

ASEAN-Australia Counter Trafficking Program

Supporting ASEAN and ASEAN Member States to strengthen responses to **trafficking in persons**, while advancing the rights of trafficked victims.

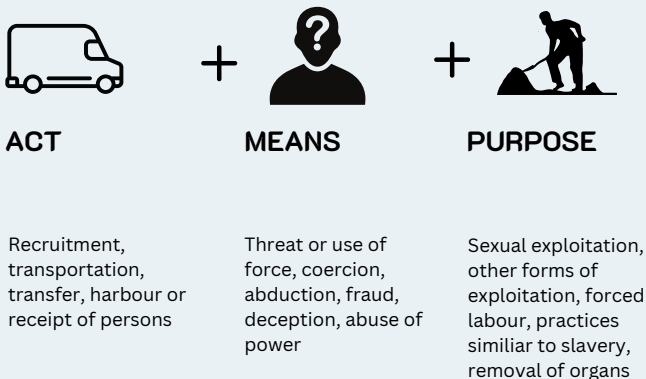
ASEAN-Australia Counter Trafficking is a 10-year program (2018-2028) funded by the Australian Government, supporting ASEAN and ASEAN Member States to implement the ASEAN Convention against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (ACTIP).

The program continues over 20 years of Australia's support to ASEAN to prevent and respond to trafficking in persons. National-level programming is currently implemented in Cambodia, Laos, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam.

Trafficking in persons in Southeast Asia

Trafficking in persons in Southeast Asia is a significant and persistent issue driven by factors such as poverty, lack of education, inequality, and economic disparities.

ASEAN has adopted the internationally agreed definition of trafficking in persons as outlined in the ACTIP:



* all 3 elements must be present for a situation of trafficking in adults. In cases of child trafficking 'means' is not required.

Southeast Asia is a source, transit and destination for trafficking, with victims exploited for forced labour, sexual exploitation, forced marriage, domestic servitude and forced criminality including into online scam centres.

ASEAN and ASEAN Member States are working together to respond to this complex and evolving crime.

Project areas

The ASEAN-Australia Counter Trafficking program has 4 key projects to respond to common challenges in countering trafficking in persons:



ENHANCING
COLLABORATION
WITHIN AND
ACROSS SECTORS



IMPROVING
TRANSPARENCY
AND
ACCOUNTABILITY



INSTITUTIONALISING
KNOWLEDGE
AND PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT



CULTIVATING
LEADERSHIP
AND
COORDINATION

Stakeholders



Working with and through ASEAN

The program supports ASEAN to implement ACTIP, working through the ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC) and relevant ASEAN Sectoral Bodies. Over the years, the ASEAN-Australia Counter Trafficking program has:

- Supported ASEAN to develop new declarations on: (1) the protection of migrant workers and family members in crisis situations, (2) the placement and protection of migrant fishers, (3) combating trafficking in persons caused by the abuse of technology (2023).
- Developed training and resources for frontliners handling trafficking cases with a focus on gender-sensitive and victim-centred approaches, by supporting the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC) (2023).
- Supported SOMTC with the development of the ASEAN Multi-Sectoral Work Plan Against Trafficking in Persons 2023 – 2028 (Bohol TIP Work Plan 2.0) and related monitoring and evaluation framework (2024).
- Facilitated the first judicial knowledge exchange between Indonesian and Philippines senior judges on victim-centred approaches led by Council of ASEAN Chief Justices (2024).

Program journey

PHASE 1

2018 2019 2020 2021 2022 2023

Strengthened capacity of government in detecting, investigating and prosecuting trafficking in persons cases. This included enhancing protection and support to victims of trafficking.

Generated new research to inform ASEAN policy including on the implementation of the non-punishment principle in ASEAN, child rights in the ASEAN justice, shelter practices in ASEAN, vulnerability of migrant workers to labour trafficking in the region.

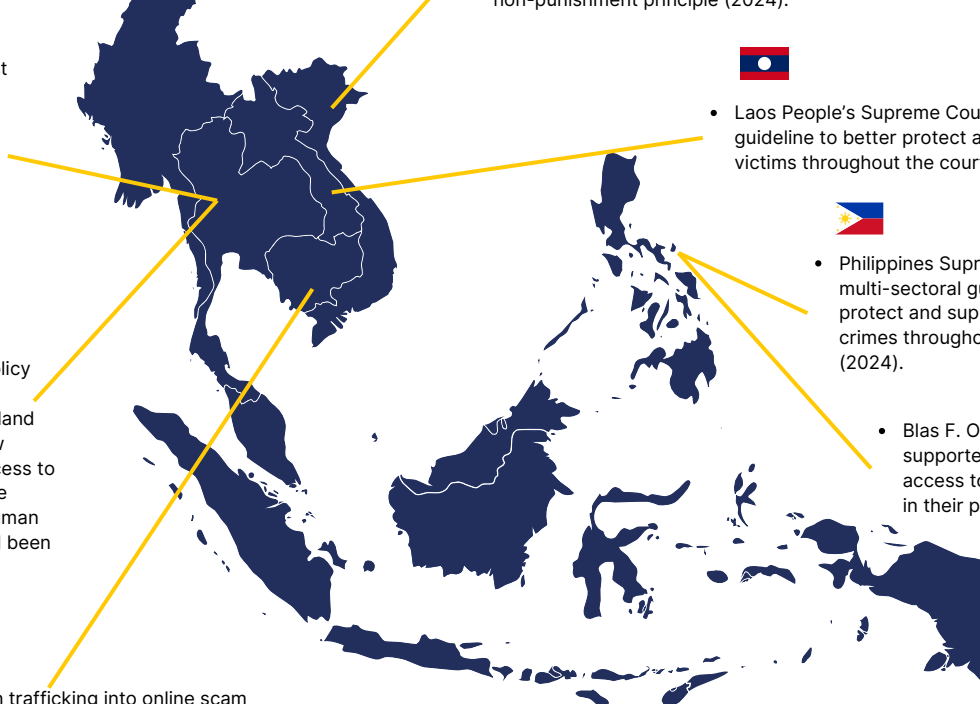
PHASE 2






2024 2025 2026 2027 2028

Continuing partnerships with ASEAN and ASEAN Member States to strengthen institutional capacity, including to increase collaboration, improve transparency and accountability, and embed sustainable knowledge exchange and professional development.

Supporting policy reforms to advocate responsible business conduct and bring public and private stakeholders together to protect and promote human rights.

Strengthening law, policy and practice to counter trafficking in persons




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 - Thailand established the first Centre of Excellence with a dedicated focus on building a cadre of government and non-government professionals equipped to counter trafficking and related crimes (2024).
 - Social Responsibility Law policy brief and consultation on compensation policy in Thailand resulted in a change to allow irregular migrants' equal access to compensation when they are victims of crimes such as human trafficking – access that had been previously denied (2023).
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 - Vietnam revised its trafficking in persons law to mandate stronger protection and enhanced support for victims, including provisions on the non-punishment principle (2024).
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 - Laos People's Supreme Court launched a judicial guideline to better protect and support trafficked victims throughout the court process (2023).
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 - Philippines Supreme Court launched a multi-sectoral guideline to better protect and support victims of serious crimes throughout the justice process (2024).
 - Blas F. Ople Policy Center supported Filipino migrants to have access to information and support in their pre-departure orientation.
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 - Research on human trafficking into online scam centres raised awareness and contributed to the evidence base for regional and national government responding to the issue (2024).

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