



FMM Calls for Decisive ASEAN Action To End Transboundary Haze and Protect Public Health and Economic Sustainability

Kuala Lumpur, October 9, 2026 - The Federation of Malaysian Manufacturing expresses deep concern over the haze affecting Malaysia and neighbouring ASEAN countries, posing serious risks to public health, worker safety, economic productivity and environmental sustainability.

As at 7.00 pm on October 8, 2026, 36 areas in Malaysia recorded unhealthy Air Pollutant Index (API) readings, according to the Department of Environment's Air Pollutant Index Management System (APIMS). Segamat, Johor, recorded the highest reading of 190, followed by Seremban, Negeri Sembilan, at 189. Earlier, at 3.00 pm, the Department had reported unhealthy readings in 38 areas across Peninsular Malaysia.

The disruption has already extended to education, with all schools in Johor closed on October 8 and 9 and schools in Negeri Sembilan, Melaka, Putrajaya dan Selangor to be closed on October 9. These developments underline the wider consequences of haze for families, workplaces and daily economic activity.

The recurring haze crisis highlights a fundamental challenge confronting ASEAN: economic development must not come at the expense of environmental protection and the wellbeing of its people.

Clean air is not a luxury. It is a fundamental requirement for public health, economic productivity and sustainable development.

For manufacturers, haze can affect workforce health and attendance, disrupt outdoor operations and logistics, and increase expenditure on air filtration, protective equipment and operational adjustments. Preventing haze is therefore also an investment in industrial resilience and competitiveness.

As ASEAN advances its sustainability agenda and aspirations for carbon neutrality, transboundary haze must be addressed as a matter of regional priority. ASEAN already has an established framework through the ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution (AATHP), signed in 2002 and in force since 2003, and the Second Roadmap for ASEAN Cooperation on Transboundary Haze Pollution Control with Means of Implementation, commonly known as the ASEAN Haze-Free Roadmap 2023–2030. Adopted in August 2023, the Roadmap sets out a vision of a transboundary haze-free ASEAN by 2030, supported by targets, indicators and a framework for tracking progress.

FMM recognises the regional measures already introduced. The priority now is to accelerate implementation, strengthen coordination and demonstrate measurable improvements in preventing fires and reducing haze exposure.

FMM therefore proposes five priority actions.

1. Strengthen existing ASEAN monitoring and early warning systems

The ASEAN Specialised Meteorological Centre (ASMC) already monitors regional hotspots and smoke haze, while ASEAN has established a Standard Operating Procedure for Monitoring, Assessment and Joint Emergency Response to support information exchange and coordinated assistance. These mechanisms should be strengthened and used more effectively to trigger timely preventive action.

ASEAN should improve the integration and accessibility of existing monitoring systems, combining satellite observations, ground-level air-quality measurements, meteorological data and appropriate applications of artificial intelligence.

Such improvements should enable earlier identification of fire risks, facilitate timely intervention and provide reliable public information across national boundaries.

Warnings must also reach businesses and communities promptly, enabling manufacturers to activate workplace protection measures and adjust outdoor activities before conditions deteriorate further.

2. Strengthen enforcement and prevent fires at their sources

Prevention must take priority over repeated crisis management.

ASEAN member states should strengthen enforcement against illegal open burning, promote sustainable agricultural and land management practices, and accelerate the restoration of vulnerable peatland ecosystems.

These efforts should build on the Second ASEAN Peatland Management Strategy 2023–2030, which complements the Haze-Free Roadmap. In July 2026, ASEAN's Sub-Regional Ministerial Steering Committee on Transboundary Haze Pollution reaffirmed the need for coordinated prevention, preparedness, suppression and mitigation involving governments, communities and businesses.

At the same time, smallholders and rural communities must be provided with affordable alternatives to open burning, including appropriate technologies, equipment and financial assistance.

Regional emergency-response arrangements should translate into prompt coordination of firefighting support and technical assistance when required and requested by affected countries.

3. Promote responsible and sustainable regional supply chains

Businesses throughout ASEAN have an important responsibility to ensure environmentally responsible operations and sourcing practices.

FMM encourages companies to strengthen environmental due diligence, support zero-burning practices throughout relevant supply chains, and adopt internationally recognised sustainability standards.

Manufacturers sourcing agricultural and forest-based raw materials should strengthen traceability and supplier engagement, particularly where sourcing involves areas at risk

of land or peat fires. Supplier requirements should be supported by credible verification and practical assistance to improve compliance.

Corporate accountability must be supported by transparent evidence, consistent enforcement and practical assistance to SMEs.

Manufacturers should also maintain effective controls over emissions and dust from their own operations to avoid adding to local air pollution during haze episodes.

4. Accelerate financing, technology and research for haze prevention

FMM calls for greater mobilisation of financing under the ASEAN Investment Framework for Haze-Free Sustainable Land Management, together with stronger public-private collaboration in environmental technology, monitoring and prevention.

Endorsed in August 2023, the Framework aims to mobilise an estimated US\$1.5 billion by 2030 to address the underlying causes of haze. ASEAN's Sub-Regional Ministerial Steering Committee welcomed its Implementation Plan in July 2026. FMM urges partners to translate these arrangements into accessible financing and projects with demonstrable fire-prevention and sustainable land-management outcomes.

ASEAN should also strengthen regional Research, Development, Innovation and Commercialisation (R&DI&C), drawing upon universities, research institutions and industry expertise to develop practical and affordable environmental solutions.

Greater attention should be given to artificial intelligence, satellite technology, air-pollution monitoring systems and sustainable land-management technologies.

For manufacturing, complementary domestic support should facilitate workplace air-quality monitoring, suitable filtration systems and cleaner production technologies, particularly for SMEs with limited technical and financial resources.

5. Protect workers and communities and strengthen accountability

Governments and employers must prioritise public health and occupational safety during periods of unhealthy air quality, particularly for outdoor workers and vulnerable communities.

FMM urges employers to act on DOSH's October 6, 2026 advisory by assessing and controlling haze exposure in both indoor and outdoor workplaces. The advisory highlights that fine particulate matter, including PM2.5, can enter buildings through ventilation and air-conditioning systems and openings. Employers should maintain ventilation systems, control polluted-air ingress and use suitable filtration or air-cleaning equipment, based on workplace risk assessments and the Industry Code of Practice on Indoor Air Quality 2010.

Consistent with DOSH's workplace haze guidelines, manufacturers should minimise strenuous outdoor work when API readings exceed 100, avoid such work when readings exceed 200, and provide suitable, properly fitted respiratory protection where required. Particular attention should be given to susceptible employees and workers undertaking loading, unloading, yard operations, maintenance and other outdoor duties. Activities should be suspended where the identified risks cannot be adequately controlled.

Companies should activate haze-response and business-continuity plans covering employee communication, health reporting, safe work arrangements and logistics contingencies. Employers are also encouraged to consider reasonable flexibility for employees affected by school closures, taking account of job responsibilities and operational requirements.

At the regional level, FMM urges ASEAN to publish regular progress reports against the Roadmap's existing targets and indicators, supported by clear responsibilities and implementation milestones. Reporting should demonstrate outcomes in fire prevention, haze reduction and sustainable land management, alongside progress in enforcement, financing and regional cooperation.

Progress should be reviewed regularly against ASEAN's 2030 haze-free ambition.

FMM's Commitment

As the voice of Malaysia's manufacturing industry, FMM will promote the adoption of workplace haze-response measures among members, facilitate industry-academia collaboration on practical environmental solutions, and advocate targeted support for cleaner production, responsible sourcing and SME sustainability investments through its engagements with the Government and ASEAN business organisations.

FMM also calls for Malaysia's Budget 2027 to strengthen incentives for environmental technologies, pollution prevention, industrial R&DI and SME sustainability investments. Support should include accessible assistance for workplace air-quality monitoring and filtration improvements, alongside investments that reduce pollution at its source.

Environmental sustainability and industrial competitiveness should reinforce one another. ASEAN cannot aspire to become a leading sustainable manufacturing and investment destination while recurring haze continues to undermine the health and wellbeing of its people. The objective must go beyond managing haze when it occurs. ASEAN must progressively eliminate its preventable causes.

A haze-free ASEAN must become a measurable achievement, not merely a recurring aspiration.



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FMM Advocates Transparency, Integrity, Accountability and No Corruption

About FMM

The Federation of Malaysian Manufacturing (FMM) (formerly known as Federation of Malaysian Manufacturers) has been the voice of the Malaysian manufacturing sector since 1968, advocating policies and initiatives that drive industrial growth, competitiveness and workforce development. Representing over 13,540 member companies (4,270 direct and 9,270 indirect) from the manufacturing supply chain, FMM is actively engaged with government and its key agencies at Federal, State and local levels. FMM is also well-linked with international organisations, Malaysian businesses and civil society. Apart from benefitting from FMM's advocacy, FMM members enjoy value-added services including training, business networking and trade opportunities as well as regular information updates.

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