

South-East Asian Training of Trainers Seminar on Green Growth Policy Tools for Low-carbon Development

Meeting Report

The *South-East Asian Training of Trainers Seminar on Green Growth Policy Tools for Low-carbon Development* was held at the Comsaed River Kwai Resort in Kanchanaburi, Thailand from 31 August – 5 September 2009 for 36 participants from the ten ASEAN member states. The seminar was organized by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the Regional Help Desk on Sustainable Consumption and Production in Asia and the Pacific and was generously supported by the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

The seminar focused on strengthening the capacity of policy makers from ASEAN member states to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change and to pursue Green Growth. The course provided them with the tools and knowledge to develop policies and strategies that would steer the current economic growth pattern towards a more eco-efficient and low-carbon pattern while increasing the resilience to and prevention of further climate change adversities.

The training of trainers seminar was held over five and half consecutive days and utilized the Green Growth training of trainers toolkit, expert advice, practical exercises, quizzes, group discussions, field trips and the recently released ADB study on *the Economics of Climate Change in South-East Asia* to educate participants about the Green Growth policy tools available that can be used to promote climate change action and low-carbon development.

The first day of the training was a general introduction to climate science and the Green Growth concept for low-carbon development and climate action. It featured a special documentary film about climate change commissioned by the British Government called “*High Stakes*”. Each of the following days consisted of presentations, group discussions, and participatory exercises on each of the Green Growth paths: Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP); Greening Business and markets; Sustainable Infrastructure & Investment in Natural Capital and Green Tax and Budget Reform (GTBR).

The seminar was organised with sustainability in mind which included hosting the event at an eco-resort powered entirely by renewable energy. The training materials were printed using recycled paper, soy-based ink and organic unbleached cotton for a set promotional T-shirts especially tailored for the event, which contributed to minimizing the environmental impact of the meeting. The venue is an excellent example of sustainability and adds credence to the business case that green businesses can indeed be profitable, environmentally friendly and benefit local communities by generating green jobs and improving services.

Considerations made regarding Ramadan for the Muslim participants were sincerely appreciated. This included the provision of a prayer room and specially prepared *halaal* food made available at the appropriate times (4:30 am and 6:40 pm). In addition, the organizers decided to offset the carbon emissions generated by the meeting. ESCAP teamed up with the non-profit *Plant a Tree Today Foundation* who will be planting trees in Ban Nong Muang, North East Thailand to offset the CO₂ produced by participants travelling to the venue.

Key Recommendations

Participants identified several important areas for assistance, where the application of Green Growth policies would provide solutions at the national and regional levels to the challenges of climate change and unsustainable economic growth:

- To strengthen inter-ministerial collaboration with a focus on the development of Green Growth policies;
- To develop and enhance the capacity of policy makers to promote innovation and publicly funded environmentally sound technologies (ESTs);
- To implement a co-benefits approach to policy formulation to address the triple crises (fuel, food and finance) and climate change;
- To examine current fiscal policy instruments and price structures to assess the possible use of green tax and budget reform (GTBR) as a driver of climate action and Green Growth;
- To develop public awareness campaigns on the national and local community levels for Green Growth applications, climate action, strengthening resilience, poverty reduction and empowerment through new business opportunities;
- To develop green public procurement policies, as well as other policy instruments fostering sustainable consumption and production and green businesses;
- To assess the impacts of border tax adjustments on the ASEAN region;
- To assess the impacts of carbon taxes and carbon markets on the ASEAN region;
- To improve human resource development for green jobs as a key area for strengthening poverty reduction efforts;
- To establish a Training of Trainers region-wide network for participants to exchange information and best practices on Green Growth Policy Tools.

In addition, there were a number of requests made by participants for further capacity development seminars on the application of Green Growth Policy Tools in their home countries.