

# ASEAN, Japan, and UNDP Convene at Expo 2025, Osaka, Japan to Advance Financing Strategies for Blue Ecosystem Restoration

OSAKA, KANSAI, JAPAN, September 27, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Government of Japan, and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) reaffirmed their commitment to advancing a resilient and sustainable blue economy in the ASEAN region and Timor-Leste during the "Exploring Innovative Financing Solutions for Blue Ecosystem Restoration Projects" innovation workshop at the ASEAN Pavilion at Expo 2025, Osaka, Kansai, Japan.

At the Expo, a workshop and series of discussions were convened under the

[ASEAN Blue Carbon and Finance](#)

[Profiling \(ABCF\)](#) initiative, funded by the Government of Japan and implemented by UNDP Indonesia with the ASEAN Coordinating Task Force on Blue Economy (ACTF-BE). The initiative supports ASEAN Member States and Timor-Leste in unlocking the economic, environmental, and social value of blue carbon while aligning with the region's net-zero goals by 2050.

The event brought together more than 60 academics and professionals from Japan and various countries to explore innovative financing strategies aimed at accelerating the restoration of Southeast Asia's critical blue ecosystems, including mangroves, seagrass, and peatlands, which are vital for climate action, livelihoods, and biodiversity. Southeast Asia's leadership in this agenda is underscored by its natural wealth: the region is home to 33% of the world's seagrass beds and nearly 40% of known tropical peatlands, representing around 6% of global peatland resources.

"Mobilizing financial resources is crucial to unlocking the potential of the blue economy. Through mechanisms such as blue bonds and carbon credits, we can channel investments into ecosystem restoration that deliver tangible benefits for our communities," said Mr. Lee Yoong Yoong, Director of the Community Affairs Directorate at the ASEAN Secretariat and Deputy



Panels, discussants, and participants concludes the "Exploring Innovative Financing Solutions for Blue Ecosystem Restoration Projects" at the Expo 2025 Osaka.



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*Mr. Lee Yoong Yoong*

Commissioner General of ASEAN for Osaka Expo 2025.

H.E. Mr. KIYA Masahiko, Ambassador of Japan to ASEAN, underscored Japan’s strong commitment to supporting ASEAN’s efforts in advancing a sustainable blue economy. Blue carbon ecosystems are vital for both climate action and community resilience. Today’s workshop is an important step in turning ideas into practical financing strategies,” said Ambassador KIYA. “Japan will continue to be a reliable partner to ASEAN and UNDP in this important work. Our contribution goes beyond funding. We are

committed to fostering knowledge exchange, supporting technology transfer, and encouraging innovation that responds to local needs.”

Participants also had the opportunity to hear from the winners of the [ASEAN Blue Innovation Challenge](#), the previous ASEAN–Japan–UNDP joint project. The community-driven initiatives from Brunei Darussalam (Green Brunei), Myanmar (Ecosystem Conservation and Community Development Initiative – ECCDI), and Timor-Leste (Netil), showcased practical, market-ready business models for restoring and protecting coastal ecosystems. The session was followed by exchanges that explored financing pathways such as blue bonds, debt-for-nature swaps, and voluntary carbon markets, to scale up impact across the region.

Ms. Aretha Aprillia, Head of the Nature, Climate, and Energy at UNDP Indonesia, emphasized that lasting progress depends on broad partnerships that connect science, policy, and finance. “This event brings together innovators, private sectors, and governments to co-create financing solutions that meet the scale of today’s challenges,” she said. “UNDP acts as a bridge, linking knowledge and resources to ensure blue carbon ecosystems safeguard nature while strengthening climate resilience and protecting biodiversity. In doing so, these ecosystems also advance sustainable human development by supporting livelihoods, particularly for women and youth at the frontline of environmental stewardship.”

Preceding the Osaka Expo workshop, participants joined a knowledge exchange program in Kobe City, hosted by the Kobe City Government. Presentations from Kobe City, Blueable, and the Suma Satoumi Association highlighted innovative policies, sustainable business models, and community-led coastal conservation, offering participants valuable insights drawn from Japan’s best practices.

The Japanese company, Blueable shared how seaweed utilization and blue carbon credits can restore marine ecosystems, while the Japanese Suma Satoumi Association showcased grassroots efforts in seagrass transplantation, seaweed cultivation, and coastal education. These exchanges added practical insights and reinforced the commitment to scale up blue economy solutions across ASEAN countries and Timor-Leste.

Building on the momentum from Osaka and Kobe, ASEAN, Japan, and UNDP will continue to strengthen regional cooperation to restore critical ecosystems and foster sustainable livelihoods. This joint effort advances the shared vision of a resilient and prosperous future for Southeast Asia, where protecting nature goes hand in hand with improving people's well-being and economic opportunities.

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