

Sustainable Development Programme • Bangkok

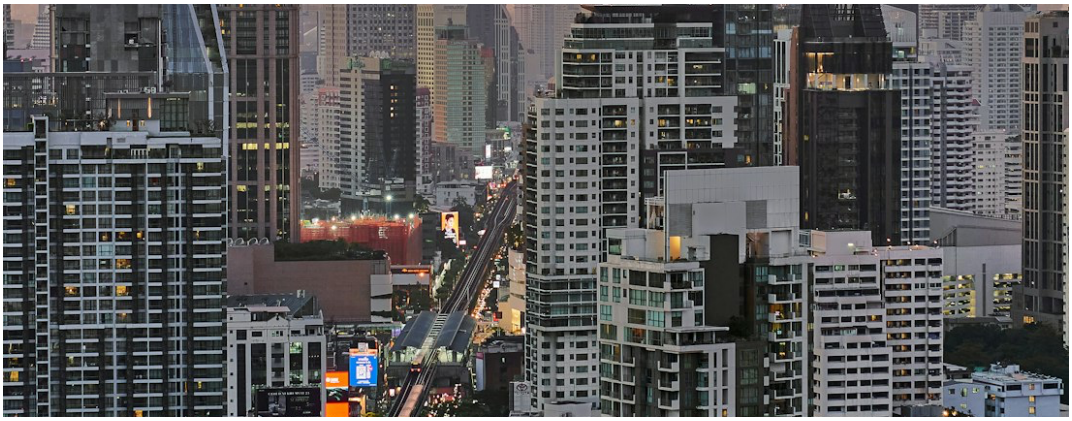
The Asia-Pacific gateway to the Sustainable Development Goals — where regional development meets multilateral practice

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



◎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.

◎LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the conclusion of the programme, participants will have:

- Developed a working knowledge of the Sustainable Development Goals as they are 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.

◎COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK

The programme develops six core competencies:

- ✓ **Creativity**
- ✓ **Decision-making**
- ✓ **Communication**
- ✓ **Sustainability Literacy**
- ✓ **Collaboration**
- ✓ **Cross-cultural Competence**

◎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
Pre-Programme Online Module	*On-Site Immersion in Bangkok*	*Capstone Proposal*
≈ 2–3 hrs / week · 3 weeks (6–8 hrs)	**10 days on-site · Bangkok**	**Day 10 · capstone presentation**
▸ 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

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.

◎SAMPLE ITINERARY

DAY	FOCUS	SIGNATURE ACTIVITIES
Day 1	**Arrival — Bangkok**	Arrival in Bangkok; check-in; welcome briefing on the Asia-Pacific SDG context
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

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.