

ASSESSING CLIMATE CHANGE TRANSPARENCY AND TRANSFORMATION NEEDS FOR CAPACITY BUILDING IN ASEAN COUNTRIES



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ASEAN Member States have proactively taken measures to address the issue of climate change at the national and regional levels.

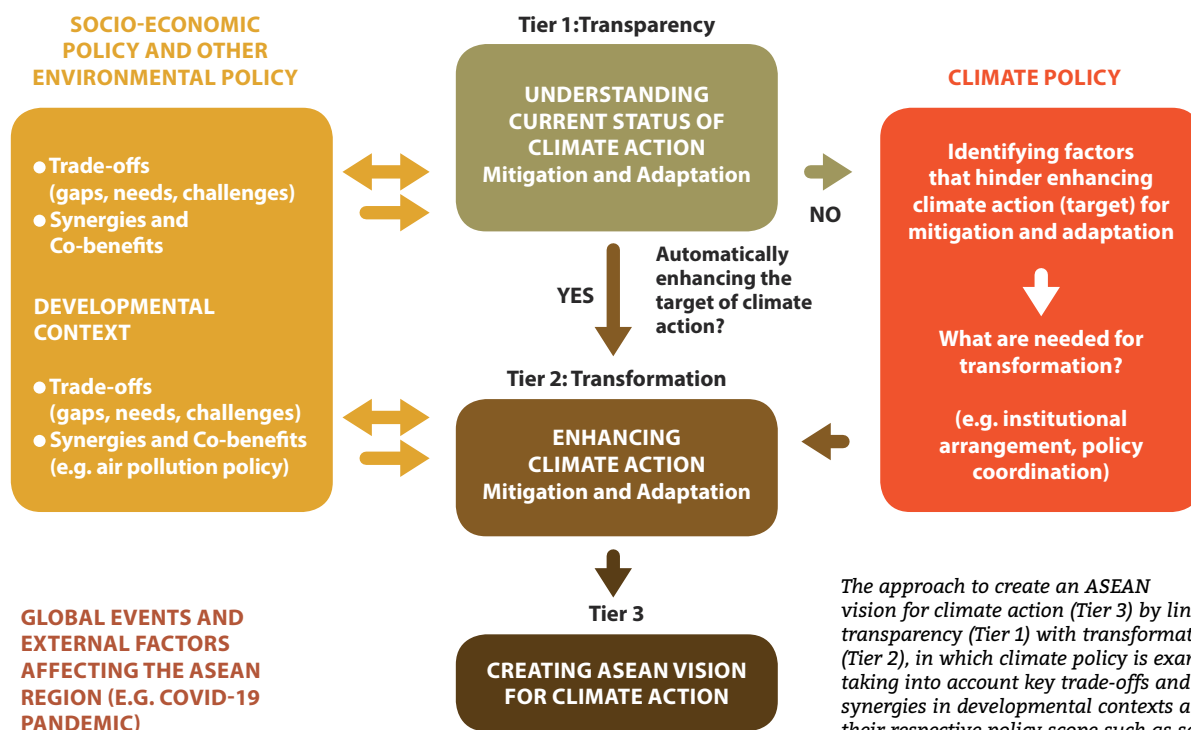
As parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement, the ASEAN Member States have also submitted regular reports and updates on target, plans, strategies, and related progress, some of which are part of the monitoring, reporting, and verification (MRV) processes. These processes include

among others the National Communications, Biennial Update Reports (to be upgraded to Biennial Transparency Reports), and Nationally Determined Contributions under the Paris Agreement.

However, some developing Member States have been facing challenges in meeting

their transparency reporting requirements due to capacity constraints. This suggests opportunities for improvement in their capacity and the need for strengthening cooperation in the region to respond to climate change.

The Paris Agreement established an upgraded framework, called the Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF), for enhancing transparency, especially in terms of tracking progress, on climate actions taken by countries (Article 13)



The approach to create an ASEAN vision for climate action (Tier 3) by linking transparency (Tier 1) with transformation (Tier 2), in which climate policy is examined taking into account key trade-offs and synergies in developmental contexts and their respective policy scope such as socio-economic and other environmental policies.

and reporting progress biennially. The ETF sets a mechanism of “global stocktake” to assess, every five years, the collective progress in achieving the adaptation and mitigation measures in the agreement. The ETF’s goal is to assess the enforceability of climate actions, such as Nationally Determined Contribution targets and relevant policies and measures, through a clearer quantitative/qualitative understanding of country priorities, needs and gaps, and good practices to inform the global stocktake. The outcome of global stocktake, which is based on the ETF status reports, determines the need for updating and enhancing national climate action and international cooperation for climate action (Article 14.3).

The Paris Agreement recognises that “transparency,” or the clear understanding of the actual situation of climate action and its developmental context, is expected to be the catalyst for “transformation” of climate action, or the setting of more ambitious national targets such as Nationally Determined Contributions to suit to the long-term goals of PA at the national, regional, and global levels (Matsuo, 2018).

Recognising the said capacity gaps in the ASEAN region, the Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund (JAIF) project on the Development of the ASEAN State of Climate Change Report (ASCCR) has been implemented to provide the first ever overall outlook on the state of climate change in ASEAN and to support the planning processes of Member States on climate action. As the diagram shows, this report aims to develop an ASEAN vision for climate action (Tier 3) from the viewpoints of transparency (Tier 1) and transformation (Tier 2).

First, on the transparency of climate actions (Tier 1), the ASCCR will identify areas of opportunity for capacity building on adaptation and mitigation within the region by understanding current status, gaps/needs, and good practices for prioritised climate actions of each Member State. For example, aspects such as sharing scientific knowledge and data, assessment of modelling approaches to predict future greenhouse gas emissions and/or impacts, and key indicators to track the progress of



action among Member States will contribute to raising the enforceability of current targets on mitigation and adaptation through updated actions for MRV or monitoring and evaluation based on more accurate, reliable, and harmonised methods. Here, the emphasis is on the country context while keeping in view the regional diversity and uniformity.

Second, this kind of stocktaking exercise on the regional scale, contributing to ensuring transparency of actions, will further provide opportunities to transform the ambition of climate targets in each Member State and the region (Tier 2). This is achieved by attempting to identify key trade-offs (or challenges) and co-benefits for raising climate ambition by looking at the developmental contexts of each country and the region. Specific issues such as the co-benefits of air pollution in climate change mitigation and the recent issue of COVID-19 will provide a good insight into countries’ priorities and specific approaches. Properly identifying the influence of these global and regional phenomena relevant to the ASEAN region and ministries in each Member State can help the region and countries to update climate action targets more appropriately. This can result in more advanced institutional arrangements and policy coordination among relevant ministries for economic and social development. In this context, the project will also highlight the transboundary and cross-sectoral issues based on the priorities of each country.

Thus far, the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies and ASEAN collaboration, which is focused on adaptation, has provided valuable insights into regional adaptation needs especially from the viewpoint of institutional arrangement and coordination. Some of the work indicated that institutional arrangement for disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation in terms of policy formulation and organisational setup from national to sub-national levels is well developed in the Member States (IGES and CTII, 2018; Maeda, Prabhakar and Sivakoti, 2019). However, coordination among agencies in charge of disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation and other agencies in different Member States is often not so strong due to the barriers related to sectoral laws and associated institutional setup, such as different laws for the management of water resource, river structure, irrigation, land-use, forest, road, hydrology, meteorology, and disaster. Moreover, the institutional arrangement is still at a development stage in most countries, particularly for subjects that require intensive coordination among relevant agencies and local governments in a wide geographical coverage, such as water resources management and river management from upstream to downstream.

The scoping exercises conducted by Institute for Global Environmental Strategies and ASEAN also recognised that the integration of climate change projections into disaster risk assessments is at nascent stages and needs to be improved. For example, efforts have been taken up to improve the disaster risk assessments at the river basin level in selected river basins in Lao PDR and Myanmar for flood and landslide risk assessments (IGES, CTII and ADPC, 2020). These efforts are being further scaled up to enhance risk assessments and risk reduction planning in Cambodia and Viet Nam in the second phase of the collaborative efforts with ASEAN and JAIF.

Based on extensive work by various development partners of ASEAN as well as the aforementioned work by IGES, ASCCR will show how the ASEAN region will transform its communities into more resilient and climate-friendly ones beyond 2030 and onto 2050 through enhanced transparency of actions. ■