



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



PARTNERING WITH THE ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS (ASEAN)

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) partners with ASEAN to promote equitable economic growth and reduce trans-boundary threats – such as trafficking in persons, global climate change and illegal trade of wildlife all requiring concerted cross-border and international efforts. Through this strategic partnership with ASEAN, the United States promotes prosperity and security through economic inclusion and sound governance practices.

OUR WORK

USAID partners with ASEAN in promoting unity, consensus-building, and solidarity in Southeast Asia. This long-term cooperation elevates sustainable and inclusive economic growth, strengthens democratic institutions with rules-based systems, and improves natural resource management to support a more peaceful, prosperous, and secure Indo-Pacific. USAID works collaboratively with ASEAN to bolster its credibility, coordination, and institutional capacity to create policies and frameworks that implement ASEAN endorsed commitments. USAID has development assistance missions in seven out of ten ASEAN member states to close the development gap by boosting ASEAN member states' initiatives to successfully implement ASEAN endorsed agreements at the national level.

Combating Trafficking in Persons: Traffickers are often violent and linked to international criminal networks that take advantage of weak laws, lack of law enforcement, porous borders and corrupt officials. USAID works with ASEAN transnational crime and human rights officials to implement regional guidelines for protecting and serving trafficked persons. With private sector partners, USAID also strives to reduce human trafficking in targeted supply chains. A Practitioners' Model Implementation Toolkit, translated in six ASEAN languages (Khmer, Indonesian, Lao, Myanmar, Thai and Vietnamese), serves as a basis for prioritizing needs and developing initial tailored national-level capacity building initiatives across ASEAN States.

Advancing Economic Integration: USAID works towards advancing the ASEAN Single Window for trade facilitation, a mechanism of the ASEAN Economic Community for speeding clearance procedures and reducing costs for traders. Initial negotiations with ASEAN on an agreement to simplify the electronic exchange of trade documents and data between ASEAN and the U.S. Automated Commercial Environment mark the next phase of this long-term collaborative effort. Linking the ASEAN Single Window and Automated Commercial Environment will reduce trade costs and will increase the US-ASEAN total trade of roughly \$270 billion to a much greater value.

Combating Illegal Fishing: USAID works with the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center and the ASEAN Working Group on Fisheries to develop an electronic catch documentation and traceability system. This will allow the tracking of high risk illegally traded or mislabeled species and helps suppliers meet EU and U.S. market access requirements for seafood traceability. USAID also undertakes regional research initiatives to identify and assess opportunities and mechanisms through which ASEAN can better address human trafficking and forced labor in the region's fishing industry.

Digital Connectivity and Inclusivity: All around the world, governments, the private sector and individuals understand that the digital economy is the future. Southeast Asia has the potential to become one of the world's top five digital economies. Its digital market has expanded threefold in the past three years and represents 7 percent of ASEAN's US \$2.8 trillion GDP. USAID supports ASEAN's efforts to enhance regional internet connectivity and accessibility while adopting approaches that strengthen cybersecurity and digital finance.

Gender Mainstreaming: USAID collaborates with a coalition of stakeholders to strengthen institutional mechanisms that enhance gender responsive policies and programs along with promote the role of women in peacebuilding and conflict resolution across ASEAN. USAID facilitates gender equality training opportunities to advance the role of women in initiatives within the ASEAN Economic Community. It also strengthens the capacity of female entrepreneurs through the ASEAN Women CEO Summit to advance financial technology access and availability.

Strengthening Disaster Risk Reduction and Management: Natural disasters are devastating and can lead to local, national, and regional instability. USAID supports ASEAN's "One ASEAN, One Response" initiative to mobilize a rapid ASEAN response to natural disasters. USAID also supported the installation of a state-of-the-art all-hazard disaster monitoring and response system at the ASEAN Coordinating Center for Humanitarian Assistance.

Combating Trafficking in Wildlife: Poaching and illegal trade in wildlife and wildlife products form one of the largest black markets known to finance dangerous criminal activity that can harm local ASEAN communities. USAID partnered with ASEAN to develop the endorsed ASEAN Guidelines for Detecting and Preventing Wildlife trafficking which reaffirm ASEAN's commitment to wildlife crime prevention and detection cooperation. The Guidelines highlight principles for inter-country data sharing, joint-operation mechanisms, and policy making collaboration.

Promoting Science, Technology and Innovation: USAID collaborates with ASEAN to further institutionalize science-based, data-driven decision making and raise awareness about the role of data and research in policy making. Annual USAID assisted activities such as the Science and Technology Policy Fellows program, U.S.-ASEAN Science Prize for Women, and youth innovation initiatives advance these efforts.

Elevating Youth Engagement: USAID partners with ASEAN in raising youth awareness to strengthen a shared ASEAN identity. Regional programs that promote entrepreneur innovation, leadership, diplomacy, and public speaking skills, challenge youth to take action with pressing issues facing the region and find solutions that foster positive change in their communities while championing good governance and developing economic growth.

Promoting Renewable Energy: Over the next 25 years, demand for electricity will double in the ASEAN region. USAID collaborates with the ASEAN Centre for Energy and the US-ASEAN Business Council to develop theoretical and practical guidance for the energy sector and provides recommendations for how ASEAN can advance the process of digitalization of energy. This will lay the foundation needed to mobilize private sector investment for grid-connected renewable energy.

Bolstering Good Governance and the Rule of Law: ASEAN's institutions are the foundation of continued regional integration. USAID is a reliable partner in promoting ASEAN's capacity in resolving regional and global challenges as well as advancing an effective, rules-based architecture for cooperation among ASEAN member states to uphold human dignity and the rule of law.

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