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## ASIA-EUROPE SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY DIPLOMACY INITIATIVE FOR YOUNG LEADERS

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### CONCEPT NOTE

#### BACKGROUND

The current global order is undergoing a remarkable transformation in diplomacy and industry, with a growing number of countries appointing Science Diplomats, and businesses integrating diplomats into their public policy departments. The cross-pollination of ideas and expertise drives innovation and economic growth, however at the same time, governments are also ensuring that public good remains a priority.

The increase in focus on **Science, Technology & Innovation (STI)** presents a **unique opportunity to foster increased dialogue and cooperation among Asian and European stakeholders**. Europe and Asia jointly account for a significant share of the world's population (almost 70%<sup>1</sup>) collectively contributing to over 60% of the world's gross domestic product (GDP)<sup>2</sup>. **Asia and Europe stand as powerhouses in the realm of STI**, hosting numerous world-class research centres, universities, and international organisations that uphold their research and development capacities. By cooperating together and leveraging their strong diplomatic ties, they can harness their collective scientific and technological progress to develop cutting-edge solutions and innovations, thereby establishing a solid foundation for science diplomacy and international cooperation.

The Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) has launched the [Asia-Europe Science and Technology Diplomacy Initiative](#) to **pinpoint and promote areas of potential interregional cooperation** among the ASEF member countries, the European Union and the ASEAN, with a **special focus on young and emerging leaders**, and to maximise the potential of Science, Technology, and Innovation to achieve sustainable development.

#### OBJECTIVES

The “Asia-Europe Science & Technology Diplomacy Initiative” aims to:



**Map and collect information** on national and regional **science & technology diplomacy strategies**, policy tools and performance.



**Facilitate dialogue, knowledge exchange and peer-to-peer collaboration** in the area of science & technology diplomacy.

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<sup>1</sup> World Population Prospects 2022. United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division.

<sup>2</sup> IMF Data Mapper. International Monetary Fund.

**TARGET GROUP**

Emerging young leaders (up to 35 years old) from 50 countries in Asia and Europe working in the following sectors:

- Academia: Early career academics, researchers of public and private tertiary education
- Government: Government officials, policymakers and diplomats working with science and technology diplomacy topics in international collaboration institutions and think tanks
- Public sector: Young Professionals working in not-for-profit and non-governmental organisations
- Private sector: Young professionals working for businesses focusing on R&D&I and technology transfer

**ACTIVITIES IN 2024****1 | Research on Mapping Science & Technology Diplomacy Strategies**

The research titled “Asia-Europe Science & Technology Diplomacy Report” aims to map out the different national strategies, policy tools and performance across 50 ASEF member countries, the European Union and ASEAN Secretariat, and provide insights and recommendations to the relevant institutions on areas for enhanced collaboration within and across the two regions.

The report explores Science & Technology Diplomacy using *qualitative* analysis, including documentary analysis and interviews to map national strategies, priorities, policy tools and practices in the field of science diplomacy.

The report will address **two main research questions:**

- What strategies do countries in Asia and Europe have for Science Diplomacy?
- What initiatives and tools are being used to implement these strategies?

The **Country Informants** will play a key role in collecting evidence, synthesising information and writing short country profiles. Young academics, diplomats, professionals, and students will take up this role and write a chapter of the report on the given country.

The research will take place between June to October 2024 with the following **planned schedule:**

- Desk research: June – August 2024
- Interviews and Summary: September – October 2024

**2 | Awareness Raising and Capacity Building Programme**

ASEF is piloting an awareness raising and capacity building programme for young leaders, to build upon the results of the report and explore new avenues to meet the objectives of this initiative.

The hybrid, interactive and multi-disciplinary training would invite about 30-40 young academics, diplomats, professionals, and students working in the international collaboration space on science, technology, and innovation related matters.

The training will build knowledge on scientific and technological collaboration trends and domains; build skills in intercultural science and technology diplomacy negotiations and build peer-to-peers networks among participants.

### 3 | Engagement in Regional Forums

The results of the project are planned to be showcased at high-visibility regional events, such as the Science and Technology in Society (STS) Forum, taking place in October 2024 in Kyoto, Japan, or the World Science Forum taking place in November 2024 in Budapest, Hungary. These events could offer a platform for the young leaders to showcase the results of their research and to form collaborative networks among global leaders in academia, industry, and government.

#### ACTIVITIES PLANNED FOR 2025

Using the findings of the research report mapping science and technology diplomacy strategies and initiatives in Asia and Europe, the activities in 2025 would focus on **“Navigating Science and Technology Diplomacy Ecosystems”**. Activities will spotlight different countries’ multilayered approaches and explore potential avenues for cooperation in the field among young leaders.

It consists of two pillars:

#### 1 | Country Focus Workshop series

Based on the finding of the research report in 2024, four (4) countries will be invited to co-design a series of online workshops to showcase the STI ecosystem of the country and how to collaborate with the different stakeholders.

- Each country workshop series will include at least 50 young leaders from Asia and Europe and contain four (4) sessions showcasing the selected country’s Science Diplomacy initiatives to foster mutual understanding among the Asian and European participants, and to equip them with the knowledge and tools to navigate the field successfully.
- The workshops will provide a space for knowledge sharing as well as networking opportunities, building peer-to-peer as well as cross-functional relationships which will prepare the participants to navigate and be able to negotiate within the Science Diplomacy ecosystem.

#### 2 | Engagement in Regional Forums

Similarly, the outcomes of the activities and the learning could contribute to prominent international and high-visibility forums, disseminating the outcomes and insights gained from the workshops in 2025.

#### EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Connectivity and Collaboration between Asian and European stakeholders in science and technology diplomacy have been increased through peer-to-peer exchanges
- Awareness and information available on the recent trends in science and technology diplomacy in Asia and Europe have been increased

**EXPECTED  
IMPACT**

In the long-term, the expected impact of the Research Report is to promote connectivity and collaboration between Asian and European stakeholders in science, technology, and diplomacy and empower regional stakeholders, through:

- Fostering interdisciplinary and international research around Science Diplomacy;
- Identifying national and regional Science Diplomacy initiatives;
- Indicating potential areas of interregional cooperation in Science Diplomacy; and
- Promoting intergovernmental cooperation through national and regional collaboration and research on Science Diplomacy initiatives.

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**ORGANISED BY****Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF)**

ASEF is an intergovernmental not-for-profit organisation located in Singapore. Founded in 1997, it is the only institution of the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM). ASEF promotes understanding, strengthens relationships, and facilitates cooperation among the people, institutions and organisations of Asia and Europe. ASEF enhances dialogue, enables exchanges and encourages collaboration across the thematic areas of culture, education, governance, sustainable development, economy, public health and media.

For more information, please visit [www.ASEF.org](http://www.ASEF.org)

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