

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

Context

Agriculture and food systems are central to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)'s economic integration and a major source of employment and income across Member States. However, the agri-food sector faces increasing pressures from climate change, resource constraints, environmental degradation, and socio-economic challenges. 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 has provided a common framework for sustainable agriculture, climate resilience, and harmonised quality and sustainability standards. As ASEAN finalises its post-2025 strategic plans, strengthening national laws, regulations, and implementation mechanisms remains essential to ensure compliance across borders and value chains.

ASEAN AgriTrade II builds on the success of its first phase to support harmonised sustainability and quality standards, strengthen agricultural value chains, and improve access to regional and global markets. The project supports relevant ASEAN and national institutions, with a particular focus on CLV countries. Through public-private partnerships, the project engages farmers' organisations, MSMEs, civil society, women's business networks, and development partners to promote knowledge exchange on sustainable agriculture and food security across ASEAN. The project works closely with the ASEAN Secretariat's Food, Agriculture and Forestry Division (FAFD), supporting the ASEAN Sectoral Working Group on Crops (ASWGC) and related expert platforms, including the Expert Working Group on Good Agricultural Practices (EWG-GAP).



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 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 Food, Agriculture and Forestry Sectoral Plan 2026-2030 and will also support the follow-on plan.



Page 1 (Left). Participants gain hands-on experience during the ASEAN Climate Leadership Programme 2025 field visit. Photo: GIZ

Page 1 (Right). Working with ASEAN, its Member States, and partners to advance the ASEAN Food, Agriculture and Forestry (FAF) Sectoral Plan 2026-2030. Photo: GIZ

Page 2. The third ACLP batch concludes in 2025 after six months of intensive learning. Photo: GIZ

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Progress and Achievements

Working on ASEAN agendas: The project aligns German and ASEAN strategic goals through close consultation with regional and national decision-making bodies. It supports relevant ASEAN bodies to develop and implement key frameworks, including the Food, Agriculture and Forestry Sectoral Plan 2026–2030 and the Strategic Plans of the ASEAN Sectoral Working Group on Crops (2021–2025 and 2026–2030), strengthening climate-smart and regenerative agriculture, food and nutrition security, and sustainable trade requirements for resilient agri-food value chains.

Climate and environmental resilience: Regional platforms, including the ASEAN Climate Resilience Network and the ASEAN Climate Leadership Programme (ACLP), support exchange and promote on topics such as Climate-Smart Agriculture (CSA) in line with the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and National Adaptation Plans.

Implemented over six months in 2025, the third run of the ACLP brought together future climate leaders and policymakers from eight ASEAN Member States. Designed with good practices from Germany, the European Union and ASEAN partners, the programme strengthened leadership knowledge, skills, and mindsets, with a focus on climate policy, CSA, and inclusivity. Through Personal Change Projects, participants drove cross-sectoral actions in agriculture, forestry, rural development, food security, and climate policy, delivering tangible benefits for their sectors and communities.

Capacity building and international engagement: The project strengthened ASEAN stakeholders' capacity to engage in international climate policy on the agriculture–climate–nutrition nexus. Through targeted support jointly with the Capacity for Nutrition (C4N) initiative, including preparation and debriefings for participation in UNFCCC climate negotiations, ASEAN delegates enhanced their commitment to NDCs and rules-based global policy, enabling stronger representation and advocacy of ASEAN priorities at the international level.

Private sector engagement: Together with the Piloting Sustainable Uses of Rice Straw initiative, the project tests practical ways to collect, process, and reuse rice straw as a raw material for organic fertiliser, an alternative to single-use plastic products or to sustainable packaging. Implemented with ASEAN partners, the initiative promotes regional public-private dialogues and training, scales good practices in agricultural residue processing with German, European, and local businesses, and translates lessons learned into policy recommendations to support ASEAN economic integration. The project also initiated further engagement of local cooperatives and small businesses in CLV to improve quality requirements for trade in the region and beyond.

Equality and inclusion: The project highlights inclusivity and gender equality within its interventions, guided by the ASEAN Ministers Meeting on Agriculture and Forestry (AMAF) approach to gender mainstreaming in the food, agriculture and forestry sectors.

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