



# 2020-21 ASEAN AND SOUTHEAST ASIA REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM PROGRESS REPORT

The *2020-21 ASEAN and Southeast Asia Development Program Progress Report* summarises progress for the reporting period **1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021** of implementation of the Australia – ASEAN and Southeast Asia COVID-19 Response Plan and program highlights.

*Our development program to ASEAN and Southeast Asia contributes to achieving the following Sustainable Development Goals.*



Program Budget	2020-21 Budget Estimate \$m*
Bilateral	0
Regional	38.4
Global	0
Other Government Departments	0
<b>Total ODA</b>	<b>38.4</b>

\*Actual expenditure expected to be available in December 2021/ January 2022.

## CONTEXT

A peaceful, inclusive, and resilient region is in Australia’s interests, and is also a priority for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) as reflected in ASEAN’s Outlook on the Indo-Pacific. Australia has long-standing investments in development cooperation to address shared regional challenges. As ASEAN’s oldest Dialogue Partner, **Australia’s cooperation with ASEAN continues to play an important role** in addressing the health and economic challenges brought on by COVID-19.

In Southeast Asia COVID-19 continues to present complex, transboundary development and economic challenges. The pandemic is testing the region’s gains in economic growth, poverty reduction, gender equality and political stability. **For most of 2020, Southeast Asia successfully contained the spread of COVID-19, but the more infectious Delta variant is now pushing fragile healthcare systems to the brink and suppressing economic growth.**

Achieving high COVID-19 vaccination rates is critical to combatting the pandemic and supporting economic recovery in the region. Vaccination coverage varies greatly across Southeast Asia.

After years of declining rates of poverty, in 2020 poverty across Southeast Asia rose in comparison to pre-COVID-19 forecasts. If COVID-19 containment measures and restrictions are prolonged, poverty and inequality will increase further in some Southeast Asian economies.

Most Southeast Asian domestic economies are still forecast to grow during 2021, with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) forecasting a growth rate of 3.1 per cent for the region. Economies with large manufacturing-focused sectors are showing resilience, whereas those reliant on travel and tourism remain vulnerable. Domestic consumption is supporting the economic recovery across the region, however, it is constrained by ongoing lockdowns.

## AUSTRALIA’S RESPONSE AND PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Australia’s well-established development program adapted quickly to address the immediate health, humanitarian and economic recovery needs of our partners during the initial stages of the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite the challenging environment in the reporting period, our program remains on track to achieve regional health security, stability and economic recovery goals. Progress across investments towards expected outcomes has been uneven reflecting a challenging operating environment.

## Health Security

Australia responded to the COVID-19 pandemic in Southeast Asia to help address gaps in health systems to bolster health security, expand efforts to contain the virus, and facilitate supply chains for essential goods.

Australia supported safe and effective COVID-19 vaccine rollouts in Southeast Asia through multilateral and regional initiatives and bilateral activities. In 2020-21, Australia provided immediate support and funding to deliver vaccine doses across Southeast Asia. **Between 2020-2023, Australia has committed \$300 million to Southeast Asia as a part of the regional COVID-19 Vaccine Access and Health Security Initiative (VAHSI).** This funding included a commitment of \$21 million to support the **ASEAN Centre for Public Health Emergencies and Emerging Diseases**, to enhance regional capacity to prepare, detect and respond to pandemics. We are also providing \$130 million to the COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access Advance Market Commitment (COVAX AMC).

Complementing these commitments, on 11 June 2021, Prime Minister Morrison joined leaders from the Group of Seven (G7) counterparts by committing to share at least an additional 20 million vaccine doses from Australia's domestic vaccine supply across the Indo-Pacific region.

In the reporting period, **Australia's Indo-Pacific Centre for Health Security (CHS) strengthened Public Health Emergency Operation Centre facilities across the region**, delivered enhanced training, supported stronger surveillance (including for COVID-19), and improved laboratory and response activities. In addition, CHS provided biosafety training from the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation Australian Centre Disease Preparedness to strengthen animal health systems and help address future zoonotic spill-overs.

Australia supported women's health across the region through the Mekong Women's Empowerment Project (Empower). Empower has **strengthened the capacity of 418 frontline women healthcare workers** to provide high quality, comprehensive, equitable and affordable Sexual Reproductive Health and Family Planning services to target populations in Cambodia, Myanmar and Vietnam.

A two-year **\$44 million Indo-Pacific Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights COVID-19 Response** was announced in June 2021 to support the urgent, unmet needs for sexual and reproductive health services across the region resulting from the pandemic. The initiative focuses on expanding resilient ways of working such as telehealth, tele counselling, developing an app and mobile outreach. Countries in Southeast Asia include Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Myanmar, Philippines, Timor-Leste and Vietnam.

The new **ASEAN-Australia Health Security Program** is aimed at reducing the risk of pandemics from zoonotic disease outbreaks by implementing One Health approaches, working at the nexus of human, animal and environmental health in ASEAN and providing scholarships for ASEAN's health officials.

## Stability

Australia is committed to supporting stability in Southeast Asia and collaborated with ASEAN member states to address shared security issues such as maritime security, cybersecurity, trafficking in persons and transnational crime.

Australia's four-year, **\$232 million Mekong-Australia Partnership (MAP)** builds on our long-standing bilateral programs with Mekong states to increase economic resilience, provide scholarships for future leaders, boost trade and investment, build environmental resilience, and strengthen cyber and technology capabilities in the Mekong subregion.

In 2021, **Australia continued deepening cyber and critical technology capacity and resilience through the Cyber and Critical Tech Cooperation Program as a part of the MAP.** In addition, the Mekong-Australia Partnership on Transnational Crime commenced in March 2021. It will invest \$30 million over eight years (2021- 2029) to strengthen regional cooperation and information-sharing to respond to cross-border threats, such as illicit drugs, child sexual exploitation and financial crimes.

An open, inclusive, safe and rules-based maritime domain plays a vital role in the region's prosperity and security. In 2020-21, Australia partnered with Vietnam to **provide technical advice on implementation of the Strategy for the Sustainable Development of Vietnam's Maritime Economy** by drawing on international best practices and Australia's experience in managing our domestic maritime environment.

To address possible increases in irregular migration, our ASEAN-Australia Counter-Trafficking program is strengthening ASEAN criminal justice systems, supporting just punishment of traffickers and protecting victims' rights.

ASEAN member states have made significant progress towards gender equality in recent years. However, COVID-19 is having a disproportionate impact on women and girls in Southeast Asia with marked economic, health and social consequences for women. Women are disproportionately represented in the informal sector in Southeast Asia which is significantly impacted by COVID-19 containment measures, resulting in exacerbated income inequalities.

### ***Economic recovery***

Australia continues to support the region's economic recovery through a range of programs.

Australia **commenced the Partnerships for Infrastructure (P4I) program in January 2021**, to support the development of quality infrastructure. P4I engaged with stakeholders across the region and provided partners technical advice, access to Australian expertise and regional learning opportunities. The program has a pipeline of more than 40 potential activities across the region.

The MAP – Water, Energy, Climate Program **supported the Mekong River Commission to develop the Basin Development Strategy and Strategic Plan** and set the strategic direction of the commission for the next decade. The program provided regional forums on river data transparency and standards and developed pumped storage hydropower as an alternative energy technology.

Australia undertook a mid-term review in 2021 of a regional women's economic empowerment program, Investing in Women (IW), which confirmed it is on track to reach its end of program outcomes. In 2020-21, there were 13 new investments in women-led micro, small and medium-sized enterprises totalling \$2.2 million and leveraging a further \$25.8 million private sector investment and \$2.4 million in leveraged public co-investment.

**The ASEAN Australia Development Cooperation Program Phase II supported the development and implementation of high-quality economic strategies**, including the Fourth Industrial Revolution strategy which has supported vital regional supply chains during the pandemic. This program continued to enhance regional economic connectivity and narrow the development gap among ASEAN member states.

The ASEAN-Australia Digital Trade Standards Initiative, to which Australia contributed a further \$2 million in 2020, harmonised digital trade standards and remove non-tariff barriers to trade.

The ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Area (AANZFTA) Economic Cooperation Support Program continues to support regional economic integration by assisting ASEAN implement the AANZFTA agreement and realise the benefits of greater trade liberalisation and regional economic integration.

**The ASEAN-led Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) is supporting regional economic integration by addressing non-tariff barriers**, including in areas such as biosecurity and technical standards, and improving cooperation and compliance with World Trade Organization rules. Australia is developing a new \$46 million investment to deliver economic cooperation under RCEP and AANZFTA, which will support implementation of both agreements.

**The Tripartite Action to Enhance the Contribution of Labour Migration to Growth and Development in ASEAN (TRIANGLE) strengthened labour migration governance frameworks and mitigated exploitation** of vulnerable migrant workers. In 2020, TRIANGLE worked to protect the rights of migrant workers through input to legislation and policies in Laos, Vietnam and Thailand. Migrant Worker Resource Centres provided direct support, including counselling, training, legal assistance, and COVID-19 emergency support.

Under the ASEAN-Australia Smart Cities Initiative, Australia is supporting ASEAN member states to build liveable cities. For example, in the Philippines city of Baguio we are working with the city government on a flood forecasting and early warning system to mitigate impacts and protect residents, especially the vulnerable.

Australia supported the Malaysia and Thailand Reform Partnership. The coalition is facilitated by The Asia Foundation and addressed critical reforms in economic recovery through innovative policy solutions for quality basic education and competition policy in Thailand, and women's workforce productivity in Malaysia.

## ANNEX 1: PROGRESS AGAINST COVID-19 RESPONSE PLAN RESULTS INDICATORS

*Health Security*

Key Results Indicators	Progress/Result
Evidence that partner countries in Southeast Asia have improved responses to health security threats	Under VAHSI, Australia's funding has purchased over 1,900 cold-chain refrigerators for Vietnam and supported critical communications on national COVID-19 vaccination campaigns in Cambodia, Indonesia and Vietnam. Australia's contribution to COVAX AMC has supported the delivery of over 17 million vaccine doses to the region in 2020-21.
Coordinated surveillance systems in place in the animal health and public health sectors for zoonotic diseases / pathogens in countries in Southeast Asia	Commenced funding the Food and Agriculture Organisation Strengthening Mechanisms on Animal health for a Resilient ASEAN project to prevent, detect and respond to animal and zoonotic diseases with pandemic potential in ASEAN.  Continued support under the Australia-OIE One Health Partnership to improve reporting to Global Animal Health Information Systems through online user training for the new OIE WAHIS platform. By July 2020, this platform had 30 participants across ASEAN.
Evidence of strengthened health systems in Southeast Asia, including for health emergency preparedness, resulting from Australian support to partner countries	Supported the ASEAN COVID-19 Response Fund, a mechanism for ASEAN member states to purchase vaccines in partnership with United Nations Children's Fund. On-going support to the Public Health Emergency Operating Centres project to build capacity for the 1,300 participants and strengthens facilities through improving infrastructure and equipment in Laos, Cambodia and Myanmar. This enhances disease surveillance capacities and supports COVID-19 preparedness and response.
Examples of Australia's support for ASEAN-led efforts to strengthen regional architecture for responding to public health emergencies	Supported, in partnership with Japan, the establishment of the ASEAN Centre for Public Health Emergencies and Emerging Diseases. The Centre will enhance regional capacity to prepare and respond to pandemics.
Contraceptive protection from unplanned pregnancies made available through Australian support in Cambodia, Myanmar and Vietnam (target 62,000 in Apr 2020-Mar 2021)	The Empower Program provided protection to 61,731 participants.



## Stability

Key Results Indicators	Progress/Result
Evidence of technical and policy support for ASEAN-led processes in priority political security areas (maritime security, cybersecurity, women, peace and security and transnational crime)	Partnered with Singapore to stage the East Asia Summit Workshop – Regional Cyber Capacity Building: Seizing the Fourth Industrial Revolution (September 2020). Also supported technical analysis of opportunities for the integration of Women, Peace and Security principles into ASEAN’s COVID-19 recovery.
Number of men and woman police and law and justice officials trained (pending targets)	Through ASEAN-Australia Counter Trafficking Program (ASEAN-ACT) trained 2,037 law and justice officials (37 per cent men, 62 per cent women, 0.2 per cent other).
High quality, transnational crime and border security analysis produced to inform policy frameworks and operational strategies	Through ASEAN-ACT, built counter-people trafficking capacities for police, investigators, judiciary and policymakers in Cambodia, Laos, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam.  Advocated for the rights of trafficked people by supporting ASEAN Members to comply with their obligations under the ASEAN Convention against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children.  As part of the broader Mekong-Australia Partnership (MAP), supported ASEAN region engagement with critical technology standards and strengthened cyber and critical technology resilience in the Mekong.
Examples of technical advice provided to domestic maritime agencies in partner countries to increase efficiency and coordination	Provided technical advice Vietnam to implement <i>its Strategy for the Sustainable Development of Vietnam’s Maritime Economy</i> . Advice drew on international best practices and Australia’s experience in managing our domestic maritime environment. In addition, also supported interagency coordination on maritime engagements across the ASEAN region.
Examples of policy advice and progression on reform initiatives with Southeast Asia governments and civil society networks	Research grants to the Australian National University, the Brookings Institution and The Asia Foundation enhanced understandings in Australia and Southeast Asia of domestic and regional dynamics influencing stability in Southeast Asia, contributing to better informed policy and programs.
Evidence of increased women’s leadership and participation in water resources and renewable energy projects / policy development processes	Strengthened community and civil society networks with 592 representatives, including 280 women, to support advocacy by downstream countries on river development and dam reservoir operations.

## Economic Recovery

Key Results Indicators	Progress/Result
Evidence of policy support and/or change for water, energy and infrastructure decision-making including new government-to-government collaboration on planning, procurement, regulation, and inclusion of gender and social analysis	Provided technical advice to support water data management and modelling, development of water plans, and review of hydropower projects in the Mekong subregion.
Examples of policy and technical advice provided to partner countries or regional organisations on responding to the immediate economic impacts of COVID-19 and longer term sustainable and inclusive economic recovery	Supported the development of the ASEAN policies including: Fourth Industrial Revolution Strategy; Priority Logistics Routes and Vital Regional Supply Chains Framework; Methodologies for Conducting Ex-Ante Regulatory Review on Draft Non-Tariff Measures; and the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (which works to narrow the development gap between ASEAN member states). Supported the development of national engagement reports that detail how implementation and harmonisation of international digital standards can increase trade. Included workshops among National Standard Bodies and government agencies on issues including artificial intelligence, 5G and digital transactions.
Evidence of policy, legislative and/or technical support on labour migration, reducing remittance costs, protection and gender equality for migrant workers	Supported technical inputs to draft legislation and policies in Laos, Vietnam and Thailand for migrant workers' rights. Supported Migrant Worker Resource Centres to provide services to 21,223 migrant workers, including counselling, training, and legal assistance, plus additional emergency support to 29,954 migrant workers. Also supported capacity building on migrant workers' issues for 3,029 government, employer, and civil society representatives. Launched the SaverAsia mobile app in November 2020. The app aims to reduce remittance costs by allowing migrant workers to compare and select the best rate and service to send remittances home. Published "By Women, For Women", a guidance document which provides a framework for building sustainable migrant women's peer support networks. This regional tool will be piloted in Cambodia in 2021.
Examples of ASEAN policy development, technical advice and capacity building to enable ASEAN to promote regional economic integration, including number of men and woman officials trained to enhance the implementation of Free Trade Agreements and other related instruments	Delivered capacity building and technical support to improve: competition laws and policies, the mutual recognition of qualifications within ASEAN, patent examination processes and market access for agricultural products. This included training 77 officials (40 women and 37 men).
Examples of technical, policy and capacity building support provided to expand women's economic opportunities in Southeast Asia	In the ASEAN region, supported a 22 per cent increase in jobs in the small and medium enterprises under the Investing in Women (IW) program. Of these jobs, 58 per cent were women employees. IW also supported Vietnam Business Coalition for Women Empowerment to incorporate 6 workplace gender equality recommendations into the Corporate Sustainability Index to track gender equality indicators.

## ANNEX 2: INVESTMENT PERFORMANCE RATINGS

Investment Details	Year	Effectiveness	Efficiency	Gender
<b>Open, Inclusive and Accountable Governance</b> Investment duration: 2014-2021; Budget: \$3.7m	2021	4	4	4
	2020	4	4	4
<b>ASEAN – Australian Smart Cities</b> Investment duration: 2018-2024; Budget: \$20.7m	2021	4	3	4
	2020	n/a	n/a	n/a
<b>Shaping Inclusive Finance Transformations in ASEAN Program</b> Investment duration: 2014-2020; Budget \$9.9m	2021	4	5	4
	2020	5	5	5
<b>Support to ERIA – 2<sup>nd</sup> phase</b> Investment duration: 2018-2023; Budget \$5m	2021	4	4	4
	2020	4	4	2
<b>ASEAN-Australian Counter Trafficking Program</b> Investment duration: 2018-2028; Budget \$80m	2021	5	5	4
	2020	4	4	4
<b>ASEAN-Australian Development Cooperation Program II</b> Investment duration: 2008-2021; Budget \$57m	2021	4	4	3
	2020	5	4	3
<b>AANZFTA Economic Cooperation Support Program</b> Investment duration: 2010-2021; Budget \$36m	2021	4	4	3
	2020	4	4	3
<b>TRIANGLE in ASEAN</b> Investment duration: 2015-2027; Budget \$24m	2021	5	5	5
	2020	5	5	5
<b>MAP-WEC: Australia-Mekong Water Facility</b> Investment duration: 2019-2023; Budget \$9.8m	2021	3	3	3
	2020	4	4	4
<b>MAP-WEC: Mekong Regional Water Governance Inclusion Project</b> Investment duration: 2019-2024; Budget \$5.4m	2021	4	4	5
	2020	n/a	n/a	n/a

## FINAL INVESTMENT PERFORMANCE RATINGS

Investment Details	Year	Effectiveness	Efficiency	Gender
<b>Shaping Inclusive Finance Transformations in ASEAN Program</b> Investment duration: 2014-21; Budget: \$9.9m	2021	4	5	4
	2020	5	5	5
<b>IFC Sustainable Hydropower in the Mekong countries</b> Investment duration: 2014-2020; Budget \$8m	2021	3	3	2
	2020	5	5	3
<b>Supporting MRC and Mekong governments</b> Investment duration: 2014-2022; Budget \$10.9m	2021	4	4	3
	2020	4	3	3

## Definitions of rating scale:

Satisfactory (4, 5 and 6)

6 = Very good; satisfies criteria in all areas.

5 = Good; satisfies criteria in almost all areas.

4 = Adequate; on balance, satisfies criteria; does not fail in any major area.

Less than satisfactory (1, 2 and 3)

3 = Less than adequate; on balance does not satisfy criteria and/or fails in at least one major area.

2 = Poor; does not satisfy criteria in major areas.

1 = Very poor; does not satisfy criteria in many major area.