

MEDIA RELEASE

Launch of the Australian Business in ASEAN 2019 Survey

The Australia-ASEAN Chamber of Commerce (AustCham ASEAN) today launched the 2019 edition of their annual business survey. The survey provides a deep insight into the views and experiences of Australian business in ASEAN, from within each of the ASEAN nations.

This fourth iteration of the Australian Business in ASEAN Survey shows that Australian business continues to be an important contributor in ASEAN, and those operating in the region are keen to expand their presence and investment in the region. Among the key findings:

- **Australian firms are bullish about the region.** Almost two-thirds (60%) of respondents had moved to take advantage of the ASEAN opportunity in the past two years by expanding their presence in the region. More than 80% of businesses in the region are planning to expand their investment in the next five years. For firms seeking to expand, the Philippines is now the most prominent destination of future investment, with Vietnam, Thailand, and Indonesia also attracting strong investment plans.
- **Three main factors are attracting Australian businesses to ASEAN.** The growth in the consuming class in ASEAN continues to be the primary driver for almost two-thirds of firms. Improvements in infrastructure are the second most compelling drivers of expanding trade and investment, with the increasing availability of skilled labour now identified by one-third (32%) of firms, overtaking regional integration as the third most important driver.
- **Australia's presence in the region is diverse.** While almost one-third of businesses are in professional or financial services, Australian business has a significant footprint in hospitality and entertainment, education and training, and manufacturing. In addition, there is significant variation in the size of operations, with almost half of firms turning over less than \$5 million, but almost one-quarter employing more than 200 people in the ASEAN state from which they responded.
- **Barriers remain to deepening Australian business engagement in ASEAN.** Despite access to skilled labour becoming an increasing driver of expansion in ASEAN, it continues to be a roadblock for one-third (37%) of firms. Barriers to ownership and investment (39%), and corruption (43%) continue to be identified by a significant number of businesses as challenges to operating in the region. Further, more than half of respondents need further information on the progress and impacts of the ASEAN economic community, as only 7% were confident they had a detailed understanding of what it means to their business.

“Australia and ASEAN are critical partners at a time of historic change. Our close cooperation and warm people to people ties position our businesses well to maximise inclusive growth opportunities,” commented H.E. Jane Duke, Australian Ambassador to ASEAN, and AustCham ASEAN Patron. “This year’s Australian Business in ASEAN Survey is a valuable resource for understanding the ASEAN business environment and I recommend it to all Australian firms and advisers with interests in the region.”

“I encourage you to read the case studies in this publication detailing how our partners have progressed in their different areas of expertise. If you are interested in contributing to any of these focus areas, please don’t hesitate to contact AustCham ASEAN: we are eager to discuss how AustCham ASEAN can help Australian business best seize ASEAN business opportunities,” noted Brenton

Mauriello, AustCham ASEAN President.

The full 2019 survey report can be found at AustCham ASEAN's website: austchamasean.com

This activity received grant funding from the Australia-ASEAN Council of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.



About AustCham ASEAN

The Australia-ASEAN Chamber of Commerce (AustCham ASEAN) was officially launched by the Australian Prime Minister, the Hon Malcolm Turnbull MP, on Saturday June 3, 2017. AustCham ASEAN is a 'chamber of chambers' with its membership base the officially registered Australian chambers and business councils from across ASEAN.

The organisation is a registered society in Singapore with the following Foundation Members:

- The Australian Chamber of Commerce, Cambodia
- Indonesia Australia Business Council
- The Australia Chamber of Commerce Lao PDR
- Australian Chamber of Commerce Myanmar Association
- Malaysia-Australia Business Council
- The Australia-New Zealand Chamber of Commerce (Philippines) Inc
- Australian Chamber of Commerce, Singapore
- Australian-Thai Chamber of Commerce
- The Australian Chamber of Commerce in Vietnam

AustCham ASEAN aims to deepen Australian business engagement with ASEAN by (1) Informing Australian business on regional integration developments and the business landscape; (2) Explaining the contribution of Australian business to ASEAN markets; and (3) Advocating for policies, rules and regulations that support Australian business activities in ASEAN.

Website: austchamasean.com LinkedIn: [linkedin.com/company/austcham-asean](https://www.linkedin.com/company/austcham-asean)

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