Determined Contributions (NDCs), with a view towards the achievement of net-zero

greenhouse gas emissions consistent with a pathway to keeping a 1.5-degree Celsius temperature increase within reach.

To implement these areas of cooperation, the United States intends to coordinate closely with the relevant ASEAN sectoral bodies, ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity, ASEAN Centre for Energy, the ASEAN Centre for Climate Change, and the ASEAN Secretariat to ensure consistency and transparency in the proposed environment and climate activities.

## 1. **Enhancing Climate Ambition and Regional Mitigation and Adaptation**

This priority aims to support themes 1-5 under the ASEAN Working Group on Climate Change Plan of Action. The United States will support ASEAN Member States to establish net-zero strategies and enhance and implement their 2030 Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) in ways that further national development priorities and create momentum towards a zero-emissions, climate resilient future.

USAID currently implements programs on adaptation, renewable energy, and natural climate solutions across the ASEAN region to improve responsible management of natural resources, accelerate emission reductions in energy systems and promote international environmental standards.

Existing and future cooperation:

- o The **U.S.-ASEAN Climate Solutions Hub** will provide technical assistance to ASEAN Member States in order to accelerate implementation of their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and related low-emission development and resilience strategies. The U.S. plans to support ASEAN Member States on climate and energy priorities, including providing technical and analytical support to strengthen regional connectivity, improve grid resilience and security, and advance both short- and long-term emission reductions. The U.S. will also support on-demand requests for assistance to address NDC implementation, reporting, or updating as well as more involved requests to strengthen nations' long-term strategies.
- o The **U.S.-ASEAN Smart Cities Partnership (USASCP)** is working to help ASEAN cities develop sustainable urban solutions to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change. U.S. agencies have launched 20 projects to improve sustainable transportation, water management and resource reuse, and energy modelling for the cities in the ASEAN Smart Cities Network.
- o Under the **Mekong-U.S. Partnership (MUSP)**, the United States engages ASEAN Mekong countries on climate adaptation and resilience, including through technical assistance. The U.S.-backed Mekong Water Data Initiative increases water data transparency and empowers the Mekong River Commission and Mekong countries to jointly manage climate-related impacts on the Mekong River through technical assistance and tools like the Mekong Dam Monitor. The USAID and Australia Mekong Safeguards Program provides stakeholders with information and

tools to apply environmental, social, and governance standards for infrastructure development in the Mekong sub-region; to improve transparency in infrastructure decision-making and accelerate the role of the private sector as a driver of development.

- o **SERVIR-Southeast Asia (SERVIR SEA)**, a partnership between USAID and NASA, supports governments, regional institutions, and other stakeholders to build climate resilience by using publicly available satellite data to improve decision making on regional climate challenges, including disaster preparedness and response, food security, water resource and land management, and air quality. As one of five in a global network of SERVIR hubs, its demand-driven tools build the capacity of governments and regional institutions to integrate geospatial information into policy making and climate action. Explore cooperation with ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (AHA Centre) on data related to disaster preparedness and response and adapt to the effects of climate change, such as rising sea levels, more frequent flooding, drought and other extreme weather events, heightened risk of water-energy-food insecurity, and ever-more-destructive storms.
- o The National Renewable Energy Laboratory's **LEDS-GP** program, working with ASEAN Member States, will support the development of low-emissions development strategies across sectors, providing technical and analytical resources to enable net-zero pathways.
- o The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (USEPA) work through the **Global Methane Initiative (GMI)** looks to continue engagement with ASEAN Member States on methane mitigation in the region through the three sectors (biogas, coal mine methane and oil and gas). Through the Global Methane Pledge, USEPA and GMI work to support increased ambitious action to reduce global methane emissions in ASEAN Member States.
- o USEPA's **Transparency Accelerator** for Greenhouse Gas Inventories initiative works with ASEAN Member States to support the establishment, maintenance, and improvement of developing country sustainable greenhouse gas inventory management systems that enable high-quality inventory reports, consistent with the reporting requirements under the Enhanced Transparency Framework of the Paris Agreement.
- Recognizing that the clean energy transition is critical to tackling the climate crisis, the United States takes a holistic approach that also supports emissions reductions in ASEAN's energy sector with programs that complement—our environment and climate engagement. These initiatives include: the Smart Power Program, E4SEA, and the Advanced Energy Partnership for Asia.

## 2. Innovation for a Low-Carbon Future

This priority aims to identify technology and innovation needs, technical exchanges and opportunities for cooperation with ASEAN Member States to support theme eight under the ASEAN Working Group on Climate Change Plan of Action.

Existing and future cooperation:

- o The **U.S. ASEAN Connect Green Economy Series** will leverage public and private U.S. experts to advise ASEAN audiences on technology, solutions, and best practices across a range of environmental issues, including green recovery, circular economy, blue economy, climate action, air pollution and sustainable, climate resilient infrastructure.
- o The **USASCP** is increasing smart cities cooperation with Japan and the Republic of Korea to advance resource recovery and reuse towards net-zero solutions.

### **3. Mobilizing Climate Finance**

As ASEAN recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic, the United States will support ASEAN Member States in mobilizing climate finance and promoting the flow of capital toward climate-aligned investments, by working with institutions like the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation, regional financial institutions, and others. U.S. President Biden has pledged to work with Congress to increase U.S. annual public climate finance to developing countries to \$11.4 billion by 2024, including for adaptation efforts. This Priority will support theme six under the ASEAN Working Group on Climate Change Plan of Action.

Existing and future cooperation:

- o The U.S. International Development Finance Corporation is committing to achieve a net zero investment portfolio by 2040, the earliest target of any G7 or G20 development finance institution (DFI), and to make at least one-third of all its new investments have a climate nexus beginning in FY 2023.

### **4. Supporting Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation**

This priority aims to support the areas of environment cooperation under the ASEAN-U.S. Plan of Action, including through support for implementation of the action plan under the ASEAN Working Group on Nature Conservation and Biodiversity and encouraging collaboration with existing institutions including the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity and the ASEAN Flyway Network. The United States will also continue to promote regional collaboration to combat marine debris in line with the 2018 EAS Leaders' Statement on Combating Marine Plastic Debris and the ASEAN Framework of Action on Marine Debris.

Existing and future cooperation:

- USAID's regional programs, including USAID Reducing Demand for Wildlife (RDW), supported the ASEAN Working Group on CITES and Wildlife Enforcement. RDW supported the development of a Regional Plan of Action to strengthen the region's response to wildlife crime by convening policy makers, regional institutions, legislators, enforcement officials, prosecutors, and judges to enhance the regulatory and enforcement systems through partnerships with the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, ASEAN Chiefs of National Police (ASEANAPOL), and the Asian Judges Network for the Environment. RDW ended in February 2023, and USAID plans continued engagement to counter regional wildlife trafficking through a new program to launch in 2023.
- To conserve marine biodiversity and combat illegal, unregulated, and unreported (IUU) fishing, USAID Sustainable Fish Asia Technical Support (SuFiA TS) activity works to support the ASEAN Sectoral Working Group in Fisheries to strengthen regional coordination, address gender and labor concerns, enhance fisheries trade and compliance, and promote tools for combating IUU fishing.
- US EPA engages in international cooperative activities to reduce exposure to lead to protect public health, especially children. For example, EPA is Chair of the Global Alliance to Eliminate Lead Paint that promotes the phase out of the manufacture, export and sale of lead paint through the development and implementation of laws.
- As transboundary haze is a top environmental concern for ASEAN, the United States and ASEAN will further explore possible cooperation on this topic, including further discussions to identify opportunities to support the establishment and operationalization of the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Transboundary Haze Pollution (ACC THPC) in the implementation of the ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution (AATHP), as well as ways to address pollution control, land and/or forest fire prevention.