

Strategic Dialogue on Advancing Future Cooperation on Environmental Challenges in Southeast Asia

1. Proposed Date May 27–28, 2026 (Wed–Thu)

2. Proposed Venue May 27: Station Conference Kawasaki (Kawasaki city),
May 28: Kawasaki Environment Research Institute, Shimadzu Tokyo Innovation Plaza

3. Background

The Asia Center for Air Pollution Research (ACAP) serves as a hub for an international platform that promotes regional cooperation on air quality management in Asia. To further advance air quality improvement in the region, ACAP needs to strengthen collaboration with relevant governments, international organizations, and research institutions, particularly in the areas of science-based policy support, capacity development, and the proposal and dissemination of integrated solutions that address multiple environmental challenges simultaneously.

3.1 Need for Engagement with Key Regional Partners

In the evolving regional environmental landscape in Southeast Asia, strengthened collaboration among research institutions, international cooperation agencies, and policy platforms is increasingly necessary. Transboundary air pollution, Short-Lived Climate Pollutants (SLCPs), toxic chemical waste leakage, and waste management challenges require integrated, multi-stakeholder approaches that combine policy support, technical expertise, and regional implementation networks. In this context, ACAP proposes to deepen engagement with the following institutions and initiatives:

- United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) – A leading international institution for environmental protection, it addresses global environmental challenges through treaty administration, policy support, the promotion of sustainable development, and environmental education.
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) – A key global development partner supporting countries in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with strong expertise in governance, climate action, sustainable urban development, and integrated policy solutions. UNDP plays a critical role in mobilizing financing, supporting country-level implementation, and advancing cross-sectoral approaches that link air quality, climate change, and public health.
- Asian Development Bank (ADB) – A leading multilateral development finance institution supporting sustainable development across Asia and the Pacific, with strong engagement in environmental management, climate change mitigation, urban development, and regional cooperation initiatives.
- Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) – Germany’s international development agency, supporting environmental governance, climate action, and sustainable urban development globally. Works through development cooperation frameworks and regional programs (including SEACAI) to establish policy dialogues and city-level implementation networks.
- Southeast Asia Clean Air Initiative (SEACAI) – A regional platform focused on air quality management, science-policy interface, and city-level implementation in Southeast Asia.
- Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC) – A regional organization promoting climate resilience to climate change, disaster risk reduction, and sustainable development.
- Asian Institute of Technology (AIT) – A leading academic institution advancing research and capacity development in environmental engineering, climate change, and sustainable development.
- Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) – Japan’s official development assistance agency, supporting sustainable development through technical cooperation, capacity building, and financing mechanisms. JICA has extensive experience in environmental management, including air pollution control, climate change mitigation, waste management, and the Joint Crediting Mechanism (JCM), and plays a key role in fostering regional cooperation and policy implementation across Southeast Asia.
- Yokohama City – A leading environmental future city promoting decarbonization, renewable energy, energy efficiency, and citizen engagement in environmental policy.

Engaging these partners will:

- Align regional air quality and environmental initiatives
- Enhance coordination among development-supported programs
- Identify synergies between air pollution control, waste management, wastewater treatment, and climate resilience
- Strengthen the science-policy interface in Asia
- Building future networks and platforms

3.2 Need for Strategic Partnership with the Ministry of the Environment, Japan

The Ministry of the Environment, Japan (MOEJ) has provided long-standing support and leadership in promoting regional environmental cooperation in Asia, particularly in air quality governance, environmental management, and sustainable urban development. In this dialogue, strategic discussions with relevant MOEJ departments, including those responsible for regional environmental management of air, water, and related areas, will be highly valuable, particularly regarding:

- Alignment with Japan's priorities in regional environmental cooperation
- Future collaboration.

3.3 Role of the Japan Environmental Sanitation Center

The Japan Environmental Sanitation Center (JESC) is a leading institution advancing research, technical solutions, and capacity development in environmental sanitation, waste management, and pollution control. Through technical expertise and training programs, JESC contributes to cleaner and more sustainable urban systems in Japan and across Asia. As one of JESC's branch organizations, ACAP plays a key role as an international research institute contributing to regional air quality improvement in East Asia. ACAP also serves as the Network Center for the Acid Deposition Monitoring Network in East Asia (EANET), which celebrates its 25th anniversary this year, an important milestone that underscores the value of convening a strategic dialogue on future regional collaboration.

4. Objective of the Strategic Dialogue

This Strategic Dialogue aims to build future cooperation by discussing the following key issues:

- Strengthening institutional relationships
- Explore future collaboration in atmospheric, waste, and wastewater management
- Share strategic priorities and regional perspectives
- Identify opportunities for joint initiatives and coordinated programming
- Define pathways for cooperation contributing to sustainable urban and environmental development.

5. Scope of Discussion

The discussion will cover a wide range of forward-looking themes:

5.1 Air Quality Management and Environmental Governance

- Strengthening regional cooperation and policy dialogue
- Addressing SLCPs
- Enhancing collaboration on transboundary haze and atmospheric pollution
- Aligning science-based research with regional policy frameworks.

5.2 Institutional Partnership and Collaboration Frameworks

- Modalities for cooperation among JESC, ACAP, GIZ, SEACAI, ADPC, AIT, and ADB
- Strategic engagement with MOEJ for policy coordination
- Identification of priority areas for follow-up actions and joint planning
- Development of potential joint concept notes or pilot initiatives.

5.3 Future Opportunities in Environmental Sustainability

Discussion will include integrated approaches that address multiple environmental challenges simultaneously, such as:

- Using the 25th anniversary of EANET as an important moment to reflect on progress and explore new directions for future regional collaboration on atmospheric and climate issues. In addition, exploring opportunities to enhance regional collaboration on air quality management, including improved monitoring, data utilization, and science–policy linkages, in response to evolving atmospheric challenges in East and Southeast Asia.
- Identifying joint approaches to address PM_{2.5}, ozone, and other emerging pollutants, building on existing regional platforms and long-standing partnerships among participating institutions.
- Advancing integrated strategies for reducing SLCPs such as black carbon and methane, contributing to both cleaner air and climate mitigation objectives.
- Strengthening cooperation on climate- and air-quality-related risk assessment at the city level, by combining the technical, scientific, and policy expertise of participating organizations.

6. Participation

Approximately 30 participants (including representatives from Japan) will attend, with a focus on senior-level participants to ensure a strategic dialogue.

7. Expected Outcomes and outputs

- Strengthened institutional relationships and mutual understanding;
- Identification of future areas for collaboration, particularly in air quality, waste, and wastewater management;
- Strategic direction for potential joint initiatives;
- Agreement on follow-up actions and focal points for continued engagement.

As a concrete output of the first dialogue, JESC/ACAP will create an English online platform on its website to support continued information sharing among participating institutions.

8. Follow-Up

- A summary note of discussions will be circulated post-meeting;
- Focal points will be designated for continued coordination;
- Potential joint initiatives may be further elaborated and developed into concept notes or proposals for collaborative projects.

9. Program

Program of May 27

Time	Session	Lead
09:00 – 09:30	Registration	
09:30 – 09:33	Opening Remarks	Dr. Toshimasa Ohara, Director General, ACAP
09:33 – 09:38	Greetings	Ms. Keiko Omori, Director- General, Environmental Management Bureau, MOEJ
09:38 – 10:00	Welcome Remarks and Keynote Speech	Mr. Hideki Minamikawa, President, JESC
10:00 – 10:50	Institutional Introductions and Strategic Priorities (10 min each)	MOEJ, UNEP, UNDP, ADB, GIZ
10:50 – 11:10	Coffee Break	
11:10 – 12:00	Institutional Introductions and Strategic Priorities (10 min each)	SEACAI, ADPC, AIT, JICA, JESC, ACAP Yokohama City
12:00 – 13:30	Lunch	
13:30 – 15:30	Discussion on Future Collaboration: Air Quality and Environmental Governance	All 1) the Needs from Mekong area (Lao), 2) Early warning system (air pollution, heat) from ACAP, covering LCS, grand station, satellite.
15:30 – 15:40	Coffee Break	
15:40 – 16:40	Discussion on Future Collaboration: Waste Management, Wastewater Treatment, and Integrated Environmental Management	All
16:40 – 17:00	Summary Reflections and Next Steps Closing Remarks	Ms. Siwaporn Rungsiyanon, Deputy Director General of ACAP
17:00 – 17:30	MOU Ceremony	AIT & ACAP
18:00 –	Welcome Reception	Hideki Minamikawa, President, JESC

Program of May 28

Time	Session
9:30 – 12:30	Laboratory and Facility Tour Kawasaki Environment Research Institute, Shimadzu Tokyo Innovation Plaza