



# ASEAN-INDIA DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMME (AIDPP)



**An online training and capacity  
building programme for officials,  
scholars and practitioners of ASEAN  
countries and India**

**16 to 20 August 2021**

## CONCEPT NOTE

1. ASEAN and India are bound together by their shared history and culture. Relation with ASEAN is one of the cornerstones of India's foreign policy. There has been steady progress in the ASEAN-India relation since the Look East Policy (LEP) was initiated in 1992. Today, India's relations with ASEAN have also been the core foundation of India's Act East Policy (AEP). India became a sectoral dialogue partner of ASEAN in 1992. In 1996, this was upgraded to full dialogue partnership. India has been increasingly engaged with ASEAN, and that is also growing rapidly. In 2002, India became a Summit level partner of ASEAN. These political level interactions are further strengthened through the Senior Officials' Meetings, as also specialised working groups in the various functional areas. At present, there are more than 30 senior official level interactions between India and ASEAN, cutting across all the sectors, and an annual summit of the Heads of the countries. In 2018, ASEAN and India commemorated 25 years of dialogue partnership and 15 years of Summit level partnership. The Commemorative Summit attended by the Leaders from all the 10 ASEAN countries and came out with the *Delhi Declaration*, the guiding roadmap of ASEAN-India partnership. In 2022, ASEAN and India will be celebrating its 30 years of partnership.

2. The world is facing unprecedented challenges. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has severely impacted lives and livelihoods, basic well-being, and the productivity of countries across the world. Faced with the greatest challenges since the Great Depression of the 1930s, the need for stronger multilateral cooperation is, therefore, felt *sine qua non* to not only containing the pandemic and mitigate its social and economic effects but also bringing back the world economy to the growth path. It also underlines the need for deeper cooperation between ASEAN and India in search of collective solutions to these challenges and the collective path for a resilient recovery.

3. While initial months of the COVID-19 pandemic witnessed a deceleration of trade between ASEAN and India, India's engagements with ASEAN nations in coping with the COVID-19 challenges have paved the way for friendship, good neighbourliness, peaceful co-existence and prosperity in the region. Although trade growth, both in India and ASEAN, in recent months has faltered due to COVID-19 pandemic and trade policy uncertainties, there is still untapped potential for further enhancing ASEAN-India trade. Also, the future looks promising as there is a clear sign of revival of trade in goods between ASEAN and India in later months. One of the key challenges to India's export in this uncertain time is, therefore, to maintain the competitiveness in the global and regional markets by improving trade facilitation not only at home but also with the trade partners. Along with it, upgrading the ASEAN-India FTA (AIFTA) and its effective utilisation may perhaps add the required momentum to the bilateral trade flows while promoting sustainable and inclusive growth for both ASEAN and India. Another great opportunity to scale up the ASEAN-India engagements is the development of value chains. ASEAN and India can leverage the emerging scenario and support each other to build new and resilient supply chains. However, to explore this opportunity, ASEAN and India must upgrade the improve logistics services and strengthen the transportation infrastructure. Investment reform is another challenge for both India and ASEAN. Business and economic cooperation between India and ASEAN in

areas of mutual interest such as financial technology (FinTech), connectivity, start-ups, and innovation, empowerment of youth and women and the development of MSMEs is important driver to move up the ASEAN-India relation in higher plateau. ASEAN-India connectivity could serve as a basis for Indo-Pacific infrastructure cooperation. The ASEAN-India Plan of Action (POA) (2021-2025) recommends for transforming Trilateral Highway into an Economic Corridor. Deep integration between India and ASEAN is likely to provide a strong platform for the larger economic integration, particularly in the post-COVID-19. This is a time for skilling and capacity building, firming up the new strategy to cope up with the emerging challenges.

4. In the wake of the current global pandemic, economic and cultural interactions have been restricted. ASEAN member states and India have been facing daunting tasks to bring back the regional economy into growth path. This poses substantial challenges for research relationships aiming to build capacity and foster co-creation to achieve the economic growth as well as Sustainable Development Goals, where regional collaboration and communication is paramount. Only an enhanced and upgraded skill can provide better solutions. In such background, this online capacity building will make an attempt to fulfill this requirement. This is an opportune moment to develop best practice for virtual interactions, which will not only facilitate working under the current circumstances but will allow us to gain from each other's experiences and knowledge.

5. In view of the above, the Asian Confluence, New Delhi; ASEAN Studies Centre of ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore and ASEAN-India Center (AIC) at RIS, New Delhi propose to offer a week-long online programme titled "ASEAN-India Development Partnership Programme (AIDPP)" on 16-20 August 2021. The first edition of the AIDPP will focus on the achievements and challenges of ASEAN-India economic relations. Considering the current situation, we are forced to explore how we can build trust and dialogue, deliver international capacity building and advance research activities through virtual interactions. The training and capacity building programme will help strengthen the ASEAN-India relations in view of changing global order.

6. The AIDPP course will comprise of several lectures and interactive sessions that will include both overarching and broad issues like geo-politics, economic relations, etc. and more specific issues like trade and investment, connectivity, trade facilitation and sector-specific sessions focusing on priority sectors for the ASEAN-India relations. This programme better suits to officials, research scholars, practitioners, etc. It will be targeted at representatives from think-tanks, industry associations, researchers and students of international relations, economics and development sciences, who can gain a comprehensive understanding of ways to deepen and diversify the relationship and cooperation between India and ASEAN countries. The course will help equip researchers, practitioners and officials to better understand how to approach the various facets, achievements, challenges for enhancing cooperation between ASEAN and India. The course will have leading experts from the fields of policy, academia, law and industry to deliver lectures and conduct interactive sessions on various topics and subjects that are critical towards forging mutually beneficial collaborations

and larger regional cooperation between India and ASEAN countries.

7. The tentative outline of the program is as follows:

- Duration: 5 days, 16-20 August 2021
- Format: One Inaugural Session (45 minutes), one Closing Session (45 minutes) and three Technical Sessions (90 minutes, 60 minutes lecture and 30 minutes Q&A)
- Outline of Sessions:
  - Day 1-2: lectures on strategic, geo-political, international relations
  - Day 3-4: lectures on trade connectivity and economics and sustainability cooperation
  - Day 5: 2 lectures on socio-cultural relations
  - Concluding session for Feedback and Q&A at the end
- Proposed Fees: Free to all registered participants
- Certification: Course completion certificate will be provided to each successful participant by the organizers.
- Lecture mode: Virtual
- Selection of participants: It will be done jointly by all three organizers with the help of social media and advertisement.

8. The following are the envisaged outcomes of this initiative:

- A group of equipped and capacitated officials, researchers and private sector players who will be able to facilitate greater cooperation, collaborations and exchange under the umbrella of the ASEAN-India Cooperation initiative.
- Enhanced understanding on sector specific challenges and possible solutions for higher cooperation and business on focus sectors.
- Enhanced understanding on the needs and nuances of similar course in future that can help enhance understanding, collaboration and cooperation between ASEAN countries and India and beyond.

9. Partners of the AIDPP are as follows:

- Asian Confluence (AsCon), Shillong
- ASEAN Studies Centre, ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore
- ASEAN-India Center (AIC), RIS, New Delhi

10. Persons to be contacted:

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11. About the organizers:

- **Asian Confluence:** Asian Confluence is a think-tank institute that initiates, stimulates and accelerates revival of the shared values between India and Southeast Asia. ([www.asianconfluence.org](http://www.asianconfluence.org))
- **ASEAN Studies Centre:** ASEAN Studies Centre (ASC) of ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute is a think-tank devoted to research on issues pertaining to ASEAN as an institution and a process. ([www.iseas.edu.sg](http://www.iseas.edu.sg))
- **ASEAN-India Centre:** ASEAN-India Centre (AIC) at RIS serves as a resource centre for ASEAN Member States and India and undertakes and disseminates evidence-based policy research. ([www.aic.ris.org.in](http://www.aic.ris.org.in))