



ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM 

Promoting peace and security through dialogue and cooperation in the Asia Pacific.

ASEAN Regional Forum Work Plan for Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime 2024-2026

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CONTEXT

Counter-terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) issues continue to represent some of the most pressing and potentially useful areas for cooperation in the ARF region. Partly due to the dialogue within ARF, there is a growing regional consensus on the nature of these threats. A large number of international and regional efforts exist towards combating these threats. However, as the region becomes increasingly more integrated and interconnected and exposed to an influx of voluntary and forcefully displaced people, there is a need to enhance CTTC cooperation including in the areas of security and border management in order to better safeguard the region from the new and evolving cross-border challenges. ARF needs to make concrete progress on those areas where it can bring the most added value.

ARF has dealt with a wide range of CTTC issues including maritime security, illicit drugs, terrorism, counter radicalization and cyber security. A more focused and coordinated strategy is needed.

The Hanoi Plan of Action to Implement the ARF Vision Statement which was adopted at the 17th ARF in July 2010 contains policy guidance for the ARF to develop and implement concrete and practical actions, including work plans under ARF's areas of cooperation. Under the ARF counter terrorism and transnational crime framework, the Hanoi Plan of Action aims to develop a network for regional law enforcement and military agencies to build regional capacity, share information, and individually and collectively respond in a timely and effective manner to threats posed by terrorism and transnational crime in the region.

The 11th ISM-CTTC in 2013 agreed that the Work Plan's priority areas could be better aligned with that of the ASEAN Senior Officials' Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC), namely: terrorism; illicit drug trafficking; trafficking in persons; arms smuggling; sea piracy; money laundering; international economic crime; and cybercrime.

The 13th ISM-CTTC in 2015 agreed on the extension of the implementation period of the Work Plan from 2015-2016 to 2015-2017, so that all the lead countries can have sufficient time to implement activities under their respective priority area, and the Work Plan on CTTC can be in line with the implementation period of the ARF Work Plans on Disaster Relief and Maritime Security.

The 24th ARF in 2017 agreed on the establishment of the ARF ISM on the Security of and in the Use of Information Communications Technology (ISM on ICTs Security), so that the Priority Area 3 Security of and in the Use of Information and Communication will not be longer included in the work plan of CTTC.

The 16th ISM-CTTC in 2019 agreed on the extension of the implementation period of the Work Plan from 2015-2017 to 2019-2021. The Work Plan was further extended until the period of 2023 by the 17th ISM CTTC in 2021 and the 18th ISM CTTC in 2022 due to delays in the implementation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The 20th ISM-CTTC in 2024 presented an updated Work Plan for 2024-2026, continuing the work of the ARF under previous Work Plans.

OBJECTIVE

This Work Plan updates and revises the previous CTTC Work Plan for the 2024-2026 period by drawing on experiences of ARF participants based on previous ARF goals, commitments, and efforts in the CTTC field. The Work Plan also draws from a need's assessment of the conclusions from the various ISM-CTTC meetings.

The key objective is to maintain a CTTC Work Plan, which aims to develop regional capacity to respond to terrorism and transnational crime threats, in line with the Hanoi Plan of Action to Implement the ARF Vision Statement.

The Work Plan creates a vetted, coordinated, and long-term strategy that:

- helps ARF participants meet their CTTC-related national, regional, and international commitments;
- focuses ARF's efforts towards concrete, capacity-building efforts, technical support;
- facilitates information exchange;
- complements existing initiatives; and
- simplifies and consolidates ARF CTTC-related activities to share burden.

FRAMEWORK

The Work Plan identifies the Priority Areas for ARF's CTTC efforts. While there are other important aspects of international CTTC cooperation, ARF should focus its own work on the areas where it could bring the most added value given its geographic focus, participation, or past work. In other words, ARF does not need to "do everything," in this vast field during the short term, but rather "do some things very well." CTTC-related efforts in other fields can continue, but progress in initial Priority Areas can serve as models for other CTTC-related areas in the future. Each Priority Area is followed by a brief, but broad explanation of the scope of efforts that will be taken under ARF.

Reaching a general consensus at the ISM-CTTC annual meeting will be important to ensure that Ministers receive a draft Work Plan endorsed by an ARF meeting of CTTC experts. In this sense, the annual ISM-CTTC will serve as a coordinating body for ARF's CTTC work among CTTC experts. However, ultimate approval will rest with the ISG, SOM, and Ministerial process.

LEADERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, AND FUNDING STRUCTURE

Lead Countries will be responsible for coordinating and presenting the input provided by ARF participants in their respective Priority Area, proposing their own projects, coordinating the work of their Priority Area, and seeking out funding and hosts for projects in the Priority Area. All ARF participants are encouraged to input appropriate projects to the respective Priority Areas, and submit proposals for activities ahead of the ISG or SOM of the current inter-sessional year for endorsement and implementation in the next inter-sessional year.

Every Lead Country and Co-Sponsor should set a voluntary goal for introducing and contributing towards one project per year within the framework of the Priority Area during their two-year tenure. Lead Countries will be composed of one ASEAN and one non-ASEAN country, supported by the ARF Unit of the ASEAN Secretariat. Lead Countries will be responsible for briefly updating each ARF Inter-Sessional Support Group (ISG), Senior Officials Meeting (SOM), and annual ISM-CTTC meeting on recent and future progress in their Priority Area. The ARF SOM will monitor the effectiveness of the activities based on reports given by the Lead Countries.

Co-Sponsors have no limiting factors on either the number of co-sponsors or membership criteria. Co-Sponsors shall submit project proposals and advise Lead Countries on the development of their Priority Area. Lead Countries and Co-sponsors are highly encouraged to actively coordinate outside of ARF plenary meetings in order to manage their Priority Area's efforts. ISM-CTTC Co-Chairs should also be consulted in the development of Priority Area projects. ISM-CTTC Co-Chairs should seek to create an ISM-CTTC agenda and meeting conducive to substantive discussion of and overall guidance to the Work Plan. As the Work Plan progresses in its early stages, ARF should revisit the role of the ISM-CTTC Co-Chairs, perhaps to increase their coordination role and serve as co-chairs for a set period of time.

An essential element of this Work Plan includes expanding the mandate for the ARF Unit towards this effort. In order to effectively implement the Work Plan and specific projects, the ARF Unit will need to play an increasingly important role. The ARF Unit will need to:

- provide administrative and technical support to ISM-CTTC and appropriate project meetings.
- liaise regularly with Lead Countries to ensure adequate coordination and implementation of Work Plan requirements.
- serve as a depository of incoming project proposals for countries.
- update the ARF, perhaps quarterly as appropriate, on Work Plan contributions.
- as directed by Lead Countries and in consultation with the ARF Chair, coordinate the implementation of certain projects including financial coordination of ARF contributions, contract services, and, if and as appropriate, project monitoring and evaluation.
- coordinate, as appropriate, with training centers and other regional and international organizations.

Projects will be funded by sponsoring ARF members unless noted otherwise. If necessary, sponsoring nations may seek assistance from donor nations or outside organizations.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER REGIONAL/INTERNATIONAL EFFORTS

ASEAN as well as other relevant organizations have similar work plans which could serve as useful models for ARF. The participation of some of these institutional representatives, as well as briefings on the ARF work plan in separate, but related areas in ARF CTTC-related meetings would ensure complementarity with the Work Plan's efforts.

TIMELINE

2 May 2024	An initial draft of the Work Plan was tabled at the 20th ARF ISM on CTTC in Honolulu, HI, USA.
9 May 2024	An updated draft Work Plan was tabled at the ARF ISG on CBMs and PD in Vientiane, Lao PDR
7 June 2024	An updated draft Work Plan was tabled at the ARF Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM) in Vientiane, Lao PDR
27 July 2024	The Work Plan was adopted by the Ministers at the 31st ARF in Vientiane, Lao PDR

PRIORITY AREAS

CTTC Priority Areas should seek to strike a balance between Counter Terrorism (CT) and Transnational Crime (TC) threats. ARF participants may want to begin such cooperation in only a few Priority Areas. ARF can build success off these and then venture into new CTTC-related Priority Areas in future intersessional years. Other work in the CTTC field may be done by ARF outside of these Priority Areas. However, comprehensive cooperation in a new area should be reflected in an updated Work Plan.

A Priority Area is an area of increased focus toward some of ARF's CTTC-related efforts. Under the ARF Work Plan on CTTC 2024-2026, the ARF will focus on five priority areas, namely:

- illicit drugs;
- chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) matters;
- preventing and countering violent extremism conducive to terrorism;
- trafficking in persons; and
- border security management related to foreign terrorist fighter and transnational criminal travel

Proposals for new priority areas and expansion of priority area will be reflected in the Work Plan when at least one ASEAN and one non-ASEAN ARF participants have agreed to co-lead the priority areas before the Work Plan is submitted for the Ministers' endorsement.

It should be noted that in the 2009-2010 Work Plan, the scope of the earlier priority area in bio-terrorism and bio-security was expanded to cover CBRN matters, and the

counter-radicalization priority area was introduced under this Work Plan. Two other new priority areas were proposed, namely (i) terrorist financing; and (ii) trafficking in persons. The ARF SOM in Yangon, Myanmar, on 9 June 2014, welcomed the offers from Indonesia and the European Union to co-lead the priority area “trafficking in persons”. Since the lead countries for trafficking in persons have been identified and as agreed by the 13th ISM on CTTC, this new priority area is added to the Work Plan.

It should also be noted that the 24th ARF in 2017 agreed on the establishment of the ARF ISM on the Security of and in the Use of Information Communications Technology (ISM on ICTs Security), so that the Priority Area 3 Security of and in the Use of Information and Communication in the 2015 – 2017 Work Plan will not be longer included in the work plan of CTTC.

Beginning with the 2019-2021 Work Plan, the priority area on Counter Radicalisation was renamed Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism.

For the 2024-2026 Work Plan, a new priority area on Border Security Management Related to Foreign Terrorist Fighter and Transnational Criminal Travel was added as a cross-cutting focus area of the ISM on CTTC.

PROJECT TYPES

These capacity-building projects can take a variety of forms to fit the particular assistance needs and nature of the Priority Area. As appropriate, projects can be single events or a series of events with increasing complexity. Some examples include, but are not limited to:

- *Voluntary Training Courses* from regional training centers (SEARCCT, JCLEC, ILEA, etc.) to provide capacity building in the Priority Area. The proposers of the project, Co-Sponsors, or Lead Countries should consider contributing funds to the training courses. While all ARF participants would be invited to send technical experts to such a course (self-funded), in coordination with the center, sponsors of the training course may plan to fund some participants from interested countries.
- *Symposiums or Experts’ Dialogue* that appraise ARF participants the latest trends and modus operandi of terrorist organizations, and the best practices of government agencies in addressing them.
- *Capacity-Building Workshops* including field visits that share information on experiences and bring in government, private sector, and other relevant experts and provide first-hand information to brief, train, and/or develop best practices.
- *ARF Pilot Projects* that utilize funding given to the ARF Fund for a submitted technical assistance or capacity-building project(s) in one or more ARF countries. The ARF Pilot Project should be within the scope of ARF’s Priority Areas and could be implemented by qualified government agencies in cooperation with private sector agencies.
- *Multilateral Tabletop or Field Exercises* that would test the implementation of international agreements, regional arrangements, or modes of communication, voluntary intelligence sharing and coordination among interested ARF and sub-regional participants.

Future exercises should take into account not only the capacity-building and technical support needs, but also modes of communication and information-sharing among exercise participants.

Each year at the annual ISM-CTTC, the Work Plan will be reviewed in depth to ensure continued relevance, add additional follow-on activities, and revised if necessary. Major changes to the ARF CTTC Work Plan, such as the addition or subtraction of Priority Areas, should be approved by Ministers each year. Thus, the ARF CTTC Work Plan will be considered a living document. As agreed at the 9th ARF ISM-CTTC priority areas should be dropped if no ASEAN and non-ASEAN ARF participants come forward to lead said priority area.

The extensive involvement of all ARF participants is encouraged and the Work Plan will not impose mandatory obligations upon any participants without its consent.

This structure may be revised in accordance with ARF procedures, in particular during the early stages of the Work Plan's implementation.

PRIORITY AREA IMPLEMENTATION ANNEX

PRIORITY AREA #1: ILLICIT DRUGS

Scope: In recent years, there has been a strong shift in the regional drug market from opiates to synthetic and unconventional drugs, particular methamphetamine. More worryingly, the methamphetamine production and trafficking in the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) has reached historically high levels, with many GMS countries reporting record amounts of methamphetamine seized in the region. Non-GMS countries are similarly affected due to the falling drug price of methamphetamine resulting from an unprecedented scale of drug production, normalising and growing acceptance of illicit drug use and internet-enabled drug trafficking.

ARF should target the production and trafficking of illicit drugs, their precursors, and elements responsible for establishing and sustaining illicit drug networks, by complementing existing law enforcement capabilities in the affected countries. This include enhancing cooperation in airport, seaport and land border interdiction and investigation, intelligence exchange and joint operations, strengthening the capacity of the criminal justice system on drug control, preventing and disrupting trafficking routes, support the development of national legislations, implementing best practice measures, and increasing coordination among law enforcement and forensic entities in ARF participating countries. In particular, ARF should seek to apply national precursor controls with aim for uniformity effectiveness throughout the ARF participating countries, as a means of avoiding the displacement of diversion points across national borders.

Under this priority area, ARF participating countries may also explore cooperative activities/projects on a broad and balanced approach that includes efforts to significantly reduce the supply and demand of illicit drugs, and reject any efforts that would normalise recreational drug use that goes against our aspiration of a Drug-Free ASEAN.

Lead Countries:

Co-Sponsors:,

Proposed Projects:

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Implemented Projects:

1. ARF Workshop on Enhancing Regional Cooperation to Address Challenges Posed by Illicit Drugs by Thailand and New Zealand, 11-12 February 2015, Bangkok, Thailand
2. ARF Workshop on Precursor Chemicals and Synthetic Drugs, by Thailand and Canada, 12-13 February 2015, Bangkok, Thailand

3. Concept Development Workshop on ARF Transnational Threat Information-sharing Center (ATTIC), by United States and Thailand, February 2016, Bangkok, Thailand
4. ARF Workshop on the Establishment of the ARF Transnational Threat Information-sharing Center (ATTIC), by Thailand and the United States, 6-7 March 2017, Bangkok, Thailand

Past ARF/ASEAN Work:

- ARF Statement Promoting Collaboration on the Prevention of Diversion of Precursors Into Illicit Drug Manufacture, July 2008
- ARF Statement on Enhancing Cooperation in Addressing and Countering the Drug Problem, August 2017

PRIORITY AREA #2: CHEMICAL, BIOLOGICAL, RADIOLOGICAL AND NUCLEAR (CBRN)

Scope: The enactment and implementation of necessary national measures to address bio-terrorism. This includes increased protection of dangerous biological materials, technology, and expertise which will build the capacities of ARF participants to prevent, or respond to, acts of bio-terrorism. The dual-use nature of biological science, for both peaceful and non-peaceful purposes, must be addressed to both prevent bio-terrorism and continue biological science development for peaceful purposes. This will also build safe, secure, and sustainable capacity to combat infectious diseases, thereby meshing international security and public health priorities. Efforts should be in support of the goals of the Biological Weapons Convention, the Seventh Review Conference, and related commitments, and be consistent with international law. Following the 9th ARF ISM CTTC, the priority area has been expanded to also cover the chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) aspects.

Lead Countries:

Co-Sponsors:

Proposed Projects:

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Implemented Projects:

1. ARF Workshop on Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1540, San Francisco, 14 February 2007
2. ARF Biological Threat Reduction Workshop, by the Philippines and United States, June 2009 in Manila, Philippines
3. ARF Workshop on Bio-risk Management, by the Philippines, United States and Australia, September 2010 in Manila, Philippines
4. ARF Workshop on Disease Detection and Surveillance: Enhancing Public and Veterinary Health Networks to Combat Infectious Disease and Bioterrorism, by the Philippines, United States and Australia, September 2011 in Manila, Philippines
5. ARF Workshop on Preparedness and Response to a Biological Event, by the Philippines, United States and Australia, September 2012, Manila, Philippines
6. Workshop on Countering Illicit Trafficking of CBRN Materials, by Canada and Philippines, November 2013, Manila, Philippines
7. ARF Cross-Sectoral Security Cooperation on Bio-Preparedness and Disaster Response, by Philippines and the United States, 26-28 August 2014, Manila, Philippines
8. ARF Bio-Preparedness Table Top Exercise (TTX) and Workshop (proposed by the Philippines and United States), 11-13 August 2015, Manila, Philippines
9. ARF Workshop on "Raising awareness and promoting cooperation on CBRN risk mitigation", by the Philippines and European Union, 9-10 September 2015, Metro Manila, Philippines

10. 2nd ARF Workshop on Raising Awareness and Promoting Cooperation on Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) Risk Mitigation, by the Philippines and United States, March 2018, Manila, Philippines
11. ARF workshop on strengthening legal frameworks to combat CBRN terrorism-Steppe Lotus, by Vietnam, Mongolia, and the United States, 16-18 April 2024, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

Past ARF/ASEAN Work:

- ARF Statement on Cooperative Counter-Terrorist Action on Border Security, Phnom Penh, 17 June 2003
- ARF Statement on Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1540, Manila, 2 August 2007
- ASEAN Working Group on Bio-Terrorism Prevention
- ARF Best Practices for Implementation of a Bio risk Management System; ARF Best Practices for the Implementation of Disease Surveillance; ARF Best Practices for Preparedness and Response to a Biological Event (by United States, Australia and Philippines)

PRIORITY AREA #3: PREVENTING AND COUNTERING TERRORISM AND VIOLENT EXTREMISM CONDUCTIVE TO TERRORISM

Scope: The priority area “Preventing and Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism Conducive to Terrorism” is aimed at implementing a sustained and proactive approach to prevent and to counter all forms of violent extremism conducive to terrorism, and to institutionalize efforts to support the victims of terrorism (VOTs). ARF participating countries may explore cooperative projects including short and long-term initiatives focused on preventing violent extremism conducive to terrorism and ensuring the protection of rights and necessary services to VOTs. The projects can be done through cooperation in promoting dialogue and conflict prevention, strengthening good governance, human rights and the rule of law, building resilient, inclusive communities able to resist violent extremist ideologies, empowering youth, empowering women and promoting gender equality, providing education, skills development, employment facilitation, strengthening strategic communications, and working with government, which takes the leading role, and civil society to build out good practices to assist victims and survivors of terrorist attacks.

Among others, under this priority area, ARF participating countries may explore cooperative activities/projects in identifying and countering the spread of radicalization to terrorism through various channels such as the internet and social media, religious centers, schools, including institutes of higher education, community, social and sports organizations, as well as by inmates in detention centers and by terrorists from abroad.

ARF countries may also seek ways to cooperate on mitigating the spread of violent extremism conducive to terrorism by empowering moderate voices and civil society. ARF participants are encouraged to cooperate in exchange of experiences, lessons learned and best practices in addressing radicalization, including sharing of information on the socioeconomic and social drivers of radicalization and violent extremism conducive to terrorism in their countries, as well as local/community engagement and social support measures that may address these issues, including the development of counter narratives. ARF countries may also explore de-radicalization measures, aimed at rehabilitating and reintegrating those radicalized back into society.

Lead Countries:

Co-Sponsors:

Proposed Projects:

1. ARF Workshop to Support the Victims of Terrorism in the ASEAN Region
2. ARF Workshop on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism Conducive to Terrorism through Effective Rehabilitation and Reintegration

Implemented Projects:

1. ARF-related Workshop on Countering Radicalization, 4-5 February 2013, Tokyo, Japan

2. ARF Workshop on Countering Radicalization, by Malaysia and Japan, 25-26 March 2015, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
3. ARF Seminar on Strengthening Management of Cross-Border Movement of Criminals, by China and Thailand, 1-2 September 2015, Guangzhou, China
4. ARF Workshop on First Response Support for Victims of Terrorism and Other Mass Casualty Events, by the Philippines and United States, 22-23 September 2015, Manila, Philippines
5. ARF Workshop on Medium-to-Long-Term Support for Victims of Terrorism, by the Philippines and the United States, 7-8 February 2017, Manila, Philippines
6. ARF Workshop on Mainstreaming the Prevention of Violent Extremism in the ARF Region, by the Philippines, Australia, and the European Union, 15-16 February 2017, Brussels, Belgium
7. ARF Workshop on Countering Online Extremist Messaging, 19-20 July 2017, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
8. ARF Statement on Preventing and Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism Conducive to Terrorism (VECT), 2 August 2019, Bangkok, VC
9. ARF Statement on the Treatment of Children Recruited by or Associated with Terrorist Groups, Hanoi (VC), 12 September 2020
10. ARF Workshop on Aviation Security and Information Sharing, by the Philippines, Australia, and the United States, 22-24 February 2021, VC.
11. ARF Workshop on Preventing Terrorist Use of the Internet, by Indonesia, Malaysia, and New Zealand, 7 July 2021, VC
12. ARF Statement on Promoting Youth, Peace and Security Agenda, Brunei Darussalam (VC), 6 August 2021
13. ARF Seminar on the Role of Youth in Building Digital Resilience to Prevent and Counter Terrorism and Violent Extremism Conducive to Terrorism (VECT), by Malaysia, Australia, and New Zealand, 15 March 2022, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
14. ARF Workshop on Anti Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism (AML/CFT), by Indonesia, Laos PDR, and the European Union, 8-10 March 2023, Bali Indonesia

Past ARF/ASEAN Work:

- Symposium on the Dynamics of Youth and Terrorism, 8-11 May 2011, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- ARF Statement on Preventing and Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism Conducive to Terrorism (VECT) (2019), proposed by Australia, Indonesia, and New Zealand, adopted by the 26th ARF in Bangkok in 2019
- ARF Statement on Aviation Partnership: Soaring Ahead Together (2019), proposed by Brunei Darussalam and the US, adopted by the 26th ARF in Bangkok in 2019
- ARF Statement on the Treatment of Children Recruited by or Associated with Terrorist Groups, proposed by Australia, the EU, Indonesia, New Zealand, and the Philippines, adopted by the 27th ARF in September 2020

PRIORITY AREA #4: TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS

Scope: Trafficking in Persons (TIP) is a serious crime and a violation of fundamental human rights. TIP – particularly of persons in vulnerable situations – is increasingly prevalent where people are trafficked between states. The areas of crime have overstepped the boundary of the state and the modus operandi involves international criminal networks.

This new ARF priority area enables ARF participants to explore numbers of projects and activities to strengthen national, regional and international cooperation in preventing and combating TIP in a comprehensive manner. The establishment of this new priority under the framework of ARF is also considered as complementary to the entering into force and implementation of the ASEAN Convention Against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (ACTIP). The inclusion of TIP in this Work Plan also reinforces the work of the ASEAN SOMTC in addressing TIP.

Cooperation in preventing and combating TIP under the ARF will continue to increase mutual understanding of the issue, as well as promote intensified capacity building programs and quality cross-border cooperation arrangements to address relevant issues on TIP, especially in prevention, early detection, prosecution and protection of TIP victims. These capacity building activities include, among others, exchange of views and information sharing on relevant migratory flows, trends and patterns, victim identification and protection, border controls and monitoring mechanisms, law enforcement, as well as criminalization of all aspects of TIP.

Taking into account the existing relevant regional and international mechanisms in preventing and combating TIP, ARF recognizes that proposed projects in the Work Plan should complement, and do not duplicate or overlap, the work of other regional and international mechanisms and fora dealing with TIP.

Lead Countries:

Co-Sponsors:

Proposed Projects:

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Implemented Projects:

1. ARF Workshop on Security, Stability and International Migration in the ASEAN Region, by Myanmar and the United States, 10-11 March 2015, Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar
2. ARF Workshop on Trafficking in Persons, by Indonesia and the European Union, 5 April 2017, Semarang, Indonesia

**PROPOSED ADDITION*

PRIORITY AREA #5: BORDER SECURITY MANAGEMENT RELATED TO FOREIGN TERRORIST FIGHTER AND TRANSNATIONAL CRIMINAL TRAVEL

Scope: With the world gradually shifting again to pre-COVID-19 conditions, borders have re-opened, economies are growing, and transnational travel is back on the rise. However, that would undoubtedly include the movement of foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs) and transnational criminals (TCs) and cross-border operations that relate to their operations.

Preventing and minimizing the movement and *modus operandi* of FTFs and TCs, as well as ensuring their coordinated return to their origin countries, is a complex challenge as it is not only the concern of one government, rather it requires multifaceted solutions such as establishing effective migration policy and legal frameworks, detecting fraudulent documents, watchlisting of known terrorist fighters and transnational criminals, API/PNR data collection and security, and tracking terrorism and criminal financing networks while ensuring that human rights and the rule of law are upheld. It is, therefore, vital that relevant government agencies, key regional players, and the international community must increase their respective border security management.

This Priority Area provides ARF participants the platform to discuss and share best practices and develop mutually beneficial projects and activities that aim to enhance the capacities of their relevant units against the movement and *modus operandi* of FTFs and TCs. The inclusion of this Priority Area complements and is in line with the ASEAN Convention on Counter Terrorism, ASEAN Comprehensive Plan of Action on Counter Terrorism, ASEAN Plan of Action to Prevent and Counter the Rise of Radicalisation and Violent Extremism (2018-2025), ASEAN Convention Against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, ASEAN Multi-Sectoral Work Plan Against Trafficking in Persons 2023-2028, ASEAN Plan of Action in Combating Transnational Crime (2016-2025), and other relevant instruments.

On the other hand, it must be considered that this Priority Area connects with each of the other Priority Areas with the nexus of cross-border activity and transnational illegal transit. As a way forward, finding projects and activities on common ground that avoid duplication and promote shared interests are of pivotal interest.

Lead Countries:,

Co-Sponsors:,

Proposed Projects:

1. Experts Dialogue on Foreign Terrorist Fighters and Online Recruitment
2. Symposium on Border Security Management and Regional Security
3. Standardized Training for border security officials.
4. Cyber Security Cooperation on capacity building and information sharing.
5. Public-Private Partnership in Border Security initiatives.

Implemented Projects:
