

# Go Digital ASEAN

digital skills to unlock new economic opportunities

<b>200k individuals</b>
4k Brunei
15k Cambodia
20k Indonesia
8k Laos
15k Malaysia
8k Myanmar
25k Philippines
100 Singapore
40k Thailand
65k Vietnam


ASEAN, the world’s fifth-largest economy, is moving towards greater economic integration yet is severely constrained by an expanding digital divide. This divide will only deepen in the Covid-19 pandemic and severely impact ASEAN’s micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs). Today, MSMEs account for 99% of businesses in key sectors of most ASEAN economies. MSMEs and underemployed workers are closely connected. To be successful, MSMEs need access to more digitally literate workers. For underemployed workers from rural areas and recent graduates, MSMEs are their best option for future employment.


Targeting disadvantaged communities across ASEAN, the Go Digital ASEAN initiative is designed to equip MSMEs and the emerging workforce, particularly those in rural and isolated areas, with digital skills and tools; expand economic opportunity across ASEAN countries; and minimize the negative impact from the Covid-19 crisis. The project will reach up to 200,000 underserved people and rural micro-enterprises across the region, including 60% women and 40% youth (ages 15–35). Leveraging The Asia Foundation’s on-ground networks, the initiative will bring critical digital skills training directly to those who need it the most.

## RESPONSE TO COVID-19

Covid-19 is a significant threat to enterprises across ASEAN. The disruption of business operations and supply chains, along with the slowdown in sectors such as tourism, is putting MSMEs at severe risk. Digital capacity will be vital to helping small-scale entrepreneurs stay in business, providing access to wider markets, information, and services previously unavailable.



 47% are micro, small, and medium enterprise owners

 53% are underemployed workers; including youth, ethnic minorities, and people with disabilities



## CURRICULUM



1-ON-1  
TRAINING



DIGITAL  
LITERACY



DIGITAL  
TOOLS



ONLINE  
SAFETY



FOLLOW-UP  
MENTORING

## A COMMUNITY APPROACH

Working with governments, local partners, and youth volunteers across the 10 ASEAN countries, Go Digital ASEAN delivers trainings for beneficiaries in villages and secondary cities, equips MSME owners and workers with the capacity to engage in the digital economy, and provides information on Covid-19 assistance.

The local partners have deep-rooted experience working with rural, poor, and disadvantaged communities, including women, youth, ethnic minorities, and people with disabilities. These partners were also selected for their expertise in the informal sector or in target industries such as agriculture, tourism, and handicrafts.

## FUNDAMENTALS OF DIGITAL LITERACY & ONLINE SAFETY AWARENESS

Go Digital ASEAN provides customized training and tools to help people succeed in the digital economy. With increased Internet access comes an added layer of vulnerability from online threats. The initiative addresses these issues by cultivating online safety awareness to help ensure a safe and secure digital footprint.

## TOWARDS ASEAN'S DIGITAL INTEGRATION FRAMEWORK

New technologies are creating pivotal shifts in the way people live, work, and interact, and governments want to ensure their countries are not left behind. In response, Go Digital ASEAN supports the digital talent and entrepreneurship objectives of the ASEAN Digital Integration Framework (ADIF), set out by the ASEAN Coordinating Committee on MSMEs. The activities will also contribute to the ASEAN Strategic Action Plan for SME Development (2016-2025). The project is working with both MSME owners and underemployed workers to improve their digital literacy, as the future success of each group will be mutually reinforcing.

## About Go Digital ASEAN

The Go Digital ASEAN initiative focuses on closing the digital gap across ASEAN and approved for implementation by the ASEAN Coordinating Committee on Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (ACCMSME) during its 8th Meeting in November 2019. Implemented by The Asia Foundation, with support from Google.org, Google's philanthropic arm, the initiative will train up to 200,000 people from rural regions and underserved communities—including entrepreneurs, underemployed youth, and women. Working with local partners in Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Viet Nam, the USD\$3.3 million grant from Google.org will broaden participation in the digital economy to include groups that have the most to gain from digital literacy skills and online safety awareness. Amidst the Covid-19 crisis, this initiative will also be a mechanism for helping MSMEs to learn about programs or assistance that can help them continue to operate during the Covid-19 crisis.