



## BRIEFING NOTE

# Support to ONEP/Thailand as Chair of the ASEAN Working Group on Climate Change



Residents moving their belongings on a raft during the 2011 Thailand floods

ADAPT Asia-Pacific's program of support to the Royal Thai Government included assistance to ONEP, as the Chair of the ASEAN Working Group on Climate Change, to help match donors with climate change actions proposed by ASEAN for implementation in the sub-region.

### SUMMARY

Support from the USAID Climate Change Adaptation Project Preparation Facility for Asia and the Pacific (ADAPT Asia-Pacific) helped ASEAN member countries to identify potential assistance from an array of donors and partner organizations to implement specific elements of the ASEAN Action Plan on a Joint Response to Climate Change (the Action Plan). This was done as part of ADAPT Asia-Pacific's program of assistance to the Royal Thai Government, serving as Chair of the ASEAN Working Group on Climate Change (AWGCC).

### CHALLENGES

Southeast Asia is one of the world's most vulnerable regions to climate change. The Asian Development Bank estimated that economic loss in this region from climate change impacts could be the equivalent of 6.7% of GDP by the year 2100, more than twice the world average. At the same time, the region is increasing its greenhouse gas emissions as a proportion of the global total and thus is contributing to the very impacts with which it is threatened.

In the face of such challenges, ASEAN has taken steps to promote collaborative action on climate change. The Blueprint for the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) was launched in 2009. Section D10 on Responding to Climate Change and Addressing Its Impacts advocates for enhanced regional and international cooperation to address the causes and impacts of climate change. Also in 2009, an ASEAN Climate Change Initiative was developed to further guide enhanced regional cooperation, and the AWGCC was formed to implement the initiative. Subsequently, the Action Plan was prepared, identifying specific actions that could be taken by ASEAN member countries.

In the lead up to the 4th meeting of the AWGCC in March 2013, Thailand, as AWGCC Chair, recognized that there was no clear information on the extent of possible donor interest in supporting the action items contained in the Action Plan. Thailand considered this a key constraint to implementing the Action Plan. Consequently, ADAPT Asia-Pacific was asked to help ascertain the level and nature of interest among donors and other partner organizations with a track record of strong support to ASEAN and/or climate change in the region.



The Bangkok Mass Transit System in downtown Bangkok, Thailand

### **ADAPT Asia-Pacific**

Under contract with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), AECOM International Development (AECOM) implements the five-year ADAPT Asia-Pacific project to assist eligible Asian and Pacific countries in gaining improved access to finance for climate change adaptation. ADAPT Asia-Pacific is establishing a facility that provides a combination of technical assistance, capacity building and networking related to accessing climate change adaptation financing. ADAPT Asia-Pacific also works with regional, international and U.S. partners to share and replicate best practices among national and local stakeholders.

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## **PRINCIPAL ACTIVITIES**

In February 2013, ADAPT Asia-Pacific mobilized expert support to Thailand's Office of Climate Change Coordination (OCCC) of the Office of Natural Resources and Environment Policy and Planning (ONEP), Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MoNRE). ADAPT Asia-Pacific's consultant conducted a survey that would elicit information from donor/partner organizations as to their current climate change programs, identify where the objectives of these programs might overlap with the specific action items contained in the Action Plan, and ascertain the respective organization's potential interest in supporting the action item(s).

In early March, OCCC issued letters of invitation to about two dozen donor/partner organizations with a request for them to submit the necessary inputs as well as to attend the consultation forum during the last week of March. The intervening weeks were spent communicating with the various organizations to secure their inputs and participation.

The results of the mapping exercise were presented at a Partners Organization Consultation Forum in Siem Reap, Cambodia on 26 March 2013, attended by 47 people including representatives from 11 partner organizations who presented their positions on support to the Action Plan. All action line items contained in the Action Plan were matched with expressions of interest or support from one or more donors/partner organizations.

Feedback received from participants at the Consultation Forum indicated that the mapping exercise was very useful in matching actions in the Action Plan with donors/partners who are in a position to support those actions. The Partners Organization Consultation Forum was immediately followed by the 4th Meeting of the AWGCC on 27-28 March 2013, which also acknowledged the mapping effort.

## **RESULTS AND OUTCOMES**

The donor's matrix was used as a main document to facilitate discussions between ASEAN member countries and donor agencies with regard to their joint efforts in the future to meet the climate change challenges being faced by the countries of Southeast Asia and as identified in the Action Plan.

## **PARTNERS**

The Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning of Thailand's Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment represented Thailand as the chair of the AWGCC during the period of this work and served as the counterpart agency to ADAPT Asia-Pacific.