

Accelerating International Collaboration towards a Net-zero and Resilient ASEAN through the ASEAN Climate Change Strategic Action Plan 2025-2030

ASEAN Climate Change Strategic Action Plan (ACCSAP) team in IGES¹

Yosuke Arino* ; Temuulen Murun**

* Strategic Management Office, IGES; ** Climate and Energy, IGES

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¹ Core members of the IGES' ACCSAP team include Prabhakar Sivapuram, Temuulen Murun, Chatthep Chanyam, Brian Johnson and Yosuke Arino.



A Background: Towards Global Climate Goals and ASEAN Climate Vision 2050

In the twenty-eighth Conference of Parties (COP28) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the “[beginning of the end](#)” of the fossil fuel era was announced as part of the COP28 Agreement in the oil-producing United Arab Emirates. However, according to the [scenarios](#) used in the Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)’s Sixth Assessment Report (AR6), if we keep the current policy trend (e.g. C7 scenario), the global mean temperature rise relative to pre-industrial level will reach or surpass three degrees Celsius (°C) by 2100. Accordingly, adaptation and finance gaps will be widened as time goes by at the current implementation rate. The [first Global Stocktake](#) conducted in September 2023 stated that, globally, much more action is needed for both mitigation and adaptation to keep on track

with achieving the Paris Agreement (PA)’s climate goal.

The [ASEAN Climate Vision 2050](#) presents ASEAN’s goal and pathway to navigate the region to the PA’s goal. For the region’s sustainable development in the long run, this vision specifies a mitigation goal of achieving net-zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions as early as possible after 2050, and sets synergised adaptation actions along the mitigation pathway toward net-zero.

To this end, ASEAN has initiated a dialogue to develop a climate change strategy named the ASEAN Climate Change Strategic Action Plan 2025-2030 (ACCSAP). At the same time, ASEAN Centre for Climate Change (ACCC) is being planned to be established in Brunei Darussalam as a regional hub for science-based policy making on climate change.

With this background, on 8 December, 2023, the [COP28 Japan Pavilion side event](#) “Accelerating International Collaboration towards a Net-zero and Resilient ASEAN” was

organised by the ASEAN Secretariat and the Ministry of the Environment, Japan (MOEJ), inviting ASEAN Member State (AMS) representatives, youth, and a European research organisation, and had a panel discussion on accelerating financial, technological and capacity development and international collaboration in ASEAN. The dialogue became an important stepping stone for the future of the ASEAN region. The present proceedings summarise the insights and voices from the panelists (**Table 1**) and audience, with a view to contributing to the co-creation of ACCSAP and ACCC.

Table 1. Panelists

Vong Sok, Head, Environment Division, ASEAN Secretariat
Yulia Suryanti, Director of Climate Mitigation, Ministry of Environment and Forestry, Indonesia
Nasir Tahir, Brunei Climate Change Secretariat, Prime Minister's Office
John Leo Ching Algo, National Coordinator, Aksyon Klima Pilipinas / Youth Advisory Group for Environmental and Climate Justice
Franck Lecocq, Director, CIRED

All the contents hereafter are based on discussions in the side event’s panel discussion. There are no additional inputs by the authors.

Call for ASEAN Climate Change Strategic Action Plan

Given ASEAN's unique characteristics of high population and economic growth and vulnerability to climate change, the ACCSAP is expected to unlock ASEAN's potential for sustained growth and sustainable development, with the view that climate change is both a threat and an opportunity. It will also be important to have a view of enhancing ASEAN values through development and implementation of ACCSAP. ACCSAP will be a multi-year, high-level, top-down regional strategy, but will also capture grassroots actions and movements, and also effectively encourage the involvement of youth and vulnerable groups such as women and children in particular.

ACCSAP pursues transparent, inclusive (or just), and sustainable processes in its planning and implementation phases, where all relevant stakeholders in the region will participate, obtain knowledge, and be empowered to transform their actions. It is particularly important to recognise the [Bandar Seri Begawan Declaration on ASEAN Youth for Climate Action](#) adopted in 2021.



ACCSAP will be a forward-looking strategic document on climate change for the ASEAN region and all AMS, building on the findings of the [ASEAN State of Climate Change Report \(ASCCR\)](#) that showed where ASEAN was and where it would be heading throughout this century.

ACCSAP should not impose additional burdens on countries by duly respecting the principle of common but differentiated responsibility and respective capabilities (CBDR-RC), each country’s priorities, and responsibilities under the UNFCCC. Rather, it provides all AMS with opportunities for transformation by integrating policies and institutions, and by reinforcing the “means of implementation” to achieve the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). It also helps AMS to enhance their NDC targets so they can realise transition toward their long-term development and climate goals.

Again, the ACCSAP is not just a guiding document but supports the implementation of climate actions in a transformative manner. ACCSAP should be implementable and actionable with clear timelines and implementation agencies. It is pivotal for

ACCSAP to be implemented in the way that involves scientific and technical capacity development of AMS. In particular, finance is essential to bridge the gaps on both adaptation and mitigation for the 2050 vision.

For Realising Long-term Transformation of Society

ACCSAP ultimately aims at achieving sustainable development in the ASEAN region by sustainably transforming society. As indicated in the IPCC's concept of Climate Resilient Development Pathways (CRDP), it is important not only to combine climate and development areas, but also to place climate actions upon development pathways and promote reductions in GHG emissions as well as adaptation to climate change. Long-term GHG reductions, for example, will involve significant social changes in the way cities and transport systems interact with each other, so policies seemingly unrelated to climate change, such as urban, fiscal, and land (zoning) policies, need to be aligned or interlinked. These are not related to short-term GHG reductions but related to GHG reductions in the decades ahead. Given the premise that the ACCSAP is an action plan pursuing transition towards the 2050 vision, it is important that the ACCSAP explicitly links with other sectoral plans and incorporates climate objectives and policies and measures (PaMs) oriented towards long-term development of countries or the region.

In order to bring about significant social change, the research side can also provide support in terms of scenario development from a systems perspective. For example, on the techno-economic side of change, the Asia-Pacific Integrated Assessment Model (AIM) has made a significant contribution to date. The economic costs of transition and change, employment impacts, impacts on inequality, etc. can have implications for non-climate ministries. Scientific understanding on intersectoral systems helps horizontal and vertical coordination.

Furthermore, it is necessary to explore cost-effective solutions to transform society in a self-sustaining manner. It is, thus, vital to integrate policy and institutional frameworks and to explore synergistic pathways at the regional, national, and subnational levels. For this, ACCSAP takes stock of a number of existing strategies and plans in AMS and the region and the actions of ASEAN's development partners. Building on this, ACCSAP aims to promote inter-sectoral coordination and cross-country collaboration in a coherent manner, even across the pillar of the ASEAN Community (i.e. ASEAN Political-Security Community, ASEAN Economic Community, and ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community).



Long-term strategies (LTS) provide a chance to raise the ambition of the NDC targets towards the PA goal. For example, Indonesia presented a long-term climate and development vision in its LTS, which set 2050 as the target year for resilience and 2060 for net-zero, and also presented scenarios on adaptation and mitigation (pathways for mitigation). ACCSAP can promote long-term transition of society by helping AMS that have not yet developed their LTS.

While a focus on NDC updating and implementation is important for ASEAN, it is also essential to acknowledge the importance of National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) in terms of the climate-aligned development of the countries and for them to be reflected in the future ACCSAP as well. Loss and damage are also going to play a big part in the climate realities and responses for many AMS.

Expectations on Thematic Areas of ACCSAP

In principle, instead of mere alignment or intersectoral coordination, it is desirable that ACCSAP creates a framework that links the NDC targets of AMS with the ASEAN-wide targets and PA goal. The perspective that the ACCSAP is one of the measures to address the global challenge of climate change is necessary. It is important to ensure that ACCSAP's goals be linked to global goals while respecting the NDCs of each country.

General expectations for the ACCSAP include (i) social transformation linked to the 1.5°C target, (ii) a transition where no one is left behind, (iii) linkages with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, and Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, and (iv) linkages with the current and future ASEAN strategies and action plans.

More specific expectations from the panelists call for ACCSAP to:

- Accelerate international support to help achieve conditional targets of NDCs;
- Enhance the ambition of NDCs toward achieving the PA goal including supporting LTS development in all AMS;
- Jointly take stock of means of implementation to achieve each country's NDC targets and systematically identify support among ASEAN countries, ASEAN Sectoral Bodies (e.g. ASEAN Centre for Energy and ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity) and development partners;
- Promote cooperation in the various areas of NDC in each country with regard to PaMs on mitigation, adaptation, and synergistic areas;
- Support planning of NAPs for the climate-aligned development of AMS;
- Include actions averting or minimising loss and damage and assess how countermeasures toward them will influence the attainment of the adaptation, mitigation, and SDG-related targets;

- Promote just and equitable energy transition by involving Non-Party Stakeholder (NPS) including youth;
- Identify common strategies across AMS to achieve a long-term vision on resilience, which has synergies with mitigation;
- Consider common climate targets and activities across AMS on Nature-based Solutions (NbS) and ecosystems-related area;
- Produce a dialogue/platform on maritime or ocean issues to share lessons learned while creating joint action in the region;
- Promote education and awareness-raising of youth by means of digitalisation and media; and
- Not only drive climate action, but also bring co-benefits and synergies to the SDGs, including poverty reduction, employment, green transition and education across ASEAN.

ASEAN Centre for Climate Change for Integrating Policy Planning and Implementation

Science helps drive social transformation in a forward-looking manner by enhancing transparency of climate action. Building a database of policy actions and managing progress as well as climate prediction models will be important for the stocktaking of current climate action and designing future climate action. Reliable on-time data is crucial for updating any climate action.

The establishment of the ACCC is a timely and historic action to bridge the gap in information, knowledge and collaboration. ACCC has a role to indicate how ASEAN can engage in climate change issues and PaMs and how ASEAN can work with other partners, and mobilise massive resources to really transform the region. ACCC can play a significant role, directly or indirectly with regard to the aforementioned specific expectations.

Toward an effective alignment of ACCSAP and ACCC, first of all, stability will be important. It

will be important to sustainably maintain and develop human capacity. Second, an efficient and effective system of cooperation within ASEAN and AMS will be important. Third, it is also important to understand that trade-offs may arise with regard to multi-country cooperation. Governance structure to mitigate the tensions or trade-offs among stakeholders is desirable.

Continued communication among multiple stakeholders underpins all the actions mentioned above. A learning-by-doing philosophy will greatly help ASEAN ramp up climate ambition and efforts in a sustainable manner.

Can ASEAN achieve net-zero?

ASEAN can absolutely achieve net-zero emissions. ASEAN is part of the global community and respects the global target of achieving net-zero by the middle of the century, as the IPCC points out. At the same time, based on the principle of CBDR-RC, international support, especially financial, is pivotal.

For the goal of net-zero, ASEAN needs to change the course of action and change from a

business-as-usual (BAU) world. ASEAN tries to make such change by setting clear long-term directions and prioritising actions to improve from BAU. This is the purpose of ACCSAP. Regarding mitigation, for example, ACCSAP reaps all possible opportunities, including promotion of energy efficiency improvement, renewable energy, forest carbon sinks, and abatement of carbon dioxide from carbon capture and storage technologies. Energy demand reduction has a huge potential of mitigation in ASEAN.

To change the course of action, all dialogue partners need to collaborate. Based on the understanding of what has (not) been achieved at the national level, ACCSAP attempts to operationalise the regional 2050 vision, helping AMS achieve their ambitions.

Any commitment is based on action which requires costs and effort. This is also true for the journey for achieving net-zero. However, ACCSAP will also attempt to maximise co-benefits and synergies of net-zero mitigation with resilience and adaptation, sustainable development and biodiversity conservation in the region.

(This box contains the question by one of the audiences and responses by panelists.)



Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES)

2108-11 Kamiyamaguchi, Hayama, Kanagawa, 240-0015, Japan

Tel: 046-826-95592 Fax: 046-855-3809

www.iges.or.jp

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