

2014

2024

Making a difference

Celebrating 10 years of the
OECD **Southeast Asia** Regional
Programme

Our story, in one word

On our 10th anniversary, we believe that connecting, supporting one another and sharing experiences makes a difference.



*If I would like to describe Indonesia's engagement with the OECD through the Southeast Asia Regional Programme in one word, it is **'super'***



Amalia Adininggar Widyasanti
Deputy Minister for Economic Affairs,
Ministry of National Development Planning
of Indonesia



*'two words: **exciting** and **challenging**'*

Sihesak Phuangketkeow

Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs of Thailand

*'**collaborative**'*

Alladin D Rillo

Former ASEAN Deputy Secretary-General
and ERIA's Senior Economic Advisor

*'**progressive**'*

Nguyen Minh Hang

Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Viet Nam



On our 10th anniversary,

Since its launch in 2014, the OECD Southeast Asia Regional Programme (SEARP) has supported economic growth and reform in Southeast Asia and created a platform to share good policy practices in a mutually beneficial way.

Our Programme also supports the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, ASEAN.

The Programme has paved the way for Indonesia and Thailand's requests

for OECD membership – both milestone achievements that will be transformational for the OECD's relationship with the region.

Looking ahead to the next ten years, the OECD Southeast Asia Regional Programme will work even more closely with the region's diverse countries, which face common challenges, such as attracting more quality investment, tackling climate change, and creating a truly integrated regional economy.

Connecting Southeast Asia and the OECD

The OECD and Southeast Asia – one of the world's most dynamic and diverse regions – have a long-standing relationship that has steadily developed since the late 1990s.

Building on two decades of engagement, the OECD Southeast Asia Regional Programme was inaugurated at the 2014 OECD Ministerial Council Meeting, chaired by Japan, to bring the relationship to a deeper and more strategic level.

The OECD Southeast Asia Regional Programme allows policymakers to exchange good policy practices, supports ASEAN regional integration, involves Southeast Asian countries in OECD bodies and instruments, and contributes to their domestic reform processes.

we believe that connecting,



Southeast Asian countries...

Are able to draw from the OECD's experience to carry out reforms, are invited to talk about global and regional challenges in a setting where all OECD countries come together, and can take part in shaping OECD's global standards.

The **OECD**, on the other hand...

Learns from the region's experiences, brings Southeast Asian policy priorities into OECD policy debates and gets an opportunity to increase its relevance in Southeast Asia and globally.



It's very clear... We want more countries from Southeast Asia to join the OECD because the Indo-Pacific region of which we're part is the most dynamic region in terms of the global economy



Sihasak Phuangketkeow

Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs of Thailand

supporting one another

Supporting ASEAN, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations

ASEAN's regional economic integration agenda has been at the heart of the OECD Southeast Asia Regional Programme since its inception in 2014.

For many years, the OECD has supported successive ASEAN Chairs in achieving their goals across diverse policy areas, including sustainable infrastructure, food security, SMEs, and the blue economy.

The OECD works with ASEAN and its bodies to deliver results on our common policy priorities, including with:

- the Coordinating Committee on MSMEs to deliver the ASEAN SME Policy Index and the annual ASEAN Inclusive Business Summit
- the Coordinating Committee on Services to measure barriers to trade in services with the OECD Services Trade Restrictiveness Index, and,
- the Coordinating Committee on Investment to inform the development of ASEAN Guidelines on Sustainable Investment.



*Working with the
OECD Southeast
Asia Regional
Programme has
enabled ASEAN
to engage more
effectively with
the OECD*



Alladin D Rillo

Former ASEAN Deputy Secretary-General
and ERIA's Senior Economic Advisor



Encouraging exchange

The Programme's structure and governance are designed to encourage the systematic exchange of experiences, which is indispensable for developing common solutions to regional and national challenges.

The OECD Southeast Asia Regional Programme is comprised of 13 work streams built on the work of OECD directorates and Southeast Asian bodies and dialogue processes:

- Tax Policy and Administration
- Good Regulatory Practice
- Investment Policy and Promotion
- Education and Skills
- Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs)
- Sustainable Infrastructure
- Competition
- Trade
- Innovation
- Gender
- Green Recovery
- Tourism
- Economic Outlook for Southeast Asia, China and India.

The Programme brings policymakers together through its Regional Policy Networks and draws on OECD standards and best practices to improve outcomes across the region.

Southeast Asian countries have drawn on our reports, analysis, and data to inform domestic and regional policy processes supported by regular capacity-building activities and technical exchanges.

These reports in turn also inform OECD policy makers about policy trends in the region.

Regular Ministerial Forums also provide a platform for high-level exchanges between OECD and Southeast Asian countries on the most pressing shared challenges.

Since its inception, the Programme has been governed by a Steering Group consisting of all OECD and ASEAN member countries and led by two co-chairs, one from each group.



makes a difference.

Making a difference: three examples

#1: ASEAN: Measuring the regulatory environment for services trade

Services make up almost half of the ASEAN region's economy. Since 2019, the OECD has been collaborating with the ASEAN Coordinating Committee on Services to develop the ASEAN Services Trade Restrictiveness Index, which improved the measurement of services trade regulations across four priority sectors: logistics, telecommunications, construction, and computer services. The ASEAN Services Trade Restrictiveness Index helps its member states drive economic recovery and empower a services-led growth model in the region.

#2: Viet Nam: Addressing international tax evasion

Between 2012 and 2024, the OECD, the World Bank Group, and the European Commission provided technical assistance to Viet Nam on complex international tax matters.

Thanks to this support, Viet Nam introduced new transfer pricing rules (Decree No. 20/2017) to combat profit-shifting practices in accordance with international standards. In the same year, Viet Nam joined the OECD/G20 Inclusive Framework on Base Erosion and Profit Shifting, and in 2020, the Global Forum on Transparency and Exchange of Information for Tax Purposes.

Finally, in 2023, it signed and ratified the Multilateral Convention on Mutual Administrative Assistance in Tax Matters, the most comprehensive multilateral instrument available for co-operation to tackle tax evasion and avoidance.

Did you know?

The OECD and ASEAN both work through member-driven committees to seek common solutions to economic and social policy issues.

Our wide range of common interests was recognised in the 2022 OECD-ASEAN Memorandum of Understanding and Implementation Plan, which set out over 35 priority areas of cooperation.

#3 Philippines: Making climate resilience matter in infrastructure planning

The OECD supports Southeast Asian countries in transitioning to energy, transport, and industry systems that are aligned with the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Under the Sustainable Infrastructure Programme in Asia, the OECD has worked with the Philippines to support the integration of decarbonisation and climate resilience into national economic and development planning.

The OECD advised how to ensure that the Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2023-2028 recognises climate resilience as a core element for the country's socioeconomic development.



The biggest challenge for Viet Nam lies in achieving rapid and sustainable development amidst a complex global context. To achieve our strategic goals for 2030 and 2045, we count on OECD and Southeast Asia Regional Programme's support



Nguyen Minh Hang

Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Viet Nam



Our story, at a glance

● 2007

The OECD made **Southeast Asia a strategic priority** "with a view to identifying countries for possible membership" - an approach OECD Members reaffirmed in subsequent years

● 2012

OECD-Indonesia Framework of Cooperation Agreement, later renewed in 2017 and 2022

● 2013

MoU with the Asian Development Bank (ADB), renewed in 2018 and 2024, and MoU with the UN Economic and Social Commission for the Asia-Pacific (UNESCAP), renewed in 2019



● 2014

Launch of the Southeast Asia Regional Programme

Japan and Indonesia were the first co-chairs, and an MoU was signed with the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA), subsequently renewed in 2017, 2020, and 2024



● 2018

First SEARP Ministerial Forum in Tokyo, with the handover of the co-chairmanship to Korea and Thailand, launch of the Thailand Country Programme Phase 1 and - in recognition of the Programme's evolution - a Bureau was established to provide strategic guidance and support to the co-chairs

MoU with the ASEAN+3
Macroeconomic Research Office
(AMRO) and MoU with Viet Nam

2021

Second Ministerial Forum in Seoul, with the handover of the co-chairmanship to Australia and Viet Nam, MoUs signed with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and Singapore, and **third Ministerial Forum in Hanoi**

2022

2023

OECD Strategic Framework for the Indo-Pacific adopted a key objective of *'welcoming more Indo-Pacific countries into the OECD's membership'*

Indonesia's request for OECD membership, **Fourth Ministerial Forum in Hanoi**, and Thailand Country Programme Phase 2

Thailand's request for OECD membership and **Council's decision to open accession discussions with Indonesia**

2024

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