

ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community and Policy Implications for Korea

Jinyoung Moon Research Fellow, Head of Global Cooperation Strategy Team (jymoon@kiep.go.kr)

Seung Kwon Na Senior Researcher, Global Cooperation Strategy Team (skna@kiep.go.kr)

Jaeho Lee Senior Researcher, Southeast Asia and Oceania Team (jhlee@kiep.go.kr)

Sunghee Lee Senior Researcher, Global Cooperation Strategy Team (leesh@kiep.go.kr)

Eunmi Kim Senior Researcher, Global Cooperation Strategy Team (emkim@kiep.go.kr)

1. Introduction

Since 2017, Korea has been striving to deepen its cooperative relationship with ASEAN to the level of its four traditional major partners – the U.S., China, Japan and Russia – through the New Southern Policy. This requires strengthening cooperation not only in the economy but also in various fields. ASEAN created three communities in 2015 – the ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC), ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) and ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) – also providing a blueprint for each community. In this context, this study aims to suggest our comprehensive strategies and sectoral policies to cooperate with ASEAN member countries, with a particular focus on the ASCC. It differs from previous studies in that there are few reports which provide an analysis of this community together with policy implications for Korea.

In line with ASEAN's people-oriented commitment to improve quality of life, the ASCC can play an important role in achieving ASEAN social integration and promoting sustainable development in the region. In fact, the ASCC in-

cludes a wide variety of social issues such as culture and arts, education, public health, environment and disaster management, which cannot be covered by the APSC or the AEC. Furthermore, these issues are closely related with the policy goals that the other two communities are pursuing to achieve. When considering ASEAN's needs for cooperation, relevant global agenda and Korea's recent policy stance toward ASEAN, the research areas in this report cover social infrastructure, culture and arts, and sustainable environment, as we will explain further.

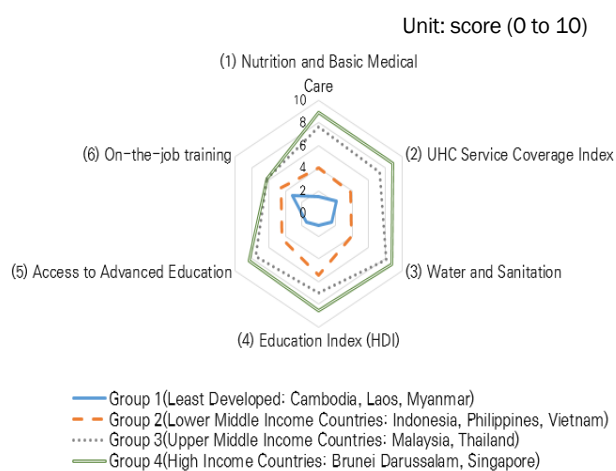
II. Sectoral Analysis on ASCC: Progress and Characteristics of Global Cooperation

Social Infrastructure

At first, we analyzed the current status of the social infrastructure in the ASEAN region and their cooperative activities with other countries, especially focusing on the area of health care, including water and sanitation and education.

These are also major areas of cooperation between Korea and ASEAN member countries. The ASEAN is committed to building and improving its regional social infrastructure while seeking sustainable and inclusive growth according to the ASCC blueprint. Member countries have been discussing agenda on their social infrastructure at ministerial and high-level meetings, and planning sectoral work programs. However, we found that there are still development gaps in health care and education sectors among member countries, with each income group showing different weaknesses. These gaps and weaknesses are likely to coincide with demands in ASEAN to cooperate with other countries.

Figure 1. Development Gaps in Social Infrastructure among ASEAN Member Countries



Note: The higher one country's score, the better the social infrastructure compared to other member countries.

Source: By authors, based on UNDP's Global Human Development Indicators, WHO's UHC service coverage index, Social Progress Imperative's database and WEF's Global Competitiveness Index. (Accessed on June 29, July 9 and August 13, 2019).

With diverse experiences and expertise in the area of social infrastructure, developed economies such as Japan, the U.S., Germany and the

EU have been working with ASEAN to align their national/regional interests and strengths with ASEAN's needs. This includes various collaborative projects at bilateral, regional and multilateral levels. In order to support ASEAN, Japan and the U.S. have leveraged their expertise in health-related issues such as universal health coverage (UHC) and contagious diseases (e.g. HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria). Germany has focused on enhancing ASEAN's capabilities in higher education and technical vocational education and training (TVET). ASEAN has also announced its appreciation for the EU's contribution to sharing its experience on integration of higher education and system reforms through activities such as the EU-ASEAN SHARE program.

For Korea, on the other hand, the health care and education sectors are key areas of cooperation with ASEAN member countries, but this is mainly in the form of promoting bilateral cooperation projects without much consideration for their income levels and development needs at the ASEAN level. Up to now Korea has failed to demonstrate keen interest in the ASCC-based regional policies. We need to pay more attention to issues that ASEAN is currently discussing, such as aging societies, higher education cooperation between member countries, and policies for vulnerable groups, to name a few.

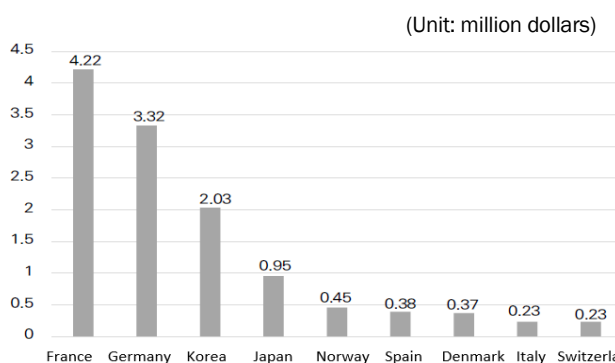
Culture and Arts

Cultural values aim to improve the quality of life and to form a common identity in the ASEAN region, and are considered as one of the important areas of the ASCC. Detailed development plans for ASEAN in this field are presented through the Strategic Plan for Culture and Arts, the Strategic Plan for Information and Media, and the ASEAN ICT Master Plan. According to the main contents of these strategic plans,

ASEAN seems to place high policy value on securing equal opportunities for cultural activities, supporting cultural diversity, preserving cultural heritage, and enhancing the competitiveness of the cultural industry.

On the other hand, with the recent emphasis placed on the importance of public or cultural diplomacy in international relations, many countries are using the culture and arts sector as a major means of their foreign exchanges and support policies. ASEAN is attracting attention as a regional cooperation partner in various aspects such as the economy, politics, and security. Therefore, in addition to Japan and China, Korea also has established overseas base organizations and promoted cultural cooperation policy to expand its influence. In the case of Europe, especially France and Germany, various cultural exchanges and language dissemination projects are carried out to increase their influence within the ASEAN region through cultural ODA and the establishment of cultural centers. UNESCO is also a representative organization leading multilateral cooperation in this region while providing various programs related to the designation and protection of world heritages.

Figure 2. Major Donors Supporting ASEAN through Cultural ODA (2013–17)



Note: Annual average amounts of ODA disbursed for culture and recreation sectors.

Source: OECD Stat, "Flow Based on Individual Project (CRS)". (Accessed on July 18, 2019).

The results of comparing Korea's ASEAN culture and art cooperation policy with main leading countries can be summarized as follows. First, overseas networks for cooperation in the field of culture and arts still remain insufficient in terms of quantity and quality compared to the major leading countries. Second, achievements in terms of establishing differentiated support channels and related policies in the field of culture and arts with ASEAN are still insufficient. Third, compared to various cooperation and support policies with individual ASEAN countries, efforts to develop multilateral cooperation agenda and projects for the ASEAN community are showing a relative lack of outcomes. Fourth, there are grounds for concerns about the lack of cohesion and inefficiency in cooperation channels, caused by the current situation in which exchange and cooperation projects in the field of culture and arts are conducted by various organizations. For Korea, it is necessary to think about practical ways to contribute to the realization and development of the ASEAN communities through mutual exchange and cooperation in the above fields.

Sustainable Environment

The simplest definition of a sustainable environment or its sustainability could be "the management and maintenance of natural resources." Its value has been repeatedly emphasized in the ASCC blueprint as well as within the agenda of international communities such as SDGs. In this context, we reviewed ASEAN's intra- and inter-regional efforts to realize a sustainable environment through disaster management, emission mitigation, biodiversity conservation and plastic waste management. When considering the rapid economic and population growth, urbanization

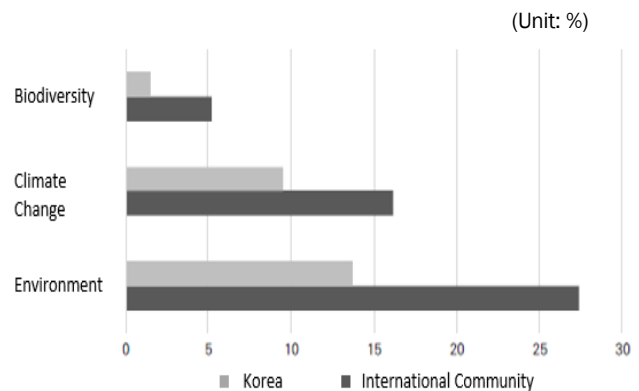
and the geographical characteristics of the ASEAN region, the goals of realizing environmentally sustainable development and establishing a community which is resilient in the face of natural disasters can be seen as urgent priorities to further ASCC progress.

Major aid donors for environment protection and climate change in ASEAN, such as Japan, Germany and the EU, regularly communicate with ASEAN to identify cooperation potentials and opportunities through policy dialogue especially on environment issues. Also, these countries are closely working with various bilateral and multilateral donors in the field of culture and arts with the aim of enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of cooperation programs. For instance, in order to reduce disaster risk in the ASEAN region, Japan has supported activities regarding risk assessment, system development, planning, and strategy development. EU has focused on support for areas such as greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction, adaptation to climate change, sustainable cities, and waste management, and has tried to meet ASEAN's environmental needs.

We found that Korea has been providing support to strengthen ASEAN's capacity for adaptation to climate change by providing climate change-related ODA. Over the last five years (2013–17), Korea has spent 13.7% and 9.5% of its total ODA on the environment and climate change respectively, which is still lower than the international average. Nevertheless, it is encouraging that many of the development projects included areas in which ASEAN focuses on investment and cooperation. Korea should develop strategic policy and priorities for cooperation with ASEAN in environment and climate

change issues with an understanding of the environmental needs in ASEAN, recent global agenda and Korea's competitive advantages.

Figure 3. Comparison between Korea and the International Community: Environmental sector's share in total ODA (2013–17)



Note: Annual average amounts of disbursement.

Source: OECD Stat, "Flow Based on Individual Project (CRS)".
(Accessed on August 12, 2019).

III. Policy Implications

This report suggests the basic directions and strategies of ASEAN-Korea cooperation in connection with the ASCC initiative. Since the formal consultation channels between ASEAN and Korea so far have focused on the diplomatic and economic fields, a formal dialogue channel on the lines of an "ASEAN-Social and Cultural Policy Dialogue" (tentative name) needs to be established. Through these dialogue channels, it will be necessary to lead discussions on the development of cooperation fields, strategy and action plan establishment, and discussions at the ministry level to establish the goal of ASEAN-ROK joint prosperity by establishing working groups for each major field. Korea also needs to find a cooperative model with multilateral organizations as well as the private sector, and to

review whether there is any overlap or linkage among cooperation projects by sector and business.

Among the major sectors, cooperation strategies to achieve goals in the social infrastructure sector can be presented as follows. First, it is necessary to re-examine ASEAN's cooperation needs by each income group based on research results on policy, project promotion process and obstacles in recipient countries. Second, we need to develop various cooperation models that reflect ASEAN policy needs. This could be explored by reviewing current policies such as the ASEAN Post-2015 Health Development Agenda and discussing our suggestions with ASEAN. In addition, there are other types of opportunities to deepen the cooperation with ASEAN by participating in ASCC related-projects such as smart cities or sustainable cities run by the APSC or the AEC. Third, it is necessary to promote projects to improve ASEAN's health care system and services by for instance supporting ASEAN to manage and treat infectious diseases effectively, and also to pursue a collaborative response to the issue of aging societies. Fourth, there is a need to strengthen the mutual cooperation system to promote exchange of human resources among ASEAN member countries, as well as between Korea and ASEAN, in the field of higher education through linkages between current projects.

In the field of culture and arts, we derived the following cooperative strategies to utilize Korea's comparative advantages and to effectively respond to ASEAN's support needs. First, it is necessary to revitalize mutual beneficial exchange and cooperation in the field of culture

and arts between ASEAN and Korea, such as supporting projects for enhancing the competitiveness of the ASEAN culture industry. Second, it will be necessary to develop exchange and cooperation projects at the ASEAN community level, not bilateral cooperation with individual countries, such as developing an online platform to record and share ASEAN cultural heritage information. Third, stronger support must be provided for preservation and restoration of cultural heritage in ASEAN through cultural ODA. Korea's assets in popular culture, such as K-Pop contents, can be considered a useful resource when developing, diversifying and deepening cooperative projects through the cultural ODA. Fourth, it will be necessary to prepare support policies to effectively utilize human resources such as overseas Korean networks within the ASEAN region.

Lastly, in the area of sustainable environment, we derived the following policy strategies to achieve specific goals within the sector. First, it will be necessary to establish higher strategies for environmental cooperation and to identify priority areas for cooperation with ASEAN. Since each ASEAN member country possesses different environmental and policy conditions, the target countries should be classified into different groups and projects developed by each agenda of environmental cooperation. Second, in order to strengthen environmental cooperation with ASEAN, it is necessary to understand international discussion trends and reflect them in cooperation strategy. Third, private participation should be encouraged to expand and mobilize financial resources related to ASEAN environmental cooperation. Fourth, it will be necessary to find various ways of cooperation aside

from financial support, such as policy consulting, professional training and partnership in the green finance sector. Given the size of Korea's ODA budget is relatively smaller than major donor countries, the above suggestions will be useful toward formulating a more strategic and effective approach. **KISP**