



The AANZFTA Implementation Support Program - Strengthening Economic Cooperation

REGIONAL TRADE FOR DEVELOPMENT (RT4D)

Supported by the Governments of Australia and New Zealand.



Regional Trade for Development (RT4D)

Funded by the Governments of Australia and New Zealand, the \$48.7 million Regional Trade for Development (RT4D) supports ASEAN economies to meet their commitments and realise the full benefits of the Agreement Establishing the ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Area (AANZFTA) and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Agreement.

Comprising the AANZFTA Implementation Support Program (AISP) and the RCEP Implementation Support Program (RISP), RT4D manages Australia's AUD 46.3 million and New Zealand's NZD 2.1 million commitments to this initiative until 2028.

RT4D is built on and takes learnings from over a decade of economic cooperation delivered under the AANZFTA Economic Cooperation Support Programme (2011-2022).

Our Mission

Contribute to the realisation of integrated, cohesive, equitable, and resilient regional economies in which the benefits of open, predictable, transparent, rules-based and non-discriminatory trade are shared by all.

Our Impact

RT4D benefits regional economies through governments, micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), women entrepreneurs, and entrepreneurs with disabilities by enhancing their skills, networks, and resources.

We aim for trade that fosters regional integration, equitable growth and shared prosperity across the ASEAN region, contributing to a resilient, inclusive, and people-centred ASEAN Community.

How we work

- Tailored and Inclusive Support**
Offering tailored, national-level support to address ASEAN Member States' (AMS) specific needs, with a practical focus on integrating **Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI)** as a key cross-cutting priority in all project designs.
- Strategic Approach to FTA Implementation**
Supporting AANZFTA Parties in the planning and delivery of projects that address strategic sectoral priorities for FTA implementation.
- Enhanced Stakeholder Engagement**
Fostering deeper engagement and relationship-building between businesses and AANZFTA Party governments, ensuring early buy-in and ongoing coordination with stakeholders for impactful outcomes.
- Adaptive Learning and Delivery**
Providing robust Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) support, integrated into project planning and employing flexible delivery methods, including hybrid (in-person and virtual) formats, to maximise access and participation in capacity-building activities.

The Second Protocol to Amend the Agreement Establishing the AANZFTA (AANZFTA Upgrade)

The entry into force of the AANZFTA Upgrade is a critical milestone in the region's economic integration. The Upgrade unlocks a range of new outcomes to ensure the FTA meets today's business needs with modern trade processes and trade in services access. The AANZFTA Upgrade entered into force on 21 April 2025, after Australia, New Zealand, Brunei Darussalam, Lao PDR, Malaysia and Singapore ratified the agreement. The Upgrade entered into force for Vietnam on 22 August 2025.

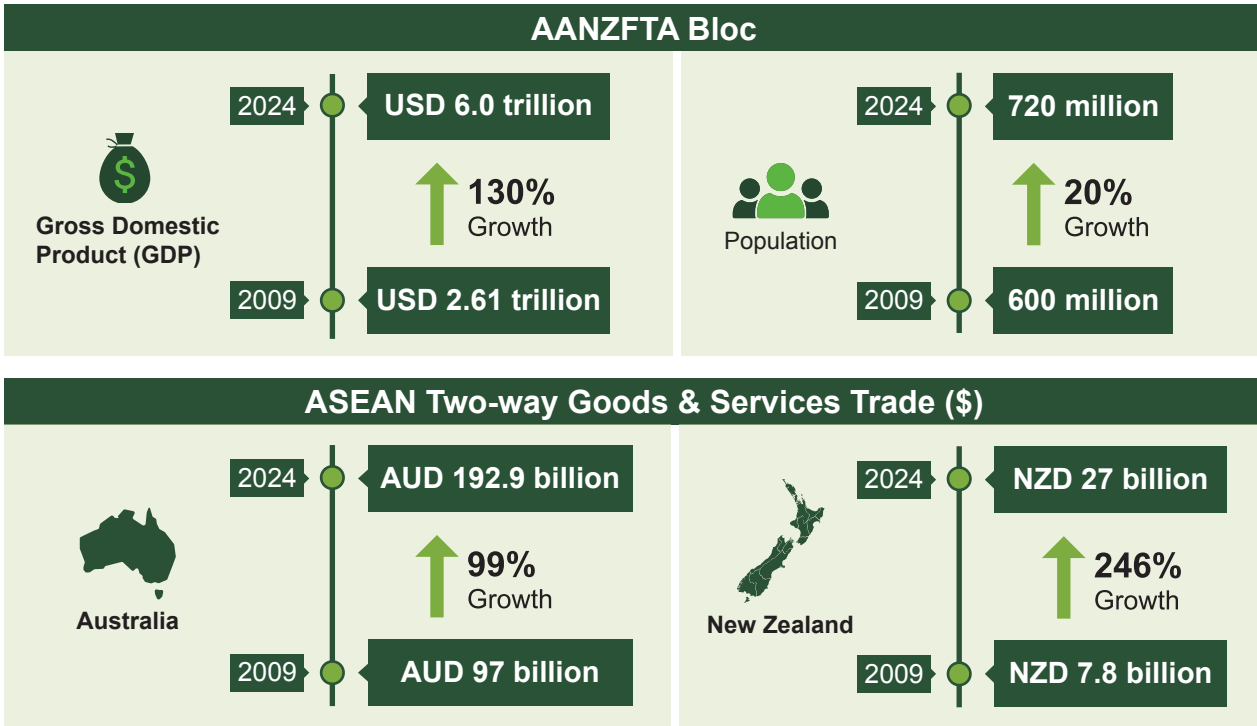
At a time of growing challenges for global economic and trade policy and business uncertainty, the AANZFTA Upgrade promotes an open, stable, and predictable environment that improves the confidence and ease of doing business for traders in the region. The AANZFTA Upgrade's cooperative, collective and regional efforts to liberalise markets, address non-tariff barriers and expand the benefits of trade continues to maximise pathways for growth.

The Upgrade builds on the strong foundations of the original landmark AANZFTA with new and enhanced chapters and provisions that:

- modernise and simplify trade processes;
- address new and emerging barriers to minimise friction;
- enhance transparency and make complying with laws and regulations easier, including core improvements for service providers - particularly in education, mining and engineering, banking and insurance, investment, and e-commerce/data storage;
- promote sustainable and inclusive development; and
- ensure Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) can access and take full advantage of the agreement.

Through the AANZFTA Implementation Support Program (AISP), RT4D provides tailored support to enhance the capabilities of ASEAN Member States to implement the AANZFTA by strengthening skills, building networks, facilitating policy options and ensuring that trade benefits everyone, including MSMEs, women and people with disabilities.

The AANZFTA in Numbers





Supporting AANZFTA Implementation

Since 2023, RT4D has supported AANZFTA Parties in the selection, design and implementation of economic cooperation projects that address sector specific FTA implementation priorities.

Balanced Approach to Supporting AANZFTA Implementation

The AISP project portfolio includes 35 projects and has a total approved budget of AUD 9.96 million. The portfolio features projects that address FTA implementation priorities across 12 sectors, ensuring balanced alignment with the needs of the AANZFTA parties. This broad engagement supports AMS in engaging, influencing and benefitting from an open and rules-based trade architecture.



Capacity Building to Address FTA Implementation Knowledge Gaps

AISP project implementation included the delivery of 47 trainings and workshops that strengthened the knowledge and capacity of government and private sector stakeholders to effectively implement and leverage the AANZFTA. Trainings and workshops have:

- Engaged and supported 1,964 participants from all AANZFTA Parties.
- Maintained inclusion principles across all areas of activity design and delivery, ensuring strong representation from women (53.7% of participants) and of persons with disabilities (35 total participants).
- Promoted awareness and strengthened access to AANZFTA benefits by engaging and supporting 225 businesses.

Participants have reported consistently high satisfaction rates and improvements in their capacity and knowledge, demonstrating the effectiveness of in-person, hybrid and in-person formats.

90.1%

of participants indicated capacity building activities were relevant to their work.



89.6%

of participants reported increased understanding of FTA implementation technical areas.



85.5%

of participants noted that they are likely to apply knowledge learned to implement FTAs within their area of competence.



85.3%

of participants indicated capacity building activities increased their level of understanding of GEDSI in trade.





Advancing Inclusive Trade Through GEDSI Integration in AANZFTA Implementation

RT4D is advancing inclusive trade by embedding Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) principles across the design and implementation of AISP projects.

Since 2023, all 35 AISP projects have included GEDSI dimensions. Of these, five projects specifically focused on improving access to the benefits of the AANZFTA for MSMEs, women entrepreneurs, and persons with disabilities. These targeted initiatives have delivered tangible outcomes that includes:

- Empowered 14 women entrepreneurs to register trademarks and access national intellectual property systems in Lao PDR, allowing them to distinguish themselves and build their products for domestic and international markets.
- Supported 47 women entrepreneurs and 21 organisations of people with disabilities through the delivery of four business engagement roundtables to enhance their understanding and utilisation of the AANZFTA agreement.
- Developed and published a Business Guide designed to specifically assist ASEAN MSMEs and women-led businesses to understand and use the AANZFTA agreement.
- Identified ways to promote the economic participation of women and persons with disabilities through research supporting the implementation of AANZFTA Upgrade commitments on Trade and Sustainable Development and Intellectual Property.

Looking Ahead to 2026

RT4D, in close collaboration with AANZFTA Parties, will continue supporting the identification, design and implementation of projects that support Parties' strategic priorities and needs.

Implementation of the AISP portfolio will remain a key focus throughout 2025 and 2026. In June 2025, the portfolio added eight new projects across eight sectors that support FTA implementation across key priorities, including:

- Communicating the benefits and promoting the utilisation of the AANZFTA.
- Promoting regional dialogue and cooperation on technical areas that include the digital trade, financial services and the protection of animal, plant and human health.
- Developing regional guidelines that foster alignment and common approaches to Intellectual Property protection and product technical standards.
- Enhancing the competitiveness and inclusiveness of the region's trade in services sector.

This ongoing effort involves developing robust project designs through close consultation. All projects will adhere to the highest standards, consistently meeting Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) and Gender Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) criteria.

Looking ahead, these efforts will continue to ensure the effective delivery of economic cooperation objectives that support AANZFTA implementation and ensure its benefits are accessible to everyone.



About RT4D

The \$48.7million Regional Trade for Development (RT4D) initiative, funded by both the Governments of Australia and New Zealand, assists ASEAN Member States (AMS) in meeting their commitments and realising the advantages offered by the Agreement establishing the ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Area (AANZFTA), and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP). RT4D supports AMS in benefitting from an open, free and rules-based trading system.

Through the AANZFTA Implementation Support Program (AISP) and the RCEP Implementation Support Program (RISP), RT4D provides tailored support to enhance the capabilities of ASEAN Member States by strengthening skills, building networks, facilitating policy options and ensuring that trade benefits everyone, including Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), women and people with disabilities.

The Regional Trade for Development Initiative:

- provides ASEAN with access to world class technical expertise to support economic cooperation activities.
- delivers economic cooperation activities, working closely with ASEAN Member States and ASEAN Secretariat.
- has a strong focus on less developed ASEAN economies to ensure that it responds to the different needs and readiness of ASEAN.
- facilitates implementation of the provisions of selected FTAs to support inclusive development outcomes.



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