The inaugural

ASIA-PACIFIC POLICY CHALLENGE

Cultivating Asia-Pacific's next generation of changemakers

INFORMATION PACK

CHALLENGE RUNS
November 2026 – March 2027

FINAL SHOWCASE
MARCH 6, 2027

VENUE
Harvard Kennedy School, Cambridge, MA



Our Invitation

Dear Prospective Teams,

Greetings!

We are thrilled to invite your university to participate in the inaugural **Asia-Pacific Policy Challenge (the Challenge)**, a multi-month international policy analysis contest that seeks to engage students from leading universities across the Asia-Pacific region in policy discourse, enabling authentic and diverse perspectives to converge on the region's most pressing issues.

The Challenge is a central pillar of the Asia-Pacific Conference (APC), a conference wholly organized by Harvard graduate students and the largest student-led policy convening on the East Coast of the United States.

The winning team of the Challenge will be **invited to deliver a presentation at the APC, held at the Harvard Kennedy School on March 6, 2027.**

This booklet provides further details on the Challenge, including this year's thematic focus, eligibility, and next steps for application. We would be honored to welcome your team as delegates of the Challenge, and look forward to elevating crucial perspectives from the Asia-Pacific region.

Sincerely,



Arrif Asavaviriyakul



Crystal Gee



Haripoom Prasutchai



Hira Baig



Michele Helen Reyes



Zhiqi Wang

On behalf of the Asia-Pacific Conference Organizing Committee

02 · The Challenge

Authentic voices on the region's most pressing issues

The Asia-Pacific Policy Challenge brings the analyses and ideas of the region's rising policymaking minds to Harvard.

Our aspiration is simple: surface authentic voices from across the Asia-Pacific on issues that matter most, and grow a community of young policy leaders that reaches far beyond Cambridge.

20+	1–4	March 6, 2027
leading universities in the Asia-Pacific region	university student(s) per team	final showcase at Harvard



2027 THEME

Energy Security: Preparing for the Next Energy Shock

Recent disruptions to global energy routes have shown how quickly a crisis far from home can ripple through Asia-Pacific economies. This year's Challenge asks teams to think like policymakers and act before the next shock arrives.

Registered teams will receive an email with the policy prompt at 8 PM Eastern Time on December 1, 2026.

WHAT TEAMS DELIVER

3,000	1	5
word policy memo	page executive summary	page annex (optional)



Senior Advisor to the Challenge

Pita Limjaroenrat
2023 Election-Winning Thailand Prime Minister Candidate

03 · Key dates

Challenge Timeline

All times are in Eastern Time (ET). Deadlines are at 11:59 PM ET unless stated otherwise.

November 29 2026	**Team Registration Deadline** Complete the team registration form on page 9 (Next Steps) to confirm your team's place in the Challenge.	*Online*
December 1 2026	**Challenge Prompt Release** Registered teams will receive the Challenge prompt and submission guidance by email.	*Online*
Mid-December 2026	**[Tentative] Advisory Session and Mid-point Check-in** Optional session for teams to meet with Advisors to the Challenge and receive early feedback.	*Online*
January 3 2027	**Submission Deadline**	*Online*
Late January 2027	**Winner announcement** The winning team will be announced on the Asia-Pacific Conference website and notified by email.	*Online*
February 2027	**Getting ready for the Conference** The winning team will work with the Organizing Committee to finalize presentation materials and travel logistics.	*Online*
MAR 6 2027	**Final showcase at APC 2027** The winning team will deliver a presentation at the annual Asia-Pacific Conference.	*Harvard Kennedy School, Cambridge*



04 · Taking part

Who can apply

Open
enrollment

1–4
students per team

All Levels
undergraduate, graduate, and PhD students

Any
nationality

HOW TO JOIN

1. Form your team in whatever way suits you.
2. Register by November 29th.
3. Receive your team code and meet your liaison.
4. Receive the Challenge prompt on December 1.

Faculty advisor

Optional. While advisors can guide the team's preparation, the submission must be the students' own work.

Your APC liaison

A dedicated member of our team who will act as your first point of contact throughout the Challenge.

Each student may join only one team. Changes to team membership can be made until December 15, 2026 by emailing your APC liaison.

05 · Submissions and judging

Submissions



Deliverables	3,000-word policy memo, 1-page executive summary (excluded from word count), and an optional 5-page annex
Anonymity	Include only the team code assigned in the deliverable
Integrity and AI	Any use of AI tools must be disclosed, including the tools used and how they were used
Submission	Submit by 11:59PM Eastern Time, January 3, 2027

Judging

Entries will be read by Harvard Kennedy School-affiliated faculty and researchers specializing in the Asia-Pacific region.

STAGE 1 · JAN–FEB · VIRTUAL

Written Review
Independent evaluation of submitted policy memos by the judging panel

STAGE 2 · MARCH 6 · AT HKS

Final Showcase
The winning team presents its policy recommendation at APC on March 6, 2027

Entries will be assessed on four main components:

Issue Identification
A clear articulation of the issue, grounded in the specific country context and supported by effective use of evidence

Policy options
A realistic set of options that reflects the decision-maker's mandate, priorities, and available policy levers, with clear criteria for evaluating each option

Recommendation
A well-justified choice for the decision-maker that sets out the implementation plan, cost and risk implications, and trade-offs involved

Communication
Clear, concise, and well-structured writing, accompanied by an action-oriented executive summary tailored to the intended decision-maker

More information regarding the judging rubric will be shared with registered teams on December 1, 2026.



06 · The final showcase

Your stage: the Asia-Pacific Conference

Harvard Kennedy School

Date: **March 6, 2027 (Saturday)**

Venue: **Harvard Kennedy School, Cambridge, Massachusetts, United States**

Theme: ***The Asia-Pacific Century: Navigating Power, Technology, and Change***

PAST APC SPEAKERS INCLUDE *(Not exhaustive)*



Pita Limjaroenrat

2023 Election-Winning Thailand Prime Minister Candidate



Catherine So

Former CEO of the South China Morning Post



Chatib Basri

Former Minister of Finance of Indonesia



Wendy Cutler

Former Acting Deputy U.S. Trade Representative



H.E. Oh Joon

Former Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations



H.E. Babo Soares

Vice-President of the 80th Session of the United Nations General Assembly

TENTATIVE PROGRAM

Day Before Conference

- **Pre-Event Speaker Dinner**
  Speakers and organizers meet over dinner the evening before the conference.

Conference Day

- **Keynote Speech**
  Featuring leaders, followed by an engaging armchair discussion on leadership in the Asia-Pacific.
- **Main Panels**
  High-caliber speakers from across the Asia-Pacific bring diverse perspectives on key issues.
- **Lunch Discussion**
  Discussion with experts over lunch, widening the range of topics and networking opportunities.
- **Post-Conference Cocktail Hour**
  Exclusive, interactive sessions where students engage panelists in two-way dialogue.

The winning team is invited to participate in the full conference program

Presentation by the winning team will be held alongside the main panels

07 · Questions

Frequently Asked Questions

ELIGIBILITY AND TEAM FORMATION

Who is eligible to participate?

Undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral students enrolled at universities in the Asia-Pacific region are welcome to apply.

Do all team members need to be from the Asia-Pacific?

No. Any student enrolled at a participating university is eligible, regardless of nationality.

Can a university enter more than one team?

Yes. A university may nominate multiple teams, but each student may join only one team.

Is a faculty advisor required?

No. Teams may consult a faculty advisor, but all research, analysis, and writing must be the students' own.

THE POLICY PROMPT

When will information about the policy prompt be released?

The theme for 2027 is **Energy Security: Preparing for the Next Energy Shock.** The full prompt will be released to all registered teams at 8 PM Eastern Time on December 1, 2026.

May we respond in a language other than English?

No. All submissions must be written in English, and the winning team will present in English at the final showcase.

SUBMISSIONS

Is there a fee to participate?

No. There is no fee to register or to submit an entry.

Are AI tools permitted?

Yes, provided their use is disclosed. Teams are required to submit a short accompanying statement on the usage of AI tools. Detailed guidance on AI use will be shared with registered teams.

How will a team's submission be used?

With the team's consent, winning entries may be published on the website and shared with attendees of the Conference.

RECOGNITION AND FINAL SHOWCASE

What if the winning team is unable to travel?

Should difficulties arise, the Organizing Committee will work with the winning team to arrange for alternative ways to deliver the presentation. Invitations to the Conference may be extended to the team placed second.

How will other participating teams be recognized?

All teams that submit a complete entry by the deadline will receive a certificate of participation and brief written feedback. The five highest-ranked teams will also be invited to a private virtual session with Harvard Kennedy School-affiliated faculty and the Senior Advisors to the Challenge.

Still have questions?

Contact the Organizing Committee at harvardasiapacificcon@gmail.com.

08 · Next steps

Ready to join?

1 Confirm your participation

Accept the invitation by completing the registration form before 11:59PM Eastern Time, November 29, 2026.

Register your team→

Scan to register

2 Meet your liaison

Once your team is registered, we will introduce your dedicated APC liaison by email.
Your liaison will be the team's first point of contact and is ready to guide the team every step of the way.

3 Stay connected

Website	asiapacificconference.org
Instagram	@asiapacificcon
LinkedIn	linkedin.com/company/harvardapc
Email	harvardasiapacificcon@gmail.com

Follow along for speaker news and Challenge updates.



ASIA-PACIFIC CONFERENCE

Presented by Harvard Kennedy School Students

Connecting the next generation of policymakers across the Pacific

APC 2027 · The Asia-Pacific Century: Navigating Power, Technology, and Change

March 6, 2027 · Harvard Kennedy School