



Distr.: Limited  
11 August 2025

English only

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**UNITED NATIONS**

**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC**

Twenty-eighth Senior Officials Meeting (SOM-28) of the North-East Asian Subregional Programme for Environmental Cooperation (NEASPEC)

22-23 September 2025

Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

**REVIEW OF PROGRAMME PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION**

(Item 5 (d) of the provisional agenda)

**Low Carbon Cities**

*Note by the secretariat (to be updated after the completion of the 5<sup>th</sup> International Forum on Low Carbon Cities)*

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## I. BACKGROUND

1. The transition towards low carbon and resilient cities is essential to realize national and local mitigation targets. The North-East Asian Subregional Programme for Environmental Cooperation (NEASPEC) is focused on promoting low carbon city development through peer-to-peer support and experience-sharing. The North-East Asia Low Carbon City Platform (ENEA-LCCP) launched in 2014 is a platform to facilitate joint efforts of relevant institutions and organizations in adopting and advancing low carbon city development, linking cities with major stakeholders, promoting awareness, and building capacity.

2. Approved by the twenty-first Senior Officials Meeting (SOM-21) in 2017, the pilot peer review studies were conducted, and peer review workshops were organized in Wuhan, China, in 2018, and Guangzhou, China and Gwangju, Republic of Korea, in 2019. The secretariat also carried out a comparative study of national policies on low-carbon cities in China, Japan and the Republic of Korea, engaging think tanks and institutes such as the Institute for Global Decarbonization Progress (iGDP), Institute for Global Environmental Studies (IGES) and the Korea Environment Institute (KEI).<sup>1</sup>

3. Subsequently, the secretariat implemented the project, “Leveraging Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) for Low Carbon and Resilient Cities”, funded by the United Nations’ regular budget, to promote knowledge sharing and capacity by utilizing the work of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) on Science, Technology and Innovation (STI). Under this project, the secretariat organized a training workshop in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, in 2021.

4. To expand the partnership for promoting city-led climate action by holding a regular forum on low carbon cities, thereby creating synergies among existing city initiatives, the secretariat, together with Incheon Metropolitan City, the Republic of Korea, organized the International Forum on Low Carbon Cities since 2021. The forum is a venue to exchange knowledge and experiences among cities, academia and research institutes.

5. The secretariat is organizing the 5<sup>th</sup> International Forum on Low Carbon Cities back-to-back to the Regional Partners Forum on 25<sup>th</sup> August 2025 and developing a Booklet on Low Carbon City Networks.

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<sup>1</sup> The study is available at: [https://neaspec.org/sites/default/files/Comparative%20Study%20on%20LCC-final\\_0.pdf](https://neaspec.org/sites/default/files/Comparative%20Study%20on%20LCC-final_0.pdf)

## II. PROGRESS OF THE ACTIVITIES ON LOW CARBON CITIES

### **Knowledge Production: Research and Policy Advice**

6. The **Booklet on LCC Networks**, plans to profile key low carbon city networks in North-East Asia and beyond. It will showcase how these networks foster collaboration, capacity building and knowledge sharing to accelerate urban decarbonization. The booklet will also highlight the North-East Asia Low Carbon City Platform (NEA-LCCP), launched by NEASPEC in 2014, which consolidates information on low carbon city approaches and connects cities with research institutes, NGOs, and international organizations

### **Knowledge sharing: Capacity building**

7. The **Fifth International Forum on Low Carbon Cities**, themed “Rethinking Urban Climate Actions under Demographic Change”, will be convened jointly by ESCAP in collaboration with NEASPEC, Incheon Metropolitan City, Asia-Pacific Localization Partnership for Sustainable Cities (APLP-CITIES), and UN-Habitat, alongside the 2025 Regional Partners Forum on Sustainable Urban Development. Held in a hybrid format, with in-person participation at the United Nations Conference Centre in Bangkok and remote engagement via Microsoft Teams, the forum aims to ensure broad accessibility and stakeholder inclusion.

8. Urban development in the Asia-Pacific region presents complex challenges as well as dynamic engines for sustainable development, especially under the compounded contexts of climate pressures and substantial structural demographic changes. It is ambiguous how the unprecedented coexistence of large youth populations and ageing societies will impact low carbon city development, across various socio-economic contexts. The nuances in these relationships without more comprehensive understanding can hamper effective policy designs and implementation for sustainable development at the city level

9. Recognizing these opportunities and challenges, the Forum will serve as a key platform for city leaders, policymakers, urban experts, the private sector, youth, and development partners to exchange knowledge, share best practices, and shape regional strategies for sustainable urban development. The forum will feature three sessions that explore how cities can navigate demographic change while advancing climate action:

### **Knowledge dissemination: Outreach**

The NEASPEC secretariat has engaged in a series of outreach activities on social media to promote the 5th International Forum on Low Carbon Cities and is planning to raise awareness on the Booklet on Low Carbon City Networks through ESCAP promotional channels.

### **III. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION**

10. The meeting may wish to request member States to:
  - (a) Express interest in hosting the International Forum on Low Carbon Cities in the coming years;
  - (b) Encourage cities and local municipalities to attend the NEASPEC activities on low carbon cities to exchange knowledge and experiences on city-led climate actions including the LCCP; and
  - (c) Review and approve the proposed activity plan for 2026 (Annex III).

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