



**THE ASEAN STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN FOR
CONSUMER PROTECTION (ASAPCP) 2016-
2025: MEETING THE CHALLENGES OF A
PEOPLE-CENTERED ASEAN BEYOND 2015**

FINAL

1. Background

The ASEAN Strategic Action Plan for Consumer Protection or the ASAPCP sets out ASEAN's strategy for consumer policy over the next ten years (2016-2025)¹. The ASAPCP builds upon the ACCP work on consumer protection since its establishment of the ACCP in 2007. The focus of the ACCP work has been to ensure that consumer protection legislation is in place in all AMS, consumer access to information is enhanced, mechanisms for consumer redress and recalls are effective and running, and institutional capacity are strengthened. These are reflected in the strategic approaches under the work plan for the ACCP 2012-2015, and the significant progress made in the last 9 years.

The ASAPCP comprises of four goals, covering a ten-year period from 2016 to 2025. The implementation of the ASAPCP will be overseen by the ASEAN Committee on Consumer Protection (ACCP) in cooperation with other ASEAN sectoral bodies, and relevant consumer bodies and stakeholders. The four goals under the ASAPCP are:

- I. A Common ASEAN Consumer Protection Framework is Established;
- II. A High Common Level of Consumer Empowerment and Protection is Ensured;
- III. High Consumer Confidence in the AEC and Cross-border Commercial Transactions is Instituted; and
- IV. Consumer Concerns in all ASEAN Policies are Integrated.

These goals are designed to allow ASEAN to work towards a common consumer protection framework, build ASEAN citizens confidence in the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), integrate consumer concerns into all other ASEAN policies and to maximize the benefits of the AEC for consumers and business.

2. Mission Statement

The following are the objectives of the ASAPCP:

- I. to develop a dynamic, people-centered AEC that generates prosperity for consumers and business;
- II. to build consumer confidence in a fair and transparent ASEAN markets; and
- III. to achieve this by working along and together with AMS, national consumer administrations and consumer organizations.

¹ See Appendix A

Appendix - Summary of the Strategic Goals and Initiatives/Targets

Strategic Goal 1: A Common ASEAN Consumer Protection Framework is Established		
An effective consumer protection regime in ASEAN needs to be evolutionary; a gradual approach to developing an effective consumer protection regime may be more appropriate to suit the consumer landscape in AMS. Such an approach could begin by including, adopting and monitoring the implementation of a set of high-level principles on consumer protection that are adaptable to changes in the AEC, strengthen the enforcement capacities of administrative agencies as well as the use of alternative dispute resolution mechanisms (ADR) for consumer redress		
Outcomes	Initiatives	Timeline
1.1 A set of high-level principles for consumer protection is adopted	1.1.1 Adopt a set of High Level Principles for Consumer Protection	▪ 2017
1.2 Voluntary peer reviews undertaken on all AMS' consumer protection laws	1.2.1 Voluntary peer reviews undertaken based on the set of high-level principles	▪ 2016 – 2025
1.3 AMS consumer protection legislation are modernized and contain provisions on unfair contract terms; e-commerce; product liability/safety and consumer data privacy	1.3.1 Modernization of legislation (taking into account the high-level principles and peer reviews) of relevant provisions of national consumer protection legislation in these areas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ unfair contract terms ○ e-commerce ○ product liability/safety ○ consumer data privacy 	▪ 2020 – 2025
1.4 Enforcement and Monitoring of Consumer Protection Legislation are made effective through the	1.4.1 Develop tools and technical capacity to apply consumer protection legislation 1.4.2 Establish an ASEAN knowledge management and information exchange system	▪ 2016 - 2020

development of capacity building tools and an ASEAN Knowledge Management System		
1.5 Alternative Dispute Resolution mechanisms are made available in AMS	1.5.1 Develop guidelines for common approaches to ADRs including consideration of a mechanism for resolving consumer complaints through consumer groups 1.5.2 Establish of national small claim courts/ADR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2016 – 2020 ▪ 2025
<p><u>Strategic Goal 2</u> : A High Common Level of Consumer Empowerment and Protection is Ensured</p> <p>To empower ASEAN consumers so that markets work for the benefit of ASEAN citizens and competition is boosted significantly. Empowered consumers need real choices, accurate information, market transparency and the confidence that comes from effective protection and solid rights. Consumer empowerment would also require the establishment of consumer protection bodies that would facilitate consumer issue being highlighted more effectively that consumers cannot tackle as individuals. This goal shall ensure that vulnerable consumers have access to information on goods and services, in order to have equal opportunities to make free and informed choices, including through consumer associations.</p>		
Outcomes	Initiatives	Timeline
2.1 Consumer concerns are advocated through availability of consumer forums and associations to highlight issue and concerns	2.1.1 Publish a Report on needs and gaps in access to consumer redress and compensation in ASEAN is undertaken 2.1.2 Hold dialogues, forums and hearings on how to address consumer concerns at the national and the ASEAN level 2.1.3 Establish or strengthen national consumer protection associations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2016-2020
2.2 Consumer knowledge and advocacy are enhanced through development of an online knowledge center	2.2.1 Publish a Handbook on Consumer Protection 2.2.2 Develop information policy tools for consumers 2.2.3 Develop on-line interactive and distance learning tools for consumers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2016-2018

	2.2.4 Establishment of a webpage and data-base “unfair contract terms” and consumer guidance	
	2.2.5 Implement national and regional awareness campaigns	

Strategic Goal 3: High Consumer Confidence in AEC and Cross Border Commercial Transactions is Instituted

The overarching desired outcome for the 2025 ASAPCP is an environment where consumers can transact with confidence. Transacting with confidence in this context means that consumers’ reasonable expectations of transactions will be met. A high level of confidence in AEC and cross border commercial transactions is essential for market stability and for trade within the ASEAN markets in particular. All these factors require an appropriate regulatory framework and enforcement measures to ensure high level of confidence in domestic and cross border transactions.

Outcomes	Initiatives	Timeline
3.1 Product safety enforcement in AMS is strengthened through the establishment of an improved Product Alert System	3.1.1 Develop a framework for the regular collection and assessment of data on product-related injuries at the national and ASEAN levels; 3.1.2 Strengthening the effective functioning of the ASEAN Product Alert System; 3.1.3 Publication of safety standards under the ASEAN Coordinating Committee on Standards and Quality and its Technical Working Groups; 3.1.4 Encourage participation in standard setting work by consumer associations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2016-2020 ▪ 2018-2025
3.2 An ASEAN Regional Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) Network is established	3.2.1 Establish national ODR system 3.2.2 Establish an ASEAN ODR Network 3.2.3 Establish an ASEAN mechanism for cross border complaints and investigations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2016-2025
3.3 Sustainable Consumption is promoted through policy dialogues and information	3.3.1 Promote the development and implementation of policies for sustainable consumption and the integration of those policies with other public policies;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2016-2020

toolkits are developed	<p>3.3.2 Develop tool kits, information and other education materials and strategies that promote sustainable consumption through a mix of policies that could include regulations;</p> <p>3.3.3 Development of a research programme on sustainable consumption</p>	
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Strategic Goal 4: Consumer Concerns in all ASEAN Policies are Integrated

Integrating ASEAN consumer protection policies and priorities into other ASEAN policies and activities will remain essential for the next decade to ensure that they are mutually supportive and deliver results which are beneficial to citizens and other stakeholders. This goal will seek to ensure overall consistency and complementarity between ASAPCP and other relevant ASEAN policies, instruments and actions.

Outcomes	Initiatives	Timeline
4.1 An Impact Assessment Mechanism on Consumer Protection is developed	4.1.1 Establishing a comprehensive impact assessment mechanism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2016-2020
4.2 An ASEAN Consumer Empowerment Index is developed	4.2.1 Research and conferences on consumer policy statistics and development of indices (ASEAN Consumer Empowerment Index) to measure consumer welfare and concerns in markets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2016-2019
4.3 Interface enhanced between Consumer Protection, Competition and related areas	<p>4.3.1 Joint collaboration between ACCP and AEGC on the efficiency and functioning of markets</p> <p>4.3.2 Awareness raising about competition policy and its impact</p> <p>4.3.3 Advocacy initiatives in other areas such as e-commerce, financial services, energy, air transport and telecommunications</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2016-2020