

ASEAN-CHINA
ENVIRONMENTAL COOPERATION ACTION PLAN
(2011-2013)

To Implement the
China-ASEAN Strategy on Environmental Protection Cooperation
2009-2015

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I . Background

1. ASEAN Member States (AMS) and China pay great attention to the environmental protection, one of the priority areas under the ASEAN-China cooperation framework. In November 2007, the Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao stated that China was prepared to set up a China-ASEAN environmental cooperation center. He proposed that China and ASEAN to jointly develop an ASEAN-China strategy on environmental cooperation and promote related cooperation. The Cha-am Hua Hin Declaration on the Roadmap for an ASEAN Community 2009-2015 adopted by the ASEAN leaders highlighted the concept of sustainable development, including environmental sustainability, economic growth and social development, and importance of pragmatically promoting regional environmental cooperation.

2. In October 2009, ASEAN and China jointly developed and adopted the "China-ASEAN Strategy on Environmental Protection Cooperation 2009-2015", which provides the foundation for China and ASEAN to promote concrete cooperation on environment. Based on the ASEAN Community Blueprints and the current status of environmental cooperation between ASEAN and China, the strategy identified the following priority areas of cooperation: (i) public awareness and environmental education, (ii) the promotion of environmentally sound technology, (iii) environmental labelling and cleaner production, (iv) biodiversity conservation, (v) environmental management capacity building, (vi) global environmental issues, and (vii) promotion of environmental industries, and proposed to formulate action plan to further implement the Strategy.

3. With the approval of the Chinese Government, the Ministry of Environmental Protection of China (MEP) launched the China-ASEAN Environmental Cooperation Center (CAEC) in March 2010, aiming to implement the Strategy and promote environmental cooperation between ASEAN and China.

4. In October 2010 in Vietnam, at the 13th ASEAN-China Summit, the Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao stated that " the two sides should, in keeping with the ASEAN-China Strategy on Environmental Cooperation, work out an action plan at an early date, give full play to the role of the China-ASEAN Environmental Cooperation Centre, explore the possibility of launching the ASEAN-China Green Envoys Program, and take solid steps to push forward our exchanges and cooperation in circular economy, green economy, energy conservation and environmental protection." The Summit adopted the ASEAN-China Leaders' Joint Statement on Sustainable Development, in which the Leaders affirmed to "support the role of the China-ASEAN Environmental Cooperation Centre, actively implement the China-ASEAN Environmental Protection Cooperation Strategy 2009-2015, in particular, cooperation in such fields as biodiversity and ecological conservation through engagement with the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity, cleaner production, environmental education and awareness."

5. The 13th ASEAN-China Summit also adopted the “Plan of Action to Implement the Joint Declaration on ASEAN-China Strategic Partnership for Peace and Prosperity 2011-2015”, which indicated that the two sides will take the following joint actions and measures in the field of environmental cooperation:

- Implement the “ASEAN-China Strategy on Environmental Protection Cooperation 2009-2015” and jointly develop the ASEAN-China Environmental Cooperation Action Plan at an appropriate time;
- Support the work of the China-ASEAN Environmental Cooperation Centre to promote environmental cooperation as outlined in the ASEAN-China Strategy on Environmental Protection Cooperation 2009-2015;
- Strengthen exchange and cooperation on environmentally sound industry, including cooperation on environmentally sound technologies, environmental labelling and cleaner production, to support ASEAN and China’s endeavor in pursuing green and environmentally sustainable development;
- Strengthen dialogue and exchanges in urban and rural environmental protection and implement demonstration projects on cooperation in urban and rural environment to improve living environmental quality in the region;
- Carry out joint-training courses, joint researches, staff exchange programs and post-graduate scholarship programs to enhance capacity and raise the level of regional environmental management;
- Carry out cooperation in co-beneficial areas such as study/research, capacity building and experience sharing in the field of air and water quality management, and health protection;
- Establish the ASEAN-China Environmental Ministerial Meeting mechanism at an appropriate time.

6. Formulating an action plan and undertaking concrete cooperation would facilitate the implementation of the China and ASEAN Leaders’ initiative. Both ASEAN and China recognized that strengthening cooperation between two sides in the areas such as the promotion of biodiversity conservation, responding and adapting to climate change, etc., will not only contribute to the achievement of the UN Millennium Development Goals in East Asia including the poverty reduction in rural areas, but also help countries in the region change development pattern and pursue towards a green development. The cooperation is also conducive to exploring a new model of "South-South" regional environmental cooperation.

7. In order to promote the implementation of the China-ASEAN Strategy on Environmental Cooperation and the ASEAN and China Leaders’ initiatives, ASEAN and China herewith jointly formulate the "ASEAN-China Environmental Cooperation Action Plan 2011-2013", based on the principle of supporting ASEAN’s leading role in the cooperation, out of common interest and needs. As the first 3-year initiatives, the action plan will lay the foundation for long-term continuous cooperation on environment between two sides.

8. China-ASEAN Environmental Cooperation Action Plan is an integral, operational, open, flexible and phased approach plan of actions. ASEAN and China welcome the interested governments, international organizations and regional institutions to join the efforts as cooperation partners and support the implementation of the Action Plan.

II. Plan of Actions

1. High Level Policy Dialogue on Environmental Cooperation

1.1 Organize ASEAN-China Environment Ministerial Meeting

1.1.1 ASEAN-China Environment Ministers Meeting (EMM) is a high-level dialogue mechanism for ASEAN-China environmental cooperation, which will be attended by ministers from ASEAN Member States (AMS), China, the Secretary-General of ASEAN and their senior officials.

1.1.2 The ASEAN-China EMM mandates include: providing strategic guidance for ASEAN-China environmental cooperation, exchanging views on major issues of environmental cooperation, conducting policy dialogue on global and regional environmental issues of common concern, reviewing progress of ASEAN-China environmental cooperation, etc.

1.1.3 Organize the first ASEAN-China EMM at an appropriate time. ASEAN-China EMM will be held once every 2 to 3 years as necessary.

1.2 Establish ASEAN-China Environmental Cooperation Forum

1.2.1 ASEAN-China Environmental Cooperation Forum is to serve as an open platform for conducting dialogue, facilitating exchanges and promoting practical cooperation. With a focus on the specific areas of ASEAN-China environmental cooperation, the forum will invite policy makers both from national and local level, business executives, experts and scholars from China, AMS, Non-AMS and international institutions, non-governmental organizations, to participate in dialogue and to exchange and develop the further cooperation.

1.2.2 In principle, The Forum will be organized annually, with different themes which should be selected from the predominant issues of the year.

1.2.3 The first Forum will be convened in China no later than the end of 2011.

2. Develop and Launch the ASEAN-China Green Envoys Program

2.1 ASEAN-China Green Envoys Program (GEP) was designed to enhance the awareness of decision makers and the public on environmental protection through various forms of activities, such as personnel exchanges, joint trainings and seminars. The program is expected to improve the capacity of China and AMS for environmental protection. The program will take the young generation as particularly important target groups.

2.2. GEP will focus on the priority areas of ASEAN-China environmental cooperation and environmental issues of common concern for China and AMS. A group of "Green Envoys" will be selected and appointed, from schools, governments, research institutions, enterprises and various environmental civil societies, etc.

2.3 The activities for the first stage of the ASEAN-China Green Envoys Program (2011-2013) include:

- Developing and launching the Green Envoys Program
- ASEAN-China Capacity Building and Training Program
- Public Awareness on Environmental Protection Programme

2.4 Launch the Green Envoys Programme

2.4.1 GEP will be officially launched by a ceremony activity attended by the Young Green Envoys from China and AMS.

2.4.2 The launching ceremony of GEP will be held in China no later than the end of 2011.

2.5 ASEAN-China Capacity Building and Training Programme

2.5.1 The training programmes will be implemented with support from China for environmental officials, technicians and professionals from AMS, in order to enhance capacity building on environmental management.

2.5.2 Funding opportunities of training activities will give priority to the least developed AMS.

2.5.3 The topics of the training activities will include but not limited to national environmental policies and regulations, techniques and practices of environmental impact assessment, environmental law enforcement, urban and rural environmental management, biodiversity conservation, protection environment and poverty alleviation, environmental monitoring and pollution control technology, etc.

2.5.4 The training activities will start from 2011, in principle twice every year,

totalling around 100 people participating in the training activities during three-year period between 2011 and 2013.

2.6 Public Environmental Awareness Programme

2.6.1 An ASEAN-China Green Envoys Programme website will be established no later than 2012, to set up a platform for information exchange and communications.

2.6.2 Develop and distribute publications and materials of various forms for increasing the public awareness on environmental issues in AMS and China.

3. Cooperation on Environmental Industry & Technology

3.1 Promote the Establishment of ASEAN-China Environmental Industry Cooperation Network

3.1.1 The environmental industry cooperation network will play as a bridge and a platform for environmentally sound technology cooperation among AMS and China.

3.1.2 The environmental industry cooperation network is open to all relevant institutions and enterprises from AMS and China.

3.1.3 The network will be launched no later than 2012.

3.1.4 The environmental industry cooperation and communication between ASEAN and China will fully take advantage of the annual ASEAN-China Guangxi Expo to bring together as much as possible the business community.

3.2 Conduct Feasibility Study and Promote Mutual Recognition of Environmental Labelling

3.2.1 ASEAN and China will boost the cooperation on mutual certification of environmental labelling schemes/products (eco-labelling, environmentally-friendly products and low-carbon products).

3.2.2 ASEAN and China will conduct feasibility studies of the mutual certification of environmental labelling schemes/products and organize technical workshops at appropriate time. Relevant work plan and report should be presented through 2011-2012.

3.3 Develop Environmentally Sound Technology Pilot Projects

3.3.1 ASEAN and China will seek support from business community, taking into consideration the specific needs in AMS and China, especially in less developed areas, identify best-applicable technologies in the areas of pollution treatment, energy saving, cleaner production and resource recycling, and develop small scale pilot projects.

3.3.2 The selection of technology, companies to be involved and the launch of activities should be conducted no later than the end of 2012.

4. Joint Research Projects

4.1 Develop and Publish the Report on ASEAN-China Environment Outlook

4.1.1 Aiming at the common challenges, global and regional environmental issues facing ASEAN and China, through studies on environment and development related issues, the joint study project on ASEAN-China Environment Outlook (ACEO) will periodically come up with report which provides policy advices to ASEAN and China.

4.1.2 Experts from AMS, China and other countries will be invited to the joint studies and development of the report.

4.1.3 The report will be renewed every 2 or 3 years. The studies will focus on different identified topics for each edition.

4.1.4 The work plan and relevant discussions of the project should be started in 2011, and the first report will be developed and published no later than 2013 both in English and Chinese.

4.2 Develop and Conduct Joint Policy Studies

4.2.1 The policy studies with a focus on global and regional environmental issues of common concern that ASEAN and China share will be conducted by invited expert team, the joint policy study reports will be released. The report should be accessed by the public and policy makers.

4.2.3 The areas of joint policy study might include, but are not limited to: climate change adaptation, biodiversity, trade, investment & environment, co-benefit and co-action of air pollution control, sustainable consumption, implementation of international environmental conventions and agreements, etc.

4.2.4 ASEAN and China will encourage experts and scholars to build up network via implementing joint study projects, and strengthen communication and exchange.

4.2.5 Special attention will be paid to the area of biodiversity conservation in Southeast Asia. China-ASEAN Environmental Cooperation Center in Beijing and ASEAN Centre on Biodiversity (ACB) in Manila should jointly develop and implement the projects including joint studies and dialogues no later than 2012.

III. Implementation of the Action Plan

1. Institutional Arrangement

1.1 The Action Plan will be approved by the ASEAN and China Environmental Authorities, which will provide support and guidance for the implementation of the Action Plan. Each government will designate official National Focal Point (NFP) for the ASEAN-China environmental cooperation.

1.2 ASEAN and China will set up a Joint Implementation Secretariat (JISE). The China-ASEAN Environmental Cooperation Center (CAEC) and the Environment Division (ED) of the ASEAN Secretariat are responsible for the JIS operation.

1.3 CAEC will play the role on coordination and implementation of the Action Plan on Chinese side, while ASEAN Secretariat ED does the same on ASEAN side. The terms of reference (TOR) specifically for CAEC and ED will be developed by two sides through consultations.

1.4 The JISE Co-directors will be appointed by ASEAN and China respectively.

1.5 Both ASEAN and China encourage their local governments, enterprises and civil society to join and support the implementation of the Action Plan.

2. Funding Support

2.1 Major funding resources to support the implementation of the Action Plan include but are not limited to:

- ASEAN-China Cooperation Fund
- Funding support from international partners
- Funding from Chinese government
- Support from governments of ASEAN countries
- Funding support by Public-private partnership