



ACTIVITY REPORT

OECD Southeast Asia Regional Programme

April 2024

Submitted to the 13th Steering Group Meeting
17 April 2024
Paris, France

Introduction

The **OECD Southeast Asia Regional Programme (SEARP)** was launched at the **2014 OECD Ministerial Council Meeting** by then Japanese Prime Minister Shinzō Abe. Over the past nine years, the Programme has aimed **to support domestic reform priorities, strengthen global and regional integration and connectivity efforts in Southeast Asia, and bring countries closer to the OECD’s best practices and instruments**. It also aims to foster mutual learning and the exchange of good practices between policy makers in Southeast Asia and OECD countries.

Thematic Engagement

The Programme’s structure is designed to encourage a systematic exchange of experience to develop common solutions to regional and national challenges. It is comprised of **13 work streams** built on the work of OECD directorates and Southeast Asian bodies and dialogue processes. These are **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 and Tourism**. The Programme comprises an overarching **Economic Outlook for Southeast Asia, China and India** that monitors medium-term macroeconomic trends and regional integration.



Steering Group

The Programme is built upon the principles of partnership, shared ownership and a common commitment between Southeast Asia and OECD countries. The Steering Group meets on a regular basis, normally twice a year, and provides overall strategic guidance to the Programme. The 13 work streams regularly report their activities to the Steering Group. In 2018, the Programme established a Bureau to provide strategic guidance and support to the Co-chairs. The Bureau is comprised of the current and past Co-chairs of the Programme as well as representatives from OECD and Southeast Asian countries. The current Bureau members are Viet Nam, Australia, Thailand, Korea, Indonesia, Japan, Canada, Germany, and the United Kingdom.

Engagement with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)

Since the launch of SEARP, the Programme has worked closely with ASEAN to deliver a number of concrete outputs, including supporting the implementation of ASEAN instruments like [the ASEAN Economic Community \(AEC\) Blueprint 2025](#), which specifically mentions the OECD as one of [the institutions for strategic collaboration](#). At the 37th ASEAN Summit on 11 November 2020, Leaders adopted the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework (ACRF) and its implementation plan. The ACRF names several important stakeholders, including the OECD as an implementation partner.

Developments in 2023

SEARP had another busy year in 2023, holding its third Ministerial Forum in 18 months and witnessing the historic decisions of Indonesia and Thailand to seek OECD membership.

OECD receives first accession requests from Southeast Asia

The tenth year of operations of SEARP saw a step change in the OECD's relationship with the region. Indonesia notified the OECD of its accession request in July 2023, with the OECD Council agreeing to open accession discussions in February 2024. Meanwhile, Thailand requested OECD accession in January 2024.

The [OECD Council Decision](#) that established SEARP in 2013 explicitly recognised the Programme's potential to 'eventually lead to more interest in membership'. Since 2014, SEARP has been working closely with countries and institutions in the region, supporting Southeast Asia in its domestic reform and regional integration priorities and increasing awareness of the OECD. As this Activity Report makes clear, our relationship is now both deep and broad-based, with dozens of new activities and publications being added every year. Thailand and Indonesia's decision to seek OECD membership is a testament to SEARP's success in building a closer OECD-Southeast Asia relationship.



OECD Secretary-General Matthias Cormann and Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Thailand, Parnpree Bahiddha-nukara, discuss Thailand's membership aspirations at the World Economic Forum in January 2024.



OECD Secretary-General Matthias Cormann meets Indonesia President Joko Widodo in Jakarta in August 2023.

2023 Southeast Asia Ministerial Forum



Heads of delegation at the 2023 Southeast Asia Ministerial Forum, October 2023.

The major event of 2023 was the Ministerial Forum held in Ha Noi, Viet Nam, on 26-27 October – the third ministerial-level event held since the beginning of 2022. Themed "Sustainable and Quality Investment: New Momentum for OECD – Southeast Asia Partnership", the Forum underscored the OECD's role in supporting investment policy reform in the region and the potential for its standards and policy recommendations to contribute to investment promotion and better sustainability outcomes from FDI. Participants recognised the Programme's strong record of supporting investment policy

reforms, including through OECD Investment Policy Reviews which have contributed to improvements in the investment climate.

A consistent message from the Ministerial Forum, stated by representatives from government, business, and international organisations alike, was the role of regional integration in attracting sustainable and quality investment. Participants recognised the role that OECD standards and policy recommendations can play in this endeavour. There was a strong focus on the OECD Declaration on International Investment and Multinational Enterprises and related legal instruments, and the opportunities it afforded for its Adherents to exchange good practices in investment policy and contribute to the future development of OECD standards. Several OECD and Southeast Asian government and business representatives further highlighted the potential of OECD standards and tools on responsible business conduct and FDI qualities to be integrated into investment policies.

Participants also expressed strong support for the OECD Strategic Framework for the Indo-Pacific, noting its potential to help broaden adherence to OECD standards and participation in OECD committees by countries in the region, as well as Indonesia's accession request, highlighting the importance of aligning with OECD standards to facilitate its goal of becoming a high-income country by 2045.

Summary of workstream outputs

Substantively, SEARP's 13 work streams remained highly active in 2023, with a focus on engaging with national and regional officials and businesses to deliver results supporting both OECD and ASEAN strategic priorities. Key highlights include :

- further progress in the OECD's important tax work, with the Philippines becoming a new member of the Asia Initiative of the Global Forum on Transparency and Exchange of Information for Tax Purposes (January 2023) and Viet Nam depositing its instrument of ratification to the Convention on Mutual Administrative Assistance in Tax Matters as amended by the 2010 Protocol (August 2023);
- close co-operation with the ASEAN Coordinating Committee on MSMEs on several major outputs including OECD's participation in the 6th ASEAN Inclusive Business Summit and the ASEAN SME Policy Index 2024 to be launched in September 2024;
- continued technical engagement with the ASEAN Coordinating Committees on Services and Investment and the ASEAN Trade Facilitation Joint Consultative Committee on the use of OECD tools such as the Services Trade Restrictiveness Index and the Trade Facilitation Indicators to support regional economic integration;
- strong technical engagement with national policymakers on sustainable infrastructure and clean energy outcomes through the Sustainable Infrastructure Programme in Asia (SIPA) and the Clean Energy Finance and Investment Mobilisation (CEFIM) programme;
- the publication of several major regional reports, including the regular *OECD Economic Outlook for Southeast Asia, China and India* (March 2023), the *OECD Southeast Asia Skills Strategy* (April 2023), the *Extending Broadband Connectivity in Southeast Asia* report (December 2023) and the *Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) 2024 Regional Report for Southeast Asia* (March 2024).

A complete list of all SEARP workstream outputs is included on the following pages.

Updates from the Regional Policy Networks (RPNs) and Initiatives

REGIONAL POLICY NETWORK ON TAX POLICY AND ADMINISTRATION

Over 140 countries and jurisdictions, including **Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand** and **Viet Nam**, participate in the [OECD/G20 Inclusive Framework on Base Erosion and Profit Shifting](#) (IF) and are committed to addressing the tax challenges arising from the digitalisation of the economy by participating in the [Two-Pillar Solution](#) to reform the international taxation rules and ensure that multinational enterprises pay a fair share of tax wherever they operate. The OECD provides extensive support in this area to IF developing country members, including in the Asia-Pacific region. This included multilateral virtual workshops, learning tools, targeted capacity-building, as well as an in-person regional consultation held in Manila, **the Philippines**, in November 2023. In addition, the OECD is supporting **Malaysia, Thailand** and **Viet Nam** in implementing the minimum global tax and analysing its impact on tax incentive regimes.

Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and **Viet Nam** participate in the 171-member [Global Forum on Transparency and Exchange of Information for Tax Purposes](#) (Global Forum), which promotes the effective implementation of exchange of information standards. In July 2022, 13 Asian jurisdictions (including **Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore** and **Thailand**) signed the Bali Declaration and became members of the [Global Forum's Asia Initiative](#) (GFAI) to bolster tax co-operation in Asia to fight tax evasion and illicit financial flows. The Philippines became a new member of GFAI in January 2023. Viet Nam signed the [Multilateral Convention on Mutual Administrative Assistance in Tax Matters](#) in March 2023.

Indonesia, Malaysia and the OECD Multilateral Tax Centres (MTCs) in China and Korea hosted several virtual and in-person training events under the [Global Relations Programme](#) (GRP) on a variety of topics related to international taxation including the Two-Pillar Solution. Progress was also made in implementing technical assistance programmes in **Cambodia, Malaysia** and **Thailand** under the [Tax Inspectors Without Borders](#) (TIWB) initiative. The [OECD Asia-Pacific Academy for Tax and Financial Crime Investigation](#) provided law enforcement authorities in the region with virtual and in-person programmes on specific themes such as Crypto assets. The OECD also publishes the [Revenue Statistics in Asia and the Pacific](#) series annually, which covers **Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand**, and **Viet Nam**.

RECENT ACTIVITIES AND PUBLICATIONS (Feb 23-April 24)

Activity	Date	Location
Fourth High-level Asia Initiative Meeting	27 April 2023	New Delhi, India
Tax and Crime seminar on combatting the professional enablers of tax and other financial crimes	22-26 May 2023	Saitama, Japan
Tax and Crime seminar on VAT/GST fraud investigations	29 May-2 June 2023	Saitama, Japan
Workshop on Pillar Two with Viet Nam	30 May-2 June 2023	Hanoi, Viet Nam
Workshop on Transfer Pricing with Indonesia	24-27 July 2023	Jakarta, Indonesia
Workshop on Pillar 2 with Malaysia	5-7 September 2023	Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Regional Consultation on BEPS for the Asia Pacific region	8-9 November 2023	Manila, Philippines
Fifth High-level Asia Initiative Meeting	28 November 2023	Lisbon, Portugal
Publications		
Global Forum Tax Transparency in Asia 2023: Asia Initiative Progress Report (April 2023)		
OECD (2023), Revenue Statistics in Asia and the Pacific (2023), OECD Publishing, Paris		
FORTHCOMING ACTIVITIES AND PUBLICATIONS (April-December 2024)		
Activity	Date	Location
Tax and Crime seminar on Major Case Management	20-24 May 2024	Saitama, Japan
Tax and Crime seminar on Big Data/Analytics and Crypto assets	27-31 May 2024	Saitama, Japan
Sixth High-Level Asia Initiative Meeting	24 – 25 June 2024	Yerevan, Armenia
Workshop on Transfer Pricing with Malaysia	24-28 June 2024	Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
Workshop on Tax Treaties with Indonesia	25-27 June 2024	Jakarta, Indonesia
Workshop on Tax Treaties with Malaysia	1-5 July 2024	Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
Workshop on Transfer Pricing and Financial Transaction with Indonesia	23-25 July 2024	Jakarta, Indonesia
Workshop on GloBE rules with Indonesia	29 July – 2 August 2024	Jakarta, Indonesia
Regional Consultation on BEPS for the Asia Pacific region	TBC	Manila, Philippines
Publications		
Global Forum Tax Transparency in Asia 2024: Asia Initiative Progress Report (forthcoming, June 2024))		
OECD Revenue Statistics in Asia and the Pacific (2024), OECD Publishing, Paris (forthcoming, June or July 2024)		

REGIONAL POLICY NETWORK ON INVESTMENT POLICY AND PROMOTION

The Investment Committee has been supporting Southeast Asian countries for over a decade, with a total of 12 Investment Policy Reviews (IPRs) completed. A report on Enabling Sustainable Development in ASEAN was presented to the ASEAN Coordinating Committee on Investment (CCI) and in other workshops, and published in 2023. The report leverages on the Policy Framework for Investment (PFI), the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) Qualities policy toolkit and responsible business conduct (RBC) instruments to provide an analysis on how to improve the framework conditions to attract and enable sustainable investment in ASEAN. As a follow-up to this work, the OECD Secretariat is discussing with the ASEAN CCI a Work Plan to continue work on sustainable investment and support the implementation of the ‘more, better and safe FDI’ in the region with the support of Japan.

The OECD will leverage the success of the OECD Southeast Asia Ministerial Forum held in October 2023 Hanoi on “sustainable and quality investment: new momentum for OECD Southeast Asia partnership”. The conference discussed opportunities for cooperation between OECD members and Southeast Asia to encourage sustainable and quality investment and included a day dedicated to the OECD-Viet Nam Investment Forum focused on Viet Nam’s readiness to adhere to the Investment Declaration and a kick-off discussion on the forthcoming FDI Qualities Review of Vietnam.

RECENT ACTIVITIES AND PUBLICATIONS (Feb 23-April 24)

Activity	Date	Location
Presentations of ‘Enabling Sustainable Investment in ASEAN’ report to CCI and other forums	January-April 2023	Virtual
Kick-off of FDI Qualities Review of Viet Nam	October 2023	Hanoi
Presentation of ‘Viet Nam and the OECD Declaration on International Investment and Multinational Enterprises’ report	October 2023	Hanoi
Presentation to ASEAN CCI on proposed Work Plan on more, better and safe FDI in ASEAN	January 2024	Virtual

Publications

[Enabling Sustainable Investment in ASEAN](#)

[Viet Nam and the OECD Declaration on International Investment and Multinational Enterprises](#)

FORTHCOMING ACTIVITIES AND PUBLICATIONS (April-December 2024)

Activity	Date	Location
Workshop back-to-back with next CCI meeting to discuss and begin project on more, better and safe FDI in ASEAN	June 2024	Singapore
Taskforce meeting and fact-finding mission for FDI Qualities Review of Viet Nam	May-June 2024	Viet Nam
Fact-finding missions and workshop in the context of the project on more, better and safe FDI in ASEAN	Q3-Q4 2024	ASEAN
On-site workshops with Thai and Vietnamese authorities to discuss policy notes in the context of the project “Attracting more, better, and safe investment for sustainability and resilience in Thailand and Viet Nam”	Q3-Q4 2024	Bangkok, Ha Noi

Publications

Policy discussion note on more, better and safe FDI in Thailand

Policy discussion note on more, better and safe FDI in Viet Nam

REGIONAL POLICY NETWORK ON SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES

The workstream continues close collaboration with the ASEAN Coordinating Committee on MSMEs (ACCMSME) on a variety of work elements which included:

ASEAN SME Policy Index 2024

The National kick-off meetings were conducted in seven ASEAN countries with the aim to promote the project and explain the methodology and process of the project. This activity was followed up by the data collection effort and National Validation workshops across all ten ASEAN countries. The final results were presented at the ACCMSME meeting in Singapore in October 2023. The work continued on data validation and drafting the regional and country chapters of the report.

Public-Private Policy Dialogues and Business Roundtables

The Public-Private Dialogue on greening MSMEs was co-organised by the OECD together with the ASEAN Business Advisory Council (ASEAN BAC) and its representatives in Thailand as well as the Business at OECD (BIAC) along the week of meetings of the ASEAN Coordination Committee on ASEAN MSMEs. It was supported by the Governments of Germany and Ireland and allowed to draft a short policy brief around circular economy and greening for MSMEs. The event was organized on the sidelines of the ACCMSME Meeting in Bangkok. The final version of the policy brief on greening SMEs was promoted through the webinar organized with the support of the OECD Tokyo office in December 2023.

The Public-Private Dialogue on sustainable investment was co-organised by the OECD with the BIAC, and the Viet Nam Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Hanoi, Vietnam on the sidelines on the SEARP Ministerial Forum. It was also supported by the Government of Germany and GIZ. It allowed to present the work of the OECD and get feedback from the private sector.

6th ASEAN Inclusive Business Summit

The Sixth ASEAN Inclusive Business Summit, hosted by Indonesia, emphasized the importance of establishing a conducive environment for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and for large businesses to adopt inclusive business (IB) models that contribute to inclusive and sustainable development in the region. It included the virtual opening remarks of the OECD Secretary-General Mathias Cormann as well as the Minister of Cooperatives and SMEs of the Republic of Indonesia Teten Masduki. The event was co-organised by the OECD, UN ESCAP, ASEAN Secretariat as well as the Government of Indonesia. The event allowed to adopt the “Declaration on Promoting Inclusive Business Models : Empowering Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises for Equitable Growth” as well as the Plan of Action for 2023-2027.

ASEAN Institution for MSMEs financing

The Indonesian Government in 2023 have requested support of the OECD to conduct a study on the financial gap analysis for financing needs of the MSMEs across ASEAN and work on the project of the feasibility study for the establishment of the ASEAN Financial Institution for MSME financing. The concept of the project was agreed at ACCMSME and the OECD has been working since on supporting the team of the Indonesian Ministry of MSMEs and Co-operatives. It is one of the initiatives of the Indonesian Government ASEAN Chairmanship.

RECENT ACTIVITIES AND PUBLICATIONS (Feb 23-April 24)

Activity	Date	Location
15 th ACCMSME Meeting in Bangkok	22-25 May 2023	Bangkok, Thailand
Public-Private Policy Dialogue around greening MSMEs	24 May 2023	Bangkok, Thailand
6 th ASEAN Inclusive Business Summit at Ministerial level	23-25 August 2023	Bali, Indonesia
16 th ACCMSME Meeting in Singapore	16-20 October 2023	Singapore

ASEAN SME Policy Index Regional Validation Workshop	17 October 2023	Singapore
Public-Private Policy Dialogue on sustainable investment	26 October 2023	Hanoi, Viet Nam
OECD Webinar: Greening and Circularity: How to facilitate the green transition of ASEAN enterprises	14 December 2023	Tokyo, Japan (virtual)
Publications		
Greening MSMEs and Circular Economy in Southeast Asia (2023)		
FORTHCOMING ACTIVITIES AND PUBLICATIONS (April-December 2024)		
Activity	Date	Location
17 th ACCMSME Meeting	13-17 May 2024	TBC
Launch of the ASEAN SME Policy Index 2024 at the ASEAN Economic Ministers Meeting	September 2024	Vientiane, Lao PDR
7 th ASEAN Inclusive Business Forum	September (TBC)	Vientiane, Lao PDR
SMEs RPN	November 2024 (TBC)	TBC
Publications		
ASEAN SME Policy Index 2024		
Policy Brief: Empowering Women Entrepreneurs in ASEAN (2024)		

REGIONAL POLICY NETWORK ON SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE

The Sustainable Infrastructure Programme in Asia (SIPA) supported Thailand, Indonesia and the Philippines at all stages of infrastructure development, from planning and design to financing and delivery. SIPA is led by ENV/FIG in collaboration with several OECD Directorates (e.g., DAF, GOV, GRC, OSG) and other implementing partners (e.g. IISD, ITF, WWF) working together in a consortium.

During the period from February 2023 to April 2024, the SIPA implemented several activities under various workstreams:

1. Mainstreaming Resilient Infrastructure Planning and Investment in the Philippines and Indonesia (carried out by ENV/CBW, with input from the World Wildlife Fund, WWF)
2. Strategic foresight workshop in Indonesia (carried out by OSG/Foresight and ENV/FIG)
3. Infrastructure Governance Indicators (IGI) Surveys in Southeast Asia (carried out by GOV/IPP)
4. Clean Energy Finance and Investment in the Philippines and Indonesia (under the CEFIM programme, ENV/FIG)
5. Framework for industry's net-zero transition in Thailand and Indonesia (under the CEFIM programme, ENV/FIG)
6. Decarbonising Pathways for Freight Transport in the Philippines (carried out by ITF)
7. Enhancing Regional Freight connectivity for Southeast Asia (carried out by ITF)
8. Responsible Business Conduct (carried out by DAF/RBC, with input from the International Institute for Sustainable Development, IISD)

SIPA also organised the 7th OECD Regional Policy Network Meeting on Sustainable Infrastructure in Southeast Asia under the OECD Southeast Asia Regional Programme (SEARP). It provided Southeast Asian governments the opportunity to discuss effective infrastructure governance strategies to deliver sustainable and inclusive infrastructure systems that are aligned with long-term priorities, including long-term climate and development objectives. The meeting gathered more than 90 participants from 10 OECD and SEA countries as well as international organisations, across ministries of finance, foreign affairs, public works, transport, national development planning, public procurement agencies, etc.

RECENT ACTIVITIES AND PUBLICATIONS (Feb 23-April 24)

Activity	Date	Location
Foresight Workshop: Rethinking Infrastructure for Sustainable, Resilient Development	7-9 March 2023	Bogor, Indonesia
Online Seminar on Responsible Financing and Infrastructure (in the context of the 7 th Bangkok Business and Human Rights Week)	2 June 2023	Virtual
2nd Indonesia Clean Energy Finance and Investment Training Week	19-23 June 2023	Yogyakarta, Indonesia
4 Sectoral Workshops on Resilient Infrastructure Planning and Investment	30 June 2023 and 7 July 2023	Manila, Philippines
Workshop with Policymakers on OECD standards on RBC, In Consultation with The Office of The National Economic and Social Development Council (NESDC)	10 July 2023	Bangkok, Thailand
Workshop with Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) to Promote a Common Understanding of OECD Standards on RBC [10 July 2023	Bangkok, Thailand
Workshop With Trade Unions to Promote a Common Understanding of OECD Standards on RBC	11 July 2023	Bangkok, Thailand
Workshop with the Private Sector and State-Owned Enterprises to Promote OECD Standards on RBC	11 July 2023	Bangkok, Thailand
Workshop on Infrastructure Governance Indicators in Indonesia	24 August 2023	Bogor, Indonesia

7th Regional Policy Network Meeting on Sustainable Infrastructure In Southeast Asia	10 October 2023	Virtual Event
Kick Off Meeting: Framework for Industry's Net-Zero Transition in Steel Sector In Indonesia	26 October 2023	Indonesia
Workshop On the Governance of Infrastructure in The Philippines	6 Nov 2023	Virtual Event
Workshop On "RBC, Sustainable Infrastructure and the Role of Finance"	14 Nov 2023	Manila, Philippines
Workshop with civil society organisations in Indonesia on Current Issues Around Promoting RBC In Infrastructure	16 November 2023	Jakarta, Indonesia
Workshop On "Building a Resilient Economy with Sustainable Infrastructure" in Collaboration with the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) and Bappenas	17 November 2023	Jakarta, Indonesia
COP-28 OECD Virtual Pavilion: Aligning Infrastructure Investment for a Net-Zero and Resilient Asia	30 November 2023	Virtual Event
Workshop on Mainstreaming Climate Resilience in Infrastructure Planning and Investment in Indonesia	18-19 December 2023	Jakarta, Indonesia
Kick Off Meeting: Framework for Industry's Net-Zero Transition in Thailand	15 February 2024	Bangkok, Thailand
Workshops On Unlocking Finance and Investment in Offshore Wind Power and Energy Efficiency in Public Buildings in The Philippines	6-7 March 2024	Manila, Philippines
Launch Of the Clean Energy Finance and Investment Roadmap of The Philippines	7 March 2024	Manila, Philippines
Publications		
Clean Energy Finance and Investment Roadmap of the Philippines		
FORTHCOMING ACTIVITIES AND PUBLICATIONS (April-December 2024)		
Activity	Date	Location
Launch of the Mainstreaming Resilient Infrastructure Planning and Investment: Philippines case study	TBD	TBD
Launch of Mainstreaming Resilient Infrastructure Planning and Investment: Indonesia case study	TBD	TBD
8 th Regional Policy Network Meeting on Sustainable Infrastructure in Southeast Asia	Q4	TBD
Publications		
Philippines case study "Mainstreaming climate resilience in infrastructure planning and financing"		
Indonesia case study "Mainstreaming climate resilience in infrastructure planning and financing"		
Policy Insight on Responsible Business Conduct for Sustainable Infrastructure: Indonesia		
Policy Insight on Responsible Business Conduct for Sustainable Infrastructure: the Philippines		
Policy Insight on Responsible Business Conduct for Sustainable Infrastructure: Thailand		
Report on results of the strategic foresight workshop in Indonesia		
Report on the results of the strategic foresight workshop in the Philippines		

REGIONAL POLICY NETWORK ON EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Education

The “SEAMEO Policy Research and Publication Capacity Building Workshop” will take place the 27-28 March in collaboration with the OECD. The workshop aims to empower the participants – members of the 26 SEAMEO Regional Centres and Networks – with the knowledge and skills needed to develop policy research proposals that emphasise strengthened elements of research impact especially for Southeast Asia. The workshop session will have input contributions from OECD, UNESCO GEM Report and SEA-PLM. More information about the workshop here: [SEAMEO Secretariat](#).

The 10th of April the OECD-ADB-Japan are hosting a joint webinar for ASEAN countries on PISA 2022 data and insights for the region with a focus on strengthening national assessment systems. The aim of this webinar is to show the use of PISA data for enhancing government capabilities in assessing and improving learning outcomes, with examples from Japan and Morocco. The following countries will participate as panellists: Cambodia, Philippines, Viet Nam, Indonesia.

There are plans to conduct a **joint OECD-ADB study that will analyse PISA data, focusing on Philippines, Cambodia**, other countries TBC. The study will analyse policies which aim to address the specific country challenges identified in the PISA data from a comparative perspective. ADB is in the process of requesting funding from Japan for this study, with an estimated budget of \$200,000-\$250,000 for the OECD. Together with ADB, we will develop several topics and research questions for this study. This proposal is subject to ADB's internal approval processes and Japan's Ministry of Finance.

Skills

On 19 April 2023, the OECD Centre for Skills officially launched the “OECD Skills Strategy Southeast Asia – Skills for Post-COVID Recovery and Growth” report. The project was funded by the Permanent Delegation of the Republic of Korea to the OECD, and benefitted from contributions by over 115 stakeholder representatives, as well as guidance and input by ASEAN. The OECD Skills Strategy Southeast Asia provides countries in the region with an assessment of their skills performance, opportunities for improvement, and policy recommendations based on in-depth desk analysis and stakeholder consultations. It also supports greater pan-regional collaboration on skills and raises awareness about broader policy priorities for a large number of countries.

In 2023, the OECD started an OECD Skills Strategy project for Thailand. Building on findings of the “OECD Skills Strategy Southeast Asia – Skills for Post-COVID Recovery and Growth”, this project will provide Thailand with a more in-depth assessment of Thailand’s performance and provide concrete policy recommendations tailored to Thailand’s unique context. The project officially started in July and a virtual kick-off meeting with different ministries was organised on 26 September 2023. The project will focus on three broad priority areas: i) Strengthening the skills of youth in initial education; ii) Fostering greater participation in adult learning; and iii) Improving the governance of skills systems. In 2024, two rounds of consultations will be organised and the report is schedule to be published in late 2024 or early 2025.

On 22 November 2023, the 13th meeting of the OECD Southeast Asian Regional Policy Network (SEA RPN) on Education and Skills was held. Participants from ASEAN, partner countries in Southeast Asia, OECD member countries and international organisations joined the virtual event to discuss recent skills challenges and opportunities in the region. The meeting focussed on the topic of “*Skills for the green and digital transitions*” – recognising that these transitions are rapidly reshaping societies and economies, with major consequences for the skills that people need to develop. Findings from various recent OECD publications on green and digital transitions provided input for discussions. The meeting featured presentations on key emerging findings from the “OECD Skills Outlook 2023: Skills for a Resilient Green and Digital Transition”, as well as “Job Creation and Local Economic Development 2023: Bridging the Great Green Divide”, and the application of the OECD Skills strategy in Southeast Asian countries.

RECENT ACTIVITIES AND PUBLICATIONS (Feb 23-April 24)

Activity	Date	Location
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Launch “OECD Skills Strategy Southeast Asia – Skills for Post-COVID Recovery and Growth”	19 April	virtual
Kick-off meeting OECD Skills Strategy project for Thailand	26 September	Bangkok and virtual
13th meeting of the OECD Southeast Asian Regional Policy Network (SEA RPN) on Education and Skills	22 November	virtual
SEAMEO Policy Research and Publication Capacity Building Workshop	27-28 March 2024	Bangkok
Webinar: Harnessing PISA 2022 Results: Lessons and Future Directions	10 April 2024	Online
Publications		
OECD Skills Strategy Southeast Asia – Skills for Post-COVID Recovery and Growth		
FORTHCOMING ACTIVITIES AND PUBLICATIONS (April-December 2024)		
Activity	Date	Location
Consultations for the OECD Skills Strategy for Thailand	TBC	

REGIONAL POLICY NETWORK ON GOOD REGULATORY PRACTICES

The ASEAN-OECD Good Regulatory Practices Network (GRPN) builds upon the longstanding partnership of the OECD with Southeast Asia on regulatory reform, both regionally through APEC and ASEAN and bilaterally with individual ASEAN Members. The GRPN meets annually and comprises senior officials in ASEAN Member States and OECD Members. The GRPN aims to assist ASEAN Members in building and strengthening capacity for the implementation of good regulatory practice to ensure high-quality regulation and regulatory coherence. It also supports efforts to strengthen ASEAN institutional connectivity, working in close collaboration with ASEAN bodies and its Secretariat.

In December 2023, the OECD, with support of the Office of the Council of State (OCS) in Thailand and the Office for Product Safety and Standard (OPSS) in the UK, co-ordinated the 8th ASEAN-OECD Good Regulatory Practice Network (GRPN) in Bangkok, Thailand. This annual conference reviewed ASEAN countries use of good regulatory practices to advance principles of sustainable development. Core themes addressed in this conference were: better regulation for environmental sustainability, human-centered design for regulatory policymaking, and digital and data-driven results for a more sustainable future. In total, the conference was attended by more than 110 participants. The 9th ASEAN-OECD GRPN meeting will be held in Jakarta and hosted by Indonesia.

The OECD is also closely co-operating with the Government of Thailand to strengthen initiatives aimed at regulatory management and oversight. Currently, the OECD is drafting a prioritisation guideline to support Thailand's Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) framework. As part of this engagement, the OECD hosted two capacity-building workshops in Bangkok, Thailand, focusing on stakeholder engagement and good practices for RIA in December 2023. This co-operation will be followed by a broader OECD Regulatory Policy Review of Thailand, financed by the OECD Thailand Country Program, scheduled for publication in early 2025.

RECENT ACTIVITIES AND PUBLICATIONS (Feb 23-April 24)

Activity	Date	Location
8 th ASEAN-OECD Good Regulatory Practice Network (GRPN)	7/12/2023	Bangkok, Thailand
Capacity building workshop on good regulatory practices	8/12/2023	Bangkok, Thailand
Fact-finding mission on prioritization guideline and good regulatory practices for the forthcoming OECD Regulatory Policy Review of Thailand	11-15/12/2023	Bangkok, Thailand

FORTHCOMING ACTIVITIES AND PUBLICATIONS (April-December 2024)

Activity	Date	Location
9 th ASEAN-OECD Good Regulatory Practice Network (GRPN)	TBD (in Q4)	Jakarta, Indonesia

Publications

Internal Report: Integrating a Proportionality Test into the RIA process in Thailand

TRADE INITIATIVE

The Trade Initiative aims to foster closer dialogue on trade issues between ASEAN and OECD member countries, based on greater understanding of the relevance of OECD work on trade and identification of areas of mutual interest.

Much of the OECD Trade Committee’s work in SEA is highly relevant to efforts in the region to improve market connectivity and economic integration. This is particularly the case in relation to ongoing work on trade facilitation, services trade, and digital trade. The OECD is pursuing strategic opportunities to strengthen dialogue and relationships with ASEAN countries and is working effectively in partnership with regional organisations including APEC, ERIA and ESCAP.

Recent activities of the Trade Initiative include:

- TAD’s continued collaboration with the ASEAN Coordinating Committee on Services (CCS) on the development of the STRI for ASEAN Member States delivered concrete outcomes in 2023. At the invitation of ASEAN Coordinating Committee on Services (CCS), TAD participated in two CCS meetings in 2023. In May 2023, a [new website](#) and [interactive policy simulator](#) were launched and presented through a capacity building workshop organised in partnership with the ASEAN CCS, Indonesia, and the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA) in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. The workshop focused on deepening understanding of the STRI and its role in supporting ASEAN member states’ (AMS) priorities to facilitate services trade in the region. The workshop also featured experience sharing from ASEAN economies (e.g., Viet Nam) on the usage of the STRI. TAD also participated virtually in the CCS meetings in November 2023 to provide an update on the work related to the development of the STRI for AMS.
- TAD continues also engagement with Indonesia on the study “Services Trade in Indonesia and the Global Economy”, in cooperation with the Ministry of Trade of Indonesia. The study is planned to be completed in the summer of 2024.
- In April 2023, at the invitation of the Philippines’ National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), TAD presented the draft STRI regulatory database of the Philippines to domestic regulatory agencies. Outcomes contributed to validation of the regulatory data in the STRI, and facilitated engagement with local agencies on the potential application of this tool for domestic services reforms.
- In July 2023, TAD participated at the 27th ASEAN Trade Facilitation Joint Consultative Committee (ATF-JCC), on the margins of the ASEAN Senior Economic Officials meeting. The Secretariat provided a presentation on the Trade Facilitation Indicators (TFIs) to the JCC plenary with specific insights for ASEAN Members, as well an overview of recent analysis on impacts on trade costs, trade in parcels and agri-food trade, all of which was very well received. The [latest TFIs](#), released in 2023, cover all ASEAN economies. The Meeting agreed for the OECD to continue providing expertise and knowledge on these issues to ASEAN in the context of ATF-JCC Meetings.
- In December 2023, work on the Digital Trade Review of ASEAN began. The aim of the report is to identify the challenges and opportunities that the digital transformation raises for ASEAN economies, with a view to providing recommendations about how best to ensure that digital trade works for all in the region.

RECENT ACTIVITIES AND PUBLICATIONS (Feb 23-April 24)

Activity	Date	Location
Participation in the ASEAN Coordinating Committee on Services meeting	16 November 2023	Virtual
Participation in the ASEAN Coordinating Committee on Services meeting	16 May 2023	Yogyakarta, Indonesia
ASEAN-ERIA-OECD Joint Workshop on Leveraging the Services Trade Restrictiveness Index (STRI) to Support Services Facilitation in ASEAN	16 May 2023	Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Meeting with Philippines' National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA)	April 2023	Manila, Philippines
Participation of Senior ASEAN Secretariat official to the OECD Global Forum on Trade 2023 on the topic of Making Digital Trade Work For All	October 2023	Paris, France
Participation to the ASEAN Trade Facilitation Joint Consultative Committee, on the margins of the ASEAN Senior Economic Officials meeting	July 2023	Surabaya, Indonesia
FORTHCOMING ACTIVITIES AND PUBLICATIONS (April-December 2024)		
Activity	Date	Location
Participation in the ASEAN Coordinating Committee on Services meeting and an ASEAN workshop on services	22 October 2024	Jakarta, Indonesia
ASEAN Connectivity Symposium	August 2024 (TBC)	Luang Prabang, Lao PDR
Publications		
Services Trade in Indonesia and the Global Economy (forthcoming in summer 2024)		
Digital Trade Review of ASEAN (2025)		

GREEN RECOVERY INITIATIVE

The Clean Energy Finance and Investment Mobilisation (Programme), under the OECD Environment Directorate, is supporting the governments of Thailand and Indonesia in their endeavor to decarbonise their industry sector. In the second half of 2023, together with the government's focal points (Ministry of Industry (Kemenperin) and Ministry of National Development Planning (BAPPENAS) in Indonesia; Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council (NESDC) in Thailand), the following industrial sectors have been selected: textile and iron and steel in Indonesia, petrochemicals and related plastics value chain in Thailand. The OECD is currently identifying focus areas and low-carbon technologies in these sectors that are instrumental and will require particular attention to achieve the countries' climate objectives. The economic assessment of these technologies will start in April 2024.

On 19-23 June 2023, the OECD's Clean Energy Finance and Investment Mobilisation (CEFIM) Programme organised the 2nd annual Clean Energy Finance and Investment (CEFI) training in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. This annual training week brought together national and provincial governments, project developers, and financial institutions in one place to discuss financing and regulatory updates, barriers and solutions for renewable energy and energy efficiency projects in Indonesia. This training is part of a three-year annual training week, with the first annual training week held in Fall 2022. The training week is organised by CEFIM, with funding from Germany through Sustainable Infrastructure Programme in Asia (SIPA). Following the successful training implementation, Indonesia's Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources (MEMR)'s Human Resources Development Agency and Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Training Centre (PPSDM KEBTKE) and CEFIM programme organised a webinar on Clean Energy Finance and Investment in Indonesia on July 2023 to increase the knowledge of MEMR's officer and the broader community to achieve NZE target.

Under the Indonesia's Financial Services Authority (OJK)-OECD secondment program, the CEFIM Programme also organise a series of knowledge exchange and capacity building activities, including targeted Focus Group Discussions (FGD) with Indonesian stakeholders to support OJK on transition finance (1st FGD on March 2023), energy savings insurance (1st FGD on March 2023), and will also cover the topics on carbon markets, blended finance and climate stress tests.

Under the CEFIM Philippines programme, funded under SIPA, the OECD completed the Clean Energy Finance and Investment Roadmap of the Philippines focusing on offshore wind and energy efficiency in public buildings. The Roadmap was published in March 2024 and officially launched in Manila on 7 March, with a back-to-back workshop on offshore wind and energy efficiency finance.

Under the CEFIM Vietnam programme, the OECD undertook a mission in Hanoi in May 2023, building on the OECD Clean Energy Finance and Investment Policy Review of Viet Nam launched in November 2021, as well as the MoU signed between the OECD and Viet Nam, including follow-up of the Review. We conducted a series of bilateral meetings with government ministries, public utilities, international organisations, multilateral development banks and private sector representatives to explore priorities and relevant implementation-support activities that OECD CEFIM Programme could undertake to help mobilise finance and investment for clean energy in Viet Nam. We have been since engaging with the Ministry of Finance of Vietnam to discuss technical assistance for the Ministry of Finance of Vietnam linked to the country's sustainable finance activities and agenda.

RECENT ACTIVITIES AND PUBLICATIONS (Feb 23-April 24)

Activity	Date	Location
Kick-Off meeting: Framework for industry's net-zero transition in Indonesia (focus on iron and steel sector)	26 October 2023	Jakarta, Indonesia
Kick-Off meeting: Framework for industry's net-zero transition in Thailand (focus on petrochemical sector and plastics value chain)	15 February 2024	Bangkok, Thailand
Focus Group Discussion I: Transition finance in Indonesia	21 March 2023	Virtual

2nd Indonesia Clean Energy Finance and Investment (CEFI) Training Week	19-23 June 2023	Yogyakarta, Indonesia
Clean Energy Finance and Investment in Indonesia webinar	26 July 2023	Virtual
Launch of the Clean Energy Finance and Investment Roadmap of the Philippines and a back-to-back workshop on offshore wind and energy efficiency in public buildings.	6-7 March 2024	Manilla, Philippines
Second stakeholder consultation workshop: OECD Clean Energy Finance and Investment Roadmap of Thailand	24 November 2024	Bangkok, Thailand
Publications		
Clean Energy Finance and Investment Roadmap of the Philippines (20 Feb 2024) & Policy Highlights		
FORTHCOMING ACTIVITIES AND PUBLICATIONS (April-December 2024)		
Activity	Date	Location
Framework for industry's net-zero transition in Thailand: Workshop on the selection of low-carbon options for the decarbonisation of the petrochemical industry and plastic value chain.	4 April 2024	Virtual
Technical Advisory Committee meeting: Framework for industry's net-zero transition in Indonesia (focus on textile and iron and steel sector)	24 April 2024	Jakarta, Indonesia
Framework for industry's net-zero transition in Thailand: 2 nd Project meeting for the validation of the business cases relating to the decarbonisation of the petrochemical industry and plastic value chain in Thailand.	Q4 2024	Bangkok, Thailand
3rd Indonesia Clean Energy Finance and Investment (CEFI) Training Week	8-11 October 2024	TBC, Indonesia
Stakeholder consultation on Climate Transition Planning for Financial Institutions, Issuers, and Publicly Listed Companies in Indonesia	Apr	Virtual
Stakeholder Consultation on De-Risking Instruments and Unlocking Energy Saving Insurance (ESI) in Indonesia	May	Jakarta, Indonesia (hybrid event)
RETScren training with the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources (MEMR) and Financial Service Authorities (OJK)	July	Jakarta, Indonesia
Focus Group Discussion (FGD) on climate transition planning with financial institutions for the 1 st draft of deliverable	August	Jakarta, Indonesia (hybrid event)
ESI Development Workshop	October	Jakarta, Indonesia
Workshop on The Draft of ESI Need Assessment Result	November	Virtual
Final Deliverable and Soft Launching of ESI Need Assessment Result	December	Jakarta, Indonesia
Clean Energy Finance and Investment Training in the Philippines	Q4 2024	
Publications		
Clean Energy Finance and Investment Roadmap of Thailand	June 2024	Bangkok, Thailand

INNOVATION INITIATIVE

The Innovation Initiative serves as a platform to discuss and exchange experiences among Southeast Asia and OECD Member countries on innovation policies, including digital transformation. The OECD's experience in innovation policy, productivity analysis and digital economy policy, as well as its breadth of statistical evidence, makes it a great resource to support the forging of coherent and comprehensive policy approaches that enable Southeast Asian economies to maximise the benefits of an increasingly digital and innovation-driven global economy, particularly for a post-COVID recovery.

Much of the work of the OECD Committee for Scientific and Technological Policy (CSTP), the OECD Digital Policy Committee (DPC) and the OECD Committee on Consumer Policy (CCP) is highly relevant to the SEA region. The Initiative is further informed by the inclusion of several Southeast Asian countries in various online platforms and databases such as OECD-WTO Trade in Value Added (TiVA).

In 2023, the OECD Digital Policy Committee (DPC), supported by the STI Connectivity Services and Infrastructure unit, undertook the project on Extending Broadband Connectivity in Southeast Asia which concluded, with the publication of the final report on 15 December 2023. This project, grounded in the recently revised OECD Recommendation on Broadband Connectivity [OECD/LEGAL/0322], aimed to assess the overall state of broadband connectivity in Southeast Asia, identifying the main challenges policy makers face to promote the deployment of high-quality broadband networks, and recommending a set of policy actions to improve connectivity in the region. The study focused on 5 countries that are representative of the different framework conditions for broadband development in the region: Cambodia, Indonesia, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam. The preliminary findings of the report were presented at a high-level breakfast event organised on 27 October 2023, in Hanoi (Viet Nam), in the sidelines of the 2023 OECD Southeast Asia Ministerial Forum.

As part of the partnership between OECD and ASEAN on consumer policy, the OECD Committee on Consumer Policy (CCP) is undertaking a "twin transition" project that will benefit from the implementation of the 2022 ASEAN Sustainable Consumption Toolkit. A third Joint Committee meeting with the ASEAN Committee for Consumer Protection, focusing on ecommerce, product safety and sustainable consumption, initially planned to take place in 2023, has been postponed due to preparations for the CCP Ministerial meeting (new date tbc).

As approved by Council, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam will be invited to the CCP Ministerial on 8-9 October 2024 at the OECD in Paris. In addition, selected ASEAN Member States are currently participating in two empirical projects being developed by the CCP, whose results will be presented at the CCP Ministerial. Such participation involves: Cambodia and Thailand being among the 20 countries surveyed by the CCP to test the effects of dark commercial patterns on consumer behaviour and related harms; and Cambodia, the Philippines and Vietnam being among the 18 countries surveyed by the CCP to test consumer attitudes towards sustainable consumption.

In March 2024, Singapore was invited to become a Participant in the CCP and the Working Party on Consumer Product Safety (WPCPS). The ASEAN product recall alert system continues to be integrated in the OECD's GlobalRecalls portal.

As part of the CSTP initiative "S&T Policy 2025", the OECD initiated in 2023 a pilot project with Thailand on science, technology and innovation (STI) strategy for carbon neutrality and transitions. The project aims to make the country the leading case study to implement the OECD Agenda for Transformative STI policies, which is currently under development. Specifically, it will support Thai policymakers in setting strategies and implementing reforms that leverage the STI system to achieve net-zero in three sectors: agrifood, energy (power), and road transport. For each sector, the project aims at developing policy guidance in a range of STI policy domains: public funding and private finance, cross-government co-ordination, and international co-operation. Thailand also continues to participate in the OECD R&D tax incentives survey.

The OECD work on innovative, digital and open government (GOV/INDIGO) in Southeast Asia aims to build digital and open government maturity to deliver better services and policies for people in the region. This

implies bringing countries in SEA closer to OECD standards, promote and exchange knowledge in line with OECD practices, develop regional indicators and benchmarks on digital government and open data, and build public sector capacity. Topics of relevance for the SEA region include the design and delivery of public services, digital public infrastructure including digital identity, AI and data governance in the public sector, and digital investments. This work aligns with OECD strategic priorities for the region including enhancing SEA countries' participation in the OECD bodies, facilitate their potential adherence to the OECD legal instruments, and building an evidence-based foundation to inform ongoing and potential accession processes to the OECD in the future. Furthermore, GOV/INDIGO aims to establish stronger strategic partnerships with other international and regional organisations to bring enduring impact to the region.

RECENT ACTIVITIES AND PUBLICATIONS (Feb 23-April 24)

Activity	Date	Location
OECD/KPC Capacity Building Programme: Cambodia	22-23 May, 2023	Phnom Penh, Cambodia
OECD/KPC Capacity Building Programme: Indonesia	21-22 September, 2023	Bali, Indonesia
OECD workshop on digital government in Thailand (TCP Phase 2)	25-26 September, 2023	Bangkok, Thailand
High-level event on “Extending Broadband Connectivity in Southeast Asia: Promoting investment and competition to close digital divides”, in the side-lines of OECD Southeast Asia Ministerial Forum 2023.	27 October 2023	Hanoi, Viet Nam
Thailand participated in the 2023 OECD R&D tax incentives survey (Dec 2023 - Mar 2024), facilitating the update of the OECD R&D tax incentives database in April 2024.	April 2024	n.a.
Cambodia and Thailand participating in the implementation of an online survey and behavioural experiments testing the effects of dark commercial patterns on consumer behaviour and related harms.	Jan-April 2024	n.a.
Cambodia, the Philippines and Viet Nam participating in the implementation of an online survey and behavioural experiments assessing consumer attitudes towards sustainable consumption.	Jan-April 2024	
Singapore invited to become a Participant in the CCP and WPCPS	Mar 2024	
Thailand is completing a self-assessment tool, underpinned by the OECD Agenda for Transformative STI policies, for the STI strategy for carbon neutrality and transitions project.	January 2024 - ongoing	n.a.

Publications

[OECD \(2023\), *Extending Broadband Connectivity in Southeast Asia*, OECD Publishing, Paris](#)

FORTHCOMING ACTIVITIES AND PUBLICATIONS (April-December 2024)

Activity	Date	Location
Thailand participated in the 2023 OECD R&D tax incentives survey (Dec 2023 – Mar 2024), facilitating the update of the OECD INNOTAX portal in June 2024, including country page for Thailand .	June 2024	n.a.
As part of the STI strategy for carbon neutrality and transitions project, 2 workshops will be organised with Thai authorities and other stakeholders to discuss how Thai policymakers can best	September-October 2024	Virtual/Thailand (tbd)

leverage STI to enable decarbonisation in the three targeted sectors (agriculture, energy (power), and road transport).		
OECD/KPC Capacity Building Programme: Lao PDR	20 – 21 May, 2024	Vientiane
OECD/KPC Capacity Building Programme: Viet Nam (TBC)	October 2024	TBC
Network on Innovative, Digital and Open Governments in Southeast Asia (INDIGO Network)	3 September 2024	Seoul, Korea
OECD workshop on <i>open</i> government in Thailand (TCP2)	September 2024	Bangkok, Thailand
OECD workshop on Digital Government Index and OECD OURdata Index in Southeast Asia (in the context of the activities of <i>OECD Government at a Glance Southeast Asia</i>)	September 2024 (tbc)	Seoul, Korea (tbc)
Publications		
OECD (2024) Mission-oriented innovation policy in Korea: Challenges, opportunities and future options, OECD Science, Technology and Industry Policy Papers. <i>[forthcoming]</i>		

GENDER INITIATIVE

Building on data and evidence from the fifth edition of the SIGI, released in 2023, the OECD Development Centre released the *SIGI 2024 Regional Report for Southeast Asia: Time to Care* with the support of Korea. The report stresses how discriminatory social institutions curtail girls' and women's rights and opportunities in all aspects of their lives, starting within the family, and emphasises how such discrimination spills over into the economic and public spheres, for example in terms of citizenship rights or in the workplace.

The report explores the specific roles played by the region's complex legal landscape and by the multiple personal status laws. It also underscores how social norms governing gender roles and responsibilities became more restrictive in Southeast Asia between 2014 and 2022. Building on this evidence, the report calls for a transformative shift in terms of gender roles and provides policy recommendations that aim to reshape social norms, promote women's empowerment and build a truly inclusive society. Through a specific thematic focus on care, the report illustrates how views on gender roles lead to a care system that primarily relies on women's unpaid work. It places the analysis in the wider context of Southeast Asia's ongoing demographic, educational and economic transitions, revealing that countries will face a growing demand for paid formal care services, a demand for which most of them remain largely unprepared. The analysis highlights the benefits that the development of formal care sectors could bring to Southeast Asia's societies in terms of women's economic empowerment and resilience while stressing three main challenges: labour informality, limited social protection systems and the weight of social norms.

On 28 February 2024, the draft report was presented during the 6th meeting of the Dedicated Working Group on the SIGI, during which representatives from Malaysia's Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development, the Philippine Commission on Women (PCW) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) provided comments and shared ongoing initiatives in the region. The meeting was closed by the Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Korea to the OECD.

On 18 March 2024, the report was launched during the 68th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in New York. The high-level launch was opened by the Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative of Korea to the United Nations and by Ulrik Knudsen, Deputy Secretary General of the OECD, and was closed by Ragnheiður Árnadóttir, Director of the OECD Development Centre. Panel discussants included representatives from UN Women, The Asia Foundation and the International Women's Rights Action Watch-Asia Pacific (IWRAP-AP).

RECENT ACTIVITIES AND PUBLICATIONS (Feb 23-April 24)

Activity	Date	Location
6 th meeting of the Dedicated Working Group on the Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI)	28 February 2024	Virtual
Roundtable with foundations and the private sector ahead of the launch of the SIGI 2024 Regional Report for Southeast Asia	15 March 2024	New York, USA
Launch of the SIGI 2024 Regional Report for Southeast Asia	18 March 2023	New York, USA

Publications

[OECD \(2024\), *SIGI 2024 Regional Report for Southeast Asia: Time to Care, Social Institutions and Gender Index*, OECD Publishing, Paris](#)

FORTHCOMING ACTIVITIES AND PUBLICATIONS (April-December 2024)

Activity	Date	Location
Care economy in Southeast Asia (tbc)		

TOURISM INITIATIVE

The Tourism initiative aims to support Southeast Asian countries in developing active tourism policies that contribute to the sustainable recovery of tourism post-COVID 19 pandemic and promote digital transition and a greener tourism system, building on the work of the OECD Tourism Committee.

OECD Deputy Secretary General, Yoshiaki Takeuchi, participated in the Japan-ASEAN Special Tourism Ministers Dialogue on 28 October 2023, and provided a lead intervention on the topic of Promoting Sustainable Tourism and Advancing Mutual Exchanges. The meeting was chaired by Japan and Lao PDR and commemorate the 50th year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Co-operation.

OECD (CFE) participated in an ADB Workshop on Regional Co-operation to Promote Sustainable Tourism on 6 November 2023 in Manila, Philippines, and participated in a panel discussion the topic of Tourism, Big Data and Databases. During the workshop the OECD shared the work of the OECD Tourism Committee and its Working Party on Tourism Statistics work to improve the data and evidence base for sustainable tourism policies, including by harnessing new data sources and tools. The following day, 7 November 2023, the OECD (CFE) participated in a Roundtable Discussion on Enhancing Regional Co-operation for Sustainable Tourism and Digitalisation. During the roundtable the programme of work and priorities of OECD Tourism Committee's were presented and potential synergies with the tourism agenda and work of other international institutions in Asia Pacific was discussed. The workshop and roundtable brought together key stakeholders in the Asia Pacific region, including from Indonesia, Singapore and the ASEAN Tourism Unit.

On 24 January 2024, the APEC Executive Director wrote to the OECD to confirm that APEC member economies had approved the request by the OECD for the three-year guest status in the Tourism Working Group. The guest status will be valid until 31 December 2026.

RECENT ACTIVITIES AND PUBLICATIONS (Feb 23-April 24)

Activity	Date	Location
Japan-ASEAN Special Tourism Ministers Dialogue	28 October 2023	Tokyo, Japan
ADB Workshop and Roundtable on Regional Co-operation to Promote Sustainable Tourism	6-7 November 2023	Manila, Philippines
Guest Status in APEC Tourism Working Group renewed	24 January 2024	

FORTHCOMING ACTIVITIES AND PUBLICATIONS (April-December 2024)

Publications

OECD Tourism Trends and Policies 2024 (forthcoming) includes country profile for Indonesia

REGIONAL ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

The *Economic Outlook for Southeast Asia, China and India* is the OECD's longest lasting and flagship publication concerning Southeast Asia and Emerging Asia. Each publication consists of three parts: a regional macroeconomic monitor, a thematic focus aligned with the priorities of the ASEAN/East Asia Summit agenda, and a series of country notes related to the thematic focus.

Two Outlook Consultation Group (OCG) Meetings have been conducted for each edition of the Outlook. The first OCG Meeting for each edition sets the thematic focus, while the second provides an opportunity for dialogue on the draft chapters. These meetings gather OECD and regional experts as well as country representatives for exchanges of views designed to and are designed to shape the publication to best suit regional needs. The 22nd and most recent Outlook Consultation Group Meeting was held on 14 March 2024 as the second such meeting for the 2024 edition.

In addition to the OCG Meetings, several consultations were conducted on missions to the region and additional policy dialogues in the region were held with Emerging Asia's representatives.

RECENT ACTIVITIES AND PUBLICATIONS (Feb 23-April 24)

Activity	Date	Location
Launch of <i>Economic Outlook for Southeast Asia, China, and India 2023</i>	March 2023	Virtual, Paris
1 st Outlook Consultation Group Meeting for <i>Economic Outlook for Southeast Asia, China and India 2024</i> (21 st OCG Meeting)	March 2023	Virtual, Paris
Launch of <i>Economic Outlook for Southeast Asia, China and India 2023 - Update</i>	September 2023	Jakarta, Indonesia
Web release of <i>Fostering Catastrophe Bond Markets in Asia and the Pacific</i>	February 2024	Virtual, Paris
2 nd Outlook Consultation Group Meeting for <i>Economic Outlook for Southeast Asia, China and India 2024</i> (22 nd OCG Meeting)	March 2024	Virtual, Paris
Launch of <i>Fostering Catastrophe Bond Markets in Asia and the Pacific</i>	March 2024	Virtual, Paris
<i>Nature-based solutions for flood management in Asia and the Pacific</i> (Working Paper 351)	March 2024	OECD Website

Publications

Economic Outlook for Southeast Asia China and India 2023: Reviving Tourism Post-Pandemic

Economic Outlook for Southeast Asia China and India 2023: Resilience Under Uncertainty

Fostering Catastrophe Bond Markets in Asia and the Pacific

Nature-based solutions for flood management in Asia and the Pacific (Working Paper 351)

FORTHCOMING ACTIVITIES AND PUBLICATIONS (April-December 2024)

Activity	Date	Location
Launch of <i>Economic Outlook for Southeast Asia, China and India 2024: Developing Amid Disasters</i>	May 2024	OECD MCM, Paris
Presentations of <i>Economic Outlook for Southeast Asia, China and India 2024: Developing Amid Disasters</i>	May-June 2024 (TBD)	Virtual, Paris

Publications

Economic Outlook for Southeast Asia, China and India 2024: Developing Amid Disasters

COMPETITION INITIATIVE

Sixteen jurisdictions from Asia-Pacific countries, represented at the senior level, attended the 8th meeting of High-Level Representatives of Competition Authorities of Asia-Pacific. This annual meeting, organised by the OECD, is an opportunity to discuss topics that are of common interest to the competition authorities in the region bringing the policy viewpoints and experience of the OECD to bear on the region. Following recent OECD work on environmental issues, the topic of the meeting was Competition Policy and Environmental Considerations.

The Initiative also hosted a workshop for new staff of competition agencies with the Vietnam Competition Commission and the OECD Korea Policy Centre. The workshop entailed three days of training on all areas of competition law (cartels, abuses, and mergers).

RECENT ACTIVITIES AND PUBLICATIONS (Feb 23-April 24)

Activity	Date	Location
8th meeting of High-Level Representatives of Competition Authorities of Asia-Pacific	6 December 2023	Paris, France
Workshop for New Staff of Competition Agencies	9 th -11 th April 2024	Hanoi, Vietnam