



one vision  
one identity  
one community



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# ADDRESSING CHALLENGES TOGETHER



ANNUAL REPORT  
2021-2022

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## ANNUAL REPORT 2021-2022

# ADDRESSING CHALLENGES TOGETHER

The ASEAN Secretariat  
Jakarta

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# FOREWORD

As the world emerges from the COVID-19 pandemic, ASEAN is leveraging on the opportunities to recover lost progress and build back better for a more resilient and sustainable future as outlined in the *ASEAN Community Vision 2025*. At the same time, ASEAN remains vigilant against downside risks to our recovery such as disruptions to the supply of key commodities, rising costs in logistics and transport, the economic slowdown in major economies, and high inflationary pressures.

This report highlights ASEAN's work as well as progress over the past year to address those challenges and bring peace, stability and prosperity to our region of 650 million people.

In the political-security sphere, efforts to reduce vulnerabilities amplified by the pandemic have embraced measures that uphold the integral principles and values of human rights, especially on the protection of women and children. Additional focus was also given to address non-traditional security issues, such as transnational crimes and cybersecurity threats, among others by speeding up digitisation to facilitate faster and greater cross-sectoral cooperation and coordination. Regional peace remains our goal as ASEAN works steadfastly for the full and effective implementation of the *Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea*. Similarly, we are committed to ensuring the delivery of humanitarian assistance, implementing the *Five-Point Consensus*, and achieving a peaceful solution in the interests of the people of Myanmar.

In the economic sector, ASEAN has forged ahead with its regional integration agenda as reflected by the entry into force of the *Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Agreement*

on 1 January 2022 as well as the successful completion of several priority deliverables, including the endorsement of Non-Tariff Measure Cost-Effectiveness Toolkit. Meanwhile, the adoption of the *Framework for Circular Economy for the ASEAN Economic Community* last year promotes resourceful ways of production and consumption, as well as the continued implementation of the *ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework* across five broad strategies. Furthermore, ASEAN is developing a consolidated strategy to support member states in transitioning towards decarbonisation and achieving the climate agenda. Recognising climate change as a cross-cutting issue that requires a holistic and strategic coordination approach at the regional level, we also announced the establishment of the *ASEAN Centre for Climate Change*.

Another important cross-cutting issue is digital transformation which ASEAN has embraced as a new driver for the region's inclusive, innovative and sustainable growth. The adoption of the *Bandar Seri Begawan Roadmap on Digital Transformation* aims to transform the region of 463 million internet users into a leading digital economy and ASEAN is now actively pursuing the necessary steps to launch the *ASEAN Digital Economy Framework Agreement* by 2025. Other notable initiatives include 'Destination for Every Dream', a new tourism campaign to boost the region's travel sector.

In the socio-cultural domain, our work continues to pivot on the wellbeing and empowerment of our people. Development programmes, including 25 health-related initiatives, have been designed to adequately respond to the current as well as future pandemics. This complements other fully optimised initiatives, namely

the *ASEAN COVID-19 Response Fund* and the *ASEAN Regional Reserve for Medical Supplies*.

Additionally, the recently adopted *Regional Framework for Protection, Gender and Inclusion in Disaster Management 2021-2025* affirms ASEAN's commitment in leaving no one behind, especially during dire and unprecedented circumstances. At the same time, the adoption of the *Bandar Seri Begawan Declaration on the Strategic and Holistic Initiative to Link ASEAN Responses to Emergencies and Disasters (ASEAN SHIELD)* will crucially enhance our humanitarian response capacity and capabilities in a region highly prone to natural disasters.

Lastly, the ASEAN Secretariat looks forward to welcoming the first batch of the *ASEAN Junior Fellowship Programme* in August 2022 as part of our belief that the youth are agents of change that will play an indispensable role in the pursuit of our post-pandemic recovery, sustainable development and ASEAN Community building efforts.

Looking back at our programmes this past year, ASEAN has demonstrated its ability to position itself in the driving seat and lead the region's post-pandemic recovery as well as transform related difficulties into opportunities. As such, I am greatly encouraged of what ASEAN can achieve moving forward, as we remain cohesive and collaborative in our undertakings towards an inclusive, resilient and sustainable ASEAN Community.



**Dato Lim Jock Hoi**  
Secretary-General of ASEAN



# ASEAN POLITICAL-SECURITY COMMUNITY





An ASEAN Dialogue Partner presents its contribution to help ASEAN respond to public health emergencies.

## INTRODUCTION

ASEAN's 2022 chairmanship theme of 'ASEAN A.C.T.: Addressing Challenges Together' highlights ASEAN's spirit of 'Togetherness' as one community and the collective will to address and overcome challenges facing the region.

Under this theme, ASEAN, through the leadership of Cambodia as the current ASEAN Chair: "Seeks to build a harmonious ASEAN Community that is peaceful, stable and prosperous, underpinning ASEAN's engagement with the wider region and regional responses to the impacts and uncertainties posed by regional and global challenges."

Within this context, taking stock of the various challenges that the ASEAN Community faces and how ASEAN, specifically, the ASEAN Political-Security Community has and continues to deal with these challenges, becomes imperative.

## RESPONDING TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to be a primary challenge for the ASEAN Community. With the disruption the pandemic has brought to the social and economic lives of the ASEAN people beyond the immediate threat to their personal health, the pandemic's effects are expected to be felt over the long-term.

Notwithstanding these challenges, ASEAN has been able to weather the storm by putting into place measures that address both the pandemic's immediate and longer-term effects. These interventions include: (i) The COVID-19 ASEAN Response Fund; (ii) The ASEAN Regional Reserve of Medical Supplies for Public Health Emergencies (RRMS); (iii) The ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework (ACRF) and its Implementation Plan; (iv) The ASEAN Regional Centre for Public Health Emergencies and Emerging Diseases (ACPHEED); and (v) The ASEAN Travel Corridor Arrangement Framework (ATCAF).

ASEAN has utilised the COVID-19 ASEAN Response Fund to purchase vaccines for the people of ASEAN. ASEAN Member States have also earmarked contributions to the RRMS and these are readily available for use by any ASEAN Member State when needed. Once operational, ACPHEED will serve as a centre of excellence and as a regional resource hub to strengthen ASEAN's regional capabilities to prepare for, detect, prevent and respond to public health emergencies and emerging diseases.

ASEAN's road to post-pandemic recovery is guided by ACRF, which serves as a whole-of-community strategy on the COVID-19 crisis – addressing not only the pandemic's current impact, but also facilitating the region's reopening, recovery and long-term resilience. Good progress has been made thus far in implementing the initiatives outlined in ACRF.

To sustain intra-regional connectivity, including ensuring the essential movement of people in the region, ASEAN is making commendable progress on the ATCAF. Its operationalisation will leverage the ongoing

digital transformation in ASEAN, including the ASEAN Single Digital COVID-19 Health Certificate Verification Portal and the establishment of an ASEAN single QR code.

As part of these initiatives, the defence sector has been involved in the COVID-19 responses of individual ASEAN Member States and the defence sector has made a commitment to playing a continuing role in handling the pandemic, including in the recovery phase and in future public health crises. Various activities under the ASEAN Center of Military Medicine, the Network of ASEAN Chemical, Biological and Radiological Defence Experts and the ADMM-Plus Experts' Working Group on Military Medicine enable military medical practitioners and defence professionals (i.e. biological experts) to keep abreast of the latest developments related to the COVID-19 situation and to explore possible collaborations with other interested parties.

Regarding the law enforcement sector, the *Bandar Seri Begawan Declaration*

on *Combating Transnational Crime Post-COVID-19 Pandemic*, was adopted at the 15<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime on 29 September 2021. This declaration calls for ASEAN law enforcement agencies to be vigilant, adaptable and flexible in addressing new and evolving transnational crime trends in the post-COVID-19 landscape, including the accelerated digitisation of society, while also protecting the lives and well-being of the public. The declaration also calls for all ASEAN Member States to intensify collective efforts to prevent and combat transnational crime, including through the promotion of cross-pillar and cross-sectoral cooperation and coordination in the post-pandemic era.

Human rights cooperation in ASEAN continues to prioritise and leverage efforts in addressing the unprecedented challenges. The advocacy of the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) highlighted measures and good practices in the COVID-19 response and recovery, including implementation of ACRF.



Discussions at the 9<sup>th</sup> Human Rights Film Screening on a holistic approach to human rights, including refugee and non-traditional security issues.

### DEALING WITH NON TRADITIONAL SECURITY ISSUES

While the COVID-19 pandemic has in the past couple of years taken centre stage, ASEAN has sustained its efforts in dealing with security issues which equally impact on the lives of the ASEAN people, such as transnational crimes, illicit drugs and cybersecurity.

Regarding the protection of women and children, the *ASEAN Convention Against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (ACTIP)* continues to be implemented through: (i) The establishment of the National ACTIP Representatives; and (ii) The Final Review of the Bohol TIP Work Plan 2017-2020 and (iii) the development of its successor, the ASEAN cross sectoral TIP work plan.

Once operational, National ACTIP representatives will enhance the efforts of ASEAN Member States in promoting, monitoring, reviewing and reporting on cross-sectoral implementation of ACTIP, as well as facilitating linkages, coordination and complementarity between regional and national activities to implement ACTIP.

The development of the next ASEAN cross-sectoral TIP work plan will retain the four core thematic areas of cooperation: covering the prevention of TIP; protection of victims; law enforcement and prosecution of crimes of TIP; and regional and international cooperation and coordination. While these are derived from the previous work plan, enhancements have been put into place on account that the work plan has proven to be effective to implement ACTIP at the regional and national levels.

On dealing with illegal drugs, the mid-term reviews of the *ASEAN Work Plan of Securing Communities Against Illicit Drugs 2016-2025* and the *ASEAN Cooperation Plan to Tackle Illicit Drug Production and Trafficking in the Golden Triangle 2020-2022* were finalised and adopted in 2021.



The reviews identify areas where ASEAN needs to strengthen its cooperation to achieve its aspiration for a drug-free region. Areas that need to be strengthened under the ASEAN Work Plan 2016-2025 include law enforcement, treatment and rehabilitation, research and alternative development. The ASEAN Cooperation Plan identifies the need to strengthen cooperation on demand reduction, healthcare services for vulnerable groups in the Golden Triangle areas and implementation of drug-related projects.

Meanwhile, the publication of the *ASEAN Drug Monitoring Report* continues to serve as an early warning indicator and a monitoring tool of general and emerging trends regarding the regional drug situation.

While the COVID-19 pandemic increased social and economic communication in the digital world, thereby increasing the importance accorded to cybersecurity, this security concern has been at the forefront of ASEAN's political and security agenda in recent years.

The defence sector has also played a key role in this area. In 2021, an agreement

was reached to establish the ASEAN Cyber Defence Network (ACDN), which is expected to be launched in 2022. With the objective of promoting cyber confidence and readiness, the ACDN will link current cyber defence operations centres in ASEAN and support the initiation of new centres.

Likewise, the establishment of the ADMM Cyber Security and Information Centre of Excellence (ACICE) was agreed in 2021. This centre will focus specifically on cyber malware, misinformation and disinformation threats through improved information-sharing and capacity-building.

With the re-opening of societies and economies as ASEAN Member States adapt to a post-COVID-19 world, greater importance is attached to border management. Prior to the pandemic, this area was more concerned with the issue of transnational crimes.

In this regard, it is worth highlighting the adoption of: (i) *The Concept Paper on ASEAN Border Management Cooperation Roadmap*; and (ii) The Plan of Action (PoA) to Implement the Intelligence Data Sharing Protocol (IDSP).





The roadmap is envisaged to enhance coordination in border management through information sharing and relevant intelligence exchanges in order to implement appropriate measures to ensure the safety and security of the ASEAN Community regarding transnational crime and cross-border challenges.

Furthermore, the roadmap is intended to catalyse joint action to help address the multifaceted dimensions of transnational criminal activities linked to border crossing, while also facilitating the movement of goods, people and services that have been hampered due to the COVID-19 pandemic-enforced lockdown.

Once developed and implemented under the control of ASEAN Director-Generals of Immigration Departments and the Heads of Consular Affairs Divisions of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs (DGICM), the IDSP will enable timely and reliable information sharing regarding immigration matters. This includes lost, stolen

and fraudulent passports and travel documents.

The protocol will also enhance individual and collective capabilities in facilitating the legitimate movement of people within or across ASEAN borders and deter transnational threats, including terrorism, transnational organised crime, human trafficking and smuggling.

#### CONTRIBUTING TO EMERGING SECURITY AGENDA

The ASEAN Political Security Community has made important contributions to the emerging security agenda, particularly on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) and Youth, Peace and Security (YPS).

There are various activities under the ASEAN Defence Interaction Programme, as well as the ADMM-Plus Experts' Working Groups (EWGs) on: (i) Peacekeeping Operations; (ii) Maritime Security; and (iii) Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief that promote the WPS agenda.

The establishment of a future network for ASEAN woman peacekeepers will provide a dedicated platform for capacity-building purposes, both before and during the deployment of peacekeepers in the areas of operation.

The ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting (ADMM) and ADMM-Plus, Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC), AICHR and the ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation (ASEAN-IPR) contribute to the promotion of the WPS agenda through: (i) The Advisory Group on ASEAN Women, Peace and Security; and (ii) The development of the ASEAN Regional Plan of Action on Women, Peace and Security, alongside the ASEAN Committee on Women (ACW) and the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC) and other ASEAN Sectoral Bodies and entities. The *Bali Work Plan* also includes action lines relevant to WPS that are implemented by other ASEAN sectoral bodies.

In relation to YPS, the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) adopted a *Joint Statement on Promoting the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda* at the 28<sup>th</sup> ARF in August 2021. This joint statement has become a reference point in related activities, such as the ARF Workshop on Youth, Peace and Security Agenda held in December 2021.

#### ENSURING ASEAN STABILITY

Regional stability is a top priority of ASEAN. The ASEAN Leaders' Meeting (ALM), convened in April 2021, reached a Five-Point Consensus. These are the guiding principles for ASEAN to assist Myanmar in addressing the situation the country currently faces.

Progress has been achieved, particularly in regard to the provision of humanitarian assistance. ASEAN's humanitarian assistance efforts in Myanmar have been coordinated by the Secretary-General of ASEAN in his role of ASEAN Humanitarian Assistance Coordinator





(SG-AHAC). The operation on the ground was conducted by the AHA Centre. ASEAN Member States, ASEAN external partners and other organisations provided financial and technical support for the exercise.

The Special Envoy of the ASEAN Chair on Myanmar held the first working visit to Myanmar in March 2022, with the support of the Secretary-General of ASEAN. This visit has been useful in maintaining channels of communication with different stakeholders towards finding a peaceful solution and effective ways and means to deliver humanitarian assistance to people in need in Myanmar. As a follow-up to the working visit, a consultative meeting was held in May 2022 to get relevant stakeholders to discuss approaches to ensure that the humanitarian assistance meets the needs of the people and leaves no one behind, as well as to ensure greater synergy between ASEAN, the UN and other organisations working in Myanmar.

Meanwhile, ASEAN continues its collective effort to support the Government of Myanmar in facilitating the repatriation process to Rakhine State. Notwithstanding the COVID-19 pandemic and recent developments in Myanmar, efforts are being made to continue the implementation of recommendations of the Preliminary Needs Assessment (PNA) Report of 2019, particularly through the planning and implementation of various projects, as coordinated by the Ad Hoc Support Team of the ASEAN Secretariat.

#### PROMOTING THE PEOPLE'S WELFARE

The promotion of the welfare of the ASEAN people is a key thrust of ASEAN. In relation to this, of importance are the implementation of regional frameworks, such as the *ASEAN Enabling Masterplan 2025: Mainstreaming the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*, the *ASEAN Plan of Action Against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children*, and the *ASEAN Plan of Action to Prevent and Counter the Rise of Radicalisation*

and *Violent Extremism (2019–2025)*, to which AICHR has made substantive contributions.

This is particularly significant as the year 2022 marks the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of AICHR's work in the promotion and implementation of the ASEAN Human Rights Declaration (AHRD). AICHR developed multi-annual frameworks, strategies and action plans to implement the AHRD relating to a broad spectrum of human rights and fundamental freedoms. AICHR further explored new initiatives and modalities in stakeholder engagement with Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), as well as other stakeholders, notably the first interface meeting between AICHR and the Southeast Asia National Human Rights Institutions Forum (SEANF) held in 2021.

#### CONTRIBUTING TO REGIONAL PEACE AND STABILITY

Regional peace, stability and diplomacy have always been a major concern

of ASEAN. With this in mind, keeping the South China Sea as an area of peace and prosperity is an imperative. Consequently, ASEAN Member States and China are working closely to pursue the full and effective implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC) in its entirety, including through practical maritime cooperation activities and the early conclusion of a Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (COC) that is effective, substantive and consistent with international law, including the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of Sea (UNCLOS).

The textual negotiations of COC resumed in June 2021 virtually. ASEAN Member States and China continue to work towards expediting COC negotiations and the completion of the second reading of the Single Draft COC Negotiating Text by the year-end of 2022.

A key mechanism for promoting regional peace and stability through confidence



building and preventive diplomacy is the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). Through its various activities, ARF provides a platform for dialogue, the exchange of views and the sharing of information among the 27 participants in order to promote understanding and strengthen cooperation. The ARF's areas of cooperation include disaster relief, maritime security, non-proliferation and disarmament, information and communication technologies security and counter-terrorism and transnational crime. *The ARF Ha Noi Plan of Action II (2020-2025)* is currently being implemented.

Meanwhile, the Concept Paper on Mainstreaming Four Priority Areas of the ASEAN Outlook on Indo-Pacific (AOIP) within ASEAN-led Mechanisms was adopted in early 2022. Discussions are currently being held on how to further mainstream cooperation under AOIP's four priority areas of: (i) Maritime cooperation; (ii) Connectivity; (iii) UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

2030; and (iv) Economic and other possible areas of cooperation.

Cooperation in these areas will be explored and implemented through practical projects, linkages, synergies and cooperation within the modalities of existing ASEAN-led mechanisms.

#### PROMOTING ASEAN CENTRALITY AND THE GLOBAL AGENDA

Amidst the continuous expansion of ASEAN external relations, it is imperative to keep ASEAN as the driving force in regional affairs, which is the essence of ASEAN Centrality. Indeed, ASEAN's external partnerships continue to widen and deepen.

Over recent years there has been an increase in the number of countries outside of the region which want to accede ASEAN's external partnerships have also widened. The United Kingdom of ASEAN's

to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC) in Southeast Asia. This is a signal of the increasing importance they attribute to ASEAN and the principles espoused by it.

To date, there are 43 High Contracting Parties to the TAC. Six countries, whose requests have been approved, namely (i) Denmark, (ii) the Hellenic Republic, (iii) the Netherlands, (iv) Qatar, (v) the Sultanate of Oman, and (vi) the United Arab Emirates are expected to sign the Instrument of Extension at the soonest possible opportunity.

Asean's external partnerships have also widened. The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland was accorded the status of Dialogue Partner of ASEAN in 2021. France and Italy became ASEAN's Development Partners in 2021. Relations with Australia and China were given the nomenclature of comprehensive strategic partnerships in 2021.

In other developments, the ASEAN Plus Three cooperation framework and the East Asia Summit continue to be strengthened, with their respective work plans being developed for the next five years (2023-2027). Non-ASEAN Ambassadors accredited to ASEAN (96 in total, including those from ASEAN's formal partners) and the 54 ASEAN Committees in the Third Countries and International Organisations continue to play an instrumental role in promoting ASEAN's interests and connecting ASEAN to the world by forging mutually beneficial relations.

Meanwhile, ASEAN continues to contribute to the global agenda, particularly in regard to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Through the ASEAN Network of Regulatory Bodies on Atomic Energy (ASEANTOM), cooperation among the nuclear regulatory bodies has been enhanced to further strengthen nuclear safety, security and safeguards



in the region. The ASEAN Protocol for Emergency Response and Preparedness to a Nuclear or Radiological Emergency was finalised in July 2021 and this protocol has become a milestone document in regional cooperation on nuclear and radiological emergencies.

Implementation of the Practical Arrangements between the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and ASEAN on Cooperation in the Areas of Nuclear Science and Technology and Applications, Nuclear Safety, Security and Safeguards (PA), signed in September 2019, continues to progress with a number of new activities undertaken or planned as more ASEAN sectoral bodies have been engaged.

#### LOOKING AHEAD

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Meanwhile, regarding ASEAN's external relations, there is a continued interest within external partners which want to establish formal partnerships with the organisation. As the number of ASEAN's external partners grows, ASEAN is working towards ensuring

that relations, both with current and future partners, are substantive, meaningful and mutually beneficial.

The year 2022 marks the commencement of the work towards a Post-2025 ASEAN Community Vision. Meetings of the ASEAN Community's Post-2025 Vision have been held at the ASEAN Secretariat and in Bangkok, Thailand.

The adoption of the Rules of Procedures and initial discussions conducted on the core elements of the Vision, including preliminary discussions on engaging stakeholders, have enabled HLTF to kick-start its work.

In accordance with guidance provided by ASEAN's leaders, the development of the post-2025 Community Vision shall be pursued in: "A comprehensive, pragmatic, balanced, inclusive and coordinated manner: taking a whole-of-community approach to synergize efforts across the ASEAN Community Pillars and among its sectoral bodies to address the increasing complexity of opportunities and challenges facing ASEAN."

# ASEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY



**AEM SPECIAL MEETING 2022 17-18 MAY 2022, BALI, INDONESIA**

The region's economic performance in 2021 showed a complete turnaround from 2020. Economic growth was at 3.0 percent, compared to a contraction of 3.2 percent in the previous year. As foreign and domestic demand further strengthens, growth expectations for 2022 and 2023 have become more upbeat at 4.9 percent and 5.2 percent, respectively. The year 2021 was a recovery period for trade and investments. Driven by strong demand in energy and manufacturing products, ASEAN merchandise trade value grew by 20.2 percent to USD 3.21 trillion in 2021. Total Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflows to ASEAN also grew by 28.3 percent in 2021 to USD 176.2 billion. The region's momentum for recovery, however, is challenged by heavy downside risks, including current geopolitical tensions, supply chain disruptions, shortages in key commodities, and inflationary pressures.

Notwithstanding the challenges brought about by the pandemic as well as new and emerging global developments, the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) continued to make significant progress in its regional integration agenda. This is evident in the successful completion of Priority Economic Deliverables (PEDs) under Brunei Darussalam's Chairmanship of ASEAN in 2021, which include the endorsement of the Non-Tariff Measure (NTM) Cost-Effectiveness Toolkit, launch of the ASEAN-Canada FTA negotiations, conclusion of the negotiations for the 9<sup>th</sup> Package on Financial Services under the ASEAN Framework Agreement on Services and adoption of the Framework on Circular Economy for AEC, among others.

Many initiatives have been implemented in trade facilitation as part of ASEAN's recovery efforts from the pandemic to ensure that ASEAN remains on track to be **a highly integrated and cohesive economy**. Trade documents including the e-Form D and the ASEAN Customs Declaration Document (ACDD) can now be exchanged through the ASEAN Single Window (ASW), while the e-Phyto certificate is targeted to be exchanged by 2022. ASEAN is also in the progress of discussing with China, Japan, Korea, and the US the exchange of e-documents. To reduce the regulatory burden for traders and facilitate the transaction of trade and investment in ASEAN, and to strengthen economic development within ASEAN as envisaged in the AEC Blueprint 2025, ASEAN has targeted to implement a pathfinder programme for the Mutual Recognition Arrangement of the Authorised Economic Operators in 2023.

To ensure the smooth flow of essential goods during the pandemic and future crises, ASEAN continued to foster the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding on the Implementation of the Non-Tariff Measures on Essential Goods under the Hanoi Plan of Action on Strengthening ASEAN Economic Cooperation and Supply Chain Connectivity in Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic (MOU), signed in November 2020, by expanding the list of essential goods to 259 to include medicines, medical and essential supplies, test kits and equipment, and agricultural and food products.

Another important milestone is the launch of the ASEAN Trade in Goods Agreement (ATIGA) upgrade negotiations in March 2022 to ensure that ASEAN remains relevant, modern,

forward-looking, more responsive to regional and global developments, and to provide a conducive environment for the growth and development of supply chains, thus enhancing the region's resilience in the face of future crises.

In standards and conformance, ASEAN has endorsed the ASEAN Agreement on Regulatory Framework for Traditional Medicines and the ASEAN Agreement on Regulatory Framework for Health Supplements to harmonise technical requirements on safety, efficacy and quality of the products. ASEAN also finalised the Protocol to Amend the MRA on Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) Inspection for Manufacturers of Medicinal products, which expanded the scope of the MRA from Over the Counter (OTC) medicinal products to include Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients and Biologics.



Trade digitalisation initiatives are part of the region's effort to become an integrated and cohesive economy.



QR code payment linkages will position ASEAN at the forefront of retail payments connectivity.

In addition, collaborative work between the economic and health sectors has resulted in the adoption of a strategic document on ASEAN Pharmaceutical Regulatory Policy (APRP) by the ASEAN Economic Ministers (AEM) and the ASEAN Health Ministers (AHMM).

In trade in services, ASEAN has been progressing the transformation of existing positive list commitments under the ASEAN Framework Agreement in Services (AFAS) into schedules of non-conforming measures under the ASEAN Trade in Services Agreement (ATISA) to provide greater openness and transparency of

services policies in the region. ASEAN is also in the final stage of updating its commitments under the Movement of Natural Persons (MNP) Agreement for signing within 2022, reaffirming ASEAN's commitment to facilitate the movement of professionals and business people across the region. Moreover, improvement of investment facilitation processes has been significantly accentuated in ASEAN, following the pandemic outbreak, to attract new investments, retain existing investments, and to ensure continuity of business operations. The ASEAN Investment Facilitation Framework (AIFF), therefore, was adopted in 2021

to create more favourable conditions for businesses and investments.

With respect to ASEAN finance integration, sustainable finance is emerging as a new priority of ASEAN as the region initiated many measures to meet the sustainable goals under the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. The most notable initiatives include: (a) issuance of Version 1 of the Key Components of the ASEAN Taxonomy for Sustainable Finance; (b) development of Sustainability-Linked Bond Standards; (c) development of an ASEAN Sustainable and Responsible Fund Standards; and (d) conversation pack for sustainable

finance first for sustainable projects. To pave the way for region-wide cross-border QR code payment linkages in supporting ASEAN financial inclusion and cross-border e-commerce, Singapore and Thailand successfully launched the world's first Real-Time Retail Payment Systems (RT-RPS) linkage.

**ASEAN has also put in place several important measures to transform ASEAN into a competitive, innovative, and dynamic region.** To enhance quality consistency, transparency, and confidence for owners filing patents in ASEAN, the ASEAN Quality Management System (QMS) for Patent Processes was developed to promote patent convergence across the region. Meanwhile, the ASEAN IP Virtual Academy continued to offer ASEAN-focused programmes to increase the competency of IP stakeholders. ASEAN also enhanced the capacity of government officials to protect Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge, and Traditional Cultural Expression by completing a Comparative Study of AMS legislations in this area.

Further, ASEAN strengthened cross-border cooperation and capacity building for consumer protection and competition. The ASEAN Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) Guidelines was adopted to guide the ASEAN Member States to develop their ODR systems with a view to facilitating consumers' access to redress their grievances in e-commerce. ASEAN also launched the Online Interactive and Distance Learning Tools on consumer protection to educate consumers on their rights and obligations in the online marketplaces. The ASEAN Sustainable Consumption Toolkit was completed to help government officials, consumer associations and businesses, to

formulate policies that promote sustainable consumption.

To enhance the understanding of government officials on convergence in competition law and practices in the region, ASEAN conducted a Study on Substantive and Procedural Standards in Competition Policy and Law Enforcement for ASEAN. In this connection, the ASEAN Regional Capacity Building Roadmap for Competition 2021-2025 was also developed to guide ASEAN Competition Agencies, to implement capacity building initiatives that address recent developments and emerging challenges in competition.

**Work have advanced across several economic sectors in ASEAN leading to enhanced connectivity and sectoral cooperation.** On digital transformation, the ASEAN Leaders Statement on Advancing Digital Transformation in ASEAN in November 2021 affirmed a strategic, holistic, and coordinated approach to digital transformation with the active involvement of multiple stakeholders from across all ASEAN Sectoral Bodies and

Community Pillars. This led to the adoption of several major digital initiatives including the Bandar Seri Begawan Roadmap: An ASEAN Digital Transformation Agenda to Accelerate ASEAN's Economic Recovery and Digital Economy Integration, ASEAN Digital Master Plan 2025, and the Work Plan on the Implementation of the ASEAN Agreement on Electronic Commerce 2021-2025. These initiatives are targeted to building an inclusive, conducive digital ecosystem in the region and paving the way for the establishment of a robust ASEAN digital economy by 2025. Furthermore, in recognition of emerging threats of cybersecurity to the ASEAN economy and society, ASEAN endorsed the ASEAN Cybersecurity Cooperation Strategy 2021-2025 and the Regional Action Plan (RAP) on the Implementation of the UNGGE Norms of Responsible State's Behaviour in Cyberspace to reinforce cooperation among AMS towards the development of a peaceful, secure, and resilient rule-based cyberspace.

In the area of aviation transport, ASEAN and the European Union (EU) concluded the negotiations on the ASEAN EU

Comprehensive Air Transport Agreement (AE CATA) on 2 June 2022. The agreement will enhance air connectivity between and beyond both regions and to provide a solid foundation for closer cooperation in the areas of aviation safety, air traffic management, consumer protection, environmental and social matters. ASEAN also concluded the Protocol to Implement the Twelfth Package of Commitments on Air Transport Services under the AFAS to further liberalise air transport ancillary services in ASEAN. To further promote and enhance the integration of sustainable transport and land use planning in the region, two policy documents were adopted, namely: (i) the Guidelines for the Development of Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (SUMP) in ASEAN Metropolitan Regions; and (ii) the Toolbox for the Establishment of Metropolitan Transport Executives (MTE) in ASEAN Metropolitan Regions, as well as the issuance of the Phnom Penh Declaration on Sustainable Urban Mobility. The conclusion of the ASEAN Agreement on Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue Cooperation is also a significant step towards strengthening regional

coordination to conduct more effective search and rescue (SAR) operations in the future.

With regard to energy cooperation, the adoption of the Bandar Seri Begawan Joint Declaration of the 39<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Ministers on Energy on Energy Security and Energy Transition reaffirmed ASEAN Member States' collective pursuit of the ASEAN Plan of Action for Energy Cooperation (APAEC) goals. This Declaration called for intensified efforts to address the financial, investment, and technical as well as cross-sectoral, cross-pillar, and external support needed to deploy advanced, cleaner and low carbon energy systems in ASEAN. Stronger cooperation with partners has also been initiated to support the effective implementation of the APAEC and mobilise resources to help accelerate the energy transition agenda, while the implementation of APAEC is expected to continue under Cambodia's 2022 Chairmanship.

ASEAN also adopted the ASEAN Minerals Cooperation Action Plan (AMCAP-III) Phase 2: 2021-2025 in October 2021

ASEAN continues to make significant progress in its regional integration agenda.



Enhancement of air connectivity in the region is one of the ultimate goals in the area of public transport.





Agricultural sector contributes to the region's economic performance.

to promote the region as a minerals investment destination and to build investments in all stages of the minerals value chain. To support this, the development of a draft ASEAN Minerals Exploration Strategy to bolster support for policy and geological prospectivity is underway. This is complemented by the ongoing development of an ASEAN Principles of Sustainable Minerals Development to progressively improve governance and economic, social and environmental outcomes from minerals development.

Various initiatives have also been undertaken to promote sustainable and circular agriculture. The ASEAN Guidelines on Sustainable Agriculture were developed to serve as a practical

guide for farmers and cooperatives to promote the establishment and operation of sustainable agriculture, and encourage other relevant stakeholders in the sector to integrate their operations to create a stronger ASEAN agricultural system. The establishment of sustainable and circular agricultural systems in ASEAN is key initiative aimed at ensuring continuous productivity and cost-effectiveness while adhering to environmental and social welfare concerns. Additionally, the Stocktaking on the Use of Agro-chemicals in ASEAN was formulated to provide policy recommendations on the effective approaches to improve the sustainable use of the ASEAN agro-chemicals in production to meet the global food safety requirements.

The COVID-19 pandemic brought massive losses in ASEAN's tourism sector as a result of regional travel restrictions and health-related measures imposed by ASEAN Member States in response to the pandemic. Faced with these challenges, appropriate solutions have been explored to expedite the effective implementation of the Post COVID-19 Recovery Plan for ASEAN Tourism. In January 2022, the ASEAN Tourism Ministers agreed to announce the gradual reopening of ASEAN tourism and endorsed the ASEAN Guidelines on Hygiene and Safety for Tourism Professionals and the Communities in the Tourism Industry, which covers eight tourism and tourism-related sectors. The ASEAN Safe Travel Stamp, which may be utilised by various tourism industry players, has also

been introduced to assure travellers on the application of hygiene and safety standards. On the marketing side, the ASEAN Tourism Ministers have endorsed the New ASEAN Tourism logo and tagline of "A Destination For Every Dream" which comprises of a panoply of historical sights, cuisines, adventures, cultures, natural landscapes, and modern metropolis.

With regard to Science, Technology and Innovation, four main initiatives were implemented to strengthen ASEAN's capacity in overcoming the impact of COVID-19 namely, ASEAN COVID Genomics Project and ASEAN-Wide Anti-COVID Sero-Surveillance Study that provided up-to-date genomic information on virus strains detected in ASEAN thus further enhanced the region's epidemic



Hygiene and safety standards in ASEAN tourism ensure comfort and provide assurance to travelers.





ASEAN is committed to facilitate movement in trade and investment.

preparedness; ASEAN Diagnostic Development (DxD) Initiative that promoted Public Private Partnerships within the region to commercialise diagnostic technologies; and High Performance Computing (HPC) in Tackling COVID that identified concrete actions for joint exploitation of HPC technologies to tackle COVID. Beyond COVID, research continues to advance the region's preparedness for future outbreaks by strengthening linkages and new networks within and beyond ASEAN. As part of ASEAN HPC Shared Infrastructure Initiative, two series of HPC Schools were held to foster HPC skills and to prepare for the best use of the ASEAN HPC shared platform planned to be hosted in ASEAN.

Ensuring a resilient, inclusive, people-oriented, and people-centred ASEAN is essential to the AEC. ASEAN made tremendous efforts in Micro, Small

and Medium Enterprises (MSME) development, particularly in preparing itself to embrace digital technology to boost productivity and competitiveness. Among others, ASEAN launched the ASEAN Access, an online business service portal to assist ASEAN MSMEs in exploring opportunities in the regional and global markets and the ASEAN Access MATCH, a virtual business matching platform. In addition, a notable achievement was the relaunch of the ASEAN SME Academy on 8 April 2022, which is an inclusive, learner-friendly facility featuring richer content, available on mobile phones, and multi-lingual support in Indonesian, Thai and Vietnamese. Another major initiative is the Go Digital ASEAN, a public-private collaboration among ASEAN, Google.org and the Asia Foundation, which provides the much-needed digital skills to micro-enterprises and the underserved communities including women and youth.

The program has benefited more than 220,000 MSMEs, most of them in rural areas.

To enhance public-private engagement and participation, ASEAN proactively sought inputs and feedbacks from private sectors in the course of its economic integration process, through key activities such as (i) regular consultation between the private sector and relevant sectoral bodies; (ii) undertaking of ASEAN Business Sentiment Study 2020/2021; (iii) bi-monthly release of the ASEAN for Business bulletin; and (iv) organizing AEC Dialogues.

Deepening ASEAN's integration into the global economy became all the more important as the COVID-19 pandemic exposed the vulnerability of supply chains in the region. The launch of negotiations for an ASEAN-Canada free

trade agreement (FTA) in November 2021 and the entry into force of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Agreement on 1 January 2022 reinforced not only ASEAN's commitment to an open, inclusive and rules-based trading system but also its resolve to ensure that supply chains in the region bounce back stronger and more resilient from the pandemic. ASEAN is also upgrading the ASEAN Plus One FTAs starting with the ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand FTA, with ASEAN's FTAs with China, India and Korea expected to follow suit. This is another demonstration of ASEAN's determination to not only foster regional supply chains by diversifying sources of trade and investment but also to pave the way for incorporating ASEAN's emerging priorities, i.e., sustainability and digitalisation in its FTAs for these to continue to be relevant and for ASEAN Member States to stay on course in its Global ASEAN strategy.

# ASEAN SOCIO-CULTURAL COMMUNITY





Health awareness starts from early age.

Challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic were dominant throughout 2021. ASEAN entered a new phase in fighting the virus, while also managing the reopening of borders and implementing strategies to restart the damaged tourism sector.

The ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) continued with its policy to 'put people first' as Brunei Darussalam steered ASEAN in its chairmanship year to fulfil its promise in the three areas of 'caring for our people', 'preparing for future opportunities and challenges', and 'prospering together as a unified region'.

To ensure the full potential of the ASEAN community, many regional initiatives continued to underline the need for resilience and preparedness to ensure that outcomes are inclusive, dynamic, resilient, engaging and sustainable.

ASCC sectoral work plans and several activities were aligned with the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework. The ASEAN Comprehensive Framework on Care Economy was also

adopted at the 38<sup>th</sup> and 39<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summits.

Other critical initiatives on bolstering people-centred inclusivity include the Regional Strategic Framework on Gender Mainstreaming, the Roadmap to Implement the Ha Noi Declaration on Strengthening Social Work towards a Cohesive and Responsive ASEAN Community, the ASEAN Digital Readiness among ASEAN Citizens, and the Terms of Reference and Technical Arrangements for the Digitalisation of Health Protocol on the Recognition of COVID-19 Health Certificates.

#### **PRIORITISING PEOPLE'S HEALTH AND WELL-BEING**

The ASEAN Health Sector sustained and scaled-up 25 health-related initiatives on the COVID-19 response, and enhanced cooperation with ASEAN's external partners. It launched the ASEAN Portal for Public Health Emergencies, with support from Global Affairs Canada and German Cooperation (GIZ).

It also prioritised expediting the operationalisation of the ASEAN Center for Public Health Emergencies and Emerging Diseases (APCHEED). With the support from the Government of Japan, through the ASEAN Integration Fund and the Japan International Cooperation Agency and additional support from the Government of Australia, resources were mobilised for APCHEED's operationalisation.

The sector successfully organised, through the support of GIZ, a series of expert panel webinars on COVID-19 response which produced policy briefs on critical issues related to vaccine security and self-reliance, safeguarding vulnerable populations, balancing health and economic priorities, strengthening health systems, supporting public health emergencies through innovative approaches and addressing COVID-19 misinformation.

As COVID-19 vaccines were rolled out across the region, ASEAN helped to ensure the sufficient and timely

procurement of vaccines for its citizens. It also fortified existing initiatives and mechanisms toward building regional capacities related to enhancing access to safe, quality and effective vaccines and drugs and ensuring adequate supplies and their timely distribution through the Regional Strategic and Action Plan for ASEAN Vaccine Security and Self-Reliance, the COVID-19 ASEAN Response Fund and the ASEAN Regional Reserve of Medical Supplies for Public Health Emergencies. Regional Reserve of Medical Supplies for Public Health Emergencies.

“ Looking after your mental health is as important as taking care of your physical health. A listening ear could make a huge difference to someone who may be struggling. ”

*Gianni Infantino - FIFA President during the launch of the #ReachOut campaign*

Addressing mental health issues, a situation exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly among the youth, was another priority under Brunei Darussalam's stewardship. Through the health sector, the ASEAN Plus Three (APT) collaboration was enhanced in addressing mental health issues and promoting suicide prevention, particularly among adolescents and young persons. The sports sector partnered with FIFA and football stars to launch the #Reachout video campaign to reach out to youths affected by mental health challenges during the lockdown.

The safe reopening of schools and learning recovery intervention as Member States emerged from the pandemic was also prioritised. ASEAN worked with the UNICEF East Asia and the Pacific Regional Office on the ASEAN Policy Brief on Safe School Reopening, Learning Recovery and Continuity and Reopen, Recover & Resilience in Education: Guidelines for ASEAN countries which recommended key strategies for safely reopening schools and protecting children based on emerging global and regional evidence. This was complemented by the ASEAN Health Protocol for Pandemic Preventive Measures in Public Places and its Operational Guidelines.

“ ...no nation can tackle COVID-19 pandemic exclusively. As a region, we should work cohesively so that we can do it better and faster.”

*Budi G. Sadikin - Minister of Health (Indonesia), The ASEAN Issue P. 15-16*

## ADVANCING INCLUSION AND GENDER EQUALITY

ASEAN worked to ensure that women in the region are provided with equal opportunities and are treated fairly. To achieve these goals, ASEAN partnered with the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) investigated multiple burdens affecting women and girls which continue to be unrecognised and unresolved. The final report, *Addressing Unpaid Care Work in ASEAN*, includes key recommendations in the areas of care infrastructure, care-related social protection, care services and employment-related policies.

Through the implementation of the ASEAN Enabling Masterplan 2025: Mainstreaming the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, ASEAN unified regional efforts into wider public programming with engagement from multi-stakeholders, particularly organisations that represent persons with disabilities.

ASEAN takes further responsibility in fulfilling obligations to persons with disabilities through the adoption of the Result-Based Monitoring and Evaluation Framework of this plan.

ASEAN also accelerated action to achieve the SDGs by convening the first ASEAN Ministerial Dialogue which reaffirmed a commitment to elevate actions, strengthen partnerships and pursue collaborative initiatives to improve the lives of all people.

The labour sector piloted the ASEAN Guidelines on Gender Mainstreaming into Labour and Employment towards 'Decent Work for All' following this campaign's adoption in 2020. The guideline's checklist was completed

by all Member States to assess the gender responsiveness of policies on employment promotion, decent working conditions, social and maternity protection and international labour migration.

## BUILDING INCLUSIVITY AND AN AGILE WORLD OF WORK

To prepare ASEAN workers for the transformative changes exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, the ASEAN Declaration on Promoting Competitiveness, Resilience and Agility of Workers for the Future of Work was adopted. The ASEAN Labour Productivity Index was also developed as a tool to measure and support the capacities of ASEAN Member States in enhancing the productivity of their respective employees. Under ASEAN's priority towards the protection and inclusion of vulnerable groups, the association conducted a study that examined the different social security systems and schemes of ASEAN Member States.

The Study Report on the Portability of Social Security Rights between the ASEAN Member States explored ways of connecting the different systems to allow the transfer of workers' social security benefits to another country in the region.

ASEAN also successfully launched the *ASEAN Development Outlook*, an inaugural report made to chart progress towards inclusive and sustainable development in the ASEAN region.

ASEAN also undertook studies on the improvement of human resource readiness for the future and the management of the movement of migrant workers in ASEAN countries. Recognising the contribution of migrant workers to economic recovery, the *ASEAN Migration Outlook's* first edition examined the challenges and barriers to ensuring the effective return and reintegration of migrant workers affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Recognising the importance of ensuring labour law compliance, the ASEAN Labour Inspection Committee (ALICOM) was established by ASEAN Labour Ministers in 2021 through the adoption of its terms of reference.

The committee aims to enhance labour inspection capacities of ASEAN Member States for better work conditions and the protection of workers. The inaugural meeting of the committee was hosted and chaired by Brunei Darussalam in December 2021.

As part of the continuous effort of promoting inclusive and non-



Investing on human resource readiness for the future of ASEAN.

discriminative workplaces, the ASEAN Guidelines on HIV Counselling and Testing in the Workplace was finalised. These guidelines are useful for governments, employers, business coalitions on HIV and AIDS and other stakeholders in promoting HIV prevention and control programmes in the workplace.

#### DEVELOPING FUTURE-READY CITIZENS AND A CIVIL SERVICE WITH A STRONG SENSE OF IDENTITY

ASEAN has been highly active in pursuing measures to prepare its citizens for a digital and globally interconnected future. In cooperation with dialogue partners, ASEAN continues to offer scholarship grants to ASEAN citizens to build expertise in the region and promote people-to-people connectivity. These initiatives include the EU-ASEAN SHARE Programme, the ASEAN-China Young Leaders Scholarship for Post Graduate Programme and The Higher Education for ASEAN Talents (HEAT) programme.

The ASEAN Working Group on Higher Education Mobility, with support from the SHARE Programme, developed the ASEAN Roadmap towards an ASEAN Higher Education Space. This will support capacity building and awareness of ASEAN Youth and the ASEAN community building process.

To help youth become more digital-savvy, socially engaged, well-rounded and to enhance their awareness and participation in the ASEAN Community building process, ASEAN organised the ASEAN Data Science Explorers Regional Finals 2021 and the ASEAN Youth Interfaith Camp 2021. ASEAN also declared 2022 as the 'Year of the ASEAN Youth' to highlight the

importance of ASEAN Youth in ASEAN community building.

ASEAN Member States cemented their commitment to the promotion of good governance and the delivery of high-quality public service through the adoption of the ASEAN Declaration on Fostering the Civil Service's Adaptability to the New Challenges.

Recognising challenges and opportunities brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, this declaration calls for transformative leadership, continuous skills development of civil servants, quality public service delivery and promotion of digital governments. *A study on Civil Service Modernisation in ASEAN: Towards A Future-Ready Civil Service* reviewed the state of civil services in the region and identified measures to modernise and prepare civil servants for current and future challenges.

ASEAN sought to cultivate citizens who are not only highly skilled and adaptable, but also who take pride in their ASEAN identity. It conducted a study, 'Understanding How Young People See ASEAN', to establish baseline data on how the youth make sense of their identity.

ASEAN also sustained the ASEAN Cultural Heritage Digital Archive (ACHDA) project and launched an e-exhibition and seminar featuring digitised cultural treasures contained in the archive.

Another initiative was continued publication of ASCC's flagship publication, *The ASEAN* magazine. ASEAN also released 'ASEAN 101' videos to increase awareness of the association's community's ideals, values and work.

“ ASEAN is like a big family as we come from similar roots and have similar culture. We have a close-knit weaving community ASEAN. ”

*Viengkam Nanthavongdouangsy - Master weaver and fashion designer at KHANG (Lao DPR)*

To further strengthen the ASEAN identity, ASEAN also published the ASEAN Youth Development Index 5<sup>th</sup> Domain. This is based on a survey of regional students' ASEAN awareness, values and identity.

The study showed that university students across the region possess a strong awareness of ASEAN and they see the benefits of their country's membership in ASEAN for their future. The study also emphasised the need for more visible and impactful cooperation, such as economic collaboration, tourism and development assistance.

One of the multi-sectoral initiatives toward regional economic recovery, the ASEAN Creative Economy (ACE), is being developed to create new social and economic opportunities for sustainable and inclusive development, especially in the cultural and creative sectors.

One such initiative was the ASEAN Creative Economy Business Forum 2021. This was conducted to help creative entrepreneurs and professionals connect with potential investors and partners and also facilitate discussion on the prospects for, and the challenges that hinder the development of the creative industries.

The information sector continues to play a pivotal role to amplify ASEAN awareness and to foster ASEAN Identity. Under the ASEAN Communication Master Plan II 2018-2025, impactful communication and outreach activities were launched, including the ten-episode 'ASEAN 101 Videos' that educate the public about ASEAN's vision and work.

As the prevalence of fake news and misinformation may distort perceptions and understanding of ASEAN developments, a regional task force on fake news under the information sector has been established to intensify efforts and coordination to minimise the harmful effects of fake news and misinformation.

#### STRENGTHENING RESILIENCE TO DISASTERS

In realising ASEAN's vision to become a global leader in disaster management, ASEAN continues to share its experiences with the international community. It also enhanced its visibility and relevance in global platforms such as the Global Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction (GPDRR), the Asia-Pacific Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction, the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction and the International Recovery Platform.

In anticipating new and emerging risks, ASEAN scans beyond the horizon in the *ASEAN Disaster Resilience Outlook: Preparing for a Future Beyond 2025* to assess the region's journey towards becoming a disaster-resilient community and this outlook offers strategic recommendations in realising this vision.

“ During disaster relief efforts, social workers conduct assessments as well as providing psychosocial support. We provide moral support and fulfil the basic needs of the survivors to help them get back on their feet.”

*Sharima Ruwaida Abbas – Social Worker, Humanitarian Worker, and Academician (Malaysia)*

An intergenerational dialogue on “Teaming Up with You(th) for a Disaster Resilient and Climate-Friendly ASEAN” brought together ASEAN stakeholders, youth leaders and champions to commemorate ASEAN Youth in Climate Action and Disaster Resilience Day on 25 November 2021.

ASEAN signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) on the Strengthening of Community Resilience in South-East Asia. This renewed partnership with the world’s largest humanitarian network will bolster ASEAN’s disaster risk reduction initiatives

through the mobilisation of greater localised efforts.

ASEAN’s commitment to ‘leave no one behind’ was also reaffirmed with the adoption of the ASEAN Regional Framework for Protection, Gender and Inclusion in Disaster Management 2021-2025. This framework ensures that the needs of vulnerable groups in disaster scenarios are recognised and communities are meaningfully engaged across all phases of disaster risk management.

### ENSURING ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

The ASEAN region is the most natural disaster-prone in the world. Additionally, climate-induced hazards are further changing the disaster risk landscape in the ASEAN region. ASEAN has taken steps to anticipate, mitigate and respond to these emerging risks through building a more sustainable and resilient ASEAN community.

Leaders of ASEAN Member States joined world leaders to deliberate about transformational changes in global climate policy at the 26<sup>th</sup> Session of the Conference of the Parties to the United

Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC COP26).

ASEAN reiterated its commitment to global climate action with the ASEAN Joint Statement on Climate Change to UNFCCC COP26. This was a side event held in conjunction with the main conference to highlight the importance of ASEAN’s peatland forests in global climate change mitigation.

The ASEAN State of Climate Change Report provided a review of the climate vulnerabilities of the region and this publication identified the necessary intervention to achieve specified commitments under the Paris Agreement, an international treaty on climate change, adopted in 2015, that covers climate change mitigation, adaptation and finance.

The Scoping Study on Strengthening Science and Policy Interface in Climate Change related Decision-Making Process: Laying the Groundwork for Long-term Strategies in ASEAN was also conducted to identify priorities, direction and the extent of ASEAN interventions related to long-term climate strategies. As part of ASEAN’s commitments toward climate change, the ASEAN Centre for

Climate Change will be established to serve as an inter-governmental centre for climate change coordination and cooperation among ASEAN Member States. ASEAN also joined the global call for ‘urgent and integrated action’ and issued the ASEAN Joint Statement on Biodiversity Conservation to protect biodiversity in the region.

The Youth on Climate Action – ASEAN Ministers Meeting on Environment (ASEANyouCAN – AMME) Dialogue on Youth for Climate Action was held on the sidelines of the 16<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Ministers Meeting on Environment. ASEANyouCAN youth delegates presented the Bandar Seri Begawan Declaration on ASEAN Youth for Climate Action to ASEAN Environment Ministers. The declaration highlighted the collective position of ASEAN youth in the region, their concerns and their recommendations to strengthen climate action intervention activities.

In working towards pursuing low-carbon and climate-resilient cities, ASEAN initiated support for the implementation of green and smart city solutions. It also presented the 5<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Environmentally Sustainable Cities (ESC) Awards and the 4<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Certificates of Recognition for



ASEAN joins the global call on biodiversity conservation to protect biodiversity in the region.



ASEAN citizens take pride in their ASEAN identity.

Clean Air, Clean Water, and Clean Land to selected cities. The ASEAN Green Initiative was officially launched in August 2021. This targets a strengthening of the community engagement to plant 10 million trees over 10 years across the ASEAN region.

As part of ASEAN's efforts to combat marine debris pollution and promote a circular economy, ASEAN welcomed the ASEAN Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) Framework and organised knowledge exchange and capacity building activities for reducing plastic pollution in the ASEAN region.

ASEAN also strengthened partnership and synergy in regional environmental protection and conservation efforts through the ASEAN-EU High-level Dialogue on Environment and Climate Change, the ASEAN-Japan Dialogue on Environmental Cooperation, the ASEAN-ROK Dialogue on Environment and Climate Change, the ASEAN-US Preparatory Dialogue on Environment and Climate Change and the ASEAN

Plus Three senior officials and ministerial meetings on the environment. The ASEAN-China Joint Statement on Enhancing Green and Sustainable Development Cooperation was also adopted at the ASEAN-China Summit.

Under the ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution (AATHP), ASEAN endorsed the Report of the Final Review of the ASEAN Peatland Management Strategy 2006-2020. ASEAN also endorsed the Report of the Final Review of the Roadmap on ASEAN Cooperation towards Transboundary Haze Pollution Control 2016-2020.

ASEAN's efforts to strengthen cooperation on peatland management continues through regional programmes and projects supported by the EU, the Sustainable Use of Peatland and Haze Mitigation in ASEAN (SUPA), the International Fund for Agricultural Development and the International Union for Conservation of Nature – most notably, the Mekong Peatland Project.

# ASEAN CONNECTIVITY

Sustainable infrastructure is one of the focuses of the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity 2025.





## HIGHLIGHTS OF ASEAN CONNECTIVITY

- Identification of Initial Findings of the Assessment of Future Sustainable Infrastructure Trends and Priorities in a Post-Pandemic ASEAN.
- Convening of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Forum of ASEAN Infrastructure Discussion Series.
- Development of City Technical Proposals in Implementing the ASEAN Sustainable Urbanisation Strategy.
- Conduct of the ASEAN Sustainable Urbanisation Forum.
- Organisation of the 12<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Connectivity Symposium on Promoting Recovery and Resilience through Connectivity
- Organisation of the 12<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Connectivity Symposium on Promoting Recovery and Resilience through Connectivity.

Connectivity continues to be a crucial lever in building the ASEAN Community, supporting post-COVID-19 recovery and strengthening the resilience of ASEAN Member States. Efforts in enhancing

ASEAN Connectivity has grown from strength to strength through implementation of the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC) 2025.

MPAC 2025 focuses on developing the region's sustainable infrastructure, promoting digital innovation, expanding markets through seamless logistics, strengthening regulatory excellence and facilitating people mobility. MPAC 2025 strategic areas are inter-linked and mutually reinforcing with different initiatives that bring benefits to the people of ASEAN.

As of May 2022, 14 out of 15 MPAC 2025 initiatives were in an implementation phase, with progress at a varying pace. Being a multi-year, cross-pillar undertaking, delivering MPAC 2025 requires innovative approaches and flexibility to meet the changing needs of ASEAN towards achieving a connected, integrated, inclusive and resilient ASEAN Community.

The ASEAN Connectivity Coordinating Committee (ACCC), which coordinates the MPAC 2025 implementation, together with lead implementing bodies, relevant ASEAN Sectoral Bodies, National Coordinators and National Focal Points, will strengthen existing partnerships and forge new partnerships with various ASEAN stakeholders to co-curate actions and projects in implementing MPAC 2025.

## ENHANCING ASEAN'S SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT AND PRODUCTIVITY

Connecting and showcasing infrastructure investment opportunities in ASEAN are critical given the importance of infrastructure in improving the way we live, work and travel. ASEAN convened the 3<sup>rd</sup> Forum of ASEAN Infrastructure Discussion Series in November 2021. This event brought governments, multilateral development banks, research institutes and the private sector together to discuss best practices and solutions to support the sustainable infrastructure of Southeast Asia and beyond.

Recognising the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on infrastructure development, ASEAN conducted the Assessment of Future Sustainable Infrastructure Trends and Priorities in a Post-Pandemic ASEAN to assist in understanding recent infrastructure trends and new priority areas to promote sustainable infrastructure towards the future inclusion of projects into the Initial Rolling Priority Pipeline of ASEAN Infrastructure Projects.

To support regional cities to achieve smart and sustainable urban development, ASEAN initiated collaboration with UN-Habitat on a project titled 'Accelerating the Implementation of the ASEAN Sustainable Urbanisation Strategy' (ASUS). This undertaking provides ASEAN cities with knowledge exchange and capacity building activities to advance their sustainable urbanisation actions and solutions.

As part of this project, ASEAN convened the ASEAN Sustainable Urbanisation Forum on 6-8 October 2021. This event provided a platform for national and local governments, international organisations, the private sector, experts, academia and other stakeholders to connect and share best practices and lessons learnt on sustainable urban development.

Following the completion of city diagnostic exercises in September 2021, ASEAN is supporting the development of City Technical Proposals for eight cities<sup>1</sup> and the ASEAN Sustainable Urbanisation Report due to be completed in 2022.



Efforts on enhancing ASEAN connectivity has grown from strength to strength through implementation of the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity 2025.

<sup>1</sup> Kep City (Cambodia), Tomohon (Indonesia), Kaysone (Lao PDR), Shah Alam (Malaysia), Mandalay (Myanmar), General Santos (the Philippines), Hat Yai (Thailand) and Sa Pa (Viet Nam).

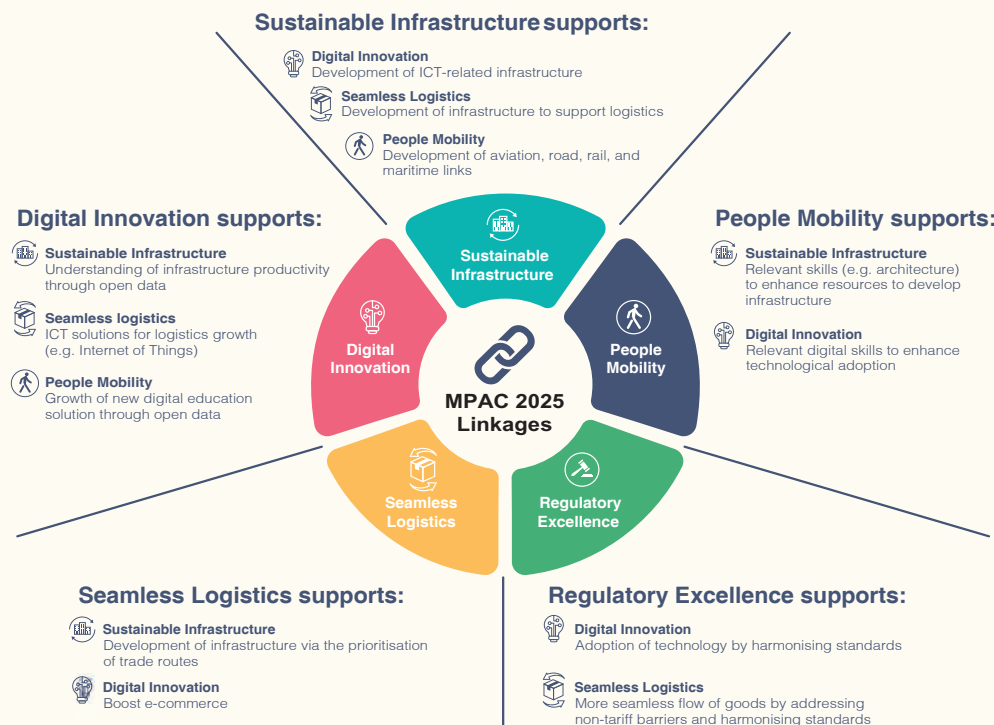
# Seamlessly and Comprehensively Connected ASEAN

Enhancing ASEAN Connectivity would benefit all ASEAN Member States by improving physical, institutional and people-to-people linkages, and strengthening resilience across all three Community pillars.

The Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC) 2025 is unlocking more opportunities to create stronger network of peoples, infrastructure and cities that will improve the way we live, work and travel.



## Linkages and Synergies\* Among Strategic Areas of MPAC 2025



\*Source: Report of the Mid-Term Review (MTR) of MPAC 2025

More about MPAC 2025: <https://connectivity.asean.org>

Check out #ASEANConnectivity on

This infographic is supported by



“We find the ASUS framework to be useful by helping the city to prioritise sustainable urbanisation actions and align city visions to international framework.”

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Wichai Kanchanasuwon, Deputy Mayor of Hat Yai, at the ASUS City Technical Proposal Closing Event on 5 April 2022.

As a platform for 26 cities to exchange good practices and lessons learnt in managing urban challenges and to facilitate cooperation on smart cities development, the ASEAN Smart Cities Network (ASCN) continues to seek opportunities to improve the lives of the ASEAN Community using technology and innovative solutions as enablers.

In 2022, ASCN will commence the development of the ASCN online portal and the ASEAN Smart City Investment Toolkit. The ASCN online portal will enable ASCN cities to showcase progress on their respective Smart City Action Plans (SCAPs), seize opportunities to nurture current partnerships, as well as engage with potential partners and access resources for smart city development.

The ASEAN Smart City Investment Toolkit will provide ASCN and other ASEAN cities with knowledge and understanding of the various options available for funding and financing smart city initiatives. Cultivating the synergies between ASCN and ASUS is key to enhancing collaboration and partnerships in furthering smart and sustainable cities development in the region.

PROMOTING DIGITAL INNOVATION, ENHANCING SUPPLY CHAIN EFFICIENCY AND RESILIENCE, STRENGTHENING REGULATORY EXCELLENCE AND FACILITATING PEOPLE MOBILITY FOR A MORE CONNECTED REGION

In promoting digital innovation, ASEAN has initiated the development of an ASEAN Open Data Dictionary. This initiative aims to improve the efficiency of government service delivery and private sector innovation through data sharing across ASEAN nations. Collective efforts to assess open data readiness in 10 ASEAN Member States has been completed and work to establish an ASEAN open data development framework is underway so the ASEAN Open Data Dictionary can become an active online resource.

To enhance supply chain efficiency and resilience and tackle potential shocks, ASEAN is working on an ASEAN Database on Trade Routes and a Framework on ASEAN Supply Chain Efficiency and Resilience. The framework aims to support ASEAN's efforts in navigating supply chain bottlenecks and improving the global competitiveness of ASEAN supply chains to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 and stimulate post-COVID-19 pandemic recovery.

To facilitate the movement of goods in the region, ASEAN has embarked on a project to develop a Set of Methodologies in Conducting an Ex-Ante Regulatory Review on the Draft Non-Tariff Measures (NTMs), before these are imposed by ASEAN Member States. As part of the project, the Handbook on Methodology for Review of Draft NTMs has been drafted for consideration by Member States.

To facilitate people mobility, two projects have been initiated. To support higher education exchange across ASEAN, *a Report on Graduate Employability in ASEAN – the Contribution of Student Mobility* has been drafted. This publication aims to provide preliminary findings on how intra-regional mobility can contribute to graduates' career enhancement. Work on this started in September 2021 and it is expected to be finalised in 2022.

In supporting ease of travel throughout ASEAN, a project on Enhance ASEAN Tourism Digital Platforms, which commenced in January 2022, aims to contribute to the promotion of ASEAN as a single tourism destination for post-pandemic travel for both tourists and short-term business visitors.

#### **INTENSIFYING ENGAGEMENT WITH STAKEHOLDERS**

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ASEAN has intensified engagements with dialogue partners and other external partners, the private sector and other key stakeholders through ACCC and related Meetings, as well as the ASEAN Connectivity Symposium and MPAC 2025 project forums/workshops. The

symposium, held annually since 2010, provides a platform to discuss and exchange good practices, joint efforts and establish partnerships to enhance connectivity in the region.

In August 2021, the 12<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Connectivity Symposium under the theme 'Promoting Recovery and Resilience through Connectivity' brought together over 160 participants to discuss ASEAN's efforts to enhance regional connectivity towards a more sustainable and resilient society post-pandemic and beyond 2025.

Regular outreach to key stakeholders through communication activities is essential to maintain the visibility of ASEAN Connectivity and give an update on the progress of MPAC 2025.

Seventeen different ASEAN Connectivity digital communications projects – in the form of video, infographic and carousel posts – were developed and uploaded to the ASEAN Connectivity Microsite.

To view these, access: <https://connectivity.asean.org> and other ASEAN online social media channels that were made available over the period from June 2021 to March 2022.

# ASEAN ANNIVERSARY AND OUTREACH EFFORTS





### 54<sup>TH</sup> ASEAN DAY CELEBRATION

Due to the lockdown enforced by the COVID-19 pandemic, commemoration of the 54<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Day was, again, held online. The theme of the 54<sup>th</sup> celebration reiterated Brunei Darussalam's ASEAN chairmanship 2021 theme: **"We Care, We Prepare, We Prosper."** This event featured remarks by Secretary-General of ASEAN Dato Lim Jock Hoi and Foreign Minister of Indonesia Retno Marsudi. The 45-minute video celebration was streamed on the ASEAN Secretariat's (ASEC) social-media channels, notably Facebook and YouTube. Among highlights of the video content were the well-wishes conveyed by the twelve heads or representatives of ASEAN centres/facilities. Inspired by ASEAN's Leaders' vision to build an inclusive, people-oriented and people-centered ASEAN Community, the programme also highlighted how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted on vulnerable and marginalised populations, especially those with disabilities. The programme also announced a new bursary initiative, the "ASEAN-Maybank Scholarship" for academically outstanding students to further their studies in another ASEAN Member State. Social media outreach to promote the 54<sup>th</sup> ASEAN anniversary reached 180,000 netizens and this figure keeps increasing.

### MEDIA ENGAGEMENT

To garner the media's support in covering ASEAN and raising awareness about ASEAN's policies and actions, ASEC continued to engage with regional media through its annual flagship media event, the ASEAN Media Forum (AMF). The 5<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Media Forum was successfully convened in mid-August 2021 and it brought together over 30 media leaders from around the region. The event touched on 'the importance of multilateralism in a diverse ASEAN' and 'ASEAN's balancing acts between major powers in the region'. The forum provided a credible platform for the region's media leaders to engage with key ASEAN policymakers, members of academia and the private sector, while significantly enhancing coverage on how ASEAN's work impacts the lives of its citizens. After two years of holding the AMF online due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 6<sup>th</sup> AMF aims to take place in person in Cambodia in second half of 2022.

### ENTITIES ENGAGEMENT - 5<sup>TH</sup> FORUM OF ENTITIES ASSOCIATED WITH ASEAN

ASEC hosted the 5<sup>th</sup> Forum of Entities Associated with ASEAN online, bringing together about 100 participants representing ASEAN parliamentarians, members of the judiciary, youth, civil societies, women and business and professional associations. The forum aimed to enhance collaboration between entities and ASEC, ASEAN sectoral bodies, ASEAN-related centres and participants. The event highlight was the launch of the Entities Digital Platform. Embedded in the ASEAN website, the platform allows accredited entities to directly engage with one another, to post event announcements and to invite applications. It also aims to streamline the accreditation process.

### ACADEMIA ENGAGEMENT - 3<sup>RD</sup> ASEAN STUDIES DIALOGUE (ASD)

Considering the importance of facilitating ASEAN's engagement with academia and the positive feedback given by representatives of think-tanks and ASEAN study centres following the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> ASEAN Studies Dialogue (ASD), the 3<sup>rd</sup> ASD is scheduled to be held in the last quarter of 2022. The dialogue will discuss cooperation between the think-tanks and ASEAN study centres across the region. This initiative may include a joint publication of articles regarding ASEAN and/or a joint event discussing matters related to the region.

### DIGITAL/SOCIAL MEDIA

As the region collectively recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic, ASEC continues to intensify and solidify its social media efforts to convey key messages – heightening the ASEAN identity to stay engaged with its online audiences and followers. There are currently 1.25 million subscribers to all

of ASEC's social media platforms, an increase of about 5% from 2021. The recently launched podcasts about ASEAN and its influencers on various platforms have also started to gain traction. Meanwhile, a revamped ASEAN website was launched on 8 August 2021 in celebration of ASEAN's 54<sup>th</sup> anniversary and this overhaul aims to enhance the user experience. The number of visitors to the improved ASEAN website went up by 20%, from 10 million in 2021 to more than 12 million in 2022.

### OUTREACH

In response to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, ASEC launched the digital outreach programme in 2021 to resume engagement with students and other stakeholders wishing to learn about ASEAN and its work. As of May 2022, over 750 students across the region have taken part in the digital outreach programme and the ASEC digital tour. To maximize the capacity of the programme, ASEC co-hosted the virtual exhibition of the 4<sup>th</sup> ASEAN-EU Cooperation and Scholarship Day to reach out to a greater number of students across the region.

Leveraging on ASEC's ASEAN Gallery being an effective vehicle in promoting ASEAN arts and culture and thus the ASEAN identity, ASEC commemorated the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ASEAN Gallery in 2021 by launching *August Gathering*, a coffee table book. The book features artworks from renowned artists ASEAN Member States, dialogue partners and business communities, displayed in the ASEC building.

Riding on the success of the inaugural ASEAN Artists Residency Programme (AARP), the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition was held in February 2022 in cooperation with the Maybank Foundation – ASEAN's newly accredited entity and the Sharjah Art Foundation. Two young talented artists from Malaysia and Philippines were

selected to carry out their residency in the United Arab Emirates in conjunction with World Expo 2020 hosted by Dubai. Their artworks created during the residency will be displayed at the ASEAN Gallery. AARP reaffirmed ASEAN's commitment in nurturing the region's young and upcoming artists by providing them with the opportunity to undertake cultural exchanges, as well as studio and exhibition spaces for their creativity to flourish.

### ASEAN PRIZE

Since its launch in 2018, the ASEAN Prize continues to honour inspiring achievements and outstanding contributions of ASEAN citizens and organisations that are instrumental in advancing ASEAN community building efforts. At the 54<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Ministerial Meeting in August 2021, the ASEAN Studies Centre under the ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute of Singapore was officially bestowed as the third ASEAN Prize Recipient, making it the first ASEAN organisation to receive the prize. Into its fifth year, the ASEAN Prize continues to enhance ASEAN awareness and forge an ASEAN identity through a wide range of digital outreach programmes, such as social media promotion, a podcast series and webinars.



### ASEC'S PARTICIPATION IN THE WORLD EXPO

ASEC participated in the World Expo 2020 Dubai from 1 October 2021 to 31 March 2022. ASEC's presence at the Expo, through the ASEAN Pavilion, was an initiative to promote regional unity, diversity and the rich inclusive cultures of ASEAN to a global audience. It also showcased how ASEAN cooperation improves the lives of its citizens and beyond. Within six months, the ASEAN Pavilion received over 300,000 international visitors whose enthusiastic participation in the pavilion's activities illustrated that ASEAN is making steady steps in building its brand on the international stage.



ASEAN Secretariat's participation in the World Expo 2020 Dubai – an initiative to promote regional unity, diversity and rich cultures of ASEAN to a global audience.



# ASEAN COOPERATION PROJECTS AND PROGRAMMES



As of April 2022, the cumulative value of submitted ASEAN cooperation projects and programmes since 2009 amounted to USD1,694,599,04. Of this figure, USD1,621,805,987 has been utilised – on-going, implemented, completed – and USD72,868,413 is currently being processed.

The utilised portion constitutes 1,245 projects (USD785,464,043.38) and 116 programmes (USD 836,341,943). In terms of its contribution to the ASEAN community pillars:

- 45.73% (USD 741,589,946) was channelled to ASCC which supported education and youth exchange programmes, culture, disaster management, COVID-19 related initiatives, labour migration, environment, climate change, health and capacity development programmes;
- 38.37% (USD 622,319,184) was allocated to AEC, of which a significant proportion supported

initiatives on science and technology, the transport sector, MSME, trade, information and communication technology, cybersecurity, forest, food and agriculture, tourism and energy;

- 9.66% (USD 156,597,112) went to APSC which was used mainly for development cooperation programmes, victim assistance programmes, cyber capacity development, combating crimes and human rights;
- 0.82% (USD 13,254,689) was allocated to IAI/NDG. This finance was used primarily to support education programmes in CLMV, attachment programmes for CLMV officers, as well as capacity building programmes for CLMV on electronic commerce, science and technology and MSME;
- and 5.43% (USD 88,045,055) was allocated to General and Cross Pillar projects which supported ASEAN promotional activities, connectivity, ASEAN project development training events and strengthening of the ASEAN Secretariat.

The implementation of the above-mentioned projects was made possible through financial and technical support extended by ASEAN Dialogue Partners such as Japan, the Republic of Korea, India, China, Canada, Russia and New Zealand, as well as sectoral dialogue partners, including Norway, Pakistan, Switzerland, Turkey, Chile and Italy.

For 2021, 61 ASEAN cooperation projects were approved for implementation, implemented and or completed with a total utilized value of USD50,436,426.58 which contributed mostly to ASCC at 67.42% (USD 34,004,281.69) and supported education and youth-related initiatives such as the ASEAN-China Young Leaders Scholarship and JENESYS programmes; empowering women as part of Advancing Women Peace and Security in ASEAN; disaster management and public health including DELSA Phase III, ARCH Phase II and design and preparation for the ASEAN Centre for Public Health Emergencies and Emerging Diseases; environment and culture.

and top-up projects were approved for implementation with a total allocation of USD39,257,795.23.

Under ASEAN-US cooperation, The ASEAN Policy Implementation (API) project to provide technical assistance among AMS to accelerate the implementation of key ASEAN initiatives and the Capacity Building of Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Import Maximum Residue Limit (MRL) Guideline for Pesticides in ASEAN were approved.

Likewise, the follow-up projects of Sustainable Design of Urban Mobility in Middle-sized Metropolitan Regions in ASEAN (SMMR) Phase II; a new project Promoting Maritime Peace and Security in Southeast Asia; the follow-up project of Reduce, Reuse, Recycle to Protect the Marine Environment and Coral Reefs (3RproMar); the follow-up project of the Promotion of Sustainable Agricultural Value Chains in ASEAN (ASEAN AgriTrade); and a new project, the ASEAN Municipal Solid Waste Management Enhancement (AMUSE) were approved under ASEAN-Germany cooperation.

A figure of 31.84% (USD16,059,911.10) was allocated to AEC to support initiatives on food and agriculture, including the Capacity Building on Enhancing Resilience to Forest Fire and Local Livelihood and Market Linkages; MSME, and cybersecurity. A figure of 0.52% (USD 264,311.69) was allocated to APSC which supported development cooperation programmes; and 0.21% (USD107,922.10) went to IAI/NDG which supported a capacity building programme for skilled birth attendants in the CLMV countries (Cambodia, Lao DPR, Myanmar and Viet Nam).

On the other hand, implementation of some programmes was supported by dialogue partners such as the EU, Australia, Australia-New Zealand and the USA, as well as development partner Germany. In 2021, seven new

The following programmes have extended implementation periods: 1) Biodiversity Conservation and Management of Protected Areas in ASEAN (ASEAN-EU); 2) Integrated Programme in Enhancing the Capacity of AHA Centre and ASEAN Emergency Response Mechanisms (ASEAN-EU); 3) Sustainable Use of Peatland and Haze Mitigation in ASEAN (SUPA) (ASEAN-EU and ASEAN-Germany); 4) Promotion of Competitiveness within the Framework of the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (COMPETE) (ASEAN-Germany); 5) AANZFTA Economic Support Programme (AECSP); and, 6) ASEAN-Australia Development Cooperation Programme Phase II (ASEAN-Australia). AADCP II was extended to implement ongoing projects as well as to support measures

### CONTRIBUTION OF ASEAN PROJECTS AND PROGRAMMES BY PILLAR (2009-APRIL 2022)





under the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework (ACRF) and support for the ASEAN Centre for Public Health Emergencies and Emerging Diseases (ACPHEED).

On-going programmes, such as Enhanced Regional EU-ASEAN Dialogue Instrument (E-READI); ASEAN Regional Integration Support by the EU (ARISE Plus); ASEAN-USAID Inclusive Growth in ASEAN through Innovation, Trade, and E-Commerce (IGNITE); and ASEAN-USAID Partnership for Regional Optimization with the Political-Security and Socio-Cultural Communities (PROSPECT) continue to support projects and provide technical assistance in support of the implementation of plan of actions with formal partners and the ASEAN Community Blueprint 2025.

#### **STRENGTHENING THE ASEAN PROJECT MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK**

Full implementation of Project Management Framework (PMF) documents commenced on 1 October 2021 following the approval of the CPR on 9 February 2021 and a transition period of six months from April to September 2021. *The ASEAN Cooperation Projects Design and Management Manual* and the updated ASEAN Cooperation project proposal and reporting templates are now available at the ASEAN website.

As part of strengthening the ASEAN PMF, particularly on monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of ASEAN Cooperation Projects, support has been sought from the EU's ARISE Plus Grant for the recruitment of a dedicated technical specialist to assist PCPMD in developing policies, systems and procedures on M&E.

The selected expert has joined PCPMD in June 2022. Complementing the EU assistance on M&E, USAID has offered

its support to enhance capacities of PCPMD and other relevant ASEC staff through the conduct of customized trainings on M&E. These trainings will be informed by a needs and gaps analysis, which is currently ongoing. The strengthening of the systems and procedures on the one hand and the continuous development of capacities on the other are expected to significantly improve the implementation of the ASEAN PMF.

Regarding the ASEAN Project Proposal Management System, PCPMD is further enhancing the system's functionalities and processing the migration of project data from 2009-2017 into the system through the support of the EU ARISE Plus Grant. The process was completed in April 2022.

#### **IAI PROJECT PROPOSAL WRITING COURSE FOR CLMV**

Singapore's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, supported by the Republic Polytechnic of Singapore and the ASEAN Secretariat (ASEC), organised a series of training events on Project Proposal Writing for officials in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Viet Nam as a follow up to the successful first training series in 2020.



The second series of training kicked-off from September 2021 to February 2022. Officials and experts from various ministries, institutions, and universities attended the events with the aim to enhance participants' knowledge and understanding on the development and management of ASEAN Cooperation Projects.

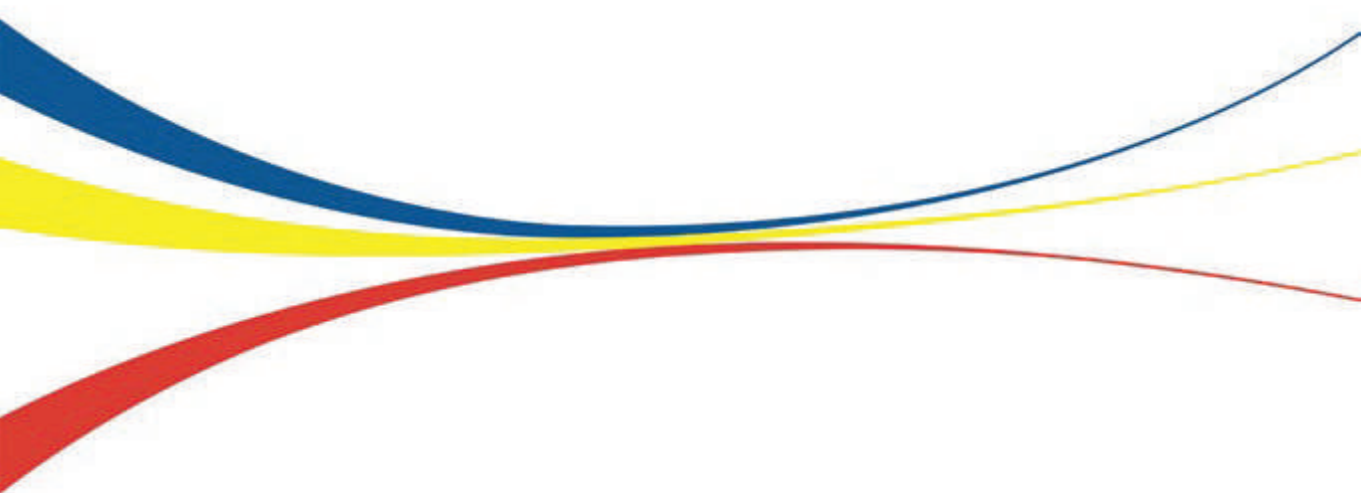
During the two-week training, participants were engaged in various exercises and group work pertaining to general project management and proposal writing, as well as the ASEAN project cycle covering project proposal development, appraisal and approval processes, implementation and monitoring and completion and reporting.

The first part of the training was facilitated by the Republic Polytechnic, while ASEC, represented by the

Programme Cooperation and Project Management Division, facilitated the second part of the training with a focus on ASEAN Cooperation Projects. To enrich participants' perspective, ASEC invited the JAIF Management Team to share their experiences on project proposal development and monitoring and evaluation from an ASEAN partner's perspective.

The Finance and Budget Division of ASEC was also invited to share the project budget formulation and project fund disbursements, as well as financial reporting. By the end of each training session, participants developed regional project proposals in various areas under ASEAN Community Blueprints. Upon completion, each participant received a joint certificate issued by Singapore's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the ASEAN Secretariat.





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