

**STRENGTHENING CAPACITY FOR ENVIRONMENTAL LAW IN  
THE ASIA-PACIFIC : DEVELOPING ENVIRONMENTAL LAW  
CHAMPIONS**

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# Defining the Environment

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# The Scope of Environment

- 20 minute class exercise
- Discuss the scope environmental law
  1. Divide class into small groups (example 6 students per group)
  2. Groups to define the word “environment”
  3. Groups to list the various subjects that environmental law covers
  4. Each group to report back

Teaching/learning Methodology: group exercise in class

Learning outcome: understanding scope of the legislation through definition of environment

# ENVIRONMENT

- Existing Philippine environmental laws have not defined what “Environment” is.
- But, notable is the definition of Ecology as “the life-sustaining interrelationships and interactions of organisms with each other and with their physical surroundings.” (Chapter 1, Section 3, no. 8, Republic Act No. 7611 or the Strategic Environmental Plan (SEP) for Palawan Act, promulgated on June 19, 1992)



## ENVIRONMENT

- **Environmentally Acceptable:** shall refer to the quality of being re-usable, biodegradable or compostable, recyclable and not toxic or hazardous to the environment. (Chapter 1, Article 2, Section 3m, Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000, passed on April 8, 2001.



## Vietnamese definition

- According to Law on environmental protection of Vietnam 'environment' has been defined: “Environment refers to a system of natural and artificial physical factors affecting the existence and development of human beings and creatures” (Article 3. Interpretation of terms).

## Australian national definition: *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*

- **'environment'** includes:
- (a) ecosystems and their constituent parts, including people and communities; and
- (b) natural and physical resources; and
- (c) the qualities and characteristics of locations, places and areas; and
- (d) heritage values of places; and
- (e) the social, economic and cultural aspects of a thing mentioned in paragraph (a), (b), (c) or (d).

- “The **environment** is the spatial unity of all materials, forces, situations, and living creatures, including humans and their behavior, which influences the continuation of life and welfare of humans and other living creatures”.
- ***The 2009 Environmental Protection and Management Act (Indonesia)***

## Malaysian definition

- **"environment" means the physical factors of the surroundings of the human beings including land, water, atmosphere, climate, sound, odour, taste, the biological factors of animals and plants and the social factor of aesthetics- S.2 of Environmental Quality Act 1974**



# Scope of the Environment

- The scope of environmental law is potentially very broad. It covers at least:
  - Environmental planning and impact assessment
  - Environmental protection and pollution
  - Terrestrial and marine nature conservation
  - Protection of natural and cultural heritage
  - The protection and exploitation of all natural resources

A class exercise to define “environment” from a legal point of view is one way to generate discussion on the scope of environmental law