Established in 2015, the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) is a major milestone in regional economic integration, offering opportunities in the form of a market of US$2.6 trillion and over 622 million people. Collectively, ASEAN is the third largest economy in Asia and the seventh largest in the world.

With deeper economic integration, and a focus on facilitating the freer movement of skilled migrants; more people will be on the move. This vision is also in line with the AEC 2025 Blueprint goals of simplifying and improving the movement of skilled labour and consequent retention of talent in the region. It further aligns with the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community’s (ASCC) 2025 goals of improving quality of life and equitable access to opportunities, and promoting social development. Coordinated action to facilitate the freer flow of skilled labour in furthering regional integration is crucial to ensuring that the potential economic and developmental benefits of labour mobility are realized and equitably distributed among ASEAN Member States.

With the aim of strengthening the capacity and frameworks of ASEAN Member States through enhanced dialogue and coordination, IOM will support the development and implementation of policies and mechanisms to facilitate effectively-managed labour mobility, in the context of increased regional integration. The project focuses on key areas which have been identified as priorities in moving towards the freer movement of skilled labour through consultation with ASEAN Member States (AMS) and the ASEAN Secretariat:

- Support the development of a labour migration information sharing mechanism/platform;
- Promote strengthened employment and recruitment services among ASEAN Member States;
- Facilitate effective referencing and quality assurance of national qualifications and skill standards to the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Frameworks (AQRF).

KEY FACTS

Donor: IOM Development Fund
Geographical Coverage: ASEAN Member States
Management Site: Bangkok, Thailand
Duration: 2 years
Beneficiaries: Senior Labour, Economic, Education and Immigration Officials of ASEAN Member States; Employers; Trade Unions; Professional Associations and Regulatory Bodies; Recruitment Agencies; Workers; Relevant ASEAN Sectoral Bodies
Partners: ASEAN Member State Governments; the Senior Labour Officials Meeting (SLOM); ASEAN Secretariat

For more information, contact

Petra Neumann
Project Manager
Direct: +66 61 393 1131
Email: pneumann@iom.int
IOM is conducting research on legislation, policy and regulation of AMS regarding the intra-ASEAN migration of skilled workers. The research is comprised of two components — a desk review and a questionnaire. This research examines the conditions surrounding (1) admission of skilled workers from AMS to each country, and their (2) employment and stay within each country created by the relevant legislation, policy and regulation. The desk review will produce a comparison of the available and accessible policies, legislation and regulations of each AMS (from a destination-country perspective), relating to potential challenges to movement that may be faced by skilled workers migrating within ASEAN.

The overall aim of the research will be to suggest evidence-based policy recommendations, through drawing on the analysis of relevant instruments and questionnaire responses from AMS Ministries. It is envisaged that this will help contribute to a greater understanding of regional labour standards that could subsequently serve to assist AMS in realizing how to facilitate enhanced common regional labour standards, thereby promoting the freer flow of skilled labour.

IOM will support the development of a pilot regional ASEAN Labour Migration Information Sharing Mechanism (envisaged as a web-portal). It is expected that this mechanism will contain information about — inter alia — labour market conditions, labour migration policies and rights frameworks across AMS. It will aim to provide a user-friendly, practical online source of consolidated information, and its development will be ASEAN-Member State led.

To prepare for its development, IOM is implementing three workshops for officials responsible for the management and sharing of labour migration information (LMI), on ‘labour market information for migration policy’. This will be done to help build capacity to collect and manage labour market and migration information in an increasingly harmonized manner. A template and plan of action for this information sharing mechanism will be developed, and subsequently presented and discussed through a consultation meeting to a broader range of stakeholders in ASEAN for their input and feedback, including workers, employers, recruitment agencies and professional regulators.