

**AHEAD50 (ASEAN Human Educational Development Scholarship Partners)
for Environment Division Officials of the ASEAN Secretariat
and Officials of the ASEAN Centre for Energy
(Short-term Invitation Program to Japan -Mission #8) Report**

1. Program Overview

【Objectives and Overview】

From 23 to 29 August, a total of six officials from the Environment Division of the ASEAN Secretariat and the ASEAN Centre for Energy (ACE) visited Japan.

This Invitation Program to Japan was held with the theme of “Climate Change Measures and Marine Conservation for Sustainable Economic Growth,” to contribute to the smooth implementation of ASEAN-Japan cooperation projects in the field of climate and environment, in particular to deepen the understanding of the following initiatives:

- Initiatives to enhance climate change mitigation, adaptation and transparency
- Efforts to achieve decarbonization and economic growth simultaneously
- Marine environmental conservation efforts, including measures to address marine plastic pollution

【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 in 2023. 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 members

- Environment Division of the ASEAN Secretariat: 1 Head of Division, 1 Senior Officer, 2 Officers
- Modelling and Policy Planning (MPP) Department, ASEAN Centre for Energy (ACE): 1 Head of Department, 1 Senior Officer

【Locations】Tokyo, Ibaraki

【Schedule】

■ Invitation Program:

August 23 (Sun) – August 29 (Sat), 2026 (6 nights, 7 days)

Aug. 23 (Sun)	Arrival at Narita International Airport
Aug. 24 (Mon)	【Lecture, Opinion Exchange】 Ministry of the Environment, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry
Aug. 25 (Tue)	【Observation】 Ota Incineration Plant 【Cultural Experience】 Kintsugi Experience
Aug. 26 (Wed)	【Lecture, Opinion Exchange】 National Institute for Environmental Studies

Aug. 27 (Thu)	【Meeting Attendance】 Tokyo Meeting on Cooperation toward the 2nd Global Stocktake between ASEAN and Japan
Aug. 28 (Fri)	【Meeting Attendance】 Tokyo Meeting on Cooperation toward the 2nd Global Stocktake between ASEAN and Japan 【Reporting Session】 Presentations of Program Findings and Action Plans Comments: Mr. HAYASHI Naoki, Director, Regional Cooperation Division, Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau, MOFA
Aug. 29 (Sat)	Departure from Narita International Airport

2. Program Photos

	
August 25 【Observation】 Ota Incineration Plant	August 25 【Cultural Experience】 Kintsugi Experience
	
August 26 【Lecture, Opinion Exchange】 National Institute for Environmental Studies	August 26 【Lecture, Opinion Exchange】 National Institute for Environmental Studies
	
August 28 【Reporting Session】	August 28 【Reporting Session】 Group photo

3. Voices from the Participants (excerpt)

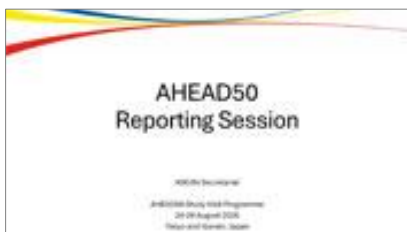
- The most memorable and useful aspects of the programme were the direct exposure to Japan's environmental policies, technologies and institutional practices, complemented by exchanges with Japanese government agencies, research institutions and other stakeholders. The visits to NIES and the Ota Incineration Plant were particularly useful in demonstrating how scientific research, data, technology and policy can be translated into practical environmental action.

The programme was also valuable for the exchange of experiences between ASEAN and Japan, particularly on climate change, marine litter and plastic leakage, resource circulation, waste management, and carbon markets. The opportunity to discuss practical challenges and potential areas for future cooperation with Japanese counterparts, as well as to learn from the experiences of different AMS, was particularly useful. The programme also reinforced the importance of peer-to-peer learning, capacity building and context-specific approaches in advancing ASEAN–Japan environmental and climate cooperation.

- The most memorable was the meeting for the 2nd Global Stocktake. I learned a great deal about climate, energy, and decarbonisation, which were areas I had not been very familiar with, as my current portfolio is mainly focused on transboundary haze, biodiversity, and marine issues. What I found particularly interesting was how interconnected and cross cutting these issues are. Although energy and decarbonisation are not directly part of my usual work, the discussions showed me how they can intersect with haze, biodiversity, and other environmental issues. This has broadened my perspective and given me a different lens through which to approach my day-to-day work.

Another interesting visit was to the Ota Incineration Plant. I am familiar with how incinerator centres work generally. However, there is less than a handful of time that I have ever visited one. Interestingly, a topic of small talk risen among us participants, which was that Southeast Asia, but Indonesia in particular, was so behind compared to Japan on waste management. Japan has managed to operate several incinerators by the late 90's, but Indonesia had just begun planning development for a few incinerators in 2026. Memorable, but more of a reflection.

4. Presentations of Program Findings and Action Plan at the Reporting Session (excerpt)

Environment Division of the ASEAN Secretariat		
		
【Results of the Program】 ◆ Program Learning The program highlighted the importance of integrating policy, data, science, and technology, while strengthening collaboration among governments, research institutions, and the private sector. It also		

emphasized that effective environmental action requires not only technology, but also enabling systems, institutional capacity, and human resource development.

◆ Key Takeaways

ASEAN and Japan share common challenges in climate change, marine litter, and resource circulation. Potential areas for cooperation include data and MRV (Measuring, Reporting, and Verification), carbon markets, microplastic monitoring, e-waste (waste electrical and electronic equipment) and ELV (End-of-Life Vehicle) management, and the application of Japanese technologies and expertise.

【Action Plan】

ASEAN and Japan will continue existing environmental cooperation while exploring concrete collaboration on the ASEAN-Japan GST Report, JCM (Joint Crediting Mechanism) and carbon markets, AIM (Asia-Pacific Integrated Model), GOSAT (Greenhouse Gases Observing Satellite), marine plastic pollution, and the circular economy. Upcoming ASEAN meetings, COP31, and other regional forums will also be used to strengthen coordination and partnerships.

Modelling and Policy Planning (MPP) Department, ASEAN Centre for Energy (ACE)



【Results of the Program】

◆ Program Learning

The program highlighted that climate action should not rely on isolated technologies or projects, but should integrate policy, institutions, data, science, infrastructure, finance, and regional cooperation. It also emphasized the importance of addressing energy security and decarbonization together.

◆ Key Takeaways

Key priorities for ASEAN include renewables, electrification, energy efficiency, regional power interconnection, and better integration of emissions data, MRV (Measuring, Reporting, and Verification), satellite observations, and modelling. Resilience and circular economy considerations should also be incorporated into energy planning.

【Action Plan】

The next step is to prioritize a smaller number of well-evidenced cases for the ASEAN-Japan GST Report clearly showing the challenges, enabling conditions, barriers, results, and replication potential. Quantitative messages should be validated, while ASEAN's key messages should be clarified and translated into practical cooperation.

Implementing Agency: Japan International Cooperation Center (JICE)