



Narrowing the Development Gap



Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI) and Narrowing the Development Gap (NDG)

Aiming at narrowing the development divide and enhancing ASEAN's competitiveness, the ASEAN Leaders at their Summit in 2000 launched the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI) with the objectives of narrowing the development gap and accelerating economic integration in ASEAN.

The IAI's core activities are aimed at addressing the development divide of ASEAN's newer Member States, namely Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, and Viet Nam.

IAI Work Plan

Efforts to narrow the development gap have been driven mainly by the IAI Work Plans. The first IAI Work Plan (2002-2008), endorsed by the Leaders at the 8th ASEAN Summit in 2002, had priorities addressing infrastructure (transport and energy); human resource development (public sector capacity building, labour and employment, and higher education); information and communication technologies (ICT); and, regional economic integration (trade in goods and services, customs, standards, and investments). Tourism and poverty alleviation have also been included.

The second IAI Work Plan (2009-2015) was endorsed in 2009 at the 14th ASEAN Summit, and is based on key programme areas in the ASEAN Political-Security Community Blueprint, ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint and the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Blueprint.

The third IAI Work Plan (2016-2020) was endorsed in 2016 at the 28th ASEAN Summit in Vientiane, Lao PDR and contains five priority strategic areas: (i) food and agriculture; (ii) trade facilitation; (iii) micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs); (iv) education; and (v) health and well-being.

IAI Task Force

The IAI Task Force provides policy guidance in development and implementation of the IAI Work Plans. The Task Force comprises the Permanent Representatives to ASEAN in Jakarta, Indonesia.

ASEAN Framework of Equitable Economic Development

As a complementary effort to the IAI and NDG, The ASEAN Framework on Equitable Economic Development (AFEED) was adopted by ASEAN leaders on 17 November 2011 in Bali, Indonesia. The AFEED underlines ASEAN commitments to further enhance the third pillar of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) Blueprint on equitable economic development so as to provide ASEAN citizens with equal opportunities to benefit from regional economic integration.

Link: <http://asean.org/asean-economic-community/initiative-for-asean-integration-iai-and-narrowing-the-development-gap-ndg/commissioned-work-and-joint-studies/>

Overall Progress

Since 1997, the poorest countries of ASEAN have generally grown the fastest, meaning that the gaps that exist between ASEAN Member States in living standards have steadily narrowed. The integration of ASEAN Member States into the global economy has increased, with many of the developing and least developed members of the ASEAN Community having integrated most rapidly. Access to primary education has increased, and progress in improving health services and access to clean water and sanitation for citizens in the least developed countries have helped reduce child and infant mortality. Despite the broad-based progress, development gaps across the ASEAN community remains large in many areas, which call for a continued commitment to narrow the development divide.

For more information:

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