ASEAN-APEC Forum on Advancing MSME Development through Policy Dialogue and Knowledge Exchange

as part of Canada - ASEAN Business Forum

Date: November 14-15, 2026
Location: Manila, the Philippines, on the sidelines of the ASEAN Business and Investment Summit (ABIS) and 49th ASEAN Leaders Summit
Host: the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada, implemented in collaboration with Canada - ASEAN Business Council
Format: In-person, by invitation only
Dress code: Business Casual or National Attire

Introduction

The ASEAN–APEC Forum on Advancing MSME Development through Policy Dialogue and Knowledge Exchange marks the culmination of the APEC-Canada Growing Business Partnership (ACGBP), a Government of Canada-funded initiative implemented by the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada (APF Canada) across Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Viet Nam.

Through policy leadership, research, capacity building, mentorship, and regional knowledge exchange, ACGBP has worked to support more inclusive and sustainable growth for micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), with particular attention to women entrepreneurs and other groups that continue to face barriers to economic participation.

Building on the experiences and lessons generated across the five project economies, the Forum broadens this engagement to the wider ASEAN region. It brings together policymakers, MSME entrepreneurs, support organizations, private-sector representatives, and regional partners to connect policy discussions with practical experiences and identify shared priorities for MSME development.

The Forum reflects priorities being advanced across both ASEAN and APEC, including stronger MSME competitiveness and resilience, digital and technological transformation, participation in regional and global value chains, supportive business environments, sustainability, and inclusive growth. By bringing together perspectives from across the region, the Forum aims to share practical approaches, strengthen collaboration, and identify opportunities to carry forward lessons from ACGBP in support of future MSME development.

Event Objectives

- Share lessons and practical approaches from ACGBP and across ASEAN to

strengthen inclusive, resilient, and sustainable MSME development.

- Connect policy and practice by creating direct dialogue among policymakers, MSMEs, support organizations, and private-sector actors.
- Strengthen regional collaboration and knowledge exchange across ASEAN and APEC on common MSME priorities and challenges.
- Identify practical opportunities for future action on digitalization, market access, sustainability, enabling policies, and inclusive growth.

Agenda (Subject to change)

Time	Program	Stage
Day 1 (November 14th)		
9:30 - 10:00 AM	**Registration**	ABIS
10:00 - 12:00 PM	**APFC MSME Roundtable** The roundtable will bring together ASEAN policymakers and regional MSME stakeholders to discuss practical approaches to supporting the green transition of MSMEs. Drawing on policy recommendations developed through earlier regional convenings, participants will exchange perspectives on policy and program priorities, opportunities for regional cooperation, and the types of support needed to advance inclusive, sustainable, and resilient MSME growth.	ABIS
12:00 – 1:00 PM	**Lunch Break**	ABIS
1:00 – 2:00 PM	**Registration** *(for participants of the MSME Trainings)*	
2:00 - 5:00 PM	**APFC MSME Training** Two parallel training sessions will focus on AI adoption and Export to Canada, building on the virtual training series delivered in the lead-up to the Forum. Led by subject-matter experts, the sessions will enable MSMEs to build practical skills, including steps to become export-ready and learning to build a business landing page. The interactive sessions will provide opportunities to discuss business challenges, receive practical guidance, and learn from experiences across the region.	ABIS
5:30 – 7:00	**Dinner**	ABIS
Day 2 (November 15th) - Main Forum		
7:30 - 8:30 AM	**Registration**	

8:30 - 8:35 AM	**Opening Remarks** • Wayne Farmer, President, Canada-ASEAN Business Council	
8:35 - 8:45 AM	**Special Opening Plenary: A New Chapter in Canada-ASEAN Relations** • The Right Honourable Mark Carney, Prime Minister of Canada (Invited)	
8:45 - 9:00 AM	**CEO Spotlight**	Main Stage
9:00 - 9:50 AM *Parallel Session*	**Panel 1: The ASEAN-Canada Momentum: Where Business Sees the Opportunity** This panel will bring together business leaders to examine where the next wave of commercial opportunity is emerging. Drawing on their experience operating across Canada and Southeast Asia, speakers will discuss the markets and sectors they see driving growth, how shifting supply chains, technology and changing consumer demand are shaping business strategies, and what will influence companies' decisions to invest and expand across the two regions. **Panelists:** • Mark Lee, Chairman, Singapore Business Federation and CEO, Sing Lun Holdings Limited (Invited) • JJ Moreno, President & CEO, Sun Life Philippines (Confirmed) • Arsjad Rasjid, Founder and Chairman, Sriwijaya Capital (Confirmed) • Paul Tessy, Chief International Officer, Purolator (Confirmed) • Alison Nankivell, CEO, Export Development Canada (Confirmed) **Moderator:** The Honourable Mary Ng, Former Minister of Export Promotion, International Trade and Economic Development of Canada, and Senior Milken Institute Fellow (Confirmed)	Main Stage

09:50 - 10:00 AM *Parallel Session*	**Canada-ASEAN Business Spotlight** This 10-minute spotlight will showcase B2Gold's journey as a leading Canadian investor in the Philippines and its contribution to the country's economic development. Through its long-term presence and investment, B2Gold demonstrates how Canadian businesses can create lasting value through employment, local supply chains and community development, while contributing to responsible resource development. The session will highlight B2Gold's experience as a tangible example of the growing commercial partnership between Canada and ASEAN and the opportunities for Canadian businesses to grow alongside the region. • Kelvin Dushnisky, Executive Chair, B2Gold (Confirmed)	Main Stage
9:00 – 9:10 AM	**Opening Remarks for MSME Program:** Jeff Nankivell, President and CEO, The Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada	MSME Stage
9:10 – 9:20 AM	**Welcome Remarks for MSME Program:** Myrtle Faye Solina, Director, Bureau of Small and Medium Enterprise Development, Department of Trade and Industry, Philippines	MSME Stage
9:20 - 10:20 AM	**Panel Discussion: Policy–MSME Dialogue** Policymakers, MSME support organizations and MSME entrepreneurs will engage in a structured dialogue on enabling policies that enhance MSME competitiveness and resilience. This session provides an opportunity for the Policy Leadership Stream to share key outcomes from the pre-event policy workshops and the Day 1 roundtable, and to engage directly with MSME representatives to exchange perspectives and practical insights. **Panelists:** • Jose Ma Concepcion III, Chairman, ASEAN Business Advisory Council • Justin Elavathil, Counsellor (Commercial) and Trade Commissioner, Embassy of Canada to the Philippines	MSME Stage

	• Jose Montegu, Policy Analyst, Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) • MSME Entrepreneur from ASEAN **Moderator:** Karenina B. Romualdo, Acting Vice President for Business Affairs of Central Luzon State University (CLSU)	
10:00 - 10:30 AM	**Networking Coffee Break**	Foyer Area
10:30 - 11:20 PM *Parallel Session*	**Panel 4: Powering ASEAN's Future: Addressing the Energy Trilemma through Canada-ASEAN Cooperation** ASEAN's rapidly growing economies face an increasingly complex energy trilemma: meeting rising demand while maintaining energy security, affordability, and progress toward climate objectives. This challenge is becoming more urgent amid a volatile global landscape, where geopolitical disruptions, including risks to critical energy routes such as the Strait of Hormuz, can affect fuel supplies, prices, and investment decisions, while climate change is increasing pressure to build more resilient and lower-carbon energy systems. This panel will explore how Canada and ASEAN can deepen cooperation across power-grid connectivity, renewable and conventional energy, nuclear technology, and resilient infrastructure. The discussion will also examine one of the region's most persistent challenges: turning energy ambitions into bankable projects, including how governments, development finance institutions, utilities, investors, and the private sector can improve project preparation, risk allocation, financing structures, and regulatory certainty to mobilize the capital required for ASEAN's energy transition and long-term energy security. **Scene-Setting Keynote Speech:** H.E. Sharon Garin, Secretary of Energy of the Philippines (Invited) **Panelists:** • Danel C. Aboitiz, President and CEO, Aboitiz Power (Invited)	Main Stage

	• Emmanuel "Manny" V. Rubio, President and Chief Executive Officer, Meralco PowerGen Corporation (Invited) • Dr. Sara Supa-amornkul, Director of International Business Development, Candu Energy, Inc (Confirmed) • Petronas (Invited)	
10:20 - 11:20 AM *Parallel Session*	**Panel Discussion: Scale Up to Regional and Global Market** This panel will feature trade experts from ASEAN and Canada who will discuss the opportunities and potential for ASEAN MSMEs to contribute to, and benefit from, regional and global trade and supply chains. **Panelists:** • Maria Lourdes G. Monteverde, MSMED Council Private Sector Representative – Mindanao, Chairperson, MSMED Council Committee on Global Market Penetration • Sumaiya Sajjad, Director of Technical Assistance Facility, Development Finance Institution of Canada • Christa Hardjasaputra, Senior Officer for Enterprise Development, ASEAN Secretariat • Filipino MSME Entrepreneur **Moderator:** TBC	MSME Stage
10:30 AM - 12:00 PM *Parallel Session*	**Nuclear Energy Roundtable**	Breakout Room
11:20 AM - 12:10 PM *Parallel Session*	**Panel 3: Strengthening Canada-ASEAN Partnership for Food Security and Resilience** As ASEAN's population, incomes, and demand for safe and nutritious food continue to grow, the region must strengthen food security while adapting to the increasing pressures of climate change. This panel will explore how Canada and ASEAN can deepen cooperation across agriculture and agri-food to strengthen food supply and safety, meet ASEAN's growing protein and nutritional needs, and build more resilient and sustainable food systems. The discussion will highlight how Canadian agricultural	

	products, technology, innovation, and expertise can support ASEAN in adapting to climate-related risks, strengthening agricultural value chains, and developing long-term partnerships that enhance regional food security. **Scene-Setting Keynote Speech:** H.E. Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr., Secretary of Agriculture, Department of Agriculture of the Philippines (Invited) **Panelists:** • Eric Bienvenue, Canada Beef Association (Confirmed) • Michael Smart, Director & Chief Representative, Indo-Pacific, FinDev Canada (Confirmed) • Ernesto Tanmantiong, Global President and CEO, Jollibee (Invited) **Moderator:** • Diedrah Kelly, Executive Director, Indo-Pacific Agriculture and Agri-food Office (Confirmed)	
11:20 AM - 12:00 PM	**Project Highlights and Impact Stories Session** This session will mark the official conclusion of ACGBP Phase II implementation by reflecting on the project's achievements, experiences, and impact. MSME entrepreneurs will share success stories from their participation in the project, implementation partners will reflect on their experience supporting MSMEs, and the ACGBP team will provide an overview of key project results and achievements. **Speakers:** • Xiaoyi (Yee) Ze, Program Manager, APEC-Canada Growing Business Partnership, Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada • MSME Participant of the APEC-Canada Growing Business Partnership • Alyssa Binti Haniff, Senior Manager, Development & Partnerships, Women of Will - Malaysia (Implementation Partner of the APEC-Canada Growing Business Partnership) • Le Ha, Associate Professor of the Foreign	MSME Stage

	Trade University's Innovation and Incubation Space – Viet Nam (Implementation Partner of the APEC-Canada Growing Business Partnership)	
12:00 – 12:10 PM	**APEC-Canada Growing Business Partnership Project Remarks** Global Affairs Canada Representative	MSME Stage
12:10 - 1:30 PM	**Networking Lunch**	Foyer Area
1:30 - 2:00 PM	**Fireside Chat with the Ministers** **Delivering the Next Phase of Canada-ASEAN Economic Partnership** With major trade frameworks taking shape, this ministerial conversation will look beyond the negotiations to the next phase of Canada-ASEAN economic cooperation. Ministers will discuss how governments can translate stronger trade architecture into greater commercial activity, investment and business partnerships, and identify the sectors and initiatives where Canada and ASEAN can deliver tangible results over the coming years. **Panelists:** • H.E. Maria Cristina Aldeguer-Roque, Secretary, Department of Trade and Industry of the Philippines (Invited) • The Hon. Maninder Sidhu, Minister of International Trade of Canada (Invited) • H.E. Gan Kim Yong, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Trade and Industry, Ministry of Trade and Industry, Singapore (Invited) **Moderator:** TBD	Main Stage
2:00 - 2:10 PM	**Canada-ASEAN Business Spotlight: Announcement of a Partnership**	
2:10 - 3:00 PM	**Panel Discussion: Canada, ASEAN and APEC — Supporting MSME Growth and Regional Cooperation** Bringing ASEAN and APEC MSME stakeholders onto the main stage, this panel considers how the two regional platforms can work in greater concert	

	to strengthen the MSME ecosystem across the region. The discussion will address MSME integration into regional and global value chains, digital and technological transformation, and the enabling conditions that allow smaller firms, particularly women-led and marginalized enterprises, to participate in and benefit from deeper economic ties with Canada. **Panelists:** • Hon. Justice Allan B. Gepty, Associate Justice, Court of Appeals of the Philippines, and Undersecretary, Department of Trade and Industry, Philippines • H.E. Ambra Dickie, Ambassador of Canada to ASEAN • Dr. Azman Bin Abdullah, Deputy Undersecretary, Ministry of Entrepreneur and Cooperatives Development, Malaysia • Tetsuya Watanabe, President, Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia • Representative from the APEC Secretariat **Moderator:** Barrett Bingley, Asia Regional Director for the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada	
3:00 - 3:30 PM	**Fireside Chat: Investing in People: Canada and ASEAN Building the Workforce of the Future** As ASEAN economies continue to grow and transform, developing a future-ready workforce will be critical to sustaining competitiveness, innovation, and inclusive growth. This fireside chat will explore how Canada and ASEAN can work together to strengthen human capital through education, skills development, applied learning, research, and closer partnerships between academic institutions and industry. Drawing on Canadian expertise in workforce-oriented education and innovation, the discussion will consider how deeper collaboration can help equip the next generation with the skills needed for a rapidly changing, technology-driven, and increasingly sustainable economy. **Panelists:** • Dr. Ann Marie Vaughan, President and CEO, Humber Polytechnic (Confirmed) • TESDA Philippines	Main Stage

3:00 - 4:00 PM	**Networking Coffee Break**	Foyer Area
4:00 - 4:30 PM	**Leadership Dialogue: Navigating the New Geoeconomic Landscape: Canada and ASEAN in a Changing World** Against a rapidly changing global landscape marked by geopolitical uncertainty, economic fragmentation, shifting supply chains and intensifying competition for investment, this high-level dialogue will examine how Canada and ASEAN are repositioning their economic relationships. The discussion will explore the strategic role each can play in the other's diversification, resilience and long-term economic security, and where their interests increasingly converge. **Panelists:** • The Honourable Anita Anand, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Canada (Invited) • The Honourable Frederick Go, Secretary of Finance of the Philippines (Invited) **Moderator**: Jeff Nankivell, President and CEO, Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada (Confirmed)	
4:30 - 5:15 PM	**Panel 5: Shaping the Next Chapter of Canada-ASEAN Investment** **Scene-Setting Presentation:** Barrett Bingley, Asia Regional Director, Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada (Confirmed) Canada and ASEAN are entering a new phase in their investment relationship as both seek to diversify economic partnerships and strengthen resilience amid a changing global landscape. The Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada's *Investment Monitor 2026* shows a significant shift: ASEAN investment into Canada rose from less than CAD 200 million in 2005-2009 to nearly CAD 19 billion in 2020-2024, while Canadian investment into Southeast Asia declined from nearly CAD 19 billion to CAD 4.5 billion over the same periods. Building on the Canada Investment Summit in September 2026, this panel will bring together institutional investors, private capital leaders, business executives, and legal and advisory experts to	Main Stage

	examine how both regions can translate strategic interest into investable opportunities. The discussion will explore how sovereign and institutional capital, private equity, infrastructure investors, and corporate partners can identify and structure opportunities across sectors. It will also address the practical conditions that shape investment decisions, including bankability, risk allocation, regulatory certainty, governance, partnerships, and market entry. The panel will ultimately consider how Canada and ASEAN can build a stronger two-way investment pipeline and deepen long-term capital partnerships between the two regions. **Panelists:** • Cezar Consing, President and CEO, Ayala Corporation (Confirmed) • Wai Leng Leong, Managing Director, Head of Asia Pacific, La Caisse (Invited) • Cesar Purisima, Founding Partner, Ikhlas Capital (Invited) • Invest in Canada (Invited) • Manulife (Invited)	
5:15 - 5:25 PM	**Insights from the Negotiators on ASEAN-Canada FTA and Canada-Philippines FTA** With negotiations for the ASEAN-Canada Free Trade Agreement and Canada - Philippines are expected to be substantially concluded this year, this session will provide a first-hand update on the agreements and what businesses can expect next. The session will provide insights into the concluded chapters and key outcomes, the expected benefits and new opportunities for Canadian and ASEAN businesses, and the anticipated pathway toward signature, ratification, and implementation. Insights sharing by Jay Allen, Director General, Trade Negotiations, Global Affairs Canada (Confirmed)	Main Stage
5:25 - 5:45 PM	**Canada-ASEAN Business Forum Closing Session** **Remarks:** • Canada-ASEAN Business Council • H.E. David Hartman, Ambassador of Canada	Main Stage

	to the Philippines	
6:00 - 8:00 PM	**Networking Reception** **Remarks:** • H.E. Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr., President of the Republic of the Philippines (Invited) • Dr. Kao Kim Hourn, Secretary-General of ASEAN	Foyer Area