

ASEAN SOAR Together – Programme Concept

Application Package ASEAN SOAR Together

Application Deadline: 30 April 2025

Apply at: https://bit.ly/ASEANSOARTogether_Form

Send enquiries to email: asean.soar@aseanfoundation.org

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

The ASEAN Foundation, in collaboration with TikTok Shop, launches the *ASEAN SOAR* (Supporting Our Artisans and Retailers) *Together* program. This initiative aims to empower 50 selected Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) across ASEAN by providing tailored support in digital business that enables them to thrive and stand out in the global economy.

As the backbone of ASEAN's economy, MSMEs account for 97.2% to 99.9% of businesses and contribute significantly to job creation and financial stability. Despite their vital role, many MSMEs face significant challenges in adapting to the digital landscape, such as limited access to digital tools, low market visibility, and a lack of structured business strategies. Without the necessary skills and support, many MSMEs struggle to establish a strong online presence and scale their business.

To address these issues, the *ASEAN SOAR Together* program provides MSMEs with practical skills in e-commerce, live selling, digital marketing, and business expansion using the TikTok Shop platform. By combining hands-on training and networking opportunities, the programme equips ASEAN MSMEs with the tools necessary to thrive in an increasingly digital world and helping them strengthen their market positioning to achieve sustainable growth.

OBJECTIVES

The ASEAN SOAR Together is implemented with the following objectives to foster sustainable growth to its participating MSMEs

1. **Empower MSMEs in ASEAN** – Support the growth of MSMEs, with a particular focus on youth and women entrepreneurs, by providing essential knowledge, tools, and experiences.
2. **Enhance Digital and Live Selling Skills** – Equip MSMEs with the necessary skills to succeed on TikTok Shop, with a strong emphasis on live selling as a key driver for business growth.

3. **Strengthen E-Commerce Capabilities** – Provide comprehensive training on TikTok Shop operations, including e-commerce fundamentals, shop management, and promotional strategies, enabling MSMEs to optimize their online presence.
4. **Foster Regional Economic Growth** – Through collaboration with the ASEAN Foundation, empower MSMEs with entrepreneurial skills and digital literacy, opening new opportunities for economic advancement in the ASEAN region.

BENEFITS OF THE PROGRAMME

Tailored Capacity Building for MSMEs

Selected participants will receive training on **digital business skills** and **TikTok Shop**. The programme combines essential business fundamentals with platform-specific strategies to equip selected MSMEs with the knowledge to enhance their online presence, master e-commerce skills, engage customers effectively, and accelerate sales growth.

In-Depth Insights from TikTok Shop Experts

Selected participants will learn directly from TikTok Shop professionals who provide insights into e-commerce strategies, branding, content creation, and financial management to strengthen their business operations.

Hands-On Learning for TikTok Shop and TikTok Live

Selected participants will take part in interactive training sessions that provide a hands-on platform to apply their skills in optimising TikTok Shop and TikTok Live operations. They will gain insights into effective live selling strategies and leverage influencer/affiliate marketing to boost sales.

Guidance on Policy Compliance and Regulations

Selected participants will gain insights into TikTok Shop's policies and common violations to help them navigate platform regulations and mitigate potential risks. This knowledge will support participants in maintaining a compliant and trustworthy online presence that allow sustainable business growth.

Business Challenge

After completing the capacity building phase, participants are required to take part in a Business Challenge to apply what they learned from the training. Top performers will be awarded up to USD 1,000 of advertising/promotional coupons and potentially be selected to participate in the ASEAN Business and Investment Summit 2025. The Business Challenge will allow them to test and refine their strategies in a real-world setting.

Opportunity to Engage with ASEAN Policymakers, Stakeholders, and Global Leaders

Top performing MSMEs will have the chance to showcase their businesses at the ASEAN Business and Investment Summit 2025 (ASEAN-BIS 2025) and gain exposure among ASEAN policymakers, global leaders, investors, and key stakeholders.

Networking with Other Aspiring MSMEs in ASEAN

Selected participants will gain access to a platform where MSMEs can connect, collaborate, and share experiences with like-minded entrepreneurs across the region.

ELIGIBILITY AND QUALIFICATIONS

The ASEAN SOAR Together is open to Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) operating in ASEAN countries with the following qualifications:

- Officially registered and operate a business within an ASEAN Member State.
- At least one C-Level team member is a national of one ASEAN Member State.
- Fully committed to participate in the program.
- Have existing products or services suitable for online selling, ideally already generating sales. If otherwise, the applicants should be willing to develop them.
- Possess basic digital literacy and demonstrate a willingness to adopt digital tools and technologies to enhance their operations.
- Have an interest in selling on TikTok Shop and live selling. Ideally have an existing TikTok and TikTok Shop account. If otherwise, the applicants are expected to be willing to create one as part of our program requirements.
- Have willingness to learn and produce TikTok contents to sell products or services, enhance brand visibility and increase customer engagement.
- Strong commitment to learn for business improvement, expansion, and long-term sustainability.
- Ideally, have a founder or C-level executive with strong English proficiency to participate effectively in the programme, or a designated representative who can communicate proficiently in English.

Special consideration will be given to MSMEs from underserved communities, including those led by women, youth, and minority groups. This also extends to MSMEs with the following criteria:

1. Have a mission that creates meaningful social-economic impact
2. Contribute to the [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#), notably with a focus on addressing food security and nutrition (SDG 2), fostering inclusive economic empowerment (SDGs 1, 5, 8, 10), and promoting sustainability (SDGs 12 & 13).
3. Promote inclusivity and diversity
4. Empower marginalised communities
5. Foster inclusion and participation of People with Disabilities (PWDs) within the socio-economic community

PROGRAMME LANGUAGE

The programme will be conducted entirely in **English** to ensure effective communication and engagement among all MSMEs across ASEAN.

PROCESS AND TIMELINE

Stage 1 – Call for Applications (08 April - 30 April 2025)

Interested MSMEs may submit their applications through the designated registration link. During this period, applicants will be required to provide essential business information and outline their goals for participation in the program.

Stage 2 – Shortlisting (18 April – 03 May 2025)

All applications will be assessed based on eligibility criteria, business potential, and digital readiness. A total of 75 MSMEs will be shortlisted for further evaluation.

Stage 3 – Interview and Selection (28 April – 07 May 2025)

Shortlisted applicants will be invited to participate in an interview process to assess their commitment, growth potential, and alignment with the program's objectives. The final selection of 50 MSMEs/participants will be announced after this stage.

Stage 4 – Baseline Study and Need Assessment Survey Distribution (May 2025)

Selected MSMEs will complete a baseline study and needs assessment survey to identify key areas for development and learning. The results will be used to design the business skill-related curriculum to ensure it meets the specific needs of participants.

Stage 5 – Virtual Capacity Building (June – July 2025)

Selected MSMEs will undergo an intensive virtual training program on Shop operations, live operations, governance and operations led by experts from TikTok Shop, and other tailored business skill topics facilitated by external experts.

Stage 6 – Real-world Application and Business Challenge (August – September 2025)

During this stage, MSMEs will apply key learnings acquired through the training program on TikTok Shop, including managing their Shop operations, live selling, and driving digital marketing campaigns or business growth initiatives. Participants will test and refine their strategies in a real world setting. As part of this, they will need to demonstrate the skills and knowledge acquired by participating in a Business Challenge, where top performers will be awarded advertising credits.

Stage 7 – Reporting and Survey (October 2025)

All participants will be required to complete a survey detailing the outcomes of their Business Challenge, key learnings, and reporting the business growth achieved through the programme.

Stage 8 – Regional Showcase (October/November 2025)

Top performing MSMEs may have the opportunity to showcase their business and *ASEAN SOAR Together* success stories at the ASEAN Business and Investment Summit or other regional platforms. This engagement will provide valuable exposure and networking opportunities for the selected MSMEs.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

We are looking for MSMEs that demonstrate strong potential in the following areas:

1. Digital Readiness
2. Business Potential
3. Creativity & Innovation
4. Commitment to Participate
5. Social and Economic Impact
6. Readiness to Participate in the Business Challenge

HOW TO APPLY

All interested social enterprises are required to apply the programme by completing the **application form** on the following [LINK](#) by **30 April 2025**.

Applications submitted to other channels will not be considered. Incomplete completion of the form will not be further processed for shortlisting.

For enquiries, please contact asean.soar@aseanfoundation.org