# 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 | Venue/ Stage |
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| **Day 1 (November 14th)** | | |
| 9:30 - 10:00 AM | **Registration** | Solaire Resort |
| 10:00 - 12:00 PM | **APFC MSME Roundtable**<br>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. | Solaire Resort |
| 12:00 – 1:00 PM | **Lunch Break** | Solaire Resort |
| 1:00 – 2:00 PM | **Registration** *(for participants of the MSME Trainings)* | Solaire Resort |
| 2:00 - 5:00 PM | **APFC MSME Training**<br>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. | Solaire Resort |
| 5:30 – 7:00 | **Dinner** | Solaire Resort |

| Day 2 (November 15th) - Main Forum | | |
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| 8:00 - 8:45 AM | **Registration** | |
| 8:50 - 9:00 AM | **Opening Remarks**<br>• Wayne Farmer, President, Canada-ASEAN Business Council | |
| 9:00 - 9:50 AM<br>*Parallel Session* | **In Conversation with The Hon. Mary Ng: The ASEAN-Canada Momentum: Where Business Sees the Opportunity**<br><br>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.<br><br>**Panelists:**<br>• Alison Nankivell, CEO, Export Development Canada<br>• Arsjad Rasjid, Founder and Chairman, Sriwijaya Capital<br>• JJ Moreno, President & CEO, Sun Life Philippines<br>• Mark Lee, Chairman, Singapore Business Federation and CEO, Sing Lun Holdings Limited (Invited)<br><br>**Moderator:** The Honourable Mary Ng, Former Minister of Export Promotion, International Trade and Economic Development of Canada, and Senior Milken Institute Fellow | Main Stage |
| 9:00 – 9:10 AM<br>*Parallel Session* | **Opening Remarks for MSME Program:**<br>Jeff Nankivell, President and CEO, The Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada | MSME Stage |
| 9:10 – 9:20 AM<br>*Parallel Session* | **Welcome Remarks for MSME Program:**<br>Myrtle Faye Solina, Director, Bureau of Small and Medium Enterprise Development, Department of Trade and Industry, Philippines | MSME Stage |

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| 9:20 - 10:20 AM<br>*Parallel Session* | **Panel Discussion: Policy–MSME Dialogue**<br>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.<br><br>**Panelists:**<br>• Nhimkhemara Rosa, Head of the General Department of Small and Medium Enterprises and Handicraft, Ministry of Industry, Cambodia<br>• Jose Ma Concepcion III, Chairman, ASEAN Business Advisory Council<br>• Jose Montegu, Policy Analyst, Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)<br>• Maria Lourdes G. Monteverde, MSMED Council Private Sector Representative – Mindanao, Chairperson, MSMED Council Committee on Global Market Penetration<br><br>**Moderator:** Joseph Ronald M. Reyes, Trade and Industry Development Specialist, Bureau of Small and Medium Enterprise Development, Department of Trade and Industry, Philippines | MSME Stage |
| 09:50 - 10:00 AM<br>*Parallel Session* | **Canada-ASEAN Business Spotlight**<br><br>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. | Main Stage |

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| | • Kelvin Dushnisky, Executive Chair, B2Gold | |
| 10:00 - 10:50 AM<br>*Parallel Session* | **Powering ASEAN's Future: Addressing the Energy Trilemma through Canada-ASEAN Cooperation**<br><br>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<br>.<br>**Scene-Setting Keynote Speech:** H.E. Sharon Garin, Secretary of Energy of the Philippines<br><br>**Panelists:**<br>• Dr. Ann Marie Vaughan, President & CEO, Humber Polytechnic<br>• Jose Ricardo Delgado, CEO, Citadel Pacific Ltd.<br>• John McDonald, Managing Director, Indo Pacific, Government of Alberta<br>• Joseph Yu, President and CEO, Mgen Terra Solar<br>• Dr. Sara Supa-amornkul, Director of International Business Development, Candu Energy, Inc<br>**Moderator:** Martin Tabi, Executive Director for Canada, Denmark, Finland, Ireland, The Netherlands, Norway and Sweden, Asia Development Bank | Main Stage |
| 10:50 - 11:00 AM | **Special Opening Plenary: A New Chapter in Canada-ASEAN Relations**<br>• The Right Honourable Mark Carney, Prime Minister of Canada (Invited) | Main Stage |

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| 10:20 - 11:20 AM<br>*Parallel Session* | **Panel Discussion: Scale Up to Regional and Global Market**<br>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.<br><br>**Panelists:**<br>• Sumaiya Sajjad, Director of Technical Assistance Facility, Development Finance Institution of Canada<br>• Akhmad Bayhaqi, Senior Analyst, APEC Policy support Unit (PSU), APEC Secratariat<br>• Christa Hardjasaputra, Senior Officer Enterprise and Stakeholders Engagement Division (ESED), ASEAN Secretariat<br>• Kulkanya Kulmala, ASEAN MSME Entrepreneur<br><br>**Moderator:** Piyawan Chaiwisessakul, Senior Manager, Kenan Foundation Asia | MSME Stage |
| 11:00 – 11:20 | **Networking Coffee Break** | Foyer Area |
| 11:20 AM - 12:00 PM<br>*Parallel Session* | **Project Highlights and Impact Stories Session**<br>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.<br><br>**Speakers:**<br>• Xiaoyi (Yee) Ze, Program Manager, APEC-Canada Growing Business Partnership, Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada<br>• MSME Participant of the APEC-Canada Growing Business Partnership<br>• Alyssa Binti Haniff, Senior Manager, Development & Partnerships, Women of Will - Malaysia (Implementation Partner of the APEC-Canada Growing Business | MSME Stage |

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| | Partnership)<br>• Le Ha, Associate Professor of the Foreign Trade University's Innovation and Incubation Space – Viet Nam (Implementation Partner of the APEC-Canada Growing Business Partnership) | |
| 11:20 - 11:30 AM | **Canada-ASEAN Business Spotlight: Announcement of Partnership** | Main Stage |
| 11:30 AM - 12:20 PM<br>*Parallel Session* | **Strengthening Canada-ASEAN Partnership for Food Security and Resilience**<br><br>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.<br><br>**Scene-Setting Keynote Speech:** H.E. Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr., Secretary of Agriculture, Department of Agriculture of the Philippines (Invited)<br>**Panelists:**<br>• Eric Bienvenue, Canada Beef Association<br>• Michael Tan, President, Asia Brewery<br>• Michael Smart, Director & Chief Representative, Indo-Pacific, FinDev Canada<br>• Datuk Shireen Ann Zaharah binti Muhiudeen, Founder/Principal Fund Manager, Corston-Smith Asset Management and ASEAN BAC Malaysia Council Member<br>• Christopher Ilagan, Corporate Affairs Lead for PepsiCo – Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore & North Asia<br><br>**Moderator:**<br>• Diedrah Kelly, Executive Director, Indo-Pacific Agriculture and Agri-food Office | Main Stage |

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| 12:00 – 12:10 PM<br>*Parallel Session* | **APEC-Canada Growing Business Partnership Project Remarks**<br>The Honourable Rechie Valdez, Minister of Women and Gender Equality and Secretary of State (Small Business and Tourism), Government of Canada | MSME Stage |
| 12:10 – 1:00PM | **Working Lunch with the Honourable Rechie Valdez**<br>*Invited guests only* | Boardroom |
| 12:10 - 1:30 PM | **Networking Lunch** | Foyer Area |
| 1:30 - 2:00 PM | **Fireside Chat with the Ministers**<br><br>**Delivering the Next Phase of Canada-ASEAN Economic Partnership**<br>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.<br><br>**Panelists:**<br>• H.E. Maria Cristina Aldeguer-Roque, Secretary, Department of Trade and Industry of the Philippines<br>• The Hon. Maninder Sidhu, Minister of International Trade of Canada<br><br>**Moderator:** Jeff Nankivell, President & CEO, Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada | Main Stage |
| 2:00 - 2:10 PM | **Canada-ASEAN Business Spotlight: Announcement of a Partnership** | Main Stage |
| 2:10 - 3:00 PM | **Panel Discussion: Canada, ASEAN and APEC — Supporting MSME Growth and Regional Cooperation**<br><br>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. | Main Stage |

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| | 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.<br><br>**Panelists:**<br>• The Honourable Rechie Valdez, Minister of Women and Gender Equality and Secretary of State (Small Business and Tourism), Government of Canada<br>• Pamela Coke-Hamilton, Executive Director, International Trade Centre<br>• Dr. Azman Bin Abdullah, Deputy Undersecretary, Ministry of Entrepreneur and Cooperatives Development, Malaysia<br>• Wittawat Lamsam, Assistant Director-General, Office of Small and Medium Enterprises Promotion (OSMEP), Thailand<br><br>**Moderator:** H.E. Ambra Dickie, Ambassador of Canada to ASEAN | |
| 3:00 – 3:30 PM | **Networking Coffee Break** | Foyer Area |
| 3:30 - 4:30 PM | **Panel 5: Shaping the Next Chapter of Canada-ASEAN Investment**<br><br>**Scene-Setting Presentation:** Barrett Bingley, Asia Regional Director, Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada (Confirmed)<br><br>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 |

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| | examine how both regions can translate strategic interest into investable opportunities.<br>**Panelists:**<br>• H.E. Satvinder Singh, Deputy Secretary General of ASEAN for the ASEAN Economic Community<br>• Ian G. McKay, Canada's Special Envoy to Indo-Pacific<br>• Manulife Philippines<br>• Cezar Consing, President and CEO, Ayala Corporation | |
| 4:30 - 5:20 PM | **Emerging Threats, Emerging Technologies: Advancing Canada-ASEAN Cooperation in Defence and Security**<br>The global security landscape is becoming increasingly complex, governments and businesses face evolving security challenges, including the growing sophistication of cyberattacks, threats posed by non-state actors, and emerging risks to critical infrastructure, maritime security, and border protection. At the same time, rapid advancements in cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, secure communications, and autonomous systems are transforming how governments and industries detect, monitor, and respond to these challenges. This panel will explore how emerging defence and security technologies can strengthen national capabilities and operational resilience in response to an evolving threat landscape.<br><br>**Scene-setting address:** Undersecretary Fabian M. Pedregosa, Undersecretary for Information Systems and Cybersecurity, Department of National Defense (DND) of the Philippines<br><br>**Panelists:**<br>• Brad Colwell, Senior Director, Strategic Accounts APAC, BlackBerry<br>• Cameron Chell, President and CEO, Draganfly<br>• Admiral Rommel Agsaullo Supangan, Commandant, Philippine Coast Guard<br>• Prof. Victor Andres "Dindo" Manhit, Founder and CEO, Stratbase Institute for Strategic and International Studies<br><br>**Moderator:** Mike Petric, Founder and Managing | Main Stage |

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| | Director, PerceptX | |
| 5:20 - 5:35 PM | **Insights from the Negotiators on ASEAN-Canada FTA and Canada-Philippines FTA**<br><br>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.<br><br>Insights sharing by:<br>• Jay Allen, Director General, Trade Negotiations, Global Affairs Canada<br>• H.E. Ambra Dickie, Ambassador of Canada to ASEAN | Main Stage |
| 5:35 - 5:40 | **Special Remarks:**<br>• The Honourable Clément Gignac, Senator, Co-chair, Canada-ASEAN Interparliamentary Friendship Group | Main Stage |
| 5:40 - 5:45 PM | **Canada-ASEAN Business Forum Closing Session**<br><br>**Remarks:**<br>• H.E. David Hartman, Ambassador of Canada to the Philippines | Main Stage |
| 6:00 - 8:00 PM | **Networking Reception**<br><br>**Remarks:**<br>• H.E. Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr., President of the Republic of the Philippines (Invited)<br>• H.E. Airlangga Hartarto, Coordinating Minister for Economic Affairs of Indonesia | Foyer Area |