

– REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS –

**Asian Environmental Compliance and Enforcement Network  
Twinning Grants Initiative**

**BACKGROUND**

While Asia's rapid economic development has raised 270 million people out of poverty, increasing industrial production, agricultural intensification and urbanization have resulted in serious environmental degradation and scarcity of natural resources. Asian governments have responded with an impressive array of environmental laws and judicial decisions, though enforcement remains weak due to financial, technical, and institutional limitations. Common challenges include: overlapping and fragmented authority, limited interagency coordination, incomplete decentralization, lack of standardized procedures, weak human and institutional capacity, limited public outreach and involvement, and insufficient program data and performance indicators.

**AECEN.** The Asian Environmental Compliance and Enforcement Network (AECEN) is a regional network that promotes improved compliance with environmental legal requirements in Asia through the exchange of innovative policies and practices. Network members are Asian national and sub-national environmental agencies from India, Indonesia, Japan, Nepal, People's Republic of China, the Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Vietnam.

**Activities.** AECEN activities facilitate the sharing of best practices and strategies on effective environmental compliance and enforcement. With support from the AECEN Secretariat and network development partners, network members engage in activities that strengthen legal and regulatory frameworks and human and institutional capacity for improved compliance and enforcement. Activities include: targeted studies; rapid country program assessments; pilot activities on improved policies, practices and systems; specialized regional trainings; an awards program; and the AECEN website ([www.aecen.org](http://www.aecen.org)), which includes the AECEN Best Practices Inventory and AECEN Regional Principles. AECEN also organizes the AECEN Regional Forum, and the Asian Justices Forum on the Environment.

**Member-to-Member Cooperation.** Counterpart exchange and agency cooperation is at the heart of AECEN. In piloting new approaches and building capacity, practitioners share experience, information and best practices. One key objective of AECEN is to facilitate member-to-member cooperation through technical exchange, on-the-job training, and information sharing.

**AECEN Member-to-Member Cooperation**

**Strengthening Inspection in Vietnam.** To assist Vietnam in strengthening the capacity of environmental inspectors, AECEN facilitated cooperative exchange with counterpart members from Japan, Philippines and Singapore. As a result of this cooperation, the Vietnam Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE) trained 136 environmental inspectors, focusing on priority sectors, such as industrial zones, textiles, food processing, breweries, cement plants, and mining. As a next step, MONRE is developing a national inspection procedural manual, which will standardize inspections at the national and provincial levels.

**Establishing Environmental Courts in the Philippines.** In January 2008, the Supreme Court of the Philippines passed a resolution to designate 117 trial courts for improved environmental adjudication. The Supreme Court developed its new policies and practices in part through consultations and discussions with counterpart judges from Australia, India, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and the United States. In particular, in July 2007 AECEN organized the Asian Justices Forum on the Environment in Manila to facilitate dialogue and serve as a platform for regional exchange.

**AECEN TWINNING GRANTS PROGRAM**

To expand and strengthen member-to-member cooperation, in 2008 AECEN is initiating a grants program for AECEN Members to engage in "twinning" partnerships that strengthen Member capabilities in line with the AECEN Regional Principles. Under the AECEN Twinning Program, the USAID Environmental Cooperation-Asia (ECO-Asia) Program will award small grants on a competitive basis based on proposals submitted jointly by two AECEN Members, as well as courts involved in the Asian Justices Forum on the Environment.

Twinning activities include technical assistance in the development and implementation of improved policies and practices, on-the-job training, peer review, and information sharing. Twinning partners establish cooperative programs that define roles and responsibilities, expected outcomes, and resources, including partner cost-share.

## GRANT REQUIREMENTS

Per USAID regulations, ECO-Asia will conduct a small-grants solicitation targeting AECEN Members and their stakeholder partners.

**Eligibility.** AECEN Members, courts from AECEN countries and related partners may apply for an ECO-Asia small grant.

**Grant Objectives.** ECO-Asia grants will facilitate the adoption of improved policies and practices, or enhanced capacity. Partners will define outcomes and impacts in terms of the AECEN Regional Principles.

**Grant Activities.** Examples of activities include: technical assistance in developing new policies and practices, joint project development, specialized training, peer review, fellowships, information exchange and site visits.

**Grant Funds.** The maximum amount for individual twinning grant awards is US\$25,000. Grant funds may cover costs related to travel, workshops, translation, printed materials, etc.. Grant funds cannot cover purchase of equipment, or proposal preparation expenses.

**Duration and Payment Schedule.** Grant duration is between 9-12 months. Grant funds disbursement is linked with predefined outcomes and deliverables.

**Cost Share.** Grantees collaborate on a cost share basis, including in-kind technical staff and administrative support, facilities support and other inputs.

## PROPOSAL EVALUATION AND AWARD PROCESS

To streamline grant proposal development and review, ECO-Asia conducts a two-stage process that includes submission and review of a concept paper, followed by a detailed grant proposal for the most promising concepts. ECO-Asia undertakes proposal evaluation, grant award and grant administration. The overall timeline for solicitation and award for 2008 is approximately 12 weeks, beginning on May 15, 2008.

**Step 1: Concept Paper.** Representatives of the proposed twinning partners jointly prepare a two-page concept paper on proposed activities and outcomes. The concept paper identifies a specific compliance and enforcement challenge, and joint action for developing a solution through twinning activities. The concept note also outlines roles and responsibilities of twinning partners, expected outcomes and opportunities for regional replication. (See Annex below for concept paper requirements.) Based on a review of the concept papers, ECO-Asia requests applicants with the most promising concepts to submit full grant proposals.

### 2008 Twinning Grant Timeline

- Posting of solicitation notice on AECEN website: [www.aecen.org](http://www.aecen.org) – May 15, 2008
- Dissemination of solicitation notice by AECEN Secretariat to Members – May 15, 2008
- Deadline for submission of concepts – June 15, 2008
- Notification of selected Members for request for submission of full grant proposals – June 30, 2008
- Deadline for proposal submission – July 31, 2008
- Grant awards – August 15, 2008

**Step II: Grant Proposal.** ECO-Asia will request the Members and courts with the most promising concepts to submit brief (5-8 page) grant proposals that will include more detailed information on proposed activities, expected outcomes, implementation schedule, budget, and capabilities. While the partnership will be between two Members or courts, only one organization will receive the grant award. On a case-by-case basis, ECO-Asia will work with Members (or courts) to identify the most effective grant-making strategy.

**Evaluation and Selection.** ECO-Asia will select grantees based on the following criteria: (1) achievement of AECEN Regional Principles; (2) organizational capabilities and past performance; (3) demonstrated partner commitment; (4) contribution to AECEN Member or partner's mission or priorities; (5) replication potential; (6) innovation; (7) sustainability; and (8) cost share.

**Partner Cooperation.** Grant activities should promote continued cooperation between the two AECEN Members or courts that result in measurable results. Members should commit cost share of at least 25% and prepare a work plan that defines joint cooperation and partner roles and responsibilities.

**Disclaimer.** ECO-Asia awards all grants with direct approval from USAID in accordance with USAID regulations and other requirements. ECO-Asia reserves the right to reject all proposals and to conduct a more extensive or targeted proposal solicitation. All awards are subject to the availability of USAID funds. USAID retains the right to terminate all grant activities unilaterally in extraordinary circumstances.

#### Information:

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## ANNEX

### TWINNING CONCEPT PAPER REQUIREMENTS (2 pages maximum, English Language)

#### 1. Background

Provide overview on: (1) compliance and enforcement challenge to be addressed in target country in terms of the AECEN Regional Principles; and (2) how agency-to-agency or court-to-court cooperation via twinning can help address the challenge.

#### 2. Proposed Project

Provide overview of:

- Goals and objectives of twinning arrangement;
- Experience provided by the Member agency or court sharing expertise or helping to build capacity in the target country;
- Principal activities (e.g., technical assistance developing new policies and practices, joint project development, specialized training, peer review, fellowships, information exchange, and site visits);
- Expected results in terms of the AECEN Regional Principles and Member's mission and priorities; and
- Proposed start date and estimated completion date.

#### 3. Budget

Indicate estimated budget to include major expenses.

#### 4. Contact Details

Provide contact information for principal points of contact for both agencies: name, title, address, phone, and e-mail.

#### 5. Submission

Please submit twinning concept via email ([secretariat@aecen.org](mailto:secretariat@aecen.org)) or fax (+662 651 8864) by June 15, 2008.