

**AHEAD50 (ASEAN Human Educational Development Scholarship Partners)
for AMFSED Officials of the ASEAN Secretariat
(Short-term Invitation Program to Japan-Mission #6) Report**

1. Program Overview

【Program Objectives】

From 5 to 11 July, four officials from the Analysis and Monitoring on Finance and Socio-Economic Development Division (AMFSED) of the ASEAN Secretariat visited Japan.

The visit focused on sustainability-related issues, particularly green transition topics that have gained increasing importance in recent years, including carbon neutrality, the circular economy, and the blue economy. The primary objective of the program was to deepen participants' understanding of advanced policies, initiatives, and private-sector practices in Japan and among international organizations based in Tokyo, while enhancing their professional knowledge through exchanges of views with relevant stakeholders.

Participants explored practical approaches and enhanced their knowledge in areas related to sustainability, including climate action, sustainable resource management, and emerging policy and financing frameworks that support the green transition. Strategic themes such as carbon markets, sustainable finance, ESG data governance, circular economy practices, and multi-stakeholder approaches to sustainable development were also discussed.

The knowledge and insights gained through these activities are expected to deepen participants' understanding of key issues at the intersection of finance and the green transition, while contributing to the capacity-building of AMFSED officials responsible for the analysis and monitoring of financial integration within ASEAN.

【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: 4 staff members (1 Director-Level Officer, 2 Senior Officers, 1 Officer) from the AMFSED of the ASEAN Secretariat

【Locations】 Tokyo, Hyogo

【Schedule】

■ Invitation Program:

July 5 (Sun) – July 11 (Sat), 2026 (6 nights, 7 days)

July 5 (Sun)	Arrival at Haneda Airport
July 6 (Mon)	【Opinion Exchange】 International Monetary Fund (IMF) Regional Office for Asia Pacific (OAP) Mr. NAGAOKA Takashi, Director Mr. Chad Steinberg, Deputy Director / Assistant Director, Asia and Pacific Department Ms. Anne Oeking, Advisor to Director Mr. TERAJ Kosuke, Communications Officer 【Opinion Exchange】 Asian Development Bank Institute (ADBI) Dr. SHIRAI Sayuri, ADBI Fellow / Professor, Faculty of Policy Management, Keio University 【Lecture, Opinion Exchange】 Research Institute for Environmental Finance (RIEF) “Key points of Environmental & Sustainable Finance” Lecturer: Mr. FUJII Yoshihiro, Executive Director
July 7 (Tue)	【Lecture, Opinion Exchange】 Institute for Future Initiatives, The University of Tokyo “Overview of the Institute for Future Initiatives and Climate Policy and Energy Systems Modelling” Lecturer: Dr. SUGIYAMA Masahiro, Professor 【Opinion Exchange】 Sustainable Lab Inc. Mr. TAKAHASHI Kotaro, Chief Operating Officer Mr. HIRASE Renji, Chief Executive Officer Travel from Tokyo to Hyogo
July 8 (Wed)	【Observation】 Panasonic Eco Technology Center Co., Ltd. 【Cultural Experience】 Tea ceremony experience 【Lecture, Opinion Exchange】 Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES) Kansai Research Centre “Bridging Synergy Approach to the Ground” Lecturer: Dr. TANAKA Yugo, Senior Research Manager / Lens Facilitator
July 9 (Thu)	【Observation】 Himeji Castle Travel from Hyogo to Tokyo
July 10 (Fri)	【Workshop】 Preparations for the Reporting Session (summarizing program findings, confirming social media posts, preparation of action plans) 【Reporting Session】 Presentations of Program Findings and Action Plans
July 11 (Sat)	Departure from Haneda Airport

2. Program Photos

Invitation Program

	
July 6 【Opinion Exchange】 International Monetary Fund (IMF) Regional Office for Asia Pacific (OAP)	July 6 【Opinion Exchange】 Asian Development Bank Institute (ADBI)
	
July 6 【Lecture, Opinion Exchange】 Research Institute for Environmental Finance (RIEF)	July 7 【Lecture, Opinion Exchange】 Institute for Future Initiatives, The University of Tokyo
	
July 7 【Opinion Exchange】 Sustainable Lab Inc.	July 8 【Observation】 Panasonic Eco Technology Center Co., Ltd.

	
July 8 【Cultural Experience】 Tea ceremony experience	July 8 【Lecture, Opinion Exchange】 Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES) Kansai Research Centre
	
July 9 【Observation】 Himeji Castle	July 10 【Reporting Session】

3. Voices from the Participants (excerpt)

- **International Monetary Fund IMF Regional Office for Asia Pacific (OAP)**

The meeting was really insightful because IMF shared how they collect the data and how they provide recommendation on financial analysis and policy.

The engagement enables AMFSED to connect with IMF who is not our natural partner in conducting macroeconomic surveillance for ASEAN.

The meeting was a good opportunity to introduce our work and also learn about IMF regional office's mandate and scope in identifying entry points for possible collaboration in the future.

- **Asian Development Bank Institute (ADBI)**

The meeting with ADBI was illuminating as it highlighted the common challenges faced by ASEAN and Japan in mobilizing sustainable finance. The meeting also allowed AMFSED to exchange views with ADBI on risk of aging and its impact on ASEAN and Japan's economy as well as policy response to aging issues. Through the engagement, AMFSED learned about a few upcoming training courses by ADBI where AMFSED can participate to enrich our knowledge on issues related to carbon market. The discussion also offered valuable perspectives that may contribute to policy development and capacity-building efforts within ASEAN.

- **Research Institute for Environmental Finance (RIEF)**

The discussion provided valuable insights into both the opportunities and risks associated with sustainable finance. We also exchanged knowledge on carbon market schemes at the global, regional, and national levels.

- **Institute for Future Initiatives, The University of Tokyo**

The meeting was highly informative, providing valuable insights into the Japan Model Intercomparison Platform (JMIP) for Sustainable Futures and its contributions to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Seventh Assessment Report (AR7), as well as climate policy evaluation and the circularity challenges of PV and EV battery waste. The knowledge shared and exchange of perspectives on innovation and enabling policies, such as the right to repair, were relevant and useful for informing ASEAN's ongoing work on resource circularity and sustainable decarbonization.

The “Right to Repair” refers to policies that enable consumers and businesses to repair products they own without unnecessary restrictions from manufacturers. It has gained increasing international attention as an important approach to promoting resource circularity, reducing waste, and advancing a circular economy.

- **Sustainable Lab Inc.**

The meeting was highly informative, providing valuable insights into Japan's ESG data ecosystem and approaches to ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) data standardization, interoperability, and governance. The exchange of knowledge on these topics, including the role of multi-stakeholder collaboration and AI in data management, offered useful perspectives that are relevant to ASEAN's ongoing work in advancing carbon neutrality and sustainable development.

- **Panasonic Eco Technology Center Co., Ltd.**

The session was truly eye-opening. We learned a great deal about the recycling process, which requires the participation of multiple stakeholders, including policymakers, the company itself, its workers, and the community. We also learned that each stakeholder plays an important role in ensuring effective and sustainable recycling.

Beyond recycling, the session introduced the concept of circularity, which focuses on keeping materials and products in use for as long as possible through reducing, reusing, repairing, and recycling. This approach minimizes waste, conserves resources, and supports a more sustainable future.

- **Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES) Kansai Research Centre**

The meeting provided valuable insights into IGES's “Synergy” approach, which links global sustainability goals with local implementation through collaboration among policymakers, researchers, municipalities, businesses, and communities. It also enhanced our understanding of how multi-stakeholder partnerships can support more effective and integrated sustainability actions.

The presentation of the Asia-Pacific Synergy Report highlighted the current progress toward the SDGs in the region and the importance of accelerating collective efforts. The examples of local decarbonization initiatives, including agrivoltaics, demonstrated practical approaches that municipalities can adopt and offered useful lessons on implementing sustainable solutions in different local contexts.

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

Reporting Session

Japan Programme for Officials from the ASEAN Secretariat:
Analysis and Monitoring on Finance and Socio-Economic
Division (AMFSED)
AHEAD50 Mission #6



JICE Headquarters, Tokyo | 10 July 2020

Major Takeaways

- The IMF is engaged with G20 members and recommends the Asia-Pacific region and Japan to work more closely with ADB in supporting regional economic resilience, while also accelerating regional integration through technical cooperation.
- Public-financed development for policy environment in order to build up and recover the economy, as well as to build collaboration with ASEAN by sharing the information in future policy and capacity building programs.
- A lot of useful insights into the issue between theory and practice in the global market, highlighting various challenges and opportunities as well as cooperation for future.

Action Plans to Enhance Productivity and Efficiency

- Strategic Level:** AMFSED will strive to adopt and copy the best practices gained from this fruitful AHEAD50 program in areas within our purview, particularly in supporting the implementation of ASEAN 2045, Our Shared Future and the AEC Strategic Plan 2025-2030.
- Operational Level:** With the support of technical expertise, economic surveillance insights, policy research, and capacity building support offered by our peers such as the IMF and ADB, AMFSED intends to strengthen its data-based policymaking, improve analytical capabilities, and facilitate the development of more targeted and effective initiatives in support of ASEAN's economic and sustainable development priorities.
- Policymaking Level:** The deep dive sustainability discussions with RETS, the Institute for Future Initiatives, Sustainable Lab, PETEC, and IGES will provide valuable insights to support the design and implementation of key ASEAN sustainability initiatives, including the ASEAN Strategy for Carbon Neutrality, the Framework for Circular Economy, and the ASEAN Blue Economy Framework.

【Results of the Program】

- ◆ **Key highlights of the program**
We had productive discussions regarding the environment and finance of each organization that we visited, such as IMF, ADBI and The University of Tokyo. These visits gave us opportunities for networking and encountered to new ideas. They gave us many insights regarding what we have to do toward the future, laws and initiatives in Japan, etc.
- ◆ **Major takeaways**
The observation of recycling plant of Panasonic Eco Technology Center was eye-opening, and the lessons learned there may contribute to circular economy in ASEAN countries. Also, during our visit to Sustainable Lab, we found the importance of analysis and assessment of ESG data for financing. In addition, we noticed ASEAN and Japan can teach and learn mutually, taking advantage of respective strengths.

【Action Plan】

We will try to adopt our findings and best practices to relevant ASEAN plans and initiatives. Also, we will implement policymaking and achieve our economic and sustainable development priorities supported by IMF, ADBI, etc. In addition, we will discuss deeper with the organizations we visited for better design and implementation of environment-related strategy and frameworks of ASEAN.

【Feedback and suggestions】

We were able to successfully gain knowledge and achieve networking, which will be a foothold for future collaboration. We expect post-program engagement such as follow-up exchanges. We would have had deeper discussions on academic subjects if we had more time.

Implementing Agency: Japan International Cooperation Center (JICE)