OUR PEOPLE OUR FUTURE TOGETHER

MID-TERM REVIEW OF THE ASEAN SOCIO-CULTURAL COMMUNITY BLUEPRINT (2009-2015)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
Adopted by the ASEAN Leaders
at the 23rd ASEAN Summit

one vision
one identity
one community

Mid-Term Review of the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Blueprint (2009-2015)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Adopted by the ASEAN Leaders
at the 23rd ASEAN Summit

The ASEAN Secretariat

Jakarta
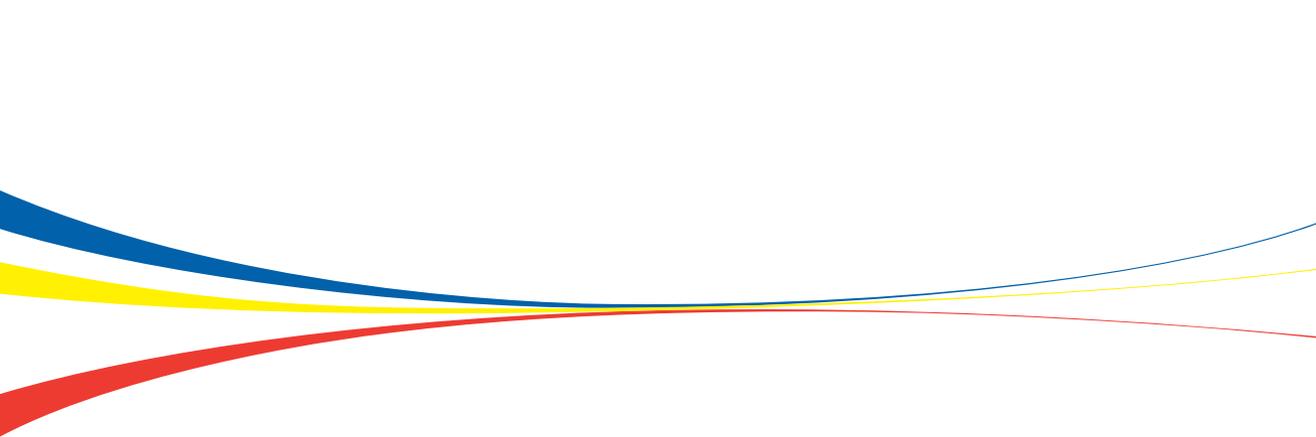
TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A. Introduction

1. The Cha-Am Hua Hin Declaration on the ASEAN Roadmap for an ASEAN Community 2009-2015 of 1 March 2009 established that the three Community Blueprints – Economic, Political-Security, and Socio-Cultural – and the 2nd IAI Work Plan constitute the ASEAN Roadmap. The ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) Blueprint's primary goal is "to contribute to realising a people-centred and socially responsible ASEAN Community by forging a common identity and building a caring and sharing society." The ASCC Blueprint is a framework for action and is structured into 6 Characteristics[1] or strategic-level development and cooperation outcomes and impacts toward ASEAN Community building. Underlying each Characteristic are Elements or inter-woven cross-pillar, thematic, sectoral and cross-sectoral outcomes. Each Element is in turn buttressed by Action Lines of which there are 339 specific results or activities to be achieved or undertaken through programmes, projects or special activities. The Blueprint contains an implementation arrangement laying out a schedule of key milestones and a coordination mechanism or governance structure delegating roles to the ASCC Council, Sectoral Ministerial Bodies, Senior Officials Meetings and other ASEAN-affiliated bodies and associated entities. In carrying out the Blueprint, ASCC is required to identify and address resource requirements, and to enumerate a communications plan that helps to enhance awareness, broaden and raise funds.

2. The ASCC Council oversees the overall implementation of the ASCC Blueprint and ensures coordination of efforts, including across the other Communities. The ASEAN Secretariat (ASEC) is tasked to monitor and review the implementation of the ASCC Blueprint, and for this purpose shall develop and adopt indicators and systems. The ASCC Blueprint also calls for a mid-term review whenever necessary, taking into account the changing dynamics of the region and the global environment. The Mid-Term Review (MTR) of the Implementation of the ASCC Blueprint officially

---

1   Profil Kemiskinan di Provinsi Papua Barat Maret 2013, Berita Resmi Statistik BPS Provinsi Papua Barat No. 29/ 07/91/Th. V, 2 Juli 2012).

commenced with the convening of the 1st Meeting of the Working Group for the MTR of the ASCC in Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam, from 15 to 16 June 2013 and the Regional Workshop on National Assessments for MTR of the ASCC Blueprint in Jakarta, Indonesia, on 26 June 2013. The regional-level assessment of the MTR of the ASCC to collect data from primary documents, data sources and interviews ran from 27 June until 31 August 2013.

3. The purpose of the MTR is to assess (i) whether the measures and actions in the ASCC Blueprint have been effectively implemented at the national and regional levels; (ii) whether implementation of the ASCC Blueprint has contributed to achieving the goals of the ASCC as articulated in the ASCC Blueprint; (iii) the means of implementation; (iv) institutional mechanisms in ASEAN Member States (AMS) and the ASEC; (v) the availability and efficacy of financial resources and potential financing gaps to sustain the achievement of ASCC Blueprint goals by end 2015; and (vi) to provide recommendations to enhance the timely and effective implementation of the ASCC Blueprint by the end of 2015.

B. Methodology

4. In accordance with the SOCA-approved Terms of Reference, SOCA leads the MTR which is implemented by a Regional MTR Working Group chaired by Brunei Darussalam. The Working Group is composed of regional and national MTR focal points designated by the respective AMS and representatives of the ASEC, with technical advisory services provided by national consultants appointed by AMS where necessary, and by appointed regional consultants, Asia Partnership for the Development of Human Resources in Rural Areas (Asia DHRRA). The main documents reviewed were the latest ASCC Scorecard received on 28 June 2013 and the latest implementation-focused monitoring system report dated 20 June 2013. Also examined was the implementation-focused monitoring system developed by ASEC to monitor the implementation of the ASCC Blueprint by capturing specific activities implemented by various ASCC sectoral bodies to address the elements

and characteristics of the ASCC Blueprint. Sectoral bodies adapted the indicators with the support of the ASEC to assess the outcome and impact of the various activities implemented through the ASCC Scorecard. The MTR was enriched by the reports coming from the national assessment process of the MTR, which was conducted simultaneously with the regional process, according to need, as perceived by the AMS.

5. The regional consultants conducted interviews that provided additional perspectives of ASEC staff members, the current Secretary-General, the three Deputy Secretary-Generals, the Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR) to ASEAN, former Secretary-Generals of ASEAN, Dialogue Partners, Senior Officials and relevant representatives from civil society with direct engagement with ASEAN. Interviews were conducted by the regional consultants in Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand.

6. Five assessment criteria were employed to assess the extent of the implementation of the elements and characteristics of the ASCC Blueprint. The five assessment criteria used were relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact. For each of the five criteria, a five-scale ranking was developed to assess the extent of the fulfilment of the criteria. The scale was developed to guide the process of capturing progress of implementation to obtain a sense of whether implementation was taking place. It is a guidepost to see where ASEAN is with regards to the implementation of the ASCC Blueprint and how it can move forward.

7. The MTR recognised limitations in relation to the availability and quality of primary reference documents as information provided may not be up to date or incomplete. The relatively short period of time constrained the MTR from conducting a deeper review of the thematic elements, where data and information had to be researched further to arrive at more detailed assessment of the progress of implementation.

C. Progress of Implementing the ASCC Blueprint at Regional Level

8.   The ASCC Blueprint implementation is generally positive where about 90% of all the action lines have been addressed through the conduct of various activities by ASCC sectoral bodies. There have been many challenges in the course of implementing the Blueprint at the national and regional levels. But there are continuing efforts to improve and fast track meeting the 2015 targets and prepare for post-2015 challenges. There is more programmatic and cross-sector cooperation observed and the governance system is gearing up to be more dynamic and accountable. From a mid-term review process, the gains thus far are considerable and should point to more exciting and meaningful cooperation in the next two years. The MTR of the Blueprint has brought the ASEAN Community closer and served to prepare every one of the actions that have to be taken, in strong coordination and mutual support. It is hoped that the priority recommendations from the MTR will be acted on with dispatch to keep the momentum for 2015 and beyond.

Characteristics: An Overview

9.   With 57 out 61 action lines (~93%) having been addressed, the implementation of the human development characteristic is positively progressing towards realising its goal to enhance the well-being and livelihood of the peoples of ASEAN by providing them with equitable access to human development opportunities. This is confirmed by statistics[2] showing the average number of school years completed by the adult population increased from 7.5 years for ASEAN-6 and 4.6 years for CLMV in 2005 to eight years and five years respectively in 2010. The literacy rate of the youth population across ASEAN-6 countries inched

---

2   ASEAN Community Progress Monitoring System 2012 (ASEAN, 2013)

closer to 100 per cent while the CLMV countries have significantly improved their literacy rate from around 81 per cent in 2009 to 92 per cent in 2010. Data from UNESCO and Viet Nam show that this rate was more than 93% in Viet Nam in 2010. With regard to the education gap between ASEAN-6 and CLMV countries, the recent publication, entitled Narrowing the Development Gap in ASEAN: Drivers and Policy Options, shows that the gap between the ASEAN-6 and the CLMV countries in terms of the Human Development Index (HDI) has been decreasing over the past decade.

10. In the overall implementation of the social welfare and protection characteristic, progress is more than satisfactory as activities relevant to 91 out of 94 action lines (~97%) have been implemented. It was reported in the ASEAN Brief 2012: Progress Towards the ASEAN Community that HDI rose from the ASEAN average rate of 0.635 in 2005 to 0.657 in 2010. Likewise, the extent of absolute poverty (people living on less than PPP$ 1.25 a day) "in ASEAN declined significantly between 2000 to 2010, from around 45 to 16 per cent in CLMV countries and from around 29 to 15 per cent in ASEAN-6". Implementation appears to be on track while recognising the challenges involved. There has been effective mobilisation of partnerships across the sectoral bodies towards strategic objective such as the various regional cooperation partnerships that have enhanced ASEAN's programming framework to support AMS.

11. Likewise, in the social justice and rights characteristic, overall implementation is steady with 21 out of 28 actions (~79%) having been addressed. This characteristic focuses on rights for the vulnerable and marginalised in ASEAN – particularly women, children, persons with disabilities, older people and migrant workers. Institutional mechanisms to facilitate cooperation to promote social justice and rights of vulnerable groups have been strengthened with the establishment of the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC), and the ongoing development of an ASEAN instrument for the protection and promotion of the rights of migrant workers.

The 5th Senior Officials Meeting on Social Welfare and Development held on 3-4 December 2008 in the Philippines and the Preparatory Senior Officials Meeting for the 7th AMMSWD on 23-24 November 2010 in Brunei Darussalam helped in the formation of the ASEAN Children's Forum, which serves as a platform for children's participation at the regional level. The ASEAN Decade of Persons with Disabilities 2011-2020 proclaimed at the 19th ASEAN Summit in 2011 has been translated into joint efforts. Many of the activities implemented are categorised under confidence building and joint efforts with the challenge of advancing some of these towards harmonisation or developing regional implementing mechanisms. A feature under this characteristic is the continuing engagement with civil society through sectoral dialogue platforms and partnerships with Dialogue Partners that augur well for long-term sustainability.

12. Overall, there is high relevance of the implemented activities and projects towards ensuring environmental sustainability, resonating with the stated goal. AMS' Environmental Performance Index (EPI) scores in 2010 and 2012, which are used as the overall indicator to monitor the progress of implementation of Section D (Ensuring Environmental Sustainability) of the ASCC Community Blueprint, reflect good and well-maintained environmental health and ecosystem vitality, with AMS reporting an above average EPI score of 57.95 in 2010 and 56.63 in 2012 (range of 0 to 100). The Trend EPI shows overall positive improvements with an average AMS' Trend EPI score of 6.54 (range of -50 to +50). While Brunei Darussalam received a Trend EPI score of -1.3, it received one of the highest EPI Scores among AMS. Thailand is ranked one of the Top 10 Trend Index Performers (10th) among 132 countries. In general, progress is satisfactory in this characteristic. While such achievements have transcended ASEAN's overall cooperation in the environmental sector over the years, there is still a considerable amount of work to be done towards 2015.

13. The goal of achieving an ASEAN identity has progressed through various confidence-building activities among AMS with primary focus given to human capacity building. The completed and ongoing actions and projects addressing 48 of the 50 actions (96%) for this characteristic are deemed highly relevant in

achieving the strategic objective of creating a sense of belonging, consolidating unity in diversity, and deepening mutual understanding among ASEAN Member States. Events such as the ASEAN Festival of Arts, ASEAN Cities of Culture, Best of ASEAN Performing Arts, ASEAN Quiz, ASEAN Studies courses, ASEAN Corners or the ASEAN Day celebration are popular and powerful instruments in raising ASEAN awareness and in bringing an ASEAN identity to the attention of national populations. Awareness of ASEAN is also being inculcated through the curriculum in schools, especially primary schools through the ASEAN Curriculum Sourcebook's initiative. The achieved milestones identified indicate the continuing efforts by AMS and sectoral bodies and can be considered building blocks in advancing the strategic objectives under this characteristic for the remaining period. Overall, the achievement of targets is commendable in some elements but needs improvement in others, especially in terms of dissemination of the information.

ASCC Financing

14. There has yet to be a definite valuation or analysis made on the required cost of funding the implementation of the ASCC Blueprint and the related sectoral work plans. Nevertheless, ever since the Blueprint was adopted in 2009, the cost of implementation has been borne by ASEAN Member States with assistance from ASEAN Dialogue and External Partners. The ASEAN Member States contribute to the implementation of the ASCC Blueprint, at both regional and national levels, in the following ways: (a) cash contributions to specific regional budgets and funds; (b) ASEAN-wide funds, e.g., ASEC Operating Budget (AOB), ASEAN Development Fund (ADF); (c) ASCC-related funds : e.g., ASEAN Science and Technology Fund; ASEAN Haze Fund; ASEAN Biodiversity Fund; AADMER Fund; Operational Fund for the AHA Centre; ASEAN Youth Programme Fund; and Singapore-ASEAN Youth Fund; and (d) financial and in-kind contributions to regional projects and meetings. Cash and in-kind contributions derived from national programmes have a multiplier effect on ASCC-related activities.

15. ASEAN partners with ASEAN Dialogue and External Partners to augment its own resources. Their contributions are made through ASEAN-wide initiatives as well as those specifically aimed at the ASCC. They contribute through supporting multi-year regional programmes and one-off projects/activities; providing technical assistance through experts, advisers and additional staff complement; and setting up additional funds for specific purposes such as for capacity-building, etc.

16. Given the diversity of financing and co-sharing modalities, with different kinds of contributions and coming from all sources, there is some difficulty in accounting

for and estimating all the resources used to implement the ASCC Blueprint. Presently, the grant management database in ASEC is not able to capture all resources mobilised from all donors, generate up-to-date information or be linked to the ASEC financial system. Nevertheless, across all sectors, the continued support of the AMS by ensuring funding availability to host ASEAN meetings as well organising and attending regular regional meetings, from ministerial to working group levels, to undertake ASEAN events and implement ASCC-related national programmes and projects, ensure that the work of the ASCC is supported at both regional and national levels. There is financial support for regional programmes and projects in sectors such as Culture and Information, Science and Technology, Youth, Environment, Disaster Management, and ACCSM's ASEAN Resource Centres' operations and projects run by AMS. A comprehensive study of the overall availability and magnitude of cash and in-kind contributions of AMS, specifically the funds established by individual AMS, and the assistance programs provided by Dialogue Partners and Development Partners, should be undertaken as part of a resource mobilisation strategy.

D. Progress of Implementing the ASCC Blueprint at National Level

17. Overall, AMS have satisfactorily progressed in implementing the five characteristics on human development, social welfare and protection, social justice and rights, environment sustainability and ASEAN identity awareness. AMS have made major contributions both individually and collectively to the attainment of the ASCC goals, and there is increasing evidence of regional and national development and cooperation programmes being mutually supportive through parallel and reinforcing objectives.

18. The implementation of the ASCC Blueprint by the AMS has been active and the activities developed are relevant as they reflect consistency with national priorities. The high degree of coherence with national priorities enable national policy frameworks to be strengthened and reinforced. At the same time, implementation produces challenges as some AMS mentioned bottlenecks occurring with regards to resources like funding, expertise and human resources. Coordination with different sectoral bodies is also challenging as some AMS found duplication in implementation among sectoral bodies.

Despite the challenges encountered, mechanisms for cross-cutting issues have been established and are being mainstreamed into current government structures at the national level.

19. Challenges faced by AMS in the implementation of the ASCC Blueprint relate to financial and human resources, technical expertise or language proficiency, coordination and cross-sectoral mechanisms, problems on the use of the ASCC monitoring tools, and awareness of the ASCC Blueprint among government officials and the general public.

E. Observations

20. Generally, the MTR supports the findings of the March 2013 ASEC report on the Status of the ASCC Blueprint implementation where it was reported that 33 action lines, or 9.73% of the total 339, fell into the category whose outcomes are not under the direct control of an ASCC sectoral body. These are action lines that need cross-sectoral or cross-pillar arrangements, necessitating strong coordination and effective communication lines among the different sectoral bodies to ensure that action lines are implemented and opportunities for cross-sectoral cooperation are optimised.

21. There is an immediate need to pursue consolidation and prioritisation across sectors in light of the need to fast track implementation of targets towards 2015. The SOCA is highly encouraged to oversee this process, guided by the principles on prioritisation and with the support from the CPR and the ASEC. The ASCC Council has to mandate and approve this process to ensure that resources and attention of the responsible actors in the ASCC Blueprint implementation are focused on priority and programmatic cooperation, especially in the run up to 2015.

F. Priority Recommendations

22. A list of priority recommendations has been identified and recommended for consideration:

a) The **ASCC Blueprint's implementation should be prioritised** in order to achieve practical implementation. Given the need to prioritise and focus resources in the run up to 2015, a process of review and re-targeting should be done at the sectoral level, keeping in mind the need to re-cluster overlapping targets and the option of cross-sectoral, cross-pillar cooperation.

b) **Enhancement of ASCC Monitoring Tools.** There is a need to further refine and enhance the scorecard for the ASCC Community and the implementation-focused monitoring system for the ASCC Blueprint. The feasibility of an enhanced and expanded monitoring system across other pillars, with which there are cross-cutting and cross-sectoral interests, should be examined. A corollary to this is setting up a data bank for ASCC at regional and national levels. The indicators and statistics should be relevant to the needs of the Member States and the system should warrant the long-term impact and sustainability of undertaken initiatives.

c) **Knowledge Management System.** ASEC should be calibrated to take on this function and build its capacity for more effective processing of data and information generated in aid of policy making, programming, and resource generation and development. The ASCC Department can pilot it for selected or priority regional cooperation or by sector and within its core administration.

d) **Coordination and Cross-Sectoral Mechanisms.** At the regional and national levels in some countries, there is a need to create a coordination mechanism or focal point networks or to strengthen the existing ones, especially for cross-sectoral issues, for interventions that are holistic and have greater impact potential. Shared targets could be better attained in collaboration and coordination amongst the relevant ASEAN sectoral bodies at regional level and government agencies in some countries.

e) **Resource Mobilisation.** Further in-depth analysis would be required to determine the extent of funding requirements to implement the ASCC Blueprint and cross-cutting issues until 2015. Likewise, a study on the replication of the Small Grant Scheme of the COCI may also be undertaken to see how resources can be further devolved in the sectors. A resource mobilisation strategy that is in line with key priority areas for implementation is needed. This strategy will include the formulation of more strategic proposals to avail of funding that is presently within ASEAN and particular sectors.

f) **Multi-sectoral and Multi-stakeholder Approaches.** There is no one-size-fits-all approach in pursuing new partnerships. One recommendation is the strengthening of the role of the SOCA in supporting the ASCC Council to fulfill one of its mandates to coordinate the work of the different sectors under its purview, and on issues which cut across the other Community Councils.

g) **Communication Strategy.** ASEAN should expedite the release of the ASEAN-community-wide communication strategy/plan.

h) **Special Consideration for CLMV Countries.** CLMV and some of the ASEAN-6 countries acknowledge the need to give special considerations to CLMV countries. Special Assistance is recommended to support implementation of cooperation and in support of project development to succeed more in resource mobilisation.

i) Lastly, **Commitment to Implement Recommendations.** Most of the MTR recommendations have been raised in previous assessments and studies aimed to bring ASEAN closer to its One ASEAN Community goals. A core group from the SOCA, sectoral body representatives, and ASEC could be created to prioritise action points and develop an MTR action plan.

G. Ways Forward, Beyond 2015

23. The post-2015 scenario for the ASCC pillar would have to be closely linked to two main developments: namely, the coming into being of the ASEAN Community and the post-2015 development agenda at the global level. For the former, the ASCC would need to position itself to sustain an environment that is a people-centered and socially responsible ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community in the midst of a more integrated ASEAN Economic Community, aiming towards a single market and production base for the region, along with projecting a more peaceful and stable ASEAN Political-Security Community with ASEAN centrality being maintained.

24. ASEAN has committed itself to the principles espoused in the Bali Concord III Declaration of 2011 to move towards forging ASEAN common positions on

various issues in the global arena by 2022. ASCC can take a leadership role in defining distinctly regional positions and strengthen ASEAN centrality in the areas under its purview in increasingly complex and cross-cutting issues by leveraging the diverse institutions and highly networked sectoral bodies as ASEAN's presence expands in regional and global fora.

H. Concluding Comments

25. The MTR of the ASCC Blueprint implementation has shown progress but implementation has reached a critical juncture. While many stipulated action lines are achieved or on track, it is important to closely monitor such ongoing action lines including those still under formulation to ensure that concerted and timely actions are taken. The MTR exercise has shed light on these specific areas and made recommendations on how to overcome those that still need improvement. The findings and recommendations of the MTR can act as a barometer of the ASCC's good progress and where action is still lagging and how to address these accordingly. Altogether, the process – from the national to the regional level – has helped build confidence, infuse excitement, and brought the ASCC community closer, the momentum of which should propel ASEAN to its set goals. The ASEAN Chair in 2015 coincides with the final review of the ASCC Blueprint which enters into the last year of implementation. The Chair will preside over a year of transition bringing closure to the current ASCC Blueprint while paving the way for the introduction of a successor strategic framework.

List of Photos	
Front Cover	**Clock wise from left above :** Viet Nam National Tourism Organisation, Hansa Tangmanpoowadol (ASEAN Secretariat's Photo Competition Finalist), Budi Prakasa (ASEAN Secretariat's Photo Competition Finalist), Phobelyn Gullunan (ASEAN Secretariat's Photo Competition Finalist), Brunei Darussalam National Tourism Organiation, Thailand National Tourism Organisation, Samuel de Leon (ASEAN Secretariat's Photo Competition Finalist)
Page 1	ASEAN Secretariat
Page 2	SOCA Singapore
Page 3	SOCA Brunei Darussalam
Page 4	Indonesia National Tourism Organisation
Page 5	Viet Nam National Tourism Organisation
Page 6	Myanmar National Tourism Organisation
Page 8	Indonesia National Tourism Organisation, Myanmar National Tourism Organisation
Page 11	Myanmar National Tourism Organisation
Page 12	**Clock wise from left above :** Viet Nam National Tourism Organisation, Indonesia National Tourism Organisation, Indonesia National Tourism Organisation

***