



Environmental Cooperation-Asia (ECO-Asia) ECO-Asia Environmental Governance

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Photo: ECO-Asia

AECEN helps regional environmental agencies develop inspection and enforcement programs to strengthen industrial compliance with environmental regulations

REGIONAL COOPERATION

Coping with the environmental impacts of rapid urbanization and industrial growth is 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 and local expertise, limited public outreach and involvement, and insufficient data gathering for evaluation.

REGIONAL COOPERATION AND NETWORKING

In 2005, with support from the US 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). AECEN's mission is to promote improved compliance with legal environmental requirements in Asia through regional exchange of innovative policies and practices. The network aims to:

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

NETWORK MEMBERS AND SECRETARIAT

Network members are environmental agencies from Asian countries committed to improving compliance and enforcement through regional cooperation and information exchange. Members designate 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.





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AECEN works with the region's judiciaries to strengthen environmental adjudication and establish special "green" courts.

Current members include environmental agencies from India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, the People's Republic of China, the Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Vietnam. With support from USAID, the AECEN Secretariat supports the implementation of activities, and provides coordination and information support.

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 develop local expertise.

Twinning program. AECEN operates a grants program for members to engage in "twinning" partnerships that strengthen member capabilities in line with the AECEN Regional Principles. Activities enable direct linkages between member agencies that lead to the adoption of improved policies and practices and increased expertise.

Targeted studies. AECEN works with members to complete rapid assessments of their environmental compliance and enforcement programs. The Secretariat also completes targeted studies on priority topics.

Regional cooperation and training. AECEN facilitates regional counterpart exchange and training to promote the sharing of practices and lessons learned. The Secretariat also establishes a platform for reform and regional cooperation.

Asian Justices Forum on the Environment. Courts throughout Asia are increasingly receiving environmental cases and are working to develop new policies and institutional arrangements such as specialized "green" courts. Through the Asian Justices Forum on the Environment AECEN works with Asian courts to support development of specific interventions that strengthen court policies and judicial skills.

AECEN Annual Forum. The AECEN Secretariat and member countries organize an annual forum to report results, conduct regional trainings and share experiences. The AECEN Forum also affords members an opportunity to collaborate and learn from other international enforcement networks and development partners.

AECEN Award for Excellence. To support and encourage increased opportunities for women in environmental compliance and enforcement, AECEN presents an award for excellence at the annual AECEN Forum to a woman who has exhibited outstanding achievement in the field.

PARTNERS

Asian Development Bank, US Environmental Protection Agency, World Bank, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, Institute for Global Environmental Strategies, International Network of Environmental Compliance and Enforcement, Environmental Compliance and Enforcement Network for Accession, and Clean Air Initiative-Asia.

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