

**AHEAD50 (ASEAN Human Educational Development Scholarship Partners)
“Kick-Off Mission”
(Short-term Invitation Program to Japan-Mission #1) Report**

1. Program Overview

【Program Objective】

From 15 to 21 June 2025, six officials of the ASEAN Secretariat were invited to Japan on a "Kick-Off mission." The objective of the kick-off mission was to have the officials actually participate in a model program to get a sense of the value of the project and to gain insight into how the project should be implemented in the future.

【Overview of AHEAD50】

AHEAD50 (ASEAN Human Educational Development Scholarship Partners) is an invitation program launched on the occasion of the 50th Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation. The purpose of this program is to provide promising staff of the ASEAN Secretariat and other related organizations with an opportunity to learn about Japan's policies, systems, and positions, thereby strengthening the ASEAN Secretariat through human resource development and enhancing smooth cooperation with Japan.

【Participants】 Total: 6 ASEAN Secretariat members (3 assistant directors, 1 senior officer, 2 officers)

【Locations】 Tokyo, Oita

【Schedule】

Jun. 4 (Wed) [Pre-departure Orientation] (recording)

■ Invitation Program:

Jun. 15 (Mon) Arrival at Haneda Airport

【Post-arrival Orientation】

Jun. 16 (Mon) [Opinion Exchange] Towards the start of "AHEAD50"

Mr. TAKAMIZU Hidero, Director, Regional Cooperation Division, Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan

【Lecture】“Urban development and socioeconomic challenges in Southeast Asia: The case of Thailand”

Lecturer: Ms. ENDO Tamaki, Professor, Graduate School of Asia - Pacific Studies, Waseda University

	<p>【Opinion Exchange】 JICA's cooperation toward ASEAN Mr. Mimpei Ito, Deputy Director General, Southeast Asia and Pacific Department, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)</p>
	<p>【Welcome Dinner】</p>
Jun. 17 (Tue)	<p>【Lecture】 "Japan-ASEAN Economic Partnership Projects" Lecturer: Ms. HATA Yumiko, Director, Asia and Pacific Division, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry</p>
	<p>【Lecture】 "MAFF's initiative to achieve net zero GHG emissions for sustainable food systems & ASEAN-Japan MIDORI Cooperation Plan" Lecturers: Ms. YOSHIDA Yuri, Deputy Director for MIDORI Sustainable Food Systems Strategy Division, Minister's Secretariat, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF)</p>
	<p>Mr. INADA Yoshiaki, Director and Negotiator for South-East Asia, Bilateral Affairs Division, Export and International Affairs Bureau, MAFF</p>
	<p>Travel from Tokyo to Oita</p>
Jun. 18 (Wed)	<p>【Lecture】 "Indo-Pacific, the United States, Japan, and ASEAN—the Future of Security and Regional Economic Cooperation" Lecturer: Mr. SATO Yoichiro, Professor, Graduate School of Asia Pacific Studies Faculty, The Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University</p>
	<p>【Observation】 Umi-jigoku, Suginoi Geothermal Power Plant</p>
Jun. 19 (Thu)	<p>Travel from Oita to Tokyo</p>
	<p>【Observation】 Asean-Japan Centre (Promotion Centre on Trade, Investment and Tourism)</p>
	<p>Workshop, AHEAD50 implementation meeting</p>
Jun. 20 (Fri)	<p>【Mission Report】 Ministry of Foreign Affairs 【Courtesy Call】 Mr. MATSUMOTO Hisashi, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs</p>
Jun. 21 (Sat)	<p>Departure from Haneda Airport</p>

2. Program Photos

Invitation Program

	
<p>June 16 【Opinion Exchange】 Towards the start of “AHEAD50”</p>	<p>June 16 【Lecture】 “Urban development and socioeconomic challenges in Southeast Asia: The case of Thailand”</p>
	
<p>June 16 【Opinion Exchange】 JICA's cooperation toward ASEAN</p>	<p>June 16 【Welcome Dinner】 Commemorative photo</p>
	
<p>June 17 【Lecture】 “Japan-ASEAN Economic Partnership Projects”</p>	<p>June 17 【Lecture】 “MAFF's initiative to achieve net zero GHG emissions for sustainable food systems & ASEAN-Japan MIDORI Cooperation Plan”</p>

	
June 18 【Lecture】 “Indo-Pacific, the United States, Japan, and ASEAN—the Future of Security and Regional Economic Cooperation”	June 18 Lunch exchange at The Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University
	
June 18 【Observation】 Suginoi Geothermal Power Plant	June 19 【Observation】 Asean-Japan Centre
	
June 20 【Mission Report】 Ministry of Foreign Affairs	June 20 【Courtesy Call】 Mr. MATSUMOTO Hisashi, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs

3. Mission Report by the Participants

<p>I. Reviewing the Program (2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">The Mission provided participants a comprehensive understanding of Japan's intention for the AHEAD50 program;The Mission provided participants with an overview of Japan's key ministries and agencies' working modalities, experiences, priorities, as well as expectations on ASEAN-Japan cooperation; 	<p>I. Reviewing the Program (3)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">The Mission provided participants with firsthand experience with various Japanese cultural nuances, which leads to a better understanding of their policies and approaches; andThe Mission provided participants with enrichment of views from the academics' perspective, to provide a better understanding of Japan's diplomacy position. 	<p>II. Moving Forward</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">1. Timing: early November 2025 (first week of November 2025)2. Main topic: to be informed3. Number of participants: 4 – 7 ASEC Staff Members4. Number of divisions: 2 – 3 divisions5. Targeted participants: ORS and LRS of ASEC Staff Members6. Duration: 5 working days7. Modalities of programme: to streamline the schedule to ensure efficiency of participation in the programme 
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Programme Assessment

The Mission enabled participants to gain a comprehensive understanding of Japan's intention for the AHEAD50 programme.

It provided an overview of the working modalities, experiences, and priorities of Japan's key ministries and agencies, as well as their expectations for ASEAN-Japan cooperation. Participants experienced Japanese cultural nuances firsthand, which deepened their understanding of Japan's policies and approaches—something not possible through online interaction alone. The Mission also enriched participants' perspectives through academic insights into Japan's diplomatic stance and ASEAN-Japan relations.

Implementation Agency: Japan International Cooperation Center (JICE)