

Annex I.

Expert Group Meeting on Addressing Sustainable Development Challenges in North-East Asia

Promoting Environmental Cooperation in North-East Asia: Development of the NEASPEC Strategic Plan 2026-2030 13 December 2024, Hybrid (Beijing and Online)

Background

The North-East Asia Subregional Programme for Environmental Cooperation (NEASPEC) is a unique environmental cooperation mechanism in North-East Asia tailored to the specific subregional characteristics and needs of the member States for concerted efforts to improve environmental sustainability. NEASPEC has made significant and tangible progress in subregional environmental cooperation in several programmatic areas, namely air pollution, biodiversity and nature conservation, marine protected areas, low carbon cities, and desertification and land degradation. It has also facilitated the establishment of thematic platforms, such as the North-East Asia Clean Air Partnership (NEACAP), North-East Asian Marine Protected Areas Network (NEAMPAN), and North-East Asia Low Carbon Cities Platform (NEA-LCCP).

NEASPEC Strategic Plans have served, through the years, as guiding documents for developing and implementing NEASPEC work in its five programmatic areas as well as strengthening its institutionalized cooperation platforms and have supported NEASPEC work to move from a short-term, project-based to a long-term, programmatic approach. In 2016, after a study on challenges and opportunities of NEASPEC and a series of consultations, the 20th Senior Officials Meeting (SOM-20) adopted the NEASPEC Strategic Plan 2016-2020. And in 2020, building on the Strategic Plan 2016-2020 and reflecting new developments during its implementation, the 24th Senior Officials Meeting (SOM-24) adopted the NEASPEC Strategic Plan 2021-2025.

The development of the NEASPEC Strategic Plan 2026-2030 is at hand. In 2023, NEASPEC member States reaffirmed their commitment to promoting environmental cooperation in North-East Asia, which set a solid impetus in developing the next five-year strategic plan. Through the NEASPEC Commemorative Statement issued to mark the 30th anniversary of NEASPEC, member States envisaged: (a) accelerating the progress of NEASPEC's activities, projects and platforms in five programmatic areas; (b) bolstering NEASPEC's relevance to tackling environmental challenges and delivering concrete benefits for the subregion and beyond; (c) developing subregional knowledge base and capacity through NEASPEC's works for the member States, and (e) enhancing the effectiveness of NEASPEC's work.

Objectives

ESCAP East and North-East Asia Office, as NEASPEC secretariat, has supported member States in the development of NEASPEC strategic plans. To this end, the Expert Group Meeting is organized with the following objectives:

- a. Discuss the timeline and approach in developing the NEASPEC Strategic Plan 2026-2030
- b. Exchange views among NEASPEC member States, experts and practitioners on how to further operationalize the goals articulated under the NEASPEC Commemorative Statement

The discussions during Expert Group Meeting will lay the groundwork for the NEASPEC secretariat in carrying out its tasks supporting member States in developing the NEASPEC Strategic Plan 2021-2025.

Participants

Participants will include:

- o Government delegations attending the 27th NEASPEC Senior Officials Meeting (SOM-27),
- o Representatives and partners of NEASPEC programmatic areas
- o Experts from academia, research institutes, UN, and other international organizations

Indicative Programme

30 mins	<p>Opening</p> <p>Welcome Remarks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mr. Ganbold Baasanjav (Head, ESCAP East and North-East Asia Office) <p>Context-Setting: Development of the NEASPEC Strategic Plan 2026-2030</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• NEASPEC secretariat
90 mins	<p>Accelerating NEASPC's progress: Programmatic Areas Moderator: NEASPEC Secretariat</p> <p><i>Session structure: Resource persons will provide an overview/issue presentation, to be followed by interactive discussions. Guiding questions will be provided to steer the discussions.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Air pollution• Low carbon cities

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marine protected areas • Biodiversity and nature conservation • Desertification and land degradation
<i>15 mins</i>	<i>Break</i>
60 mins	<p>Accelerating NEASPC's progress: Programmatic Areas (con't)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NEASPEC cooperation areas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Interlinkages of programmatic areas ○ New areas of collaboration
<i>60 mins</i>	<i>Break</i>
75 mins	<p>Accelerating NEASPC's progress: Operational Support Moderator: NEASPEC Secretariat</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding • Outreach and stakeholder engagement • Secretariat support
30 mins	<p>Wrap-Up and Next Steps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timeline and approaches in developing the NEASPEC Strategic Plan 2026-2030
75 mins	Stakeholders' Networking