



Sustainable Development Programme • Bangkok

The Asia-Pacific gateway to the Sustainable Development Goals — where regional development meets multilateral practice

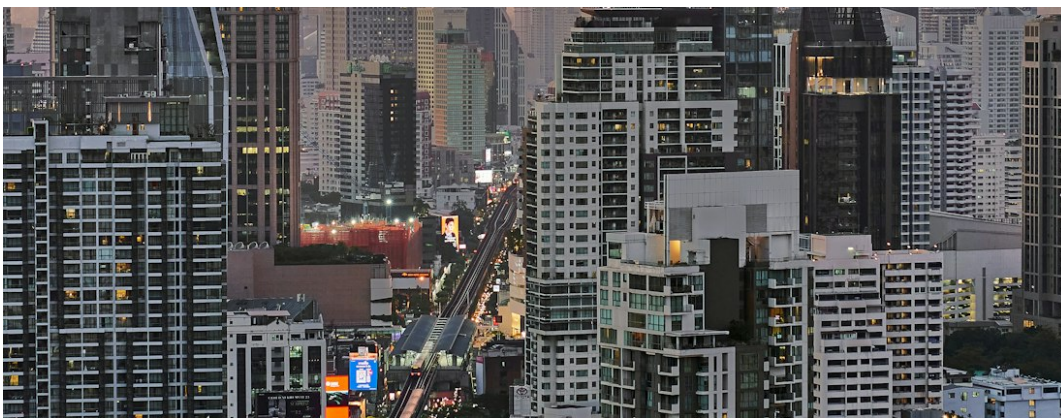
Bangkok is the regional capital of Asia-Pacific multilateralism. It hosts the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) — the largest UN regional commission and the primary institutional home of SDG implementation across a region containing over four billion people. It also hosts the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT), a UN-recognised international postgraduate institution and a designated CIFAL centre for training and knowledge transfer.

The Sustainable Development Programme • Bangkok places undergraduate delegates inside this regional apparatus for ten days. Over the course of the programme, delegates engage directly with ESCAP officials, academic faculty at AIT, and Thai institutions actively delivering the SDGs at national scale. The programme is deliberately calibrated for the Asian context — SDG implementation as it looks from within the region, not as it is described from Geneva or New York.

This is the flagship offering within the GYLDC Culture, Heritage & Human Development pillar, and it is a geographically necessary complement to the European programmes elsewhere in the portfolio. Delegates who intend to work in Asia-Pacific development, ASEAN institutions, or Chinese international engagement across the region should treat this as a foundational credential.

PROGRAMME AT A GLANCE

PILLAR	Sustainable Development & Cultural Heritage
PRIMARY TIER	Undergraduate
AVAILABLE FOR	All tiers (separate cohorts)
DURATION	10 days
NEXT ITERATION	July 2027
LOCATION	Bangkok, Thailand
LANGUAGE	English
COHORT SIZE	25–35
CERTIFICATION	GYLDC + GSLDC
FEE	On application



PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

©The Regional Moment

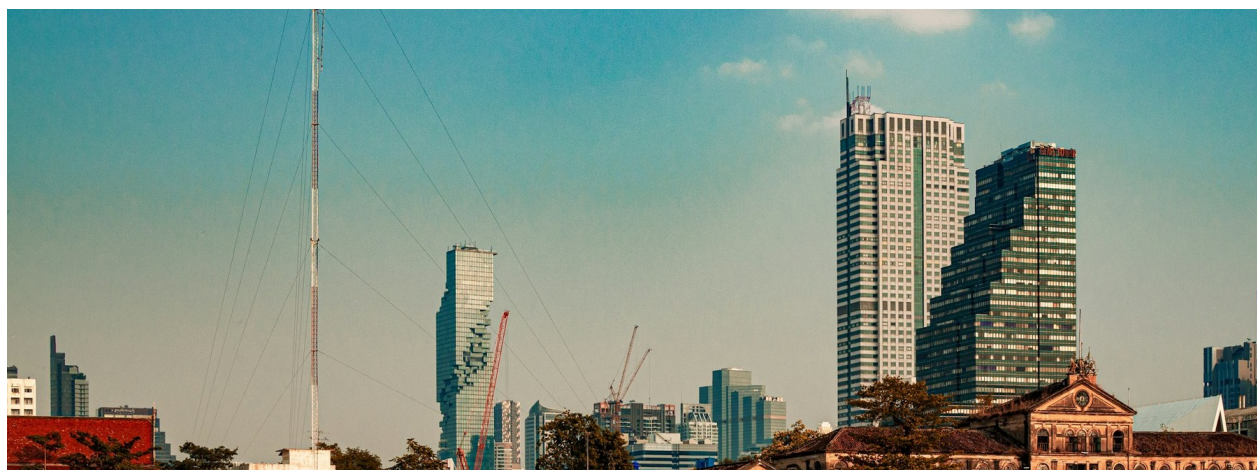
Asia-Pacific hosts more than half the world's population and accounts for the majority of global growth this decade. The Sustainable Development Goals will be substantially achieved or substantially missed in this region — nowhere else. Yet the SDG conversation is disproportionately Geneva- and New York-centred. Bangkok is where that conversation is grounded in operational reality: ESCAP is the working machinery through which the region's SDG progress is measured, coordinated and financed.

©What Participants Experience

The programme opens at ESCAP's UN Conference Centre in Bangkok with structured engagement across the SDG portfolio — poverty reduction, gender equality, climate adaptation, sustainable urbanisation. Delegates then move to the AIT campus for a substantial academic phase covering integrated development, technology for sustainability, and Asia-Pacific case studies. The programme also engages Thai institutions actively delivering the SDGs — from social enterprises in Bangkok's informal settlements to cultural heritage sites illustrating the human-development dimensions of Thai national policy.

©Why GYLDC

This programme is anchored in GYLDC's institutional relationships with ESCAP and AIT — Asia-Pacific's most substantive academic partner for UN-affiliated training. AIT holds designation as a CIFAL centre, giving delegates access to a UN-recognised knowledge transfer institution that few undergraduate programmes elsewhere in Asia can offer. Delegates leave with credentials that carry weight in graduate applications and career paths across the Asia-Pacific region.



©WHO THIS IS FOR

This programme is designed for undergraduate students whose academic and career trajectory intersects with Asia-Pacific development, sustainable development policy, cultural heritage, or Chinese engagement with the region. The programme is deliberately calibrated for participants who intend to build careers across the Asia-Pacific region rather than only in Chinese domestic settings or exclusively European institutions.

Suitable participants typically include: undergraduates in international relations, development studies, economics, public policy, urban studies, environmental studies, cultural heritage or area studies programmes; students preparing for graduate study in international development, sustainability or Asia-Pacific affairs; participants intending careers with ASEAN institutions, the Asian Development Bank, or Chinese firms and organisations operating regionally; and student leaders active in sustainability or Asia-focused activities on their home campuses. English working proficiency is required.

©LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the conclusion of the programme, participants will have:

- Developed a working knowledge of the Sustainable Development Goals as they are actually implemented across the Asia-Pacific region — not as they are described in general theory but as ESCAP measures, coordinates and finances them.
 - Established direct professional relationships with ESCAP officials, AIT faculty and Thai institutional partners — a network of durable value for careers across the region.
 - Produced and defended, as a team, a sustainable-development capstone proposal on a region-specific challenge, evaluated by ESCAP specialists and AIT academic faculty.
 - Acquired the applied cross-cultural competence to work effectively in Asia-Pacific institutional environments — a competency directly transferable to graduate study, internship and career settings across the region.
 - Formed a lasting connection to GYLDC and clear pathways into ADB Youth Assembly, ASEAN youth convenings, and adjacent regional programmes.
-

©COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK

The programme is structured against the six global-competency dimensions of the United Nations Youth Leadership Development Programme:

CREATIVITY	LEADERSHIP	DECISION-MAKING
COLLABORATION	COMMUNICATION	EXECUTION

©CURRICULUM ARCHITECTURE

The programme unfolds in three sequenced phases. Pre-programme online modules establish grounding in the SDGs and in the Asia-Pacific development context. The on-site immersion translates that grounding into direct engagement across ESCAP, AIT and Thai national institutions. The capstone crystallises the learning into a defensible proposal responsive to Asia-Pacific development realities.

PHASE 1	PHASE 2	PHASE 3
<i>Pre-Programme Online Module</i>	<i>On-Site Immersion in Bangkok</i>	<i>Capstone Proposal</i>
▶ The Sustainable Development Goals — theory and implementation ▶ Asia-Pacific development context — historical and contemporary ▶ ESCAP and the UN regional commission system ▶ Cultural heritage and human development in the SDG framework ▶ Delivered by GYLDC faculty and ESCAP-affiliated specialists ▶ 6–8 hours across three weeks, culminating in a pre-arrival briefing pack	▶ ESCAP UN Conference Centre — full institutional programme ▶ AIT campus — sustained academic engagement ▶ Thai social enterprise and community development visits ▶ Cultural heritage engagement — Bangkok temples and museums ▶ SDG in practice — visits to Thai national implementation ▶ Regional dialogue with ASEAN peer delegates	▶ Team-based capstone on an Asia-Pacific SDG challenge ▶ Coaching by ESCAP specialists and AIT faculty ▶ 10-minute defence before a mixed UN-academic panel ▶ Winning proposals nominated for ADB Youth Assembly ▶ Selected proposals published in IJYS with editorial support

©SIGNATURE INSTITUTIONAL PARTNERS

Note — Named partners are indicative. Delivery partners are curated on a case-by-case basis per cohort.

The programme is anchored in direct engagement with the institutions that operationalise sustainable development across the Asia-Pacific region. Every partner below hosts a substantive session — a briefing by senior officials, a working meeting on live policy files, or a structured tour of programmatic work.



UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)

The UN regional commission for Asia and the Pacific; hosts the programme's core institutional immersion at the UN Conference Centre in Bangkok, with dedicated sessions on SDG implementation across the region.



Asian Institute of Technology (AIT)

A UN-recognised international postgraduate institution and CIFAL centre; hosts the programme's academic phase with faculty-led sessions on integrated development, technology for sustainability, and Asia-Pacific case studies.



CIFAL Bangkok

The UNITAR CIFAL centre hosted at AIT — the training and knowledge transfer institution through which the programme's certification is anchored. Delegates gain direct access to the CIFAL Global Network alumni system.

[LOGO]

Thai National SDG Implementation Partners

Structured visits to Thai institutions actively delivering the SDGs — from social enterprises in informal settlements to national ministries. Specific hosts vary by cohort based on relevance to the capstone theme.

[LOGO]

ASEAN Youth Networks

Programmed dialogue with peer delegates from ASEAN member states — a rare opportunity to build cross-regional relationships with the next generation of ASEAN institutional leadership.

[LOGO]

Bangkok Cultural Heritage Institutions

Engagement with Bangkok's temples, museums and heritage districts — situating the human-development dimensions of the SDGs within a specific cultural and historical context.

©FEATURED FACULTY

Note — Named faculty are indicative. Delivery faculty are curated on a case-by-case basis per cohort and confirmed approximately 60 days prior to commencement.

The programme's faculty combine ESCAP officials, tenured AIT academic faculty, and regional specialists in sustainable development and cultural heritage. Named faculty may vary between iterations; the profiles below are representative of the calibre confirmed for each cohort.

[PHOTO PENDING]

Senior ESCAP Official

United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

A senior ESCAP official delivers the programme's opening framing on the state of SDG implementation across Asia-Pacific. ESCAP specialists also serve on the capstone adjudication panel, connecting delegate proposals directly to ESCAP's live regional programming.

[PHOTO PENDING]

Tenured Professor, Asian Institute of Technology

AIT Faculty — Sustainable Development

A tenured AIT faculty member delivers the programme's academic sessions on integrated development, technology for sustainability, and Asia-Pacific case studies. Sessions are calibrated for undergraduate delegates from technical and non-technical backgrounds alike.

[PHOTO PENDING]

CIFAL Bangkok Programme Director

CIFAL Bangkok · UNITAR Training Network

The CIFAL Bangkok programme director provides continuity across the ten days and anchors the programme's UNITAR certification. CIFAL Bangkok is one of the most active CIFAL centres in the Asia-Pacific region and delegates gain direct entry to the broader CIFAL alumni network.

©SAMPLE ITINERARY

Note — Itinerary shown is illustrative. Actual programme is curated on a case-by-case basis per cohort.

The schedule below is illustrative. The exact 2027 programme will be released four months prior to commencement. Delegates receive a fully detailed handbook upon confirmation of enrolment.

DAY	FOCUS	SIGNATURE ACTIVITIES
Day 1	Arrival — Bangkok	Arrival in Bangkok; check-in; welcome briefing on the Asia-Pacific SDG context; opening dinner.
Day 2	ESCAP Opening	Full-day at the ESCAP UN Conference Centre; opening ceremony; senior ESCAP official framing on SDG implementation; institutional orientation.
Day 3	ESCAP Working Sessions	Successive ESCAP working sessions on regional SDG portfolios — poverty reduction, gender equality, climate adaptation, sustainable urbanisation.
Day 4	AIT Academic Phase I	Transfer to AIT campus; academic sessions on integrated development and Asia-Pacific case studies; capstone team formation.
Day 5	AIT Academic Phase II	AIT sessions on technology for sustainability; workshop on capstone development methodologies; cross-cultural evening programme.
Day 6	SDGs in Practice	Structured visits to Thai institutions delivering the SDGs — social enterprises, community development sites, national implementation partners; capstone research.
Day 7	Cultural Heritage	Engagement with Bangkok's temples and heritage districts; sessions on cultural heritage and human development within the SDG framework; capstone drafting.
Day 8	Regional Dialogue	Programmed dialogue with ASEAN peer delegates; regional perspectives on youth participation in SDG delivery; expert critique of draft capstones.
Day 9	Capstone Development	Capstone teamwork day; ESCAP and AIT faculty coaching; rehearsals; expert critique; final refinement of proposals.
Day 10	Presentation & Closing	Capstone presentations; expert panel adjudication; awards ceremony; certification; farewell dinner; departure preparations.

©WHAT PARTICIPANTS RECEIVE

Every delegate completing the programme leaves with a defined package of credentials, professional relationships, and pathways into further international engagement. These are structured to deliver durable value for careers across Asia-Pacific.

Formal Certification Certificate of Completion co-signed by GYLDC and GSLDC, valid for academic and professional credit recognition.	Letters of Recommendation Selected participants receive personal letters of recommendation from ESCAP officials, AIT faculty or CIFAL Bangkok — carrying particular weight for careers across the Asia-Pacific region.
CIFAL Global Network Automatic entry into the CIFAL Global Network — the UNITAR-affiliated worldwide alumni system of CIFAL centre trainees, spanning over twenty centres globally.	ADB Youth Assembly Pathway Winning capstone teams receive nomination for the Asian Development Bank Youth Assembly and related regional youth convenings.
Publication Opportunities Winning capstone proposals published in the International Journal of Youth & Sustainability (ijys.org), with editorial support from GYLDC faculty.	Alumni Network Membership Automatic entry into the GYLDC global alumni network — several hundred fellow participants across cohorts and geographies.

©APPLICATION

Applications are reviewed on a rolling basis until each cohort fills. Thailand visa processing is straightforward for most applicants — a fifteen-day visa exemption applies to many nationalities, and longer stays require a standard tourist visa obtainable within two weeks. Early application is nevertheless recommended to secure cohort placement.

Eligibility

Undergraduate students (Years 1–4). Working English required.

Cohort

25–35 delegates, curated for balance of discipline, home university and regional origin.

Fee

On application. Fee covers programme delivery, ground programme, AIT campus accommodation, meals, materials and certification. International travel is separate.

Contact

admissions@ungyldc.org · www.ungyldc.org