

**SUMMARY OVERVIEW OF THE THIRD COMPLETION OF THE
CHECKLIST OF THE ASEAN GUIDELINE ON GENDER
MAINSTREAMING INTO LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT POLICIES
TOWARDS DECENT WORK FOR ALL
BY ASEAN MEMBER STATES IN 2026**

1. The [ASEAN Guideline on Gender Mainstreaming into Labour and Employment Policies Towards Decent Work for All](#) was adopted by the 26th ASEAN Labour Ministers' Meeting (ALMM) in October 2020 and subsequently noted by the 37th ASEAN Summit. The Guideline serves as a practical regional reference to support ASEAN Member States (AMS) in integrating gender perspectives into labour and employment policies, legislation, programmes, and institutional practices in line with international labour standards and ASEAN's commitment to achieving gender equality and decent work for all.
2. The Guideline includes a user-friendly checklist covering four thematic areas, namely: (i) Employment Promotion; (ii) Decent Working Conditions; (iii) Social Protection including Maternity; and (iv) International Labour Migration. The checklist comprises 245 questions designed to facilitate AMS' self-analysis of the mainstreaming of gender perspective in labour and employment policies and practices and to assist AMS in identifying progress, gaps, and priority areas for further actions. In accordance with the Guideline, AMS are encouraged to complete the checklist voluntarily every two years.
3. Pursuant to Article 1.6 of the Guideline, the ASEAN Secretariat (ASEC) compiles the completed checklist submitted by AMS and prepares a regional summary overview. Every two years, the summary overview is shared with the ASEAN Committee on Women (ACW) for submission to the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Women (AMMW) for information, and to the Senior Labour Officials Meeting (SLOM) for endorsement prior to its submission to the ASEAN Labour Ministers' Meeting (ALMM).
4. The first completion of the checklist was undertaken by all AMS in 2022 and provided the first regional baseline on the implementation of the Guideline. The Summary Overview prepared by ASEC was reported to SLOM and ACW on 23 May 2022 and subsequently submitted to the ALMM and AMMW on 15 June 2022. The second completion was submitted by all AMS in 2024. The Summary Overview was reported to SLOM and ACW on 25 October 2024 and submitted to the ALMM and AMMW on 30 October 2024.
5. The third completion of the checklist was submitted by all eleven AMS this year. It is the first time that Timor-Leste participated in this checklist completion following its accession to ASEAN in October 2025. This Summary Overview of the country results is prepared by ASEC for the SLOM's consideration for endorsement.

Checklist 1: Employment Promotion

6. A total of 61 questions were answered by AMS under this thematic area of employment promotion. Overall, compared with the 2024 self-assessment, the 2026 results of ten AMS indicate encouraging progress across several areas of employment promotion. More AMS reported providing women and men with equal access to information on job vacancies and employment opportunities, equal assistance and facilities to seek employment, and equal employment opportunities across different sectors. Improvements were also observed in measures supporting employability, with more AMS reporting that skills development opportunities are available, accessible and affordable for women and men, including initiatives promoting entrepreneurship, technical and vocational education and training (TVET), and skills for emerging technologies. In addition, more AMS reported collecting sex-disaggregated labour market data, particularly on labour force participation and informal employment, and strengthening legal and institutional measures to promote gender equality in employment, including protection against discrimination and gender-responsive social dialogue.

1.1 Increasing Employment Opportunities

7. The third self-assessment indicates all AMS reported that all men and women were able to get information on job opportunities and were given equal assistance access to the facilities to find job vacancies. All AMS¹ reported that course requirements for entrepreneurship and skills development are the same for women and men. Most (i.e. nine AMS) reported that women and men are provided with equal opportunities to be employed across different sectors. Most (i.e. ten AMS) also reported that women and men were offered skills development for entrepreneurship. Most AMS further reported that women and men have access to technology supporting employment and entrepreneurship and are provided with opportunities to transition from informal to formal employment. Some AMS also reported that cultural or religious practices influence women's or men's participation in certain occupations.

1.2 Enhancing Employability

8. The third self-assessment indicates all AMS reported that women and men are able to enhance their employment-related skills, while most AMS indicated that skills training is readily available, accessible and affordable for both women and men. Most AMS also reported that their TVET curricula do not reinforce traditional gender stereotypes.
9. Most AMS reported having policies promoting entrepreneurship skills for women, and providing technology-based skills training, including Science, Technology,

¹ "All AMS" refers to 11 AMS while "An AMS" refers to 1 AMS. "Most AMS" refers to 6-10 AMS while "Some AMS" refers to 2-5 AMS.

Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)-related training, for women and men. Some AMS further reported that their national TVET systems encourage both women and men to acquire non-traditional skills. Some AMS promoted Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts or Agriculture, and Mathematics (STEAM) education for girls and women through incentives supporting their enrolment in STEAM- and ICT-related courses.

1.3 National Employment Policy

10. The third self-assessment indicates that all AMS reported collecting sex-disaggregated data on labour force participation, while not all AMS (i.e. at least eight AMS) reported collecting sex-disaggregated data on informal employment outside agriculture, women and men in managerial positions, unemployment, and underemployment. Some AMS also reported collecting sex-disaggregated data relating to vulnerable groups. Most AMS further reported having legal and administrative measures supporting gender equality in employment, including provisions prohibiting dismissal on the grounds of gender, complaint procedures for employment discrimination, and sanctions against perpetrators of discrimination. Most AMS also reported having legislations prohibiting different recruitment and selection criteria for women and men.
11. The responses indicate variations among AMS in several areas. Four AMS reported that their labour ministries analysed gender statistics and that victims of employment discrimination were entitled to compensation for damages suffered. Two AMS reported that their laws provided temporary special measures to facilitate women's entry into male-dominated occupations. Three AMS also reported provision of temporary special measures to increase women's representation in managerial or senior positions.

1.4 Social Dialogue

12. The third self-assessment indicates that most AMS (i.e. eight AMS) continued to promote social dialogue on gender equality in labour and employment through engagement between the Labour Ministry, ministries responsible for gender equality, and employer groups, workers' groups, and civil society organisations, including NGOs and women's groups.
13. Most AMS reported coordination between labour ministries and ministries responsible for gender equality, as well as dialogue with employers' organisations, workers' organisations, civil society organisations, and women's groups on gender mainstreaming in labour and employment policies.
14. Most AMS (i.e. ten AMS) also reported that labour ministries recognised their responsibility for gender mainstreaming, and eight AMS had undertaken initiatives to integrate gender perspectives into labour and employment policies. Most AMS further reported consulting ministries responsible for gender equality, employers'

organisations, workers' organisations, civil society organisations, and women's groups when implementing such initiatives.

Checklist 2: Decent Working Conditions

15. A total 51 questions under this thematic area of decent working conditions were answered by AMS. Overall, compared with the 2024 self-assessment, the 2026 results of ten AMS indicate progress in several aspects of decent working conditions. More AMS reported having corrective measures to address gender pay disparities, particularly in the public sector, as well as measures in the private sector. Improvements were also reported in relation to working conditions, with more AMS indicating that women and men engage in part-time jobs. In addition, more AMS reported the availability of data on the incidence of gender-based violence and violence against women in the workplace. Further progress was observed in strengthening legal and policy frameworks addressing sexual harassment and violence against women, including national laws prohibiting sexual harassment in the workplace, investigation of reported cases, workplace policies against sexual harassment and other forms of violence against women, practical measures to prevent sexual harassment, the involvement of trade unions and civil society organisations in prevention efforts, and laws or local ordinances prohibiting sexual harassment in public spaces.

2.1 Data on Conditions of Work

16. The third self-assessment indicates varied responses on the availability of sex-disaggregated data on conditions of work. Six AMS reported collecting sex-disaggregated data on the average hours of work of women and men. Some AMS reported collecting sex-disaggregated data on average hourly earnings by sex, occupation and age & persons with disabilities, while only an AMS reported collecting sex-disaggregated data on the number of hours of unpaid work undertaken by women and men, including time spent on domestic chores and care work.

17. The responses indicate a smaller number of AMS on other aspects of working conditions. Five AMS reported collecting sex-disaggregated data on the frequency of occupational injuries by sex and migrant status; three AMS reported collecting data on the incidence of domestic violence and four AMS reported collecting data on sexual harassment in public spaces; and five AMS reported collecting data on workplace sexual harassment.

2.2 Gender Pay Gap

18. The third self-assessment indicates that some AMS reported data, statistics or studies showing disparities in pay between women and men for work of equal value. Some AMS also reported identifying occupations or sectors where

differences in remuneration exist. Some AMS further reported that the government had taken measures to address gender pay disparities in the public sector, such as introducing objective job appraisals, requiring transparency in pay levels, or issuing policies or enacting legal provisions. An AMS further reported that the government had taken such corrective measures in the private sector.

2.3 Hours of Work

19. The third self-assessment indicates that most AMS reported the engagement of women and men in part-time employment and flexible working arrangements. Some AMS reported that men and women were engaged in home-based jobs. In particular, five AMS also reported having a national policy allowing flexible working hours and that most employers practiced it. An AMS further reported that women continue to spend longer hours than men undertaking unpaid care work.

2.4 Violence and Sexual Harassment in the Workplace

20. The third self-assessment indicates that most AMS (i.e. eight AMS) reported having national laws prohibiting sexual harassment in the workplace, alongside practical measures at the national level to prevent sexual harassment. Most AMS also reported the availability of investigation mechanisms, labour inspection reports which covered sexual harassment, and the participation of trade unions or civil society organisations in prevention efforts. Some AMS further reported the availability of national legislation prohibiting workplace sexual harassment, workplace policies addressing sexual harassment, and practical measures to prevent sexual harassment.
21. Some AMS also reported collecting national data on violence against women, including workplace sexual harassment, and recognising the effects of domestic violence on workers. This is in line with the responses of AMS in sub-section 2.1 above. However, the responses indicate that the availability of such data and measures differs among AMS.

2.5 Laws and Policy on Conditions of Work

22. The third self-assessment indicates that most AMS reported having national laws or policies that guaranteed equal remuneration for equal work and work of equal value between women and men. All AMS also reported that their laws provided equal protection of women and men from occupational hazards, and compensation in cases of employee injury at the workplace. Most AMS also reported that the law provided for equal pension age and conditions for retirement between women and men.
23. Most AMS (i.e. nine AMS) reported that the law required the same criteria for women and men for promotions and for access to training and other skills development activities. Most AMS also reported that labour or employment laws

required labour inspectorates to address gender equality issues. Most AMS further reported that the annual labour inspection reports included sections reflecting the inspectorate's activities regarding workplace gender equality.

24. Some AMS reported that the law considers gender in shift work assignments. Most AMS (i.e. seven AMS) also reported having a specific legislative provision prohibiting sexual harassment by employers and co-employees, and that the definition of sexual harassment included physical, psychological, verbal and visual forms of harassment, as well as behaviour that created an intimidating, hostile or humiliating working environment.

Checklist 3: Social Protection Including Maternity

25. A total 69 questions under this thematic area of social protection including maternity were answered by AMS. Overall, compared with the 2024 self-assessment, the 2026 results of ten AMS that participated in both assessment cycles indicate encouraging progress across several areas. More AMS reported contribution-based social protection schemes and the provision of a range of benefits, including healthcare, maternity care, child benefits, income security in the event of sickness and disability. Improvements were also reported in extending measures to workers in the informal economy, including access to social insurance, income assistance, skills training, market linkages, financial and credit assistance, and pension schemes. In addition, more AMS reported providing income assistance and other forms of support for vulnerable workers, particularly older persons. Progress was also observed in strengthening maternity protection and family-friendly workplace measures, with more AMS reporting laws and policies on maternity protection, maternity leave, leave related to miscarriage or pregnancy complications, paternity leave, maternity cash benefits, protection for pregnant workers, lactation breaks, breastfeeding facilities, flexible working hours for workers with family responsibilities, and workplace childcare facilities. Improvements were further reported in measures to recognise and reduce unpaid care work.

3.1 Universal Coverage: Social Protection for All

26. The third self-assessment indicates that all AMS reported having contribution-based social security schemes in place. Most AMS reported that their social protection schemes provided healthcare, including maternity care, child benefits, income security in the event of sickness and disability, income security for older persons, and other forms of social protection. Furthermore, most AMS reported that their social protection systems included social insurance, health insurance, while some AMS reported providing social or relief assistance, cash transfer programmes, and other forms of support. Most AMS also reported that women and men were able to access healthcare when they were sick, injured, elderly, pregnant, or unemployed.

3.2 Protection for Workers in Informal Economy

27. The third self-assessment indicates that most AMS reported that workers in the informal economy contributed to some form of social insurance. Most AMS also reported providing government-supported skills training, financial and credit assistance, and providing access to pension schemes in old age. Some AMS also market support for workers in the informal economy.

3.3 Protection for Vulnerable Workers

28. The third self-assessment indicates that most AMS reported providing income assistance or pensions for elderly women and men. Most AMS also reported providing medical support for workers injured at work, disability benefits for workers permanently injured at work, and income support for workers in vulnerable situations who lost their jobs. Some AMS further reported providing health assistance for indigenous peoples, victims of disasters, victims of armed conflict, and extremely poor women and men. However, the responses indicate that the availability of these forms of assistance differs among AMS.

3.4 Social Protection Including Maternity

29. The third self-assessment indicates that most AMS reported having laws or policies providing maternity leave, including leave relating to miscarriage, termination of pregnancy, or pregnancy complications. Most AMS also reported providing maternity leave benefits regardless of employment status, prenatal and postnatal healthcare, lactation breaks, breastfeeding facilities, and workplace childcare facilities. Most AMS (i.e. nine AMS) reported providing paternity leave. Most AMS (i.e. seven AMS) also reported provision of flexible working arrangements for workers with family responsibilities such as care for small children, of sick family members & dependent older persons. The responses indicate variation among AMS regarding maternity cash benefits, protection against loss of seniority during maternity leave, protection from hazardous work during pregnancy, gynaecological leave, flexible working hours, and telecommuting arrangements for workers with family responsibilities.

3.5 Unpaid Care Work

30. The third self-assessment indicates that some AMS reported conducting time-use surveys, compiling data on unpaid work, and recognising unpaid care work in national accounts. Some AMS also reported implementing measures to redistribute unpaid care work, including parenting programmes for fathers, improving access to basic utilities, increasing access to labour-saving technologies for women in rural communities, and providing childcare and elderly care services through community planning initiatives.

Checklist 4: Gender Issues in International Labour Migration

31. A total of 64 questions under this thematic area of social gender issue in labour migration were answered by AMS. Overall, compared with the 2024 self-assessment, the 2026 results of ten AMS indicate encouraging progress in strengthening gender-responsive labour migration governance across ASEAN. More AMS reported having data on the migration of men and women for overseas employment and on the occupations of migrant workers in destination countries. Improvements were also reported in the dissemination of pre-departure information and training, including information on conditions of work abroad, the economic and social costs and benefits of overseas employment, and specially designed training for women that includes discussion of gender issues. Further progress was observed in protecting migrant workers in destination countries, with more AMS reporting the provision of arrival orientation programmes, the ability of migrant workers to remit earnings, receive overtime payments, communicate with fellow nationals and other migrant workers, and participate in training and skills upgrading while working abroad. In addition, more AMS reported the availability of social security and safety nets for migrant workers, programmes supporting the return and reintegration of migrant workers, and mechanisms to facilitate their reintegration into the labour market and support finance management, employment, livelihood and entrepreneurship.

4.1 Participation in Labour Migration

32. The third self-assessment indicates that most AMS reported collecting data on the migration of women and men for overseas employment, including information on the occupations of migrant workers in destination countries. Based on the reported data, eight AMS reported that women migrant workers were dominant in domestic work and nursing home or aged care; seven AMS reported their dominance in care work and hotel and tourism; and six AMS reported their dominance in hospital care. Furthermore, some AMS reported that professionals may be employed in low-skilled or unskilled occupations in destination countries. Most AMS further reported that migrant workers were required to pay recruitment and placement fees.

4.2 Pre-departure

33. The third self-assessment indicates that most AMS reported providing pre-departure orientation programmes for migrant workers prior to deployment. Furthermore, most AMS reported providing women and men with access to information on overseas employment opportunities, including pre-departure information and orientation programmes. Most AMS also reported disseminating information on working conditions abroad and the economic and social costs and benefits of overseas employment. Most AMS (i.e. six AMS) reported that they provided specialised pre-departure training that addresses gender issues. The responses also indicate that an AMS reported cases of discrimination in overseas recruitment and hiring, while some AMS reported that women and men were subject to illegal recruitment, and collected data on those who had been victimised

by illegal recruiters.

4.3 Arrival and On-Site: Conditions of Work

34. The third self-assessment indicates that most AMS (i.e. ten AMS) reported providing arrival orientation programmes for migrant workers and most AMS reported that migrant workers generally work under conditions consistent with their employment contracts. All AMS reported that migrant workers were allowed to communicate with other migrant workers and/or fellow nationals. Most AMS also reported that migrant workers were allowed to retain their passports, had access to suitable accommodations, remit earnings to their home countries, and participate in training or skills upgrading while employed overseas. Most AMS also reported that migrant workers were paid for overtime, where applicable, and that migrant workers were given paid rest days each week.

4.4 Social Protection

35. The third self-assessment indicates that most AMS (i.e. eight AMS) reported the availability of social security or other social protection arrangements for migrant workers in countries of origin or destination. Most AMS also reported that migrant workers experiencing violence, harassment, or abuse were able to obtain assistance from both the countries of origin and destination through labour attachés, welfare attachés, consular services, emergency contact mechanisms, or other reporting channels.

4.5 Return and Reintegration

36. The third self-assessment indicates that most AMS (i.e. six AMS) reported the availability of programmes to prepare migrant workers for their return home.. Most AMS also reported providing program to create work opportunities/reintegration into the labour market for migrant workers on their return, and providing support for, financial management ,employment, livelihood , and entrepreneurship projects of returning migrant workers and their families.

4.6 Migration Governance

37. The third self-assessment indicates that all AMS reported having a specific migration employment policy, and a specialised entity/unit to deliver that policy. Most AMS also reported that migration policies considered the specific vulnerabilities of women and adolescent girls, provided measures supporting the cultural, social, and economic integration of migrant workers, and included bilateral agreements or memoranda of understanding with the receiving countries. Most AMS also reported mechanisms protecting remittances, extending social protection to migrant workers, and some AMS reported providing legal or social assistance funds for distressed migrant workers.

V. Conclusion and Recommendations

38. The third self-assessment of the Checklist contained in the ASEAN Guidelines on Gender Mainstreaming into Labour and Employment Policies Towards Decent Work for All provides an overview of the measures, policies, and practices at the national level to mainstream gender perspective in labour policies and practices. Compared with the previous reporting cycle in 2024, the 2026 self-assessment indicates encouraging progress across the Checklist. Of the 245 questions and sub-questions, 63 questions (approximately 26%) recorded an increase in the number of AMS reporting “Yes” in 2026 in comparison with their previous answer of “No” or “Not Applicable” or non-response in 2024. As 2026 marks Timor-Leste's first participation in the self-assessment following its accession to ASEAN in 2025, the comparison of progress between the 2024 and 2026 reporting cycles is based on the ten AMS that participated in both self-assessments.

39. The largest number of improved responses was recorded under Checklist 1: Employment Promotion (23 of 61 questions), followed by Checklist 3: Social Protection Including Maternity (20 of 69 questions), Checklist 4: Gender Issues in International Labour Migration (10 of 64 questions), and Checklist 2: Decent Working Conditions (10 of 51 questions). Those changes correspond to these questions:

- Under Checklist 1: Employment Promotion, the notable improvements were observed in equal access to information on job vacancies and employment opportunities (from 8 AMS answering “Yes” in 2024 to 10 AMS answering “Yes” in 2026), the affordability of skills training for women and men (from 7 AMS answering “Yes” in 2024 to 9 AMS answering “Yes” in 2026), and equal assistance and access to facilities to find job vacancies (from 9 AMS answering “Yes” in 2024 to 10 AMS answering “Yes” in 2026).
- Under Checklist 2: Decent Working Conditions, the most notable improvements were reported in government corrective measures to address gender pay disparities in the public sector (from 3 AMS answering “Yes” in 2024 to 5 AMS answering “Yes” in 2026), national legislation prohibiting sexual harassment in the workplace (from 6 AMS answering “Yes” in 2024 to 7 AMS answering “Yes” in 2026), and practical measures to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace (from 6 AMS answering “Yes” in 2024 to 7 AMS answering “Yes” in 2026).
- Under Checklist 3: Social Protection Including Maternity, the largest improvements were reported in workers in the informal economy having access to social insurance (from 7 AMS answering “Yes” in 2024 to 9 AMS answering “Yes” in 2026), workers in the informal economy having access to skills training (from 5 AMS answering “Yes” in 2024 to 6 AMS answering “Yes” in 2026), and the provision of childcare and elderly care services through community planning initiatives (from 2 AMS answering “Yes” in 2024 to 4 AMS answering “Yes” in 2026).

“Yes” in 2026).

- Under Checklist 4: Gender Issues in International Labour Migration, the largest improvements were reported in women migrant workers being dominant in hospital care (from 3 AMS answering “Yes” in 2024 to 6 AMS answering “Yes” in 2026), migrant workers being able to participate in training and skills upgrading while working abroad (from 6 AMS answering “Yes” in 2024 to 8 AMS answering “Yes” in 2026), and women migrant workers being dominant in hotel and tourism (from 5 AMS answering “Yes” in 2024 to 6 AMS answering “Yes” in 2026).

40. The responses indicate that most AMS reported implementing a broad range of measures to promote gender equality in labour and employment. These include employment promotion programmes, education and skills development, labour market information systems, legal and policy measures relating to conditions of work, social protection programmes, maternity protection, and measures supporting migrant workers throughout the labour migration cycle. Most AMS also reported the availability of institutional arrangements and legal frameworks supporting gender mainstreaming in labour and employment.
41. At the same time, the self-assessment indicates that the scope and implementation of these measures differ among AMS. Variations were observed in the availability of data, legal and policy measures, workplace practices, social protection programmes, maternity-related benefits, and labour migration services covered under the Checklist. These differences reflect the varying national legal frameworks, policy priorities, institutional arrangements and stages of implementation across AMS.
42. This periodic completion of the Checklist is useful as it provides a regional overview of the implementation of the Guideline which can help AMS track progress, learning from each other, and targeting their areas of improvement. The regional overview can also support SLOM and ACMW in planning regional cooperation on gender mainstreaming in labour and employment policies in accordance with national laws, regulations, policies, and priorities of AMS.
43. Considering the aforementioned benefits, AMS may wish to continue the biennial completion of the checklist on a voluntary basis and implement the ASEAN Guideline on Gender Mainstreaming into Labour and Employment Policies Towards Decent Work for All in accordance with national laws, regulations, policies, and priorities of AMS. Attention may be given on some common areas of gap, such as but not limited to the availability of sex-disaggregated data on some key aspects of employment, decent work conditions, social protection, and labour migration.