
ASEAN and Kenya Economic Relations

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ABSTRACT: This paper investigates the business and investment opportunities between Kenya and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). The study aims to identify the opportunities, challenges, and strategies to further enhance economic ties between the two regions. The guiding research questions of the study are:

1. What are the current business and investment opportunities available between Kenya and ASEAN?
2. What are the main challenges for enhancing economic ties between the two regions?
3. How to develop better strategies that can be adopted to strengthen business and investments between Kenya and ASEAN?

This paper is a revised version of my other paper entitled: "Somalia and ASEAN Investment and Economic Relations" which addresses similar issues as both countries are in the same region in Africa but dissimilar economic status. The problem is that despite the potential benefits of closer economic ties between Kenya and ASEAN, there is limited research on the subject. The research objectives are to identify the current state of business and investment between Kenya and ASEAN, to analyse the opportunities and challenges for enhancing economic ties between the two regions, and to recommend strategies for strengthening business and investment relations between Kenya and ASEAN.

The methodology adopted for this study involves a qualitative research design, which includes a review of relevant literature. While the findings of this study will be useful for the policymakers, businesses, and investors on the potential opportunities and challenges of doing business in Kenya and ASEAN and provide insights into strategies for enhancing economic ties between the two regions.

Keywords: Kenya, investment, economic, ASEAN.

INTRODUCTION

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is a regional intergovernmental organization founded in 1967 to promote economic growth, social progress, and cultural development among its members (ASEAN, n.d.). Over the past five decades, ASEAN has grown to become one of the most dynamic and influential economic blocs in the world, with a combined GDP of over \$3 trillion and a population of more than 640 million (ASEAN, 2021). Kenya, as a member of the African Union, can learn much from the experience of ASEAN in promoting regional integration and cooperation. In this article, we will examine the achievements of ASEAN and what Kenya can benefit from the ASEAN experience.

The study of ASEAN's achievements and its potential benefits for Kenya is important for several reasons. First, it can provide insights into the benefits of regional integration and cooperation for economic growth and stability. Second, it can inform policymaking in Kenya by highlighting the potential benefits of regional integration and cooperation and by providing recommendations for how Kenya can best benefit from the ASEAN experience. Finally, it can contribute to the larger body of literature on regional integration and cooperation by providing a case study of the ASEAN experience and its potential benefits for other regions. (ASEAN economic community and the ASEAN investment framework, n.d)

The remainder of this article is organized as follows. First, we will examine the achievements of ASEAN. Second, we will discuss what Kenya can learn and benefit from the ASEAN experience. Finally, we will conclude with a summary of the main findings and recommendations for future research. (Jones, 2011)

BACKGROUND OF THE TOPIC

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) was established on August 8, 1967, with the signing of the ASEAN Declaration in Bangkok, Thailand, by the founding members, of Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand (ASEAN, n.d.). Today, ASEAN has grown to include ten member states: Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam (ASEAN, n.d.). ASEAN's main objectives are to promote regional peace and stability, enhance economic growth and development, and to promote cultural exchange and understanding among its members (ASEAN, n.d.).

One of the major achievements of ASEAN is its ability to promote economic integration and cooperation among its members. The organization has established the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA), which provides for the elimination of tariffs on goods traded among its members (ASEAN, n.d.). AFTA has greatly increased trade and investment flows within the region and has helped to boost economic growth and development. For example, trade among ASEAN members has increased from \$52 billion in 1993 to \$1.2 trillion in 2019, and the ASEAN region is now the world's fourth-largest economy (ASEAN, 2021).

Another major achievement of ASEAN is its role in promoting peace and stability in the region. The organization has been instrumental in resolving conflicts and promoting dialogue and cooperation among its members (ASEAN, n.d.). ASEAN has also played a crucial role in promoting regional security through its active participation in various regional security initiatives and its efforts to address transnational issues such as terrorism, piracy, and human trafficking (ASEAN, n.d.).

BRIEF HISTORY OF ASEAN AND KENYA

Brief History of ASEAN

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is a regional intergovernmental organization comprising ten Southeast Asian countries: Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam (ASEAN, n.d.). ASEAN was founded on August 8, 1967, with the signing of the ASEAN Declaration (also known as the Bangkok Declaration) by the founding members, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand (Jones, 2011)

The main objectives of ASEAN are to promote regional peace and stability, enhance economic growth and development, and promote cultural exchange and understanding among its members (ASEAN, n.d.). ASEAN has been instrumental in promoting regional integration and cooperation, including through the establishment of the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA), which provides for the elimination of tariffs on goods traded among its members (ASEAN, n.d.).

Since its founding, ASEAN has grown to become one of the most dynamic and influential economic blocs in the world, with a combined GDP of over \$3 trillion and a population of more than 640 million (ASEAN, 2021). ASEAN's efforts to promote peace and stability in the region have also been effective, with the organization playing a crucial role in resolving conflicts and promoting dialogue and cooperation among its members (ASEAN statistical yearbook 2021, 2021)

Brief History of Kenya

The Republic of Kenya is a country located in East Africa, bordered by Tanzania to the south, Uganda to the west, South Sudan to the northwest, Ethiopia to the north, and Somalia to the east (World Bank, 2021). Kenya covers an area of approximately 580,367 square kilometres and a population of more than 47.6 million people, according to the 2019 census (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2019).

Kenya has a rich and diverse cultural heritage, with a long history of human habitation dating back to the early Stone

Age (National Museums of Kenya, n.d.). The country was a colony of the United Kingdom from 1920 until 1963 when it gained independence and became a republic (Government of Kenya, n.d.).

Since independence, Kenya has experienced significant economic and social development, with a growing economy and a vibrant civil society (World Bank, 2021). Despite its many challenges, including poverty, political instability, and environmental degradation, Kenya remains one of the most economically and politically stable countries in East Africa (World Bank, 2021).

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN KENYA AND MALAYSIA

POLITICAL AND DIPLOMATIC RELATIONSHIP

Kenya and Malaysia have established diplomatic relations and maintain a number of embassies in each other's capitals. The two countries have a strong and growing political and diplomatic relationship, which is characterized by regular high-level visits and exchanges (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2018).

In recent years, there have been several visits by Kenyan Presidents and Malaysian Prime Ministers to each other's countries. These visits have helped to strengthen bilateral ties and enhance cooperation in areas such as trade, investment, and development. For example, in 2018, the Kenyan President visited Malaysia to attend the Kuala Lumpur Summit, where he held bilateral talks with the Malaysian Prime Minister and other leaders on matters of mutual interest (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2018).

In addition to these high-level visits, Kenya and Malaysia also participate in regional and international forums, such as the United Nations and the World Trade Organization, where they collaborate on matters of mutual concern. These forums provide opportunities for the two countries to deepen their political and diplomatic ties and enhance their cooperation in areas such as peace and security, human rights, and sustainable development (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2018).

ECONOMIC AND TRADE RELATIONSHIP

The economic and trade relationship between Kenya and Malaysia has been growing in recent years, with both countries working to enhance their bilateral trade and investment ties. According to data from the International Trade Centre (ITC), in 2020, Malaysia exported goods worth \$517 million to Kenya, while Kenya exported goods worth \$82.4 million to Malaysia (ITC, 2021).

The main products exported from Malaysia to Kenya in 2020 were palm oil (\$329 million), refined petroleum (\$76.7 million), and hot-rolled iron bars (\$27.6 million) (ITC, 2021). Over the past 25 years, Malaysia's exports to Kenya have increased at an annualized rate of 15%, from \$15.7 million in 1995 to \$517 million in 2020 (ITC, 2021).

In 2020, the main products exported from Kenya to Malaysia were tin ores (\$43.7 million), refined petroleum (\$18.2 million), and titanium ore (\$9.04 million) (ITC, 2021). Over the past 25 years, Kenya's exports to Malaysia have increased at an annualized rate of 11.1%, from \$5.96 million in 1995 to \$82.4 million in 2020 (ITC, 2021).

These trends suggest that the economic and trade relationship between Kenya and Malaysia has been growing in recent years, with both countries working to enhance their bilateral trade and investment ties. This is expected to continue in the future, as both countries seek to expand their trade and investment partnerships with each other and with other

countries in the region (ITC, 2021).

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN KENYA AND INDONESIA

ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL RELATIONSHIPS

The relationship between Kenya and Indonesia is characterized by strong economic and political ties, with both countries working to enhance their bilateral cooperation and collaboration.

Economically, Kenya exports a range of products to Indonesia, including textiles, clothing, and agricultural products. Indonesia is a significant market for Kenyan exports, with trade between the two countries totalling over \$250 million in 2019 (International Trade Centre, 2021). Additionally, Indonesia is a significant source of imports for Kenya, with the country importing a range of manufactured goods and machinery from Indonesia. In 2019, Kenyan imports from Indonesia totalled over \$100 million (International Trade Centre, 2021).

Politically, Kenya and Indonesia have a strong and growing relationship, characterized by mutual support and cooperation in regional and international forums. Kenya has consistently supported Indonesia's bid for a non-permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council, and Indonesia has supported Kenya's efforts to become a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO) (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2022).

To further enhance their political and economic ties, the Government of Kenya officially opened its embassy in Jakarta, Indonesia on March 18, 2022. This is expected to provide a platform for increased bilateral engagement and cooperation, as well as to support the growth of trade and investment between the two countries (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2022).

EDUCATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

The relationship between Kenya and Indonesia extends beyond political and economic ties, with both countries working to enhance their cooperation in the fields of education and tourism.

In the field of education, Indonesia has supported Kenya's education system through the provision of scholarships for Kenyan students to study in Indonesia. This has provided Kenyan students with the opportunity to gain valuable knowledge and skills and to develop a deeper understanding of Indonesia and Southeast Asia. In addition, Indonesia has supported the establishment of the Indonesian Chair at the University of Nairobi, which promotes the study of Indonesia and Southeast Asia in Kenya (Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in Nairobi, n.d.).

EDUCATIONAL AND TOURISM RELATIONSHIPS

In the field of tourism, Kenya is a popular destination for tourists from Indonesia, and the two countries have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on cooperation in the tourism sector. This MoU provides a framework for increased cooperation and collaboration in areas such as tourism marketing, product development, and capacity building (Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in Nairobi, n.d.). In 2019, Indonesia was the eighth-largest source of tourists to Kenya, with over 15,000 visitors from Indonesia (Kenya Tourism Board, 2019).

These initiatives demonstrate the strong and growing relationship between Kenya and Indonesia in the fields of education and tourism and are expected to continue to support the growth of bilateral cooperation and collaboration in the future (Kenya Tourism Board, 2019).

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN KENYA AND THAILAND

TRADE RELATIONSHIP

The trade relationship between Kenya and Thailand has been consistently growing in recent years, with both countries benefiting from the exchange of various goods and services. As of 2021, the total trade between the two nations was estimated to be around \$600 million (World Bank, 2021).

Kenya primarily exports agricultural products, textiles, and clothing to Thailand. These exports include tea, coffee, fresh flowers, and raw materials for the textile industry (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2021). On the other hand, Kenya imports a wide range of products from Thailand, with key imports being manufactured goods, machinery, and electronic equipment. This includes automobiles, home appliances, and consumer electronics (Thai Ministry of Commerce, 2021).

The trade balance between Kenya and Thailand has been tilted in favor of Thailand, with Kenya importing more than it exports. In 2021, Kenya's imports from Thailand were valued at approximately \$450 million, while its exports to Thailand amounted to about \$150 million (World Bank, 2021). This trade deficit can be attributed to the higher demand for Thai manufactured goods and machinery in Kenya, as well as the relatively lower value of Kenyan exports in the global market.

Despite the trade deficit, the two countries have been working together to strengthen their economic ties. They have participated in various trade expos and bilateral meetings, aimed at exploring new trade and investment opportunities (Kenya-Thai Chamber of Commerce, 2022). Additionally, the governments of both countries have expressed interest in promoting collaboration in areas such as tourism, agriculture, and renewable energy (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kenya, 2021).

In conclusion, the trade relationship between Kenya and Thailand has grown over the years, with both countries benefitting from the exchange of goods and services. Although the trade balance is in favor of Thailand, both nations continue to explore opportunities to strengthen their economic ties and promote mutual growth.

INVESTMENT RELATIONSHIP

The relationship between Kenya and Thailand extends beyond trade, with both countries actively seeking investment opportunities in each other's markets. As of 2021, Thai direct investment in Kenya was estimated to be around \$100 million, reflecting the growing interest of Thai companies in the Kenyan market (Bank of Thailand, 2021).

Thailand has invested in several sectors in Kenya, including telecommunications, agriculture, and manufacturing. One notable example is the investment by the Thai telecommunications company, DTAC, in the Kenyan mobile network operator, Safaricom, through a strategic partnership aimed at expanding the coverage and quality of mobile services in the country (Safaricom, 2021). In the agricultural sector, Thai agribusiness firms have invested in Kenya's horticulture and aquaculture industries, focusing on value addition and technology transfer (KenInvest, 2021).

Moreover, Thai investment in Kenya's manufacturing sector has been growing, with companies setting up production facilities in the country to benefit from Kenya's lower production costs and strategic location as a gateway to East Africa. For instance, Thai-based Siam Cement Group has established a manufacturing plant in Kenya to produce construction materials for the East African market (SCG, 2020).

On the other hand, Kenya has attracted investment from Thai companies in the energy and infrastructure sectors. For example, the Thai construction company, Italian-Thai Development (ITD), has been involved in various infrastructure projects in Kenya, such as the construction of the Nairobi-Mombasa Highway and the Lamu Port-South Sudan-Ethiopia-Transport (LAPSSET) Corridor (ITD, 2021). In the energy sector, Thai companies have expressed interest in investing in Kenya's renewable energy projects, including solar, wind, and geothermal power generation (Kenya-Thai Chamber of Commerce, 2022).

Both governments have been supportive of these investments, signing bilateral agreements and establishing institutions such as the Kenya-Thai Chamber of Commerce to promote investment opportunities between the two countries (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kenya, 2021).

In conclusion, the investment relationship between Kenya and Thailand is characterized by growing interest from both countries in various sectors, including telecommunications, agriculture, manufacturing, energy, and infrastructure. With continued support from both governments, investment ties between the two nations are likely to strengthen further in the coming years.

CULTURAL EXCHANGE

Kenya and Thailand, both boasting rich cultural heritages, have actively participated in cultural exchange programs and events to foster mutual understanding, respect, and cooperation. These exchanges have facilitated the sharing of artistic expressions, traditional practices, and knowledge between the two countries (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kenya, 2021).

One notable example of cultural exchange occurred in 2018 when Kenya and Thailand jointly organized the Kenya-Thailand Cultural Festival in Bangkok. This event showcased traditional Kenyan and Thai music, dance, and cuisine, allowing attendees to experience the cultural diversity of both nations (Kenya-Thai Chamber of Commerce, 2018).

Since then, there have been various cultural exchange initiatives, including artist residencies, academic exchanges, and collaborations between cultural institutions. For instance, the Kenyan National Theatre and the Thai Cultural Center have collaborated on joint performances, workshops, and exhibitions, featuring artists and cultural practitioners from

both countries (Kenyan National Theatre, 2020).

Additionally, educational exchanges have been encouraged, with Thai and Kenyan universities establishing partnerships to facilitate student and faculty exchanges, joint research, and academic cooperation. For example, Kenyatta University in Kenya and Chulalongkorn University in Thailand have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to promote academic collaboration in various fields, including arts and culture (Kenyatta University, 2019).

Furthermore, both nations have organized film festivals, showcasing movies from Kenya and Thailand to promote cross-cultural understanding and appreciation of each other's cinematic expressions. These festivals have featured screenings, panel discussions, and workshops with filmmakers and industry professionals from both countries (Kenya Film Commission, 2020; Thai Film Archive, 2020).

In conclusion, the cultural exchange between Kenya and Thailand has been vibrant, with numerous programs and events fostering mutual understanding and cooperation. These initiatives have enriched the cultural landscapes of both nations, enhancing appreciation for their unique artistic expressions and traditions.

POLITICAL RELATIONSHIP

The political relationship between Kenya and Thailand has been characterized by mutual support, cooperation, and shared interests on the international stage. Both countries have established diplomatic ties since the early 1960s, and their collaboration has extended to various international forums and organizations (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kenya, 2021).

Thailand has consistently supported Kenya's efforts to become an active member of the World Trade Organization (WTO). Since Kenya acceded into the WTO in 1995, Thailand has provided technical assistance and capacity-building programs in areas such as trade policy, negotiation, and dispute settlement (WTO, 2021). This support has helped Kenya to participate more effectively in the global trade system and advance its interests in trade negotiations.

In addition, Thailand has shared its expertise in various fields, such as agriculture, public health, and disaster management, through bilateral cooperation programs and regional initiatives. For instance, Thai experts have conducted training programs for Kenyan officials and professionals in areas such as agricultural research, food safety, and health promotion (Thai International Cooperation Agency, 2021).

On the other hand, Kenya has supported Thailand's bid for a non-permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) for the 2027-2028 term. Kenya's backing of Thailand's candidacy demonstrates the strong diplomatic ties between the two countries and their commitment to working together on global peace and security issues (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand, 2021).

Kenya and Thailand have also collaborated in various regional and multilateral forums, such as the African Union (AU), the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and the United Nations (UN). This collaboration has enabled the two countries to coordinate their positions on various global challenges, including climate change, sustainable development, and the fight against terrorism (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kenya, 2021).

In conclusion, the political relationship between Kenya and Thailand has been marked by mutual support and cooperation in various international organizations and forums. Both countries have actively collaborated on trade, capacity building, and global peace and security issues, reflecting their shared commitment to promoting international cooperation and development.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN KENYA AND PHILIPPINES

POLITICAL AND DIPLOMATIC RELATIONSHIP

The political and diplomatic relationship between Kenya and the Philippines dates back to 1967 when the two countries established diplomatic relations. Over the years, their bilateral ties have strengthened, with both nations collaborating on various international platforms and exchanging high-level visits (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kenya, 2021).

The Philippines maintains an embassy in Nairobi, which serves as the primary channel for diplomatic communication between the two countries. Established in 1992, the embassy plays a crucial role in promoting mutual understanding, cooperation, and friendship between Kenya and the Philippines (Embassy of the Philippines in Nairobi, 2021).

Kenya, on the other hand, has an honorary consulate in Manila, which facilitates communication and interaction between the Kenyan government and the Philippines. While Kenya does not have a full-fledged embassy in the Philippines, the honorary consulate ensures that the interests of both countries are represented and that diplomatic relations are maintained (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kenya, 2021).

Both countries have been actively involved in various regional and international organizations, such as the United Nations (UN), the African Union (AU), and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). They have also collaborated on global issues, including sustainable development, climate change, and the fight against terrorism (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kenya, 2021).

Over the years, Kenya and the Philippines have exchanged high-level visits to further strengthen their diplomatic ties. For example, in 2018, the Kenyan Cabinet Secretary for Foreign Affairs visited the Philippines to discuss various issues, including trade, investment, and tourism opportunities, as well as to enhance cooperation in fields such as agriculture, disaster management, and capacity building (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kenya, 2018).

In conclusion, the political and diplomatic relationship between Kenya and the Philippines has been characterized by strong diplomatic ties, active collaboration in regional and international organizations, and the exchange of high-level visits. With their respective diplomatic missions in Nairobi and Manila, both countries continue to foster mutual understanding and cooperation.

ECONOMIC AND TRADE RELATIONSHIP

The economic and trade relationship between Kenya and the Philippines has been growing over the years, with both countries engaging in the exchange of various goods and services. In 2020, the Philippines exported \$7 million worth of goods to Kenya, while Kenya exported \$5.79 million worth of goods to the Philippines (OEC, 2021).

The main products exported from the Philippines to Kenya in 2020 included office machine parts (\$2.05 million), electrical transformers (\$1.09 million), and other footwear (\$913,000). Over the past 24 years, the exports from the Philippines to Kenya have increased at an annualized rate of 16.4%, rising from \$181,000 in 1996 to \$7 million in 2020 (OEC, 2021).

On the other hand, Kenya's exports to the Philippines in 2020 were dominated by carbonates (\$2.49 million), coconut

and other vegetables (\$978,000), and planes, helicopters, and/or spacecraft (\$936,000). The exports of Kenya to the Philippines have grown at an annualized rate of 1.58% over the last 24 years, increasing from \$3.98 million in 1996 to \$5.79 million in 2020 (OEC, 2021).

To further strengthen their economic and trade relationship, Kenya and the Philippines have signed bilateral agreements and established joint business councils to promote trade and investment opportunities. The Kenya-Philippines Joint Trade Committee, for instance, aims to identify potential areas of cooperation and facilitate trade between the two countries (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kenya, 2018).

Moreover, both countries have participated in trade fairs, exhibitions, and business forums to showcase their products and services and explore new trade and investment opportunities. These initiatives have helped to create awareness about each country's respective market and foster business linkages between Kenyan and Filipino entrepreneurs (Kenya-Philippines Business Council, 2019).

In conclusion, the economic and trade relationship between Kenya and the Philippines has been growing steadily, with an increasing exchange of goods and services. Both countries have established mechanisms to promote trade and investment opportunities, and through continued collaboration, their economic ties are likely to strengthen further in the coming years.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN KENYA AND VIETNAM

ECONOMIC AND TRADE RELATIONSHIP

The economic and trade relationship between Kenya and Vietnam has been growing over recent years, with both countries engaging in the exchange of a diverse range of goods and services. In 2020, Vietnam exported goods worth \$98.7 million to Kenya, while Kenya exported goods worth \$12.4 million to Vietnam (OEC, 2021).

Vietnamese exports to Kenya in 2020 were dominated by hot-rolled iron bars (\$18 million), bedspreads (\$15.2 million), and window dressings (\$9.13 million). Other significant exports included footwear, rice, and electrical machinery. Over the past few years, the value of Vietnamese exports to Kenya has increased, demonstrating the strengthening of trade relations between the two countries (OEC, 2021).

On the other hand, Kenya's exports to Vietnam in 2020 included bran (\$4.66 million), other nuts (\$3.33 million), and carbonates (\$1.38 million). Additionally, Kenya exported products such as tea, coffee, and raw hides and skins to Vietnam. These exports indicate the diverse range of goods that Kenya provides to the Vietnamese market (OEC, 2021).

To further enhance their economic and trade relationship, Kenya and Vietnam have participated in bilateral trade talks, business forums, and trade exhibitions. These events have aimed to promote trade and investment opportunities between the two countries, as well as identify potential areas of cooperation (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kenya, 2019).

Additionally, both countries have sought to improve trade facilitation and reduce trade barriers through various mechanisms, such as the establishment of the Kenya-Vietnam Joint Trade Committee. This committee focuses on addressing trade-related issues and exploring opportunities for collaboration in sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing, and tourism (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Vietnam, 2018).

In conclusion, the economic and trade relationship between Kenya and Vietnam has been growing steadily, with an increasing exchange of goods and services across various sectors. Both countries have actively participated in bilateral initiatives to promote trade and investment opportunities, and through continued collaboration, their economic ties are

likely to strengthen further in the coming years.

DIPLOMATIC AND RELATION

The diplomatic relationship between Kenya and Vietnam has been characterized by mutual support, cooperation, and shared interests on the international stage. Both countries have established diplomatic ties since 1976 and have maintained regular high-level exchanges to further strengthen their relations (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Vietnam, 2018).

In 2019, Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyễn Xuân Phúc hosted a reception for Kenyan Cabinet Secretary (CS) for Foreign Affairs, Dr Dronica Juma, in Hanoi. During this visit, they discussed ways to enhance bilateral ties in various sectors, including trade, investment, agriculture, and tourism (Vietnam News Agency, 2019).

Dr Dronica Juma also met with Vietnamese Deputy Prime Minister Phạm Bình Minh during her visit to Hanoi in late 2019. Both the Deputy Prime Minister and the Cabinet Secretary for Foreign Affairs agreed on the need for stronger collaboration in fields such as economy, culture, education, and information technology. They also discussed the establishment of a political consultation mechanism between their respective foreign ministries to facilitate communication and coordination on global and regional issues (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Vietnam, 2019).

To further enhance their diplomatic relationship, Kenya and Vietnam have participated in various regional and international organizations, such as the United Nations (UN), the African Union (AU), and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Their collaboration in these organizations has enabled them to coordinate their positions on various global challenges, including climate change, sustainable development, and the fight against terrorism (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kenya, 2019).

In conclusion, the diplomatic relationship between Kenya and Vietnam has been marked by mutual support and cooperation in various international organizations and forums. Both countries have actively collaborated on political, economic, cultural, and educational issues, reflecting their shared commitment to promoting international cooperation and development.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN KENYA AND SINGAPORE

The relationship between Kenya and Singapore has been marked by strong diplomatic ties and growing economic cooperation. Both countries have established diplomatic representation in each other's capitals, with Kenya having an embassy in Singapore and Singapore having a high commission in Nairobi (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kenya, 2021).

To further strengthen their economic ties, Singapore and Kenya signed a comprehensive Agreement for the Avoidance of Double Taxation (DTA) on 12 June 2018. The agreement aims to facilitate cross-border trade and investment by eliminating double taxation and reducing tax barriers between the two countries. The signing took place in Kenya between the Senior Minister of State for Trade and Industry, Dr Poh Koon and Cabinet Secretary of the Treasury Henry Rotich (Inland Revenue Authority of Singapore, 2018).

In terms of trade, Kenya's exports to Singapore have primarily consisted of agricultural products, raw materials, and textiles. In 2020, Kenya exported goods worth \$24.7 million to Singapore. The main products exported from Kenya to Singapore included essential oils (\$9.42 million), crude vegetable materials (\$6.36 million), and coffee, tea, and spices (\$4.28 million) (OEC, 2021).

On the other hand, Singapore's exports to Kenya have been dominated by manufactured goods, machinery, and

electronic equipment. In 2020, Singapore exported goods worth \$102 million to Kenya. The primary products exported from Singapore to Kenya included packaged medicaments (\$15.6 million), other chemical products (\$9.93 million), and printing machinery (\$6.72 million) (OEC, 2021).

In addition to trade, both countries have pursued cooperation in areas such as tourism, education, technology, and infrastructure. They have participated in bilateral meetings, business forums, and trade expos to promote mutual understanding and explore new opportunities for collaboration (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Singapore, 2019).

In conclusion, the relationship between Kenya and Singapore has been characterized by strong diplomatic ties and a growing economic partnership. The signing of the comprehensive DTA in 2018 has further facilitated trade and investment between the two countries, and through continued collaboration in various sectors, their relationship is expected to strengthen in the coming years.

STRENGTH OF ASEAN

The strength of ASEAN lies in its diverse and dynamic member countries, economic integration, political and security cooperation, cultural exchange, and strong network of partners and stakeholders.

Diverse and dynamic member countries: ASEAN represents a diverse range of cultures, religions, and political systems. In 2020, the combined population of ASEAN member countries reached approximately 660 million, and the GDP was \$3.11 trillion (ASEAN, 2021b). The region has experienced rapid economic growth in recent years, with an average annual growth rate of 5% between 2000 and 2020 (World Bank, 2021).

Economic integration: ASEAN has made significant progress in promoting regional economic integration through the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) and the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC). Established in 1992, AFTA aims to reduce or eliminate tariffs and non-tariff barriers among member countries (ASEAN, 2021c). The AEC, launched in 2015, seeks to create a single market and production base, with free movement of goods, services, investment, skilled labour and a freer flow of capital (ASEAN, 2021d).

Political and security cooperation: ASEAN has played an essential role in promoting political and security cooperation among its member countries and beyond through initiatives such as the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM). The ARF, established in 1994, is a platform for dialogue and cooperation on political and security issues among ASEAN members and their partners (ASEAN, 2021e). The ADMM, inaugurated in 2006, seeks to promote regional peace and stability through defence and security cooperation (ASEAN, 2021f).

Cultural exchange: ASEAN actively promotes cultural exchange and understanding among its member countries through initiatives such as the ASEAN Cultural Year and the ASEAN Literary Festival. The ASEAN Cultural Year is an annual celebration that showcases the rich cultural heritage of the region (ASEAN, 2021g). The ASEAN Literary Festival, held since 2014, is an annual event that brings together writers, artists, and scholars from across the region to discuss and celebrate literature, art, and ideas (ASEAN Literary Festival, 2021). A strong **network of partners and stakeholders:** ASEAN has established a robust network of partners and stakeholders, including major global powers such as the United States, China, Japan, and the European Union. These partnerships are maintained through various mechanisms, such as the ASEAN+3, the East Asia Summit, and the ASEAN-European Union Dialogue (ASEAN, 2021h).

In conclusion, ASEAN's strength lies in its diverse and dynamic member countries, economic integration, political and security cooperation, cultural exchange, and a strong network of partners and stakeholders. These strengths enable the organization to play a vital role in promoting regional stability, economic growth, and cultural understanding.

ECONOMIC STABILITY OF ASEAN

The ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) was established in 1992 to promote economic integration and reduce trade barriers among the member countries of ASEAN. The AFTA has achieved significant progress in terms of trade liberalization and integration since its inception (Robiyanto, 2017).

The ASEAN Trade in Goods Agreement (ATIGA) is the centrepiece of the AFTA, which aims to eliminate tariffs on a list of commonly traded goods among ASEAN member countries. According to the latest available data from ASEAN Secretariat, as of 2021, ASEAN has eliminated tariffs on over 99% of the products traded within the region. This indicates that the AFTA has been largely successful in achieving its goals of promoting intra-regional trade and investment (Robiyanto, 2017).

The AFTA has also facilitated the growth of trade and investment in the ASEAN region. The total merchandise trade among ASEAN countries has increased from US\$ 122.5 billion in 1993 to US\$ 1.2 trillion in 2019. This reflects a significant increase in the level of economic integration and intra-regional trade within ASEAN. Additionally, foreign direct investment (FDI) flows into ASEAN have been steadily increasing over the years. In 2020, ASEAN received a total FDI inflow of US\$ 107.9 billion, which is a 31% increase compared to the previous year.

However, despite the progress made by the AFTA, there are still challenges that need to be addressed to ensure sustained economic stability in ASEAN. One of the key challenges is the non-tariff barriers to trade, which continue to hinder the smooth flow of goods and services within the region. These barriers include technical regulations, standards, and conformity assessment procedures, which can create additional costs and uncertainties for businesses operating in the region (Robiyanto, 2017).

Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic has severely impacted the ASEAN economies, with significant declines in economic growth and trade. The pandemic has highlighted the importance of strengthening the resilience and sustainability of ASEAN economies through regional cooperation and integration.

In conclusion, the AFTA has played a crucial role in promoting economic integration and reducing trade barriers among ASEAN member countries. The progress made by the AFTA in terms of trade liberalization and investment has contributed to the growth and stability of the ASEAN economies. However, there are still challenges that need to be addressed to ensure sustained economic stability and growth in the region (Robiyanto, 2017).

POLITICAL STABILITY OF ASEAN

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has made significant efforts to promote political stability in the region through various initiatives, including the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM).

The ARF, which was established in 1994, serves as a platform for informal political and security dialogue among ASEAN member countries and other countries in the region. According to the latest data from the ASEAN Secretariat, the forum has grown to include 27 participants, consisting of ASEAN member states and 10 other countries, including the United States, China, Japan, and Australia. The ARF aims to promote confidence-building measures and preventive diplomacy, as well as provide a framework for addressing political and security issues in the region. The forum has played a role in preventing conflict and defusing tensions among the participants, including the South China Sea dispute, which threatened to escalate into conflict.

The ADMM, which was established in 2006, is a forum for defence ministers from ASEAN member countries to discuss security issues and cooperate on defence-related matters. The ADMM has helped to promote military-to-military cooperation and confidence-building measures among member countries. According to the ASEAN

Secretariat, the ADMM has made significant progress in promoting regional peace and stability through its various initiatives, including the establishment of the ADMM-Plus in 2010, which includes eight ASEAN Dialogue Partners: Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand, Russia, South Korea, and the United States.

However, there are still challenges that need to be addressed to ensure sustained political stability in ASEAN. One of the key challenges is the ongoing territorial disputes in the region, particularly in the South China Sea. The disputes have created tensions among the claimant countries and have the potential to escalate into conflict.

In conclusion, the ARF and ADMM have played crucial roles in promoting political stability and security in the ASEAN region. These forums have provided platforms for regular consultations and discussions among the participants, as well as facilitated the establishment of confidence-building measures and preventive diplomacy mechanisms. However, there are still challenges that need to be addressed to ensure sustained political stability and security in the region.

WHAT DID KENYA LEARN AND BENEFIT FROM ASEAN

HEALTH SECTOR

Kenya can learn and benefit from ASEAN countries in the health sector by implementing some of the initiatives and strategies that have been successful in improving access to healthcare services and strengthening the health system in the region.

One significant initiative implemented by ASEAN countries is the expansion of health insurance coverage, which has helped to improve access to healthcare services. For example, Thailand's Universal Coverage Scheme (UCS) provides healthcare coverage to all Thai citizens and has helped to reduce out-of-pocket expenses for healthcare services (Wibulpolprasert et al., 2016). Indonesia has also implemented a national health insurance program, Jaminan Kesehatan Nasional (JKN), which aims to provide access to healthcare services for all Indonesians (Wibulpolprasert et al., 2016).

Another initiative that has been successful in the ASEAN region is the establishment of health promotion hospitals, which focus on promoting healthy lifestyles and preventing disease. In Thailand, there are currently 120 health promotion hospitals, which have been successful in reducing the prevalence of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) (Wibulpolprasert et al., 2016). The Philippines has also established a number of health promotion hospitals, which focus on promoting healthy lifestyles and providing health education to the community (DOH, 2019).

Furthermore, the establishment of community health centres has also been successful in improving access to healthcare services in the ASEAN region. In Vietnam, there are currently over 11,000 commune health stations, which provide primary healthcare services to the community (Wibulpolprasert et al., 2016). In Thailand, there are currently over 9,000 tambon health promotion hospitals, which provide primary healthcare services to the community (Wibulpolprasert et al., 2016).

The implementation of these initiatives in the ASEAN region has resulted in significant improvements in the health sector, including increased access to healthcare services, improved life expectancy, and reduced infant and child mortality rates (Wibulpolprasert et al., 2016).

In terms of the number of health centres in ASEAN countries, the following statistics are available:

Malaysia: In 2020, there were 1,138 hospitals and health clinics in Malaysia, an increase compared to the previous

year (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2021).

Indonesia: In 2021, there were around 2,522 functioning hospitals and other types of healthcare centers in Indonesia, an increase of 9.6 percent compared to the period between 2017 and 2021 (Statista, 2021).

Philippines: In 2016, there were approximately 1,800 hospitals in the Philippines, of which 721 (40%) were public hospitals (World Health Organization, 2018).

Thailand: In 2020, there were 1,356 hospitals in Thailand, a decrease from the previous year (Department of Health Service Support, 2021).

Vietnam: In 2017, there were over one thousand hospitals in Vietnam, with the Northern Central area and the Central coastal area has the highest number of hospitals at 242 (World Health Organization, 2018).

Singapore: In 2021, there were 1,711 health centres in Singapore, an increase compared to the previous year (Singapore Ministry of Health, 2021).

According to the World Health Organization, ASEAN countries have made significant progress in reducing infant and child mortality rates. Between 1990 and 2019, the under-five mortality rate in ASEAN countries declined by 63%, from 76 deaths per 1,000 live births to 28 deaths per 1,000 live births. The infant mortality rate also decreased by 62%, from 45 deaths per 1,000 live births to 17 deaths per 1,000 live births during the same period (WHO, 2021).

Another area where ASEAN countries have made significant progress is in improving life expectancy. According to the World Bank, life expectancy at birth in ASEAN countries increased from an average of 68.4 years in 2000 to 73.6 years in 2019 (World Bank, 2021).

Kenya could learn from ASEAN's success in the health sector and implement similar initiatives to improve access to healthcare services and strengthen their healthcare system. For example, Kenya could expand health insurance coverage to more citizens and establish community health centres to provide basic healthcare services in rural areas.

HEALTH SECTOR

The education sector in ASEAN countries has made significant progress in recent years, with governments implementing a number of initiatives to improve access to education and increase enrolment rates.

Achievements in Education Sector:

Increased enrolment in primary education: For example, the primary school enrolment rate in Cambodia has increased from 67% in 2000 to 95% in 2018 (ASEAN statistical yearbook 2021, 2021).

Increased access to secondary and higher education: Kenya faces a shortage of teachers, particularly in rural areas. This can lead to a high teacher-to-student ratio, which can affect the quality of education (ASEAN statistical yearbook 2021, 2021).

Improved literacy rates: ASEAN countries have also made progress in improving literacy rates, particularly among young people. For example, the youth literacy rate in Thailand has increased from 97% in 2000 to 99% in 2018 (ASEAN statistical yearbook 2021, 2021).

Increased use of technology in education: ASEAN countries have made progress in the use of technology in education, including through the introduction of e-learning platforms and the use of educational software and apps (ASEAN statistical yearbook 2021, 2021).

ASEAN countries have also made progress in improving access to secondary and higher education. In Malaysia, there were 530 higher educational institutions (HEIs) in 2020, including universities and colleges (Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia, 2021). Indonesia had 4,537 HEIs in 2020, including universities, colleges, and polytechnics (Ministry of Education and Culture Indonesia, 2021). Thailand had 154 HEIs in 2019, including public and private universities and colleges (Office of the Higher Education Commission, 2019). In Singapore, there were 14 publicly funded universities and polytechnics in 2021 (Ministry of Education Singapore, 2021). The Philippines had 1,346 HEIs in 2019, including universities, colleges, and technical-vocational institutions (Commission on Higher Education Philippines, 2020). Brunei had 5 HEIs in 2019, including the Universiti Brunei Darussalam and a technical college (Brunei Darussalam Department of Economic Planning and Development, 2019). Cambodia had 121 HEIs in 2019, including universities, colleges, and vocational schools (Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport Cambodia, 2020). Myanmar had 132 universities and colleges in 2019, including public and private institutions (Ministry of Education Myanmar, 2020). Laos had 80 HEIs in 2020, including universities, colleges, and vocational schools (Ministry of Education and Sports Laos, 2021). Vietnam had 235 universities and colleges in 2019, including public and private institutions (Ministry of Education and Training Vietnam, 2020).

Moreover, ASEAN countries have made progress in improving literacy rates, particularly among young people. For example, the youth literacy rate in Thailand has increased from 97% in 2000 to 99% in 2018 (UNESCO, 2021). Additionally, ASEAN countries have also made progress in the use of technology in education, including through the introduction of e-learning platforms and the use of educational software and apps.

AGRICULTURE SECTOR

ASEAN is a major player in the global agriculture industry, and the region's agricultural production has continued to grow in recent years. According to the ASEAN Statistical Yearbook 2021, in 2019, the region produced 223 million metric tons of rice, 71 million metric tons of corn, 393 million metric tons of sugarcane, 3.14 million metric tons of soybeans, and 91 million metric tons of cassava.

Achievements in Agriculture Sector

Increased food security: ASEAN has made significant progress in increasing food security within the region by increasing domestic food production and reducing reliance on imports (ASEAN statistical yearbook 2021, 2021).

Promoted sustainable agriculture: including the use of modern technologies and techniques to increase productivity while minimizing negative environmental impacts (ASEAN statistical yearbook 2021, 2021).

Improved market integration: Through the establishment of the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) and the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC). These initiatives have helped to increase trade and investment in the agriculture sector within the region (ASEAN statistical yearbook 2021, 2021).

Improved access to education and training: ASEAN has made efforts to improve access to education and training for farmers and other stakeholders in the agriculture sector, including through initiatives to enhance extension services and the development of training programs (ASEAN statistical yearbook 2021, 2021).

The region's leading producers of cereals, such as **wheat**, are Indonesia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Cambodia, Vietnam, and Thailand. In 2019, Indonesia produced 85,297.4 thousand metric tons of cereals, while Vietnam produced 48,208.1 thousand metric tons. Thailand produced 33,162.9 thousand metric tons of cereals in the same year (ASEAN Statistical Yearbook 2021).

Palm oil is also a major agricultural product in the region, with Indonesia and Malaysia being the two largest producers. In 2019, Indonesia produced 245,633.1 thousand metric tons of palm oil, while Malaysia produced 99,065.4 thousand metric tons (ASEAN Statistical Yearbook 2021).

Fruits such as mangoes, bananas, and citrus fruits are also important agricultural products in the region. The leading producers of these fruits are Indonesia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Lao PDR, Vietnam, and Thailand. In 2019, the Philippines produced 16,766.6 thousand metric tons of fruits, while Thailand produced 11,325.6 thousand metric tons (ASEAN Statistical Yearbook 2021).

Sugarcane production in ASEAN has been growing steadily in recent years, with Thailand being the region's largest producer. According to the ASEAN Sugar Alliance, Thailand produced 107.2 million metric tons of sugarcane in 2020, followed by Indonesia with 31 million metric tons, and the Philippines with 22.5 million metric tons.

In terms of **rice production**, Vietnam is the largest producer in the region, followed by Thailand, Indonesia, Myanmar, and the Philippines. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, in 2020, Vietnam produced 42.5 million metric tons of rice, while Thailand produced 34.5 million metric tons, and Indonesia produced 30.3 million metric tons (ASEAN statistical yearbook 2021, 2021).

Overall, the ASEAN region's agriculture sector has made significant progress in terms of productivity and production in recent years. These achievements can serve as examples for Kenya to improve its own agriculture sector through the adoption of innovative technologies, expansion of research and development efforts, and the promotion of sustainable farming practices (ASEAN statistical yearbook 2021, 2021).

MANUFACTURING SECTOR

The manufacturing sector has been one of ASEAN's key economic growth drivers. Already, the region is a global manufacturing hub and is estimated to grow at a compound **annual growth rate (CAGR) of 6.6%** between 2016 to 2020.

The **ASEAN Economic Community (AEC)** for example, envisions ASEAN as a single market and production base. Meanwhile, mega trade arrangements like the **Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP)** if successful would be a positive step towards a broader **Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific (FTAAP)** that can serve as a useful intergovernmental forum on free trade (ASEAN statistical yearbook 2021, 2021).

Achievements of ASEAN in the Manufacturing Sector:

Increased competitiveness: ASEAN has made significant progress in increasing the competitiveness of its manufacturing sector, particularly through efforts to improve infrastructure, reduce trade barriers, and promote the adoption of modern technologies and techniques. According to the World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness Report 2019, Singapore ranked second, Malaysia ranked 27th, Thailand ranked 40th, Indonesia ranked 50th, and the Philippines ranked 64th out of 141 countries in terms of their overall competitiveness.

Increased exports: ASEAN has been successful in increasing exports of manufactured goods, particularly to the rest of the world. According to the ASEAN Secretariat, intra-ASEAN trade in goods increased from \$347 billion in 2010 to \$612 billion in 2019, with manufactured goods accounting for a significant portion of this trade. In addition, ASEAN's exports to the world increased from \$1.1 trillion in 2010 to \$1.3 trillion in 2019, with manufactured goods accounting for the majority of these exports (ASEAN statistical yearbook 2021, 2021).

Promoted innovation and technological development: ASEAN has promoted innovation and technological development, particularly through initiatives to promote research and development and the adoption of new technologies. For example, the ASEAN Smart Cities Network was launched in 2018 to promote the adoption of smart city technologies across the region, while the ASEAN Plan of Action for Science, Technology, and Innovation 2016-2025 aims to promote innovation and technology transfer in the region (ASEAN statistical yearbook 2021, 2021).

Enhanced connectivity: ASEAN has made efforts to enhance connectivity within the region, particularly through initiatives to improve infrastructure and facilitate cross-border trade and investment. For example, the ASEAN Connectivity Coordinating Committee was established in 2010 to oversee the implementation of the ASEAN Connectivity Master Plan, which aims to improve physical, institutional, and people-to-people connectivity across the region. In addition, ASEAN has established a number of free trade agreements with other countries and regions, including the ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement and the ASEAN-China Free Trade Area, to facilitate trade and investment flows.

ELECTRONICS:

Malaysia is one of the largest producers of electronics in Southeast Asia. The country has a well-developed electronics manufacturing industry that produces a wide range of products, including computer hardware, consumer electronics, and semiconductor devices. The electronics industry in Malaysia is supported by the government, which has implemented various initiatives to attract foreign investors and promote the growth of the sector. The country's strategic location, skilled workforce, and well-established infrastructure also make it an attractive destination for electronics manufacturers (ASEAN statistical yearbook 2021, 2021).

TEXTILES:

Indonesia, Vietnam, and Thailand are major producers of textiles, including clothing and other textile products. These countries have a long history of textile production, and their textile industries have grown significantly over the years. The textile industry in these countries is supported by abundant raw materials, including cotton, silk, and synthetic fibres, as well as a skilled workforce and favorable government policies. Textile production is a significant contributor to the economies of these countries, and the industry is expected to continue to grow in the coming years (OEC, 2021)..

AUTOMOTIVE PARTS:

Thailand and Indonesia are both major manufacturers of automotive parts. The automotive industry in these countries has grown significantly in recent years, driven by increasing demand for automobiles in the region. Both countries have established automotive manufacturing industries that produce a wide range of components and parts, including engines, transmissions, suspension systems, and electrical systems. The automotive parts industry in these countries is supported by a skilled workforce, favorable government policies, and the presence of major automakers and their supply chains (OEC, 2021)..

PROCESSED FOOD:

Indonesia, Thailand, and Vietnam all have large food processing industries, producing a range of processed food products including snack foods, beverages, and prepared meals. These countries have a rich agricultural heritage and abundant natural resources, which support the production of raw materials for the food processing industry. The food processing industry in these countries is also supported by a large and growing consumer market in Southeast Asia and beyond. The industry is highly competitive, and companies in these countries have been investing heavily in research and development to develop new and innovative products (OEC, 2021)..

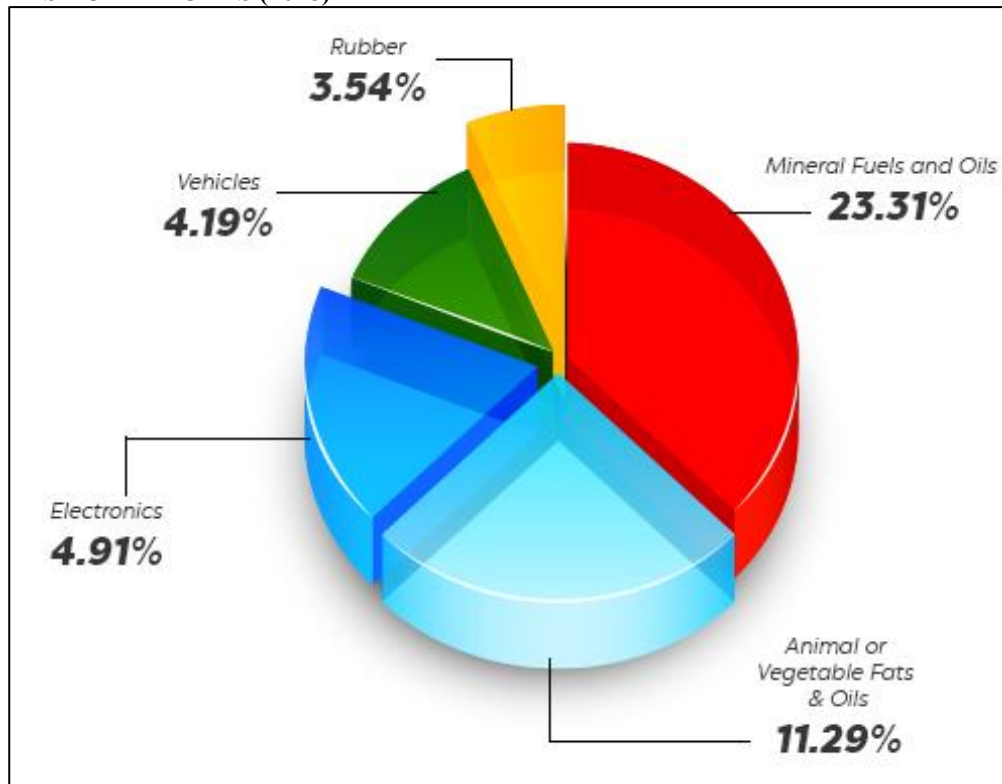
MACHINERY AND EQUIPMENT:

Including construction machinery, agricultural equipment, and industrial machinery. Southeast Asia is home to a thriving machinery and equipment manufacturing industry. Countries like Thailand, Indonesia, and Vietnam have established manufacturing hubs that produce a wide range of machinery and equipment, including construction machinery, agricultural equipment, and industrial machinery. The machinery and equipment industry in these countries is supported by a skilled workforce, favorable government policies, and the presence of major global manufacturers (OEC, 2021).

CHEMICAL PRODUCTS:

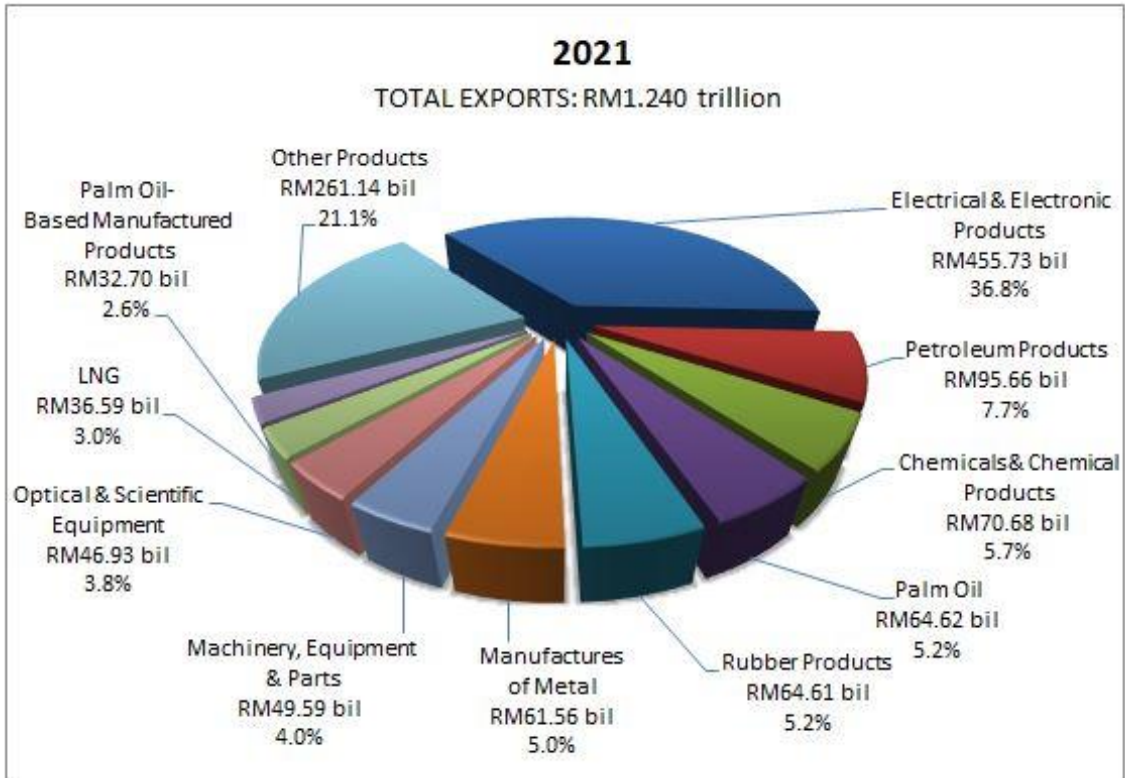
Singapore is a major manufacturer of chemical products, including pharmaceuticals and industrial chemicals. The country has a well-developed chemical industry that produces a wide range of products, including petrochemicals, speciality chemicals, and pharmaceuticals. Singapore's chemical industry is supported by a favorable business environment, strategic location, and strong intellectual property protection laws. The country is also home to a world-class research and development ecosystem, which has helped to drive innovation in the industry (OEC, 2021).

INDONESIA'S TOP EXPORTS (2018)



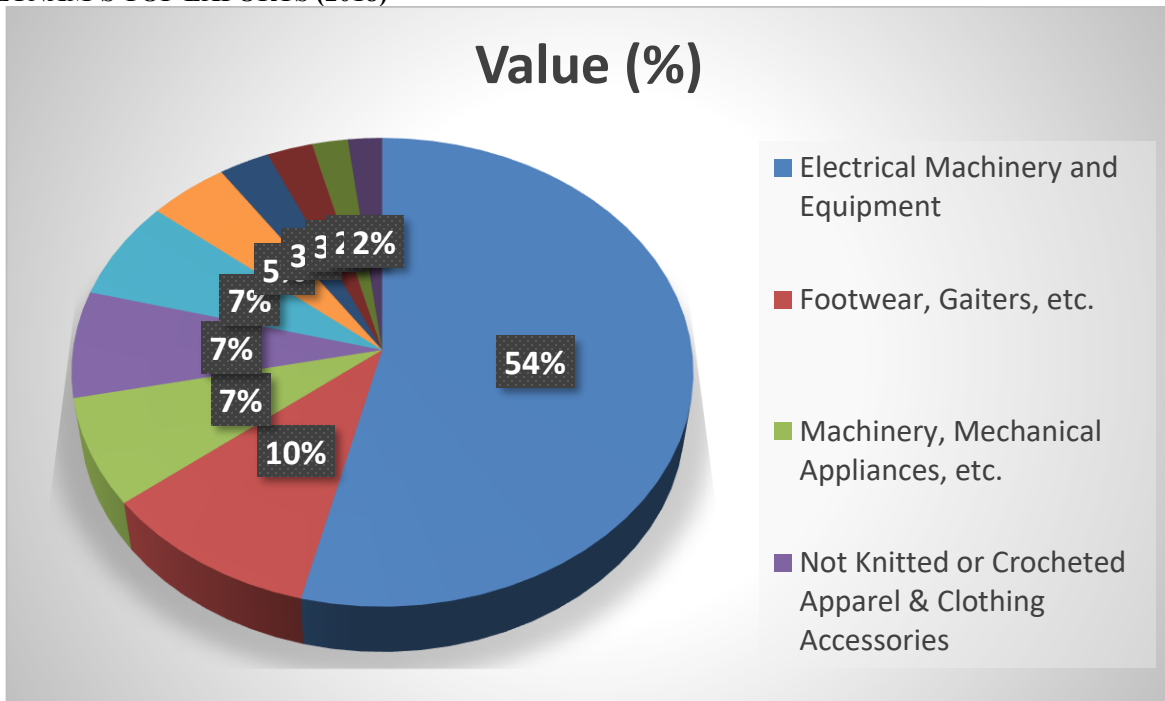
Source: ASEAN Secretariat (ASEAN statistical yearbook 2021, 2021)

MALAYSIA'S TOP EXPORTS (2021)



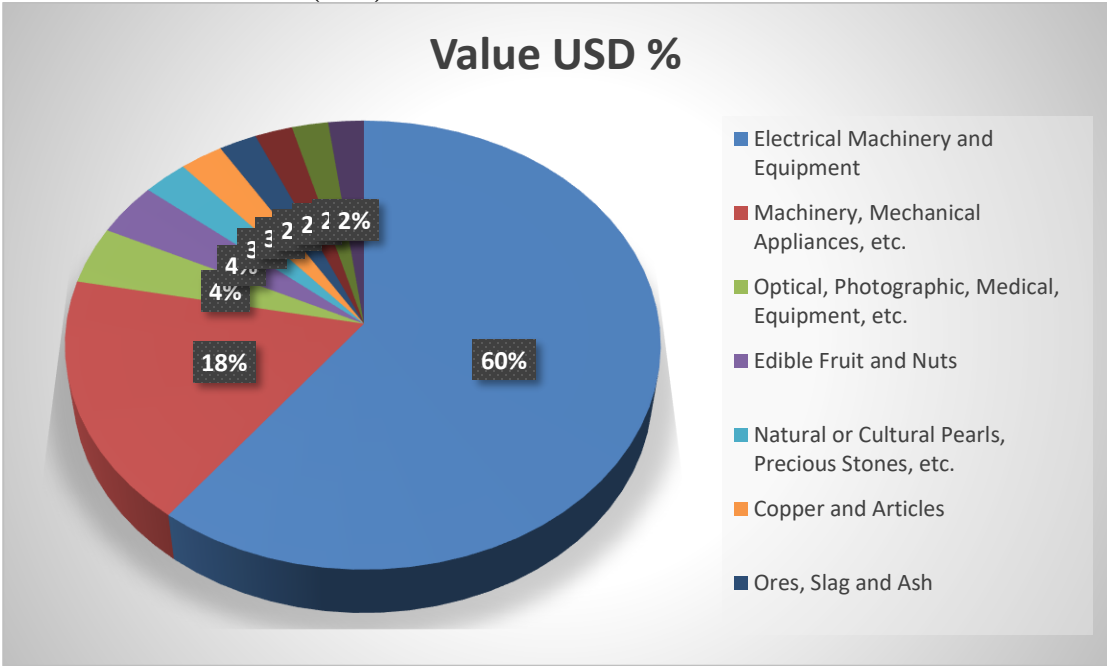
Source: ASEAN Secretariat (ASEAN statistical yearbook 2021, 2021)

VIETNAM'S TOP EXPORTS (2018)



Source: ASEAN Secretariat (ASEAN statistical yearbook 2021, 2021)

SINGAPORE'S TOP EXPORTS (2018)



Source: ASEAN Secretariat (ASEAN statistical yearbook 2021, 2021)

TRANSPORT SECTOR

Over the years, ASEAN countries have made considerable development in the transport sector, with many countries investing in the development of infrastructure such as roads, bridges, ports, and airports. The governments have implemented a number of initiatives to promote the development of the transport sector, including public-private partnerships and investments in infrastructure.

ASEAN Road Infrastructure, 2020

1. Indonesia: 538,590 km
2. Thailand: 702,576.5 Km
3. Myanmar: 237,288.4 Km
4. Vietnam: 213,800 km
5. Philippines: 33,119.6 Km
6. Malaysia: 267,012.0 Km
7. Cambodia: 64,883.0 Km
8. Laos: 58,286.8 Km
9. Brunei: 2,143 km
10. Singapore: 3,356 km

ASEAN Railways (Route Length 2020)

1. Malaysia - 1,799.4 Km
2. Cambodia - 652.0 Km
3. Indonesia - 6,324.0 Km
4. Myanmar - 6,112.3 Km
5. Philippines - 148.0 Km
6. Thailand - 4,997.9 Km

Number of Vehicles per 1000 Population in ASEAN, 2011 - 2020

Here is the data for the number of vehicles per 1000 population in ASEAN countries from 2011 to 2020, sourced from the ASEAN Secretariat:

| Country | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 |
|-------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Brunei | 436 | 464 | 473 | 477 | 491 | 497 | 507 | 517 | 525 | 535 |
| Cambodia | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 |
| Indonesia | 33 | 37 | 42 | 48 | 54 | 62 | 70 | 78 | 87 | 97 |
| Laos | 16 | 18 | 20 | 23 | 26 | 30 | 34 | 38 | 42 | 46 |
| Malaysia | 332 | 348 | 366 | 379 | 391 | 407 | 421 | 433 | 443 | 456 |
| Myanmar | 7 | 8 | 9 | 11 | 13 | 15 | 17 | 19 | 22 | 26 |
| Philippines | 34 | 36 | 38 | 41 | 44 | 48 | 51 | 54 | 58 | 63 |
| Singapore | 1132 | 1152 | 1170 | 1178 | 1181 | 1190 | 1189 | 1188 | 1194 | 1194 |
| Thailand | 254 | 265 | 275 | 286 | 297 | 308 | 319 | 329 | 340 | 351 |
| Vietnam | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 24 | 25 |

Source: ASEAN Secretariat (ASEAN statistical yearbook 2021, 2021)

Note that the data represents the number of vehicles (including cars, trucks, buses, and motorcycles) per 1000 population.

International Air Passenger Traffic in ASEAN, 2011 – 2020

Here is the data for international air passenger traffic in ASEAN countries from 2011 to 2020, sourced from the ASEAN Secretariat:

| Country | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 |
|-------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|
| Brunei | 1,608,691 | 1,541,290 | 1,609,682 | 1,639,226 | 1,681,233 | 1,128,542 |
| Cambodia | 3,712,000 | 4,361,000 | 4,974,000 | 5,875,000 | 6,465,000 | 1,876,000 |
| Indonesia | 26,367,899 | 30,223,052 | 34,153,425 | 38,235,855 | 42,702,804 | 7,645,206 |
| Laos | 1,409,000 | 1,621,000 | 1,862,000 | 2,197,000 | 2,466,000 | 364,000 |
| Malaysia | 45,403,394 | 48,076,685 | 52,276,886 | 59,195,025 | 64,845,612 | 4,068,566 |
| Myanmar | 1,402,499 | 1,548,487 | 1,711,622 | 2,039,566 | 2,334,152 | 428,881 |
| Philippines | 12,330,000 | 13,332,000 | 15,106,000 | 16,547,000 | 20,118,000 | 3,540,000 |
| Singapore | 51,236,021 | 55,448,964 | 62,219,611 | 65,628,955 | 65,628,955 | 2,674,249 |
| Thailand | 25,674,274 | 28,050,828 | 32,625,086 | 38,270,734 | 39,859,854 | 6,142,187 |

Source: ASEAN Secretariat (ASEAN statistical yearbook 2021, 2021)

Note: The data for 2020 was significantly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and the associated travel restrictions and lockdowns, resulting in a sharp decline in air passenger traffic for most countries.

WATER SERVICES

ASEAN countries have made significant progress in the water sector, with many countries investing in the development

of infrastructure such as dams, reservoirs, and water treatment plants. The Thai government has implemented a number of initiatives to promote the development of the water sector, including public-private partnerships and investments in infrastructure (ASEAN statistical yearbook 2021, 2021).

Achievements in Water Services

1. ASEAN Cooperation on Water Resources Management (ACWAM)

To coordinate efforts on water resource management among member states. This includes initiatives to improve the efficiency of water use, reduce water pollution, and strengthen the resilience of water systems (ASEAN statistical yearbook 2021, 2021).

2. Water Security Initiative

ASEAN has launched the Water Security Initiative to improve access to clean water and sanitation in the region. This includes efforts to increase the efficiency of water use, protect water sources, and promote the sustainable management of water resources (ASEAN statistical yearbook 2021, 2021).

3. Integrated Water Resources Management

ASEAN has promoted the concept of integrated water resources management (IWRM), which aims to balance the competing demands for water and ensure its sustainable use. IWRM involves the coordinated management of water resources at the catchment level, taking into account the needs of different sectors and users (ASEAN statistical yearbook 2021, 2021).

4. ASEAN Water Management Network

Infrastructure that is used to manage and distribute water for a variety of purposes, including drinking, irrigation, and industrial use. This can include infrastructure such as dams, reservoirs, water treatment plants, and distribution networks (ASEAN statistical yearbook 2021, 2021).

Proportion of Population with Access to Improved Drinking Water and Sanitation in ASEAN, 2020

Here is the data for the proportion of the population with access to improved drinking water and sanitation in ASEAN for the year 2020, sourced from the ASEAN Secretariat:

| Country | Access to improved drinking water (%) | Access to improved sanitation (%) |
|--------------------|--|--|
| Brunei | 100 | 100 |
| Cambodia | 77 | 41 |
| Indonesia | 76 | 63 |
| Laos | 66 | 50 |
| Malaysia | 100 | 99 |
| Myanmar | 63 | 47 |
| Philippines | 91 | 76 |
| Singapore | 100 | 100 |
| Thailand | 95 | 85 |

Source: ASEAN Secretariat (ASEAN statistical yearbook 2021, 2021)

Note: "Access to improved drinking water" refers to the percentage of the population with access to water that is safe to drink, from an improved source. "Access to improved sanitation" refers to the percentage of the population with access to improved sanitation facilities, which hygienically separate human excreta from human contact.

INTERNET CONNECTIVITY

The level of internet connectivity varies among ASEAN countries, with some countries having a higher level of connectivity than others. Many countries in ASEAN have a high level of **broadband penetration** and advanced **telecommunications infrastructure**. The countries have invested heavily in **fibre-optic networks**, which have enabled **high-speed internet access** for both residential and business users (II. Intra-ASEAN trade as a proportion of total ASEAN trade, 1985).

Achievements in Internet Connectivity

1. Increased broadband penetration.

According to the International Telecommunication Union, the percentage of households in the ASEAN region with access to the internet increased from 19.2% in 2010 to 67.3% in 2020 (II. Intra-ASEAN trade as a proportion of total ASEAN trade, 1985).

2. Investment in infrastructure

The ASEAN member countries have invested heavily in the expansion and upgrading of their telecommunications infrastructure to support increased internet connectivity. This has included the deployment of new fibre-optic networks, the expansion of wireless networks, and the roll-out of satellite-based services (II. Intra-ASEAN trade as a proportion of total ASEAN trade, 1985).

3. Development of national broadband plans

Many ASEAN countries have developed national broadband plans to increase internet access and promote the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs). These plans often include targets for increasing broadband penetration and expanding access to underserved areas (II. Intra-ASEAN trade as a proportion of total ASEAN trade, 1985).

4. International Connectivity

ASEAN nations have made steps to increase international connectivity, and enhancement of cross-border transmission capacity through the construction of new submarine cables, terrestrial cables, and satellite systems (II. Intra-ASEAN trade as a proportion of total ASEAN trade, 1985).

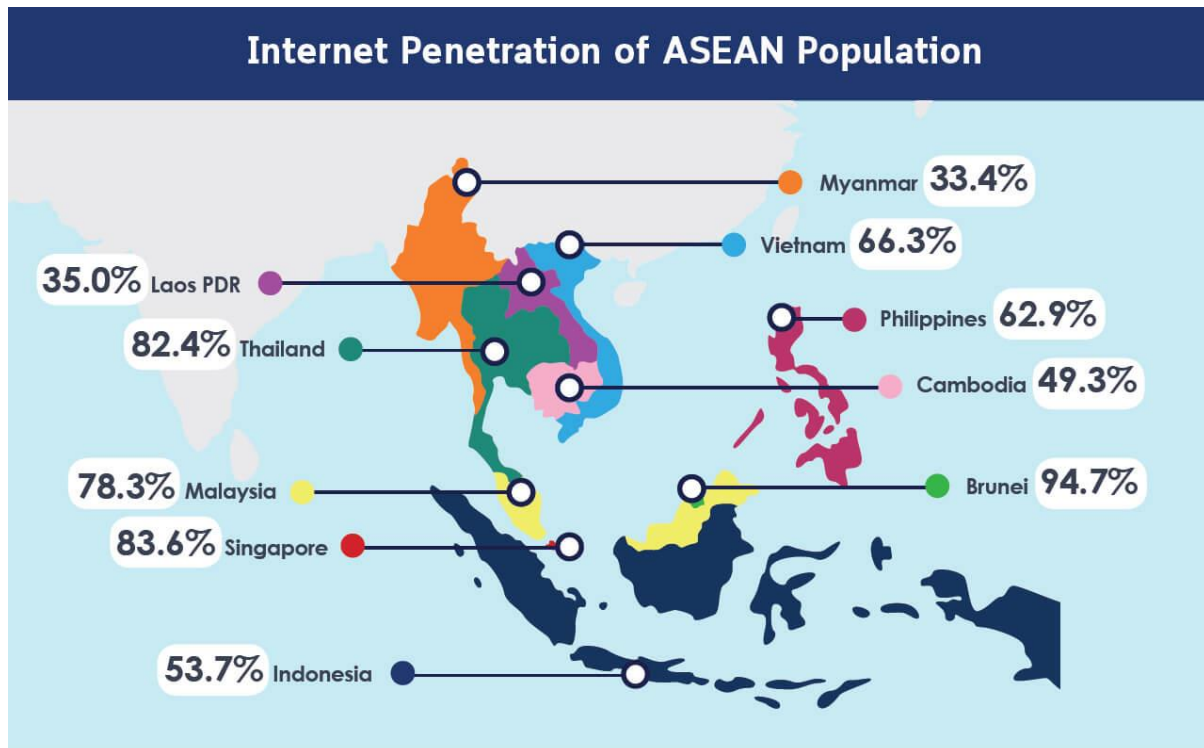
Access to Internet Services in ASEAN, 2019

Here is the data for access to internet services in ASEAN for the year 2019, sourced from the ASEAN Secretariat:

| Country | Internet Penetration Rate (%) |
|--------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Brunei | 73.7 |
| Cambodia | 13.1 |
| Indonesia | 20.0 |
| Laos | 14.5 |
| Malaysia | 80.1 |
| Myanmar | 22.0 |
| Philippines | 48.0 |
| Singapore | 84.5 |
| Thailand | 57.0 |

Source: ASEAN Secretariat (ASEAN statistical yearbook 2021, 2021)

Note: "Internet Penetration Rate" refers to the percentage of the total population of a given country or region that uses the internet.



Source: Internetworldstats, data calculation by The Gem and Jewelry Institute of Thailand (Public Organization)

HOUSING & PROPERTY

The housing and property development market in ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) has seen significant growth in recent years, driven by increasing urbanization, a growing middle class, and government initiatives to promote affordable housing. The ASEAN region is made up of 10 countries, each with its unique housing market, but some common trends and challenges have emerged across the region (OEC, 2021).

Achievements in Housing and Property

1. Increase in affordable housing.

Many governments in the ASEAN region have implemented policies and initiatives to increase the supply of affordable housing, such as setting targets for the number of affordable housing units to be built and providing tax incentives for developers who build affordable housing (OEC, 2021).

2. Development of new towns and cities

Several ASEAN countries, particularly those with high population density, have been developing new towns and cities to accommodate the rising population. For example, Malaysia has developed the Iskandar Malaysia region, while the Philippines has developed the Clark Green City (OEC, 2021).

3. Development of eco-friendly housing

This includes the use of energy-efficient materials, solar panels, and rainwater harvesting systems, as well as the inclusion of green spaces in housing developments. The development of eco-friendly housing not only helps to reduce the environmental impact of housing development but also improves the quality of life for residents (II. Intra-ASEAN

trade as a proportion of total ASEAN trade, 1985).

4. Encouraging smart city development

This includes using technology to improve the delivery of services, reduce traffic congestion, and promote sustainability. The development of smart cities is expected to improve the quality of life for residents, while also attracting investment and promoting economic growth (OEC, 2021).

Malaysia

Malaysia Number of Property Sales: Residential data was reported at 64,989.000 Units in Units2022. This records an increase from the previous number of 58,428.000 Units Jun 2022. Malaysia Number of Property Sales: Residential data is updated quarterly, averaging 52,225.000Unitst from Mar 2002 to Sep 2022, with 83 observations. The data reached an all-time high of 73,630.00Unitsit in Jun 2011 and a record low of 28,284.0 Units in Jun 2020 (II. Intra-ASEAN trade as a proportion of total ASEAN trade, 1985).

Singapore

In 2021, there were around 1.51 million residential dwelling units in Singapore. These residential dwellings included all the apartment units under the Housing Development Board (HDB), apartments, landed properties, and other types of dwellings (OEC, 2021).

Indonesia

House Built by NHUDC: Unit data was reported at 8,375.0Unitsnit in 2018. This records a decrease from the previous number of 17,004.0Unitsnit for 2017. House Built by NHUDC: Unit data is updated yearly, averaging 10,522. Units Unit from Dec 2008 to 2018, with 11 observations. The data reached an all-time high of 18,071. units Unit in 2016 and a record low of 5,216Units Units in 2008 (II. Intra-ASEAN trade as a proportion of total ASEAN trade, 1985).

The Thai government established the NHA (National Housing Authority February 12,,1973 to provide housing and financial assistance to low middle-income come-earners. According to its official website, the NHA successfully constructed a total of 544,686 housing units between 1972 and 2006. About 75% of those projects were in Bangkok (the capital city of Thailand) and its surrounding areas. Currently, the Thai government is promoting the development of affordable housing projects through the PPP (public-private partnership) scheme to cater to two low-incomers and the lower middle class.

Philippines

A 2020 survey of Filipino households revealed that the majority of households resided in a residential unit that had a floor area of around 10 to 29 square meters. On the other hand, about 30.2 per cent of centrefolds occupied a housing unit with a floor area of around 30 to 49 square meters. Only 2.3 per cent of households lived in a housing unit with a floor area of 200 square meters and above (OEC, 2021).

Vietnam

In 2019, the total number of houses was 14,030 Units where with 12,621 apartments and 1,409 private houses. Also, the total area of the housing floor was 701,500 square meters for both apartments and private houses (ASEAN statistical yearbook 2021, 2021).

ECONOMIC DIGITALIZATION

Southeast Asia's digital economy is on track to reach USD 200 Billion of Gross Merchandise Value (GMV) by end of 2022, three years earlier than expected. With 125,000 new users coming onto the Internet every day, the ASEAN digital economy is projected to grow significantly, adding an estimated \$1 trillion to regional GDP over the next ten years (OEC, 2021).

Achievements in Economic Digitalization

1. E-commerce Growth

The growth of e-commerce has been significant in ASEAN, with more businesses using digital platforms to sell their products and services. This has led to increased competition and better access to goods and services for consumers (Jones, 2011).

2. Financial Inclusion

Digitalization has also helped to increase financial inclusion in ASEAN, with more people able to access banking services and other financial products online. This has helped to reduce poverty and improve the lives of many people in the region (OEC, 2021)..

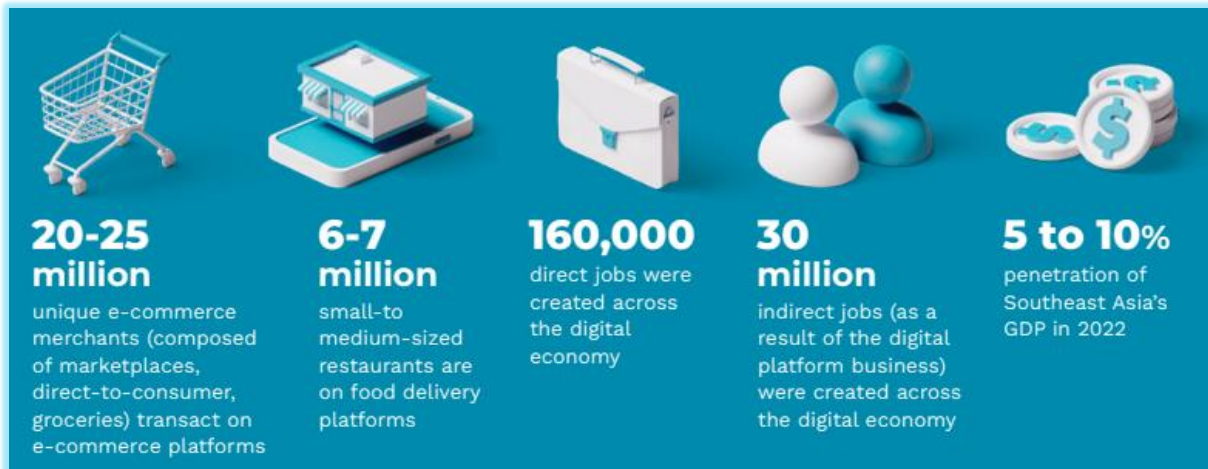
3. Agricultural Modernization

Digitalization is transforming the agricultural sector in ASEAN, by enabling precision farming, improving supply chain management, and increasing productivity.

4. Tourism Industry Development

Digitalization has made it easier to access information and book travel, leading to increased tourism in ASEAN (Jones, 2011).

Impact of Southeast Asia's Digital Economy On Business, Jobs, And Regional Economy (As Of 2022)



Source: ASEAN Secretariat (ASEAN statistical yearbook 2021, 2021)

FUTURE TECHNOLOGY

ASEAN is expected to see significant growth in technology in the coming years. Some of the key areas of focus for future technology in ASEAN include Artificial Intelligent, Big Data, Blockchain ledger, Internet of things and biotechnology.

BLOCKCHAIN TECHNOLOGY

is a decentralized and **distributed ledger** that can be used to record transactions across a network of computers. It is the technology behind cryptocurrencies like **Bitcoin and Ethereum**, but it has many other potential uses as well (ASEAN statistical yearbook 2021, 2021).

How will help the economy?

Financial Services: Blockchain can be used to create decentralized financial systems that are **faster, cheaper and more secure** than traditional systems. This can help to increase financial inclusion in ASEAN and reduce the cost of financial transactions (Jones, 2011).

Supply Chain Management: Blockchain can be used to create tamper-proof records of goods and services as they move through the supply chain. This can help to increase transparency and trust in supply chain operations and reduce the risk of fraud (ASEAN statistical yearbook 2021, 2021).

BIG DATA

Big data refers to the large and **complex data sets** that are generated by various sources, such as social media, sensors, and transactions. It is characterized by the "3Vs": **volume, velocity, and variety**.

How will help the economy?

Business Intelligence: Big data can be used to gain insights into customer behaviour, sales trends, and market conditions. This can help businesses to make better decisions and improve their operations (ASEAN statistical yearbook 2021, 2021).

Predictive Analytics: Big data can be used to analyze patterns and trends in data to make predictions about future events. This can help businesses to anticipate demand, identify new opportunities, and mitigate risks (Jones, 2011).

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a branch of computer science that involves the **development of algorithms** and systems that **can perform tasks** that would typically require human intelligence, such as understanding natural language, recognizing images, and making decisions (ASEAN statistical yearbook 2021, 2021).

How will help the economy?

Automation: AI can be used to automate repetitive and low-skilled tasks, such as data entry, customer service, and manufacturing, which can increase efficiency and reduce labour costs.

Personalization: AI can be used to create personalized experiences for customers, such as targeted marketing, personalized product recommendations, and customized financial products (Jones, 2011).

CYBERSECURITY

Cybersecurity refers to the **practice of protecting** digital devices, networks, and data from unauthorized access, use, disclosure, disruption, modification, or destruction. With the increasing adoption of digital technologies in ASEAN, cybersecurity has become an important area to protect the economy and society from cyber-attacks (ASEAN statistical yearbook 2021, 2021).

How will help the economy?

Protecting Businesses: Cybersecurity can be used to protect businesses from cyber-attacks, such as hacking, data breaches, and ransomware. This can help to reduce the risk of financial loss, reputational damage, and legal liability (Jones, 2011).

Protecting Critical Infrastructure: Cybersecurity can be used to protect critical infrastructure such as power plants, financial systems, and transportation networks from cyber-attacks. This can help to ensure the continuity of essential services and reduce the risk of major disruptions (Jones, 2011).

BIOTECHNOLOGY

Biotechnology is the application of **technology to living organisms** to modify or manipulate their characteristics or functions (ASEAN statistical yearbook 2021, 2021).

How will help the economy?

Agriculture: Biotechnology can be used to improve crop yields, reduce the use of pesticides and herbicides, and develop crops that are resistant to disease and pests. This can help to increase food security and reduce the cost of food production.

Industrial Biotechnology: Biotechnology can be used to produce biofuels, bioplastics, and biochemicals from renewable resources such as crops and microorganisms. This can help to reduce dependence on fossil fuels and mitigate the impact of climate change (ASEAN statistical yearbook 2021, 2021).

CONCLUSION

The ASEAN has been successful in promoting regional integration and cooperation, which has led to economic growth and stability in the region. With a combined GDP of over \$3 trillion and a population of more than 640 million, ASEAN has grown to become one of the most dynamic and influential economic blocs in the world. Kenya, being a member of the African Union, can learn much from the ASEAN experience in promoting regional integration and cooperation (Jones, 2011).

By studying ASEAN's achievements and potential benefits, policymakers in Kenya can gain insights into the potential benefits of regional integration and cooperation. The article's examination of ASEAN's achievements and what Kenya can learn from them can inform policymaking in Kenya, highlighting the potential benefits of regional integration and cooperation and providing recommendations for how Kenya can best benefit from the ASEAN experience (OEC, 2021).

The article can contribute to the larger body of literature on regional integration and cooperation by providing a case study of the ASEAN experience and its potential benefits for other regions. This can be useful for policymakers, researchers, and students interested in the topic (ASEAN statistical yearbook 2021, 2021).

The article is organized into different sections, each examining the relationship between Kenya and different ASEAN member states such as Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, the Philippines, and Vietnam. Each section discusses the economic, political, cultural, and diplomatic relationships between the two countries, highlighting the areas of cooperation and potential for growth.

In addition, the article also examines the strengths of ASEAN, including its economic and political stability. Policymakers in Kenya can learn from ASEAN's success in creating an enabling environment for economic growth and stability, which can be applied in Kenya to promote economic growth and reduce poverty (II. Intra-ASEAN trade as a proportion of total ASEAN trade, 1985).

The article also explores specific sectors in which Kenya can benefit from the ASEAN experience. These sectors include the health sector, agriculture sector, manufacturing sector, transport sector, water services, internet connectivity, housing and property, and economic digitalization. For each sector, the article highlights the best practices that Kenya can adopt to improve the sector's performance.

Finally, the article concludes by summarizing the main findings and recommendations for future research. The conclusion highlights the potential benefits of regional integration and cooperation, and the need for policymakers in Kenya to adopt policies that promote economic growth and stability. The article's recommendations can inform policymakers in Kenya on how to leverage the ASEAN experience to achieve their development goals (ASEAN statistical yearbook 2021, 2021).

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