

# Shared Air, Shared Responsibility: Multi-Level Governance Solutions for ASEAN's Air Quality Challenges

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# Air Quality in ASEAN: A Shared Challenge

- Main air quality challenges in ASEAN: Transboundary haze and (urban) PM<sub>2.5</sub>
- Sources: Transport, industry, power generation, construction and open burning (agriculture, waste)
- Impacts: Deteriorating public health, declining agricultural yields, increasing economic costs, accelerating climate change, geopolitical tension
- Transboundary challenge → multi-level governance solutions, with regional, national and sub-national governance structures

# The Governance Dilemma: Shared Air, Divided Authority

- Emissions are often local or national
  - Impacts spatially spread, frequently regional
  - Regulation split between ASEAN frameworks (coordination), national law (legislation) and sub-national authorities (implementation)
  - Risks: vertical governance fragmentation and policy incoherence
- challenge not absence of rules — but insufficient coordination across levels

# Multi-Level Governance Architecture

## ASEAN Level

- Policy dialogues
- Knowledge/data exchange
- Regional agreements (e.g. AATHP)
- Coordination of agreements/treaties/declarations

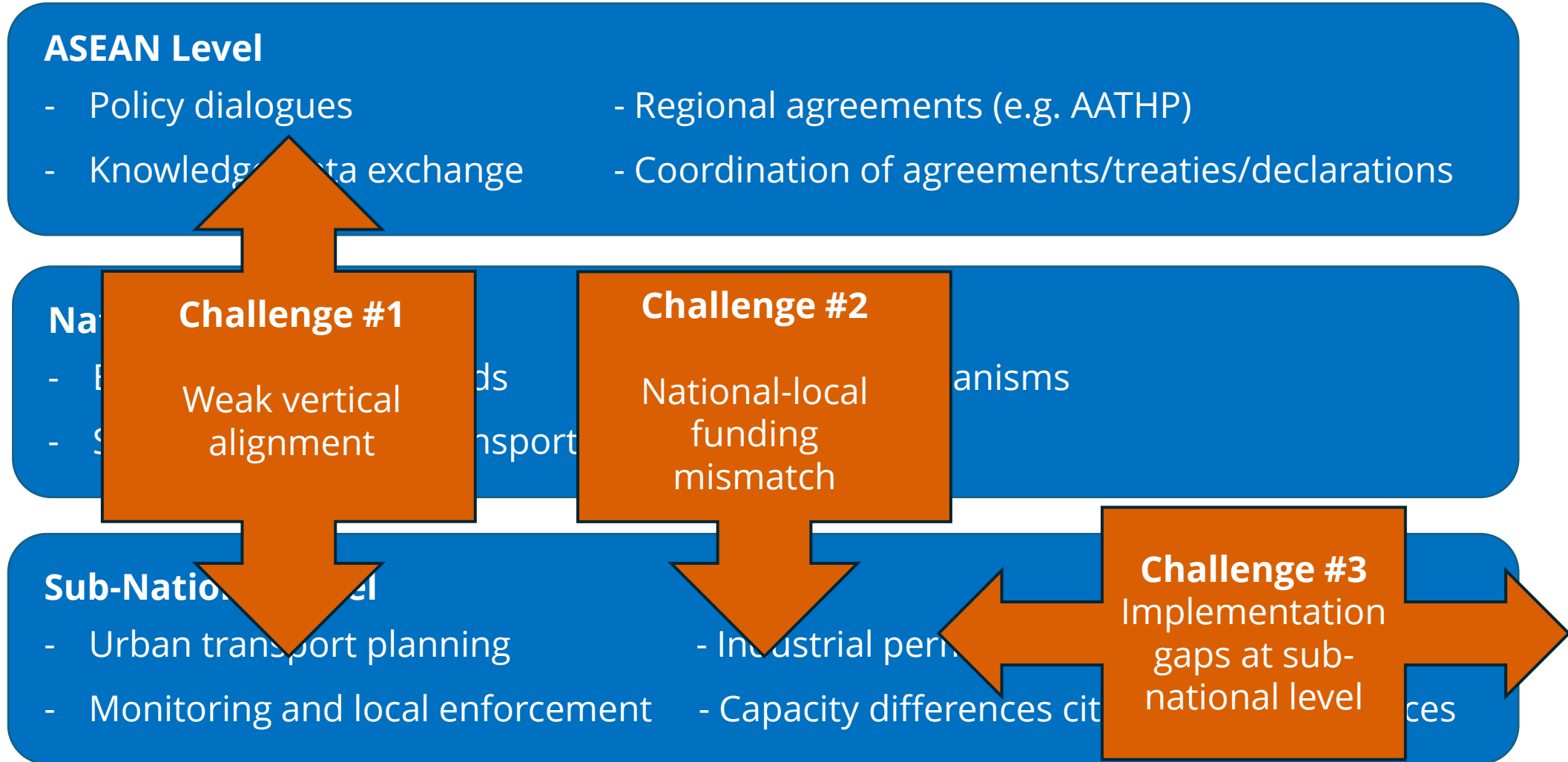
## National Level

- Environmental standards
- Sectoral regulation (transport, energy, agriculture)
- Enforcement mechanisms

## Sub-National Level

- Urban transport planning
- Monitoring and local enforcement
- Industrial permitting
- Capacity differences cities vs. rural provinces

# Multi-Level Governance Architecture



# Key Coordination Challenges

## Vertical Fragmentation

- Weak compliance at regional level
- Inconsistent national implementation
- Limited upward reporting from local authorities

## Technical & Capacity Gaps

- Monitoring standards differ
- Data comparability issues
- Uneven sub-national expertise

## Horizontal Policy Silos

- Environment vs. transport vs. agriculture
- Air policy disconnected from climate and health policy

→ **Governance failure is often coordination failure**

# Governance Solutions: Operationalising Shared Responsibility

## Strengthening Vertical Coordination

- Clearer allocation of competences
- Regular ASEAN-level review mechanisms
- Improved national–local funding alignment
- Mandatory reporting and transparency frameworks

## Enhancing Technical Cooperation & Knowledge Sharing

- Standardised monitoring protocols
- Shared modelling tools
- Regional capacity-building platforms

## Improving Horizontal Integration

- Cross-ministerial coordination bodies
- Linking air quality with climate and public health strategies
- Integrated emissions inventories

# Southeast Asia Climate and Clean Air Initiative (SEACAI)

The project is funded by the German and Swiss governments and implemented by the GIZ (2026–2028/29)

## Objectives:

Aims to improve conditions for ASEAN-wide mitigation of Short-Lived Climate Pollutants (SLCP), with special focus on Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS), through coordination between ASEAN-level dialogue and national implementation efforts.

## Approach:

- **Regional: Policy support to ASEAN-wide SLCP cooperation**
  - Strategic inputs for implementing ASEAN Haze Free Roadmap.
  - Knowledge inputs for an ASEAN SLCP mitigation process.
- **Sub-regional: Promotion of SLCP mitigation at GMS level**
  - Support for regional committee on air quality management
  - Guidelines for cross-sector cooperation on SLCP mitigation
  - Concept for cross-country (emission) data management
- **National: Support packages at country level**
  - Lessons learnt from demonstration pilots for region-wide knowledge exchange.
  - Up-scaling strategies for successful SLCP mitigation approaches.
  - Applied capacity development packages.

# Conclusion: From Shared Air to Coordinated Governance

- Air quality governance in ASEAN is a multi-level challenge
  - The core issue is coordination, not lack of rules / agreements
  - Effective solutions require:
    - Vertical alignment
    - Horizontal integration
    - Sustained political commitment
- **Shared air requires not just shared responsibility – but also coordinated responsibility.**



## SEACAI

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