



USAID | **ASIA**
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

ENVIRONMENTAL COOPERATION - ASIA

Catalyzing change through regional cooperation



ECO-ASIA PROGRAMS

WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION
ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE
BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION
SUSTAINABLE COASTAL LIVELIHOODS
TSUNAMI EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS



DMITRI IVANOV

ABOVE: Loss of biodiversity in the Greater Mekong Subregion is occurring faster than anywhere else in the world.

BACKGROUND

ASIA'S ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGE

As the fastest growing region in the world, Asia faces unprecedented environmental challenges with disproportionate impacts on the urban poor and women. Environmental impacts reach across international borders emphasizing the importance of regional cooperation on natural resource management, pollution control, environmental enforcement, and conflict resolution.

USAID RESPONSE

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Regional Development Mission/Asia (RDM/A) established a regional environment office in Bangkok, Thailand to address transnational environmental issues in Asia through

regional cooperation. In implementing regional activities, USAID works closely with international development partners to strengthen regional institutions and networks that can sustain and multiply environmental improvements.

ENVIRONMENTAL COOPERATION-ASIA

To address regional environmental challenges, USAID established Environmental Cooperation-Asia, or ECO-Asia, a regional program that promotes a range of initiatives that aim to:

- Improve access to clean water and sanitation;
- Reduce, prevent and mitigate pollution;
- Improve sustainable management of natural resources and biodiversity conservation; and

- Promote and improve tsunami response and reconstruction.

As cross-cutting regional initiatives, ECO-Asia promotes improved environmental governance and transboundary cooperation.

Under ECO-Asia, USAID develops a combination of national and regional activities in partnership with Asian governments, cities, and other organizations and agencies, including the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, to promote regional dialogue in sharing and replicating innovation across Asia. Key program countries include: India, Indonesia, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Vietnam. Cross-cutting regional initiatives include promoting improved environmental governance and transboundary cooperation.

BELOW: As the fastest growing region in the world, Asia faces unprecedented environmental challenges, with the greatest impacts expected in Asia's growing cities.

STAFF PHOTO, US-AEP



APPROACH

Catalyzing Change through Regional Cooperation. Sharing best practices is at the heart of USAID's ECO-Asia programs. By demonstrating innovation and sharing experience through counterpart exchange and regional cooperation, ECO-Asia works to catalyze change at both the country and regional levels.

Implementation Strategy. ECO-Asia works with country and city partners to pilot improved environmental policies and practices which are disseminated through regional networks and platforms. ECO-Asia's primary implementation strategy includes:

- Piloting country interventions that lead to improved policies, practices and systems;
- Sharing and replicating experiences from pilots and other interventions through technical exchange, regional tools, and regional networks and organizations; and
- Leveraging resources and regional experience through cooperation with USAID bilateral country missions and international development partners.

Resources and Activities. For all ECO-Asia program activities, USAID contractors and implementing partners deploy a range of program resources, including targeted technical assistance, coordination support, small grants, exchanges, and communications support. In collaboration with program partners, USAID applies an integrated mix of these resources to support policy formulation workshops, targeted studies, awareness campaigns, peer-to-peer exchanges, counterpart "twinning" arrangements, regional toolkits, regional forums and trainings, and communication tools.

Gender Mainstreaming. Across all country and regional activities, ECO-Asia works proactively with networks, agencies and civil society leaders to develop gender-inclusive country and regional policies and tools. ECO-Asia promotes the effective participation of women in policy development, participatory planning, project development, and awareness-raising.

Regional Collaboration. As a regional mission, USAID/RDM/A works closely with bilateral USAID missions in the

development of country and regional activities to complement ongoing mission programs and link with mission priorities. To amplify and replicate results, USAID also works closely with a wide range of development partners, including the World Bank, Asian Development Bank (ADB), Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

BELOW: As the fastest growing region in the world, Asia faces unprecedented environmental challenges with disproportionate impacts on the urban poor and women.

ROBERT JAMES ELLIOTT





JAYTESSON

WATER AND SANITATION

Widespread migration to urban centers throughout Asia is placing tremendous stress on urban water supply and sanitation services, with a disproportionate impact on the poor and women. Improving access to clean water and adequate sanitation for the urban poor is among the highest priorities facing Asian decision-makers. ECO-Asia supports achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) water targets through work with selected water services providers, local governments, civil society, and financial institutions to expand and improve service delivery through sustainable solutions.

EXPANDING WATER SERVICE DELIVERY

For most water service providers in Asia, revenues do not cover recurring expenditures, leading to a vicious cycle of service delivery decline. Many Asian service providers operate inefficiently, which can lead to poor service, inadequate skills development and limited investment, resulting in customer dissatisfaction and low willingness to pay. As a result, these service providers often have limited

financial resources to maintain existing services and finance expansions.

Activities. ECO-Asia works with water service providers to expand and improve service delivery through demonstration projects that pilot improved policies and practices in corporate management and governance. ECO-Asia works with partner agencies and organizations to promote improved enabling environments, such as water pricing and regulation, and also develops innovative models that expand service coverage to the poor. Through work with pilot cities, ECO-Asia facilitates counterpart exchange and “twinning” arrangements between U.S. and Asian water service providers and develops regional training and toolkits.

Implementing Partners: PADCO, The Asia Foundation, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Southeast Asian Water Utilities Network (SEAWUN)

SUSTAINABLE SANITATION SOLUTIONS

Sanitation services in Asia are generally

ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE

Good governance is central to improving the effective delivery of urban environmental services, management of natural resources and protection of vital ecosystems in Asia. Strengthening the governance systems and capacity of national and local governments is a critical strategy for improving environmental conditions, and promoting overall transparency, accountability and respect for the rule of law in the region.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT

While many Asian governments have developed new environmental legal frameworks to respond to environmental challenges, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws has remained weak due to technical, financial and human resource limitations. With support from ECO-Asia and Asian Development Bank (ADB), in 2005 Asian

leaders established the Asian Environmental Compliance and Enforcement Network (AECEN), a regional practitioner network which promotes improved compliance with environmental legal requirements through regional exchange of innovative policies and practices.

Activities. Through support to the AECEN Secretariat, ECO-Asia works with AECEN member countries to assess country compliance and enforcement programs and implement pilot activities that demonstrate innovation. Developed in partnership with local stakeholders, pilot activities incorporate ECO-Asia small grants, technical assistance and counterpart exchange to promote adoption of new environmental policies, practices and systems, and link to capacity strengthening efforts and performance indicators. ECO-Asia also supports the AECEN annual forum, as well as regional training and toolkits.

Implementing Partners: PADCO, The Asia Foundation, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

TRANSBOUNDARY CONFLICT RESOLUTION

ECO-Asia works with target watersheds in Asia to demonstrate strategies for addressing transboundary environmental disputes through regional cooperation. In the Mekong River basin, ECO-Asia works with the Mekong River Commission (MRC) and the four lower Mekong countries of Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, and Vietnam to develop methods and tools for addressing potential watershed disputes related to planned development activities. In particular, ECO-Asia collaborates with the MRC to promote the adoption of improved conflict management policies, plans and mechanisms at the regional and country levels related to basin development planning,



ABOVE: Increasing access to safe drinking water can have significant poverty reduction benefits, especially for women and children. AT LEFT: Less than half of all Asians have access to sanitation, which is lower than in any other region in the world.

under-funded and do not apply business models for sustained service. In some cases, governments have constructed wastewater collection and treatment systems, but do not undertake necessary maintenance measures. Inherent financial constraints or limited application of user fees also reduce system effectiveness, and prevent long term growth of sanitation services.

Activities. ECO-Asia works with target communities to support development of pilot projects that demonstrate sustainable sanitation solutions. Through a participatory planning process, ECO-Asia assists local communities in structuring investments in treatment facilities that address community priorities, including deploying low-cost technologies for public and commercial

facilities, septage management systems for domestic sources, and rehabilitation of existing facilities. To promote regional cooperation, ECO-Asia facilitates counterpart exchange for national and regional sanitation-related activities.

Implementing Partners: PADCO, The Asia Foundation

INNOVATIVE FINANCING

Many water service providers and cities in Asia do not have the financial standing or capability to obtain the investment resources necessary to develop or expand water and wastewater systems. Developing the necessary credentials to put forward “bankable” projects can be a significant challenge requiring improved technical and

governance systems.

Activities. In support of pilot activities, ECO-Asia works with pilot cities to finance new water and sanitation systems through targeted financing assistance. ECO-Asia also works with financial intermediaries and other organizations to develop and replicate innovative, sustainable financing mechanisms, including revolving funds, bond pools, and special water/sanitation loan windows in financial institutions. ECO-Asia assists lenders in developing loan products that are specifically designed for utilities in transition.

Implementing Partners: PADCO, The Asia Foundation, The Communities Group International

AT RIGHT: Addressing weak and uneven enforcement of environmental laws is a top priority of Asian decision-makers.

water utilization, environment, fisheries, navigation, hydropower, watershed management, and flood management.

Activities. To build country and regional strategies and capabilities for addressing actual conflicts, ECO-Asia’s approach involves facilitating counterpart exchange among riparian Mekong countries through specialized trainings and tools. In partnership with the MRC, ECO-Asia also promotes linkages with other international commissions in other watersheds to promote the sharing experience and replication of best practices.

Implementing Partners: PADCO, The Asia Foundation, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Mekong River Commission



POLLUTION CONTROL DEPARTMENT, THAILAND

BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION

Biodiversity is disappearing faster from the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) than anywhere else on Earth. Rapid development in local economic corridors has fragmented natural landscapes, isolating critical ecosystems and turning conservation areas into ever shrinking islands. Burgeoning infrastructure likewise facilitates poaching, endangered species trafficking and illegal wildlife consumption on a grand scale. To counter these losses, ECO-Asia has undertaken two conservation initiatives.

ASEAN WILDLIFE ENFORCEMENT NETWORK (ASEAN-WEN) SUPPORT PROJECT

Through support for the ASEAN Wildlife Enforcement Network (ASEAN-WEN), ECO-Asia helps suppress wildlife crime. ASEAN-WEN is an intergovernmental initiative by ASEAN countries, and is also

a multi-agency undertaking with involvement of police, customs officials and other authorities tasked with implementing the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). The Network provides a means for improved wildlife law enforcement at the national level, as well as better cross-border cooperation to respond effectively to illegal wildlife trade. ECO-Asia's ASEAN-WEN Support Project promotes these networking efforts by providing models for effective wildlife law enforcement, building capacity in participating government agencies and bringing officials from different countries together to resolve cross-border wildlife crime.

Activities. By fostering the creation of national task forces and promoting effective interagency coordination,

ASEAN-WEN is improving regional cooperation on wildlife law enforcement issues. Through task force trainings, the ASEAN-WEN Support Project also strengthens the capacities of Asian governments to uphold their respective laws for protection of threatened and endangered wildlife. ASEAN-WEN works closely with international bodies, such as the CITES and ASEAN Secretariats, to promote best practices, intelligence exchanges and cross-border cooperative activities.

Implementing Partners: Government of Thailand, WildAid, TRAFFIC, ASEAN, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Department of State, U.S. Department of Justice, U.S. Forest Service, CITES Secretariat



ABOVE: Sustainable fishing and aquaculture practices are at the forefront of ECO-Asia's efforts to protect the future of the region's coastal ecosystem and the well-being of coastal populations.

PAVEL POSPISIL

SUSTAINABLE COASTAL LIVELIHOODS

The December 2004 tsunami devastated Thailand's Andaman coast. A total of 392 villages and some 54,500 people were affected; over 4,500 fishing boats were destroyed or seriously damaged. Under its Post-Tsunami Sustainable Coastal Livelihoods Program, ECO-Asia is working to rebuild and diversify the livelihoods of severely affected fishing communities on the Andaman Coast in Thailand, and to demonstrate effective practices of community-based disaster preparedness.

Activities. To ensure new and diversified livelihoods, the Post-Tsunami Sustainable Coastal Livelihoods Program introduces new production technologies to coastal villages through targeted technical assistance and workshops. The program trains communities in sustainable aquaculture, such as freshwater catfish, brackish water tilapia culture, seaweed, bivalves, and abalone. The program determines how the introduction of new production techniques affects aquaculture growth, and examines the change in livelihood attitudes toward

fish culture and wild capture following a major natural disaster. In addition, ECO-Asia also supports a micro-finance revolving fund where entrepreneurs in certain villages have access to small loans.

Implementing Partners: University of Rhode Island, Asian Institute of Technology (AIT) and University of Hawaii-Hilo



LUKE DUGGLEBY

ASIA REGIONAL BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION PROGRAM

Through ECO-Asia, the Asia Regional Biodiversity Conservation Program works with the Government of Vietnam and the Asian Development Bank's Biodiversity Conservation Corridors Initiative (BCI) to establish a biodiversity conservation landscape in the Dong Nai River Basin in Vietnam. The conservation landscape is designed and managed to restore and maintain ecosystem connectivity, promote biodiversity conservation and improve the livelihoods of the rural poor. Central to this program is a Payment of Environmental Services (PES) scheme, which offers a tangible means of financing biodiversity conservation management, while also generating tangible economic benefits for the rural poor. This pilot conservation landscape serves as a regional model for estab-

lishing future conservation landscapes in Vietnam and other Asian countries.

Activities. Working in partnership with the Government of Vietnam, ECO-Asia promotes landscape-level economic planning that integrates biodiversity conservation into the development plans for the Dong Nai watershed. Through targeted technical assistance and training, ECO-Asia prioritizes actions needed to conserve biodiversity conservation based on high biodiversity irreplaceability, high level of threat and low opportunity costs of conservation. Results will impact up to five conservation corridors implemented under the BCI.

Implementing Partners: Winrock International, The World Conservation Union (IUCN)

AT LEFT: Asia is a global hotspot for the poaching, trafficking and consumption of illegal wildlife parts and products.

INDIAN OCEAN TSUNAMI WARNING SYSTEM

On December 26, 2004, a 9.3 magnitude earthquake struck off the coast of Sumatra, Indonesia, triggering a massive tsunami that severely impacted South and Southeast Asian countries, killing almost 300,000 people in eight countries within a few hours. At the time, no country in the region had any systems in place either to detect the tsunami or to issue proper warnings to the public.

Under the U.S. Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning System (IOTWS) Program, USAID and other U.S. Government agencies share technical expertise, provide guidance, and help build early warning system capacity within the Indian Ocean region to enable governments and communities to detect and prepare for future tsunamis and related coastal hazards. These partners work very

closely with UNESCO's Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC), the United Nations agency that has primary responsibility for developing the Indian Ocean's regional tsunami warning capabilities, as well as individual national and local governments to strengthen the capacity of their disaster warning systems.

Activities. The U.S. IOTWS Program addresses hazard detection, prediction, warning, communication, and preparedness at all critical levels. Major activities include:

- Regional support for the design and development of regional hazard observation and communications systems, tsunami warning center capacity building, warning formulation standards and protocols, and data-sharing strategies;

- National support for disaster management organizations, tsunami/disaster warning center capacity building, planning, policy and regulations, communications and notification systems, and hazard mapping and modeling;
- Local support for promoting Coastal Community Resilience that combines disaster preparedness and coastal hazard mitigation with Integrated Coastal Management; and
- Cross-cutting support for region-wide training, educational exchanges and knowledge-sharing information systems on tsunami and related disaster warning systems.

Implementing Partners: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), U.S. Department of Agriculture/ Forest Service (USDA/FS), U.S. Trade and Development Agency (USTDA), and a Program Integrator (PI) contractor, including IRG-TetraTech Joint Venture, the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC), University of Rhode Island, and others

TETRA TECH, INC



AT LEFT: The IOTWS Program addresses hazard detection, prediction, warning, communication, and preparedness at all critical levels.



usaid.eco-asia.org

Winston Bowman - Regional Environment Director
Regional Development Mission/Asia

U.S. Agency for International Development

GPF Witthayu Tower A, 10th Floor, 93/1 Wireless Road Bangkok, Thailand 10330

Office +66-2-263-7400 - Fax +66-2-263-7499

info@eco-asia.org