



Environmental Cooperation – Asia (ECO-Asia)

Environmental Compliance and Enforcement



Addressing weak and uneven enforcement of environmental laws is a top priority of Asian decision-makers. (Pollution Control Department/Thailand)

REGIONAL COOPERATION Coping with the environmental impacts of rapid urbanization and industrial growth remains a significant challenge for Asia. While many governments have developed environmental legal and institutional frameworks to respond to this challenge, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws remains weak due in large part to technical, financial and human resource limitations. Common challenges include: overlapping and fragmented authority, limited interagency coordination, incomplete decentralization, lack of standardized procedures, weak human and institutional capacity, limited public outreach and involvement, and insufficient program data and performance indicators.

AECEN: REGIONAL COOPERATION AND NETWORKING In 2005, with support from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB), environmental agency leaders from 13 Asian countries established the Asian Environmental Compliance and Enforcement Network (AECEN), a regional practitioner network. AECEN’s mission is: to promote improved compliance with environmental legal requirements in Asia through regional exchange of innovative policies and practices. Network objectives are to:

- Promote the development and implementation of improved environmental policies, laws, regulations, and institutional arrangements;
- Strengthen practitioner capacity through specialized training and skills development; and
- Facilitate regional sharing of best practices and information on strengthening compliance and enforcement.



NETWORK MEMBERS AND SECRETARIAT Network members are national and sub-national agencies from Asian countries committed to improving compliance and enforcement through regional cooperation and information exchange. Members appoint national coordinators responsible for the development and implementation of environmental policies and laws, including compliance promotion and enforcement. An Executive Committee, composed of representatives from members and sponsoring development agencies, serves as the governing body of the Network. At present, network members include environmental agencies from: India, Indonesia, People’s Republic of China, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Vietnam. With support from USAID and ADB, the AECEN Secretariat works with members to support the design and implementation of

country and regional activities. The Secretariat also provides an information support and coordination function, including assisting in organizing the AECEN Annual Forum.

NETWORK ACTIVITIES Sharing best practices and strategies on effective environmental compliance and enforcement is at the heart of AECEN. With support from the AECEN Secretariat and network partners, members engage in activities that strengthen legal and regulatory frameworks and human and institutional capacity for improved compliance and enforcement. Primary activities include: Country program assessments; Country pilot activities; Regional cooperation and training; Compliance and enforcement indicators; and Annual forums.

The AECEN Secretariat prepares an annual work plan of all network activities for review and approval by the AECEN Executive Committee.

Country Program Assessments Identifying common environmental compliance and enforcement challenges provide a strong basis for regional cooperation and dialogue. With assistance from the AECEN Secretariat and other partners, network members develop country program assessments that define country priorities for strengthening institutions, policies and capabilities.

Country Pilot Activities To demonstrate new approaches for achieving impact on the ground, members work with the Secretariat to develop and implement pilot activities in priority areas identified by country program assessments. Developed in partnership with local stakeholders, pilot activities promote adoption of new policies, practices and systems, and link to capacity strengthening efforts and performance indicators. ECO-Asia support for pilot projects includes small grants, technical assistance and counterpart exchange.

Regional Cooperation and Training AECEN facilitates regional counterpart exchange, and conducts regional training to promote the sharing of best practices and lessons learned. The Secretariat is also working with AECEN members to adopt regional guiding principles that reflect international best practices and establish a platform for reform and regional cooperation.

Compliance and Enforcement Indicators To measure progress and ensure commitment to reform, the AECEN Secretariat and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency work with members to develop environmental compliance and enforcement indicators that are both tailored to country programs and pilot activities, and can be aggregated regionally. Members develop indicators as part of their participation in AECEN pilot projects.

Annual Forum The AECEN Secretariat and member countries organize an annual forum to report results on pilot activities and indicators development, conduct regional trainings, share and ensure effective transfer of knowledge and experience among members and plan new activities. The annual forum affords members an opportunity to collaborate and learn from other international enforcement networks and development partners.

AECEN PARTNERS In addition to USAID's ECOAsia, AECEN partner organizations and networks include: Asian Development Bank (ADB), United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), World Bank, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES), International Network of Environmental Compliance and Enforcement (INECE), Regulatory Environmental Programme Implementation Network (REPIN), Balkan Environmental Regulatory Compliance and Enforcement Network (BERCEN), European Union Network for the Implementation and Enforcement of Environmental Law (IMPEL), and Clean Air Initiative-Asia (CAI-Asia).

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