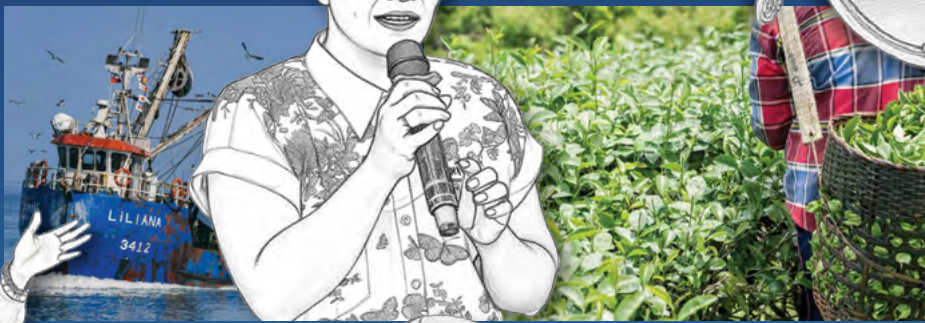




Australian  
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ASEAN-Australia  
Counter Trafficking

# ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT 2024-25



## Document information

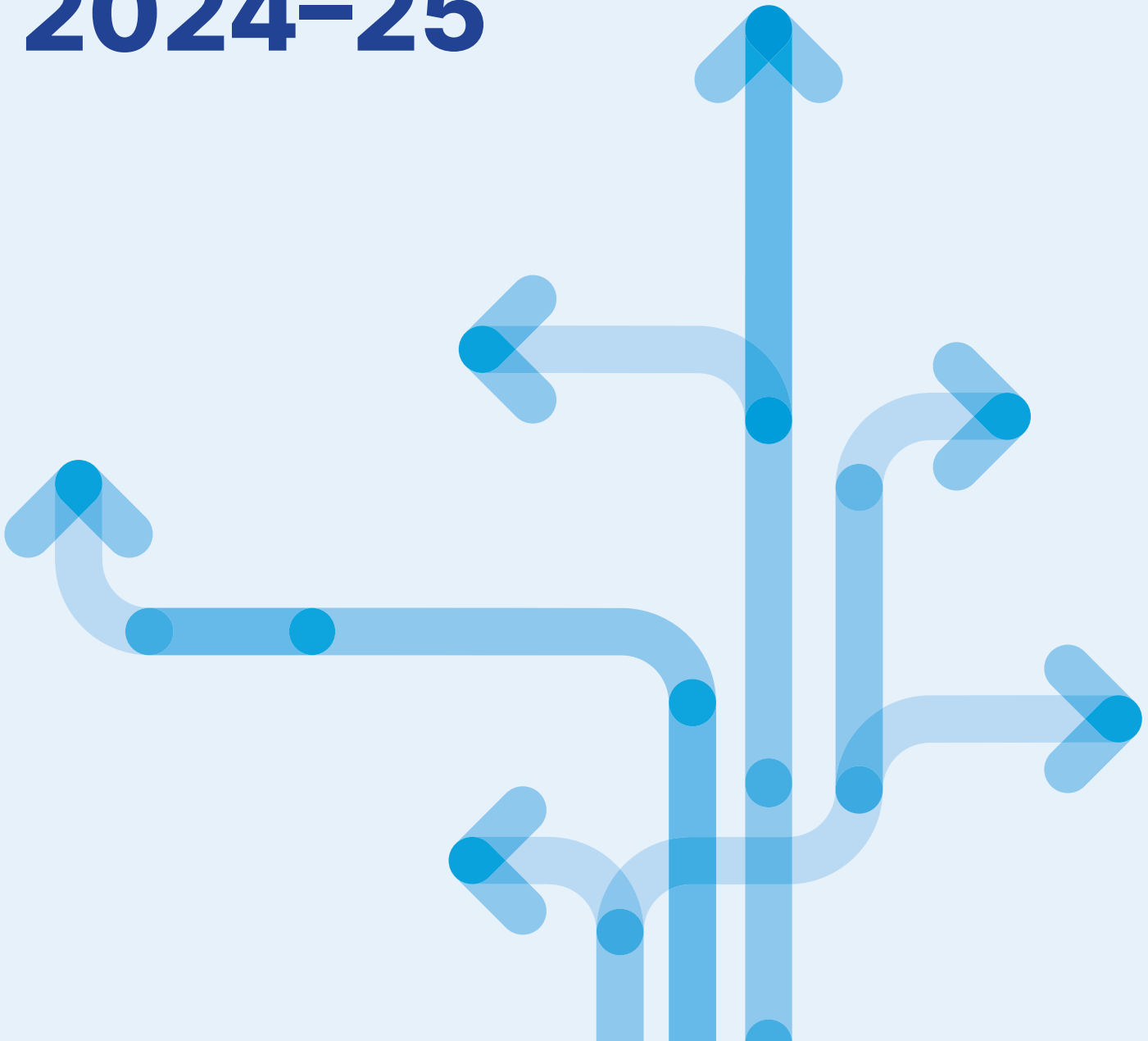
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# **ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT 2024-25**



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# ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

<b>ACTIP</b>	ASEAN Convention against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children
<b>ACWC</b>	ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children
<b>AICHR</b>	ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights
<b>ASEAN</b>	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
<b>ASEAN-ACT</b>	ASEAN–Australia Counter Trafficking
<b>CACJ</b>	Council of ASEAN Chief Justices
<b>CET</b>	competency enhancement training
<b>CSO</b>	civil society organisation
<b>CTIP</b>	counter–trafficking in persons
<b>EOPO</b>	end-of-program outcome
<b>GEDSI</b>	gender equality, disability and social inclusion
<b>GI-TOC</b>	Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime
<b>HSU</b>	Heads of Specialist Anti-Trafficking Units
<b>IACAT</b>	Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking (Philippines)
<b>IJM</b>	International Justice Mission
<b>IOM</b>	International Organization for Migration
<b>JRTI</b>	Judicial Research and Training Institute (Laos)
<b>MEL</b>	monitoring, evaluation and learning
<b>MERL</b>	monitoring, evaluation, reporting and learning
<b>MoSVY</b>	Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation (Cambodia)
<b>MSDHS</b>	Ministry of Social Development and Human Security (Thailand)
<b>NCCT</b>	National Committee for Counter Trafficking (Cambodia)
<b>NGO</b>	non-government organisation
<b>PNPA</b>	Philippine National Police Academy
<b>SOMTC</b>	Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime
<b>TIP</b>	trafficking in persons
<b>UNODC</b>	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime



Photo: Consultation with multisectoral stakeholders for Thailand's Blueprint for People-Centric Courts to prioritise victim dignity, safety and accessibility, held in Bangkok (June 2025).

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is the first annual progress report of the Australian Government-funded ASEAN–Australia Counter Trafficking (ASEAN-ACT) program under the extended contract, which covers the period 19 November 2023 to 30 September 2028. We refer to this extension as Phase 2 of ASEAN-ACT. This annual progress report for Phase 2 of the program covers the period 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025 (FY 2024–25). This report provides an overview of our work in FY 2024–25, and updates on our progress towards achieving our end-of-program outcomes (EOPOs):

## EOPO 1

---

ASEAN's planning, monitoring and reporting of ASEAN Convention against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (ACTIP) implementation is increasingly effective, advances gender equality, disability and social inclusion (GEDSI) and upholds victim rights.

## EOPO 2

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ASEAN Member States are increasingly capable of implementing their ACTIP obligations, particularly those that advance GEDSI and uphold victim rights.

## EOPO 3

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ASEAN's and ASEAN Member States' policies and practices are inclusive, influenced by relevant stakeholders and aligned with the ACTIP.

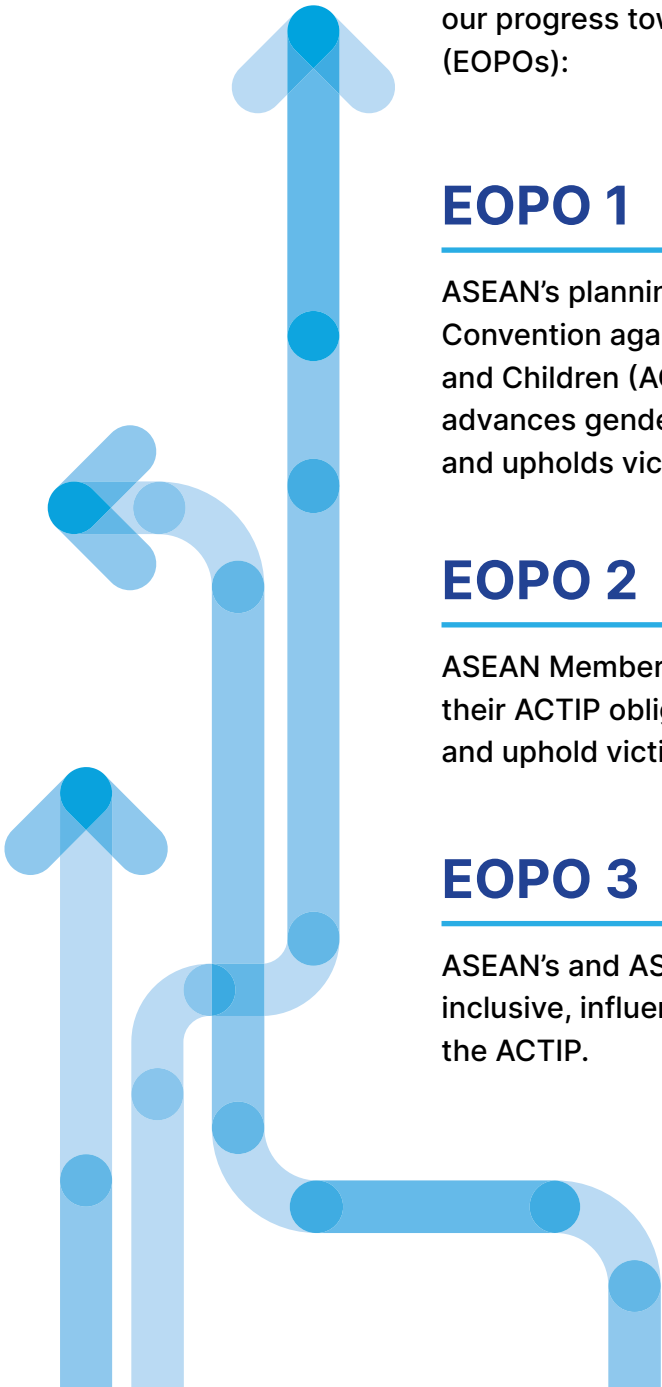


Photo: Life Haven Center for Independent Living, supported by ASEAN-ACT, conducted a 3-day workshop with stakeholders on disability inclusion and counter-trafficking in Quezon City, Philippines (March 2025).



During this reporting period, we focused on implementing planned activities in Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, the Philippines and Vietnam. We also implemented regional activities through our partnership with ASEAN, involving all ASEAN Member States. Our activities focused on addressing vulnerabilities to trafficking, interagency and transnational cooperation and responding to the evolving context of trafficking in persons. In 2024, we commenced a grants program for organisations of people with disability and a counter-trafficking in persons leadership program. This report summarises our progress in implementing these activities.

Through five multi-year projects in six ASEAN countries, we delivered 229 activities. Through these 229 activities delivered, we reached 4,945 state and non-state counter-trafficking in persons stakeholders, 55% women (see [Section 5](#) – Selected output results).

ASEAN-ACT operates in a complex and evolving environment with a diverse range of stakeholders across the region. The implementation challenges we experienced during the reporting period include staff turnover and restructuring among partner agencies, and competing partner priorities or changes in the priorities of partners. Despite the challenges, we reflected on progress and identified actions to mitigate our challenges – we assessed that the program is on track to realise its intended contributions to the three EOPOs by September 2028. Below are some examples of achievements realised through partnerships and collaborations at regional and national levels.

**EOP0 1** – we supported the ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC) in developing a regional framework on monitoring and reporting of implementation of the ACTIP and the ASEAN Multi-Sectoral Work Plan Against Trafficking in Persons 2023–2028 (Bohol TIP Work Plan 2.0). The framework was adopted ad referendum by SOMTC, has been published on the [ASEAN website](#), presented and discussed in detail during a regional workshop in Vietnam (March 2025).

In partnership with the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC), we developed a guidebook on monitoring the implementation of victim-centred and gender-sensitive approaches in counter-trafficking in persons efforts. The guidebook was endorsed by the ACWC, and ACWC representatives agreed to pilot the guidebook in the Philippines and Thailand. Three workshops were held in the Philippines and two workshops in Thailand to train participants on how to use the guidebook and its accompanying maturity tracking tool. The combined results of the pilot in the Philippines and Thailand will be presented to the ACWC regional meeting in November 2025, with lessons and recommendations for improvement and next steps.



Photo: SOMTC and AICHR representatives with Indonesia's Vice Minister of Human Rights, H.E. Mugiyanto (far right on opposite page), at the launch of the ASEAN Guideline on the Implementation of the Non-Punishment Principle for Protection of Victims of Trafficking in Persons at the ASEAN Secretariat in Jakarta, Indonesia (June 2025).

**EOPO 2** – in partnership with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), we completed a legislative review of trafficking in persons and corruption laws. The review findings will serve as a foundational resource to initiate dialogue and consultations with targeted ASEAN Member States to enhance understanding of the nexus between trafficking in persons (TIP) and corruption. We supported a roundtable discussion on the criminalisation of TIP and corruption in Thailand in February 2025.

We continued our support to Thailand’s Counter-Trafficking in Persons (CTIP) Centre of Excellence, with strategic oversight from the governments of Thailand and Australia. The CTIP Centre of Excellence is an example of improved institutional capacity that advances gender-responsive and inclusive counter-trafficking initiatives. The development of the curriculum was informed by regional and global evidence-based good practices. During the reporting period, three courses were



**EOPPO 3** – we commissioned a study to examine the extent to which the non-punishment principle is reflected in laws, policies and practices in ASEAN Member States. In response to the study’s recommendations, the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) and the SOMTC initiated the development of the ASEAN Guideline on the Implementation of the Non-Punishment Principle for the Protection of Victims of Trafficking in Persons, an initiative supported by ASEAN-ACT. The guideline was endorsed in May 2025, and launched in June 2025 by SOMTC Philippines, AICHR Indonesia and the Australian Mission to ASEAN.

Our program is advancing gender equality and disability equity through a twin-track approach that includes targeted activities and ensuring that gender equality and disability equity principles are integrated across the program. Research and analysis conducted by the program on the nexus between disability and trafficking in persons, and child and forced marriage have informed our program planning and implementation over the reporting period. We supported target ASEAN Member States and relevant ASEAN sectoral bodies to consult with organisations of people with disability and victim-survivors of trafficking during policy development initiatives. Through a grants program, we entered into partnership with three organisations of people with disability in Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand. These organisations are providing disability-related training and technical advice to inform counter-trafficking policies and programs. All of our activities with ASEAN incorporate gender equality and disability principles and our multi-year partnership with the ACWC has a targeted focus on building the capacity of frontline responders, including police, prosecutors, social workers, health professionals and non-government organisations, to apply gender equality, disability and social inclusion (GEDSI) concepts and ‘do no harm’ principles.

Through this report, we present and share with you selected change stories and evidence of success at the regional level, and by country.



Photo: Dr Dante Rigmalia, Chairperson of Indonesia's National Disabilities Commission, at a workshop led by Yayasan Sakura Indonesia Al Jamaan, supported by ASEAN-ACT and held in Jakarta (November 2024).

# Achievement highlights from 2024-25



6 regional guidelines supported

229 counter-trafficking in persons events delivered

1,074 non-state stakeholders participated across all events – 62% are women

4,945 participants across all delivered events

136 non-state stakeholders are from the private sector



670 non-state stakeholders are from non-government / civil society organisations

3,871 government stakeholders participated across all events – 53% are women



THAILAND'S

Modern Slavery

Conference

1

## About ASEAN-ACT

Photo: ASEAN-ACT Thailand team support the 2nd Modern Slavery Conference held in Bangkok (March 2025).

**During Phase 1 (2018–2023), the program strengthened government capacity to identify, investigate and prosecute trafficking in persons, alongside generating new research to inform ASEAN policy development.**

**Phase 2 (2024–2028) consolidates and expands this work by deepening partnerships with ASEAN and ASEAN Member States across the following project areas:**

- AA1 – Enhancing collaboration within and across sectors
- AA2 – Institutionalising knowledge and professional development
- AA3 – Improving transparency and accountability in counter-trafficking in persons
- AA4 – Counter-trafficking in persons leadership and coordination
- AA9 – Program governance and enabling functions

In FY 2024–25, our support to regional and national partners transitioned away from the delivery of training, as intended in the ASEAN-ACT investment design document and our theory of change, to a focus on completing some research activities up to the end of 2024, and implementing key activities under each of the five multi-year projects. This different program approach for Phase 2 of ASEAN-ACT recognised that building capacity called for a more nuanced localised approach.

During the financial year 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025 (FY 2024–25), ASEAN-ACT implemented four projects (AA1, AA2, AA3 and AA4) across the ASEAN region and in six targeted ASEAN Member States (Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam).

During the reporting period, we also supported Timor-Leste to develop its counter-trafficking capacity at regional events, as an observer and incoming member of ASEAN (full membership was formalised on 26 October 2025).

**Project AA1**

This project supports collaboration between and among relevant agencies, civil society, the private sector and other stakeholders to effectively address trafficking and exploitation, particularly for labour exploitation. We facilitate engagement between relevant partners through policy dialogues and problem-driven approaches, with a particular focus on identification and referral of, and support to, victims; ensuring access to justice for victims, using gender-responsive and victim-centred approaches; and addressing vulnerability to trafficking in persons. We also collaborate with ASEAN sectoral bodies to develop regional policies on topics such as the non-punishment principle and addressing trafficking for child and forced marriage (see story on [page 63](#)).

**Project AA2**

This project supports targeted ASEAN Member States and ASEAN sectoral bodies to institutionalise knowledge and professional development programs on trafficking in persons. The project works within existing regional and national institutions and focuses on enhancing curriculums and existing professional development programs.

**Project AA3**

This project supports ASEAN and targeted ASEAN Member States to be more transparent and accountable in their counter-trafficking in persons (CTIP) responses, particularly in addressing complicity and corruption. Key to improving transparency and accountability in CTIP initiatives is the existence of a robust monitoring and reporting framework. This project also supports and facilitates the strengthening of institutional accountability of ASEAN and ASEAN Member States in their responses to trafficking.

**Project AA4**

This project takes an innovative approach, focusing on investment in CTIP leadership and coordination, to address institutional challenges in strengthening CTIP governance. The project supports emerging CTIP leaders, individuals or organisations – to strengthen plans, policies and systems relevant to ACTIP implementation at the regional, national and subnational levels.

**Project AA9**

This project contributes to the overall effectiveness of program implementation, governance and enabling functions – contributing to the achievement of all end-of-program outcomes. It includes support to general coordination activities, monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) activities, communication activities, and support to National Program Steering Committee and Regional Program Steering Committee meetings.

# ASEAN-ACT's theory of change

## BROADER GOAL

ASEAN MEMBER STATES HAVE EFFECTIVE JUSTICE SYSTEMS THAT PROVIDE JUST PUNISHMENT OF TRAFFICKERS AND PROTECT THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF VICTIMS

## PRINCIPLES

Promote 'do no harm' principle

Work towards sustainability

Driven by locally led and participatory approaches

Enhance multi-disciplinary collaboration

Identify areas to value-add and leverage existing resources and partnerships

Assess and mitigate climate risks

## END-OF-PROGRAM OUTCOMES (September 2028)

**1**



ASEAN's planning, monitoring and reporting of ACTIP implementation is increasingly effective, advances GEDSI and upholds victim rights

**2**




ASEAN Member States are increasingly capable of implementing their ACTIP obligations, particularly those that advance GEDSI and uphold victim rights

**3**



ASEAN's and ASEAN Member States' policies and practices are inclusive, influenced by relevant stakeholders and aligned with the ACTIP

**5**



ASEAN Member State agencies are implementing anti-corruption measures to address complicity in trafficking in persons cases

**6**



ASEAN and member states have enhanced cooperation on counter-trafficking initiatives

**7**




ASEAN and member states' implementation of the ACTIP is increasingly informed by regional and global evidence-based trends and good practices

**8**



ASEAN Member State agencies are transparent and accountable in implementing counter-trafficking initiatives

**1**




ASEAN Member State agencies have improved legal and policy frameworks to implement their ACTIP obligations

**2**




ASEAN and member states are effectively implementing gender-responsive and inclusive counter-trafficking initiatives

**3**



Non-state actors, including marginalised groups and victim-survivors, are influencing laws, policies and practices

**4**



ASEAN and member states have gender-responsive and inclusive monitoring, reporting and learning systems

**7**

Commission research on emerging trends or issues, including climate change

**8**

Promote advocacy to integrate GEDSI and victim rights into policy development

**9**

Facilitate regional exchange for peer-to-peer learning on good practices

**10**

Develop and/or review national referral mechanisms

**11**

Support capacity development of state agencies on counter-trafficking planning, monitoring and reporting

**12**

Facilitate regional and/or national dialogue on data collection and harmonisation

## INFLUENCING ACTIVITIES

**1**

Develop policy briefs for policy reforms on identified priorities

**2**

Support platforms and networking for counter-trafficking collaboration

**3**

Facilitate multisectoral and inclusive policy dialogues and policy development

**4**

Facilitate coalition building for policy engagement and reforms

**5**

Support interagency meetings or workshops on counter-trafficking collaboration and/or procedures

**6**

Facilitate dialogue on the link between corruption and trafficking in persons



Photo: Thai participant in the CTIP Leadership Excellence in ASEAN Program (LEAP) at the first in-person workshop in Bangkok, Thailand (January 2025).

# Performance status on achieving intermediate outcomes

Program's intermediate outcomes	Status
1 ASEAN Member State agencies have improved legal and policy frameworks to implement their ACTIP obligations	On track to achieve by 2028
2 ASEAN and member states are effectively implementing gender-responsive and inclusive counter-trafficking initiatives	On track to achieve by 2028
3 Non-state actors, including marginalised groups and victim-survivors, are influencing laws, policies and practices	On track to achieve by 2028
4 ASEAN and member states have gender-responsive and inclusive monitoring, reporting and learning systems	On track to achieve by 2028
5 ASEAN Member State agencies are implementing anti-corruption measures to address complicity in trafficking in persons cases	Some delay but will be back on track during next reporting period
6 ASEAN and member states have enhanced cooperation on counter-trafficking initiatives	On track to achieve by 2028
7 ASEAN and member states' implementation of the ACTIP is increasingly informed by regional and global evidence-based trends and good practices	On track to achieve by 2028
8 ASEAN Member State agencies are transparent and accountable in implementing counter-trafficking initiatives	On track to achieve by 2028

# 2

## Progress towards end-of-program outcomes

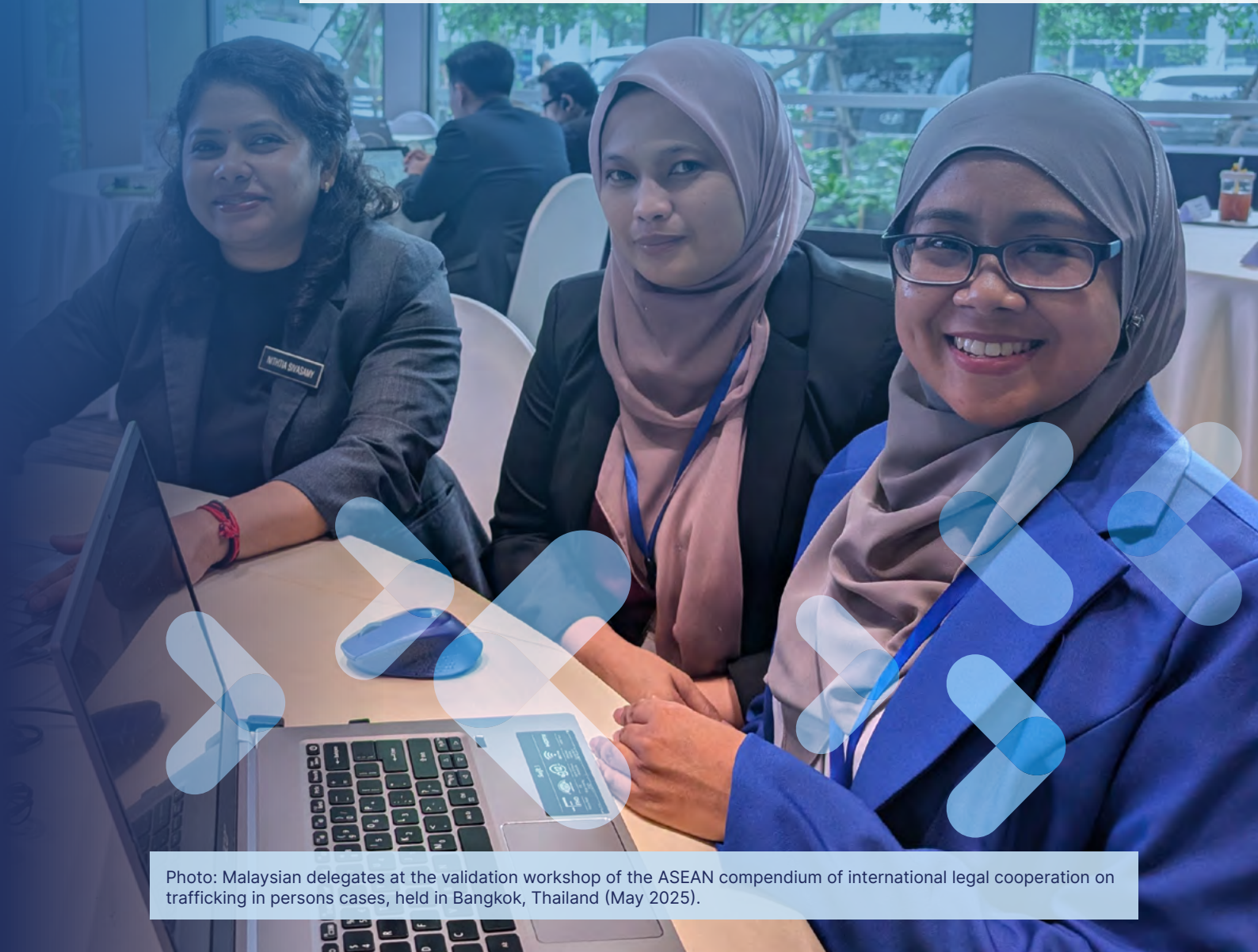


Photo: Malaysian delegates at the validation workshop of the ASEAN compendium of international legal cooperation on trafficking in persons cases, held in Bangkok, Thailand (May 2025).

## EPOPO 1

### Planning, monitoring and reporting of ACTIP implementation

**ASEAN's planning, monitoring and reporting of ACTIP implementation is increasingly effective, advances GESDI and upholds victim rights.**

In FY 2024–25, ASEAN-ACT continued to work with the Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC) and targeted ASEAN sectoral bodies to support their planning, monitoring and reporting of ACTIP implementation.

#### KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

In FY 2024–25, key achievements that contributed towards achieving EPOPO 1 included a regional monitoring and reporting framework, the pilot of a monitoring framework on the implementation of gender-sensitive and victim-centred approaches, and socialisation of the national ACTIP representative mechanism.

#### Pilot of ACWC monitoring guidebook

**Context:** In partnership with the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC), we developed a guidebook on monitoring



Photo: Thai government representatives at the first piloting workshop of the ASEAN Guidebook for Monitoring Gender-Sensitive and Victim-Centred Approaches to Trafficking in Persons, held in Bangkok, Thailand (October 2024).

the implementation of victim-centred and gender-sensitive approaches in counter-trafficking in persons (CTIP) efforts. This activity is an example of an initiative by the ACWC to improve monitoring and reporting of its CTIP efforts.

**Achievement:** The Guidebook for Monitoring Gender-Sensitive and Victim-Centred Approaches to Trafficking in Persons was endorsed by the ACWC in September 2023. The guidebook was developed using a participatory approach – with eight consultative workshops in Indonesia, Thailand and Vietnam to clarify the theory of change, and engagement with government and non-government stakeholders throughout the process. The Philippines and Thailand volunteered to pilot the guidebook. By June 2025, three workshops were held in the Philippines and two workshops in Thailand to train participants on how to use the guidebook and the accompanying maturity tracking tool. The second set of workshops compiled and validated feedback, lessons and experiences in trialling the guidebook. The combined results of the pilot in the Philippines and Thailand will be presented to the ACWC regional meeting during the second half of 2025, with lessons and recommendations for improvement and next steps. – [project AA3](#); [intermediate outcomes 4 and 8](#)

### Socialisation of ACWC monitoring guidebook

**Achievement:** The use of the ACWC monitoring guidebook at the national level is contributing to monitoring gender-responsive and victim-centred CTIP initiatives. Through other ASEAN-ACT activities, we are socialising the guidebook and at the same




Photo: Philippine government representatives at the first piloting workshop of the ASEAN Guidebook for Monitoring Gender-Sensitive and Victim-Centred Approaches to Trafficking in Persons, held in Manila, Philippines (February 2025).

time enhancing awareness on GEDSI concepts and ‘do no harm’ principles. We presented the guidebook in Cambodia and Laos and we are also planning to do this in Vietnam (FY26-27). As a result of our activities, partners in Cambodia and Laos are keen to trial the guidebook after the ACWC has considered any updates emerging from the pilot. – [project AA3; intermediate outcomes 4 and 8](#)

### National ACTIP representative mechanism

**Achievement:** We supported the SOMTC in socialising the national ACTIP representative mechanism during a one-day workshop in March 2025 in Ha Long, Vietnam. The workshop was co-hosted by the SOMTC delegations of the Philippines and Vietnam, to share and discuss the SOMTC-approved terms of reference of the national ACTIP representatives. The terms of reference indicated that the national ACTIP representatives will provide information and data for regional monitoring and reporting of ACTIP implementation. The socialisation workshop is a milestone towards building the capacity of national ACTIP representatives in monitoring and reporting of the Bohol TIP Work Plan 2.0 implementation (see story on [page 12](#)). – [project AA3; intermediate outcomes 4 and 8](#)

Besides the product, the process [of developing the ACWC monitoring guidebook] was very valuable; it really engaged and broke down the silo.

ACWC participant/  
representative



Photo: ASEAN Secretariat and Vietnamese representatives at a workshop to socialise the national ACTIP representative mechanism in Ha Long, Vietnam (March 2025).



Photo: Participant at a workshop to socialise the national ACTIP representative mechanism in Ha Long, Vietnam (March 2025).

## STORY

## Monitoring and reporting implementation of the Bohol Trafficking in Persons Work Plan 2.0

### Context

The ASEAN Multi-Sectoral Work Plan Against Trafficking in Persons 2023–2028 (Bohol TIP Work Plan 2.0) was adopted by the 17th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime held in Labuan Bajo, Indonesia, on 21 August 2023. The Bohol TIP Work Plan 2.0 serves as a comprehensive guiding document for the Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC) and eight other ASEAN sectoral bodies to counter trafficking in persons (TIP) in the region and support the effective implementation of the ASEAN Convention against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (ACTIP). The Bohol Work Plan 2.0 further addresses the recommendations from the final review report on the first Bohol TIP Work Plan, including an effective monitoring and

reporting mechanism. The Philippine SOMTC delegation, as the SOMTC Voluntary Lead Shepherd for trafficking in persons, led the development of a monitoring, evaluation, reporting and learning (MERL) framework.

### Achievements

ASEAN is on track to enhance its monitoring and reporting of implementation of the ACTIP and the Bohol TIP Work Plan 2.0. The final version of the MERL framework for the Bohol TIP Work Plan 2.0 was adopted ad referendum by the SOMTC on 28 September 2024. The [final MERL framework](#) has been published on the [ASEAN website](#), among other key documents. The process of developing the MERL framework was participatory and involved consultations with relevant ASEAN sectoral bodies, the ASEAN

### ASEAN sectoral bodies working in counter-trafficking in persons

- Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC)
- ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC)
- ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR)
- ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Education (SOM-ED)
- ASEAN Senior Labour Officials Meeting (SLOM)
- ASEAN Committee to Implement the Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers (ACMW)
- ASEAN Directors-General of Immigration Departments and Heads of Consular Affairs Divisions of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs Meeting (DGICM)
- ASEAN Senior Officials Meetings on Social Welfare and Development (SOMSWD)
- ASEAN Senior Law Officials Meeting (ASLOM)

Secretariat and the SOMTC. Through our support, the development of the MERL framework started with a regional workshop held in the Philippines and via video conference in November 2023. This was followed by rounds of revisions and circulation of draft versions, with technical inputs from ASEAN-ACT. Following the adoption of the final MERL framework, a two-day workshop was held in March 2025 – a back-to-back workshop with the socialisation of the national ACTIP representative mechanism in Ha Long, Vietnam. The workshop, facilitated by ASEAN-ACT, was attended by SOMTC focal points of nine member states plus Timor-Leste, the designated national ACTIP representative or their delegated representative, the ASEAN Secretariat and five ASEAN sectoral bodies.

At the workshop in Ha Long, the MERL framework was presented and discussed in detail, focusing on basic concepts of monitoring, the framework's objectives and scope, as well as monitoring tools and the reporting template. A trial of the reporting template, using 2024 information, was decided on at the workshop, and this trial will be the focus of the first monitoring and reporting workshop in Kuala Lumpur in July 2025. The workshop in March 2025 also provided an opportunity for the Philippine Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking (IACAT), as the national ACTIP representative for the Philippines, to share its experience in monitoring and reporting of its strategic action plan against trafficking in persons. Sharing of lessons, good practices and experiences in data collection and reporting among ASEAN Member States and relevant ASEAN sectoral bodies, including building the capacity of national ACTIP representatives, is incorporated into planned monitoring and reporting workshops to be hosted by the SOMTC and supported by ASEAN-ACT. – *project AA3; intermediate outcomes 4 and 8*



**The monitoring, evaluation, reporting and learning framework will contribute to a comprehensive and holistic assessment of the Bohol TIP Work Plan 2.0 implementation, and ASEAN nations can also consider implementing the mechanism to assess the outcomes of their national programs of action on anti-trafficking in persons, in accordance with specific circumstances and conditions of the respective country.**

*Vietnam's SOMTC delegation*

## EOPO 2

### Capacity to implement ACTIP obligations

**ASEAN Member States are increasingly capable of implementing their ACTIP obligations, particularly those that advance GEDSI and uphold victim rights.**

In FY 2024–25, ASEAN-ACT continued to work with targeted ASEAN Member States in implementing their ACTIP obligations.

### KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

In FY 2024–25, key achievements that contributed towards achieving EOPO 2 included enhanced institutional capacity to plan, monitor and report on ACTIP obligations, institutionalisation of training materials, and technical inputs to a national strategic plan against trafficking in persons.

#### Institutionalisation of ACWC materials

**Achievement:** We continued our support to the ACWC in institutionalising training materials and other resources developed during Phase 1 of the program. The e-learning course ‘Gender-Sensitive and Victim-Centred Approaches for Frontliners’ was translated into six national languages – Burmese, Indonesian, Khmer, Lao, Thai and Vietnamese. Resource materials on the



Photo: Participant at the disability inclusion and counter-trafficking workshop in Hanoi, Vietnam (May 2025).

‘do no harm’ approach, shelter practices policy, victim-centred practices and gender-sensitive strategies continue to be used by relevant stakeholders. – [project AA2; intermediate outcomes 1, 2 and 7](#)

### Pocketbook on restitution (Indonesia)

**Achievement:** The Supreme Court of Indonesia, through the Technical Working Group on Women and Children, completed the Judges’ Pocketbook on Restitution in Trafficking in Persons Cases. This pocketbook is promoting restitution in the judicial process to protect victim rights, particularly in TIP cases. We held a coordination meeting in May 2025 with the Supreme Court’s technical working group to discuss the preparations for the official launch of the pocketbook, with a launch date to be confirmed by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.

– [project AA2; intermediate outcomes 1, 2 and 7](#)

### Legislative review of TIP and corruption laws

**Achievement:** In partnership with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), we conducted a legislative review of trafficking and corruption laws within the ASEAN region. The review was completed in December 2024, and the review findings will serve as a foundational resource to initiate dialogue and consultations with targeted ASEAN Member States to enhance understanding of the nexus between TIP and corruption. Following the completion of the review, we supported a roundtable discussion on the criminalisation of TIP



Photo: Roundtable discussion on the criminalisation of trafficking in persons and corruption in Thailand (February 2025).

and corruption in Thailand in February 2025, to share the findings of the review and explore practical actions that can be supported by ASEAN-ACT and UNODC. A similar roundtable discussion will be held with relevant stakeholders in the Philippines in August 2025. – [project AA3; intermediate outcomes 5 and 8](#)

### **National Strategic Plan on Combating Trafficking in Persons (Cambodia)**

**Achievement:** The National Committee for Counter Trafficking (NCCT) developed Cambodia’s National Strategic Plan on Combating Trafficking in Persons 2024–2028. The strategic plan was approved and launched in June 2024. We participated in the consultation process and provided technical inputs in the drafting of the strategic plan. As a follow-up to this, we are supporting the NCCT in developing a monitoring, evaluation and learning framework for the strategic plan (see Cambodia progress on [page 30](#)). – [project AA1; intermediate outcomes 1, 2 and 7](#)

### **CTIP Centre of Excellence (Thailand)**

**Context:** In May 2024, the Counter-Trafficking in Persons (CTIP) Centre of Excellence was officially launched at the Department of Special Investigation (DSI) Academy (project AA2). During the ceremony, a new counter-trafficking curriculum was unveiled, which was developed with support from ASEAN-ACT and with a contribution from the Mekong–Australia Partnership on Transnational Crime (MAP-TNC). The CTIP Centre of Excellence launch was a result of extensive work led by the Royal Thai Government with support from ASEAN-ACT and strategic oversight from the governments of Thailand and Australia through the Joint Steering Committee for the CTIP Centre of Excellence, which commenced after the signing of a memorandum of understanding between Australia and Thailand in November 2022.

**Achievement:** The CTIP Centre of Excellence is an example of improved institutional capacity that advances gender-responsive and inclusive counter-trafficking initiatives. The new curriculum offers a fundamental course on the key competencies required to counter trafficking in persons, including applying victim-centred and gender-responsive approaches during all stages – from identifying a potential victim of trafficking to supporting their return and reintegration. The second course, for more advanced practitioners, has been developed for multidisciplinary teams to

Photo: Government and civil society participants at the CTIP Centre of Excellence 101 training course held in Bangkok, Thailand (November 2024).



I learned forensic interviewing techniques and the investigation process for human trafficking offences.

*Feedback from a participant in the CTIP Centre of Excellence training course 201*

problem-solve and corroborate information to investigate and prosecute criminal supply chains for trafficking in persons. The development of the curriculum was informed by regional and global evidence-based good practices. Interagency cooperation is also being promoted through the CTIP Centre of Excellence. During the reporting period, three courses (two batches of basic CTIP 101 course and second-level CTIP 201 course) were conducted at the centre, for 145 people (41 are women). – [project AA2; intermediate outcomes 1, 2, 6 and 7](#)

### CTIP monitoring and reporting (Philippines)

**Context:** In partnership with the Philippines’ Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking (IACAT), we are building the capacity of the IACAT Secretariat and IACAT’s 28 member agencies in monitoring and reporting of the Philippines’ 4th National Strategic Action Plan Against Trafficking in Persons (project AA3). We are supporting the implementation of the strategic action plan’s monitoring, evaluation, reporting and learning (MERL) framework – one of the IACAT’s priority outcomes under its key result area of CTIP partnership and collaboration.

**Achievement:** There is increased awareness, commitment and signs of improvement on monitoring and reporting of implementation of the Philippines’ 4th National Strategic Action



Photo: Participants at the IACAT monitoring and reporting workshop supported by ASEAN-ACT in Manila, Philippines (March 2025).

Plan Against Trafficking in Persons. During FY 2024–25, we supported 10 monitoring and reporting workshops and mentoring sessions, including the IACAT’s review and reflection workshop, and planning workshop. The IACAT’s commitment to monitoring and reporting was confirmed when it issued a resolution to establish, and create terms of reference for, MERL focal points among all IACAT member agencies – to build a network of MERL practitioners that monitors and reports on their respective agencies’ CTIP efforts. The IACAT also issued an office order designating heads and members of the Interim Working Group for the MERL Framework. A first round of trial reporting under the MERL framework was completed, and we provided technical advice to update the tools and templates following feedback from MERL focal points and members of the MERL working group. – [project AA3](#); [intermediate outcomes 4 and 8](#)



I can apply the learnings in making a good report.

*Feedback from one of the IACAT’s MERL focal points during a reporting workshop in February 2025*

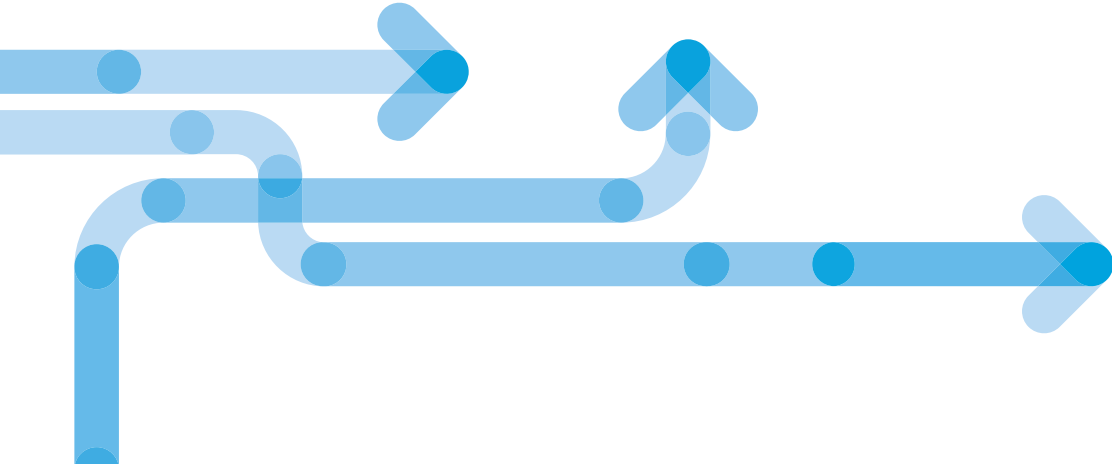




Photo: Indonesian disability advocate and researcher presenting at the regional dialogue on addressing trafficking in persons among vulnerable groups, led by the ACWC in partnership with the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and ASEAN-ACT, and held in Bangkok, Thailand (January 2025).

## STORY

## Vietnam's revised TIP Law

### Context

Vietnam's Law on the Prevention and Combating of Trafficking in Persons (TIP Law) had not been updated since its initial adoption in March 2011. Led by the Ministry of Public Security, the review of the TIP Law commenced in 2023, in response to recommendations to update the law in alignment with regional and international conventions and new trends emerging in trafficking in persons. The review involved consultations with various government and non-government stakeholders to ensure an inclusive public policy process.

### Achievement

Vietnam's revised TIP Law represents a significant step forward in aligning Vietnam's legislative framework with the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, and the ASEAN Convention against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (ACTIP). The revised TIP Law was passed by the National Assembly in November 2024. Australia contributed to the revision of the TIP Law through a collaborative effort involving ASEAN-ACT and the Australian Attorney-General's Department in partnership

Photo: Introduction of the new Vietnam TIP Law and development of the decree was discussed at the legal aid and victim compensation workshop in Ninh Binh province, Vietnam (May 2025).



with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). We contributed by enhancing the capacity of members of the legal drafting committee, facilitating policy dialogue, including between government and non-government organisations, to present research that the program has supported, and providing technical advice, particularly on the non-punishment principle, the defined age for child trafficking, victim identification, and victim-centred and gender-responsive approaches to counter-trafficking in persons.

The key reforms in the revised TIP Law include:

- alignment of the definition of TIP with international and regional obligations and clearer definitions of sexual exploitation, forced labour, and victims of human trafficking
- the definition of child trafficking as the trafficking of persons under

the age of 18 (the definition was previously under the age of 16)

- integration of the non-punishment principle to provide a legal mandate for the protection of victims of trafficking who committed a crime in association with their trafficking
- a stipulation that presumed victims of trafficking are entitled to support and protection to meet their basic needs, as well as compensation and livelihood support, even if they do not participate in a criminal justice process
- acknowledgement of the right of victims to refuse protective measures.

The amended TIP Law was enacted in November 2024 and enters into force from 1 July 2025. – [project AA1; intermediate outcomes 1, 2, 3, and 7](#)

**A gender equality and victim-centred framework ensures that the rights, safety and wellbeing of survivors are prioritised throughout every stage of the counter-trafficking in persons process.**

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*Ms Nguyen Thi Kim Dung, Deputy Head of the Women's Affairs Board, Central Committee of the Vietnam Fatherland Front*

## EOPO 3

### Inclusive policies and practices

**ASEAN's and ASEAN Member States' policies and practices are inclusive, influenced by relevant stakeholders and aligned with the ACTIP.**

Throughout FY 2024–25, ASEAN-ACT supported relevant ASEAN Member State agencies, non-state stakeholders and other stakeholders to promote demand-led dialogue and cooperation to counter trafficking in persons.

### KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

In FY 2024–25, key achievements that contributed towards achieving EOPO 3 included the endorsement of the ASEAN Guideline on the Implementation of the Non-Punishment Principle for Protection of Victims of Trafficking in Persons (see story on [pages 26–27](#)), and ASEAN Leaders noting of guidelines for protecting migrant fishers. We also supported the establishment of an industry policy working group addressing trafficking into online scam operations, a consortium advocating for counter-trafficking in persons policies and guidelines.

### ASEAN guidelines on protection of migrant fishers

**Achievement:** The [ASEAN Guidelines on the Placement and Protection of Migrant Fishers](#) were finalised and noted at the

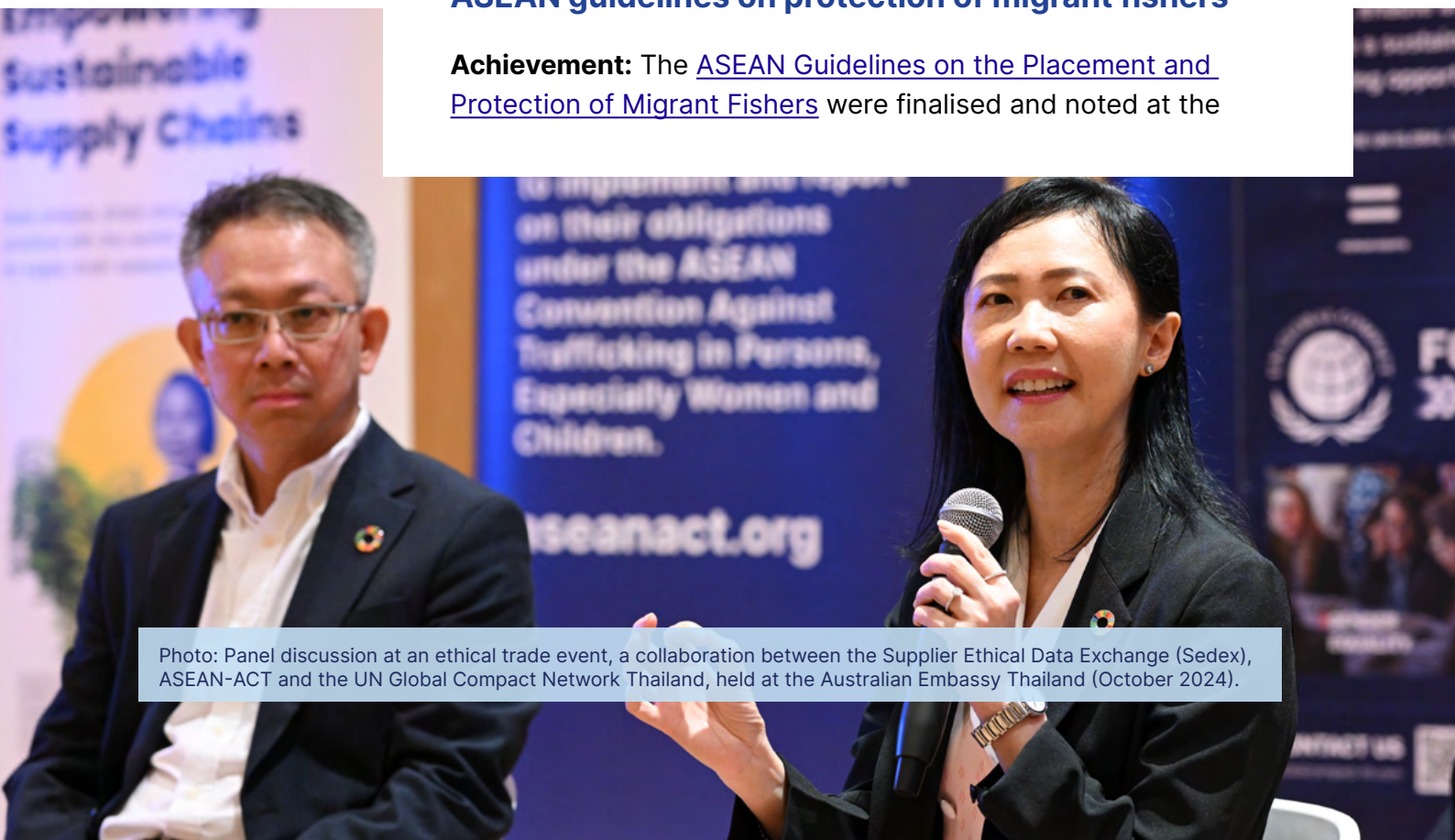


Photo: Panel discussion at an ethical trade event, a collaboration between the Supplier Ethical Data Exchange (Sedex), ASEAN-ACT and the UN Global Compact Network Thailand, held at the Australian Embassy Thailand (October 2024).

ASEAN Summit in October 2024. We supported multisectoral consultation for the development of the guidelines (October 2023 and February 2024). Civil society stakeholders at the regional and national levels were engaged, as well as trade unions and private sector representatives. Non-government organisations included the Mekong Migration Network, Legal Support for Children and Women (LSCW) (Cambodia), Migrant Worker Network (Indonesia) and Migrant Care (Indonesia). The Australian Government-funded TRIANGLE in ASEAN program was also engaged in this partnership. – [project AA1; intermediate outcomes 1, 3, 6 and 7](#)

### **Collaboration to enhance legal aid and compensation for TIP victims (Laos)**

**Achievement:** Improved understanding of roles in assisting TIP victims is supporting the enhancement of collaboration between government, civil society and international organisations. We supported a workshop in May 2025, led by the Lao Women’s Union, to discuss legal aid and the compensation process for TIP victims. Participants were from government law enforcement, the judiciary, prosecutor and victim protection offices, civil society, the Lao Bar Association and international organisations. Good practices from the Philippines were shared during the workshop. Priority areas were progressed by the Lao Women’s Union – improving the coordination mechanism, revising relevant legislation and strengthening capacity of officials. – [project AA2; intermediate outcomes 1, 3, 6 and 7](#)



Photo: Participant at the consultation workshop on legal aid and court decision implementation for trafficking in persons cases, held in Vientiane province, Laos (May 2025).

Once the new software for the court data system is up and running, these indicators will be incorporated for data collection and reporting.

*Nguyen Thi Tam, Deputy Director, Information Technology Department, Supreme People's Court of Vietnam*



## Addressing trafficking into online scams

**Achievement:** Non-state stakeholders contributing to policy dialogue is on track. We supported the establishment of an industry policy working group, in partnership with the Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime (GI-TOC), involving the private sector to address trafficking into online scam operations. Four meetings were convened over March to June 2025, including six companies from the technology and finance sectors. Principles and guidelines have been drafted with the working group and these are under review, with plans to present these standards for the consideration of policymakers. – [project AA1; intermediate outcomes 1, 3, 6 and 7](#)

## Cyber scam operations in Southeast Asia

**Context:** Human trafficking into online scam operations has become a major threat to security and governance in the ASEAN region and globally. 100,000s of people from more than 70 countries are estimated to have been tricked into forced criminality in conducting online scams, under threat of physical harm, debt and psychological abuse.

**Achievement:** The research report [Compound Crime: Cyber Scam Operations in Southeast Asia](#) was released in May 2025. The in-depth report by GI-TOC examines the rise of cyber scam operations across Southeast Asia. The report features case studies and recommendations to governments, civil society and international stakeholders. – [project AA1; intermediate outcomes 1, 3, 6 and 7](#)

## Enhancing indicators on adjudication of TIP cases (Vietnam)

**Context:** In partnership with the Supreme People's Court, we are building institutional capacity to collect and report on indicators of adjudication of TIP cases.

**Achievement:** In November 2024, we supported the Supreme People's Court to conduct a consultation on data collection and recording of courts' TIP cases. The workshop was attended by court officials from the local and central levels, and representatives from law enforcement and the Supreme People's Procuracy – allowing for inputs from relevant stakeholders on this important initiative. From this consultation workshop, key recommendations were provided by workshop

participants, focusing on indicators and TIP-related data for further discussion and consideration by the Supreme People's Court. Recommendations also covered how to integrate the proposed indicators into the court system. From this workshop, the Supreme People's Court is now considering updates to the court data system to incorporate key TIP victim indicators such as vulnerable group, gender, disability, form of exploitation, support received and type of trafficking. Once the revised court data system is completed, the system will be enforced from the local level to the central court level. – [project AA3; intermediate outcomes 3, 4, 7 and 8](#)

### **Consortium advocating for CTIP policies (Indonesia)**

**Context:** Through our grants program, we partnered with Yayasan Sakura Indonesia Al Jamaan under our regional program.

**Achievement:** During the reporting period, Yayasan Sakura established a consortium of organisations to influence the formation and implementation of policies in counter-trafficking, particularly in Bogor regency in West Java. A total of 44 organisations joined the consortium, consisting of organisations of people with disability, non-government organisations working on anti-trafficking, and relevant local government agencies. Regular meetings were conducted to share information on the intersection between trafficking in persons and disability. Yayasan Sakura is also developing guidelines for disability-inclusive prevention and handling of trafficking in persons. Multidisciplinary consultation events were held in February and May 2025. Members of the consortium, particularly organisations of people with disability, are actively contributing to the development and finalisation of the guidelines, due for completion during the second half of 2025. Through Yayasan Sakura, we are contributing to the development of Indonesia's new National Action Plan for the Prevention and Handling of the Crime of Trafficking in Persons. – [project AA1; intermediate outcomes 1, 3 and 6](#)

[With this grant project initiative, implemented by Yayasan Sakura along with other consortium members, Bogor regency is currently highly focused on disability issues, including the provision of disability-friendly facilities and infrastructure in Bogor regency. Furthermore, Kemensos \[the Ministry of Social Affairs\] has begun providing disability-friendly access in its shelters and has started extensively discussing the link between trafficking in persons and disability, as seen in many cases handled by the government.](#)

*From Yayasan Sakura's progress report to ASEAN-ACT, June 2025*

[The Bogor regency government directed all local government agencies to emphasise the importance of adopting a disability-inclusive approach in handling trafficking in persons cases.](#)

*From Yayasan Sakura's progress report to ASEAN-ACT, June 2025*

## STORY

## Cross-sectoral collaboration on non-punishment principle guidelines

### Context

The non-punishment principle sets out that victims of trafficking should not be prosecuted or otherwise punished for unlawful acts they commit as a consequence of trafficking. It does not offer blanket immunity, but is a critical tool for victim protection and a human rights-based criminal justice response to trafficking in persons.

During Phase 1 of the program, we commissioned international law expert Dr Marika McAdam to examine the extent to which the non-punishment principle is reflected in laws, policies and practices, and to canvass barriers that have been encountered in protecting victims from punishment. The study has since been presented at various regional and international events, and was cited in the [Australian Human Rights Commission's submission](#) (paragraph 102) to the targeted review

of the divisions in Australia's *Criminal Code Act 1995* that deal with slavery and trafficking in persons offences.

By sharing the study report within the region, regional practitioners, national government representatives, non-government organisations, advocates and community groups learned and heard about the non-punishment principle for victims of human trafficking. In response to study recommendations, the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) and the ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC) initiated the development of the [ASEAN Guideline on the Implementation of the Non-Punishment Principle for the Protection of Victims of Trafficking in Persons](#), an initiative supported by ASEAN-ACT.

The implementation of the non-punishment principle is an essential safeguard in ensuring the victims of trafficking are not further victimised by legal and administrative systems.

H.E. Tiffany McDonald, Australian Ambassador to ASEAN



## Achievements

The ASEAN Guideline on the Non-Punishment Principle is a major regional milestone in human rights and combating transnational organised crime, and supports ASEAN Member States to implement their legal obligations stipulated in the ACTIP. The guideline is a result of cross-sectoral collaboration between the SOMTC and the AICHR. The joint project supported by ASEAN-ACT is the first time these two ASEAN sectoral bodies have worked in partnership on a joint policy priority.

The guideline was developed to provide practical guidance to ASEAN policymakers and practitioners on the application of the non-punishment principle. This principle ensures that victims of trafficking who commit unlawful acts as a direct consequence of their trafficking are not subjected to criminal or administrative punishment. It is articulated under Article 14[7] of the

**These guidelines show ASEAN's commitment to human rights and provides a bridge between laws and their implementation.**

*H.E. Anita Wahid, Representative of Indonesia to the AICHR*

ASEAN Convention against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (ACTIP).

The guideline was endorsed in May 2025, and launched on 2 June 2025 by SOMTC Philippines, AICHR Indonesia and the Australian Mission to ASEAN. We supported the development of the guideline through an intensive consultation process involving all ASEAN Member States, other ASEAN sectoral bodies, civil society and international organisations. – **project AA1; intermediate outcomes 1, 2, 3, 6 and 7**



**This is evidence that a strict law enforcement approach to protect survivors and victims of trafficking can go hand in hand with a human rights-based approach to law enforcement.**

*H.E. Edmund Bon Tai Soon, Representative of Malaysia to the AICHR, Chair of AICHR 2025*

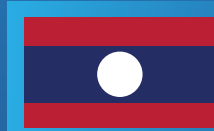
# Highlights from 2024-25 – partner countries



CAMBODIA

20

counter-trafficking in persons events delivered



LAOS

6

organisations of people with disability consulted on the nexus between disability and trafficking in persons



VIETNAM

76

representatives from government agencies and non-government organisations attended two consultation workshops on a draft decree to implement the revised TIP Law



THAILAND

12

private sector businesses reached through ethical trade seminar



PHILIPPINES

10

victim-survivors (6 women) consulted and contributed to victim referral guidelines involving overseas Filipino workers



# 3

## Progress by country

Photo: Panel discussion at Thailand's 2nd Modern Slavery Conference held in Bangkok (March 2025).

Photo: Disability advocates and counter-trafficking practitioners at a workshop to discuss the nexus between disability and trafficking, held in Phnom Penh, Cambodia (September 2024).

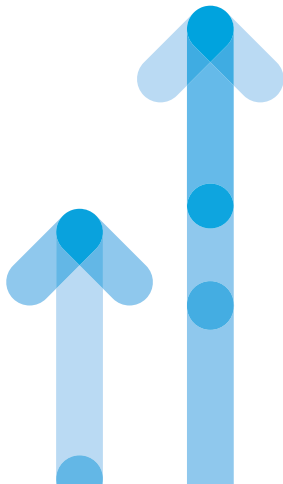


**CAMBODIA**

In FY 2024–25, we continued to support partners in Cambodia in their implementation of Cambodia’s ACTIP obligations. We delivered 20 events, with 384 participants (37% women).



**20**  
counter-  
trafficking in  
persons events  
delivered



**Key achievements**

- The Anti-Human Trafficking and Juvenile Protection Department of the Cambodian National Police conducted a face-to-face technical meeting with the Thai Department of Special Investigation on transnational investigative cooperation, and discussed the standard operating procedure on cross-border collaboration. – *project AA1; intermediate outcomes 1 and 6*
- We provided technical inputs through participation in consultative workshops to review and revise the victim identification guidelines, with the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation (MoSVY), together with the Japan International Cooperation Agency. – *project AA1; intermediate outcomes 1, 2 and 6*

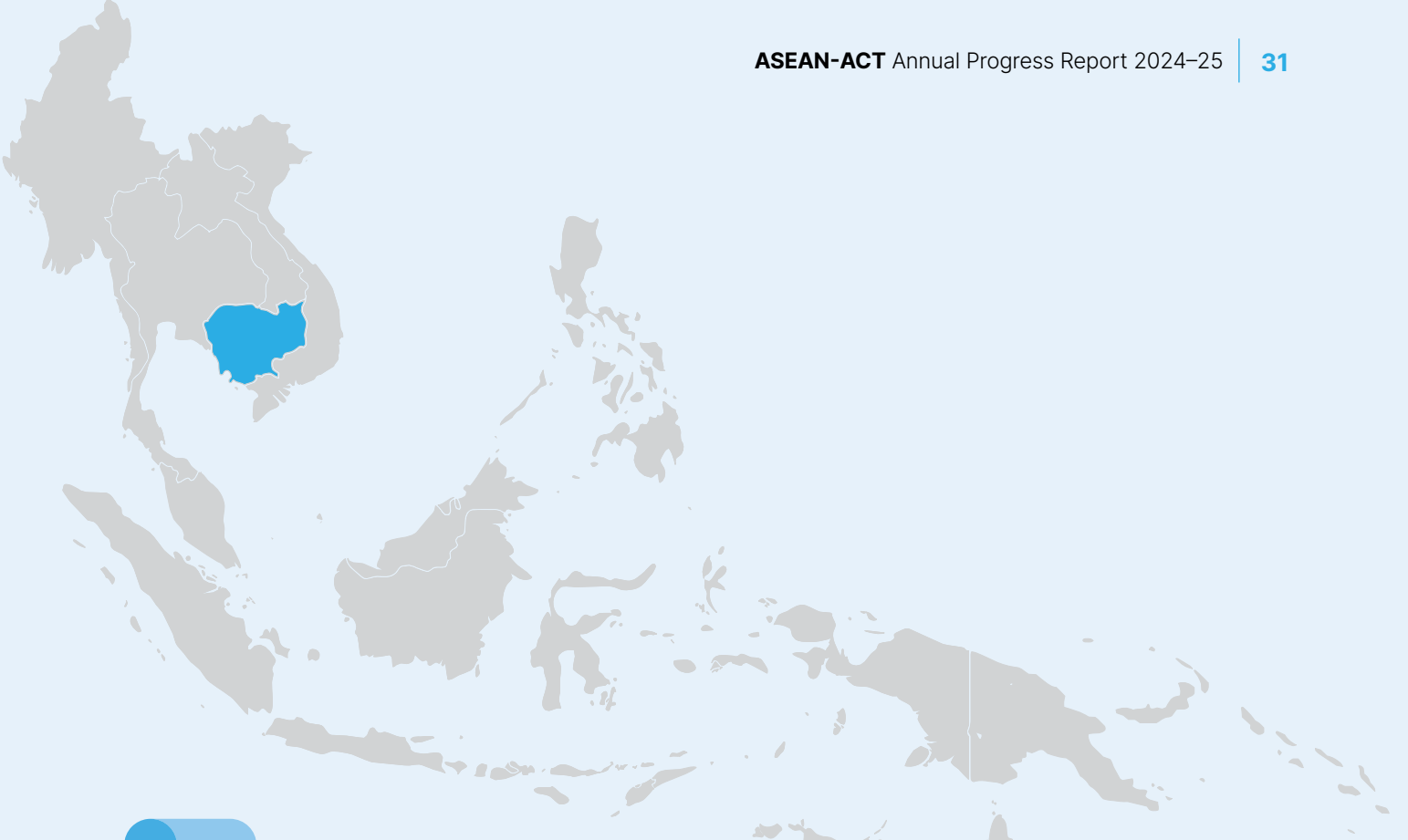

- 
- The National Committee for Counter Trafficking (NCCT) sponsored a workshop for NCCT members and stakeholders in November 2024 on the development of a monitoring, evaluation and learning framework for the National Strategic Plan on Combating Trafficking in Persons 2024–2028. This was followed by a technical meeting to finalise the framework in May 2025. The final draft was presented to the NCCT in June 2025. – [project AA3](#); [intermediate outcomes 4 and 8](#)
  - The Ministry of Justice, the NCCT, the Cambodian National Police and the Ministry of Women’s Affairs each has a representative participating in ASEAN-ACT’s emerging leaders program (see [Section 4](#) – Regional-level progress). – [project AA4](#); [intermediate outcomes 1, 2, 6 and 7](#)
  - The National Program Steering Committee held a meeting on 11 October 2024. – [project AA9](#); [all intermediate outcomes](#)
  - We conducted partner review and reflection workshops to inform planning and reporting, and socialised our Phase 2 program scope and MEL plan. – [project AA9](#); [all intermediate outcomes](#)
- 

Photo: Official launch of new standards to strengthen protection for victims of trafficking and sexual exploitation, held in Phnom Penh, Cambodia (June 2025).



### Case study

## Protection of victims of human trafficking and sexual exploitation in Cambodia

### Context

In July 2024, the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation (MoSVY), with support from the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and ASEAN-ACT, organised a 2-day consultative workshop to gather inputs for development of the Guidebook on Standard Operating Procedures for the Protection of Victims of Human Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation. The workshop brought together over 100 professionals, including frontline law enforcement, social workers and leaders from civil society organisations and provincial departments of social affairs, veterans and youth rehabilitation, to discuss and share experiences and provide inputs for the development of the guidebook.

# Standard Operation Procedures for Victims of Human Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation

7, 13 June 2025



## Achievement

Cross-agency collaboration is informing the practice of agencies and supported the development of Cambodia's Guidebook on Standard Operating Procedures for the Protection of Victims of Human Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation. Through co-funding with IOM, we supported MoSVY and provided technical advice to develop the guidebook. The guidebook was officially launched on 13 June 2025 with over 150 participants from national ministries, provincial departments, law enforcement, civil society and international organisations. The guidebook provides practical steps on how to appropriately handle victims, and embeds ethical care principles, including the 'do no harm' principle and victim-sensitive approaches. It also strengthens Cambodia's coordinated response to trafficking and sexual exploitation, particularly for vulnerable groups such as children, migrant workers and people with disability.

In his keynote remarks announcing the launch of the guidebook, H.E. Nhek Vannara, Secretary of State at MoSVY, described the guidebook as a milestone in Cambodia's counter-trafficking efforts and encouraged frontline responders such as police and social workers to integrate its procedures into their planning, daily work and action plans. – [project AA1; intermediate outcomes 1, 2 and 6](#)

## Linkages

This initiative was a partnership between the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation, the International Organization for Migration, Ratanak International and ASEAN-ACT.

Photo: Consultation workshop on the nexus between disability and trafficking with cross-sectoral participants at a workshop in Vientiane, Laos (September 2024).



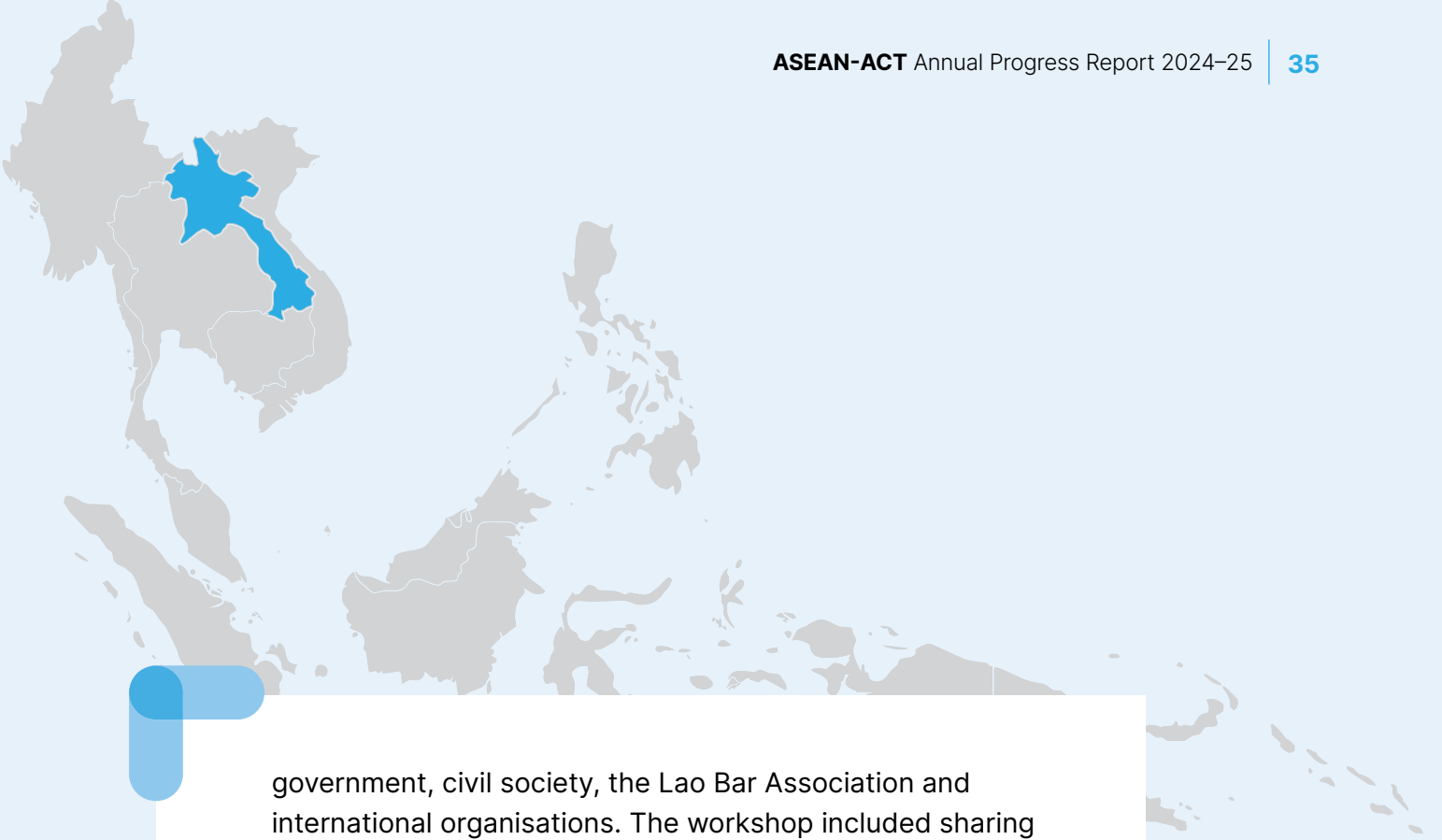
**6**  
**organisations of people with disability consulted on the nexus between disability and trafficking in persons**

In FY 2024–25, the bilateral memorandum of subsidiary arrangement between the governments of Laos and Australia expired and a process of renewal was initiated by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and relevant Lao partners. This resulted in some deferrals of bilateral activities planned for Laos. However, we continued to support partners in Laos in their implementation of the ACTIP through our regional activities. We delivered 12 events, with 295 participants (49% women).

**Key achievements**

- The Lao Women’s Union hosted a consultation workshop in June 2025, to explore the intersection between disability and trafficking in persons, with representatives from six organisations of people with disability, non-government organisations and international organisations. – *project AA1; intermediate outcomes 1, 2, 3 and 7*
- The Lao Women’s Union is taking the lead in providing legal aid and compensation to TIP victims, commencing with a workshop in May 2025 to enhance collaboration between





government, civil society, the Lao Bar Association and international organisations. The workshop included sharing of good practices from the Philippines. – [project AA1](#); [intermediate outcomes 1, 2, 3 and 7](#)


- The Judicial Research and Training Institute of the People's Supreme Court conducted a mentoring session for 46 court officials of Khammouane and Savannakhet provinces on the victim-sensitive court guidelines (see case study on next page). – [project AA2](#); [intermediate outcomes 1, 2 and 6](#)
  - The People's Supreme Court sponsored a workshop on monitoring and reporting implementation of the victim-sensitive court guidelines (see case study on next page) on 10–12 June 2025, to discuss an approach to monitoring and reporting that uses the ACWC's Guidebook for Monitoring Gender-Sensitive and Victim-Centred Approaches to Trafficking in Persons. Participants at the workshop also discussed and reviewed the court's existing TIP case monitoring system and suggested next steps. – [project AA3](#); [intermediate outcomes 4 and 8](#)
  - The Anti-Trafficking in Persons Department within the Ministry of Public Security, the Office of the Supreme People's Prosecutor, the People's Supreme Court and the Lao Women's Union each has a representative participating in ASEAN-ACT's emerging leaders program (see [Section 4](#) – Regional-level progress). – [project AA4](#); [intermediate outcomes 1, 2, 6 and 7](#)
- 

Photo: Participants at the consultation workshop on mainstreaming victim-sensitive court guidelines into the judges assistant training curriculum, held in Vientiane province, Laos (May 2025).



*Case study*

## Integration of victim-sensitive court guidelines into Laos’s Judicial Research and Training Institute curriculum

**Context**

Laos was the first ASEAN Member State to develop guidelines on victim-sensitive courts, supported by ASEAN-ACT during Phase 1 of the program. This was in response to challenge identified by Lao judges in understanding and practicing victim-sensitive courts. Since the approval of the guidelines by the People’s Supreme Court, and the launch of the guidelines in September 2023, they were socialised in all Lao courts. The guidelines were presented through workshops in all provincial courts in Laos, and the workshops were conducted by judges who completed the training-of-trainers course on the guidelines. Based on feedback and recognised need, the People’s Supreme Court approached ASEAN-ACT to support the integration of the victim-sensitive court guidelines into its training curriculum.

**Achievement**

The victim-sensitive court guidelines are now integrated into the judicial assistant training curriculum of the Judicial Research and Training Institute (JRTI) of the People’s Supreme Court. The

guidelines were piloted in four cohorts of judicial assistant course participants from July 2024. From the pilot, JRTI identified some areas for improvement and the need to have a more comprehensive training program on victim-sensitive courts. Supported by ASEAN-ACT, two consultation workshops were conducted to mainstream the victim-sensitive court guidelines and revise the training curriculum for judicial assistants. A technical working group was established comprising JRTI, the Criminal Chamber, the Department of Technical Management and Court Statistics, the Department of International Cooperation and the Cabinet Office. Key revisions include case studies on emerging trends in trafficking in persons, revised PowerPoint slides for trainers, and a facilitation program for an 8-hour training specifically on the subject of victim-sensitive courts. JRTI submitted the revised training curriculum to the Council of Judges for consideration and official approval; it will then be used with the next cohorts of judicial assistants. – **project AA2; intermediate outcomes 1, 2 and 7**

Related to this initiative is the commitment of the People’s Supreme Court, through JRTI, to monitor and report on the implementation of the victim-sensitive court guidelines. A consultation and awareness-raising workshop held in June 2025 discussed possible monitoring approaches and tools, such as the ACWC’s Guidebook for Monitoring Gender-Sensitive and Victim-Centred Approaches to Trafficking in Persons. – **project AA3; intermediate outcomes 4 and 8**

## Linkages

This initiative was conducted in partnership with the People’s Supreme Court of Laos.

**Integration of the victim-sensitive court guidelines into the judicial assistant training curriculum will improve the knowledge and skills [of judicial assistants] on victim-sensitive courts and the consideration of applying victim-centred approaches when contacting TIP victims during court proceedings.**

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*Judge Nalisuan Saiysouliya, Deputy Director General of the Criminal Chamber, People’s Supreme Court of Laos*

**This workshop [monitoring and reporting workshop held in June 2025] presents a valuable opportunity for relevant officials, particularly those responsible for court statistics, to enhance their knowledge on monitoring and reporting, and apply it in their work and request the support to develop the monitoring tools in the area of TIP case statistics.**

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*Mr Daohuang Vongdavanh, Deputy Director of the Department of Technical Management and Court Statistics, People’s Supreme Court of Laos*



Photo: Consultation workshop on the Philippines’ victim compensation program, with Marillac Hills, a shelter for girls managed by the Department of Social Welfare and Development. The workshop was supported by ASEAN-ACT and held in Manila, Philippines (October 2024).

# PHILIPPINES

In FY 2024–25, we continued to support partners in the Philippines in their implementation of the Philippines’ ACTIP obligations. We delivered 63 events, with 1,388 participants (58% women).




**10**  
 victim-survivors  
 (6 women)  
 consulted and  
 contributed to  
 victim referral  
 guidelines  
 involving overseas  
 Filipino workers

## Key achievements

- The Department of Migrant Workers consulted with 10 victim-survivors, and representatives of relevant non-government organisations and government agencies to develop the department’s victim referral guidelines involving overseas Filipino workers. The final version of the guidelines is with the Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking (IACAT) for approval. – *project AA1; intermediate outcomes 1, 2, 3 and 7*
- The Philippine National Police’s Women and Children Protection Center commenced consultations and established a technical working group to review and revise the standard operating procedure on TIP investigation. – *project AA2; intermediate outcomes 1, 2, 6 and 7*



- 
- The Supreme Court and the Philippine Judicial Academy completed the revision of the advanced competency enhancement training course on trafficking in persons for judges, prosecutors, law enforcers and social workers. – [project AA2; intermediate outcomes 2, 6 and 7](#)
  - The IACAT implemented the monitoring, evaluation, reporting and learning framework for the national strategic plan (see [pages 17–18](#)). – [project AA3; intermediate outcomes 4 and 8](#)
  - The Department of Justice, the Philippine National Police, the IACAT Secretariat and the Department of Social Welfare and Development each has a representative participating in ASEAN-ACT’s emerging leaders program (see [Section 4](#) – Regional-level progress). – [project AA4; intermediate outcomes 1, 2, 6 and 7](#)
  - The National Program Steering Committee held a meeting on 9 February 2025. – [project AA9; all intermediate outcomes](#)
  - We conducted partner review and reflection workshops to inform planning and reporting, and socialised our Phase 2 program scope and MEL plan. – [project AA9; all intermediate outcomes](#)

**The collaboration between agencies [was] apparent in the session.**

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*Feedback from a participant during the Department of Migrant Workers consultation workshop on victim referral guidelines*

## Victim-sensitive court guidelines

**Achievement:** The Supreme Court of the Philippines developed the Victim-Sensitive Guidelines in the Justice System – a practical policy guide for all relevant sectors on standard responses to survivors of violent crimes, integrating victim-sensitive, gender-responsive and socially inclusive perspectives in justice interventions. This is a response to the Supreme Court's Strategic Plan for Judicial Innovations 2022–2027, which includes an activity to develop and issue victim-sensitive court guidelines. Led by a technical working group of the Supreme Court, the drafting of the guidelines was informed by a multisectoral survey conducted in 2023, four multisectoral consultation workshops from March to May 2024, two writeshops and a validation workshop in June and July 2024, and consultation with 13 civil society organisations, three private sector businesses and four victim-survivors. The final guidelines were presented at a national event in Manila on 24 September 2024, and are now awaiting final approval by the Justice Sector Coordinating Council principals – that is, the Supreme Court, the Department of Justice, and the Department of the Interior and Local Government. – [project AA2; intermediate outcomes 2, 3, 6 and 7](#)

## Advanced competency enhancement training

**Achievement:** The Philippine Judicial Academy's competency enhancement training (CET) and advanced CET program on trafficking in persons for judges, prosecutors, law enforcers and social workers was reviewed by a technical working group, supported by ASEAN-ACT. The review of the CET course was completed during Phase 1 of the program. The technical working group of the academy began updating and revising the advanced CET course in 2023. The revised training course was finalised and approved during the first half of 2024. We supported the first advanced CET course in August 2024, with the cross-agency participation of judges, court officials, law enforcers, social workers, and prosecutors. – [project AA2; intermediate outcomes 2, 6 and 7](#)

## Disability inclusion in CTIP efforts

**Achievement:** Life Haven Center for Independent Living is one of the first three organisations of people with disability receiving grants from ASEAN-ACT. During FY 2024–25, Life Haven engaged with the IACAT and relevant CTIP agencies, providing their inputs and insights on inclusive approaches to

addressing trafficking in persons. They also conducted disability sensitisation events and a workshop on the intersection of disability inclusion and counter-trafficking in persons.

In September and October 2024, Life Haven introduced the online CTIP e-learning course of the ACWC to 38 people with disability. In March 2025, Life Haven conducted a 3-day workshop on disability inclusion and counter-trafficking in persons, to understand the nexus between disability and trafficking. Representatives of 10 organisations of people with disability were joined by representatives from nine CTIP agencies (two non-government organisations and seven government agencies). Participants came up with an initial plan to address intersectionality in their own workplace. – [project AA1](#); [intermediate outcomes 2, 3 and 7](#)

### Institutionalising TIP training for police cadets

**Achievement:** Integrating a TIP course into the curriculum of the Cadet Attachment Program of the Philippine National Police Academy (PNPA) will institutionalise TIP-related learning and transfer knowledge to future law enforcement officers and police cadets. To trial this initiative, we partnered with the PNPA and conducted the specialised Counter-Trafficking in Persons course as part of the Cadet Attachment Program involving 215 cadets in the class of 2025. The 5-day intensive CTIP course covered victim identification and referral, the reflection period, recovery and shelter, investigation, filing of cases, court obligations, and coordination. Our partnership with the PNPA will continue, with plans to integrate CTIP course modules into the PNPA's Bachelor of Science in Public Safety curriculum. – [project AA2](#); [intermediate outcomes 2 and 6](#)



Photo: Preparing future police officers to handle trafficking in persons cases effectively – a collaboration with the Philippine National Police Academy to institutionalise counter-trafficking modules into the curriculum (January 2025).

Photo: The Board of Claims under the Philippine Department of Justice officially launched the revised implementing rules and regulations of the victim compensation program in Manila, Philippines (May 2025).



### Case study

## Victim compensation program in the Philippines

### Context

Receiving compensation is crucial to relief and recovery from harm suffered by victims of crimes, including trafficking in persons. Awarding compensation demonstrates that society views such crimes as punishable by law. It also provides victims with a sense of recognition and validation for the harm that they suffered, which can be crucial for their emotional healing and recovery. The ASEAN region has made strong progress in implementing the ASEAN Convention against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (ACTIP). This includes mechanisms that are in place for trafficked victims to seek and obtain compensation for the harm and losses they have suffered as a result of being exploited. However, several challenges still hinder most ASEAN Member States in promoting and upholding trafficked victims' right to compensation. Foremost among challenges is the inadequacy of the legal framework to create an

enabling environment that will ensure victims of trafficking have access to compensation and/or restitution for the harm they suffered.

## Achievement

On 15 May 2025, the Board of Claims under the Philippine Department of Justice officially launched the revised implementing rules and regulations of Republic Act No. 7309 of 1992, which created a Board of Claims for victims of unjust imprisonment or detention and victims of violent crimes. During the launch, ASEAN-ACT was given the honour of providing closing remarks at the official signing event. The consultation sessions for the revision of the implementing rules and regulations, which took place in August and November 2024 and were supported by ASEAN-ACT, provided an opportunity for relevant stakeholders to share insights and knowledge to ensure that the process of applying for financial assistance is effectively streamlined. It was also an excellent opportunity to have the Board of Claims present and gather feedback on the victim compensation program to the Justice Sector Coordinating Council stakeholders, including judges, victim-survivors, and non-government and civil society organisations, as part of our victim-sensitive court guidelines project. – **project AA2; intermediate outcomes 1, 2, 3 and 7**

## Linkages

The Board of Claims, under the Department of Justice, worked with other government agencies, the private sector and non-government organisations.

**Those whose lives were disrupted, freedoms taken and security violated would have a mechanism that adopts, listens and responds to their evolving needs ... The collective efforts towards the effective implementation of RA 7309 ensures that compensation processes are more transparent and inclusive, consistent with the DOJ's [Department of Justice's] mantra of providing justice in real time.**

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*Extract from the Philippine Justice Secretary Jesus Crispin Remulla's message, read by Undersecretary Raul T. Vasquez at the ceremonial signing of the revised implementing rules and regulations of Republic Act No. 7309<sup>1</sup>*

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1 Department of Justice, [Advancing the DOJ-Board of Claims, revised IRR inked](#) [news article], 15 May 2025.

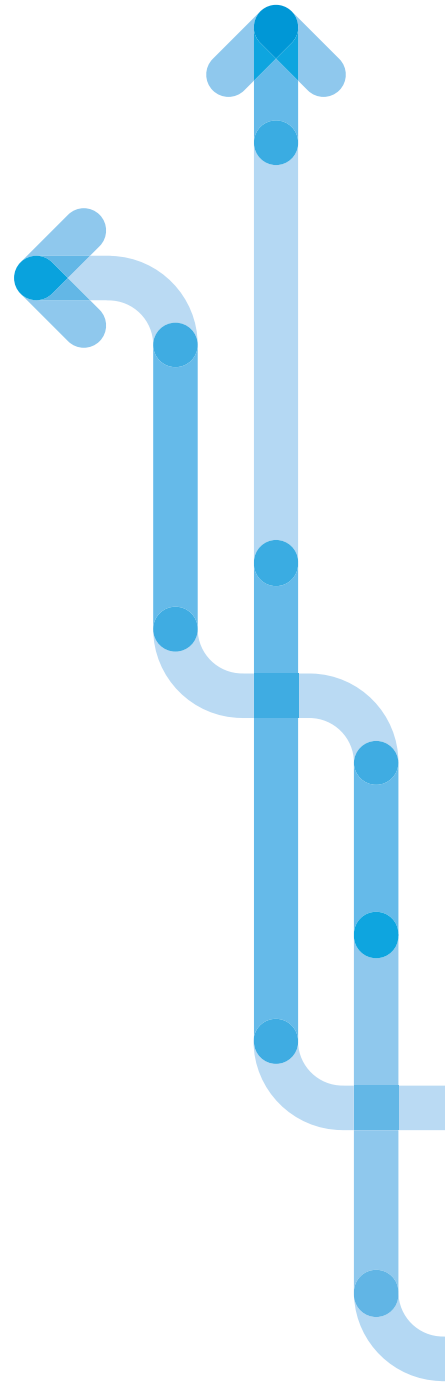


Photo: Panel discussion at Thailand's 2nd Modern Slavery Conference, supported by ASEAN-ACT and held in Bangkok (March 2025).



# THAILAND

In FY 2024–25, we continued to support partners in Thailand in their implementation of Thailand's ACTIP obligations. We delivered 60 events, with 772 participants (52% women).

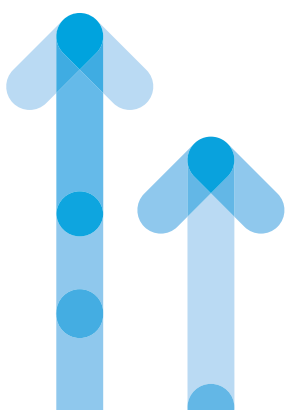
## Key achievements

- The Australian Embassy in Thailand hosted a seminar to connect Australian and Thai businesses in addressing risks of forced labour in operations and supply chains. The seminar reached 12 private sector companies or businesses and included an address from Thailand's Ministry of Justice on the planned human rights due diligence law. – [project AA1](#); [intermediate outcomes 1 and 3](#)
- The Office of the Attorney General, in partnership with a coalition of leading organisations in Thailand, hosted the 2nd Modern Slavery Conference in March 2025, with a focus on migrant worker management, international legal cooperation and human rights due diligence. – [project AA2](#); [intermediate outcomes 1, 2, 6 and 7](#)



12

private sector  
businesses  
reached through  
ethical trade  
seminar



- 
- The Ministry of Social Development and Human Security and the Office of the Attorney General held a workshop in May 2025 on the ASEAN model for compensation and remedies for victims of trafficking, to inform the updating of the standard operating procedures for multidisciplinary teams in assessing compensation for victims. – [project AA2](#); [intermediate outcomes 1, 2 and 7](#)
  - We partnered with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to support a roundtable discussion in February 2025 on the criminalisation of trafficking in persons and corruption. – [project AA3](#); [intermediate outcomes 5 and 8](#)
  - The Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, the Royal Thai Police, the Court of Justice of Thailand and the Anti-Money Laundering Office each has a representative participating in ASEAN-ACT’s emerging leaders program (see [Section 4](#) – Regional-level progress). – [project AA4](#); [intermediate outcomes 1, 2, 6 and 7](#)
  - The National Program Steering Committee held meetings on 1 August 2024 and 2 May 2025. – [project AA9](#); [all intermediate outcomes](#)
  - We conducted partner review and reflection workshops to inform planning and reporting, and socialised our Phase 2 program scope and MEL plan. – [project AA9](#); [all intermediate outcomes](#)
- 

## Screening cases of forced labour and labour trafficking

**Achievement:** In March 2025, in partnership with International Justice Mission (IJM) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), we conducted a workshop on the national referral mechanism (see case study on [pages 48–49](#)) – screening cases of forced labour and labour trafficking using the harmonised screening form. Twenty IJM-trained frontline mentors participated in addressing the use of the national referral mechanism form in identifying, assisting and protecting victims of trafficking in persons and forced labour. Key recommendations were identified – standardising procedures for screening and referral; financial support to victims; legal review and case reassessment; and victim-centred approaches. This was reported to the Steering Committee of the National Referral Mechanism in April 2025. – [project AA2; intermediate outcomes 1, 2, 3, 6 and 7](#)

## Criminalisation of TIP and corruption

**Achievement:** We partnered with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in supporting a roundtable discussion in February 2025 on the criminalisation of trafficking in persons and corruption. The event was attended by 40 people from government agencies and civil society, as well as legal experts, to examine and discuss the critical link between corruption and human trafficking, any legislative gaps and the enhancement of enforcement strategies. The event also shared the findings of the legislative review on trafficking in persons and corruption laws, conducted by UNODC through support from ASEAN-ACT. Recommendations from the event will inform policy discussions with the Thai Government and with UNODC. – [project AA3; intermediate outcomes 5 and 8](#)



## Training by the CTIP Centre of Excellence on transnational organised crime

**Achievement:** On 24–28 March 2025, the CTIP Centre of Excellence organised the Counter-Transnational Organised Crime – Trafficking in Persons training program, led by the Department of Special Investigation in the Ministry of Justice. This pivotal training aims to enhance participants’ analytical, investigative and operational competencies – to enable the effective dismantling of human trafficking networks while maintaining a victim-centred approach. Police Lieutenant Colonel Anon Untarijan, in his opening remarks on the first day of the training, underscored the importance of integrating gender equality, disability and social inclusion, and emphasised the training’s dual objectives of building technical skills and enhancing interagency collaboration. There were 40 training participants (13 women), representing both government agencies and non-government organisations, all united in the fight against human trafficking. – [project AA2](#); [intermediate outcomes 1, 2, 6 and 7](#)

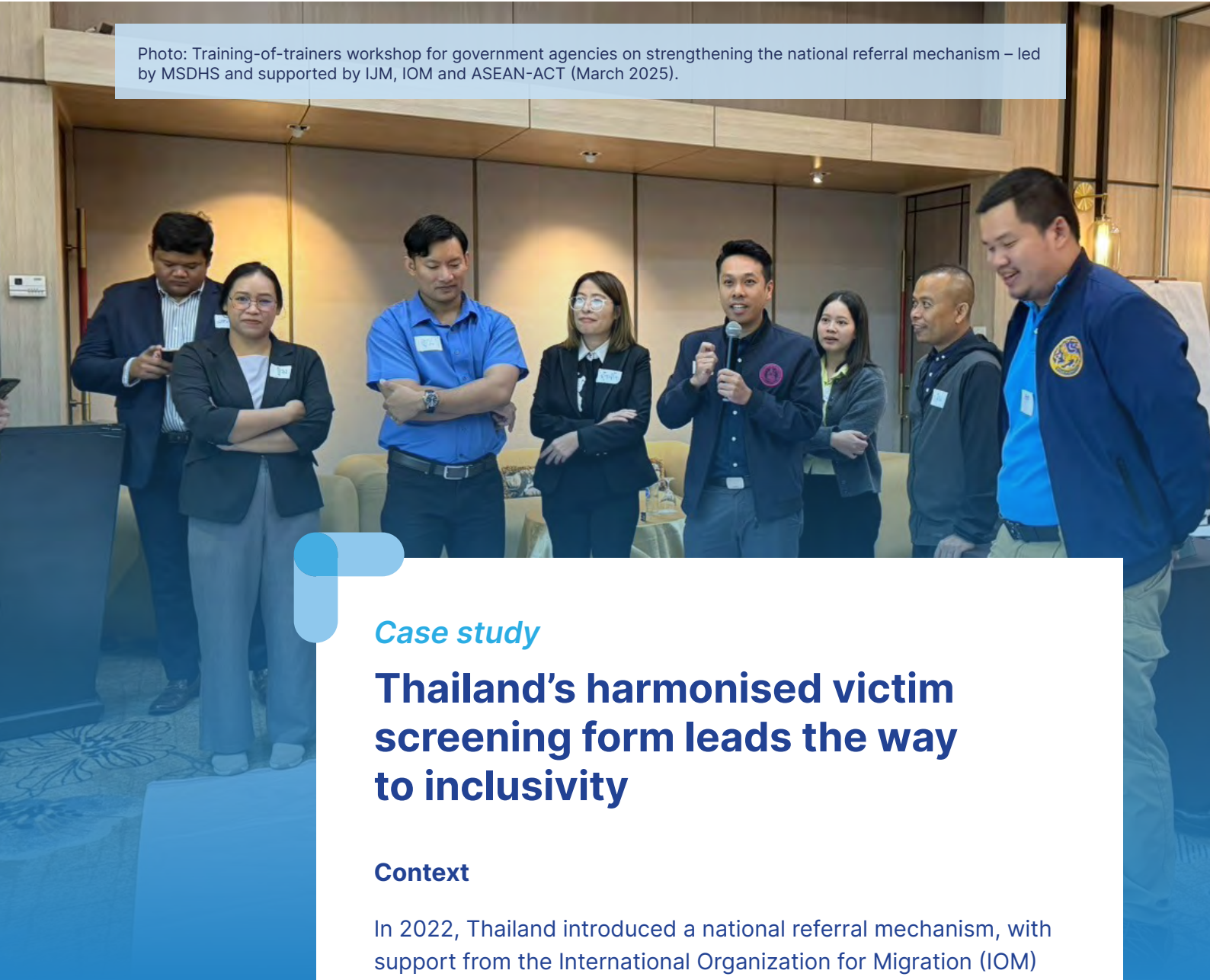
I gained valuable knowledge and information applicable to our work in safeguarding the wellbeing of victims, and established a collaborative network. This is essential as all relevant agencies play a role in the collective effort to prevent and combat human trafficking.

Participant in the Counter-Transnational Organised Crime – Trafficking in Persons training program



Photo: Participants representing cross-sectoral agencies at the CTIP Centre of Excellence 201 training course in Bangkok, Thailand (March 2025).

Photo: Training-of-trainers workshop for government agencies on strengthening the national referral mechanism – led by MSDHS and supported by IJM, IOM and ASEAN-ACT (March 2025).



### Case study

## Thailand's harmonised victim screening form leads the way to inclusivity

### Context

In 2022, Thailand introduced a national referral mechanism, with support from the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and ASEAN-ACT, to standardise the procedure for screening victims of trafficking. The mechanism operates through four key stages: frontline response; screening; identification; and protection. It ensures that victims receive tailored support such as shelter, therapy and legal assistance – prioritising cultural sensitivity, confidentiality and reintegration. However, key government agencies were using different screening forms for victims of forced labour and trafficking, causing inconsistencies and confusion among frontline responders. The Steering Committee of the National Referral Mechanism was established to coordinate and oversee the implementation of the national referral mechanism, ensuring a unified and effective response to screening and protection of TIP victims. ASEAN-ACT is a member of the steering committee.

In July 2024, during a meeting of partners led by the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security (MSDHS), we partnered with the United Nations Development Programme and the IOM in advocating for harmonisation of victim screening forms. Thailand accepted this recommendation and assigned the Steering Committee of the National Referral Mechanism to be responsible for the harmonisation of all victim screening forms.

## Achievement

In November 2024, Thailand implemented a revised and harmonised victim screening form under the national referral mechanism, to align with international standards and promote inclusive anti-trafficking responses. Evidence has shown that there are gaps in identifying people with disability among TIP victims, especially when disabilities are not visible. In response to this challenge, the questions in the Washington Group Short Set on Functioning (WG-SS), which we proposed, are now included in the revised and harmonised victim screening forms – adopted for official use nationwide. Led by ASEAN-ACT and other key development partners, an inclusive policy framework was developed.

As a member of the Steering Committee of the National Referral Mechanism, we collaborated and worked with other committee members and with other stakeholders in revising and harmonising the screening forms. The harmonisation of the forms and inclusion of the disability questions underwent extensive consultations with key government agencies, civil society, including organisations of people with disability, international organisations, and development partners. The revised forms will also enhance disability data collection on TIP victims. Following the adoption of the revised victim screening forms, we are supporting the steering committee in socialising the harmonised forms, with the first socialisation workshop held in December 2024 in Sa Kaeo, Thailand. The national referral mechanism capacity and process were tested during the first quarter of 2025, with over 400 TIP victims officially identified by MSDHS, representing 20 nationalities. – **project AA2; intermediate outcomes 1, 2, 3, 6 and 7**

## Linkages

We partnered with the Steering Committee of the National Referral Mechanism of Thailand.

### I will disseminate it to those involved.

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*Participant in the December 2024 workshop on Thailand's revised and harmonised victim screening forms under the national referral mechanism*

Photo: Training-of-trainers workshop for frontliners on gender-sensitive and victim-centered approaches in counter-trafficking in persons, held in Quang Ninh province, Vietnam (December 2024).



In FY 2024–25, we continued to support partners in Vietnam in their implementation of Vietnam’s ACTIP obligations. We delivered 24 events, with 501 participants (57% women).



76

representatives from government agencies and non-government organisations attended two workshops on a draft decree to implement the revised TIP Law

**Key achievements**

- The Ministry of Public Security and the Department of Social Welfare within the Ministry of Health collaborated in organising two consultation workshops on a draft decree to implement the revised Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Law 2024, with 76 people (33 women) participating in during the workshops (see case study on pages 54–55 and story on [page 20](#)). – *project AA1; intermediate outcomes 1, 2, 3 and 7*
- The Supreme People’s Court developed a handbook on victim-sensitive courts for judges and court officials, adapted from regional victim-sensitive court guidelines, for official endorsement in July 2025. – *project AA2; intermediate outcomes 1, 2 and 7*
- The Supreme People’s Court organised a consultation workshop on developing criteria for collecting data on adjudication of TIP cases (see [pages 24–25](#)). – *project AA3; intermediate outcomes 4 and 8*

- The Criminal Police Department within the Ministry of Public Security, the Department of Legal Dissemination, Education and Legal Aid within the Ministry of Justice, Peace House Shelter and the Supreme People’s Court each has a representative participating in ASEAN-ACT’s emerging leaders program (see [Section 4](#) – Regional-level progress). – [project AA4; intermediate outcomes 1, 2, 6 and 7](#)
- The National Program Steering Committee held a meeting on 8 August 2024. – [project AA9; all intermediate outcomes](#)
- We conducted partner review and reflection workshops to inform planning and reporting. – [project AA9; all intermediate outcomes](#)

### Disability inclusion handbook

**Achievement:** Through our support in implementing multi-year projects with government partners in Vietnam, gender-sensitive and victim-centred approaches were integrated into policies and practices. One example is the Handbook on Ensuring Inclusion for Trafficking Victims with Disabilities, launched and socialised in May 2025, in partnership with the Vietnam Federation on Disability and the Action to the Community Development Institute. This is a vital resource for frontline officers (for example, police, social workers, court officials, local-level officers), providing an overview of disability inclusion principles, and guidelines to supporting victims with disability throughout the entire justice process. Participants heard from organisations of people with disability, creating awareness on the nexus between trafficking in persons and disability. – [project AA1; intermediate outcomes 1 and 3](#)

## Legal aid and victim compensation

**Achievement:** In May 2025, we partnered with the Department of Legal Dissemination, Education and Legal Aid within the Ministry of Justice in organising a workshop on legal aid, legal support and protection of TIP victims. With the revision of Vietnam’s Law on the Prevention and Combating of Trafficking in Persons (TIP Law), the objective of this workshop was to discuss how to address challenges in providing legal aid and compensation to TIP victims under the revised TIP Law. We also shared examples of good practices from Thailand, Australia and the United Kingdom. Participants from local authorities (cities and provinces), sociopolitical organisations (for example, Action to the Community Development Institute, Vietnam Association for the Protection of Child Rights) and professional organisations (Vietnam Bar Federation, Central Committee of the Vietnam Lawyers Association) provided recommendations to central agencies (Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Public Security, Ministry of Health, Supreme People’s Procuracy, Supreme People’s Court and Border Guard Command) that were present during the workshop. – [project AA1; intermediate outcomes 1, 2, 3 and 7](#)

## Prosecution of trafficking in persons – a digital publication

**Achievement:** On 31 October 2024, the leaders of the Supreme People’s Procuracy endorsed a digital publication – a film titled [The Prosecution Journey](#) (*Hành trình công tố*) – on the prosecution of cross-border trafficking in persons cases involving victims under 16 years of age. Under our project AA2 with the Supreme People’s Procuracy, in collaboration with the *Prosecution Journal*, we supported the development of this film. The film provides guidance and examples, and explains procedures, to help investigators and prosecutors when dealing with cross-border TIP cases involving victims under 16 years of age. The film will contribute to greater effectiveness and consistency in case handling. – [project AA2; intermediate outcomes 1, 2 and 3](#)



Photo: Participants take part in an accessibility assessment to identify barriers faced by people with disability at the launch of a disability inclusion handbook for frontliners handling trafficking in persons cases, held in Ninh Binh province, Vietnam (May 2025).

Photo: Participants at the launch and socialisation of a disability inclusion handbook to support trafficked victims with disabilities, held in Ninh Binh province, Vietnam (May 2025).



*Case study*

## **Incorporating gender equality, disability and social inclusion into the decree for implementing Vietnam’s revised TIP Law**

### **Context**

Vietnam’s Law on the Prevention and Combating of Trafficking in Persons (TIP Law) was revised in 2024 to align with the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, and the ASEAN Convention against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (ACTIP). The revised TIP Law was passed by the National Assembly in November 2024, and entered into force on 1 July 2025. Following the enactment of the revised TIP Law, a guiding decree for the implementation of selected articles and enforcement measures is important, specifically on victim identification and support to victims of trafficking in persons.

## Achievement

The decree detailing the implementation of certain articles and enforcement measures of the revised TIP Law, specifically on victim identification and assistance, has been developed and submitted to the Government Office for approval. We supported two consultation workshops (one in northern Vietnam and one in southern Vietnam), held in April 2025 in collaboration with the Department of Foreign Relations within the Ministry of Public Security, and the Department of Social Welfare within the Ministry of Health. The workshops gathered inputs for the guiding decree. A total of 76 participants attended the workshops, representing relevant ministries, other central government agencies, selected provincial agencies, organisations of people with disability, international organisations, non-government organisations and victim support agencies. Key topics discussed, and proposed additions to the decree, include providing clear criteria and indicators for victim identification; support for people with disability (for example, sign language interpretation, accessible materials, assistive devices); clarifying roles and responsibilities of relevant parties; coordination in handling foreign victims; support to vulnerable groups (for example, people with disability, ethnic minorities, children accompanying trafficked mothers); and gender-sensitive and victim-centred approaches, including support to LGBTQI victims.

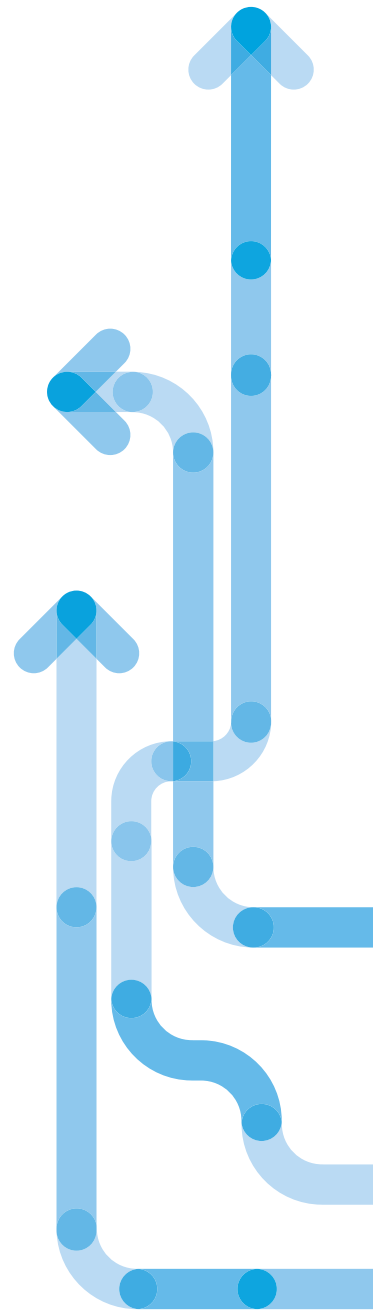
## Linkages

Partnership with the Department of Foreign Relations within the Ministry of Public Security, and the Department of Social Welfare within the Ministry of Health.

**Delegates from various ministries and sectors had lively discussions and exchanges. The ASEAN-ACT team had a very useful coordination and sharing role to promote delegate participation.**

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*Feedback from a participant in the consultation workshop in April 2025 on the implementing decree for Vietnam's revised TIP Law*



# Regional highlights from 2024-25



20

senior government officials from five ASEAN Member States participated in our CTIP emerging leaders program

3

organisations of people with disability were supported through our grants program



# 4

## Regional-level progress

Photo: Twenty senior government leaders join the first cohort of the CTIP Leadership Excellence in ASEAN Program, kicked off in Bangkok, Thailand (January 2025).

Photo: Philippine participants in the CTIP Leadership Excellence in ASEAN Program (LEAP) at the first in-person workshop in Bangkok, Thailand (January 2025).



In FY 2024-25, ASEAN-ACT continued to implement regional-level activities to support ASEAN and ASEAN Member States.

**Key achievements**

During the reporting period, key achievements included our counter-trafficking in persons (CTIP) emerging leaders program, a grants program for organisations of people with disability, dialogues on trafficking in persons and vulnerable groups, and validation of the international legal cooperation handbook and compendium.

**Emerging leaders program**

**Achievement:** This project takes an innovative approach, focusing on investment in CTIP leadership and coordination, to address institutional challenges in strengthening CTIP governance. The first cohort of 20 emerging CTIP leaders (11 women) across five ASEAN Member States (Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, the Philippines and Vietnam) started the one-year CTIP Leadership Excellence in ASEAN Program (LEAP) in November 2024. We partnered with Polaris Global Consultancy in conducting the leadership program, with four modules delivered during the reporting period. One-on-one coaching sessions were also provided to participants, in addition to face-to-face and online learning modules. The

[What] I like most about Module 2 [is] the emphasis on understanding unconscious bias and how it impacts decision-making and behaviours in professional settings. The content on trauma-informed leadership also stood out, as it highlighted the importance of considering the emotional and psychological wellbeing of those affected by human trafficking. Additionally, the integration of GEDSI principles for fostering inclusivity in the workplace was very insightful.

*Feedback from a participant in the CTIP Leadership Excellence in ASEAN Program*

participants represent different sectors and have a direct role in counter-trafficking: judges, social and shelter workers, financial investigators, police and prosecutors. – [project AA4; intermediate outcomes 1 and 2](#)

## Regional dialogue on addressing trafficking in persons among vulnerable groups

**Achievement:** In January 2025, we organised a regional dialogue, in partnership with the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC), Thailand’s representative to the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR), and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), focusing on addressing the intersectionality of vulnerabilities in TIP responses. The dialogue, which was held in Bangkok, aimed to highlight the importance of addressing the specific needs of vulnerable people through an intersectional lens. The 2-day event served as a platform to share lessons learned and good practices, as well as to foster cooperation among CTIP stakeholders. Representatives from key government and non-government organisations were joined by representatives from organisations of people with disability, and relevant ASEAN sectoral bodies. The event discussed intersectional vulnerabilities and discrimination in trafficking in persons; children’s vulnerabilities to trafficking; vulnerabilities of minority groups; vulnerabilities of people with disability; and gender-based violence and marginalised communities. Recommendations were generated for ongoing dialogue and cooperation within the region and among CTIP stakeholders. – [project AA1; intermediate outcomes 1 and 2](#)

## Grants program



**Achievement:** We have continued our grants program during Phase 2 of ASEAN-ACT, focusing on providing support to organisations of people with disability. In June 2021, we initiated a grants program for nine non-government organisations to promote joint policy dialogue and learning. Building on the success and learning from the Phase 1 grants program, and in response to recommendations from the study on the nexus between trafficking in persons and disability, we are supporting three organisations of people with disability: Yayasan Sakura Indonesia Al Jamaan, Life Haven Center for Independent Living in the Philippines, and Good Friends Association in Thailand. – [project AA1; intermediate outcomes 1 and 2](#)

### Compendium on international legal cooperation

**Achievement:** We are supporting the Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC), in partnership with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), in finalising the compendium on international legal cooperation in TIP cases. The draft compendium was validated in May 2025, in a workshop that brought together prosecutors, law enforcers and central authority representatives from ASEAN Member States and Timor-Leste. The workshop also validated the country profiles in the accompanying handbook, and the section on mutual legal assistance that refines key tools and guides cross-border coordination and responses to transnational TIP cases. It is anticipated that the SOMTC will endorse the compendium for dissemination during FY 2025–26. The cooperation tools in



Photo: CTIP Leadership Excellence in ASEAN Program (LEAP) participants representing Laos (January 2025).

the compendium will empower justice stakeholders across the ASEAN region to work more effectively and collaboratively in a way that protects the rights of victims and advances equitable access to justice. – [project AA1; intermediate outcomes 1 and 2](#)

## ASEAN judicial knowledge exchange

**Achievement:** In partnership with the [Council of ASEAN Chief Justices](#) (CACJ) Working Group on Judicial Education and Training, co-chaired by Indonesia and the Philippines, we are supporting initiatives to enhance institutional capacity and knowledge exchange among ASEAN judges. During the reporting period, with contributions gathered from the judicial knowledge exchanges between Indonesia and the Philippines, the working group completed the Compendium of Good Practices on Adjudicating Trafficking in Persons Cases in ASEAN Member States: Lessons Learned and Responses to Challenges, which was approved during the 11th CACJ meeting held in Cebu City, Philippines, on 18–21 November 2024. The meeting also approved the Framework for Judicial Knowledge Exchange on Trafficking in Persons in ASEAN, and agreed – through judicial knowledge exchange – to complete a compendium with inputs from ASEAN Member States. Additionally, the meeting also approved the concept note to revise the 2018 Model Professional Development Program for ASEAN Judges on Trafficking in Persons – a key tool to support judges in delivering more consistent, gender-responsive, victim-sensitive, disability-inclusive, and effective adjudication of TIP cases. A workshop was held in May 2025 to initiate the revision of the professional development program. – [project AA2; intermediate outcomes 1 and 2](#)

## Support to ASEAN's Heads of Specialist Anti-Trafficking Units

**Achievement:** We are supporting ASEAN's [Heads of Specialist Anti-Trafficking Units \(HSU\) process](#) and the SOMTC in strengthening this mechanism and cooperation in addressing trafficking in persons in the region. We are working with the HSUs of the Philippines and Malaysia on this initiative. During the April 2025 meeting of HSUs, an initial outline of guidelines to strengthen the HSU process was agreed, including the creation of a technical working group for the development of the guidelines. A draft of the guidelines was developed by June 2025, for review by all ASEAN HSUs. The review is led by the HSUs

of the Philippines and Malaysia, with the support of the SOMTC Secretariat. – [project AA1; intermediate outcomes 2 and 6](#)

### **Webinars on adaptive justice responses to trafficking in persons**

**Achievement:** We delivered three webinars during the reporting period, and reached a total of 606 CTIP practitioners and stakeholders. On 1 August 2024, we hosted our 21st webinar in the series – ‘From contracts to coercion: Understanding forced labour in the ASEAN region’. Our 22nd webinar in the series, held on 22 November 2024, was titled ‘Survivors matter to countering trafficking: Amplify their voices’. A participant highlighted that the webinar provided inspiration and insights from the perspectives of victim-survivors themselves. The 23rd webinar in the series, held on 30 April 2025, was titled ‘Women as drivers of change: Effective policies to enhance representation of women in counter-trafficking’. At the three webinars, we had speakers from the International Labour Organization, the Office of the Attorney General of Thailand, the Royal Thai Police, the Indonesian Migrant Workers Union, Humanity Research Consultancy, Chab Dai Coalition (Cambodia), Mentari, UNODC, the High Court of Banten province (Indonesia), and the Philippine Department of Social Welfare and Development. – [project AA2; intermediate outcomes 1 and 2](#)

**As an OPD [organisation of people with disability] trying to bring TIP onto the radar of the disability movement in the Philippines, I have been exposed to narratives, good practices, initiatives, and a network of like-minded individuals; I will bring home more knowledge and connections. I can share the depth of how persons with disabilities are victimised by traffickers and why TIP should be an issue OPDs should ... focus on and initiate engagements with government and other stakeholders.**

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*Feedback from a participant during a dialogue on addressing trafficking in persons among vulnerable groups*

## STORY

## Survivor and NGO engagement in developing the ASEAN child and forced marriage guidelines

### Context

During Phase 1 of ASEAN-ACT, we commissioned a study on the child justice system in relation to trafficking in the ASEAN region. In response to the study recommendations, in partnership with the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC), we supported the development of guidelines to address child and forced marriage in the context of trafficking in persons.

### Achievements

In May 2025, the ACWC completed and endorsed the final version of the ASEAN Guideline on the Prevention of and Response to Child and Forced Marriage in the Context of Trafficking in Persons. ASEAN-ACT supported a comprehensive consultation and review process for developing the guidelines through our project with the ACWC. Two regional workshops were conducted – one in Laos (June 2024) and one in Indonesia (September 2024). The two workshops had a total of 68 participants, of which 24 were non-state stakeholders: 17 from non-government organisations (NGOs) and civil society organisations (CSOs), two victim-survivors, and five from regional and international organisations. NGOs and CSOs, and victim-survivors of child and forced marriage, acted as

resource people during the workshops.

This was the first time an ASEAN sectoral body has engaged directly with survivors of trafficking in persons. Inputs gathered during the workshops have informed the drafting and revisions by the technical working group of the ACWC. Child leaders were also consulted through the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) initiatives. Other CSOs in the region provided their inputs through the Freedom Fund.

**Children are the future of our region, and ASEAN is dedicated to ensuring their safety, well-being and access to education, healthcare and opportunity. We will continue to work for a region where every child can grow up in a safe and nurturing environment.**

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*H.E. Theng Chhorvirith, Cambodia Child Rights Representative*

Some of the responses from our survey of partners, when asked to give an example of change or improvement in counter-trafficking due to cooperation initiatives supported or promoted by ASEAN-ACT:

**GEDSI has been mainstream[ed] in NSP [National Strategic Plan] 2024–2028**

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*Partner from Cambodia*

**The initiative on coming up with victim-sensitive guidelines**

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*Partner from Philippines*

**Good collaboration among relevant ministries and CSOs**

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*Partner from Cambodia*

**The establishment of the CTIP Centre of Excellence**

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*Partner from Thailand*

**In the past, there have been no TIP cases. The support of ASEAN-ACT [has] initiate[d] changes in the judicial sector of Lao PDR**

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*Partner from Laos*

**ASEAN-ACT efforts to introduce GEDSI [gender equality, disability and social inclusion] to government stakeholders play a pivotal role in bridging gaps between various actors working on TIP by fostering connections and facilitating discussions, and knowledge-sharing space**

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*Partner from Thailand*

**There is more cooperation between LWU [Lao Women’s Union], ATD [Anti-Trafficking in Persons Department, Ministry of Public Security] and my organisation on referring and assisting victims of trafficking**

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*Partner from Laos*

**Recommendations and inputs are recorded during the process of developing the [implementing decree for the revised] TIP Law**

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*Partner from Vietnam*

**Through trainings on MERL [monitoring, evaluation, reporting and learning], relevant personnel and stakeholders became equipped in collecting data on human trafficking cases, [and can] track trend[s], measure program impact and identify gaps in interventions**

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*Partner from Philippines*

**My lectures, communication materials, and training courses are more enriched, helping students understand and pay more attention to the content of preventing and combating human trafficking**

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*Partner from Vietnam*



# 5

## Selected output results

Photo: Participant in the experience-sharing workshop on legal support for and protection of trafficking victims, held in Ninh Binh province, Vietnam (May 2025).

This section provides results in FY 2024–25 for a selection of ASEAN-ACT’s output indicators, including the number and type of activities and events supported, the number of state and non-state participants at our activities and events, and feedback from our partners on ASEAN-ACT’s activities and events.

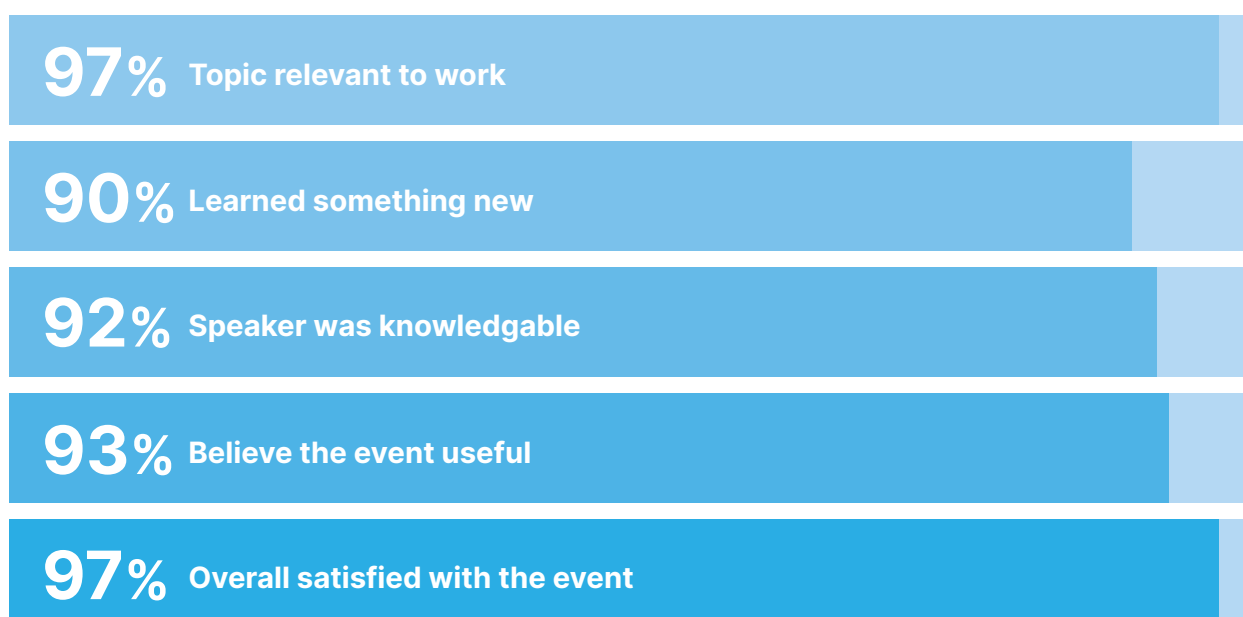
**Table 1** Number and type of events supported by ASEAN-ACT, FY 2024–25

Country/ region	Capacity development*	Meetings	Conferences and launches	Other	Total number of events supported
Cambodia	4	13	2	1	20
Indonesia	–	4	–	–	4
Laos	8	–	–	4	12
Philippines	27	29	2	5	63
Thailand	13	44	1	2	60
Vietnam	11	11	1	1	24
ASEAN/ regional	26	19	1	–	46
<b>Total</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>229</b>

\* Capacity development includes training, webinars, seminars and workshops.

Source: ASEAN-ACT activity data collection, 2024 and 2025.

**Figure 1** Summary of participant feedback collected in FY 2024–25



Note: Percentages indicate the proportion of respondents who fully agree or agree with the various statements.

Source: ASEAN-ACT participant feedback – results database, FY 2024–25.

**Table 2** Number of state and non-state stakeholders who participated in ASEAN-ACT-supported events, by country of origin, FY 2024–25

Country/ region	Female	Male	Other	Did not specify or blank	Total		
<i>State stakeholders (national and subnational government agencies)</i>							
Brunei Darussalam	27	7	1	–	35	–	–
Cambodia	134	254	–	–	388	–	–
Indonesia	107	107	1	–	215	–	–
Laos	153	165	–	–	318	–	–
Malaysia	27	15	–	–	42	–	–
Myanmar	6	10	–	–	16	–	–
Philippines	957	634	4	2	1,597	–	–
Singapore	7	12	–	–	19	–	–
Thailand	343	349	14	3	709	–	–
Vietnam	274	226	–	–	500	–	–
Timor-Leste	10	12	–	–	22	–	–
Outside ASEAN region	9	–	–	1	10	–	–
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,054</b>	<b>1,791</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3,871</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>–</b>
Percentage	53.06%	46.27%	0.52%	0.15%	100%	–	–
Country/ region	Female	Male	Other	Did not specify or blank	Total	Of total, number from organisations of people with disability	Of total, number from the private sector
<i>Non-state stakeholders (NGOs/CSOs, international organisations, regional organisations, and private sector)</i>							
Brunei Darussalam	3	3	–	–	6	–	–
Cambodia	81	75	–	–	156	7	1
Indonesia	112	46	1	–	159	20	7
Laos	33	21	–	–	54	20	–
Malaysia	6	11	–	–	17	–	5
Myanmar	23	14	–	–	37	–	2
Philippines	90	58	–	4	152	44	6
Singapore	3	7	–	–	10	1	7
Thailand	193	95	3	5	296	14	51
Vietnam	65	19	–	1	85	63	1
Outside ASEAN region	54	22	–	26	102	–	56
<b>Total</b>	<b>663</b>	<b>371</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>1,074</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>136</b>
Percentage	61.73%	34.54%	0.37%	3.35%	100%	15.74%	12.66%

Note: Excludes ASEAN-ACT and Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Australian diplomatic mission) staff. For some webinars, information on private sector participants is incomplete, and the missing data is therefore not included in this table.

Sources: ASEAN-ACT activity data collection, and participant data collection, 2024 and 2025.

**Figure 2** Summary of partner survey results in FY 2024–25



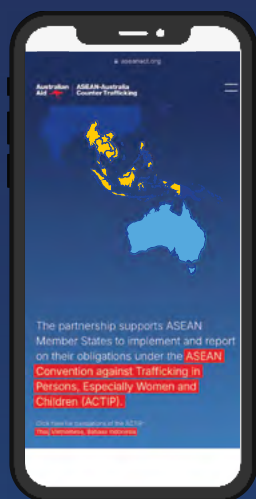
GEDSI = gender equality, disability and social inclusion

Note: Percentages indicate the proportion of respondents who fully agree or agree with the various statements.

Source: ASEAN-ACT annual survey of partners, FY 2024–25.



Photo: ASEAN representatives at the consultation workshop on the ASEAN compendium of international legal cooperation on trafficking in persons cases, held in Bangkok, Thailand (December 2024).



## Contact

Visit our website at [aseanact.org](https://aseanact.org) to download further resources to support your counter-trafficking responses.

For further information, please contact [info@aseanact.org](mailto:info@aseanact.org).

