



ILO/Japan  
Multi-bilateral  
Programme



International  
Labour  
Organization

# Japan and the ILO



Supporting Decent Work in Asia-Pacific  
for nearly four decades



Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific

ASIAN 2006  
DECENT WORK  
DECADE 2015

# JAPAN AND THE ILO: A PARTNERSHIP FOR DEVELOPMENT



ILO Japan Partnership Signing Ceremony.

For nearly 40 years the Government of Japan – a founding member of the ILO – has supported ILO projects that address the changing needs of workers and employers in Asia and the Pacific.

The Japanese Government started its technical support work with ILO in Asia in 1974 by organizing regional seminars on various workplace issues, including occupational safety and health, industrial relations and labour administration. By the 1980s Japan had expanded its contributions to include individual development projects in countries across the region.

In recent years the Government of Japan contributed more than US\$4 million towards ILO work to help reduce unemployment, improve working conditions and help lift people out of poverty.

Through the ILO/Japan Multi-bilateral Programme, the UN Trust Fund for Human Security and direct contributions (such as a fund for a social safety net), Japan continues to support ILO projects covering a wide range of issues, in ways that are specifically designed to respond flexibly to the needs of the different countries and constituents in Asia and the Pacific.

# ILO/JAPAN MULTI-BILATERAL PROGRAMME:

Much of the Government of Japan's technical cooperation work with the ILO is conducted through the ILO/Japan Multi-bilateral Programme. This long-established partnership for development is based in Bangkok, Thailand, at the ILO's Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific. An on-site international member of staff from Japan oversees the programme and directs its operations.

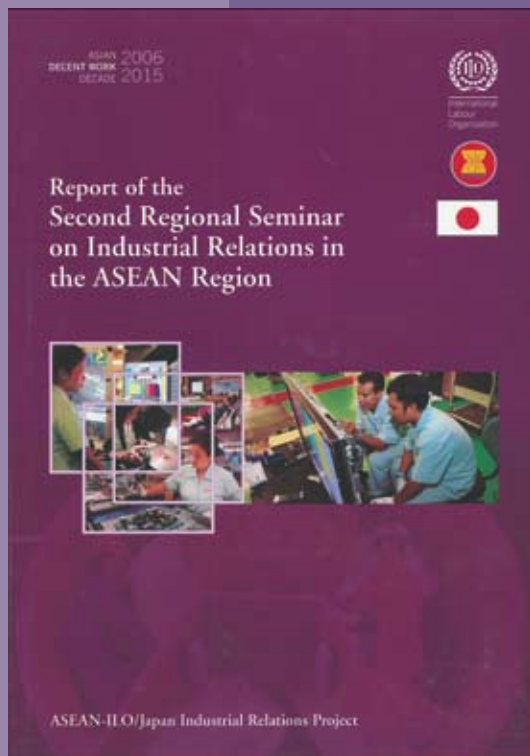
Japan and the ILO have been working together to provide direct technical assistance in 18 of the ILO's member States in Asia and the Pacific. These are the ASEAN countries plus Bangladesh, China, Fiji, India, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

Recent project works in Asia and the Pacific involve coordination with governments, workers' and employers' organizations and other multi-lateral bodies. The projects respond to a range of national concerns such as unemployment, social protection, occupational safety and health standards, greener business practices, and the transition of informal workplaces and practices into the more formal economy.

Map of ILO member States in Asia and the Pacific



# ASEAN-ILO/JAPAN INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS PROJECT



The ASEAN-ILO/Japan Industrial Relations Project was launched in 2008, with the ILO (as the implementing partner) supporting the goals of ASEAN's member States and working closely with the ASEAN Secretariat on delivery. The main objectives of the project are to promote constructive industrial relations among the ASEAN countries, support the ASEAN Secretariat in building its capacity to disseminate knowledge and information about good industrial relations practices among its members, and to strengthen the relationship between ASEAN and the ILO's Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific.

The project's approach is to add to the existing body of information and knowledge on industrial relations (IR), identify new issues and trends, and review IR institutions and processes - with a view to enabling the ASEAN countries to address emerging IR issues in the changing world of work.

Working in collaboration with the ASEAN Secretariat, the project has also contributed to building tripartism and dialogue at ASEAN level (as called for in the ASEAN Labour Ministers Work Programme 2010-2015). In promoting industrial relations the Ministers have adopted the ASEAN Guidelines on Good Industrial Relations Practices, agreed during the 21st ASEAN Labour Ministers Meeting in 2010.

For information on this and other work please visit our website at: [www.ilo.org/japantc](http://www.ilo.org/japantc) .



# OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH: PROTECTING WORKERS, IMPROVING PRODUCTIVITY

The ILO's occupational safety and health projects (OSH) take a simple, practical approach to improving working conditions on farms, in small and medium size enterprises (SMEs) and in home workplaces. These projects have improved working conditions in countries across Asia, including Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand and Viet Nam.

Introducing easy workplace safety measures – such as a guard covering moving parts on a machine or local language warning labels on chemical or fertilizer containers – have been the key to the project's success. Workers and employers learn from examples of safer working practices in their communities, using inexpensive, local materials to make their workplaces safer and healthier.

This well-established, Japanese-supported OSH work, continues in Southeast Asia, with an emphasis on reducing risks from hazardous work.

The project has contributed to the implementation of Viet Nam's 1st National OSH Programme, leading to the development of the 2nd National OSH Programme for 2011-2015. With reference to the ILO Promotional Framework for OSH Convention (No. 187, 2006), the project aims to strengthen national OSH systems, resulting in the delivery of adequate OSH protection for all workplaces. The project continues to expand its technical cooperation in Cambodia and Viet Nam and to strengthen OSH in hazardous industries, within the framework of respective National OSH Programmes and OSH Master Plans.

For more information visit ASEAN-OSHNET (ASEAN Occupational Safety & Health Network) at [www.aseanoshnet.org/](http://www.aseanoshnet.org/)



ASIAN  
DECENT WORK  
DECADE 2006  
2015

# UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE AND EMPLOYMENT SERVICES IN ASEAN

Most countries in the ASEAN area do not have fully functional public employment service agencies or unemployment insurance systems (UI). Of the ten member states of ASEAN, Thailand established the first UI scheme in 2004. In response to the economic crises of the late 2000's, and to cushion against the impact of future economic shocks, Viet Nam launched its own UI scheme in 2010.

The ILO/Japan Project to Promote and Build Unemployment Insurance and Employment Services offers support to ASEAN member governments as they set up instruments and institutions that allow immediate measures to guarantee income replacement and help the unemployed re-enter the labour market and find opportunities for decent work.

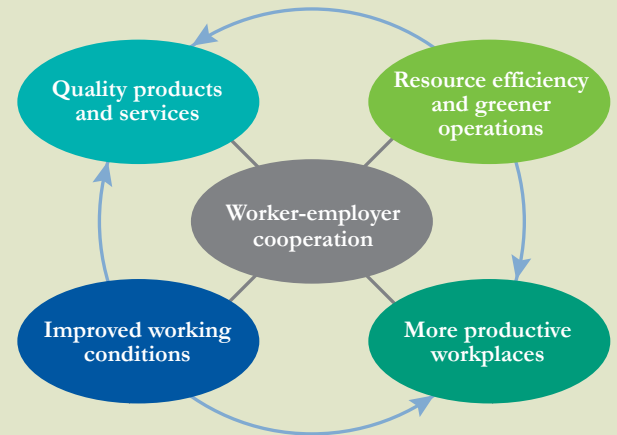
Specifically, the project provides technical assistance to Viet Nam to improve its UI scheme. Similarly, by creating a regional knowledge and expertise platform, the project offers technical inputs to Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines, who are planning their own UI systems. In close collaboration with the ASEAN Secretariat the project also seeks to raise government and social partner awareness about the importance of UI and other income security programmes, as well as linkages with employment promotion. These innovative measures not only aim to address the needs of formal employees but also those of workers in the informal economy.



# GREENER BUSINESS ASIA

In coordination with the ILO's global Green Jobs initiative, the Government of Japan has supported the ILO-initiated Greener Business Asia Project, with the aim of promoting capacity building and bipartite cooperation to support greener workplaces and sustainable enterprises.

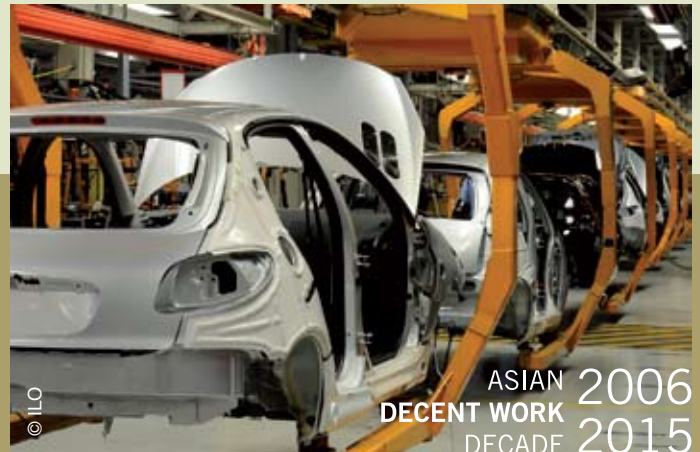
Adopting environmentally-sound practices and technologies is not only necessary to ensure the longer-term viability of enterprises and economic sectors, by safeguarding the natural capital on which they depend, but it can also be part of a strategy to maintain or improve firms' competitiveness; it can bring cost-savings or the discovery of new market niches.



Dialogue and cooperation between employers and workers in the framework of the promotion of decent work principles are of critical importance. The project supports an integrated approach that helps companies to improve their triple-bottom line performance: it links environmentally-friendly practices to improvements in productivity and overall competitiveness, while advancing the decent work agenda in the workplace.

The project is implemented in Thailand and the Philippines and focuses on the tourism and the automotive industries, respectively.

A community of practice is now established on green jobs for Asia and the Pacific (Greenjobs-AP) at: <http://greenjobs-ap.ilobkk.or.th>



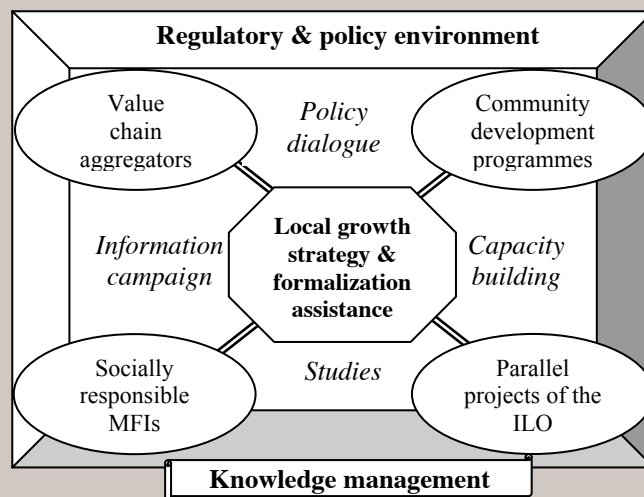


## A photograph showing a woman with dark hair and a bindi applying makeup to a woman lying down. The woman lying down is wearing a blue and white patterned sari with pink flowers. The woman applying makeup is wearing a black top. They are in a room with a wooden ladder-like structure in the background. The text "© ILO" is visible in the bottom right corner.



Decent work deficits in the growing informal economy coupled with limited growth in formal sector employment are becoming a pressing challenge for member States in South Asia. Vast informal economies could also limit the growth potential of domestic demand and fuel the polarization of these societies.

The project will address these challenges in three ways. First, it helps improve the regulatory and policy environment at local level, to incentivize the creation of formal jobs and the formalization of informal businesses and jobs. Secondly, it demonstrates how an integrated decent work strategy could promote formalization on the ground. Finally, it disseminates good practices and tools supporting formalization, which can be replicated and mainstreamed.





# JAPAN AND THE ILO: WORKING TOGETHER TO BOOST SOCIAL PROTECTION IN ASIA-PACIFIC

In recognition of the growing importance that social safety nets play in times of financial crisis and unemployment, Japan's Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW) is increasing its contributions to strengthen social protection for people in Asia and the Pacific. In 2011, the Ministry contributed the equivalent of US\$1.4 million to the ILO/Japan Fund for Building Social Safety Nets in Asia and the Pacific. The Fund aims to strengthen the capacity of Asian countries to develop social protection systems for working women and men in the formal and informal economy.

The Fund is contributing to projects and events that build the capacity, influence and effectiveness of research institutions, trade unions, employers' organizations and NGOs in working to improve social protection. This may include statistical analysis and human resource development. Funding will also be available for activities related to disaster relief, such as employment services, vocational training and occupational safety and health.



# FURTHER COOPERATION WITH THE ILO

## 15<sup>th</sup> Asia and the Pacific Regional Meeting (APRM)

In December 2011, nine months after the catastrophic earthquake and tsunami that struck Japan, the Government of Japan hosted the ILO's 15<sup>th</sup> Asia and the Pacific Regional Meeting (APRM) in Kyoto. Recognising that rebuilding lives and livelihoods is central to recovery efforts from such traumatic events, the Government also hosted a "Special Session on National Disaster Response with a Central Focus on Employment Policy", that focused on lessons learned and good practices for employment-led recovery efforts.

## Responding to Crisis in Asia and the Pacific

In addition to its multi- and bi-lateral cooperation, the Government of Japan supported the ILO's natural disaster response work in the region by organizing an ILO experts group meeting on crisis response.

The Asia-Pacific Region has been hit by a number of massive natural disasters in recent years. In 2004 the Indian Ocean Tsunami devastated countries from Sri Lanka to Indonesia. Earthquakes struck Pakistan in 2005 and 2008 – and Sichuan, China, that same year. Meanwhile, Cyclone Nargis left a trail of death and destruction in Myanmar. In 2011, the Greater Mekong Sub-region experienced some of the worst flooding in decades. These disasters have made evident the need for the ILO to focus on employment-led reconstruction and pre-disaster preparedness as part of the implementation of the Decent Work Agenda.

ASIAN  
DECENT WORK  
DECADE 2006  
2015



## Current ILO projects funded by Japan:

- Strengthening ASEAN Networks for Industrial Relations
- Improving Working and Living Conditions of Farmers in Viet Nam
- Greener Business Asia in Thailand and the Philippines
- Unemployment Insurance and Employment Services in ASEAN
- Formalization of the Informal Economy in South Asia (Bangladesh, India, Nepal)

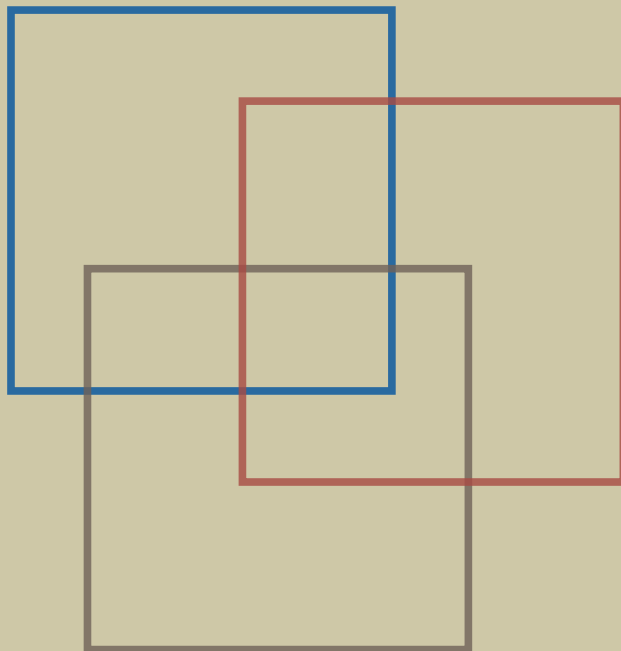


## Previous ILO projects funded by Japan:

- Promotion of Decent Work for Youth in Sri Lanka
- Expansion of Employment Opportunities for Women in Cambodia and Viet Nam
- Economic and Social Empowerment of Returned Victims of Trafficking
- Managing Cross-Border Movement of Labour in Southeast Asia
- Promoting Human Security and Reducing Poverty among Indigenous Peoples in Papua, Indonesia
- Networking of National Institutes for Labour Studies in Asia and the Pacific
- Launch of Labour Law Network
- Skills and Employability for Asia and the Pacific
- Japanese Technical Officers Programme







**DECENT WORK**

A better world starts here.

**Japan Multi-bilateral Programme  
International Labour Organization  
Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific**

**United Nations Building,**  
10th Floor, Rajdamnern Nok Avenue,  
Bangkok 10200 THAILAND

Tel: +662 288 2301

Fax: +662 288 1023

Email: [bkk\\_japantc@ilo.org](mailto:bkk_japantc@ilo.org)

[www.ilo.org/japantc](http://www.ilo.org/japantc)