



10-year program (2018-2028)
\$A80 million

SUPPORTING ASEAN MEMBER STATES TO STRENGTHEN JUSTICE RESPONSES TO HUMAN TRAFFICKING, WHILE ADVANCING THE RIGHTS AND PROTECTION OF VICTIMS.

Trafficking in persons has no borders and occurs in many different sectors - its negative impacts are spread across the ASEAN region.

Economic downturn across the ASEAN region as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and other factors, coupled with an increase in online activity, has placed more people at risk of being recruited into false or misleading employment opportunities.

Citizens of ASEAN countries are finding themselves in exploitative conditions that they cannot escape from and the dynamics between countries of origin and countries of destination are changing.

In response to these emerging trends and ongoing vulnerabilities to trafficking in persons, ASEAN-ACT works with government and non-government organisations in the ASEAN region to increase cooperation, strengthen capacity, facilitate dialogue between policymakers and practitioners, and identify innovative ways to prevent and address trafficking in persons.

The partnership supports ASEAN member states to implement and report on their obligations under the ASEAN Convention against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (ACTIP).

ASEAN-ACT has national-level programming in Cambodia, Lao PDR, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam. We are establishing programming in Indonesia, and our projects are currently on hold in Myanmar.

ASEAN-ACT's Regional Program Steering Committee (RPSC) is the regional governance mechanism of the program, with members drawn from all 10 ASEAN member states and the ASEAN Secretariat.

The RPSC is co-chaired by the Lead Shepherd on Trafficking in Persons from the ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC) and a senior Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) representative.





36

multi-year national projects in 6 countries



7

regional projects supporting ASEAN's ACTIP implementation



3

projects with a principal focus on victim rights and on gender equality, disability and social inclusion



5

projects focusing on inclusive public policy

ASEAN-ACT works through 3 interrelated pathways:

Enhancing regional-level capacity

We support and partner with the Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC) and other ASEAN bodies to strengthen victim-sensitive planning, monitoring and reporting processes.

Highlights include:

- support to development of Bohol Work Plan 2.0 which was approved in principle by SOMTC in February 2023.
- technical and financial support to drafting of 3 ASEAN declarations, adopted by ASEAN Leaders in May 2023.
- 2 training manuals launched - project with ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR).
- policy brief on shelter practices, ASEAN Do No Harm guide and training for frontliners launched as part of multi-year project with the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC).

Enhancing national-level capacity

We work with national partners to strengthen their capacity to implement the ACTIP, in particular those that uphold victim rights and advance gender equality, disability and social inclusion.

Highlights include:

- scoping study finalised to support the establishment of Thailand's Counter-Trafficking in Persons Centre of Excellence.
- development and review of 3 key policies in the Philippines including the 5-year national strategic TIP plan launched in April 2023, as part of multi-year project with Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking.
- analysis of trafficking in persons decisions made by Indonesian courts from 2019-2021 presented to Indonesian Supreme Court's Women and Children Working Group.

Developing inclusive public policy and dialogue

We facilitate dialogue and cooperation between government, civil society and the private sector to support improvements in counter-trafficking policies and practices.

Highlights include:

- 4 country reports, 3 thematic briefs completed on labour trafficking and vulnerabilities of migrant workers to trafficking - research with the Overseas Development Institute (ODI).
- conducted study with Cambodian NGO on trafficking in persons into online scam call centres and forced labour among foreigners in Cambodia.
- study with Thai NGO completed on migrant workers in Special Economic Zones in Thailand to assess the vulnerability of workers to abuse and exploitation.



JUSTICE OUTCOMES

ASEAN-ACT facilitates justice sector cooperation and provides technical support to strengthen justice responses to trafficking in persons in the region.

Recent achievements include:

- Strengthening justice sector agencies' responses to counter human trafficking, including training 1,393 state and non-state CTIP actors received training (56% women) between January - June 2023.
- Launched Regional Prosecutors Dialogue initiative, bringing prosecutors and policymakers from ASEAN Member States together for the first time with a dedicated focus on trafficking in persons cases.
- Supported Thai judges with development of and national roll-out of judicial handbook on adjudication of trafficking in persons cases with a focus on trauma-informed and victim-centred approaches.

VICTIM RIGHTS, AND GENDER EQUALITY, DISABILITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION OUTCOMES

ASEAN-ACT works with partners to support groups most vulnerable to trafficking and reduce barriers to accessing justice, protection and support.

Recent achievements include:

- Facilitated workshops for judges and prosecutors, and supporting government agencies with the inclusion of gender equality, disability and victim rights in law, policy and practice.
- Supported Lao PDR People's Supreme Court to develop victim sensitive court guideline - the first ASEAN Member State to develop official guidance on the rights and protection of trafficked victims in court proceedings.
- Ongoing consultations to inform study by La Trobe University on the nexus between disability and trafficking in persons.

RESEARCH

ASEAN-ACT conducts research and studies that contribute to evidence, specific to the ASEAN region.

A study with Rapid Asia to examine the extent to which the ACTIP has been implemented in 7 ASEAN Member States with a particular focus on victim rights, gender equality, disability and social inclusion was published in March 2023.

We supported research to document the experiences of trafficked fishers in accessing justice in the offshore fishing sector, published in June 2023.

Between January - June 2023, 2 webinars brought together international and regional experts to discuss counter-trafficking responses to forced marriage and identification of online scam victims.

PARTNERSHIPS

ASEAN-ACT recognises that effective counter trafficking responses require multi-sectoral, collaborative approaches.

We pursue partnerships with a broad range of regional and national actors, including organisations that directly support and advocate for the rights of trafficked victims and contribute valuable evidence to inform legal and policy reform.

Between January to June 2023, ASEAN-ACT continued 8 grants to organisations supporting victims' rights and empowerment, to enhance evidence base in the region and contribute to policy engagement within and amongst ASEAN Member States.

Legal Support for Children and Women (*Cambodia*)
Blas F. Ople Policy Center and Training Institute (*Philippines*)
Social Responsibility Law Office (*Thailand*)
Human Rights and Development Foundation (*Thailand*)
Labour Protection Network (*Thailand*)
Blue Dragon Children's Foundation (*Vietnam*)
Verite Southeast Asia (*regional*)
Migrant Forum in Asia (*regional*)



ASEAN-ACT supports projects in:



January - June 2023 highlights



CAMBODIA

- Trained 221 Cambodian government and non-government officials.
- Supported Ministry of Justice with 2 workshops: trafficking in persons for prosecutors, investigating judges and law enforcers, and a training of trainers for ASEAN skills program on trafficking in persons.
- Supported National Committee for Counter Trafficking (NCCT) in the launching of the 2022 trafficking in persons report.



INDONESIA

- Analysis of trafficking in persons decisions made by Indonesian courts from 2019-2021 presented to Indonesian Supreme Court's Women and Children Working Group.
- Supported consultation workshop to develop a monitoring and evaluation system for CTIP practitioners through multi-year ACWC project.



LAO PDR

- Trained 99 Lao government and non-government officials.
- Supported a workshop on individualised case management of trafficked victims for civil society and shelter staff in Champasak, Savannakhet, Bokeo and Luang Namtha provinces in May 2023.
- Collaborated with Department of Criminal Inspection and the Prosecutorial Research and Training Institute of the Office of the Supreme People's Prosecutor in developing training program for prosecutors.



PHILIPPINES

- Trained 452 Philippines government and non-government officials.
- Supported Supreme Court's Program Management Office in partnership with Governance in Justice (GOJUST) program on launch of Zamboanga City 'Justice Zone' in February 2023.
- Supported finalisation and launch of Philippines' 4th National Strategic Action Plan Against Trafficking Persons 2023-2027.



THAILAND

- Trained 304 Thai government and non-government officials.
- Supported Court of Justice to conduct 2 judicial roadshows to discuss Judicial Handbook on Adjudication of Trafficking in Persons cases.
- Partnered with United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in training prosecutors to support judges and prosecutors to address evidential issues in trafficking in persons cases.



VIETNAM

- Trained 200 Vietnamese government and non-government officials.
- Supported 119 diplomats and consular staff on victim support and protection through new partnership with Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- Supported online investigation and digital evidence training for provincial police officers in Southern province, with speakers from Australia, UK and Thailand.