

CONCEPT NOTE

ASEAN Youth Social Innovation Challenge: Finding Alternative Solutions to Plastic Pollution

Background

Fast-growing cities in Southeast Asia are responsible for as much as 60 percent of global plastic waste leaking into the environment. Plastic pollution originates from uncollected waste and leakages in waste management systems. Plastic pollution is also transboundary - up to 95 percent of plastics in our ocean is transported by ten major rivers, eight of which are in Asia. To tackle this issue, close cooperation between societal actors including businesses that care about social and environmental issues is critically needed.

Meanwhile, the youth population is currently the highest ever in ASEAN, with 213 million people between the ages of 15 and 34 years. This generation will be the most vulnerable to, and affected by, destructive human acts and exploitive activities to global as well as local environments and ecosystems. Yet, youths have an immense potential to be changemakers and turn these negative trends around with their creativity. Young entrepreneurs interested in social business are a unique driving force of change. New developments within circular economy and the internet of things could make a significant impact toward tackling plastic pollution. While Southeast Asian countries are in different stages of integrating circular economy as part of their macro-economic policies, the role of innovation and social entrepreneurship is crucial across the region to reach common societal and environmental sustainability goals.

Based on this, the Center for Southeast Asian Studies (CSEAS) in cooperation with the ASEAN Foundation and ASEAN CSR Network, under the ASEAN-Norwegian cooperation project on local capacity building for reducing plastic pollution in the ASEAN region (ASEANO) will organize “*ASEAN Youth Social Innovation Challenge: Finding Alternative Solutions to Plastic Pollution*” to incentivize youth in business to innovate and play a part in tackling plastic pollution. Through this competition, young entrepreneurs in 10 ASEAN Member States can join and win a grant to scale-up their business.

Objectives

The objectives of this activity are as follows:

- To empower early-stage social business through capacity building, mentorship, and financial support
- To inspire youth-led social businesses to make innovations toward reducing plastic pollution
- To raise awareness about plastic pollution among ASEAN youth
- To contribute to ASEANO project outputs and build capacity amongst businesses to tackle plastic pollution
- To fill the gap in private sector initiatives tackling plastic pollution in ASEAN

Expected Outputs

- Documented 10 best practice cases of social business initiatives
- Train 30 young entrepreneurs in reducing plastic pollution in ASEAN

Eligibility

To be eligible to join the competition, participants must:

- Youths (age 18-30 years old) with ASEAN nationality
- Form a team consisting of 3 people
- Actively manage a social business in the early implementation, has been in operation for at least 3 months

Rules and Regulations

- Each participant can only join one team
- Each team must fill the application form before 24 May 2021 at bit.ly/Register-AYSIC
- If selected, each team must be committed to participate in the full cycle of the program

The Selection Process

The selection process will be conducted in a series of events hosted on online platforms. The series is as follows:

Stage 1

Call for applications: 12 April – 24 May 2021

- Participants register as a team and fill the form at bit.ly/Register-AYSIC
- The application form consists of question such as:
 - Describe your social business. We encourage you to use pictures or videos
 - What is the idea or innovation that drives your business?
 - Please explain your social business' impact or outcome in tackling plastic pollution
 - Do you think your social business is sustainable? Please explain the long-term prospects

Finalists Announcement: 1 June 2021

- The reviewers will shortlist the best 10 social business to be finalists based on the selection criteria
- Shortlisted teams can join capacity building with experts and leading industries

Stage 2

Capacity building: 8 - 9 June 2021

- There will be zoom sessions with:
 - Leading industries to enhance finalists' capability in managing businesses
 - Experts to sharpen finalists' knowledge of plastic pollution in ASEAN

Stage 3

Final Round: 15 July 2021

- Finalists submit a business plan in a proposal form on 8 July 2021
- Finalists pitch their plan on how they will scale-up and utilizing new expertise gained from capacity building on 15 July 2021
- From the pitch, judges will shortlist the best social business to receive a grant based on selection criteria

Mentoring Sessions: July – October 2021

- The sessions will be conducted once a month for 3 months
- The objective of mentoring session is assisting winner in scaling up according to business plan and goals

Timeline

No.	Date	Activity
1.	12 April – 24 May 2021	Call for application
2.	1 June 2021	Ten finalists announcement
3.	8 – 9 June 2021	Capacity building for finalists
4.	8 July 2021	Business plan deadline for ten finalists
5.	15 July 2021	Pitching and winner announcement
6.	15 – 30 July 2021	Grant disbursement for winner
7.	July – October 2021	Mentoring sessions for winner
8.	October 2021	Final report for winner

Prize

The best proposal will be awarded a grant of \$10,000 and mentoring by leaders in their field

Selection Criteria

- Business model sustainability
- Business scalability
- Idea innovation
- Impact in tackling plastic pollution
- Other exceptional aspects/uniqueness