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INCREASING ASEAN MEMBER STATES CAPACITY TO STRENGTHEN REGIONAL ECONOMIC INTEGRATION THROUGH ASEAN POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) plays a vital role in setting shared high-level goals and standards that not only stimulate and guide national reform efforts, but also encourage regional integration and cohesion. However, implementation at the national level varies from issue to issue and state to state. To mitigate this, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) partners with ASEAN, through the ASEAN Policy Implementation (API) project, to accelerate implementation of key ASEAN policy agreements at the national level in order to advance economic prosperity and rules-based governance in the Indo-Pacific region.

OUR WORK

USAID, through the API project, works toward:

- Identifying concrete needs and opportunities to advance the implementation of targeted ASEAN policies at the national level.
- Providing technical assistance to ASEAN Member States to strengthen the implementation of targeted ASEAN Policies.

API works in collaboration with other USAID projects including Inclusive Growth in ASEAN through Innovation, Trade and E-Commerce (IGNITE) and Partnership for Regional Optimization within the Political-Security and Socio-Cultural Communities (PROSPECT) to achieve common outcomes and shared goals in the region.

USAID ASEAN POLICY IMPLEMENTATION (API) PHASE I & 2

USAID, through the ASEAN Policy Implementation (API) project is delivered in two phases. Phase I supports ASEAN Member States' implementation of ASEAN policies, under the ASEAN Economic Community, through research analysis and technical assistance provided at the national level to accelerate the implementation of key ASEAN initiatives that promote a free, open, and prosperous region. Phase 2 will build upon these efforts to address implementation of ASEAN priorities within all three ASEAN Communities (Political-Security, Economic, and Socio-Cultural). API Phase I works closely with USAID projects currently working at the regional level in ASEAN to build upon national level implementation through research and technical assistance in the following targeted areas.

OPTIMIZING ASEAN MEMBER STATES OPERATIONS OF THE ASEAN SINGLE WINDOW (ASW)

USAID, through API, provides technical support to assist specific ASEAN Member States with their National Single Windows. This action will improve customs compliance and increase transparency in trade transactions, thereby reducing opportunities for corruption while increasing incentives for smaller firms to participate competitively in trade. This will ensure efficient, reliable, and secure automated customs systems for trade across ASEAN, under the ASW platform, which reduces border clearance times, boosts clearance reliability, and helps ensure that trade regulations are administered equitably.

STRENGTHENING NATIONAL LAWS THROUGH ALIGNMENT WITH THE ASEAN FRAMEWORK ON DIGITAL DATA GOVERNANCE

An optimal, physical and institutional infrastructure must be in place to boost digital transformation in the ASEAN region. Under this framework, USAID, through the API project, provides ASEAN Member States with assistance in advancing ASEAN endorsed commitments on digital data governance at the national level. This includes sharing best practices and policies in areas such as cybersecurity, data protection and privacy, and data localization. Implementing an ASEAN endorsed framework can further the alignment of national laws across ASEAN and strengthens the data ecosystem that underpins national level capacities in the era of Industrial Revolution 4.0.

SUPPORTING IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ASEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY BLUEPRINT 2025 AND ITS CONSOLIDATED STRATEGIC ACTION PLANS

In an effort to assist ASEAN with guiding Member States on over 3500 potential activities to advance the ASEAN Community Blueprint 2025 strategic action plans, USAID, through the API project, investigates, maps, and analyzes regional trends to bring awareness on a wide range of economic development priorities. This research will summarize emerging needs and interests to better hone the national level development and advancement of newer ASEAN standards while creating greater shared priorities and knowledge sharing across the ASEAN region. Furthermore, USAID through API, will work closely with the ASEAN Integration and Monitoring Directorate at the ASEAN Secretariat to identify complementary areas to provide support and assistance. The latest ASEAN Integration Report 2019 highlighted the urgency of ASEAN Economic Community commitments to be met and effectively implemented in a timely manner at the national level. Only 17.7% of the total 652 action lines in the 2025 strategic plans are currently fulfilled. These complementary areas will include analyzing new ASEAN agreements, outcomes of ASEAN meetings, the progress of implementation of ASEAN policy agreements at the Member State level.

PROJECTED RESULTS AND IMPACTS

- Evidence-based research to guide work plan development to advance the ASEAN Single Window trade platform and digital data governance initiatives in line with ASEAN policy
- Increased exchange of certificates on the ASEAN Single Window trade platform due to capacity building activities for relevant personnel as well as international standards being adopted at the national level under the ASEAN Framework on Digital Data Governance
- Strengthened capacity of ASEAN Member States to advance regional economic integration

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