

# Regional Optimisation of Transboundary Ecosystem Development for Nature-based Solutions in ASEAN (ROOTED)



Project duration

Expected close date:  
December 2026



Lead implementing partner



Consortium partners



The Asia Foundation

The Asia Foundation (TAF)



International Centre of Environmental Management (ICEM)

## Overview of the initiative

This project aims to help ASEAN develop an innovative transboundary framework for Nature-based Solutions (NbS), by identifying key success factors, including the integration of local and traditional knowledge. Its overarching objective is to develop a robust NbS policy framework that supports ASEAN Member States (AMS) in meeting their climate mitigation targets and align with existing ASEAN priorities such as the ASEAN Green Initiative, the Joint Statement on Climate Change at COP 29 and COP30, and the Vision and Strategic Plan for Food, Agriculture, and Forestry.

As AMS move from discussing NbS concept to actually implementing them, successful transboundary examples highlight their practical viability and measurable impact. Integrated regional frameworks are critical to unlocking the full mitigation potential of NbS, enabling coordinated

ecosystem planning and more effective carbon reduction outcomes. In this context, this project will promote the systematic integration of NbS into national policies by bringing multiple stakeholders together around a transboundary forest landscape in the Mekong subregion, positioning it as a practical model that can be replicated in other transboundary contexts in ASEAN.

Scaling up NbS across ASEAN is both feasible and strategic when grounded in rigorous analysis of successful transboundary ecosystems and informed by traditional local expertise. The Mekong subregion, home to globally significant forest ecosystems, offers a unique opportunity for AMS to work together on large-scale restoration. Coordinated action in these landscapes will help ASEAN strengthen climate resilience, conserve

biodiversity, and enhance sustainable livelihoods. This project will apply a Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) approach, ensuring that vulnerable and marginalised groups contribute critical knowledge, priorities and leadership to shape the design and implementation of NbS policies.

Embedding GEDSI principles across NbS initiatives will promote equitable representation, inclusive development, and meaningful participation, particularly for women and other under-represented groups, throughout planning and implementation.

## Key objectives

- 1. Enhance cross-sectoral coordination among ASEAN bodies and AMS stakeholders**, to integrate and effectively implement NbS policies, including the endorsed regional NbS policy framework, into regional climate action and transboundary ecosystem management.
- 2. Equip national stakeholders with the skills and tools to apply regional NbS policies** to align transboundary policies with climate objectives and deliver inclusive climate resilience and sustainable ecosystem management.



### Alignment with ASEAN vision, plan and priorities

This project directly supports ASEAN's vision for sustainability, resilience, and regional cooperation, by helping develop a foundational transboundary policy framework for Nature-based Solutions. The framework aligns with core ASEAN strategies, including the ASEAN Green Initiative, the ASEAN Joint Statements on Climate Change at COP 29 and COP30, and ASEAN's Vision and Strategic Plan for Food, Agriculture, and Forestry. By actively managing, harmonising, and integrating regional NbS frameworks, the project contributes to ASEAN's long-term objectives to reduce emissions, protect biodiversity, and strengthen resilience.

It also supports the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) Strategic Plan 2026-2030 and the ASEAN Community Vision 2045, by promoting a sustainable, innovative, and people-centred ASEAN, while improving policy alignment across sectors and borders. By advancing policy harmonisation, ecological restoration, community

empowerment, and transboundary cooperation, the project helps operationalise ASEAN's ambition for a low-carbon, inclusive and climate-resilient region. Improved forest management delivers measurable results from increased carbon storage and avoided emissions, to healthier ecosystems and safer communities. At the same time, the project generates social co-benefits by working closely with local communities and integrating traditional knowledge into restoration efforts, reinforcing ASEAN's commitment to people-centred, inclusive development.

This project will be implemented in close partnership with the ASEAN Secretariat under the guidance of ASEAN Senior Officials on Forestry.

“ROOTED focuses on transboundary forest ecosystems—among ASEAN’s most ecologically and socially significant landscapes—where coordination across borders is essential. By advancing nature-based solutions in these shared areas, the project supports environmental resilience, biodiversity protection, and inclusive benefits for communities and countries across the region.”

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