

EU-ASEAN Sustainable Connectivity Package Higher Education Programme (SCOPE-HE)

Name of Action	EU-ASEAN Sustainable Connectivity Package Higher Education Programme (SCOPE-HE)
Commissioned by	European Union (EU)
Approved by	Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)
Implementer	Nuffic – The Dutch organisation for internationalisation in education
Implementing Partner	DAAD – German Academic Exchange Service
Programme Region	EU and ASEAN Member States
Duration	February 2024 – January 2028
Value	EUR 9.300.000



The EU Ambassador to ASEAN and
the Secretary-General of ASEAN, launched SCOPE-HE

Context

Higher Education systems in Southeast Asia face challenges in terms of accessibility, inclusivity, equity, and relevance. One challenge is to establish a shared regional higher education space that is inclusive, coherent, and competitive in standards and accessible to a growing student population.

Opportunities for the young generation to move for educational purposes within and outside the region are still limited. Improved cooperation and exchange between ASEAN higher education institutions is needed to improve the area's competitiveness and contribute to establishing a more flexible labour market. This will, in turn, support the regional economy and allow for more effective linkages to other regions, such as the EU.

Sustainable connectivity has become one of the key priority areas for EU cooperation with ASEAN and Southeast Asia as outlined in the EU Global Gateway Joint Communication, the EU Strategy for Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific, and the regional Multiannual Indicative Programme (MIP) for Asia and the Pacific (2021-2027).

The EU and ASEAN have pledged to promote connectivity within and between their regions, with a particular emphasis on **sustainability**, **climate action**, **digital transformation**, and **gender equality**. Intra-regional mobility and people-to-people connectivity have been one of the avenues through which community building has been pursued in Southeast Asia, as stipulated in the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity 2025 and the ASEAN Socio-cultural Community Blueprint 2025.

Objective

The SCOPE-HE Programme is part of the EU-ASEAN Sustainable Connectivity Package and aims to improve sustainable connectivity between the EU and ASEAN and within ASEAN. The programme builds on the successes of the EU Support to Higher Education Programme in the ASEAN Region (SHARE) and ERASMUS+. The programme involves representatives from all ASEAN Member States.

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SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



Approach

The SCOPE-HE Programme will be active in the following key areas:

Facilitating Dialogue and Collaboration. The programme will enhance Higher Education and TVET policies by fostering dialogue, consensus-building, and collaboration among key ASEAN institutions and ASEAN-EU Connectivity stakeholders. Policy dialogues will focus on specific themes and take place in both ASEAN and EU regions. This initiative will also support the development of frameworks and tools to strengthen ASEAN institutions. Furthermore, it will encourage the exchange of best practices in educational services and qualifications, strengthen collaboration between international educational organisations, and advance digital transformation in education, in alignment with the ASEAN Work Plan on Education 2021-2025.

Strengthening Mobility in Higher Education. The programme aims to increase student and academic mobility by working towards the mutual recognition of qualifications and academic credits within ASEAN and between ASEAN and the EU. This effort complements the Erasmus+ programme and aligns with ASEAN's strategic plans. By promoting international mobility and building capacity within ASEAN, the initiative will not only drive innovation in higher education but also enhance the quality and competitiveness of the region's higher education and VET systems.

Building Stronger EU-ASEAN University Networks. The programme will strengthen partnerships between EU and ASEAN universities to jointly tackle global challenges through enhanced research and technological collaboration. ASEAN member states have made significant investments in research infrastructure and innovation. The EU-ASEAN Partnership has been pivotal in promoting research collaborations across various fields, including health, agriculture, renewable energy, and environmental conservation. SCOPE-HE will build on these existing projects and encourage new joint research projects and knowledge sharing.



Establishing a Robust ASEAN Network of Vocational Institutions and Businesses. The programme will align VET programmes within ASEAN with labour market needs to reduce unemployment, improve employability, and bridge skills gaps, thereby contributing to sustainable development and increased productivity. SCOPE-HE will work closely with the VET sector, particularly in agriculture and the green transition, and support the development of Labour Market Information services and internship/mentoring programmes. The initiative will also engage the private sector in developing VET and Higher Education, with a particular focus on digital and environmental skills, inclusivity, and enhancing digital learning ecosystems.

Expected Results

- Strengthened student and academic mobility in line with the relevant ASEAN strategy and action plan in this area.
- Stronger EU-ASEAN cross-regional University Networks to jointly tackle global challenges by fostering research and technological connectivity.
- Stronger ASEAN regional network of Vocational Education Training Institutions and businesses focusing on 'green transition', 'digital transformation' and 'blue economy'.



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