





FY2024 ANNUAL REPORT



© 2025 by AJC

All rights reserved.

Published by: The ASEAN Promotion Centre on Trade,

Investment and Tourism (ASEAN-Japan Centre)

Address: 1F Shin Onarimon Bldg., 6-17-19 Shimbashi, Minato-ku, Tokyo, Japan

Website URL: https://www.asean.or.jp/

For permission requests, contact publisher at: https://www.asean.or.jp/en/contact/

Print Version ISBN: 978-4-910293-62-2

Online Version ISBN: 978-4-910293-63-9

Published in August 2025

About the Cover Design:

The graphic art pieces were designed by six young Japanese creators based on impressions and inspirations from ASEAN today. The pieces uniquely express the diversity, culture, and vibrancy of the people of ASEAN. Creator profiles and explanations of each graphic are available on the Centre's official website and Instagram (@aseanjapancentre\_pr).



# Partners for Impact

FY2024 Annual Report



## ASEAN-Japan Centre FY2024 Annual Report

#### **PARTNERS FOR IMPACT**

FY2024 was a year of partnerships for the ASEAN-Japan Centre. From the private to the public sector, collaborating with partners expanded our capacity to create a bigger impact within target communities.

In this annual report, these collaborations will be highlighted, showing the different ways in which the Centre has worked with its partners to reach and support more people across ASEAN and Japan.

In 2022, the ASEAN-Japan Centre embarked on its 5.0 Vision (AJC5.0), our first ever mid-term strategic plan. We then presented our Stories of Change and Stories of Progress, showing the results of the AJC5.0 over the past two years. For FY2024, we are proud to present to you the last installment of this three-part series, Stories of Impact.

Through these stories, we shared our journey of developing a long-term vision and strategy for our organisation. We believe that promoting trade, investment, tourism, and people-to-people exchange is only meaningful if it made the lives of people in ASEAN and Japan better, and that was what we set out to do.

As the AJC5.0 comes to an end, our Centre will continue to adjust our goals for the coming years in the AJC5.5 and build on past achievements. Thank you for the unwavering support and may you join us in reflecting on our activities through our FY2024 Annual Report.

## **Contents**

- 4 Reflections on the Fiscal Year 2024
- 6 Message from the Secretary-General
- 7 Message from the Council Director
- 8 About ASEAN-Japan Centre
- 9 Organisation Structure
- 10 Highlights of the FY2024

#### **GOAL 1**

INCLUSIVE, RESILIENT & SUSTAINABLE TRADE

- 12 STORY OF IMPACT 1 Trade Activities
- **16** STORY OF IMPACT 2
  Trade and Knowledge Platforms

#### **GOAL 2**

SUSTAINABLE IMPACT INVESTMENT

- 23 STORY OF IMPACT 3
  Investment Activities
- 27 STORY OF IMPACT 4
  Sustainable Capacity Building

#### GOAL 3

SUSTAINABLE & RESPONSIBLE TOURISM

- 31 STORY OF IMPACT 5

  Tourism Promotion Activities
- 34 STORY OF IMPACT 6
  Women Digital Skills Training
- 37 STORY OF IMPACT 7
  Sustainable Tourism Best Practice Sharing

#### GOAL 4

FOSTERING LEADERSHIP & YOUTH AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

- 40 STORY OF IMPACT 8
  ASEAN-Japan Youth Environmental
  Leaders Network
- 43 STORY OF IMPACT 9
  ASEAN-Japan Women Entrepreneurs Summit
- 47 STORY OF IMPACT 10
  ASEAN Lectures and Activities

#### **GOAL 5**

ADVOCACY & STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION

- 51 STORY OF IMPACT 11
  ASEAN New Generation Short Film Award
- STORY OF IMPACT 12

  ASEAN Chairmanship Support Activities

- 56 Staff Profiles
- 59 Contact Information
- 60 National Activities

Financial Statements

Final Progress Report

### A Bridging Year Toward a New Chapter



**Dr. Kunihiko Chris Hirabayashi** Secretary-General of the ASEAN-Japan Centre

FY2024 marked an important bridging year for the ASEAN-Japan Centre (AJC) — a year of transition between the landmark 50th Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation in 2023, and the new ASEAN Community Vision 2045 in 2025 as well as the current five-year strategic plan for the Centre, AJC 5.0 (2021-2025), and the forthcoming new five-year strategic plan, AJC 5.5 (2026-2030).

In this pivotal moment, the Centre remained deeply focused on its core strength: serving the needs of people, and working in the best interests of our member states and their communities across ASEAN and Japan. We upheld our shared vision of becoming a regional champion of change — striving toward an inclusive, people-centered, resilient, and sustainable future for our region through our strategic actions in the areas of trade, investment, tourism, and people-to-people exchange.

Throughout FY2024, the Centre delivered meaningful impact at multiple levels:

- Facilitated high-level dialogues between ASEAN Heads of Government and Ministers and Japanese business executives;
- Empowered growth-minded MSMEs, including women-led MSMEs, youth-lead startups, and entrepreneurs from developing regions by building their digital capabilities and advancing their businesses;
- Fostered policy dialogues on emerging topics, such as carbon credits and green innovation among academia, advanced businesses and governments in Japan and the ASEAN Member States;
- Supported local farmers to enhance climateresilient green agribusiness;

- Highlighted people-centred and community-led models of sustainable tourism; and,
- Engaged and mobilized youth, including high school students, in collective action to address marine plastic waste.

Each of these achievements represents an essential piece of the broader puzzle toward realizing our shared vision.

As we turn toward a new chapter, guided by the ASEAN Community Vision 2045, the Centre reaffirms its commitment to being a people-centred, future-forward institution. We will continue to amplify grassroots voices, connect regional actors, and build the capacity of people across all levels of society to co-create solutions that matter.

Together, we move forward — with purpose, with partnership, and with hope.



# ...will continue to flourish and deliver lasting, inclusive benefits for our peoples.

It is a great honor and privilege to serve as Chairperson of the Council Director of the ASEAN-Japan Centre during this important period. FY2024 has marked a year of meaningful milestones and strengthened cooperation, reflecting the enduring ASEAN-Japan partnership and the vital role the Centre plays in fostering regional connectivity, prosperity, and sustainable development.

The ASEAN-Japan partnership — built on more than five decades of mutual trust, shared values, and strategic dialogue — remains a cornerstone of peace, stability, and inclusive growth in our region. In this context, the Centre serves not only as a bridge between ASEAN Member States and Japan, but also as a dynamic platform for forward-looking cooperation. Its initiatives in supporting MSMEs, empowering youth and women entrepreneurs, and promoting sustainable and responsible business practices are both timely and impactful in preparing our economies and societies for future challenges.

In the fiscal year 2024, the Centre has continued to build on its achievements, especially by aligning its programs with emerging regional priorities such as digital transformation, innovation-led growth, and green, inclusive recovery. These focus areas reflect both the Centre's adaptability and its long-term vision for sustainable regional development.

I would like to express my highest appreciation to the Centre Secretariat for its dedication, professionalism, and tireless efforts. The Secretariat's commitment to quality programming, strategic engagement, and inclusive dialogue has been instrumental in advancing the Centre's mission during this pivotal time.

Looking ahead, I encourage the Centre to continue exploring innovative pathways in digital innovation, green growth, and capacity building — especially for MSMEs. These domains are critical to unlocking the full potential of our region in the years to come.

With continued collective commitment from ASEAN Member States and Japan, I strongly believe that the ASEAN-Japan partnership will continue to flourish and deliver lasting, inclusive benefits for our peoples.



Mr. Vu Ba Phu
Chairperson of the Council Director
of the ASEAN-Japan Centre for FY2024
Council Director for Viet Nam



The **ASEAN-JAPAN CENTRE (AJC)** is an intergovernmental organization established by the ASEAN Member States and Japan in 1981.

It has been promoting exports from the ASEAN Member States to Japan while revitalizing investment, tourism as well as people-to-people exchanges between the ASEAN Member States and Japan through seminars, workshops, capacity building programs, research and policy analysis, crosscultural events, publication and information services, among others.

#### **Organisation Structure**

The ASEAN-Japan Centre consists of a Council, an Executive Board and a Secretariat.

#### **COUNCIL DIRECTORS OF THE ASEAN-JAPAN CENTRE**

#### **BRUNEI DARUSSALAM**

#### Dr. Hajah May Fa'ezah Haji Ahmad Ariffin

Permanent Secretary (Economy, Trade and Industry), Ministry of Finance and Economy

#### CAMBODIA

#### H.E. Mr. CHUM Angvichet

Director-General, General
Department of ASEAN, Ministry of
Foreign Affairs and International
Cooperation

#### **INDONESIA**

#### Ms. Fajarini Puntodewi

Director General, National Export

Development, Ministry of Trade

#### **JAPAN**

#### Mr. MIYAMOTO Shingo

Director-General / Assistant

Minister, Southeast and Southwest

Asian Affairs Department,

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

#### **LAO PDR**

#### Ms. Sengdavanh VONGSAY

Director-General, ASEAN

Department, Ministry of Foreign

Affairs

#### **MALAYSIA**

#### Dr. Sugumari A/P S. Shanmugam

Senior Director, ASEAN Economic Integration Division, Ministry of Investment, Trade and Industry (MITI)

#### **MYANMAR**

#### H.E. Mr. Soe Han

Ambassador of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar

#### **PHILIPPINES**

#### Mr. Christian L. De Jesus

Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of the Republic of the Philippines in Japan

#### **SINGAPORE**

#### Mr. Johnny Teo

Assistant Managing Director/
Americas, Europe and Northeast

Asia & Oceania, Enterprise
Singapore

#### **THAILAND**

#### Ms. Sunanta Kangvalkulkij

Director General, Department of International Trade Promotion (DITP)

#### **VIET NAM**

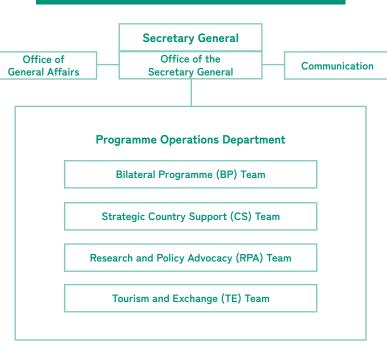
#### Mr. Vu Ba Phu

Director General, Vietnam Trade Promotion Agency (VIETRADE), Ministry of Industry and Trade

#### **EXECUTIVE BOARD**

- Consists of 11 representatives appointed by each Member State
- Supervises the activities of the Secretariat so that the decisions of the Council are implemented
- Advises the Secretary General when necessary

#### **SECRETARIAT**



# Highlights of the FY2024

#### GOAL

#### Inclusive, Resilient & Sustainable Trade









# Trade Activities

Inclusive, Resilient & Sustainable Trade

GOAL 1

Since our establishment in 1981, trade promotion has continued to be a cornerstone of the ASEAN-Japan Centre. For FY2024, the Centre remain committed to raising the awareness of ASEAN and its goods and services to the Japanese public.

**FOOD** 

Food product manufacturing has long played an important role within the ASEAN Member States, contributing significantly to their GDP. Traditionally, these exports came in the form of raw ingredients, but as countries attempt to move up the value chain, progress has been made in manufacturing clean, green, and price-competitive end products as well. In FY2024, the Centre enhanced our portfolio of trade exhibitions, bringing ASEAN exporters and Japanese importers together to explore partnership opportunities and to forge direct links between producers and importers. Moving forward, the Centre continues to deepen commercial ties and drive sustainable trade growth throughout the ASEAN-Japan corridor.

#### Vietnam Food Expo 2024

#### DATE

13-16 November 2024

#### **PARTNERS**

VIETRADE and the Department of Industry and Trade of Long An Province

#### **LOCATION**

Ho Chi Minh City and Long An Province, Viet Nam



Opening session of the event



Exhibited products included Kampot Pepper, Cashew Nuts, Dried Fruits, Tea, Coffee, Rice, among other things

#### **Cambodia Food Show**

#### **DATE**

21 February 2025

#### **PARTNERS**

Royal Embassy of Cambodia in Japan

#### LOCATION

The Royal Embassy of Cambodia in Japan

#### **Myanmar Pavilion at JAPAN FOODEX 2025**

#### DATE

11-14 March 2025

#### **PARTNERS**

Embassy of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar in Tokyo

#### LOCATION

Tokyo Big Sight



Product displays, and business representatives

#### DESIGN

Product design and fashion in ASEAN have advanced dramatically, with local brands shifting to trend-driven collections. In FY2024, the Centre amplified its trade-promotion efforts — showcasing ASEAN designers, curating buyer-seller forums for textile innovators and direct engagement between creative houses and Japanese retailers. The Centre co-organised multiple events to elevate ASEAN's design credentials and fuel export growth across the ASEAN-Japan fashion corridor as follows.

#### Thailand Fashion and Textile Business Matching Tokyo 2024

#### DATE

29-30 August 2024

#### **PARTNERS**

Department of International
Trade Promotion (DITP), Ministry of
Commerce of Thailand

#### LOCATION

Tokyo, Japan



Thai Fashion & Textile Business Matching



Fashion at FINOPINAS: The Finest of Philippine Art and Design

#### FINOPINAS: The Finest of Philippine Art and Design

#### DATE

3-13 September 2024

#### **PARTNERS**

Department of Trade and Industry of the Philippines (DTI)

#### LOCATION

Tokyo Midtown Design Hub,

Tokyo, Japan

#### Lao PDR Good Design Award (L Mark) 2025

#### **DATE**

11-14 March 2025

#### **PARTNERS**

Department of Trade Promotion, Ministry of Industry and Commerce and Japan Institute of Design Promotion

#### LOCATION

Vientiane, Lao PDR



Provincial products showcase



Bruneian Made booth at Kyoto International Gift Show 2025

#### Bruneian Made at 6th Kyoto International Gift Show 2025

#### DATE

12-13 March 2025

#### PARTNERS

Brunei Economic Development
Board (BEDB) and the Embassy of
Brunei Darussalam in Tokyo

#### **LOCATION**

Kyoto, Japan

Inclusive, Resilient & Sustainable Trade

GOAL 1

**TECH** 

Capitalising on global trends such as AI, robotics, and renewable energy, an increasing number of companies from ASEAN are also striving to partake in the growing market within and outside of ASEAN. To harness this momentum, the Centre has begun exploring ways to bring ASEAN tech innovators into direct conversation with Japanese investors and industrial partners. The Centre aims to continue strengthening ASEAN's high-tech export ecosystem and fostering sustainable, high-value collaborations across the region.

#### Singapore Kansai Startup Mission 2024

#### DATE

26-28 November 2024

#### **PARTNERS**

Enterprise Singapore

#### LOCATION

Osaka, Japan



Special lecture by Innovation Dojo Japan about entering the Japanese market



The startups with the Japanese companies



# Trade and Knowledge Platforms

In addition to direct trade activities, the ASEAN-Japan Centre also aims to promote trade across ASEAN and Japan through other platforms.

Specifically, the Centre has identified the underutilisation of Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) as well as the lack of knowledge platforms as problem areas which, if solved, could help businesses and investors boost their understanding and perception of ASEAN.

Addressing these problems are two projects: FTA Seminars and Workshops and, the ASEAN-Japan Insights Series.

FTA SEMINARS AND WORKSHOPS

The Centre organised a series of FTA-focused seminar-workshops in 2024 and 2025 to promote the effective utilisation of FTAs among ASEAN stakeholders, especially small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The seminars formed part of the Centre's broader efforts to enhance trade connectivity, economic resilience, and inclusive growth across the region. Building upon key themes from its recent workshops on digital trade, SMEs development, and FTA procedures, the sessions addressed both strategic and practical aspects of trade agreement usage.

A primary objective was to close the gap between policy and implementation by equipping exporters, trade officials, and SMEs business owners with the knowledge and tools necessary to navigate FTAs — especially AJCEP, RCEP, and Japan's bilateral EPAs — with a particular focus on their rules of origin, customs procedures, and digital trade readiness.

Lao PDR Post-2026: Pathways to Non-traditional Market Frontiers with Agro-processing Product Export Promotion Roadmap



DATE

30 August 2024

**PARTNERS** 

Department of Trade and Handicraft Promotion, Ministry of Industry and Commerce, Lao PDR

LOCATION

Vientiane, Lao PDR

**PARTICIPANTS** 

70

Side Event at Trade Expo Indonesia 2024: Seminars on the AJCEP and Digital Trade Platforms between ASEAN and Japan



DATE

10 October 2024

**PARTNERS** 

Ministry of Trade of the Republic of Indonesia

**LOCATION** 

Jakarta, Indonesia

**PARTICIPANTS** 

60

Usapang Exports on Maximizing the Benefits of FTAs between the Philippines and Japan Toward Sustainable Trade



#### DATE

2 December 2024

#### **PARTNERS**

Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), Export Development Council of the Philippine Exporters Confederation, Inc. (PHILEXPORT)

#### LOCATION

Manila, Philippines

#### **PARTICIPANTS**

133

Cambodia Trade: Looking Ahead to the LDC Graduation in 2029



#### **DATE**

28 March 2025

#### **PARTNERS**

Ministry of Commerce of Cambodia

#### LOCATION

Phnom Penh, Cambodia

#### **PARTICIPANTS**

102



Participants reported enhanced understanding of FTA mechanisms and expressed demand for more tailored, sector-specific support. Through the reduction and elimination of tariffs by utilising FTAs, producers and exporters can improve the price competitiveness of their products and enjoy the benefits of further sales expansion. Strategic responses are significant for companies, especially SMEs confronting international competitiveness. The Centre will continue to work on various problemsolving efforts for companies to facilitate FTA use through follow-up of the seminar.

#### **ASEAN-JAPAN INSIGHTS SERIES**

The Centre launched the ASEAN-Japan Insights Series to foster dialogue and collaboration on pressing issues of innovation and sustainability within the ASEAN region and Japan. Aligning with the Centre's mission to promote trade, investment, tourism, and people-to-people exchanges, the series aimed to address challenges and opportunities in sectors pivotal to regional development. Key objectives included exploring digital health advancements, empowering women entrepreneurs, and enhancing semiconductor industry collaboration through Al integration.

The webinars attracted a diverse audience, including policymakers, industry leaders, and academics, facilitating knowledge exchange and partnership building. Notably, the 'Health Without Borders' webinar highlighted the acceleration of digital health services in ASEAN, addressing challenges like data protection and system interoperability. The 'Breaking Barriers' session emphasised the role of women entrepreneurs in driving innovation and sustainability, featuring insights from leaders like Ms. Oranuch Lerdsuwankij and Ms. Kozue Sawame. The 'Inducing Innovation' webinar focused on revitalising the semiconductor industry through Al, showcasing collaborative opportunities between ASEAN countries and Japan. These sessions not only disseminated valuable information but also catalysed initiatives aimed at sustainable economic growth and inclusive development.

#### **Health Without Borders Webinar**

COVID-19 pandemic significantly and unprecedentedly accelerated the adoption of digital health technologies, particularly telehealth across Southeast Asia. Faced with disrupted access to medical care, the ASEAN Member States (AMS) rapidly embraced telehealth, adapting regulations to facilitate teleconsultations and remote healthcare services. Despite this progress, several fundamental challenges remain for establishing a robust digital health ecosystem in the region. Key issues include the development of digital transformation guidelines tailored to healthcare and data protection, interoperability of health data systems, and addressing patient trust in digital services.

The webinar unravelled the current status and challenges in the governments' initiatives to scale the digitisation of national medical records, establish robust cybersecurity systems in the face of rapidly advancing technologies, and promote innovation through private sector companies.

## DATE 19 July 2024 PARTICIPANTS

60



#### **SPEAKERS**

<b>Dr. Katrina Navallo</b> Moderator	Dr. Mohamad Hazwan Daut Panellist	<b>Dr. Takanori Fujita</b> Panellist	Ms. Ho Yuan Lu Panellist	Mr. Kazuma Abe Panellist
Programme Manager, ASEAN-Japan Centre	Head of HealthTech Hub, Malaysian Research Accelerator for Technology & Innovation/MRANTI	Senior Fellow, The Tokyo Foundation for Policy Research	Vice President, Outreach & Talent Development, Diagnostics Development Hub, at Singapore Agency for Science, Technology and Research A*STAR/Chief at Singapore Public Sector Science & Technology Policy and Plans Office	President and CEO, MEDRING

#### Breaking Barriers: Women Entrepreneurs in Innovative and Sustainable Businesses Webinar

As a lead up to the "Young Women Entrepreneurs in ASEAN and Japan" roundtable organised by the Centre in November 2024, this webinar was organised with the aims of exploring the challenges and needs of ASEAN and Japanese women entrepreneurs in the tech and innovation landscape, and how women can participate meaningfully in the economic development of ASEAN and Japan in the context of the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

#### **SPEAKERS**

Ms. Agnes Surry Moderator	Ms. Oranuch Lerdsuwankij Panellist & Keynote Speaker	Ms. Kozue Sawame Panellist & Keynote Speaker	Dr. Amor Maclang Panellist	Ms. Katrina Inandia Panellist
Deputy Head of Capacity	Co-founder and CEO of	President of JWLI	Co-Founder of	Head of Impact
Building and Training and Senior Economist at Asian	Techsauce	(Japanese Women's Leadership Initiative)	International Digital  Economies Association	and Sustainability at Amartha
Development Bank		and Fish Family	(iDEA) and Digital	
Institute		Foundation	Pilipinas	

Fig. 1 Speakers: Breaking Barriers

#### Smart Solutions: Harnessing Al and Digital Technology in Reducing Carbon Emissions Webinar

Focusing on the role of AI and digital technologies in the ongoing fight against CO2 emissions in the ASEAN region, the webinar aims to explore potential partnerships and collaborations among ASEAN member states, together with their Japanese counterparts, in finding technology solutions that will help in the collective effort of reducing CO2 emissions. Furthermore, the webinar aims to dive deeper into the challenges faced by the AMS in deploying such technologies.

#### **SPEAKERS**

Ms. Arlene A. Romasanta Moderator	Mr. Ishitsubo Hiroya Panellist	Mr. Alex Hong Panellist
Director of the Knowledge and Information Systems Service (KISS) division at DENR	CFO of Sagri Co., Ltd	Director of Aeir

Fig. 2 Speakers: Smart Solutions



#### DATE

10 September 2024
PARTNERS

AVPN

**PARTICIPANTS** 

113

Key Information for Fig. 1



#### DATE

19 December 2024

#### **PARTNERS**

Knowledge and Information Systems Service (KISS) division of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR)

**Participants** 

97

Key Information for Fig. 2

#### Inducing Innovation: Reinvigorating ASEAN-Japan Growth and Collaboration in the Semiconductor Industry with AI

This webinar sets out to explore the possible collaboration between Japan and ASEAN in the push for reigniting their semiconductor industries, recognising the pivotal role of AI as a transformative and essential resource.

The discussions explored how the AMS and Japan can tap the region's young workforce and abundant earth resources, alongside AI technologies, to expand their semiconductor capabilities through joint projects and partnerships. **DATE**26 March 2025 **PARTICIPANTS**132



#### **SPEAKERS**

Mr. Mark	Mr. Ferdinand "Perry" Ferrer Panellist	Mr. Andrew	Mr. Masaru	Dr. Lili
Manantan		Chan	Tsuchiya	Yan Ing
Moderator		Panellist	Panellist	Panellist
Director of Cybersecurity and Critical Technologies at the Pacific Forum	CEO and Chairman, EMS Group (Philippines)	Director of the Malaysia Semiconductor Industry Association (MSIA)	Partner at McKinsey & Company	Lead Advisor (Southeast Asia) at the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA)



Building on the momentum, the Centre will expand the series to foster a new generation of thought leaders and promote knowledge creation and dissemination on key topics in ASEAN and Japan relations through a new program, ASEAN-Japan Young Experts Program to be launched in June 2025. This program aims to foster cross-sector collaborations between academe and policy, support research and policy development through grant funding, and promote knowledge development from within the region.

# GOAL

### Sustainable Impact Investment











# Investment Activities

GOAL 2 Sustainable Impact Investment

The second core pillar of the Centre is investment. To improve the lives of people across ASEAN and Japan, investments should be directed into industries that have positive externalities. With that in mind, the Centre conducted several activities aimed at Japanese investors promoting investment opportunities in the ASEAN Member States that are sustainable both environmentally and financially.

#### Laos - Japan High-Level Roundtable Discussion

The Centre, with the Ministry of Planning of Lao PDR and Investment and JETRO, co-organised a high-level investment event to mark the 70th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two nations, featuring key government and business leaders from both countries.

Discussions focused on Lao PDR' potential as an investment hub, particularly in clean energy, agriculture, and manufacturing, as well as the role of Japan's expertise in driving sustainable development and technological innovation.

The roundtable facilitated direct dialogue between the Lao government, led by Prime Minister Sonexay Siphandone, and Japanese companies, aiming to address challenges and identify concrete solutions for boosting investment. Key sectors discussed include green energy, agriculture, and technological advancements, emphasising the shared opportunities to develop robust regional value chains and contribute to mutual economic prosperity.

#### DATE

22 January 2025

#### **PARTNERS**

Lao Ministry of Planning and Investment, Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO)

#### LOCATION

New Otani Hotel, Tokyo

#### **PARTICIPANTS**

80 business representatives



Laos-Japan high-level roundtable discussion group photo



Japan-Cambodia investment forum group photo

#### Japan-Cambodia Investment Forum: Digital Economy and Green Supply Chain

The Cambodia Investment Mission to Japan, led by H.E. Mr. Sun Chantol, Deputy Prime Minister of Cambodia, and organised by the Centre in collaboration with the Council for the Development of Cambodia (CDC) and JETRO, aimed to strengthen bilateral economic ties.

Through targeted meetings, company visits, and investment consultations, the mission emphasised Cambodia's stability, accessibility, and innovative solutions, showcasing Cambodia as a destination ripe with opportunities.

#### **DATE**

8 May 2024

#### **PARTNERS**

CDC and JETRO

#### Location

The United Nations University in Tokyo, Japan

#### **PARTICIPANTS**

328 business representatives

Sustainable Impact Investment GOAL 2

#### Investment Opportunities in Kulim Hi-Tech Park (KHTP) for Japanese Investors

On July 30, 2024, Roundtable Meeting 2024 on "Investment Opportunities in Kulim Hi-Tech Park (KHTP) For Japanese Investors" co-organised by the Malaysian Investment Development Authority (MIDA), Kulim Technology Park Corporation (KTPC), Kulim Hi-Tech Park—represents a significant economic collaboration between Malaysia and Japan.

The meeting reflects a strategic effort to attract Japanese investors, showcasing the high-tech investment potential of Kulim District, Kedah, in the ASEAN landscape.

# Unlocking Trade and Investment Potential with Viet Nam: Key Sectors and Strategic Insights from 2024 Activities

In 2024, the Centre strengthened trade and investment ties between Viet Nam and Japan through a series of strategic initiatives such as the business mission from Japan to the Viet Nam International Outsourcing Expo in June, and the Vietnam Trade and Investment Conference in Tokyo in July.

The primary objective was to promote Viet Nam as an attractive investment destination for Japanese businesses. The events sought to provide up-to-date information on Viet Nam's trade and investment climate, facilitate business networking, and explore opportunities in key sectors such as food, agriculture, manufacturing, and collaboration in agro-processing, e-commerce, and high-tech industries.

#### DATE

30 July 2024

#### **PARTNERS**

MIDA, KTPC, Kulim Hi-Tech Park

#### LOCATION

Le Grand, InterContinental Tokyo Bay, Tokyo, Japan

#### **PARTICIPANTS**

28



Malaysia-Japan roundtable meeting group photo

#### DATE

24 April, 3-9 June, 23 July 2024

#### **PARTNERS**

Ministry of Industry and Trade Viet Nam, Ministry of Planning and Investment Viet Nam, and JETRO

#### LOCATION

Tokyo, Japan

#### **PARTICIPANTS**

180 business representatives



Viet Nam-Japan B2B networking session

GOAL 2 Sustainable Impact Investment

#### Empowering SMEs towards a Future in Green Economy: New Chapter for Thailand-Japan Collaboration

On March 17, 2025, the Centre and the Department of Trade Negotiations (DTN), Ministry of Commerce, Thailand, co-organised the seminar entitled "Empowering SMEs towards a Future in Green Economy: New Chapter for Thailand–Japan Collaboration".

The seminar aimed to enhance collaboration between Thailand and Japan, with a focus on supporting SMEs in adapting to the rapidly evolving international trade environment.

#### DATE

17 March 2025

#### **PARTNERS**

DTN, Ministry of Commerce of Thailand

#### LOCATION

Bangkok, Thailand

#### **PARTICIPANTS**

143 business representatives



H.E. Suchat Chomklin Deputy Minister of Commerce with other co-organizers

#### Indonesia - Japan Blue and Green Business Matchmaking

The Centre organised a business event titled "Indonesia – Japan Blue and Green Business Matchmaking", jointly with the Ministry of Trade of Indonesia on 18 February 2025, targeting on environment related companies in Indonesia.

Japanese companies with innovative technologies in waste management, resource recycling, and organic waste composting delivered presentations to introduce their businesses and potential areas of collaboration to their Indonesian counterparts.

#### DATE

18 February 2025

#### **PARTNERS**

Ministry of Trade of the Republic of Indonesia

#### LOCATION

Jakarta, Indonesia

#### **PARTICIPANTS**

60 business representatives



Business matching at ASEAN Blue Innovation Expo and Business Matching



# Sustainable Capacity Building

ASEAN and Japan has long collaborated in narrowing the development gap within ASEAN. In support of this, the Centre has contributed in its own way by organising multistakeholder capacity building programmes, including ASEAN business, primarily targeting those from Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, and Viet Nam (CLMV). These initiatives aim to enhance business skills, promote sustainable and circular practices, foster regional integration, and advance sustainable economic development.

#### Carbon Smart, Market Ready

From 17 to 19 March 2025, the Centre, in collaboration with the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), and the Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (SEARCA), convened the ASEAN-Japan Workshop on Carbon Neutrality, Food Security, and Agricultural Innovation in Tokyo and Ibaraki Prefecture, Japan.

The workshop united 59 participants from governments, MSMEs, research institutions, and agri-tech sectors across ASEAN, Bangladesh, and Japan, with key involvement from the ASEAN Secretariat, Japan's MAFF, ADB and ERIA.

#### DATE

17-19 March 2025

#### **PARTNERS**

IRRI and SEARCA

#### LOCATION

Tokyo and Ibaraki Prefecture, Japan

#### **PARTICIPANTS**

59



Participants of the ASEAN-Japan workshop on carbon neutrality, food security, and agricultural innovation



Idea sharing, discussion and cross-border learning from

#### **CLMV Branding Capacity for Agricultural Products in** Global E-market

From 9 to 13 December 2024, the Centre, with Viet Nam Trade Promotion agency, organised a cross-border capacity-building mission in Viet Nam to support branding and digital marketing skills for agriculture products among Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, and Viet Nam.

This initiative marked a significant step for regional trade cooperation by connecting Japanese farmers, experts with CLMV agri-entrepreneurs and enabling peer-to-peer learning across region.

#### DATE

9-13 December 2024

#### **PARTNERS**

Viet Nam Trade Promotion Agency

Soc Trang Province and Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam

#### **PARTICIPANTS**

Over 200

Sustainable Impact Investment GOAL 2

#### Unwrapping Sustainable Packaging with Promotion of Circular Design in the Philippines

Leveraging the special opportunity at the 2nd Philippines-Japan Environment Week, the Centre in collaboration with the Design Center of the Philippines (DCP) organised the workshop on promoting circular design for sustainable packaging and labelling in the Philippines.

The main objective of this side event was to share experiences and best practices of circular design in Japan and how to apply them towards sustainable packaging and labelling systems in the Philippines. In addition, the event also aimed to raise awareness among the Philippine participants of the EPR Act and how to make their business compliant with this law.

#### Workshop on Green Packaging and Labelling in Brunei Darussalam

Following up on a project implemented in FY2023 "Capacity Building for Brunei Darussalam Towards Advancing Circular Packaging Design and Labelling", the Centre organised a second workshop in FY2024 to reach out to more participants from both the public and private sectors.

This workshop was also designed with reference to the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP) under the UN Sustainable Development Goal 2030 section and the ASEAN-Japan Economic Co-Creation Vision in the Pillar 4: Realising Sustainability.

#### DATE

13 January 2025

#### **PARTNERS**

Design Center of the Philippines

#### LOCATION

Manila, the Philippines

#### **PARTICIPANTS**

75 representatives from package and labelling companies, brand owners, and government, semi-government officials in the Philippines



Circular design workshop, Philippines

#### **DATE**

3 February 2025

#### **PARTNERS**

Brunei Economic Development Board

#### **LOCATION**

Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam

#### **PARTICIPANTS**

70 participants from multiple industries including package and labelling and food production companies, brand owners and government, semi-government officials in Brunei Darussalam



Workshop on green packaging and labelling, Brunei Darussalam

GOAL

# 03

# Sustainable & Responsible Tourism











# Tourism Promotion Activities

Forming the third pillar of the ASEAN-Japan Centre is tourism promotion. Although Japan's outbound tourism has not yet fully recovered from the pre-pandemic level, the ASEAN Member States are one of the popular destinations among Japanese travelers that more than one out of every four outbound travelers visits a country within the ASEAN region. To boost its awareness, the Centre is committed to introducing the charms of ASEAN to the Japanese people.

In addition to the regular digital marketing activities e.g. ASEAN Travel Site and Instagram posts, the Centre also conducts tourism promotional activities to respond to the demands of stakeholders.

#### Malaysia FAM Trip

The ASEAN-Japan Centre and Malaysia Tourism Promotion Board jointly hosted a familiarization trip for five Japanese social media influencers to showcase Malaysia's tourism appeal. The 6-day itinerary, covering the capital Kuala Lumpur and adjacent Selangor state, was designed to highlight the diverse culture of multiethnic Malaysia and its rich urban and natural tourism resources.

The influencers were brought to curated locations in Malaysia such as the Sky Mirror, Blue Mosque, Pink Mosque, Batu Caves, Merdeka Square, Thean Hou Temple, Central Market, Chinatown, and more.

#### DATE

16-21 October 2024

#### **PARTNERS**

Malaysia Tourism Promotion Board

#### LOCATION

Kuala Lumpur and Selangor, Malaysia

#### **PARTICIPANTS**

5 Japanese influencers

#### **NUMBER OF TOTAL VIEWS/IMPRESSIONS**

1,169,603 (as of 31 March)



Japanese influencers taking pictures at the Sky Mirror in Selangor, Malaysia



Japanese influencers being introduced to Malaysian cuisine

#### **Brunei Educational Travel Online Seminar**

The Centre co-organized a webinar aimed at schools and travel agencies to explore Brunei's advantages as an educational travel destination.

As information on Brunei remains relatively limited in Japan, many participants expressed that this seminar provided an opportunity to learn about the country in detail.

The seminar explained Brunei's position as a safe and English-friendly country with diverse educational programmes available with convenient access to Japan.

#### DATE

9 August 2024

#### **PARTNERS**

Embassy of Brunei Darussalam in Japan, Royal Brunei Airlines

#### LOCATION

Online

#### **PARTICIPANTS**

160 representatives from schools, travel industry professionals, and others

Sustainable & Responsible Tourism GOAL 3

#### Discover and be a fan of ASEAN! Indonesia and Singapore

The Centre held an event to promote the attractions of Indonesia and Singapore targeting young travel enthusiasts.

With the theme of "hopping travel" across multiple Southeast Asian countries, the event focused on the easy connectivity in the region. In addition, the event highlighted culture and wellness of both nations, proposing a new style of travel.

The event featured the latest tourism information from national tourism offices, flight details and the captivating layover experience at Changi International Airport. Furthermore, a talk show by travel influencers showcased photos and videos, providing valuable information for intentional travel plans, such as yoga experiences in Bali and Singapore's multiculturalism.

Information of the event were further disseminated through the participation of travel influencers and general participants.

#### DATE

14 March 2025

#### LOCATION

Tokyo, Japan

#### **PARTICIPANTS**

70 young travel enthusiasts

#### **SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS ON THE EVENT**

197 posts for 384,000 followers



Entrance to the Discover and be a fan of ASEAN event



Young travel enthusiasts learning about Indonesia and Singapore



# Women Digital Skills Training

Sustainable & Responsible Tourism GOAL 3

The Centre, in collaboration with Ministry of Information, Culture, and Tourism Laos (MICT), and Mekong Tourism Coordinating Office (MTCO), in coordination with Asian Development Bank, embarked on an ambitious project to empower women in the tourism in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, and Viet Nam (CLMTV).

The Training of Trainers (ToT) "Enhancing Digital Skills for Women in Tourism Communities", held in Luang Prabang, Lao PDR, aimed to equip participants with the digital tools necessary to thrive in today's competitive tourism landscape.

#### **Training of Trainers Workshop**

The four-day Training of Trainers programme (24-27 September 2024) brought together 28 participants from government and private tourism sectors across the five Mekong countries. The curriculum was designed to provide a solid foundation in digital marketing, including practical exercises such as creating websites, Facebook pages, and developing marketing plans using social media for local tourism businesses. By the end of the training, participants had not only gained a theoretical understanding of digital marketing but also had the practical skills to apply these concepts in their respective communities.

Participants presented their action plans at the end of training, which proved to be highly effective. 96.5% of participants reported an improvement in their digital skills, and 100% expressed their intention to share their newly acquired knowledge with their peers in local community.

#### DATE

24-27 September 2024

#### **PARTNERS**

Ministry of Information, Culture, and Tourism Laos (MICT), and Mekong Tourism Coordinating Office, in coordination with the Asian Development Bank

#### LOCATION

Luang Prabang, Lao PDR

#### **PARTICIPANTS**

28



Presentation by a participant



Participants, trainers, organizers



Participants working on a group project

#### **Follow-up Sessions**

In February 2025, the Centre and MTCO partnered with the National Tourism Organisations of participating countries to organise local workshops with the participants of the ToT programme. By doing this, alumni of the ToT programme were able to transfer their knowledge to the people within their tourism communities.

Listed below are the workshops organised during the follow-up sessions.

#### DATE

7 February 2025

#### LOCATION

Koh Trong CBET Center, Cambodia

#### **PARTICIPANTS**

24

#### **SUPERVISED BY**

Ministry of Tourism Cambodia

#### **DATE**

24-25 February 2025

#### LOCATION

Bagan, Myanmar

#### **PARTICIPANTS**

20

#### **SUPERVISED BY**

Ministry of Hotels and Tourism Myanmar

#### DATE

28 February 2025

#### LOCATION

Ban Bang Rong Community, Phuket Province,

Thailand

#### **PARTICIPANTS**

10

#### **SUPERVISED BY**

Department of Tourism Thailand

#### DATE

24-25 February 2025

#### LOCATION

Banana Land Community, Loei Province, Thailand

#### **PARTICIPANTS**

12

#### **SUPERVISED BY**

Department of Tourism Thailand

#### DATE

24-25 February 2025

#### LOCATION

Thai Hai Reserve area of ecological house-on-stilt village, Thai Nguyen Province, Viet Nam

#### **PARTICIPANTS**

34

#### **SUPERVISED BY**

Viet Nam National Authority of Tourism



### Sustainable Tourism Best Practice Sharing

As a follow-up of the ASEAN-Japan Tourism Ministers' Special Dialogue in October 2023, the ASEAN-Japan Centre is compiling best practices in sustainable tourism among the ASEAN Member States (AMS) and Japan in close collaboration with the ASEAN National Tourism Organisations (NTO).

### Webpage

After conducting a series of interviews from August to October 2024, the Centre launched the ASEAN-Japan Tourism Best Practice Sharing Webpage to share the findings.



The webpage serves as a knowledge-sharing platform to promote sustainable tourism initiatives in the ASEAN and Japan tourism industries, based on the fundamental principles development: sustainable socio-cultural preservation.

environmental maintenance, and economic prosperity.

Currently, the website features eight best practices from three countries. The Centre plans to expand the content to cover all ten AMS and Japan by the end of 2025.

### Workshop

The four-day workshop, held in Tokyo and Ozu City, Ehime Prefecture, from March 4-9, 2025, included lectures on sustainable tourism principles and Japanese outbound tourism trends, a workshop to present and discuss sustainable tourism initiatives from each participating country.

During the workshop, the participants had the opportunity to visit Ozu City, where they learnt about sustainable tourism initiatives from various perspectives, including public-private partnerships for landscape and heritage preservation, urban regeneration projects incorporating sustainability principles. Through this visit, they experienced the effects of sustainable tourism on the region, gaining insights into practical applications and identified potential opportunities for their own countries.





5-8 March 2025

### **PARTNERS**

INDIGO LLC, Arigato Travel KK., DMO KITA-Management

### **PARTICIPANTS**

13 NTO officials from Cambodia, Japan, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Viet Nam and official from the ASEAN Secretariat



Learning about an urban regeneration project in Ozu City that incorporates public-private partnership for the preservation of landscape and cultural heritage



Town walk guided by Ozu city's local DMO



Workshop participants from ASEAN and Japan with lecturers and organizers

### GOAL

# 04

Fostering
Leadership
& Youth
and Women
Empowerment















# ASEANJapan Youth Environmental Leaders Network

The ASEAN-Japan Youth Environmental Leaders Network (AJYELN) has been a key programme within the Centre since its start in 2023.

Gathering students from the Member States of the ASEAN-Japan Centre, the AJYELN aims to equip the next generation of leaders with the skills and experience necessary to become a force for good for the environment.

### AJYELN Leadership and Project Management Training

As part of the AJYELN Programme organised by the Centre, it has partnered with the ASEAN Youth Organization a leading youth network in ASEAN and recipient of the 2024 ASEAN Prize, to implement the AJYELN Environmental Leadership and Project Management Training program in 2024. The training program aims to equip the selected AJYELN fellows with project management skills to implement their environmental initiatives, enhance their awareness of global and national plastic pollution and marine plastic waste issues, and undergo upskilling to maximise their advocacy potential.



AJYELN Fellows visit the ASEAN Secretariat during the Leadership and Project Management Training in Jakarta on August 28 to 29

### **Project Management Training**

The 33 fellows underwent a 2-day environmental leadership and project management training program on 28-29 August in Jakarta, Indonesia.

The fellows received marine plastic waste awareness training from the ERIA Regional Knowledge Center on Marine Plastic Debris and engaged in dialogue sessions with Dr. Vong Sok, Head of Environment Division of ASEAN Secretariat and Mr. Chujo Kazuo, Deputy Head of Mission of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan to Indonesia. They also received insights from prominent environmental leaders in Indonesia.



Fellows from the Philippines organize a community awareness meeting on the dangers of marine plastic waste in a fishing community in Cebu, Philippines

### Outcome

The AJYELN fellows implemented their projects from August 2024 to January 2025. A total of 63 AJYELN activities were conducted across 8 ASEAN Member States (AMS) and Japan, engaging a total of 17,877 youths in the region. These included, among others:

- Drama performances on the impact of plastic pollution in Kampung Ayer in Brunei Darussalam.
- Beach cleanups in Bali, Indonesia, and Langkawi, Malaysia.
- Development of casein as an alternative material to plastic in Sapporo, Japan.
- Poster-making contests in Yangon, Myanmar.
- Workshops on the use of plastic-free fishing equipment on a fishing community in Cebu, Philippines.
- Interview video series on the youth's perspective on plastic consumption in Singapore.
- Mangrove planting in Samut Songkhram, Thailand
- Plastic upcycling camps in Ho Chi Minh, Viet Nam.

A final Capstone Symposium was organised on March 13, 2025, at the ASEAN Hall of the Centre. Beyond numbers, AJYELN cultivated a strong network of youth environmental advocates, many of whom reported gaining vital leadership, project planning, and intercultural communication skills. Fellows shared stories of personal growth, from developing public speaking confidence to launching new sustainability efforts in their schools and communities. The initiative has elevated ASEAN-Japan youth visibility in global forums, including a UN COP youth side event in October 2024 and ASEAN environmental working groups.

Find out more about the outcomes of the AJYELN fellows through the AJYELN Storybook "Empowering the youth in tackling marine plastic waste in ASEAN and Japan" available for viewing on the Centre's website.



### **FELLOWS**

33 from 8 AMS and Japan

### **TOTAL GRANT FUNDING**

JPY 700,000

### **PARTICIPANTS**

17,877 (across all implemented activities)

### **Supporting Ministries and Organisations**

- ASEAN Youth Organization
- ASEAN Secretariat Environment Division
- Japan Ministry of Environment
- Brunei Ministry of Education STEP Centre
- Cambodia Ministry of Environment
- Lao PDR Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment
- Malaysia Ministry of Natural Resources, Environment and Climate Change
- Philippines Department of Environment and Natural Resources – Environment Management Bureau
- Viet Nam Ministry of Environment
- East Asia Research Institute Regional Knowledge Centre for Marine Plastic Debris (ERIA-RKCMPD)



# ASEANJapan Women Entrepreneurs Summit

The ASEAN-Japan Women Entrepreneurs Summit (AJWES) marked a significant step towards fostering economic resilience and sustainable development through women-led enterprises across ASEAN and Japan. Organised by the Centre in collaboration with the ASEAN Youth Organization, the ASEAN Coordinating Committee for MSMEs, and the Women Leadership Foundation Malaysia, the summit received support from the ASEAN Secretariat, Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry (METI) Japan, and Ministry of Entrepreneur and Co-operatives Development (MECD), Malaysia. Held in Kuala Lumpur in support of Malaysia's 2025 ASEAN Chairmanship, the summit successfully brought together over 100 women entrepreneurs and business ecosystem players in a hybrid format from the ASEAN Member States and Japan.

The summit also served as the capstone of the Centre's 2024 women-entrepreneur empowerment programme, which featured a webinar in September and a two-day roundtable with 33 women entrepreneurs in Lao PDR in November 2024.

### **DATE**

13 February 2025

### **PARTNERS**

ASEAN Youth Organization

### **PARTICIPANTS**

120 women entrepreneurs and leaders

### Panel Discussion 1: Harnessing AI and Digital Skills for Women-Owned Enterprises

Focusing on the essential role of digitalisation as a foundation for Al adoption in women-owned business, the session emphasised the importance of robust digital infrastructure and the need for governments to shape policies that make innovation accessible to women entrepreneurs regardless of location or socio-economic status. The session underscored the critical need for targeted policies and investments to bridge the digital divide and support women in leveraging emerging technologies.

### **SPEAKERS**

Dr. Heather L. Taylor-Strauss Moderator	Ms. Oranuch Lerdsuwankij Panellist	Dr. Jasmine Begum Panellist	Dato' Dr. Munirah Looi Panellist	Ms. Lennise Ng Panellist
Economist, UNESCAP	Co-founder and CEO, Techsauce, Thailand	Director of Legal, Corporate and Government Affairs for ASEAN and New Markets, Microsoft	Board Member of MyDigital Corp; Ex-Deputy Chair – Women in Tech – PIKOM; Advisor and Regional CEO of BlueOnion	CEO, Borong, Malaysia



Speakers and organizers of ASEAN-Japan Young Women Entrepreneurs Summit, Malaysia



33 Women entrepreneurs from ASEAN and Japan discuss economic resilience, innovation, and sustainability, Lao PDR

### Panel Discussion 2: Strategic Access to Finance and Gender-Smart Investments

Spotlighting the need for investment literacy among women entrepreneurs, the session covered topics such as grants, funds, and accessing the right networks. The discussion stressed the importance of increasing women's representation in investment firms to address the unique financial challenges faced by women-led businesses.

### Panel Discussion 3: Easing Women's Burden: Innovations in the Care Economy

The session highlighted innovative solutions within the care economy to enhance the efficiency and quality in caregiving, the involvement of fathers in caregiving responsibilities, and the advancements needed within the aging care sector.

### Panel Discussion 4: Leveraging Sustainability for Growth and Impact

On the role of sustainability in driving growth for women-owned businesses, the panellists highlighted social innovation and the potential of integrating sustainability into financial models. Support systems such as mentorships, networks, and regional collaboration were also identified as frameworks that could amplify sustainable practices across ASEAN.

### **SPEAKERS**

Ms. Fai Wechayachai Moderator	<b>Dr. Melissa Foo</b> Panellist	Ms. Noor Amy Ismail Panellist	<b>Ms. Naoko Ueda</b> Panellist	Ms. Priya Thachadi Panellist
Head of Asia Market Development, GSG Impact, Thailand	CEO, Malaysia Impact	Board of Directors, Wahed	Head of Tokyo	Co-Founder and CEO,
	Alliance	Ventures, Malaysia	Centre, OECD	Villgro Philippines

### **SPEAKERS**

Dr. Kunihiko Hirabayashi Moderator	Ms. Nadira Yusoff Panellist	Dr. Gengpong Tangaroonsanti Panellist	Ms. Sylwin Angdrew Panellist	Mr. Jason Leong Panellist
Secretary General, ASEAN-Japan Centre	Founder and CEO, Kiddocare Malaysia, and Focal Point for ASEAN Women Entrepreneurs Network (AWEN), Malaysia	President of Thai Elderly Health Trade and Service Association; Hospital CEO of Chersery Home International, Thailand	General Manager, Ageing Asia, Singapore	CEO, Better Dads Malaysia, Malaysia

### **SPEAKERS**

Ms. Nozomi Mizuno	Ms. Ayaka	Ms. Katrina	Ms. Mylene	Ms. Sopheak
Witherspoon	Matsuno	Inandia	Abiva	Lar
Moderator	Panellist	Panellist	Panellist	Panellist
Advisor - Chop	Director of Social	Head of Impact	Corporate Secretary and	Secretary General, ASEAN
Value Japan, Board -	Innovation,	and Sustainability,	Co-Chairperson of International	Women Entrepreneurs'
Creatella Impact	Sasakawa Peace	Amartha, Indonesia	Affairs, Women's Business	Network
	Foundation, Japan		Council Philippines	

### Panel Discussion 5: Closing the Gender Divide and Enabling Women-Owned Enterprises to Scale

Addressing a more structural issue, the final panel discussion of the summit touched on the need for inclusive policies to support women entrepreneurs and the benefits of fostering an entrepreneurial mindset from an early age to challenge sociocultural barriers. In that process, creating opportunities to access training and resources will also help women in underserved sectors to scale their businesses.

### **SPEAKERS**

<b>Datuk Dr. Hafsah Hashim</b>	Ms. Jukhee Hong Panellist	Ms. Anne Abraham	Ms. Sue Yii Yap
Moderator		Panellist	Panellist
Founder and Chairman of Women	Executive Director, ASEAN-BAC Malaysia	Founder and Chairperson,	CEO, Komuniti Tukang Jahit
Leadership Foundation, Malaysia		LeadWomen, Malaysia	(KTJ), Malaysia



During the Networking Session, key messages were delivered by Datuk Dr. Hafsah Hashim, Founder and Chairman of the Women Leaders Foundation, Malaysia, who emphasised the need to empower women leaders and create a supportive ecosystem for women entrepreneurs.

Mr. Karimata Atsushi, Deputy Chief of Mission at the Embassy of Japan in Malaysia, highlighted the importance of international collaboration in advancing women's entrepreneurship in ASEAN and Japan.

Mdm. Noor Afifah binti Abdul Razak, Deputy Secretary General of Policy and Monitoring at the Ministry of Entrepreneur and Cooperatives Development, underscored the vital role of government policies in fostering an environment conducive to the growth of women-owned enterprises.



# ASEAN Lectures and Activities

To facilitate the understanding of ASEAN and its Member States among the youths in Japan and ASEAN, the ASEAN-Japan Centre frequently hosts school visits from institutions from all over Japan and ASEAN.

In FY2024, the Centre has continued to assist in long-running programmes such as the Ship for Southeast Asian and Japanese Youth Programme (SSEAYP) and the Japan-East Asia Network of Exchange for Students and Youths (JENESYS).

### **ASEAN Lectures**

The awareness of ASEAN-Japan relations among youths in Japan and ASEAN remains relatively low; to address this, the Centre has collaborated with schools in Japan and ASEAN (from middle schools to universities) to host sessions at the Centre introducing different aspects of ASEAN to the students.

The Centre also provides dispatch lectures to academic institutions and other organisations across Japan.



Mr. Chairat delivered a presentation in ASEAN Lecture at Saitama University



Ms. Ei Ei Khin participated in ASEAN Lecture at the ASEAN Hall

Participating programmes and institutions in FY2024:

- Saitama University
- Nanzan University
- Waseda University
- Japan-East Asia Network of Exchange for Students and Youths (JENESYS)
- Global FTA Study Group
- Odawara Hakone Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- Bunkyo Gakuin University
- Namiki Secondary School
- Tokai University
- Asuka Mirai High School
- Ota City Industrial Promotion Organization

### **PROJECTS**

104

### **PARTICIPANTS**

1,794

### **ASEAN Class @Onarimon Elementary School**

Continuing a tradition, the Centre has also conducted special classes about ASEAN for Onarimon Elementary School once a year. Staff members of the Centre presented about the ASEAN Member States to the elementary school students, customising the lesson to fit the syllabus of each cohort. Topics have included subjects such as school life in ASEAN, to more advanced subjects such as food security, disaster prevention, and political systems in ASEAN.

This partnership arose given the proximity to the elementary school, and the Centre remains committed to continuing this programme.

### **PARTICIPANTS**

483 students



AJC staff engaging with students in ASEAN Class at an Elementary School

### Kasumigaseki Tour Day - "Let's Discover ASEAN!"

During the summer, the Centre provided an enriching opportunity for children to explore and experience ASEAN through activities designed to foster deeper friendships and cooperation between ASEAN and Japan. This event aimed to promote international understanding by introducing ASEAN cultures, organised in close coordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan.

### DATE

10 August 2024

### **PARTNERS**

Minato City Board of Education, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Japan

### **LOCATION**

ASEAN-Japan Centre

### **PARTICIPANTS**

Over 100 attendees

The event featured a wide range of interactive activities, including:

- Indonesian Angklung Music Experience: Children learned to play the traditional bamboo instrument.
- Malaysian Batik-Making Workshop: A hands-on experience in crafting Batik art.

- Borneo Insects and Forests Talk: A fascinating talk show introducing the unique flora and fauna of Borneo.
- ASEAN Gemstone Soap-Making Workshop: Children created soap resembling ASEAN gemstones.
- Craft Corner: Making fans stamped with ASEAN icons, colouring ASEAN national flags.
- Traditional Costume Experience: Trying on traditional attire from various ASEAN countries.
- ASEAN Business Card Creation: Designing business cards using ASEAN writing scripts.
- ASEAN Sports Corner: Trying out sports like Sepak Takraw and Da Cau.

# GOAL 5

Advocacy
& Strategic
Communication









ສະມາຄົມນັກທຸລະກິດແມ່ຍິງ







# ASEAN NEW GENERATION Short Film Award

ASEAN has come a long way. Yet many countries still hold outdated perceptions of the region. To alleviate this, the ASEAN-Japan Centre explored new ways to raise the awareness of ASEAN to the younger generation in Japan.

### **ASEAN NEW GENERATION Short Film Award**

In 2024, the Centre called for filmmakers within ASEAN region to submit short films aligning with the theme of "The Future I Want to See". Submissions came in from all over ASEAN region, hoping to share their perspectives on how things are and what they want to world to look like.

The Centre then awarded 10 works to be shown to the Japanese public through various platforms. The short films were localised and promoted to the Japanese public.

### **SUBMISSIONS**

96 entries

### **VIEWS**

Over 250,000 (as of May 2025)

### **Promotional Video @Shibuya Crossing**

To complement existing publicity efforts, the Centre also secured advertisement slots on a billboard located at the world-renowned Shibuya crossing.

The billboard prominently displayed the Centre's recent promotional materials to the younger generation with the aim of increasing their general awareness of ASEAN and of the Centre's PR activities.

### DATE

October 2024 - October 2025

### **ESTIMATED VIEWS**

Over 20,000 daily average views



Promotional Video showing at Shibuya Crossing



### ASEAN Chairmanship Support Activities

As part of the Centre's ongoing commitment to strengthening regional cooperation, the Centre significantly contributed to two key sessions at the ASEAN Investment Forum (AIF) and the ASEAN Business and Investment Summit (ABIS), held under Lao PDR's ASEAN Chairmanship in 2024.

In addition to participating in vital sessions in AIF and ABIS, the Centre also engaged in meetings with key counterparts from the Lao PDR government including the Lao Businesswomen's Association, the Investment Promotion Department of Ministry of Planning and Investment and the Trade and Handicraft Promotion Department of Ministry of Industry and Commerce. These meetings focused on understanding Lao PDR's investment landscape and exploring trade opportunities to enhance bilateral cooperation toward shared economic and sustainable development goals between ASEAN and Japan.

Through these strategic engagements, the Centre reaffirmed its pivotal role in ASEAN-Japan relations, actively contributing to the region's connectivity and resilience, in line with Lao PDR's strategic priorities as ASEAN Chair in 2024. The Centre seeks to build on this momentum by continuing to support the goals set forth by the ASEAN Chair through collaborative means.

As Malaysia assumes the chairmanship of ASEAN in 2025, the Centre will also work to support its theme of "Inclusivity and Sustainability", as well as to integrate the new ASEAN Community Vision 2045 into the Centre's programmes.



AJC team meeting with Lao PDR Ministry of Industry and Commerce



AJC team in ASEAN Business and Investment Summit 2024



Secretary-General Dr. Hirabayashi and other speakers during Session 6 of the ASEAN Investment Forum 2024



Speakers during Session 5 of the ASEAN Business and Investment Summit 2024

### "Mobilizing Capital for Impact-Impact Investing in ASEAN" at the Session 6 of AIF on 7 October

Secretary-General Dr. Hirabayashi participated as a speaker, highlighting the advancement of impact investing in ASEAN while drawing lessons from Japan's thriving impact investing ecosystem. Key points of discussion spotlighted the need for cross-sector partnerships within ASEAN and the importance of leveraging technological innovations. Japan, in turn, could enhance its global leadership in impact investing by embracing ASEAN's entrepreneurial spirit. The session concluded with a shared understanding of the importance of collaboration and innovation as essential drivers for meaningful change across the region.

### "ASEAN Energy Transition" at the Session 5 of ABIS on 9 October

The session, moderated by Secretary-General Dr. Hirabayashi, underscored that the energy transition is a socio-economic transformation, not just a technical shift. Essential takeaways included leveraging digital technologies such as Al and cloud-based platforms, promoting sustainable financing through blended finance and de-risking strategies, and recognising long-term foreign direct investment as crucial for ASEAN's energy transition. Transparency was identified as essential for building trust among investors and the public. The session concluded with a consensus that innovation and cross-sector unity are vital for achieving meaningful change and fostering sustainable, peoplecentred solutions in ASEAN.

### Fireside Chat on ASEAN Centrality by H.E. Elizabeth Buensuceso

In March 2025, the Philippine Embassy in Tokyo hosted the "ASEAN Centrality, the Future of ASEAN, and Prospects for ASEAN-Japan Relations: A Conversation" symposium, in collaboration with the Centre. The event featured a keynote speech from H.E. Elizabeth P. Buensuceso, followed by a Q&A session with Dr. Mie Oba of Kanagawa University.

With the development of the ASEAN Community Vision (ACV) 2045 nearing its completion, Ambassador Buensuceso gave those in attendance a glimpse of the scenes behind how the ACV 2045 was negotiated, as well as a preview into what it might contain.

### **NOTABLE PARTICIPANTS INCLUDE:**

- H.E. Mylene Garcia-Albano,Ambassador of the Philippines to Japan
- H.E. Kazuo Sunaga,

  Former Ambassador of Japan to ASEAN

### H.E. Elizabeth P. Buensuceso

Keynote Speaker

Philippines' Eminent Person to the High-Level Task Force on the ASEAN Community's Post-2025 Vision

### Dr. Mie Oba

Commentator

Professor at Kanagawa University's Faculty of Law

### DATE

28 March 2025

### **PARTNERS**

Embassy of the Philippines in Tokyo

### LOCATION

ASEAN-Japan Centre

### **PARTICIPANTS**

65 (university students, diplomats, and academics)



The AJC hosts a seminar on ASEAN Centrality with Ambassador H.E. Elizabeth P. Buensuceso

## Staff Profiles



Chairat Liengkajornkiet

Director of Programme Operations
Trade, Investment
and Research and Policy Advocacy

As we close FY2024, I find myself deeply moved by all that we have achieved together. Our Bilateral Programme has been much more than a series of trade and investment promotions; it has been the heartbeat of our shared ambition, weaving connections between the ASEAN Member States and Japan that will endure far beyond any conference room. I have witnessed businesses forge genuine friendships, entrepreneurs discover new hope, and communities being uplifted by fresh opportunities.

Alongside this, our Research, Policy & Advocacy efforts have given voice to pressing challenges—from unlocking digital trade and increasing utilization of FTAs to champion women and youth empowerment. Each project was born out of countless conversations and the unwavering belief that data-driven insights can ignite real change. I have watched our team pour their heart and soul into every detail, driven by a single purpose: to build a region where everyone can thrive.

None of this would have been possible without the passion of our colleagues and the trust of our organisational partners. As we step into the next year, let us carry forward this spirit of collaboration and bold cooperation. Together, we will turn obstacles into opportunities and write the next chapter of ASEAN-Japan friendship—one defined by heart-to-heart partnership.

Ei Ei Khin

Director of Programme Operations
Tourism, People to People Exchange
and Strategic Country Support



I am pleased to share what we have accomplished in FY2024—and where we are headed next. This year, we launched the ASEAN-Japan Sustainable Tourism Best Practices Sharing webpage, bringing together inspiring success stories from across ASEAN and Japan in one accessible platform. It has been exciting to see how these stories can serve as practical models and motivation for others in the region.

Recognizing the vital role of inclusive growth in tourism, we also introduced Digital Skills Training for women in tourism communities across the CLMV countries. Building on this momentum, I am proud to see a series of ASEAN-Japan women empowerment activities which marked a significant step in fostering economic resilience and sustainability through women-led enterprises.

We also placed young people at the heart of our work in designing educational programs, cultural exchanges, and study tours that equip the next generation of ASEAN-Japan leaders with the knowledge they need to deepen people-to-people ties and celebrate our rich, shared heritage. All of these efforts flow directly from the Joint Vision Statement on ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation and the 2023 Tourism Ministers' Special Dialogue outcomes.

None of these achievements would have been possible without the dedication and passion of our teams. I am deeply grateful to every colleague whose contributions drive our mission forward as we look ahead to another year of impactful partnership.

### OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

### Hirabayashi Kunihiko, Ph.D., MD

Secretary-General

### Yuka Kubota, Ph.D.

Senior Executive Officer,
Office of the Secretary-General

### Tomoko Miyauchi

Lead Public Communication Officer,
Office of the Secretary-General

### Bryan Tan Jia Yang

Programme Officer,
Office of the Secretary-General

### OFFICE OF GENERAL AFFAIRS

### Junko Nukiyama

Head of General Affairs and Secretary to Secretary-General, Office of General Affairs

### Yoshimi Sakai

Lead Accounting and Finance Officer,
Office of General Affairs

### Mutsumi Oyama

Accounting Officer and
National Activity Coordinator,
Office of General Affairs

### Yukashi Oki

Information Systems Officer and Assistant to General Affairs, Office of General Affairs

### **BILATERAL PROGRAMME**

### Tomoko Onuki

Programme Manager,
Bilateral Programme Team

### Takeko Ito

Programme Specialist, Bilateral Programme Team

### Preechaya Kittipaisalsilpa, Ph.D.

Programme Officer,
Office of the Secretary-General
and Bilateral Programme Team

### STRATEGIC COUNTRY SUPPORT

### Deborah Nicole Danker

Assistant Director,
Strategic Country Support Team

### Tuan Anh Nguyen, Ph.D.

Programme Coordinator,
Strategic Country Support Team

### Navalta Razel Andrea Dizon, Ph.D.

Programme Officer,
Office of the Secretary-General
and Strategic Country Support Team

### RESEARCH AND POLICY ADVOCACY

### Yasushi Ishida

Assistant Director,
Research and Policy Advocacy Team

### Katrina S. Navallo, Ph.D.

Programme Manager,
Research and Policy Advocacy Team

### Aya Ono, Ph.D.

Programme Manager,
Research and Policy Advocacy Team

### Julius Tan Gonzales, Ph.D.

Programme Officer,
Office of the Secretary-General
and Research and Policy Advocacy Team

### **TOURISM AND EXCHANGE**

### Naoko Fujikawa

Assistant Director,
Tourism and Exchange Team

### Reiko Nagaoka

Programme Specialist,
Tourism and Exchange Team

### Mitsuo Watanabe

Programme Coordinator,
Tourism and Exchange Team

### **RECEPTIONISTS**

### Olaphai Boutthavong

### Yaly Sou

### **INTERNS**

### Maxine Louise Fujimoto

Sophia University

### Midori Naito

**Tokyo University of Foreign Studies** 

### Miwa Suzuki

Sophia University

### Saki Yamada

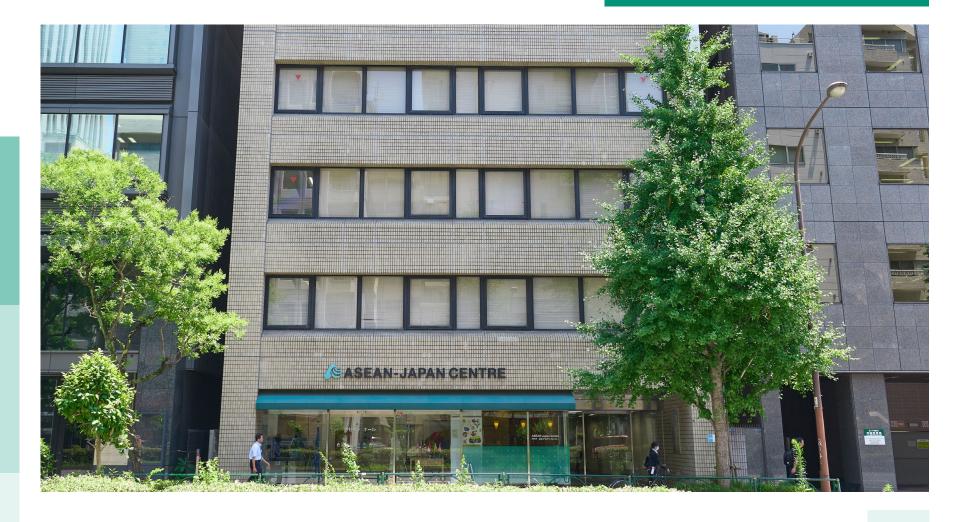
**Tokyo University of Foreign Studies** 

### Seijun Negishi

**Tokyo University of Foreign Studies** 

### Yuna Shibata

**Keio University** 



### ADDRESS

Shin Onarimon Bldg. 1F, 6-17-19 Shimbashi, Minato-ku, Tokyo 105-0004

### CONTACT

Office of the Secretary General / Office of General Affairs TEL 81-(0)3-5402-8002 FAX 81-(0)3-5402-8003

### OFFICE HOURS

9:30 AM to 5:30 PM Monday to Friday

### FY2024 NATIONAL ACTIVITES



## FY2024 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS



## FY2024 FINAL PROGRESS REPORT





### Building Bridges, Connecting Heart to Heart

The ASEAN Promotion Centre on Trade, Investment and Tourism (ASEAN-Japan Centre) is an intergovernmental organization established by the ASEAN Member States and Japan in 1981.

It has been promoting exports from the ASEAN Member States to Japan while revitalizing investment, tourism as well as people-to-people exchanges between the ASEAN Member States and Japan through seminars, workshops, capacity building programs, research and policy analysis, cross-cultural events, publication and information services, among others.

### **OUR VISION**

The ASEAN-Japan Centre is committed to fostering stronger connections among the people of ASEAN and Japan. By becoming a regional champion of change, we strive to create a human-centered, inclusive, sustainable, and resilient society.

Our efforts significantly contribute to realising the ASEAN-Japan common agenda outlined in the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 (and now the ASEAN Community Vision 2045), the Joint Vision Statement on ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation Trusted Partners and its Implementation Plan, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

We enhance the collaborative spirit and mutual growth between ASEAN and Japan through targeted and strategic mandates in trade, investment, tourism, and people-to-people exchanges.

### **OUR FOCUS**

The AJC is dedicated to achieving impactful outcomes that benefit the people of the ASEAN Member States and Japan. We focus on supporting micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), underserved regions, women, and young people. We build on our experience, continually adapting to meet the evolving needs and demands of communities across the ASEAN Member States and Japan.

### **OUR VALUES**

We prioritise the best interests of individuals in ASEAN and Japan, fostering a positive, collaborative, and inclusive culture that cultivates equal, sincere, open, and meaningful relationships between the two regions. We strive to embody competence, good judgement, and respect behaviour in all our endeavours, aiming to be reliable, competent, and respectful individuals. We actively listen, empathise, and appreciate the perspectives and circumstances of others, regardless of agreement. Our actions are guided by compassion and attentiveness to the values and needs of others.