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# ASEAN Connectivity through Trade and Investment

## *Trade and Investment Facilitation*



Photo Credit: Paul Kent, NathanInc.

*“Given the challenges of economic globalization, ASEAN should continue its efforts to remove bottlenecks to growth, improve infrastructure connectivity, and create an environment conducive for cross-border trade in goods, services, and investment to thrive.”*

**H.E. Dr. Lim Hong Hin, Deputy Secretary-General of ASEAN for the ASEAN Economic Community**

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The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Connectivity through Trade and Investment is a five-year project of the United States Agency for International Development and the Department of State to increase U.S. economic engagement and cooperation with ASEAN countries. Asia is an increasingly inter-connected region and with the launch of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), the U.S. Government has aligned its development assistance priorities in support of regional integration.

Trade between the United States and ASEAN is estimated at \$200 billion. The project encourages ASEAN to adopt free, transparent, sustainable and inclusive trade practices as it moves toward economic integration. This includes technical support for trade and investment facilitation.

The project supports the ASEAN-U.S. Trade and Investment Framework Arrangement and the U.S.-ASEAN Enhanced Economic Engagement initiative. Focus areas include trade facilitation, investment, services and trade and environment protection.

### TRADE AND INVESTMENT FACILITATION

Trade and investment facilitation benefits ASEAN member states and the United States to broaden market access, improve product quality and consumer choice, and exchange information on good regulatory practices. Key sectors of engagement with ASEAN include consumer health and safety and environmental protection in areas such as building design and construction to improve energy efficiency and improving trade of medical devices and technology in the region. Assistance to ASEAN is enhanced through dialogue between the International Trade Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce and the ASEAN Consultative Committee on Standards and Quality.

The project supports implementing an ASEAN system for self-certification of origin, which will allow traders to certify the origin of their goods, simplifying and lowering the cost of trade. In addition, the project helps establish national trade repositories to increase transparency in trade policies in line with the World Trade Organization's Trade Facilitation Agreement.

In implementing all of these activities, the project encourages the less-developed ASEAN member states to implement trade and investment measures as part of the ASEAN Economic Community and help narrow the development gap.