

OVERVIEW

ASEAN-PAKISTAN SECTORAL DIALOGUE PARTNERSHIP

A. Introduction

1. Pakistan was granted Sectoral Dialogue Partnership status with ASEAN at the 26th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on 23 July 1993.
2. The inaugural meeting to establish the ASEAN-Pakistan Sectoral Dialogue Relations was held on 5-7 November 1997 in Islamabad. The inaugural meeting agreed that the ASEAN-Pakistan Sectoral Dialogue Partnership would initially cover cooperation in trade, industry, investment, environment, science and technology, drugs and narcotics, tourism and human resources development.
3. The ASEAN-Pakistan Sectoral Dialogue Relations was institutionalised through the convening of the First Meeting of the ASEAN-Pakistan Joint Sectoral Cooperation Committee (AP-JSCC) on 5 February 1999 in Bali. Thus far, the AP-JSCC has met eight times. The second and third Meetings were held on 28 February–1 March 2001 and 5-6 June 2006 in Islamabad, while the fourth, fifth and sixth Meetings were convened on 3 June 2008, 31 May 2011, and 2 November 2017 at the ASEAN Secretariat. The 7th AP-JSCC was held on 19 September 2023, six years after the 6th AP-JSCC, marking an important opportunity to revitalise ASEAN-Pakistan sectoral dialogue relations. Subsequently, the 8th AP-JSCC was held on 6 February 2025.
4. As a follow up to the 6th AP-JSCC Meeting, in July 2020 both sides adopted the updated Terms of Reference of the AP-JSCC to be in line with the current developments on both sides; and the ASEAN-Pakistan Sectoral Dialogue Partnership: Practical Cooperation Areas (PCA) for 2019-2021, which serves as a practical guide to further substantiate the cooperation between both sides. In 2021, ASEAN and Pakistan agreed to extend the implementation of the PCA 2019-2021 for a period of two years, from 2022 to 2023.
5. On 12 February 2024, both sides adopted ASEAN-Pakistan Sectoral Dialogue Partnership: Practical Cooperation Areas (2024-2028). The PCA aims to implement future cooperation under the framework of the ASEAN-Pakistan Sectoral Dialogue Partnership to further substantiate the partnership and cooperation with a focus on practical areas for mutual benefit, where ASEAN and Pakistan have the expertise and mutual interests.
6. Pakistan has accredited its Ambassador to ASEAN since 2010.

B. Cooperation

7. Pakistan acceded to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia on 2 July 2004 in Jakarta. On the same day, Pakistan was also admitted as the 24th participant of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), and has since co-chaired and hosted a number of ARF activities. Pakistan also co-sponsored the 2020 ARF Statement on Cooperation in the Field of Security of and in the Use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in the Context of International Security with Cambodia, Lao PDR, China and Russia. Pakistan has also contributed six times to the ARF Annual Security Outlook (ASO), with its last contribution in June 2025.

8. ASEAN and Pakistan signed the Joint Declaration for Cooperation to Combat Terrorism on the sidelines of the 12th ARF on 29 July 2005 in Vientiane. Following the signing, the 1st SOMTC-Pakistan Consultation was held in Vientiane, Lao PDR on 28 June 2007 to discuss, among others, the implementation of the Joint Declaration.

9. On trade, ASEAN and Pakistan have undertaken a Joint Feasibility Study for an ASEAN-Pakistan Free Trade Agreement (FTA) to enhance and expand the overall ASEAN-Pakistan economic engagement. The Joint Feasibility Study was done by researchers of both sides: the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) and the Malaysian Institute of Economic Research (MIER). At the 41st AEM held in Bangkok, Thailand, on 13-14 August 2009, the Ministers noted the completion of the Joint Study on the Feasibility of the ASEAN-Pakistan Free Trade Area and agreed to defer consideration of the recommendations contained in the study. At the 43rd AEM held on 10-11 August 2011 in Manado, Indonesia, the Economic Ministers agreed to apply a moratorium on the proposal of Pakistan for an ASEAN-Pakistan FTA.

10. According to the ASEAN Statistic Database, Foreign Direct Investment from Pakistan to ASEAN in 2025 experienced significant growth from US\$ -44.30 million in 2024 to US\$ 25.08 million in 2025.¹ Meanwhile, the total two-way trade between ASEAN and Pakistan in 2025 increased by 2.76% to US\$ 10.74 billion from US\$ 10.45 billion in 2024.² On tourism, tourist arrivals from Pakistan to ASEAN reached **313,411** in 2025, a considerable increase from the 2024's figure which stood at 252,204 people.³

11. On other areas of cooperation, ASEAN and Pakistan have undertaken cooperation in trade and investment promotion; private sector development; science, technology and innovation; people-to-people connection and cultural exchange; information and media cooperation; human resources development; and smart cities.

¹ ASEAN Statistics, IMTS data as of 13 March 2026

² ASEAN Statistics, FDI data, preliminary 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 refer to total visitor arrivals, including both tourists and excursionists. Data for Timor-Leste are available up to Q2 2025.

12. A number of cooperation projects have been carried out with funding support from the ASEAN-Pakistan Cooperation Fund, namely: (i) First Meeting of ASEAN-Pakistan Business Council and ASEAN-Pakistan Trade Facilitation Workshop, both held back-to-back on 21-22 February 2000 in Karachi; (ii) Workshop on Industrial and Composite Design Applications on 29-31 October 2002 in Islamabad; (iii) Multimedia Training and Resources Development on 20 November-2 December 2006 in Islamabad; (iv) ASEAN-Pakistan Workshop on Geo-informatics on 10-12 September 2007 in Islamabad; (v) 1st ASEAN-Pakistan Conference on Materials Science (APCOMS) on 15-16 December 2008 in Islamabad; (vi) Pakistan-ASEAN Workshop on Halal Food Production Technology and Certification System on 11-12 March 2009 in Karachi; (vii) ASEAN-Pakistan Free Trade Agreement (FTA) Joint Feasibility Study which was finalised in 2009; (viii) ASEAN-Pakistan Photo Exhibition on 8-16 March 2011; (ix) the 2nd APCOMS on 26-28 April 2011; (x) 3rd APCOMS on 25-27 November 2014; (xi) ASEAN-Pakistan Business Opportunities Conference on 7-11 August 2023; (xii) Training Program on Digital Payment Landscape and Financial Inclusion in Emerging Markets on 8-12 May 2023; (xiii) Short Diplomatic Course for ASEAN Diplomats which was held in three batches held from 2022 to 2024; (xiv) Media Exchange/Visit of Prominent Journalists from ASEAN Member States in February 2025; (xv) the 2nd ASEAN-Pakistan Business Opportunities Conference in April 2025; and (xvi) ASEAN-Pakistan Technological Research Collaborations Programme through the National Centre of Robotics and Automation (NCRA) in April 2025.
