

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**  
**BETWEEN**  
**THE UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION**  
**FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC**  
**AND**  
**THE INSTITUTE FOR GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGIES**

**I. INTRODUCTION**

1. The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES) reaffirm their desire to work together in areas of mutual interest in the service of Asia-Pacific region through the present Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), which supersedes the MoU signed between the two organizations on 3 April 2016.

**II. PURPOSE OF ESCAP-IGES COOPERATION**

2. As both ESCAP and IGES have been established with mandates to address environmental and sustainable development challenges in Asia and the Pacific through promotion of regional cooperation, rigorous analysis, knowledge sharing, and policy dialogues and provision of policy recommendations, ESCAP and IGES plan to work together:

- (a) to synergise their work on environment and sustainable development to increase the effectiveness and impact of their respective work; and
- (b) to enhance science-policy interface in Asia and the Pacific in the areas of environment and sustainable development through joint analytical and capacity-building works that promote informed policy dialogues.

**III. GENERAL PRINCIPLES FOR ESCAP-IGES COOPERATION**

3. ESCAP and IGES will be guided by the following general principles:

- (a) the two Organisations will focus on shared strategic and operational priorities;
- (b) the two Organisations use the comparative strengths and advantages of each Organisation in the delivery of results; and
- (c) this MoU imposes no legal obligations upon any party hereto.

#### IV. FOCUS OF ESCAP-IGES JOINT ACTIVITIES

4. The priority areas for joint activities would include those listed in the Appendix to this MoU, which may be amended from time to time with the mutual written consent of the Parties. These priority areas include, *inter alia*, the following thematic priorities:

- (a) Resource efficiency and circular economy
- (b) Waste and Plastic Pollution
- (c) Climate Change
- (d) Sustainable Cities
- (e) Biodiversity in the Asia Pacific Region
- (f) Disaster Risk Reduction
- (g) Sustainable Urban Mobility

#### V. EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION

5. ESCAP and IGES recognize that effective cooperation depends on open, comprehensive and regular exchange of information at the institutional level. They agree to make appropriate arrangements to:

- (a) provide copies of publications and all public documents of each organization to the main library of the other organization to be maintained as reference documents; and
- (b) give notice, through information posted on the websites of each organization, of:
  - conferences, seminars and workshops being organized or sponsored;
  - regional, country, sector and thematic policy/strategy documents;
  - programme and project approval documents; and
  - regional programme, country programme, sectoral, project and other evaluations.

#### VI. RECIPROCAL INVITATIONS

6. ESCAP and IGES recognize that appropriate representation is important for the purpose of joint positioning and advocacy. They agree that:

- (a) reciprocal invitations, including to high-level management, will be extended to the other organization to attend the International Forum for Sustainable Asia and the Pacific (ISAP), the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD), and the ESCAP annual sessions; and

- (b) invitations to other meetings, conferences, seminars and workshops relevant to cooperation in the priority areas set out in the Appendix to this MoU will be sent, where appropriate.

## VII. PERIODIC CONSULTATIONS

7. ESCAP and IGES recognize that it is important to convene periodic consultations to review what is being planned, what is being implemented, and what is being achieved in terms of results as well as to discuss new challenges, opportunities and problems. They agree to hold such consultations periodically as required and not less than once every two years.

## VIII. FOCAL POINTS FOR MANAGEMENT OF THE MOU

8. ESCAP and IGES agree to designate as focal points for the activities under this MoU:
- (a) for ESCAP: Director, Environment and Development
  - (b) for IGES: Executive Director

## IX. MONITORING OF THE MOU AND JOINT ACTIVITIES

9. ESCAP and IGES will prepare annually:
- (a) a list of all current operational cooperation activities and status of implementation;
  - (b) a list with a brief description of all planned cooperation activities for the next year; and
  - (c) an indicative list of planned cooperation activities for the two subsequent years.
10. ESCAP and IGES agree that:
- (a) An initial implementation plan will be agreed within two months of the execution of this MoU, and the respective focal points will prepare a joint report annually on the status of implementation of the cooperation activities, including an assessment of results achieved;
  - (b) the Parties will conduct a joint mid-term review of the ESCAP-IGES cooperation after signature of this MoU, in consultation with the evaluation offices of the respective organizations; and
  - (c) these assessments will be reviewed by ESCAP and IGES in considering further cooperation activities, including any necessary amendments to this MoU.

## X. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND USE OF INSTITUTIONAL EMBLEMS

11. ESCAP and IGES recognize that the involvement of both organizations in joint cooperation activities needs to be publicized. They agree that:

- (a) there will be public acknowledgment of the role and contribution of each organization to cooperation projects in all public information documentation related to such cooperation; and
- (b) the use of emblems of each organization in documentation related to cooperation will be in accord with the current policies of each organization concerning such usage.

## XI. MISCELLANEOUS

12. The term of this MoU will be from the date of signature by both Parties until 31 March 2026.

13. Any specific activities under this MoU will be covered by a project document or written agreement.

14. This MoU may be amended by mutual written consent of the Parties.

15. This MoU may be terminated by either Party on six months' notice in writing.

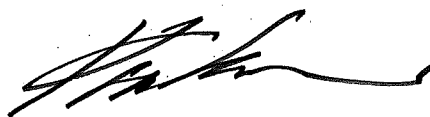
**For the United Nations Economic and  
Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific**




---

Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana  
Under-Secretary-General of the United  
Nations and Executive Secretary of ESCAP

**For Institute for Global Environmental  
Strategies**




---

TAKEUCHI Kazuhiko  
President

Place: Bangkok, Thailand

Place: Kanagawa, Japan

Date: 26 March 2021

Date: 26 March 2021

## APPENDIX

### PRIORITY AREAS FOR ESCAP-IGES COOPERATION

#### Resource Efficiency and Circular Economy

- Experts from ESCAP and IGES have contributed to regional processes and initiatives such as Regional 3R Forum in Asia and the Pacific. ESCAP and IGES can further collaborate to mainstream policy agenda of resource efficiency and circular economy.
- A concrete area of collaboration is in cooperation in the ASEAN Resource Panel (ARP) which was proposed by ESCAP and ASEAN with inputs from experts from IGES and endorsed by the ASEAN Secretariat. IGES can serve as a knowledge partner to the ARP by providing knowledge and analysis on effective policy instruments and practices accumulated through its involvement in regional policy research initiatives, such as ERIA's Regional Knowledge Center on Marine Plastic Debris (RKC-MPD).

#### Waste and Plastic Pollution

- Basis for collaboration: Eight of the world's top 20 countries as sources of marine debris are from Asia – China, Indonesia, the Philippines, Viet Nam, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Malaysia, and India. Also, approximately 95% of plastic in our ocean is transported by ten major rivers, eight of which are in Asia. The Asia-Pacific region thus is now recognized as a hotspot of plastic pollution of the oceans. These countries are facing typical challenges associated with poor waste management (e.g. lack of effective policies, technologies and capacities to manage plastic waste at the local level).
- Through the Closing the Loop project (2020-2021), ESCAP and IGES are assisting four ASEAN cities - Da Nang (Viet Nam), Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia), Surabaya (Indonesia) and Nakhon Si Thammarat (Thailand) - in developing city action plans to address plastic litter, make plastic waste management more circular and reduce the amount of plastic waste entering the marine environment from land-based sources. Areas of collaboration:
  - i. Joint delivery of learning, including through an E-Learning Module on marine plastic and circular economy being developed as part of the project which can be further utilised in capacity building training programmes for local and national governments as well as other stakeholders and platforms, such as the Asia Pacific Mayor's Academy and ERIA's Regional Knowledge Centre for Marine Plastic Debris (RKC-MPD);
  - ii. Sharing of learning from the project to other cities through existing and new project partnerships of respective agencies (e.g. UNEP, UN-Habitat, JAIF, JICA, WB, ADB and the Alliance to End Plastic Waste etc.).
  - iii. Document the results of the project and contribute to policy dialogues at regional level, through the involvement in implementation, reporting and monitoring of ASEAN Framework of Action on Marine Debris, G20

Osaka Blue Vision, Bangkok Declaration Towards Prevention of Plastic Waste Pollution through 3R and Circular Economy, Bangkok Declaration on Combating Marine Debris in ASEAN Region and Roadmap for Sustainable Waste Management and Resource Circulation in South Asia etc.; and

- iv. Jointly organise regional events highlighting project at key regional fora, such as the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD) and the International Forum for Sustainable Asia and the Pacific (ISAP) to create more awareness and policy applications.

### **Climate Change**

- IGES' Regional Office in Bangkok (BRC) hosts the UNFCCC-IGES Regional Collaboration Centre for Asia and the Pacific based in Bangkok (RCC Bangkok). RCC Bangkok has worked with ESCAP on a roadmap for carbon pricing in ASEAN, Regional Dialogue on Carbon Pricing (REdiCAP) in Central Asia and ASEAN, Needs-based Finance in Central Asia, and Coal Phase Out initiatives in Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Viet Nam.
- ESCAP and IGES may explore other potential thematic areas, such as the development of long-term low emission development strategies (LT-LEDS) and Net-Zero Target as well as NDC Implementation
- ESCAP and IGES may collaborate to develop side events and/or analytical products in the context of Asia Pacific Climate Weeks.

### **Sustainable Cities**

#### Voluntary Local Reviews (VLR)

- Experts from ESCAP and IGES have developed the "Asia-Pacific Regional Guidelines on Voluntary Local Review: Reviewing local progress to accelerate action for the Sustainable Development Goals". This publication is the first guideline on how to conduct a Voluntary Local Review targeting specifically the Asia-Pacific region.
- ESCAP and IGES can further collaborate in the practical implementation of the guidelines, supporting the efforts of local governments in the Asia-Pacific region in localizing the SDGs. Given IGES experience in supporting the VLR process of Japanese cities—and having pioneered the development of the first generation VLRs published in 2018—IGES can further contribute with knowledge sharing activities and peer-to-peer learning on how to successfully conduct a VLR. Collaboration between ESCAP and IGES in the realm of the VLR movement in terms of scientific analysis and its implementation at the ground level will be promoted.

#### Asia-Pacific Mayors' Academy

- IGES is part of the Asia-Pacific Mayor's Academy, with experts from IGES contributing as a member of the advisory board and as faculty—leading modules and delivering lectures. This programme intends to support sustainable development efforts of local governments in the Asia-Pacific region by providing

them with practical policy tools. Collaboration between IGES and ESCAP within this program will be promoted in the future, including through bringing lessons and tools from other joint initiatives (e.g. VLRs, Waste and Pollution, etc.)

### **Biodiversity in the Asia Pacific Region**

- Both IGES and ESCAP focus some of their staff and other resources on promoting biodiversity. In recent years the only formal cooperation between the two organizations on this topic has been through the IPBES technical support unit hosted by IGES, which collaborated with ESCAP on events broadcasting key messages from the IPBES Regional Assessment for Asia and the Pacific.
- IGES and ESCAP aim to pursue stronger collaboration, to strengthen implementation of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, including through joint policy briefs. Opportunities for joint involvement in projects may also be considered where appropriate.

### **Disaster Risk Reduction**

- The Seventh Session of the ESCAP Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction and associated expert meetings will serve as a platform for dialogue and peer learning to support the implementation of the Sendai Framework and Sustainable Development Goals and targets relating to resilience and disaster risk reduction.
- The Disaster Resilience Week will focus on:
  - Adaptation and resilience, particularly under climate change
  - Joint analytical work and advocacy of adaptation and resilience including through partnerships under the Asia Pacific Disaster Resilience Network.
- ESCAP welcomes IGES participation and support during the events.

### **Sustainable Urban Mobility**

- ESCAP has developed the Sustainable Urban Transport Index (SUTI), an Excel based tool that can help summarize, track and compare the performance of sustainable urban transport systems in cities. SUTI is a framework of indicators to assess urban transport systems and services. The index is based on ten indicators representing transport system, social, economic, and environmental dimensions of sustainable urban transport. The indicators and SUTI can reflect state of urban transport performance in a city. The carefully selected ten SUTI indicators covers elements of planning, access, safety, quality and reliability, affordability, and emissions. Indicators on different scales are normalized and performance of each indicators is compared on a scale of 1-100 and illustrated in a spider diagram. SUTI is derived by geometric aggregation of ten indicators, based on equal weighting. SUTI tool can help cities to assess the achievement of the SDG target 11.2 and support implementation of the New Urban Agenda.
- ESCAP and IGES may collaborate to encourage cities and developing member countries to use SUTI for assessment of urban transport systems and use results

to plan and implement measures to improve urban transport systems and services. ESCAP is also looking for collaborating partners to support collection of urban transport data and application of SUTI in more cities.

### **Other Joint work, Partnerships and Events**

#### **Analytical and Advisory Work on Governance for Sustainable Development**

- ESCAP and IGES worked together in developing a report titled Transformations for Sustainable Development in 2016. Collaboration between ESCAP and IGES will be promoted on developing analytical and advisory work on governance for sustainable development in appropriate projects and assignments.

#### **The Asian Co-benefits Partnership: Co-benefits and Air Pollution**

- ESCAP has participated in the advisory group of the Asian Co-benefits Partnership (ACP), an informal platform for information sharing and stakeholder engagement on co-benefits in Asia. IGES, as the secretariat of the ACP, is planning to make the platform more action- and solution-oriented in 2021 and beyond. IGES would welcome collaboration with ESCAP in identifying and implementing actions that deliver co-benefits in Asia, especially as it works with UNEP on the Issue-Based Coalition on Climate Change Mitigation and Air Pollution.

#### **Greening the COVID Recovery: The Energy Policy Tracker, The Platform for Redesign, and The Triple R Framework**

- IGES is promoting the greening of the COVID recovery in several initiatives. This includes the energy policy tracker, the platform for redesign, and the Triple R Framework. The Energy Policy Tracker is a database developed by several institutions (including IGES) that is updated on a weekly basis to provide the latest information about COVID-19 government policy responses from a climate and energy perspective.
- The platform for redesign is an initiative led by the Ministry of Environment, Japan (with the support of IGES and the UNFCCC) that showcases the self-reported climate related responses, recovery and redesigns from more than 65 countries. The Triple R Framework is a COVID-19 decision making framework that calls for integrating targeted, near term responses; with 2) broader, forward-looking policies and stimulus allocation; as well as 3) redesigns of infrastructure of institutions. IGES welcomes ESCAP collaboration on these and other similarly motivated COVID initiatives.

#### **International Forum for Sustainable Asia and the Pacific (ISAP)**

- The International Forum for Sustainable Asia and the Pacific (ISAP) is held annually to share information and facilitate diverse discussions on sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific, with the participation of front-line experts



and diverse stakeholders from international organisations, governments, business and NGOs. ISAP began in 2009 as an initiative of IGES, and has been organised in collaboration with many partners including ESCAP. ESCAP and IGES also have been utilising ISAP as opportunities to periodically review the progress of mutual joint activities.

\*\*\*\*\*

