



▶ TRIANGLE in ASEAN



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▶ At a glance



Partners

ASEAN Secretariat, ASEAN Committee on Migrant Workers (ACMW), labour ministries, workers' and employers' organizations, recruitment agency associations and civil society organizations at the regional and national level



Development partners

Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and Global Affairs Canada (GAC)



Duration

January 2015 - September 2025



Target beneficiaries

All migrant workers, including prospective and returned migrant workers, their families and communities from and within ASEAN, as well as governments, workers' and employers' organizations



Geographical focus

TRIANGLE in ASEAN engages at the regional level through ASEAN institutions and other regional partnerships and has country level interventions in six key countries: Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam

▶ Context

In the last three decades, labour migration has emerged as a significant driver of economic growth and development in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) region. Prior to COVID-19, the region had approximately 10 million international migrants, 7 million of whom were intra-ASEAN migrants (UNDESA 2020). Within ASEAN, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, the Philippines and Viet Nam are net countries of origin, while Brunei Darussalam, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand are net countries of destination.

Most intra-ASEAN migrant workers are employed in low-paid occupations in agriculture, construction, fisheries, manufacturing, and services, including domestic work, with inadequate housing, poor working conditions, and lacking labour and social protection. Due to the high costs and complexity of navigating the regular channels for migration, many ASEAN migrants are employed precariously in destination countries without legal status. COVID-19 further exacerbated pre-existing deficits in the protection of migrant workers. Layoffs, wage violations and limited access to health care and social protection led to an acute humanitarian crisis among many migrant workers and their families.

Women, migrants with diverse sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics (SOGIESC) and those with disabilities have fewer options for regular migration. As a result, those migrants are more likely to work in the informal sector, which has few, if any, labour protection measures.

The TRIANGLE in ASEAN programme is a part of the International Labour Organization's global efforts to promote fair migration. Through delivery of technical assistance and support to governments, social partners, civil society and regional bodies, TRIANGLE in ASEAN creates policies, tools and services that enhance the contribution of labour migration to equitable and just societies.



► Outcomes

With the overall goal of maximizing the contribution of labour migration to equitable, inclusive and stable growth in ASEAN, TRIANGLE in ASEAN operates within three outcome areas aimed to ensure that:

► Protection

All migrant workers are protected through evidence-based, gender-inclusive and rights-based labour migration policies, legislation and mechanisms that increase their access to labour protections including social protection benefits. The programme also supports regional and national capacity generation of stakeholders to implement inclusive policy and provide assistance, and sustainable, effective, gender-inclusive and responsive service delivery by Migrant Worker Resource Centres.

► Development

The potential of all migrant workers to contribute to and benefit from economic and social development is enabled. This is done by promoting evidence-based, gender-responsive policies, advancing return and reintegration programming, exploring the migration and development nexus, reducing the costs and fees associated with recruitment and remittance services. The programme also supports service delivery with a view to enable migrant workers to better manage their resources, successfully reintegrate and obtain peer support.

► Mobility

The efficiency of labour markets in ASEAN is increased through establishing gender-transformative labour mobility systems. This is done by promoting skills recognition of women and men migrant workers, matching the supply and demand for migrant labour via improved statistical data, and promoting the adoption of more efficient, inclusive and gender-responsive labour mobility policies.



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► Policy coherence

To ensure its relevance and impact, TRIANGLE in ASEAN aligns its strategies and approaches with regional and international development frameworks, and ILO principles and priorities. These include the ILO's International Labour Standards, the UN Sustainable Development Goals, the Global Compact on Migration, as well as regional frameworks and processes including the work plan of the ASEAN Committee on Migrant Workers (ACMW) and others as relevant.



► Cross cutting

TRIANGLE in ASEAN recognizes that for equitable migration and decent work to be available for all migrant workers, regardless of sex, gender, disability, and other identities, discriminatory norms and structural barriers need to be reduced and ultimately removed. Responding to this realization, all aspects of the work of TRIANGLE in ASEAN are guided by a cross-cutting Gender Inclusivity and Equality Strategy (GIES). In addition to the focus on women and women's empowerment, the GIES mainstreams inclusion of migrants with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities, as well as persons with disabilities. TRIANGLE in ASEAN allocates 20 per cent of its budget for activities to promote women's empowerment.



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