

# THE PARTNERSHIP APPROACH

## Partnership basics

ASEAN and Australia are delivering the ASEAN-Australia Development Cooperation Program Phase II in partnership.

## What's a partnership approach all about?

The partnership approach is about working together based on three key principles:

- **Alignment**

The program improves policy alignment by directly supporting ASEAN policies, strategies and plans. The program strengthens the alignment of systems by using ASEAN Secretariat systems and procedures to deliver the program.

- **Harmonisation**

By working closely within the ASEAN Secretariat and in particular with units such as the Strategic Planning and Coordination Division, the program supports ASEAN to harmonise approaches, policies and systems.

- **Ownership**

Ownership is critical to sustainability. AADCP II is driven by the requirements of ASEAN and its sectoral bodies, and projects are implemented by ASEAN Secretariat officers and ASEAN Member States with the support of the program.

## What does this really mean in practice?

This means that ASEAN Member States, the ASEAN Secretariat and the Australian Government work together to identify the program priorities, and jointly manage the delivery of the activities through an in-house team of project staff (the Program Planning and Monitoring Support Unit – PPMSU), project specialists (e.g. Senior Economist, Contracts Officer, Trust Fund/Accounts Officer) and the ASEAN Secretariat officers.

The PPMSU staff and project specialists are funded by the program with staff directly contracted by the ASEAN Secretariat. They work closely with ASEAN Secretariat officers to identify, design and deliver activities. The specialists also provide broader support to the ASEAN Secretariat to strengthen its capacity.

The overall program is jointly managed by a Program Management Team (PMT), consisting of senior ASEAN Secretariat officers and an Australian Government Program Director. The PMT oversees the work of the PPMSU and reports to the Joint Planning and Review Committee (JPRC) that consists of representatives of the ASEAN Member States, the ASEAN Secretariat and Australia.



## How is AADCP II different from other programs?

Under previous programs, the Australian Government contracted outside firms to manage the design, delivery and monitoring and evaluation of activities. This approach gave the ASEAN Secretariat only some degree of influence and responsibility from the start to the end of activities, with limited opportunity to learn from the process.

Under AADCP II, Australia delivers funding directly to the ASEAN Secretariat (based on agreed work plans approved through the JPRC) and the delivery of activities is jointly managed by the ASEAN Secretariat and the Australian Government through the PPMSU and PMT. This means that work that was previously done by contractors outside of the ASEAN Secretariat (and the Australian Government), such as tendering, contract preparation and management, project delivery, monitoring and evaluation, is now done by the ASEAN Secretariat and Australia together. No other cooperation program is currently jointly managed in this way within the ASEAN Secretariat.

## What are the advantages and challenges?

One of the ASEAN Secretariat's main roles is to support ASEAN Member States to initiate, facilitate and coordinate ASEAN stakeholder collaboration to realise ASEAN goals. With the ASEAN Charter, the Secretariat has been given an enhanced role in monitoring the implementation of agreed regional work plans. The ASEAN Secretariat needs to develop new skills, systems and processes in order to carry out its mandate effectively.

The partnership approach aims to respond to this need by strengthening the ASEAN Secretariat's capacity and improving the effectiveness of support by increasing alignment, harmonisation and ownership. The program provides this unique opportunity by working directly with the ASEAN Secretariat officers on every step of the project—from project inception, implementation to evaluation as well as working collaboratively to manage the overall program.

Working in this way on every aspect of the project cycle and overall program management places additional requirements on ASEAN Secretariat officers compared to other programs. However, this practical approach will grow staff skills and help to develop a cadre of officers more equipped to carry out the ASEAN Secretariat's mandate in the future.

## How do we know whether the approach is beneficial?

The partnership approach is assessed annually as part of the AADCP II Annual Review. The assessment looks at various aspects of the partnership and provides feedback to assist all stakeholders to continue to grow and develop their relationship in a positive way.

## Who can I contact to find out more?

Contact the Strategic Planning and Coordination Division (SPCD) or the AADCP II Program Planning and Monitoring Support Unit (PPMSU).