



# EUs Support to Southeast Asia: Climate Change

## Why in News

The [European Union \(EU\)](#) has earmarked millions of euros for supporting climate friendly development in Southeast Asia.

- After the EU became a “strategic partner” of the [Association of the Southeast Asian Nations \(ASEAN\)](#) bloc in December 2020, both blocs **pledged to make climate change policy a key area of cooperation.**

## Key Points

### ▪ EUs Assistance to Southeast Asia:

#### ◦ Multilateral Assistance:

- The EU is the largest provider of development assistance to the ASEAN region, and has committed millions of euros to various environmental programs.
- This includes 5 million Euros to the ASEAN **Smart Green Cities initiative** and another 5 million Euros towards a new means of **preventing deforestation, called the Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade in ASEAN.**

#### ◦ Individual Help:

- Along with multilateral assistance, the EU also works with individual ASEAN member states on eco-friendly policies like **Thailand’s Bio-Circular-Green Economic Model and Singapore’s Green Plan 2030.**

### ▪ Problems Faced by the EU in Southeast Asia:

- Region’s **environmental policy** as Southeast Asia is going in the wrong direction in many areas on [climate change](#).
- Five ASEAN states were among the **fifteen countries most affected** by climate change between 1999–2018, according to the [Climate Risk Index 2020](#).

### ▪ Coal Consumption in Southeast Asia:

- **Southeast Asia’s energy demand is projected to grow 60% by 2040.**
- Coal-fired energy will overtake natural gas as the main power source in the ASEAN region by 2030. And by 2040 it could account for almost 50% of the region’s projected CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.
  - In 2019, the region consumed around 332 million tons of coal, nearly double the consumption from a decade earlier, according to the [International Energy Agency \(IEA\)](#).
- This will contribute to a two-thirds rise in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions to almost 2.4 gigatons, according to the **Southeast Asia Energy Outlook 2019.**

### ▪ Risks for the EU in Southeast Asia:

- **Could Face Exporters Anger:**

- If the EU takes a strong forceful stance on coal consumption in the region, it could spark **anger from the main exporters of the commodity, China, India and Australia.**
- **Policy Resistance:**
  - The EU's climate change policy in the region has already been met with resistance.
    - Indonesia last year initiated proceedings at the [World Trade Organization](#) against the EU's phased ban on palm-oil imports.
      - The EU contends the ban is to protect the environment, but Indonesia, the world's largest palm oil producer, says it is mere **protectionism.**
    - Malaysia, the world's second-largest palm oil producer, supports Indonesia in its battle against the EU.
- **Accusations of Hypocrisy:**
  - The other problem for the EU is that it risks **accusations of hypocrisy** if it takes too forceful a stance on coal-fired energy production in Southeast Asia.
    - **Poland** and the **Czech Republic** of the EU remain dependent on coal-fired energy production.
    - Southeast Asia and Europe each accounted for around 11% of the world's thermal coal imports in 2019.
- **India's Coordination with Asean on Climate Change:**
  - In 2012 Both adopted a '**New Delhi Declaration on [ASEAN-India Cooperation in Renewable Energy](#)**'.
  - **ASEAN-India Green Fund** was established in **2007** with USD 5 million for funding pilot projects to promote adaptation and mitigation technologies in the field of climate change.
  - ASEAN and India are **collaborating on several projection Climate Change and biodiversity** through partnership with IISc, Bangalore.

[Source:IE](#)

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