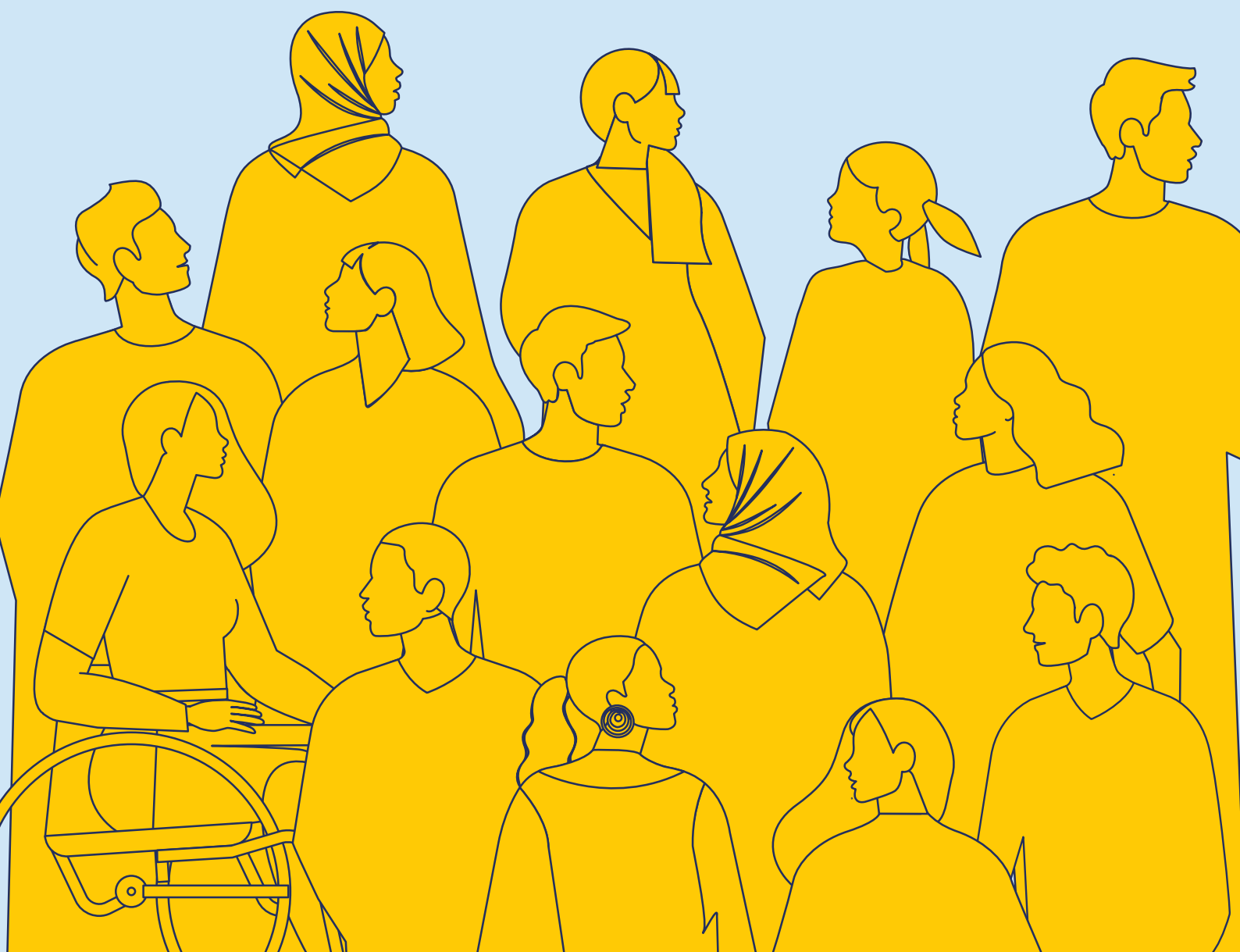




# ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT 2023



## Document information

Prepared by:	ASEAN–Australia Counter Trafficking
Date:	2024

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# ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT 2023



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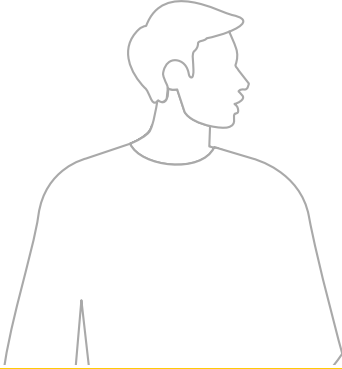
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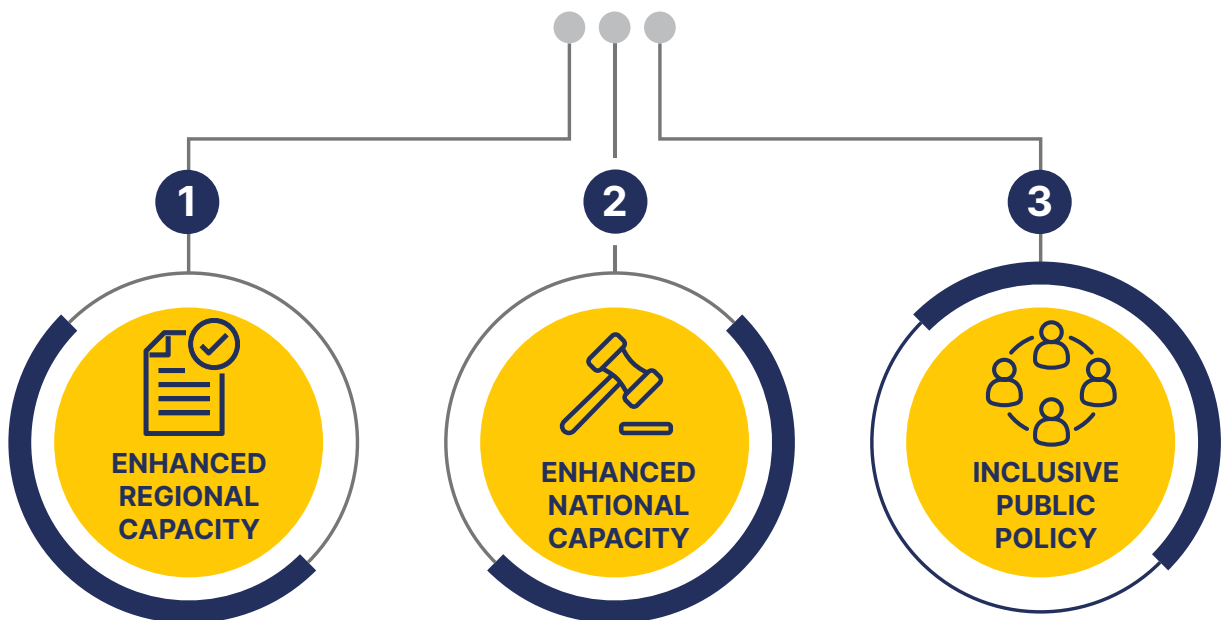
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# Goal



**ASEAN Member States have effective justice systems that provide just punishment of traffickers and protect the human rights of victims of trafficking in persons.**

ASEAN–Australia Counter Trafficking program is contributing to this goal by focusing on three end-of-program outcomes (EOPOs):



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

ASEAN Member State justice and related state agencies are increasingly capable of implementing their ACTIP obligations, in particular those that uphold victim rights

ASEAN Member State justice and related state agencies' policies and practices are influenced by relevant stakeholders and better aligned with the ACTIP, especially in connection to victim rights obligations



Photo: Indonesia judges at the Council of ASEAN Chief Justices (CACJ) knowledge-sharing event at the Research and Development Agency for Legal and Judicial Training of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Indonesia (July 2023)

# 1 About the ASEAN– Australia Counter Trafficking program

---

## A 10-year program to continue Australia's work in the ASEAN region (\$80 million from 2018-2028)

### Target ASEAN Member States

- Cambodia
- Indonesia (under establishment)
- Lao DPR
- Myanmar (activities on hold)
- Philippines
- Thailand
- Vietnam

### Key partners

- ASEAN 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 and ASEAN Secretariat
- Law enforcement agencies, prosecutors, judges and key social welfare agencies on Cambodia, Laos, Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam
- United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
- ODI
- Partnerships with 8 non-government organisations



**36** multi-year national projects in 6 countries



**3** projects with a principal focus on victim rights and on gender equality and disability and social inclusion



**7** regional projects supporting ASEAN's ACTIP implementation



**5** projects focusing on inclusive public policy



**3** projects on communications, and monitoring, evaluation and learning

# Program theory of change



BROADER GOAL



END-OF-PROGRAM  
OUTCOMES  
(year 10)



INTERMEDIATE  
OUTCOMES



IMMEDIATE  
OUTCOMES

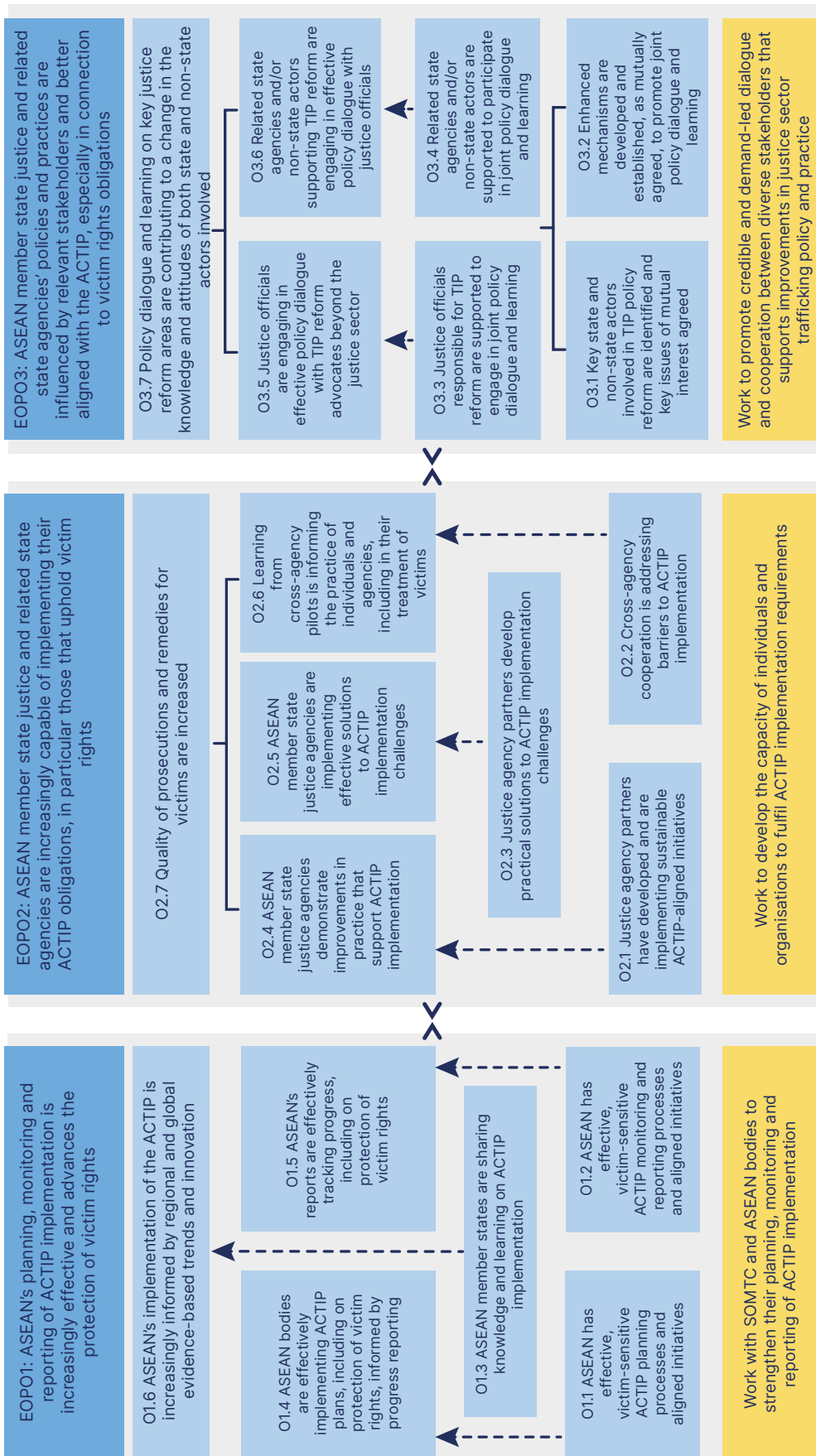


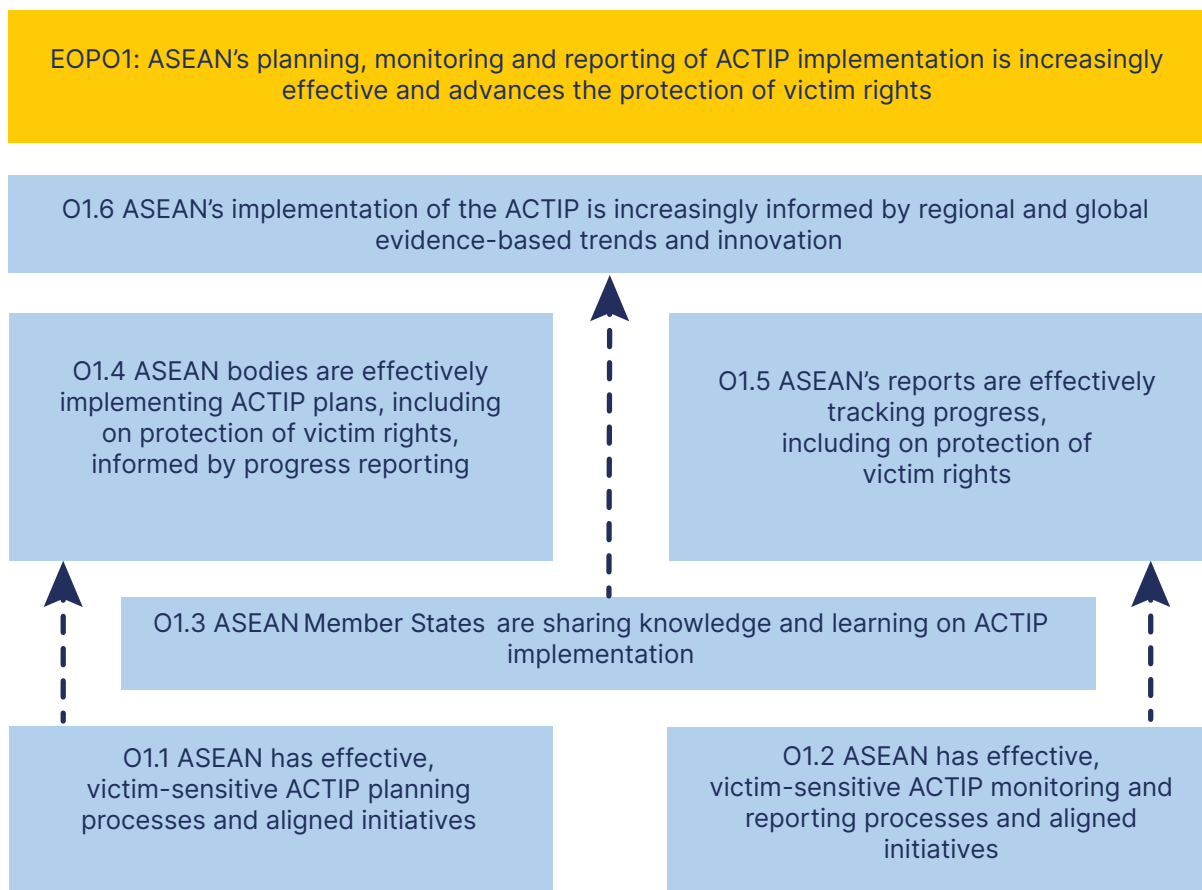
PROJECT  
CLUSTERS



FOUNDATIONAL  
ACTIVITIES

## ASEAN member states have effective justice systems that provide just punishment of traffickers and protect the human rights of victims





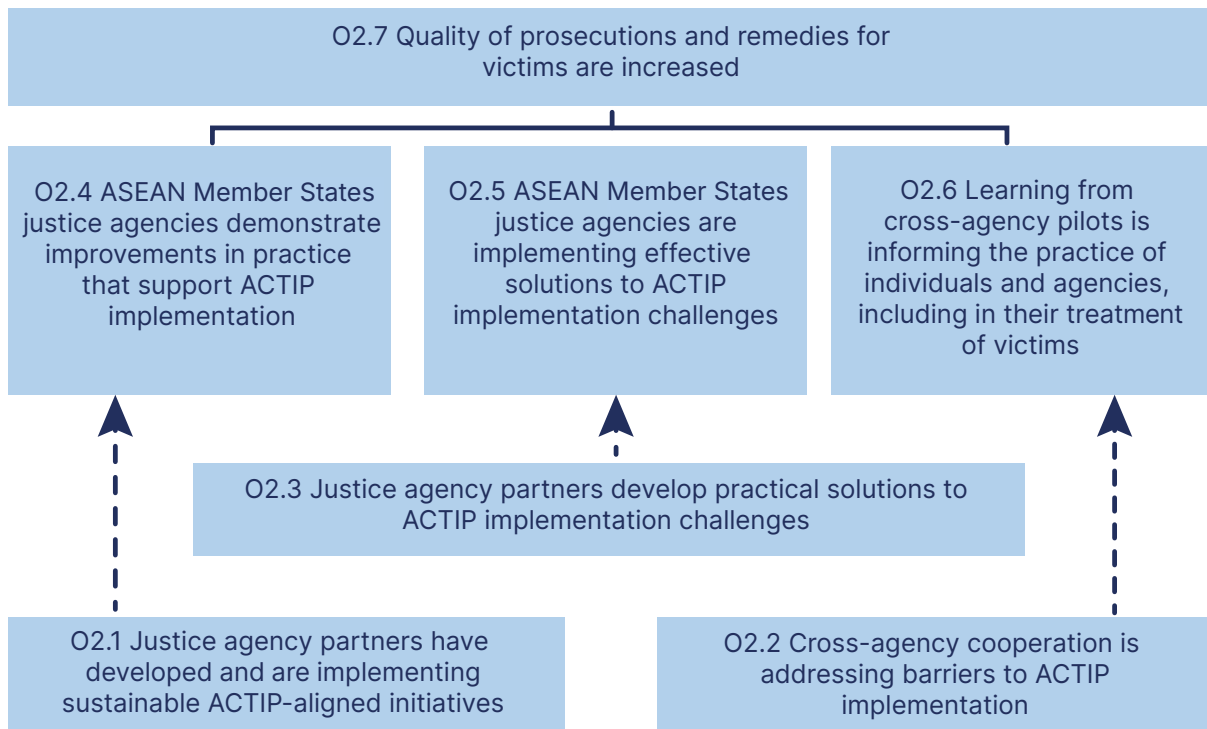
### End-of-program outcome 1 (EOP01)

**ASEAN's planning, monitoring and reporting of ACTIP implementation is increasingly effective and advances the protection of victim rights**



The ASEAN-Australia Counter Trafficking program is working with the Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC) and other ASEAN sectoral bodies and organs to strengthen victim-sensitive planning, monitoring and reporting processes (outcomes 1.1 and 1.2). The sharing of knowledge and learning on ACTIP implementation by ASEAN Member States (outcome 1.3) helps to ensure that implementation is informed by regional and global evidence-based trends and innovation (outcome 1.6).

**EOP02: ASEAN Member States justice and related state agencies are increasingly capable of implementing their ACTIP obligations, in particular those that uphold victim rights**

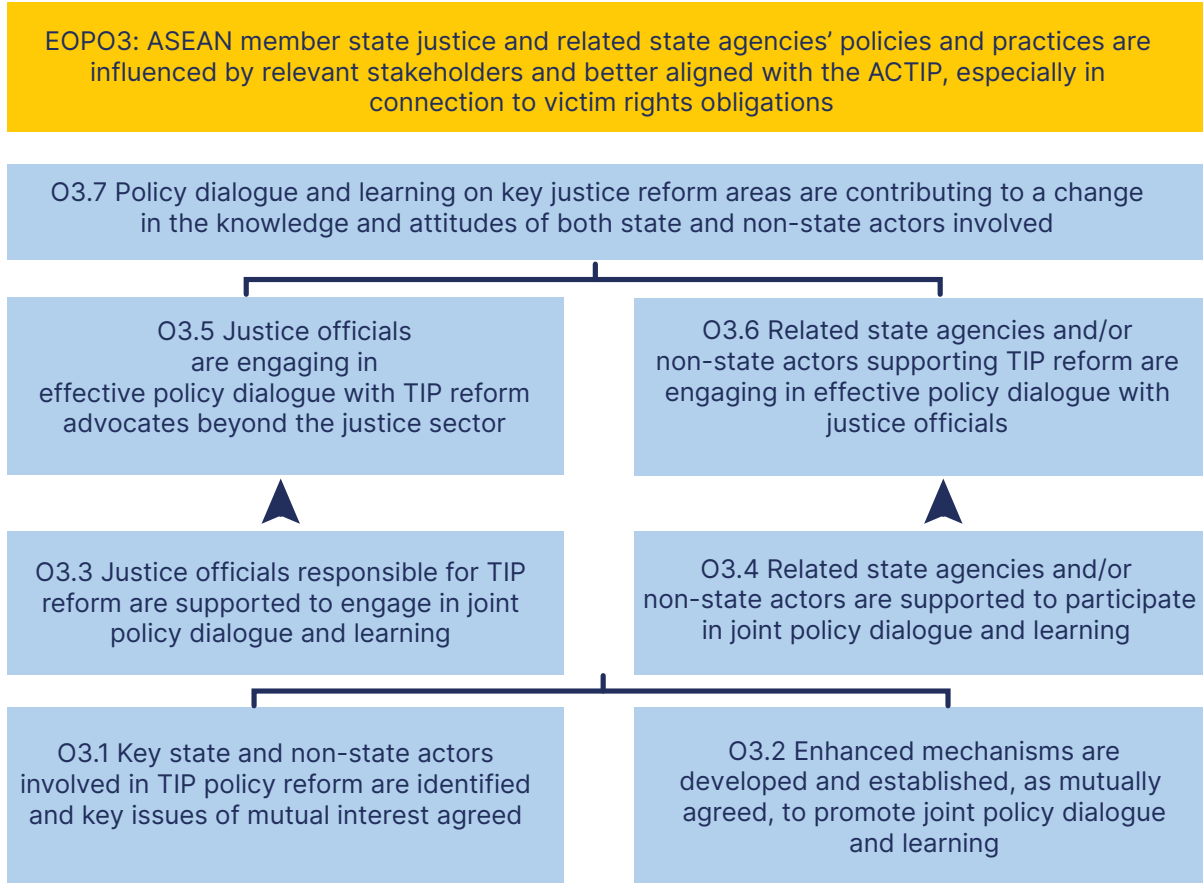


## End-of-program outcome 2 (EOP02)

**ASEAN Member State justice and related state agencies are increasingly capable of implementing their ACTIP obligations, in particular those that uphold victim rights**



The ASEAN-Australia Counter Trafficking program is working with national partners to strengthen their capacity to fulfil ACTIP implementation requirements. Our work supports justice agency partners in developing and implementing sustainable ACTIP-aligned initiatives (outcomes 2.1 and 2.4), and practical solutions to ACTIP implementation challenges (outcomes 2.3 and 2.5). Through the ASEAN-Australia Counter Trafficking program's support, cross-agency cooperation is addressing barriers to ACTIP implementation (outcome 2.2) to inform the practice of individuals and agencies, including in their treatment of victims of trafficking in persons (outcome 2.6).



### End-of-program outcome 3 (EPO03)

**ASEAN member state justice and related state agencies' policies and practices are influenced by stakeholders and better aligned with the ACTIP, especially in connection to victim rights obligations**

The ASEAN-Australia Counter Trafficking program is promoting inclusive and demand-led dialogue and cooperation between diverse stakeholders to support improvements in justice sector counter-trafficking policy and practice. As part of this process, we are identifying and supporting key state and non-state actors involved in TIP policy reform and key issues of mutual interest (outcomes 3.1, 3.3 and 3.4). The ASEAN-Australia Counter Trafficking program is also developing and establishing enhanced mechanisms to promote joint policy dialogue and learning (outcomes 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4), which over time will contribute to change in knowledge and attitudes, and influence policies and practices across the justice sector (outcomes 3.5 and 3.6).





Photo: Policy engagement planning consultation with government and non-government stakeholders in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (May 2023).

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



Photo: The inaugural regional prosecutors dialogue with a dedicated focus on trafficking in persons cases (May 2023).

# Key points about the ACTIP

- The first legally binding regional agreement on trafficking for ASEAN, making Southeast Asia the second region in the world (after Europe) to put in place legally binding rules to counter human trafficking
- Adopted in November 2015 – entered into force among the first six ratifying states parties in March 2017, and subsequently ratified by all remaining ASEAN Member States (most recently by Brunei in 2020)
- Affirms the key principles and rules set out in the major international treaty on human trafficking, the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, and its 'parent' treaty, the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime
- Extends those rules in certain key respects, especially around victim protection and support
- Places a legal obligation on ASEAN Member States to comply with the ACTIP's provisions

## Definition of trafficking in persons in the UN Trafficking Protocol and the ACTIP

THREE KEY MATERIAL ELEMENTS OF TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS	All three elements must be present for a situation of trafficking in adults	<b>Two</b> elements – action and purpose – must be present for a situation of trafficking in children (persons aged under 18 years)
1. <b>An action:</b> <i>What traffickers do</i>	Recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons	
2. <b>By means of:</b> <i>How they do it</i>	Threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, abuse of power or position of vulnerability, giving or receiving payments or benefits to achieve consent of a person having control over another person	Not required as a constituent element of trafficking in children
3. <b>For the purpose of:</b> <i>Why they do it</i>	Exploitation (including, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others, or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs)	

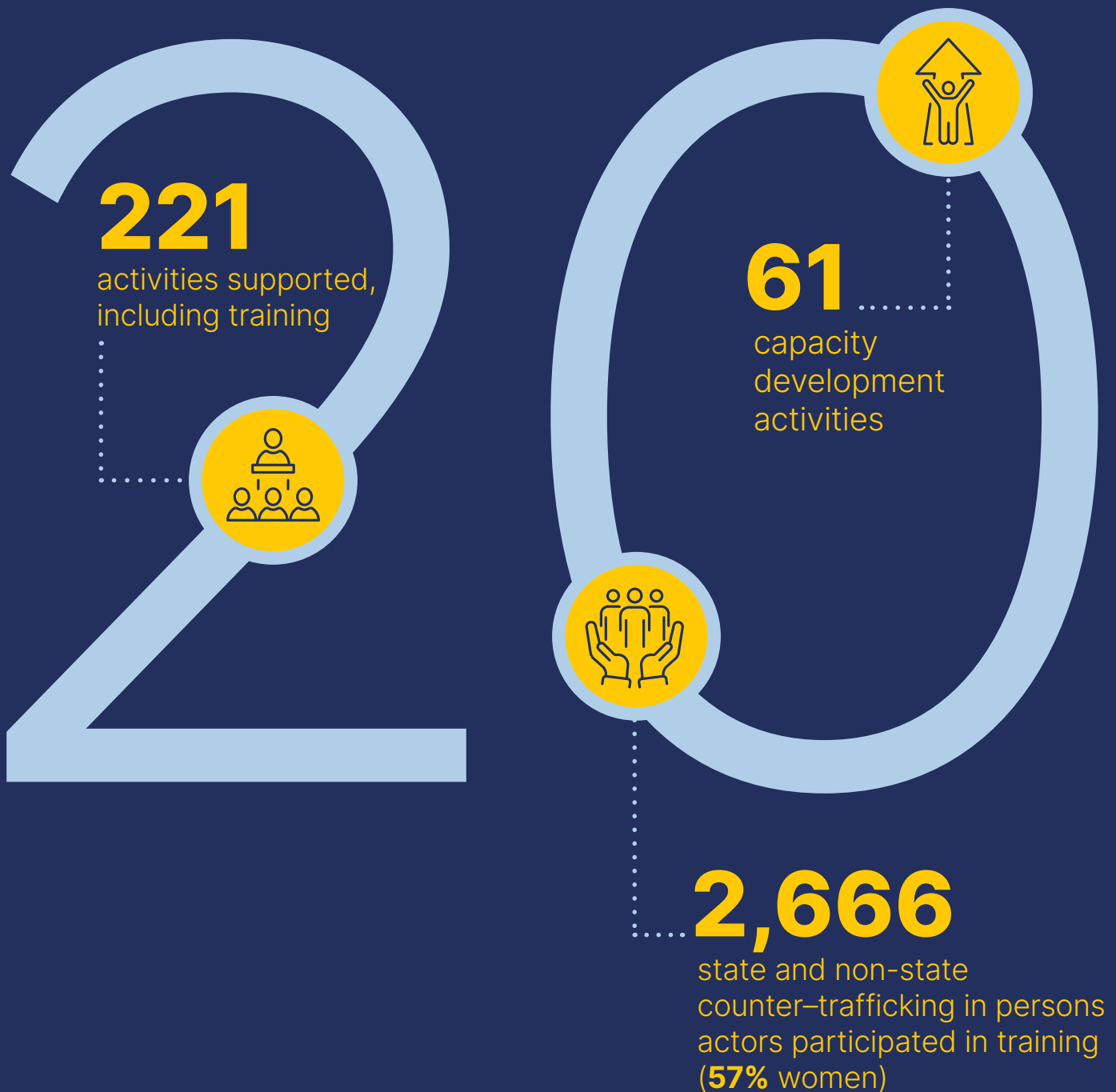
## Trafficking in persons and related crimes



## Objectives of the ACTIP and the key obligations of states parties

The objectives of the ASEAN Convention against Trafficking in Persons are to:	
Prevent and combat trafficking in persons, especially against women and children, and to ensure just and effective punishment for traffickers;	Article 1
Protect and assist the victims of trafficking in persons, with full respect for their human rights	
Promote cooperation among states parties in order to meet these objectives	
The key obligations of states parties to the ACTIP are:	
<b>Criminalise trafficking in persons</b> , as defined in the convention, and provide for higher penalties in certain cases, including where the offence involves a vulnerable victim or serious injury or death, or where the offence is committed by a public official	Article 5
<b>Criminalise corruption and obstruction of justice</b> associated with trafficking in persons, such as the giving or receiving of bribes, or the intimidation of witnesses and public officials	Articles 8 and 9
<b>Establish national guidelines or procedures for proper victim identification</b> , and respect the decisions of other states parties with regard to victim identification	Article 14(1), (2)
Consider <b>allowing victims to remain in their territory</b> , whether permanently or temporarily, taking into account humanitarian and compassionate factors	Article 14(4)
Provide for <b>physical safety</b> of victims within their territory	Article 14(5)
Protect victim <b>privacy and identity</b> to the extent possible under domestic law	Article 14(6)
Consider <b>not holding victims liable</b> for committing unlawful acts directly related to their trafficking	Article 14(7)
<b>Not unreasonably hold victims in detention or prison</b>	Article 14(8)
<b>Provide care and support</b> to victims, including housing; counselling and information; medical, psychological and material assistance; and employment, education and training; and allocate appropriate funds for the care and support of victims	Article 14(10), (14)
Ensure the law provides for the possibility of victims obtaining <b>compensation</b> for damage suffered	Article 14(13)
<b>Verify nationality</b> of victim, <b>issue necessary documentation</b> and <b>accept return</b> without delay, and undertake return with due regard for <b>safety of victim and status of legal proceedings</b> (applies to states parties that are the victim's country of origin)	Article 14(11), Article 15
Establish <b>repatriation programs</b> and assist in <b>reintegration</b> of victims (applies to states parties that are either the victim's country of origin or destination)	
Ensure <b>law enforcement and prosecution authorities</b> are <b>equipped with appropriate skills and knowledge</b> , including in relation to victim protection, and provide training for this purpose	Article 16(1), (6)
Cooperate in encouraging <b>victim-witnesses to voluntarily return to the country of destination to testify</b> or otherwise cooperate	Article 16(5)
<b>Protect victim-witnesses from intimidation</b> and harassment and punish such conduct	Article 16(7)
Afford each other the widest measure of <b>mutual legal assistance</b> in accordance with the ASEAN Treaty on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters	Article 18
Establish all trafficking in persons offences as <b>extraditable offences</b> under national law and through bilateral treaties, and cooperate in extradition requests	Article 19
<b>Cooperate with each other in order to enhance the effectiveness of law enforcement action</b> , including through exchange of information and responding to enquiries and requests for assistance; and cooperate further for <b>purposes of confiscation of proceeds</b> of trafficking in persons crimes	Article 20

# Performance highlights from



**6,400**

total participants  
at our events  
(**55%** women)



**881**

online participants  
in 4 webinars  
(**69%** women)

**21**

research  
reports  
completed




  
  
**Promoting inclusivity  
when sheltering  
victims of trafficking.**

supported by

**Australian  
Aid** 

**ASEAN-Australia  
Counter Trafficking**

  
**Applying gender-  
sensitivity when  
working with  
trafficked victims.**

supported by

**Australian  
Aid** 

**ASEAN-Australia  
Counter Trafficking**

supported by

**Australian  
Aid** 

**ASEAN-Australia  
Counter Trafficking**

Photo: Cambodian delegates attend the launch of the ACWC learning resources for frontliners on gender-sensitive and victim-centred approaches (July 2023).

# 2 Regional progress

---

## **EOP01:**

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

# ASEAN region



## 2023 projects

- Supported SOMTC in socialising the BWP 2.0
- Monitoring & Evaluation framework – Bohol Work Plan 2.0
- Supporting judicial knowledge exchange in partnership with CACJ
- Supporting victim-centred and gender-sensitive approaches with ACWC
- Supporting human-rights based approaches with AICHR



## Key partners

- ASEAN 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 Secretariat
- Council of ASEAN Chief Justices (CACJ)
- United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)



## Key achievements that we supported

- The successor Bohol Trafficking in Persons Work Plan (BWP 2.0) was adopted by the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime, through the SOMTC
- The SOMTC socialised the [Bohol TIP Work Plan 2.0](#) and consulted on its monitoring and evaluation framework and reporting process.
- The ACWC finalised and launched the ASEAN Do No Harm Guide for Frontline Responders
- [AICHR launched 2 manuals](#) (endorsed by all members) in July 2023 for frontliners to prevent and respond to trafficking in persons at a community level.



Photo: Official launch of ACWC training resources for frontliners (July 2023).

## Support to the ACWC

**Context:** Through a [partnership project with ACWC](#), we are building the capacity of frontline responders (including police, prosecutors, social workers, labour inspectors, border guards and NGOs) in victim-centred and gender-sensitive approaches to counter-trafficking. This project is included in the ACWC Work Plan 2021-2025, reflecting ACWC's contribution to the implementation of the Bohol TIP Work Plan.

**Achievement:** During 2023, ACWC's 10 member-state representatives finalized and endorsed the [e-learning basic module](#) and in-person training [advanced module](#), which were translated into 6 languages (Indonesia, Lao, Khmer, Burmese, Thai and Vietnamese). We supported the development of both training materials by engaging a short-term specialist and providing our own technical expertise. These modules were piloted in Malaysia in May 2023, and launched in July 2023 along with a regional training of trainers workshop, with representatives from 9 ASEAN Member States governments, NGOs from around the region, including from Myanmar, and representatives from Timor-Leste.

We also published and disseminated the ASEAN-Australia Counter Trafficking commissioned [shelter study](#) – promoting the ACTIP provision requiring freedom of movement for trafficked victims. We presented this topic during the May 2023 training event with the Malaysian Trades Union Congress, in response to a specific request, with interest from the Chair to promote to NGOs operating shelters in Malaysia.

The [ASEAN Do No Harm Guide for Frontline Responders](#) was finalised in December 2022, endorsed by all ASEAN Member States, and launched in January 2023. The guide was translated into 6 languages, uploaded to the [ASEAN website](#) along with with an [animation explainer](#) shared on social media.

In 2023, we also commissioned a consulting firm to facilitate the development of a monitoring and evaluation system for implementation of victim-centred and gender-sensitive approaches in counter-trafficking efforts. To develop the [M&E guidebook](#), 8 consultations and validation workshops were conducted. The final draft of the guidebook was submitted to the ACWC in December 2023, and was endorsed by all ASEAN Member States in January 2024.

## Webinar series

**Context:** Our government and non-government counterparts from Cambodia, Thailand, Indonesia, the Philippines and Vietnam have shared knowledge and good practice as key speakers. The series attracts broad and diverse stakeholders, including private sector, from the ASEAN region and beyond for the purpose of knowledge sharing and building stronger networks.

**Achievement:** Our 4 webinars in 2023 reached 881 participants (68.8% female, 30.3% male and 0.9% other). From the 651 responses received for 3 webinars in 2023, 94% confirmed they learned something new from the webinar. Webinar topics covered: [forced marriage](#), [workers forced to scam online](#), and [access to compensation and legal aid services for victims](#), as well as how these emerging trends are linked to human trafficking.

## Support to Indonesia as ASEAN chair

**Context:** We provided technical and/or financial support to the drafting of 3 ASEAN declarations – on the placement and protection of [migrant fishers](#), combating trafficking in persons caused by the abuse of technology, and the protection of migrant workers and family members in crisis situations.

**Achievement:** Our contributions, specifically during the drafting of the text of the declarations, were instrumental in ensuring the inclusion of victim rights and gender equality, disability and social inclusion (GEDSI), and alignment with the ACTIP. The declarations were also informed by evidence and research findings we commissioned – for example, the [fisheries project with La Trobe University](#) and the [political economy analysis by ODI](#).





Photo: Chair of Indonesian Migrant Workers Union (*Serikat Buruh Migran Indonesia/SBMI*), Hariyanto, to discuss the ASEAN Declaration on the Placement and Protection of Migrant Fishers in a Conversations with Chem episode (May 2023).

## STORY

# Judicial knowledge exchange: Indonesia-Philippines experience

### Context

Legal interpretations and judicial practices can differ between countries – which can hinder cooperation and the ability of victims to access justice. In support of implementation of the ACTIP, we developed a pilot project knowledge exchange between the Council of ASEAN Chief Justices (CACJ) Working Group on Judicial Education and Training co-chairs (Philippines and Indonesia). The pilot project was endorsed at the 10th Council of ASEAN Chief Justices meeting in November 2022, with the coordination meeting held in February 2023 to discuss the timeline and activities.

### Achievements

During the [first exchange in July 2023](#), 12 justices and judges from the Philippines were hosted by the [Research and Development Agency for Legal and Judicial Training of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Indonesia](#), marking a significant milestone during Indonesia's year as Chair of ASEAN.

Delegates discussed good practices and challenges related to access to restitution and compensation for victims of trafficking, special approaches for children involved in criminal proceedings, and victim-sensitive methods of testimony and cross examination. Philippines justices and judges also visited district and religious courts in Indonesia to see firsthand how courts are using technology to increase the accessibility of justice services for women, children and persons with disabilities.





“

The ASEAN Judicial Knowledge Exchange Project has been a valuable experience, fostering a deeper understanding of the challenges we face in combating trafficking in persons. This collaborative effort has paved the way for stronger regional cooperation in delivering justice and support to victims.

*Hon. Judge Bambang Hery Mulyono,  
Head of Indonesian Supreme Court Training Center*

During the reciprocal visit of 17 Indonesian judges to the Philippines in September 2023, discussions on access to justice for victims of trafficking were continued with the Philippines sharing their experiences of implementing child-friendly approaches through the family courts. Indonesia judges also had the opportunity to observe the Philippines Competency Enhancement Training provided to judges presiding over trafficking in persons matters. Judges who participated in the exchange have already started to share their learnings with other judges and government officials. For example, [Indonesian Judge Maulia Ine of Kediri Court District](#) advocated for stronger collaboration between the judiciary and law enforcers working on trafficking in persons cases in her district, while [Judge Adrian of Indramayu District Court](#) promoted victim-sensitive approaches in the Indramayu court.

This initiative is a strong example of what can be achieved when two or more ASEAN Member States collaborate and share knowledge.

# Groundbreaking international conference explores how disability intersects with human trafficking

## Context

There is growing recognition that people with disability may face increased susceptibility to human trafficking. Despite ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities by all ASEAN Member States and the existence of domestic laws on the rights of people with disability - the understanding of the nexus between disability and trafficking remains nascent. In November 2022, we commissioned La Trobe University to conduct a study on the [nexus between disability and trafficking in persons](#), to better understand the prevalence and scope of the issue within the region. A high-level research advisory board was established comprising Thailand's representative to the ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Social Welfare and Development, the Thai and Indonesia representatives to AICHR, the Philippine representative to SOMTC, and the Thai member of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disability (a United Nations treaty body). Expert consultations were held between July to September 2023 in Thailand, Indonesia and the Philippines to present preliminary findings and discuss research gaps.

## Achievements

In December 2023, we facilitated and presented the findings of the research during an [international conference on the nexus between disability and human trafficking](#). The conference brought together 266 counter-trafficking and disability rights stakeholders (of whom 123 attended online), and featured [remarks by the UN Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons, especially women and children Professor Siobhan Mullaly](#). Discussions highlighted that physical and intellectual impairment does not automatically create vulnerability to human trafficking. Rather, it is the barriers people with impairment face in participating meaningfully in the economy and society more broadly that results in an experience of disability and related vulnerability to exploitation and abuse. Participants also heard about some of the very practical and impactful steps that several ASEAN Member States have taken to make justice more accessible to persons with disabilities, including those who have been trafficked. Some of the examples include: using technology to expand reach and access to justice services, building the 'disability literacy' of duty bearers in the criminal justice and broader justice sector, and in ensuring rights to information, services and remedies are accessible to persons with disabilities.





Photo: La Trobe University national researchers at a panel discussion with OSCE representatives at the December 2023 conference held in Bangkok, Thailand.



Photo: Justices and judges from the Philippines were hosted by the Research and Development Agency for Legal and Judicial Training of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Indonesia in a knowledge exchange visit (July 2023).

# 3 Progress by country

---

## **EOPO2:**

ASEAN Member States justice and related state agencies are increasingly capable of implementing their ACTIP obligations, in particular those that uphold victim rights

# Highlights from 2023 – partner countries



Cambodia

**150**

frontline officers  
surveyed after  
training with  
MoSVY



Indonesia

**146**

people trained  
(62% women)



Lao PDR

**15**

judges  
completed the  
training-of-  
trainers course  
on victim  
sensitive court  
guidelines





Philippines

**735**

justice  
officials and  
stakeholders  
received  
training



Thailand

**5**

judicial  
roadshow  
supported

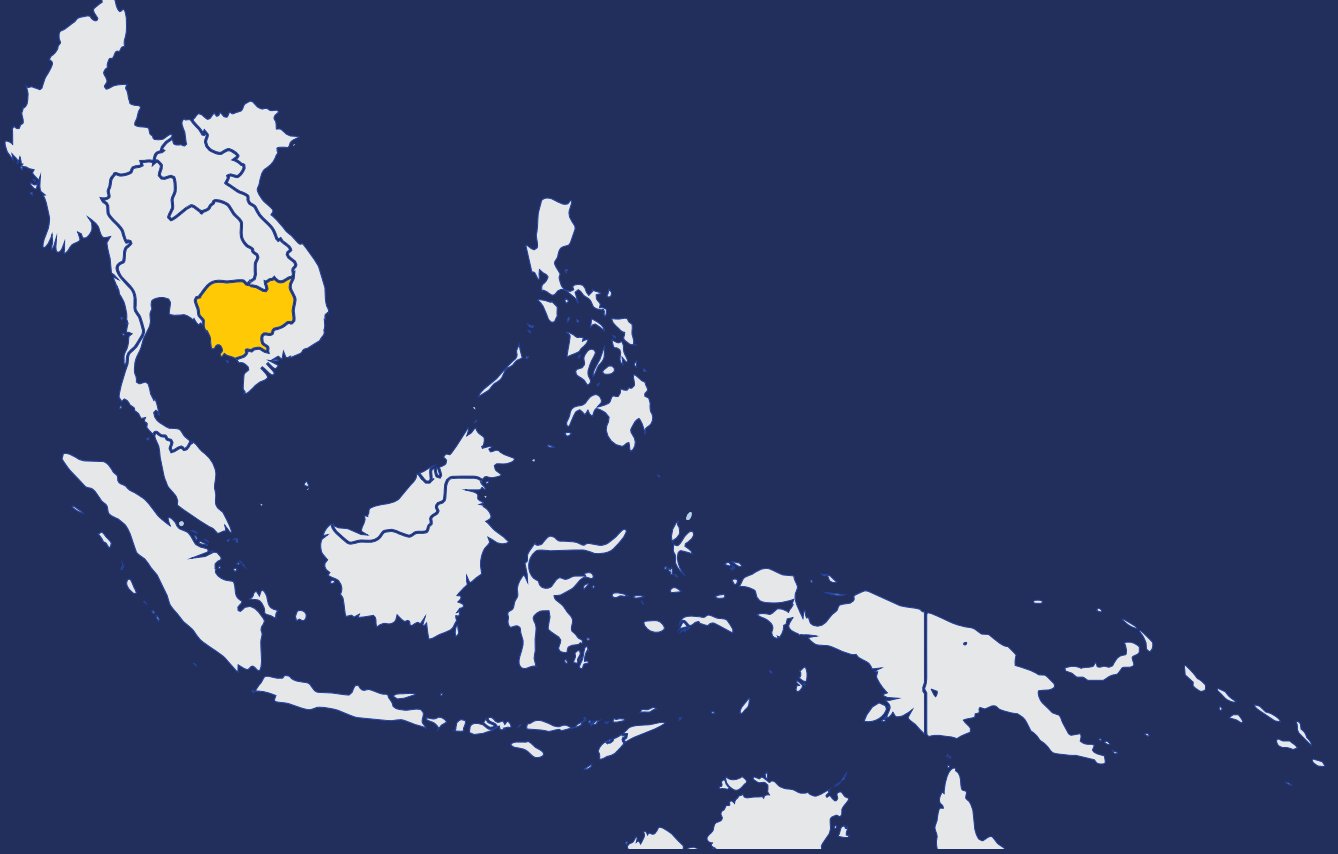


Vietnam

**119**

diplomats  
trained on  
victim support  
and protection





# Cambodia



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## # approved projects in 2023

---

### 2023 projects

- Cambodian National Police transnational investigative cooperation
- Cambodian National Police TIP investigation, including cybercrime
- Ministry of Justice – TIP prosecution and victim-centred approach
- Judiciary – TIP adjudication, including victim-sensitive courts
- NCCT – implementing victim-sensitive approaches
- MoSVY – improving victim protection and shelter practices
- National effectiveness and governance

### Key partners in 2023 program implementation

- National Committee for Counter Trafficking (NCCT)
- Ministry of Justice
- Cambodian National Police, Ministry of Interior
- Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation (MoSVY)
- Legal Support for Children and Women



23

events in  
Cambodia, with  
956 participants  
(33% women)



6

capacity  
development  
events  
conducted in  
Cambodia



397

people trained  
(38% women)

In 2023, we continued to support partners implement Cambodia's ACTIP obligations.

### Key achievements

- The Ministry of Justice conducted 2 workshops on trafficking in persons for prosecutors, investigating judges and law enforcers; and training of trainers for the ASEAN skills program on trafficking in persons
- The Specialist Unit on Anti-Human Trafficking with the Cambodian National Police conducted 8 workshops, to review and revise its standard operating procedures
- The MoSVY launched its case management circular and surveyed 150 frontline officers trained in 2022, and conducted 3 training workshops for frontline officials on policy and minimum standards of protection for TIP victims

### CASE STUDY:

## Improving victim protection and shelter practices

**Context:** We supported the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation (MoSVY) through a multi-year project to improve victim protection and shelter practices. In 2022, our partnership has completed workshops and consultations with NGOs and relevant organisations to collect inputs for the directive on the integration and monitoring of TIP victims staying at government and non-government shelters.

**Achievement:** Government and non-government counter-trafficking stakeholders cooperated to ensure the protection of victims of trafficking and provision of suitable services at shelters in Cambodia. The activities supported in 2022 resulted



Photo: Gender-sensitive and victim-rights approaches workshop in Cambodia (October 2023).

in the completion of the Case Management Circular, launched by MoSVY in February 2023. Associated with this was capacity development activities for frontline officers, and socialisation of the case management mechanism. To inform learning and decision-making, MoSVY initiated a survey of frontline officers trained in 2022. As part of this initiative, we supported the development of survey methodology while MoSVY contacted 150 frontline officers to participate on this survey. Responses were very positive, provided insights on areas for improvements. The survey results also informed the ASEAN-Australia Counter Trafficking program's internal review of training activities. The analysis of survey data was shared with MoSVY to inform learning and decision-making.



# Indonesia



---

## # approved projects in 2023

### 2023 projects

- Taskforce for the prevention and handling of trafficking in persons – support national action plan implementation and TIP coordination
- Supreme Court – TIP adjudication, including victim-sensitive courts
- National effectiveness and governance - Indonesia

### Key partners in 2023 program implementation

- Anti-Trafficking in persons Task Force
- Witness and Victim Protection Agency
- Supreme Court's Women and Children Working Group
- Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection
- Australia Indonesia Partnership for Justice Phase 2
- ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children - Indonesia



Photo: Participants at the national consultation workshop on the development of ACWC monitoring and evaluation system in Jakarta, Indonesia (May 2023).



9

regional events in  
Indonesia, with 547  
participants  
(59% women)



146

people trained  
(62% women)

In 2023, the bilateral memorandum of subsidiary agreement between Indonesia and Australia was pending. However, we continued to support partners implement Indonesia's ACTIP obligations through our regional activities.

#### Key achievements

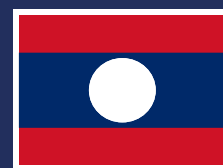
- We assisted the development of the supreme Court's Women and Children Working Group with:
  - the finalization and publishing of the [Indonesian TIP case decision analysis](#) – the findings of which were presented to a national workshop organized by IOM Indonesia in March 2023.
  - a model decision template to address some of the key findings

- a draft information booklet (buku saku) on restitution in a format for judges, including an explanatory note, checklist and process map
- anonymised decision directory by highlighting decisions in an anonymized form, in line with victim rights obligations in the ACTIP

- We provided technical support to a presentation on victim-sensitive courts during the judicial training on TIP for judges of the General Court in West Nusa Tenggara and East Nusa Tenggara in May 2023, as requested by the Supreme Court's Research and Development Agency for Legal and Judicial Training.



# Lao PDR



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## # approved projects in 2023

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### 2023 projects

- Anti-Human Trafficking Department – TIP victim identification and investigation
- People's Supreme Court – TIP adjudication, including victim-sensitive courts
- Lao Women's Union – cross-agency CTIP cooperation
- Office of the Supreme People's Prosecutor – TIP prosecution and victim-centred approach
- National effectiveness and governance - Lao PDR

### Key partners in 2023 program implementation

- National Committee on Anti-Trafficking in Persons
- Anti-Human Trafficking Department, Ministry of Public Security
- Ministry of Justice
- People's Supreme Court
- Office of the Supreme People's Prosecutor
- Judicial Research and Training Institute
- Public Prosecutor Training Institute
- Lao Women's Union
- Village Focus International



# 25

events in  
Laos, with 719  
participants  
(50% women)



# 15

capacity  
development  
events conducted  
in Laos



# 413

people trained  
(52% women)

In 2023, we continued to support partners implement Lao PDR ACTIP obligations.

### Key achievements

- We supported the Anti-Human Trafficking Department in finalising the training program on TIP investigation, currently under review by the Head of the Secretariat to the National Committee on Anti-Trafficking in Persons.
- We collaborated with the Department of Criminal Inspection and the Prosecutorial Research and Training Institute of the Office of the Supreme People's Prosecutor in developing the training program for prosecutors. In May 2023, the training program was endorsed by the Prosecutor General of the Office of the Supreme People's Prosecutor.
- We supported a workshop on trafficked victim therapy for civil society organisations and shelter staff in Champasak, Savannakhet, Bokeo and Luang Namtha provinces in May 2023. The 26 female participants learned basic concepts and case management from Indonesia's experience.
- We facilitated the finalisation of the [victim-sensitive court guidelines](#), leading to their endorsement by the President of the People's Supreme Court in July 2023. The guidelines were officially launched in September 2023.

- We supported the Lao Women's Union in developing a training program on victim protection, referral and assistance. The draft was finalised and will be submitted to the chair of the National Committee on Anti-Trafficking in Persons for endorsement.

### CASE STUDY:

## Integration of GEDSI and victim rights into CTIP efforts

**Context:** We worked with various justice agencies and with the Lao Women's Union (LWU) to support cross-agency cooperation on counter-trafficking in persons. We collaborated with LWU's Center for Counselling and Protection of Women and Children in strengthening the capacity of shelter staff in providing services and support to victims of trafficking in persons.

**Achievement:** Cross-border collaboration and knowledge sharing supports the capacity building initiatives of partners in Laos. We ensure that GEDSI and victim rights principles are integrated in our activities with both government and non-government partners. In May 2023, we supported a workshop for 26 shelter staff (all women) from Champasak, Savannakhet, Bokeo and Luang Namtha provinces, including civil society organisations, to discuss and share experiences on individualised case management for victims, victim-centred and gender-sensitive approaches and trauma-informed care. Workshop participants also learned from Indonesian experts on individualised case management and counselling, sensitive interviewing techniques and self-care for frontline workers. Associated with workshops under this project is the development of a training program on victim protection, referral and assistance. We supported the integration of the 'do no harm' principle and gender- and victim-sensitive approaches into the training.



Photo: Official launch of the Victim Sensitive Courts Guideline with People's Supreme Court Vice President HE Bounkhoung Thavisack and Australian Deputy Head of Mission for Lao PDR Dan Heldon (September 2023).



# Philippines



## # approved projects in 2023

### 2023 projects

- Department of the Interior and Local Government – enforcement of local laws and regulations on CTIP
- Department of Justice – TIP prosecution and victim-centred approach
- National Bureau of Investigation – TIP victim identification and investigation
- Supreme Court – TIP adjudication, including victim-sensitive courts
- Philippine National Police – transnational investigative cooperation
- Philippine National Police – TIP victim identification and support
- Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking – strategic plan implementation and monitoring, and TIP coordination
- Department of Social Welfare and Development – TIP victim recovery and reintegration
- National effectiveness and governance - Philippines

### Key partners in 2023 program implementation

- Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking
- Department of the Interior and Local Government
- Department of Social Welfare and Development
- Philippine Judicial Academy
- National Bureau of Investigation
- National Prosecution Service, Department of Justice
- Project Management Office of the Supreme Court
- Philippine National Police (PNP)
- Women and Children Protection, PNP
- Blas F. Ople Policy Center and Training Institute



63

events in the Philippines, with 2,041 participants (64% women)



9

capacity development events conducted in the Philippines



735

people trained, (72% women)

In 2023, we continued to support partners implement Philippines' ACTIP obligations.

### Key achievements

- We supported IACAT in the conduct of the technical working group meeting in May 2023, on the development of policy guidelines on investigating and prosecuting TIP cases involving indigenous peoples.
- We supported the National Prosecution Service in the delivery of the 6th Basic E-learning Access to Training on Investigation and Prosecution of TIP Cases (BEAT-TIP) course. We also provided support in developing the final training course on extensive and in-depth discussion on TIP cases (END-TIP).
- We supported the Philippine Judicial Academy in conducting competency enhancing training on TIP for judges, law enforcers and social workers in Zamboanga City as part of the justice zone initiative. We also supported the academy and provided technical inputs in reviewing and revising the advanced competency enhancement training program for the judiciary.
- We facilitated the finalisation of the Department of Social Welfare and Development's Recovery and Reintegration Program for Trafficked Persons Toolkit, after extensive consultation with stakeholders, including victim-survivors.

### CASE STUDY:

## Zamboanga TIP-free justice zone

**Context:** The Philippines' Justice Sector Coordinating Council (JSCC) is composed of the Supreme Court, the Department of Justice and the Department of the Interior and Local Government. Since 2016, Governance in Justice (GOJUST), a program funded by the European Union, has supported the JSCC to strengthen sector-wide coordination within the justice system. GOJUST also supported the development of 'justice zones' – areas where local justice sector actors such as police, prosecutors, judges and prison staff work together to address common challenges.

**Achievement:** Strong commitments and collaboration between justice agencies showcased a collective approach to promoting and protecting the human rights of victims. On 24 February 2023, the JSCC launched the Zamboanga City Justice Zone – a flagship program showcasing the collective approach of the 3 justice agencies in the Philippines. The JSCC, supported by the ASEAN-Australia Counter Trafficking program in collaboration with GOJUST, launched the 10th justice zone in the Philippines in Zamboanga City. This is the first justice zone to be designated as a zone free of trafficking in persons (TIP). The 3 agencies committed to deliver responsive and real-time justice services to the people of Zamboanga.

Following the launch of the Zamboanga City Justice Zone, on 9–11 May 2023, we supported the Philippine Judicial Academy, the JSCC and the Zamboanga City Justice Zone convenor in conducting the first competency enhancement training for a justice zone. The 3-day multidisciplinary training course was designed to improve

competencies of judges, prosecutors, social workers and police investigators in handling TIP cases within the justice zone. This is one of the activities identified by the city to strengthen efforts to address trafficking in persons in the justice zone.

### **First TIP-free justice zone**

We supported the Justice Coordinating Council, led by the Technical Working Group on Processes and Capacity Building of the Supreme Court, in partnership with the Governance in Justice (GOJUST) program, in launching the first TIP-free justice zone – the Zamboanga City Justice Zone – in February 2023. This initiative aims to support the province in developing a plan and indicators for improved justice system coordination. In November 2023, we conducted a victim sensitive courts workshop that included justice zone convenors from Zamboanga City to inform the development of victim sensitive guidelines for the justice system. The guidelines will be launched in 2024.

### **Inclusive process for CTIP national strategy**

We supported the finalisation of the Philippines' 4th National Strategic Action Plan Against Trafficking in Persons 2023-2027, and the development of the strategic plan's monitoring, evaluation, reporting and learning framework. The plan reflects a major shift in the IACAT planning process, through extensive and inclusive consultations. The IACAT launched the strategic plan and monitoring framework in April 2023.





Photo: Launch of resource materials on anti-trafficking in Philippines (August 2023).



# Thailand



## # approved projects in 2023

### 2023 projects

- Court of Justice – TIP adjudication, including victim-sensitive courts
- Office of the Attorney General – TIP prosecution and victim-centred approach
- Royal Thai Police and Department of Special Investigation – transnational investigative cooperation
- Cross-agency CTIP cooperation
- Division of Anti-Trafficking in Persons, Ministry of Social Development and Human Security – victim protection and support
- National effectiveness and governance - Thailand

### Key partners in 2023 program implementation

- Department of Special Investigation, Ministry of Justice
- Department of Trafficking in Persons Litigation, Office of the Attorney General
- Court of Justice
- Ministry of Social Development and Human Security
- Ministry of Labour
- Royal Thai Police
- United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
- International Justice Mission
- Social Responsibility Law Office
- Human Rights and Development Foundation
- Verite Southeast Asia
- Labour Protection Network



Photo: The Thailand Court of Justice organised judicial roadshows to disseminate the Judicial Handbook on Adjudication of Trafficking in Persons Cases, ensuring all regions of Thailand receive the handbook and training.



56

events in Thailand,  
with 1,341  
participants  
(54% women)



15

capacity  
development  
events conducted  
in Thailand



559

people trained  
(52% women)

In 2023, we continued to support partners implement Thailand's ACTIP obligations.

#### Key achievements

- We supported the Court of Justice to conduct 4 judicial roadshows to disseminate the Judicial Handbook on Adjudication of Trafficking in Persons Cases, resulting in all regions of Thailand receiving the handbook and training.
- We partnered with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in training prosecutors on addressing evidential issues in trafficking in persons cases, including a focus on new online scamming cases (April and May 2023)
- We supported the finalisation of a scoping study to establish the CTIP Centre of Excellence – the scoping study was finalised in February 2023. The first meetings of the executive committee (Thai agencies and ASEAN-Australia Counter Trafficking) and the steering committee (co-chaired by Thailand and Australia) were held in December 2023. We commissioned a consortium of consultants who will support and facilitate the development of the centre's curriculum.

- We commissioned a consulting firm to support the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security in reviewing Thailand's Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act. After extensive consultations, the law review was completed and published on the Thai Government's online database.

#### CASE STUDY:

### CTIP cooperation between Thailand and the Philippines

**Context:** Cross-border investigation and prosecution is one of the most significant challenges in countering trafficking in persons within the ASEAN region, as offenders, victims, evidence, assets, and proceeds of crime are often located in different jurisdictions. In addition, trafficking networks and perpetrators abuse technology to facilitate their operations, thereby hindering cross-border cooperation. For example, a recent trend is the increase in online scam operations across Southeast Asia, as discussed in a 2023 briefing paper by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights – Online Scam Operations and Trafficking into Forced Criminality in Southeast Asia: Recommendations for a human rights response.

The Philippines and Thailand have been identified as countries of origin, destination or transit in relation to trafficking into online scamming centres. To effectively bring the perpetrators to justice and to provide support and protection for victims, regular and close cooperation among countries is needed. In July 2022, Thailand and the Philippines held the first bilateral meeting on transnational investigative cooperation on trafficking in persons (TIP) cases. We supported and facilitated this meeting between law enforcement agencies of both countries. This led to the sharing of information concerning cases and rescues of Thai nationals lured into online scamming operations in the Philippines.

Building on this first bilateral dialogue and the experience of judicial exchange between the Philippines and Indonesia, Thailand's Office of the Attorney General sought the support of the ASEAN-Australia Counter Trafficking program to facilitate the development of an exchange activity for cross-border cooperation involving law enforcement and prosecutors. This exchange also built on peer-to-peer relationships established during the Prosecutors Regional Dialogue on Trafficking in Persons – an event that we supported, held in Bangkok in May 2023.

The main objective of the exchange between law enforcement and prosecution agencies of Thailand and the Philippines was to foster stronger bilateral ties between agencies to strengthen formal and informal cooperation in TIP cases. The exchange also aimed to build mutual understanding on procedural matters relating to practices and challenges in rescuing and repatriating trafficked victims, investigation and prosecution of trafficking cases, and understanding the roles of NGOs in supporting counter-trafficking efforts.

**Achievements:** In collaboration with the Philippine Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking (IACAT), Thailand's Department of Trafficking in Persons Litigation within the Office of the Attorney-General, and Thailand's Department of Special Investigation within the Ministry of Justice, we provided financial and technical support during the first exchange, held in the Philippines on 26–28 September 2023. Participants

were law enforcers and prosecutors – they shared knowledge and good practices, and also discussed challenges in rescuing and repatriating trafficked victims. Online scamming in the Philippines and the Mekong subregion was a particular focus

High-level officials from both sides participated in the exchange, including H.E. Mr Tull Traisorat, Thai Ambassador to the Philippines, and Undersecretary Nicholas Felix Ty of the Philippine Department of Justice. As a part of the visit, the Thai delegation visited the first TIP shelter in the Philippines and observed firsthand Bureau of Immigration exit formalities at Ninoy Aquino International Airport.

As a result, participating agencies from both countries engaged in informal legal cooperation and have fostered a collegial relationship. For example, exchange of information, discuss trafficking cases and coordination effort between Thai prosecutors, IACAT, the Partnership for Development Assistance in the Philippines and the Philippine Embassy in Thailand regarding online scams involving Filipino victims in Thailand. This was recognised by Thailand as an important catalyst that is instrumental in progressing prosecutorial efforts. The cooperation will also support Thai law enforcers seeking mutual legal assistance from the Philippines in bringing perpetrators to justice, as well as in protecting the rights of victims. This strong example of bilateral cooperation can be promoted to other ASEAN Member States.

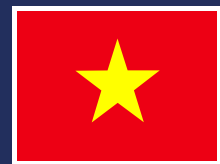
This exchange is an example of an activity that contributed to achieving the 3 end-of-program outcomes (EOPOs) – knowledge exchange under EOPO 1, bilateral counter-trafficking in persons cooperation under EOPO 2, and consultation and collaboration between government and non-government agencies under EOPO 3.



Photo: Thailand's Department of Trafficking in Persons Litigation within the Office of the Attorney-General, and Thailand's Department of Special Investigation within the Ministry of Justice held an exchange visit to the Philippines Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking (IACAT) in Manila on 26–28 September 2023.



# Vietnam



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## # approved projects in 2023

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### 2023 projects

- Ministry of Public Security – victim identification and protection
- Supreme People's Court – TIP adjudication, including victim-sensitive courts
- Supreme People's Procuracy – TIP prosecution and victim-centred approach
- Criminal Police Department – national plan of action implementation
- Cross-agency TIP cooperation
- National effectiveness and governance - Vietnam

### Key partners in 2023 program implementation

- Ministry of Public Security
  - Supreme People's Court
  - Supreme People's Procuracy
  - People's Police Academy
  - Vietnam Court Academy
  - Hanoi Procuratorate University
  - Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs
  - Vietnam Women's Union
  - Ministry of Foreign Affairs
  - Blue Dragon Children's Foundation
-



Photo: Workshop and roundtable discussion on domestic trafficking in persons and victim identification with government and non-government stakeholders in Vietnam (August 2023).



15

events in  
Vietnam, with 473  
participants  
(61% women)



6

capacity  
development  
events conducted  
in Vietnam



270

people trained  
(52% women)

In 2023, we continued to support partners implement Vietnam's ACTIP obligations.

#### Key achievements

- We supported the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in [training 119 diplomats and other staff](#) on victim support and protection.
- We finalised the research on domestic trafficking in persons, and the report was endorsed by the Ministry of Public Security in June 2023.
- We finalised the TIP training materials for judges and court staff, and the materials were endorsed by the Supreme People's Court in March 2023.
- We supported training on online investigation and digital evidence for provincial police officers in the southern area, with expert speakers from Australia, the UK and Thailand.
- We supported a workshop on mainstreaming GEDSI and victim-centred approaches in TIP law, in cooperation with the Vietnam Women's Union.
- We conducted a workshop and developed a leaflet guide and video for TIP victims in court – now completed, published and disseminated.



Photo: Participant at a workshop on case therapy for Lao Women's Union shelter staff (May 2023).

# 4 Inclusive public policy

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## **EOPO3:**

ASEAN Member State justice and related state agencies' policies and practices are influenced by relevant stakeholders and better aligned with the ACTIP, especially in connection to victim rights obligations

# Highlights from 2023



6

thematic briefs on  
applied political  
economy analysis,  
with ODI



4

country studies  
published on applied  
political economy  
analysis, with ODI



28

government, NGOs and  
private sector  
representatives  
participated in a policy  
engagement planning  
workshop in Malaysia

7

country studies completed  
on trafficking victim  
protection, with Rapid Asia



Understanding forced labor / trafficking risks related to  
in-country recruitment of foreign migrant workers (FMWs) in Thailand  
in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic

**VERITÉ**  
SOUTHEAST ASIA  
Fair Labor. Worldwide.

ทำความเข้าใจความเสี่ยงในด้านแรงงานแบบบังคับการค้ามนุษย์จากการสรรหา  
แรงงานข้ามชาติเข้าทำงานในประเทศไทยด้วยวิธีสรรหาแรงงานภายในประเทศ  
ในระหว่างการระบาดของโรคโควิด-19

Roundtable Discussion for Stakeholders | การแลกเปลี่ยนความคิดเห็นระหว่างผู้มีส่วนได้เสีย  
27 January 2023 | Bangkok, Thailand



Photo: Roundtable discussion on in-country recruitment of foreign migrant workers in Thailand drawing on the research conducted by Verite held in Bangkok, Thailand (January 2023).



### Policy agenda

What is the agenda around the specific policy priority?



### Policy rhetoric

What is discussed around the specific counter-trafficking policy priority?



### Policy process

How is policy made and who is engaged?



### Policy content

What do counter-trafficking policies cover in substance?



### Policy implementation

How are policies implemented, and what mechanisms are needed to support implementation?

Throughout 2023, the ASEAN-Australia Counter Trafficking program supported state agencies, non-state stakeholders and other actors to promote demand-led dialogue and cooperation to counter trafficking in persons.

### Key achievements

#### Applied political economy analysis

In 2021 we initiated a partnership with ODI to conduct an applied political economy analysis with the aim of better understanding vulnerabilities to trafficking for labour exploitation in Southeast Asia. In 2023, we continued research which covered Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar and the Philippines, as well as case studies on Brunei and Singapore, undertaken through desk review. By the end of 2023, 6 thematic briefs were published and 2 further briefs drafted. We convened an [open dialogue with ODI](#) to discuss the findings of this research at the Foreign Correspondents Club Thailand, in Bangkok on 11 December 2023.

#### Wage theft and forced labour study

We provided a grant to Migrant Forum in Asia to conduct a study on wage theft and linkages to forced labour among migrant workers in Southeast Asia. The study also assessed the impact of policies and practices of government and non-government stakeholders during the COVID-19 pandemic on wages and conditions for migrant workers. The [report was launched](#) by Australia's Ambassador to Thailand at the Australian Embassy in Bangkok, November 2023. The event featured a panel discussion with representatives from the Australian funded TRIANGLE in ASEAN program, the Royal Thai Government and a large Thai multinational seafood producer.

#### Policy engagement planning in Malaysia

Through our regional program, we conducted a [policy engagement planning consultation](#) on 18–19 May 2023 in Kuala Lumpur. The workshop, which was attended by 28



Photo: Launch of research on wage theft among migrant workers in Southeast Asia conducted by Migrant Forum Asia at the Australian Embassy in Bangkok (November 2023).

government and non-government stakeholders (19 female and 9 male), focused on policy responses to trafficking for labour exploitation in Malaysia. Through this workshop, a dialogue between key state actors, including the Council for Anti-Trafficking in Persons and Anti-Smuggling of Migrants (MAPO), and non-state actors generated recommendations and inputs from organisations working on human trafficking in Malaysia. The draft policy engagement plan was shared with MAPO to take forward with government and non-government agencies.

### Labour trafficking in fisheries

Studies and situational analysis are supporting evidence-based decision-making and policy formulation for improved protection of workers in the fisheries sector. We supported La Trobe University in conducting [research on labour trafficking in the fisheries sector in Southeast Asia](#). An opportunity arose to influence regional policy and standards when

the Indonesian Government pursued an [ASEAN declaration on the placement and protection of migrant fishers](#). This declaration was developed together with another [ASEAN declaration on migrant workers and family members in crisis situations](#), and guidelines to implement the latter. The declarations were adopted at the 42nd ASEAN Summit in May 2023. We continued to provide technical and financial support to ASEAN's development of guidelines for the protection of migrant fishers, expected to be adopted in 2024.

## NGO partners in 2023



### Legal Support for Children and Women

In June 2021, the ASEAN-Australia Counter Trafficking program commenced a partnership with LSCW with a focus on providing legal assistance to victims of trafficking, and using lessons learned in victim identification to inform policy dialogue. LSCW conducted a study on trafficking in persons into online scam centres in Cambodia. The research findings were shared and discussed with NGOs and members of the Forum on Migrant Labour and Human Trafficking. The findings were also shared with the National Committee for Counter Trafficking. The research report, though not yet finalised in 2023, generated interest with enquiries from international programs and non-government organisations. LSCW shared initial findings at key policy dialogues and a panel discussion in 2023.



### Blas F. Ople Policy Center and Training Institute

In June 2021, the ASEAN-Australia Counter Trafficking program commenced a partnership with the Ople Center focused on policy dialogue and advocacy for migrant worker protection within a new policy framework and government agency – the Department of Migrant Workers. Through this partnership, the Ople Center formed the Coalition Against Trafficking of Overseas Filipino Workers (CAT-OFW). We supported the Ople Center in convening a workshop in March 2023 to review and update the pre-departure orientation seminar modules for migrant workers. The workshop reviewed the modules to ensure the prevention of illegal recruitment and human trafficking. Relevant government agencies and stakeholders from civil society and federations of overseas Filipino workers attended the workshop. A technical working group was created to consolidate the inputs during the workshop, facilitated by the CAT-OFW.

## NGO partners in 2023



### Human Rights and Development Foundation (HRDF)

In June 2021, the ASEAN-Australia Counter Trafficking program commenced a partnership with HRDF focused on research, and legal support and advocacy on countering trafficking in persons in Thailand's agricultural sector. In February 2024, we helped to promote HRDF's campaign '[Who Made my Flowers?](#)' which highlights the rights of migrant workers in Thailand – digging deeper into the flower farm supply chain which is one of the most profitable commodities on Valentines Day (14 February). In May 2023, HRDF convened a multi-stakeholder consultation to consider the findings and recommendations of the research on working conditions of migrant workers in agriculture, and collected further inputs from participants. A dialogue with the main political parties contending the national elections in Thailand followed, covering issues related to migrant workers, providing for policy dialogue with potential policymakers in the next government, and also engaging with migrant workers present during the dialogue.



### Dignity in Work for all (DIWA)

(In 2023, known as Verite Southeast Asia)

In June 2021, the ASEAN-Australia Counter Trafficking program commenced a partnership with DIWA focused on conducting research on in-country recruitment of foreign migrant workers and examining the associated risks of trafficking in persons among this group in Thailand. In January 2023, DIWA convened a roundtable discussion to present the key findings of the research on the recruitment of migrant workers residing in Thailand and the risks of trafficking. The roundtable was attended by a range of stakeholders, including key government agencies such as the Department of Employment (Ministry of Labour), the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, and the Department of Rights and Liberties Protection (Ministry of Justice). Private companies representing the fisheries and apparel sectors also participated, including representatives of migrant workers.

## NGO partners in 2023



### Social Responsibility Law Office (SR Law)

In June 2021, the ASEAN-Australia Counter Trafficking program commenced a partnership with SR Law focused on policy dialogue and documenting lessons learned in victim identification, labour exploitation and trafficking in persons, and increasing access to justice for trafficked victims. The partnership aims to contribute to addressing the lack of clarity in policies and practices around forced labour and trafficking in persons, and the need for advocacy on trafficked victims' rights to compensation. Through our support in 2023, SR Law developed 2 policy briefs on victim identification, compensation for victims of trafficking, and analysis of issues related to the investigation and prosecution of cases of trafficking for forced labour. At a consultation meeting in March 2023 with a range of government and NGO partners, recommendations from the policy briefs were received positively and it was noted that more specific guidance may be developed for government agencies to support investigating officials identifying victims of trafficking.



### Blue Dragon Children's Foundation

In June 2021, the ASEAN-Australia Counter Trafficking program commenced a partnership with Blue Dragon focused on a review of lessons learned on victim identification, policy engagement with the government, assistance in TIP cases, and development of interagency collaboration at the provincial level in Dien Bien and Ha Giang provinces. Blue Dragon finalised its research on victim identification and facilitated an interagency coordination mechanism for identification, referral and support of victims of trafficking in Ha Giang and Dien Bien provinces in Vietnam. Dien Bien province conducted a comprehensive consultation process to develop a provincial guide on interagency coordination, which was endorsed in April 2023 by the provincial government. Through the improved interagency coordination in Dien Bien and Ha Giang, victim-survivors now have access to repatriation payments. In August 2023, we also facilitated a policy engagement consultation between government agencies and NGOs on Blue Dragon's research findings on victim identification in Vietnam.



Photo: ACWC representative to Indonesia Yanti Kusumawardhani with participants at the validation workshop of the monitoring guidebook in Indonesia (May 2023).



## Context

As ASEAN's 2023 chair, Indonesia focused on 3 pillars: 'ASEAN matters' (strengthening ASEAN's institutional capacity and effectiveness), 'epicentrum of growth' (maintaining regional economic growth), and implementation of the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific. Under the first pillar, Indonesia focused on several issues, including the eradication of trafficking in persons, and strengthening the institutionalisation of the human rights dialogue in ASEAN. In this regard, Indonesia led the drafting of 3 ASEAN declarations that put at the forefront the region's commitment to addressing emerging issues in human trafficking. Through the provision of technical and financial support, the ASEAN-Australia Counter Trafficking program was instrumental in ensuring the completion of the 3 declarations in time for the 42nd ASEAN Summit in May 2023.

## Achievements

The ASEAN-Australia Counter Trafficking program provided technical assistance to support the drafting of 3 ASEAN

declarations: on the protection of migrant workers and family members in crisis situations;<sup>1</sup> the placement and protection of migrant fishers;<sup>2</sup> and combating trafficking in persons caused by the abuse of technology.<sup>3</sup>

Our ability to be proactive and flexible enabled us to respond to the opportunity to influence this important undertaking led by Indonesia. The ASEAN-Australia Counter Trafficking program's technical directors provided suggested clauses for the declarations in line with the ACTIP, and provided inputs during the review of the draft declarations. We also funded and facilitated 2 workshops held in Bali on the drafting of the declarations, in March 2023. Our fisheries project and findings from the La Trobe University research that we commissioned contributed to the declaration on migrant

<sup>1</sup> ASEAN, [ASEAN Declaration on the Protection of Migrant Workers and Family Members in Crisis Situations](#), 10 May 2023.

<sup>2</sup> ASEAN, [ASEAN Declaration on the Placement and Protection of Migrant Fishers](#), 10 May 2023.

<sup>3</sup> ASEAN, [ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on Combating Trafficking in Persons Caused by the Abuse of Technology](#), 10 May 2023.



Photo: Australia's support to ASEAN's development of declarations through the ASEAN-Australia Counter Trafficking program and ILO's TRIANGLE in ASEAN.

fishers. Cambodia and the Philippines sought technical advice and input from our leadership team to inform the declaration on the abuse of technology.

The 3 declarations were presented to and adopted by ASEAN leaders during the 42nd ASEAN Summit in May 2023. In the declarations, ASEAN leaders tasked:

- relevant ASEAN sectoral bodies to mobilise resources and modalities and develop strategies against criminal use of technology in trafficking in persons
- the ASEAN Labour Ministers Meeting, with the support of the Senior Labour Officials Meeting and other relevant sectoral bodies and organs, to mobilise resources for the implementation of the declaration on the placement and protection of migrant fishers and the development of related guidelines
- the ASEAN Labour Ministers Meeting, with the support of the Senior Labour Officials Meeting and other relevant sectoral bodies and organs, to mobilise resources for the implementation of the declaration on the protection of migrant

workers in crisis situations and the development of related guidelines.

#### Partners

We supported the Government of Indonesia, the ASEAN Secretariat, and the Lead Shepherd on Trafficking in Persons, and we worked with the International Organization for Migration and the Addressing Labor Exploitation in Fishing in ASEAN (ALFA) project.

#### Going forward

The 3 ASEAN declarations, and specifically the declaration on combating trafficking in persons caused by the abuse of technology, provide a good starting point for the ASEAN-Australia Counter Trafficking program's second phase to intensify our support to several ASEAN Sectoral Bodies to implement the commitments made in the 3 declarations. We will also commence preparation towards possible support to Lao PDR as ASEAN chair in 2024.



Photo: Participant at a workshop to enhance strategic communication initiatives in countering trafficking held in Lao PDR (June 2023).

# 5 Output indicator

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This section provides results in 2023 for a selection of the ASEAN-Australia Counter Trafficking program's output indicators, including the number and type of capacity development events supported, and the number of people trained.

**Table 1** Number and type of activities supported by the ASEAN-Australia Counter Trafficking program, 2023

Country/region	Capacity development	Meetings	Other	the ASEAN-Australia Counter Trafficking program staff events	Total number of activities supported in 2023
Cambodia	6	14	3	–	23
Indonesia	–	8	1	–	9
Laos	15	8	2	–	25
Malaysia	1	1	–	–	2
Myanmar	–	–	–	–	0
Philippines	9	33	21	–	63
Thailand	15	35	6	–	56
Vietnam	6	5	4	–	15
ASEAN/regional	9	14	5	9	37
<b>Total</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>230</b>

Source: the ASEAN-Australia Counter Trafficking program activity data collection, 2023.

**Table 2** Number of capacity development events supported by the ASEAN-Australia Counter Trafficking program, 2019 to 2023

Country/region	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
Cambodia	6	18	20	2	–
Indonesia	–	4	2	–	–
Laos	15	16	17	1	–
Malaysia	1	–	–	–	1
Myanmar	–	–	–	–	–
Philippines	9	37	32	5	6
Thailand	15	15	13	9	4
Vietnam	6	15	16	7	5
ASEAN/regional	9	6	10	5	–
<b>Total</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>16</b>

Note: This table reflects the number of capacity development events conducted by the ASEAN-Australia Counter Trafficking program under country or regional programs, including webinars.

Source: the ASEAN-Australia Counter Trafficking program activity data collection, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023.

**Table 3** Number of people trained, by country or origin and gender, 2023

Country/region	Female	Male	Other	Total	% female
Brunei	3	1	1	5	60%
Cambodia	152	245		397	38%
Indonesia	91	54	1	146	62%
Laos	216	196	1	413	52%
Malaysia	37	14		51	73%
Myanmar	28	4		32	88%
Philippines	529	200	6	735	72%
Singapore	1	3		4	25%
Thailand	296	262	1	559	53%
Vietnam	139	130	1	270	51%

# Abbreviations and acronyms

ACTIP	ASEAN Convention against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children
ACWC	ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children
AICHR	ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BWP	Bohol TIP Work Plan
CAT-OFW	Coalition Against Trafficking of Overseas Filipino Workers
CET	competency enhancement training
CNP	Cambodian National Police
CSO	civil society organisation
CTIP	counter-trafficking in persons
DILG	Department of the Interior and Local Government (Philippines)
DIWA	Dignity in Work for All
DSI	Department of Special Investigation (Ministry of Justice, Thailand)
DTIPL	Department of Trafficking in Persons Litigation (Office of the Attorney General, Thailand)
EOPO	end-of-program outcome
GEDSI	gender equality, disability and social inclusion
HRDF	Human Rights and Development Foundation (Thailand)
IACAT	Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking (Philippines)
Lao PDR	Lao People's Democratic Republic

LPN	Labour Protection Network (Thailand)
LPSK	Witness and Victim Protection Agency (Indonesia)
LSCW	Legal Support for Children and Women (Cambodia)
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
MFA	Migrant Forum in Asia
MPF	Myanmar Police Force
MSDHS	Ministry of Social Development and Human Security (Thailand)
NBI	National Bureau of Investigation (Philippines)
NCCT	National Committee for Counter Trafficking (Cambodia)
NGO	non-government organisation
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
PNP	Philippine National Police
RPSC	Regional Program Steering Committee
RTP	Royal Thai Police
SOMTC	Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime
SR Law	Social Responsibility Law Office (Thailand)
TIP	trafficking in persons
VFI	Village Focus International (Lao PDR)





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