

Promotion of Sustainable Agricultural Value Chains in ASEAN (ASEAN AgriTrade II)

Context

The agriculture and food sector are vital for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Member States (AMS) and a key area to realising the ASEAN Economic Community's vision of a unified market with free movement of goods and services. In a lot of AMS, the sector is a main driver for employment and income generation. However, the agri-food sector is facing tremendous challenges such as climate change, urbanisation, geopolitical conflicts, biodiversity loss, water scarcity, land degradation, and poverty, which fosters food insecurity.

For ASEAN's emerging economies like Cambodia, Lao PDR and Viet Nam (CLV), another challenge lies in the implementation of further harmonisation measures to promote sustainable and resilient agricultural value chains.

ASEAN's Vision and Strategic Plan for Food, Agriculture, and Forestry 2021-2025 outlines a shared vision for sustainable agriculture and responsible natural resource use, addressing climate change-related impacts. The accompanying Strategic Plan of Action for ASEAN Cooperation on Crops 2021-2025 focuses on harmonising quality and sustainability standards, among other things. Additionally, ASEAN is now reviewing current action plans until 2025 and which will be the basis for renewed strategic plans. However, compliance with sustainability and quality standards in agricultural value chains still requires improvement of national laws, regulations, and guidelines in line with ASEAN agreements and their effective implementation within the country and across national borders.

Building on the successful implementation of its first phase, the ASEAN AgriTrade II project together with stakeholders and partners in ASEAN, aims to address this challenge by ensuring that AMS implement harmonisation measures to meet sustainability and quality standards in regional and global agricultural value chains. This will open new markets and give new incentives to the private sector for import and export.



Project name	Promotion of Sustainable Agricultural Value Chains in ASEAN (ASEAN AgriTrade II)
Commissioned by	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Project region	ASEAN Member States (AMS), with pilot activities in Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Viet Nam
Lead executing agency	Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)
Duration	February 2024 to January 2027

The project cooperates closely with the Food, Agriculture and Forestry Division (FAFD) of the ASEAN Secretariat as the main coordination mechanism to support the ASEAN Sectoral Working Group Crops (ASWGC) and aligned expert platforms such as the Expert Working Group on Good Agricultural Practices (EWG-GAP). The project also supports further relevant ASEAN and AMS bodies on a regional and national level, particularly in CLV countries. The aim is to strengthen sustainable economic development with improved environmental and climate-related standards in agricultural value chains for deeper regional cooperation and integration.

In doing so, the ASEAN AgriTrade II project seeks to enhance sustainable agriculture and trade in the region, with an additional focus on CLV countries, through public-private partnerships. It will involve the private sector, including farmers' associations and micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), civil society, women business networks, and development partners, to promote knowledge exchange on sustainable agriculture for food security among AMS.



Page 1 (Left) During the first phase of AIF, Na Nga Cooperative worked together with a women's group in Son La, Viet Nam. Photo: GIZ/Vu Chau Ngoc.

Page 1 (Right) The project will continue to support regional climate knowledge exchanges and facilitate discussions on implementing ASEAN guidelines. Photo: GIZ/ Pipat Noithai.

Page 2. The third AIF Knowledge Exchange in Bangkok brought together partners from CLMV countries. Photo: GIZ/Proramatephoto.

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The Objective

The regional project is working in three components :

- (1) Improve the strategic orientation and coordination among AMS and regional stakeholders for harmonising the implementation of sustainability and quality standards in agricultural value chains.
- (2) Ensure that public and private stakeholders in AMS, with focus on the CLV countries, benefit from regional exchange on the application of sustainability and quality standards in agricultural value chains.
- (3) Strengthening the capacities of public and private actors in AMS, particularly the CLV countries, to implement climate-sensitive approaches to achieve sustainable agricultural trade at national level.

The project will contribute to enhance the Strategic Plan for ASEAN Cooperation on Crops and align with the ASEAN Vision for Food, Agriculture, and Forestry for 2021-2025 and will also support the follow-on plan.

Approach

- **Align activities with ASEAN strategic goals and frameworks**, through close consultation with ASEAN partners and decision-making bodies at national and regional levels.
- **Climate-related knowledge exchange**. The project continues to support climate-related exchanges on

regional platforms such as the Climate Resilience Network (CRN) to facilitate discussions on implementing ASEAN guidelines and good practices. In partnership with regional stakeholders, a new ASEAN Climate Leadership Programme (ACLCP) will be launched to bring together young ASEAN stakeholders and strengthen their role in policymaking on climate change and adaptation.

- **Agriinnovation Fund in ASEAN (AIF)**. The AIF aims to promote market-driven innovations in agriculture, focusing on improving production, processing, marketing, and market access. During the second phase of AIF, the project will target specific aspects within ASEAN frameworks, focusing on increased private sector involvement in sustainability, decarbonisation and digitalising agricultural value chains in the CLV countries.
- **Gender mainstreaming**. The project will use a gender-sensitive approach to empower women and youth in agricultural value chains. The ASEAN Ministers Meeting on Agriculture and Forestry (AMAF) regional guidelines on promoting gender equality will support these efforts. Additionally, the project is actively seeking showcase examples of good practices from AMS that demonstrate the role of gender equality in the context of agricultural value chain development and its connection to addressing climate change.

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