

Background on EU-ASEAN Development Cooperation

The pursuit of the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** and the **EU-Asia Connectivity Strategy** are key guiding principles of the EU-ASEAN partnership. EU development cooperation initiatives span across the three ASEAN pillars outlined below, and address a wide spectrum of issues, including economic integration, mobility in higher education, sustainable agriculture, climate resilience and disaster management.

In addition, the cross-cutting **Enhanced Regional EU-ASEAN Dialogue Instrument (E-READI)** facilitates policy dialogue in areas of joint interest, including trade and economic development, the environment and climate change, energy, fisheries, human rights, and science and research.

1. Political cooperation

- As a founding member of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), the EU is committed to increasing its cooperation with ASEAN on political and security issues. The unprecedented number of high-level visits by EU officials to Southeast Asia in 2018 reflects the shared goal to increase regional security and stability within ASEAN.
- EU engagement in the region continues to expand through a range of dialogue events and other initiatives, which also extend to non-traditional security areas.
- The **EU-ASEAN Migration and Border Management Programme II (EA-MBMP II)** (completed in 2018) provided capacity-building support to ASEAN Member States, to boost their efforts in preventing and mitigating transnational crime, and strengthening border control and law enforcement in the region.

2. Economic cooperation

- The **Enhanced ASEAN Regional Integration Support from the EU (ARISE Plus)** follows a unique, two-pronged approach combining a regional programme with bilateral support measures in individual ASEAN Member States, pursuing the ultimate objective of accelerating regional economic integration. The programme works towards improving trade-related regulatory and policy frameworks, intellectual property rights, standards, customs and transport, as well as civil aviation.
- The **ASEAN Farmers' Organisations Support Programme (AFOSP)** is a key EU-ASEAN initiative targeted at improving livelihoods and food security for smallholder farmers in ASEAN. To date, the programme has reached 14 million farmers through supporting a total of 26 national and 1200 sub-national farmer organisations.

3. Socio-cultural cooperation

- The **European Union Support to Higher Education in the ASEAN Region (EU SHARE)** programme is facilitating the increased regional mobility of ASEAN students, and aims to raise the quality of university education in the region. The programme also works to harmonise higher education frameworks in ASEAN through the mutual recognition of qualifications and the creation of a regional credit transfer system.
- The **Safe and Fair** programme contributes to improving labour conditions for migrant women in Southeast Asia, and is the first initiative in Asia under the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls.
- Implemented by the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) in the Philippines, the **Biodiversity Conservation and Management of Protected Areas in ASEAN (BCAMP)** programme supports the preservation of the region's biological diversity, and the effective management of protected areas in Southeast Asia, including the ASEAN Heritage Parks.
- The **Sustainable Use of Peatland and Haze Mitigation in ASEAN (SUPA)** programme champions responsible land use and forestry, working towards mitigating carbon emissions from carbon-rich peatland areas, and the conservation of peatland ecosystems.

- The forthcoming **Integrated Programme in Enhancing the Capacity of AHA Centre and ASEAN Emergency Response Mechanisms (EU Support to AHA Centre)** is designed to increase the region's resilience, and mitigate the human, economic, social and environmental costs of natural disasters.