

Strengthening capacity of policymakers in South-East Asia to promote policies and developing plans for improved waste water treatment and reuse in urban and peri-urban areas

**Regional Policy Workshop on Wastewater Management and Sanitation in South-East Asia**

2 and 3 April, 2015, Bangkok, Thailand

**Background** ESCAP and UN-Habitat are jointly implementing a project on “Strengthening capacity of policymakers in South-East Asia to promote policies and developing plans for improved wastewater treatment and reuse in urban and peri-urban areas”, to address wastewater and sanitation issues through the promotion of the Decentralized Waste Water Treatment Systems (DEWATS). Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Viet Nam have been selected to conduct national activities including policy studies, national workshops and a pilot project. The main objective of the project is to support capacity building of policy makers and planners for better wastewater management through different activities at regional and national levels. The project has identified Asian Institute of Technology (AIT) as a regional institution, which can function as resource center or referral point with expertise on all aspects of wastewater management and DEWATS to support the network in the region.

The two regional meetings have reviewed the progress and sub-regional wastewater management experiences, namely: i) regional policy workshop for South-East Asia (19-21 March 2014, Bangkok, Thailand); (ii) the regional workshop on dissemination of the implementation of the field project (11 December, 2014, Attapeu, Lao PDR), with participation of officials from 3 target countries, giving policy makers and planners real experience of actions that improve conditions on the ground while also improving environmental sanitation for a targeted community. Financial schemes and options have been developed together with a cost-benefit analysis and market opportunities for DEWATS.

Three national workshops focused on developing the vision of the national DEWATS strategy (Lao PDR on 6-7 October 2014; Cambodia: 27-28 October 2014; and Viet Nam: 22-23 December 2014), organized by respective Ministries of Public Works and Transport (in Cambodia and Lao PDR) and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (in Viet Nam), UN-Habitat with substantial support by ESCAP. Inputs to three national strategies were proposed by the national teams and networks in participatory planning approach, seeking partnership opportunities. The outputs of these events provided valuable information in development the policy guidance manual on wastewater management with a special emphasis on DEWATS.

To ensure sustainable implementation of DEWATS initiatives, participants of the national and regional workshops have suggested that the endeavor to encourage technology and knowledge transfer among the South-East Asian countries through the national and regional networks need to be enhanced and at least three national sanitation consortia in target countries need to be developed. The final regional policy workshop would summarize the joint progress and would make recommendations of the strategic way forward at the regional and national levels in promoting policies on wastewater management and sanitation in South-East Asia.

## Scope of the Workshop and Objectives

The goal of the regional policy workshop is to further enhance knowledge and awareness of the national level policy makers, local government officials and other experts on DEWATS amongst urban and peri-urban communities in South-East Asia (SEA) and identify the framework of the regional cooperation. The specific objectives of the workshop are as follows:

1. To review and discuss the main findings and outcomes from the project implementation in particular:
  - a. the Policy Guidance Manual on Wastewater Management with a Special Emphasis on DEWATS in SEA and the case studies;
  - b. the e-learning training module on enabling policies for Wastewater Management and DEWATS in SEA, incorporate suggestions to further disseminate the e-learning knowledge platform through open-university network;
2. To discuss and identify the policies and strategies to scale up the development of DEWAT initiative at regional level, as well as the market opportunities and enabling mechanisms.

## Overview of the Programme

The first day of the policy workshop will summarize the progress made by three target countries and based on the review the country situations and good practices in South-East Asia, the workshop would review the strategies and policy tools on waste water treatment and sanitation and the ways to scale up the good practices and enabling financing mechanisms.

The new publication of Policy Guidance Manual, the on-line e-learning tool on DEWATS policy frameworks will be shared, with follow-up discussions on the strategic way forward.

AIT, as the Regional Resource Center for DEWATS in South-East Asia, would also present new proposals and ideas for pilot projects in South-East Asian countries and further resource mobilization strategy to respond the country needs in the region beyond the project scope.

The second day of the workshop would be arranged as a field visit for participants to visit two wastewater management (via biotechnology) and DEWATS practices in Nakhonchaisri, Thailand.

During the field visit participants will have opportunities to continue discussing follow-up actions on the identified working frameworks and solutions of enabling policies, as well as tools to strengthen networks and partnerships beyond the project.

**Participants:** Participants are mainly from the three target countries of the project, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Viet Nam and other governments of South East Asia, academy, civil society organizations, international organizations and other stakeholders from the region.

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