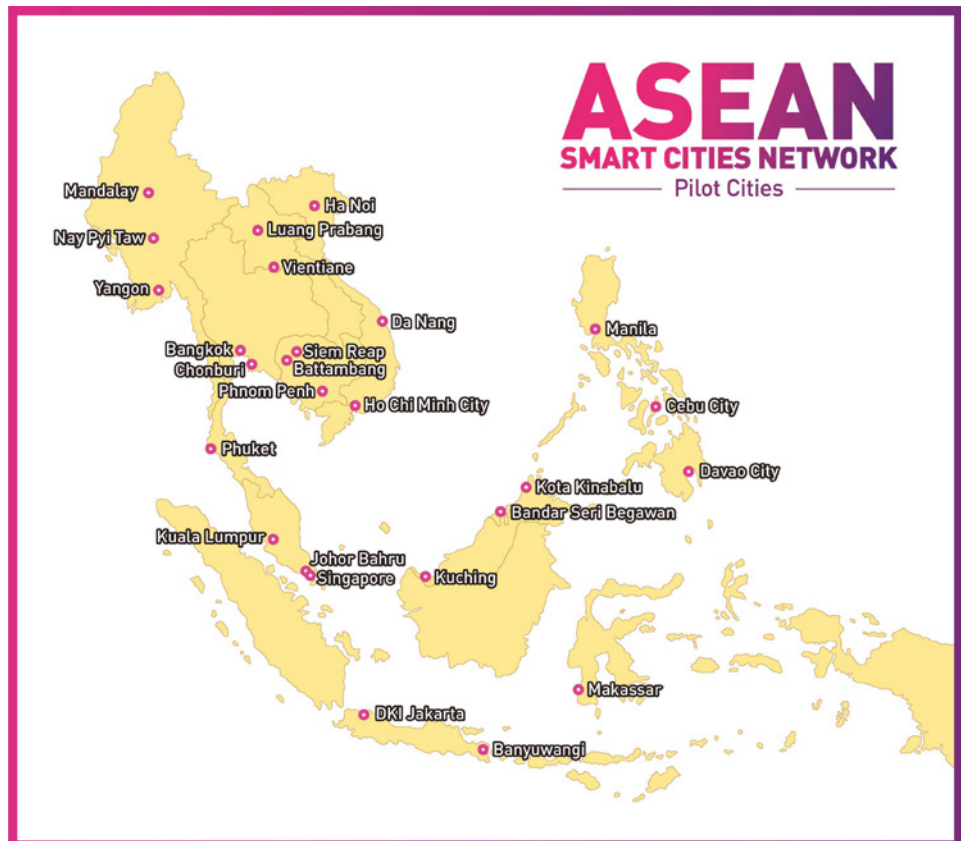**REPORT**

Catalysing the Development of Smart Cities in ASEAN

Written by Rani Samtani

26 Cities will take part in the initial run of the ASEAN Smart Cities Network.
Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Cities around the world—including those in Southeast Asia—aspire to become smarter, so as to improve the quality of living for their citizens. To synergise these efforts amongst member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Singapore has proposed the formation of an ASEAN Smart Cities Network (ASCN) under its ASEAN Chairmanship in 2018. This platform will facilitate cooperation on smart city development, share best practices and explore common technological solutions.

By 2030, Southeast Asia's urban population is expected to grow by another 90 million people. Such rapid urbanisation poses major urban challenges—rising inequality, congestion, poverty, citizen security and safety, poor water and air quality as well as inadequate housing and healthcare—which can be tackled with more intelligent urban communities. But there is currently no standard

Delegates of the ASEAN Smart Cities Governance Workshop visited Supply Chain City as part of site visits in Singapore.
Source: Centre for Liveable Cities

definition of what a "Smart City" is. The ASCN's first step is coming up with key principles and core expected outcomes of such a development. In addition, the network will link members with private sector solution providers as well as ASEAN's external partners to explore plausible solutions and secure funding for smart initiatives. This will cover a diverse range of sectors from transport, water quality and energy to healthcare, education and ICT.

For the pilot run of ASCN, ASEAN member states have nominated up to three cities, including their capitals, to participate. Additionally, each state has selected representatives—Chief Smart City Officers and National Representatives—to participate in designing and implementing their smart city action plans. A core mandate for members is to devise detailed projects and plans to be undertaken between 2018 to 2025.

Developing Smart Cities in ASEAN Together

To kickstart the ASCN initiative, Singapore's Centre for Liveable Cities (CLC) and Ministry of Foreign Affairs organised the ASEAN Smart Cities Governance Workshop in May 2018. The CLC has a wealth of experience in organising training programmes and setting up platforms for collaboration. CLC co-led together with MGA to develop the ASCN.

During the four-day workshop, the 75 delegates from 25 cities across ASEAN attended panel sessions with industry experts, think tanks and private consultants to share ideas and global best practices. They also visited sites around Singapore to learn about its successful smart initiatives.

In addition to learning, ASCN members began refining their Smart City action plans. As ASEAN cities are at varying stages of urban development and have different priorities, each state will focus on producing solutions that suit their individual city's local and cultural context.

Representatives from different member states discussed Smart City action plans during the workshop.
Source: Centre for Liveable Cities

Several private organisations briefed delegates on a range of topics related to smart and sustainable urbanisation.
Source: Centre for Liveable Cities

For instance, Phuket plans to harness the power of Big Data and use the Internet of Things sensors to enhance public safety in the city. Ho Chi Minh City, however, plans to develop an integrated and unified emergency response centre, equipped with state-of-the-art video surveillance systems and geographic information systems. To tackle pollution and pest infestation in Luang Prabang's 183 ancient wetlands, its city officials plan to gather data on wetland biodiversity, water quality and tourism activity.

A key deliverable for the ASCN is that cities produce bankable projects. Thus, a networking session was held on the last day of the workshop for delegates to meet industry partners and learn about what they do as well as how they can work together on smart city projects.

The ASCN is set to grow beyond this workshop. Malaysia's National Representative, Ms. Hajah Rokibah binti Abdul Latif, said she would share key takeaways and insights from the workshop with other emerging smart cities in her country. ASEAN Secretariat Director, Dr. Julia Tijaja, suggested identifying mutually reinforcing links between the ASCN's work and what ASEAN was doing on other platforms. She added that further discussion was needed to designate roles and responsibilities for stakeholders in the ASCN. This would ensure successful implementation of projects as well as provide adequate monitoring and evaluation of each city's progress.

The ASCN will pave the way for greater collaboration in ASEAN and enhance cooperation to address city-specific issues. Members are working towards jointly crafting an ASEAN Smart Cities Framework which will reflect the importance of sustainable development. As there is a significant disparity in stages of urban development and technology adoption across participating cities, the framework will be inclusive and focus on smart urbanisation in both developing and advanced cities.

During this year's World Cities Summit in Singapore, the ASCN will also have their inaugural meeting on 8 July. This annual gathering chaired and hosted by the ASEAN Chair will allow members to discuss progress on each city's plans, launch new projects with private sector organisations and to explore new opportunities and projects. Representatives from Thailand and Vietnam have already indicated a willingness to carry forward ASCN in their upcoming ASEAN Chairmanships in 2019 and 2020. This ensures the sustainability of the network in the long-term.

About the Writer

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About CLC

The Centre for Liveable Cities was set up in 2008 by the Ministry of National Development and the Ministry of the Environment and Water Resources, based on a strategic blueprint developed by Singapore's Inter-Ministerial Committee on Sustainable Development. Guided by its mission to distil, create and share knowledge on liveable and sustainable cities, the Centre's work spans four main areas - Research, Capability Development, Knowledge Platforms and Advisory. For more information, please visit us at http://www.clc.gov.sg