

OVERVIEW

ASEAN-UNITED KINGDOM DIALOGUE RELATIONS

1. The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (UK) was conferred the status of Dialogue Partner of ASEAN at the 54th ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting (AMM) held on 2 August 2021 via videoconference. The conferment ceremony was held via videoconference on 5 August 2021. Prior to the conferment, the UK had forged relations with ASEAN through its previous membership with the European Union.

2. The Plan of Action (POA) to Implement the ASEAN-UK Dialogue Partnership (2022-2026) was adopted at the ASEAN Post Ministerial Conference (PMC) Plus One Session with the UK in Phnom Penh on 4 August 2022. To date, five Joint Cooperation Committee (JCC) Meetings have been conducted, which reviewed the progress of implementation of the ASEAN-UK POA (2022-2026) and identified possible future cooperation activities.

A. Political Security Cooperation

3. The UK acceded to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC) on 12 July 2012 on the sidelines of the 45th ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Phnom Penh. The UK appointed its first Ambassador to ASEAN in 2009 and subsequently appointed a dedicated Ambassador to ASEAN in November 2019. The UK Mission to ASEAN was officially inaugurated in February 2020. The current UK Ambassador to ASEAN, H.E. Helen Fazey, assumed her role in August 2025. The UK has established diplomatic relations with all ASEAN Member States (AMS) and has Embassies and High Commissions in ten AMS. The UK Embassy in Jakarta is also accredited to Timor-Leste.

4. The UK continues to support the promotion of regional peace and stability. The UK is currently an observer in the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus) Experts' Working Groups (EWGs) on Military Medicine and Maritime Security for the 2024-2027 cycle, as approved by the 18th ADMM in November 2024. The UK also participated in the Open Session of the 25th ASEAN Senior Officials' Meeting on Transnational Crime in Putrajaya, Malaysia, on 24 June 2025. The UK attended the 32nd ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) in Kuala Lumpur in July 2025, as well as the Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum in Port Dickson in November 2025, as a Guest of the Chair.

5. On peace and reconciliation, the UK's continued commitment to supporting ASEAN's efforts to promote the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda is undertaken through the *ASEAN-UK WPS Programme*. The programme supports the implementation of the ASEAN Regional Plan of Action on WPS (ASEAN RPA on WPS), including through capacity-building, and provides WPS training for officials from AMS.

6. There have been frequent exchanges of high-level visits from the UK Government representatives to AMS and the ASEAN Secretariat. At the invitation of the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, H.E. Dr. Kao Kim Hourn, Secretary-General of ASEAN, undertook a Working Visit to the UK from 6 to 11 February 2026 in conjunction with the fifth anniversary of the ASEAN-UK Dialogue Partnership.

B. Economic Cooperation

7. ASEAN's preliminary statistics recorded that in 2025, the two-way merchandise trade between ASEAN and the UK reached USD 45.01 billion¹, while foreign direct investment (FDI) from the UK to ASEAN amounted to USD 9.2 billion.² During that period, the UK was ASEAN's eleventh-largest trading partner and the sixth-largest source of FDI inflow to ASEAN. Tourist arrivals from the UK to ASEAN increased from 2.98 million in 2024 to 3.26 million in 2025.³

1. The UK-ASEAN Business Council (UKABC) was launched in 2011 to promote trade and investment between ASEAN and the UK. Its establishment provides a venue for the UK's businesses to explore, develop, and deepen their business in ASEAN. The Council, based in London, works in partnership with the British Chambers of Commerce across the ASEAN region to provide support for the UK's business interests in the region. The UKABC has held the annual UK-ASEAN Business Forum since 2022. The latest event was held on 17 March 2026 in London, which was attended by senior industry and government figures from across ASEAN and the UK.⁴

2. The ASEAN Economic Ministers (AEM) held their first formal consultation with the UK (1st AEM-UK Consultation) on 15 September 2021 via videoconference. Both sides affirmed their commitment to strengthening bilateral trade and recognised the importance of an open, inclusive, transparent, rules-based, and non-discriminatory multilateral trading system for a resilient and sustainable post-COVID-19 recovery. The Meeting endorsed the *Joint Ministerial Declaration on Future Economic Cooperation between ASEAN and the UK*, which outlines priority areas of collaboration, including supply chains; open market; regulatory excellence; digital innovation; financial services; sustainable growth; infrastructure; skills and education; micro, small, and medium enterprises development; women's economic empowerment; and public-private partnerships. To operationalise this commitment, the *ASEAN-UK Work Plan to Implement the Joint Ministerial Declaration on Future Economic Cooperation between ASEAN and the UK*, detailing sector-specific

¹ ASEAN Statistics, IMTS data as of 13 March 2026

² ASEAN Statistics, FDI Preliminary Data as of 29 April 2026

³ ASEAN Statistics, preliminary Tourism Data as of 28 April 2026. Brunei Darussalam's data by country-of-origin cover air arrivals only, whereas Malaysia's data from 2024 and 2025 refer to total visitor arrivals, including both tourists and excursionists. Data for Timor-Leste are available up to Q2 2025.

⁴ UKABC Concludes a Successful 5th Annual Business Forum, 17 March 2026 - UK-ASEAN Business Council

cooperation programmes, was endorsed at the 2nd AEM-UK Consultation on 10 November 2022 in Phnom Penh. The review of the ASEAN-UK Economic Work Plan is expected to be reported to the 6th AEM-UK Consultation this year.

3. To date, ASEAN and the UK have convened six consultations at the Senior Economic Officials level and five consultations at the Economic Ministers level.

4. The *ASEAN-UK Economic Integration Programme (EIP)* was launched on 24 April 2024 with a budget of GBP 25 million over the next five years. It aims to strengthen trade and sustainable finance, building on trade digitalisation, and building ASEAN's resilience in the global supply chain. The programme focuses on its three pillars, namely (i) regulatory reform; (ii) financial services; and (iii) open trade. The EIP Work Plan 2025–2026 was agreed at the first PSC Meeting in May 2025, and the second PSC Meeting is scheduled to be held on 13 May 2026.

5. The UK also continues to collaborate with ASEAN in the areas of science and technology, women economic empowerment, and Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). Additionally, Science, Technology, and Innovation cooperation also reached a significant milestone through the convening of the UK-ASEAN AI Innovation Summit held in Malaysia in October 2025.

C. Socio-Cultural Cooperation

6. As part of the *ASEAN-UK Supporting the Advancement of Girls Education (SAGE) Programme*, two cohorts of Women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Scholarships have been operationalised since 2024, with the third cohort for 2026 currently underway. The UK also launched the ASEAN Chevening Scholarships in August 2024. Both scholarships provide greater opportunities for candidates from all AMS to pursue higher education in the UK.

7. The UK also supports the enhancement of people-to-people exchanges in the creative economy through the ongoing *ASEAN-UK Advancing Creative Economy (ACE) Programme*. The programme provides opportunities for cultural exchanges and mutual learning on creative economy development in ASEAN and the UK. The programme also supported the development of the ASEAN Creative Economy Sustainability Framework, which was adopted at the 46th ASEAN Summit in Kuala Lumpur. The Second ASEAN-UK Creative Economy Symposium was held in March 2026 in the Philippines.

8. On health, the UK provides technical assistance through the *UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) International Health Regulations (IHR) Strengthening Project*. It supports the ASEAN One Health Initiatives guided by the relevant declaration, capacity-building activities of the ASEAN Emergency Operation Centre (EOC) Network for public health emergencies, and the operationalisation of the ASEAN

Centre for Public Health Emergencies and Emerging Diseases (ACPHEED). The *ASEAN-UK Health Security Partnership Programme (HSP)*, which was launched in 2024, covers the priority areas in responding to all hazards and emerging threats, strengthening health systems and access to care, and ensuring food safety under the ASEAN health sector.

9. The UK is supporting ASEAN on climate actions, including through the *ASEAN Catalytic Green Finance Facility* and the mobilisation of funds for green projects. The UK committed up to GBP 40 million from 2024 to 2029 for the *ASEAN-UK Green Transition Fund*. The Fund will support ASEAN's transition to a clean and climate-resilient economy by accelerating green and climate-resilient growth. In addition, the UK is assisting ASEAN through the *Supporting Socially Inclusive Climate Adaptation & Resilience in ASEAN (CLARE-ASEAN)* initiative to promote socially-inclusive urban resilience to climate change in the region.

10. In the area of humanitarian and disaster preparedness, the UK is exploring collaboration with the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre), which aims to strengthen the resilience of vulnerable people across the region.

D. Connectivity

11. The ASEAN-UK Joint Ministerial Statement: Enhancing Connectivity for a Prosperous and Sustainable Future was adopted at the ASEAN Post-Ministerial Conference with the UK on 26 July 2024 in Vientiane. The Joint Statement will further guide both sides in enhancing cooperation, such as sustainable infrastructure, digital innovation, seamless trade and supply chains, regulatory excellence, and people-to-people connectivity between ASEAN and the UK, including through the creative economy. The UK continued to support capacity building related to ASEAN Connectivity, particularly under the Strategic Area on Sustainable Infrastructure through the ASEAN Sustainable Leadership Infrastructure Programme (ASLIP), which is already on its 4th cohort, covering December 2025 to March 2026.

12. ASEAN and the UK are currently discussing at the working group level to explore a potential ASEAN-UK Air Services Agreement (ASA). The 3rd ASEAN-UK Working Group Meeting on the Regional Air Services Agreement (AUKWG-RASA) was held in August 2025 in Bandar Seri Begawan, and the 4th round of negotiation took place in London in February 2026.

