

EU-ASEAN Sustainable Connectivity Package - Higher Education Programme (SCOPE-HE)

Name of the action	EU-ASEAN Sustainable Connectivity Package - Higher Education Programme (SCOPE-HE)
Commissioned by	European Union
Partnering with	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
Implementer	Nuffic – The Dutch organisation for internationalisation in education
Implementing Partner	DAAD – German Academic Exchange Service
Programme Area	EU-ASEAN Member States
Duration	February 2024 – January 2028
Value	EUR 9.300.000

Context

Higher Education systems in Southeast Asia face challenges in terms of accessibility, inclusivity, equity, and relevance. One challenge is to establish a shared regional higher education space that is inclusive, coherent, and competitive in standards and accessible to a growing student population.

Opportunities for the young generation to move for educational purposes within and outside the region are still limited. Improved cooperation and exchange between ASEAN higher education institutions is needed to improve the area's competitiveness and contribute to establishing a more flexible labour market. This will, in turn, support the regional economy and allow for more effective linkages to other regions, such as the EU.

Sustainable connectivity has become one of the key priority areas for EU cooperation with ASEAN and Southeast Asia as outlined in the EU Global Gateway Joint Communication, the EU Strategy for Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific, and the regional Multiannual Indicative Programme (MIP) for Asia and the Pacific (2021-2027).

The EU and ASEAN have pledged to promote connectivity within and between their regions, with a particular emphasis on **sustainability, climate action, digital transformation, and gender equality**. Intra-regional mobility and people-to-people connectivity have been one of the avenues through which community building has been pursued in Southeast Asia, as stipulated in the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity 2025 and the ASEAN Socio-cultural Community Blueprint 2025.



Objective

The SCOPE-HE Programme is part of the EU-ASEAN Sustainable Connectivity Package and aims to improve sustainable connectivity between the EU and ASEAN and within ASEAN. The programme builds on the successes of the EU Support to Higher Education Programme in the ASEAN Region (SHARE) and ERASMUS+. The programme involves representatives from all ASEAN Member States.



Young woman monitoring a plantation | Image by jcomp, www.freepic.com

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Approach

The SCOPE-HE Programme will be implemented through three main components or result areas:

1. **Strengthened mobility in Higher Education** will increase student and academic mobility through working towards the mutual recognition of qualifications/academic credits, both intra-ASEAN and between the EU and ASEAN, complementing the Erasmus+ programme, in line with the relevant ASEAN strategy and action plan in this area. Seeking international mobility opportunities and understanding that increased capacities in ASEAN are essential not only to implementing new and innovative solutions in higher education in the region but will also lead to higher quality and competitiveness in the ASEAN community's higher education and VET systems.
2. **Stronger EU-ASEAN University Networks** will enable partners to jointly tackle global challenges through fostering research and technological connectivity. ASEAN member states have invested in research infrastructure, improved research capabilities, and encouraged innovation. The EU-ASEAN Partnership has been vital in promoting research collaborations between the EU and ASEAN institutions. SCOPE-HE will harness the experience of existing joint research projects that have been initiated in health, agriculture, renewable energy, and environmental conservation, and promote increased or new collaboration and partnership between universities to create opportunities for joint research projects, knowledge sharing, and the exchange of expertise.

Contact

Ms. Inty Dianasari
 Communication Manager
 idianasari@nuffic.nl

3. **Robust ASEAN Network of Vocational Institutions and Businesses** to align the VET programmes of training institutions within ASEAN with the needs of the labour market. This alignment will reduce unemployment, improve employability, and bridge the skills gap, ultimately contributing to sustainable development and increased productivity. SCOPE-HE will collaborate with the VET sector in the agriculture and green transition, support the development of Labour Market Information services, and internship/mentoring programmes. Furthermore, it will engage the private sector to contribute to developing VET and Higher Education. A particular focus will be the development of digital and environmental skills, the promotion of inclusivity, and improved digital learning ecosystems.

Expected Results

- Strengthened student and academic mobility in line with the relevant ASEAN strategy and action plan in this area.
- Stronger EU-ASEAN cross-regional University Networks to jointly tackle global challenges by fostering research and technological connectivity.
- Stronger ASEAN regional network of Vocational Education Training Institutions and businesses focusing on 'green transition', 'digital transformation and 'blue economy'.



SHARE alumni participated at the ASEAN-EU Consultation Workshop on Higher Education: The Future of the ASEAN Higher Education Space and the Role of SHARE in 2018 at ASEAN Secretariat.