

08 SEP, 2025

ASEAN’s workforce future hinges on green skills



The Malaysian Reserve, Malaysia

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The ASEAN Green Skills Fair 2025 brings together govts, industries, training providers and youth to equip the workforce for green transition

by AUFA MARDHIAH

THE hum of conversation at the ASEAN Green Skills Fair 2025 in Putrajaya was more than the usual job-hunting chatter.

For Malaysia, hosting the event as ASEAN chair was about signalling a shift — that the future of work in the region will be defined as much by sustainability as by technology.

TalentCorp group CEO Thomas Mathew stated that the three forces shaping tomorrow’s workforce are artificial intelligence (AI), digitalisation and the green economy — and green skills can no longer be ignored.

“Through our study, over the first 10 sectors, close to 949 total roles — each of those roles requires some form of green skills.

“Our students must understand that green skills going forward are very important. It’s either energy transitions, conservation or efficiency — all of these things become critical in the world ahead,” he told the press at the launch of the fair in Putrajaya on Aug 29.

He further explained that sustainability-linked knowledge is no longer confined to environmental specialists. It has become a baseline expectation across industries, from finance and energy to supply chains and infrastructure. Companies that fall short on compliance risk losing access to loans, contracts and global markets.

“Even companies that need to obtain financing must show they are complying with green issues.

“The value chain is also affected if they cannot meet energy transition requirements. All of these things become very important,” he said.

### ASEAN’s Green Agenda

As chair of ASEAN 2025, Malaysia has sought to place skills, jobs and innovation at the centre of regional cooperation under the theme “Inclusivity and Sustainability”.

The ASEAN Green Skills Fair 2025, held in Putrajaya, was designed as both a showcase and a working platform — a convergence of governments, industries, training providers and youth to answer one urgent question: How can the region equip its people for the green transition?

Human Resources Ministry (Kesuma) Secretary General Datuk Azman Mohd Yusof said Malaysia is addressing the skills challenge by linking apprenticeship and internship schemes directly with green industries.

“This is why Kesuma, through TalentCorp, has brought the ASEAN Green Skills Fair to life. It is a place where governments, industries, training providers and workers converge, and where the skills that will define ASEAN’s future are demonstrated — renewable energy (RE), sustainable design, eco-innovation, energy efficiency and waste management,” he said.

The fair also supported the establishment of the ASEAN Green Jobs Regional Centre of Excellence (AGJCCE), a hub to drive green investment, job creation and skills development across South-East Asia.

Meanwhile, the imbalance mirrors global trends. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) warns that by 2030, 60% of youth worldwide may lack the skills to participate in the green economy.

With ASEAN home to more than 200 million young people, the stakes are especially high. The region could either seize the opportunity to lead in sustainable industries or risk being sidelined by more agile competitors.

At the ASEAN Green Jobs Career Fair, the Social Security Organisation (Perkeso) demonstrated that opportunities are already materialising.

Head of employment insurance system office Datuk Atri Ab Rahman reported that 5.1 million vacancies from green-related industries have been advertised on MyFutureJobs since 2020. Of these, 390,000 jobseekers have already been placed into green roles across manufacturing, construction, RE and waste management.

“The platform proves that the demand is here, the jobs are here, and the future is here — showcased here today.

“This career fair reflects the green economy we are building together, with 35 leading employers offering over 5,000 vacancies in high-skilled, high-growth sectors,” he said in his remarks at the launch.

Among those employers who exhibited at the fair were Airbus Malaysia, Worldline International and Gamuda Land, alongside companies in electric mobility, circular economy and energy efficiency. Salaries range from RM2,500 to RM12,000, signalling that green jobs are not only meaningful but also competitive.

Mathew stressed that interventions must begin early. TalentCorp has brought sustainability awareness into schools, starting from form three, through its “YES: Rock The School” programme. At the university level, TalentCorp explains to students how future careers and skill requirements are shifting.

“Actually, the generation today is very much more responsible. They want to know about their environment. They want to take responsibility in that area. So they are very interested to know — it is just that we need to educate them, we need to inform them,” he said.

Mathew (left) and Azman (centre) during the launch of ASEAN Green Skills Fair 2025 in Putrajaya

Pic courtesy of TalentCorp

Polymakers, employers, academics and youth are here to learn, to share and to build partnerships, says Mathew

Azman says Malaysia is addressing skills challenge by linking internship schemes directly with green industries

Some 5.1m vacancies from green-related industries have been advertised on MyFutureJobs since 2020

Pic by Muzid Amin Nohard



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This strategy of embedding awareness early aligns with the ILO's projection that a decisive shift to a green economy could create 24 million new jobs globally by 2030.

**Private Sector and Supply Chain Compliance**

Concurrently, the demand for green skills is also driven by market forces. Companies face increasing pressure from lenders, investors and regulators to meet environmental, social and governance (ESG) standards. Those who fail risk exclusion from contracts and financing.

This reality was echoed throughout the fireside chat sessions at the ASEAN Green Skills Fair, where multinational and regional players highlighted how technology and foresight are reshaping workforce needs.

At Siemens Energy AG, the focus was on how digitalisation, AI and cyber security are now central to managing the energy transition.

Tools such as AI-driven "digital twins" allow operators to optimise power generation and detect system anomalies across solar, wind, hydro and gas plants.

To support this, Siemens has been co-developing curricula with Malaysian universities, while offering training and internships through its Power Academy in Kuala Lumpur (KL) and its Cyber Security Operation Centre in Cyberjaya.

Many interns, the company noted, have transitioned into full-time roles, reflecting how industry-academia collaboration can directly close the green skills gap.

Furthermore, the call for deeper strategic foresight came from Invictus Leader, whose chief foresight and transformation strategist Mastura Mansor warned that ASEAN risks falling into a "comfortable illusion" if it continues to treat green skills as static.

She pointed out that while the region loses US\$300 billion (RM1.27 trillion) annually to climate impacts, the green economy could unlock US\$1 trillion in GDP by 2030, with Indonesia alone potentially generating 50 million new jobs.

Yet universities often take four to six years to update curricula, while technology evolves in less than two years. Without reform, graduates may be trained for jobs that no longer exist.

Mastura outlined three scenarios: A passive path where talent migrates abroad, an adaptive path where ASEAN remains trapped in the middle-income bracket and a pioneer path where the region becomes a global testbed for AI-powered sustainability.

The latter, she argued, requires cultivating "meta-skills" such as foresight, adaptability and critical thinking — not just technical knowhow.

Additionally, the corporate perspective was reinforced by PwC, which emphasised the interface of AI and green skills in creating a low-carbon economy.

For professional services firms, the demand lies not only in technical roles but also in finance, auditing and governance.

AI-enabled ESG reporting, carbon accounting and supply chain transparency are fast becoming essential, placing pressure on companies to hire or reskill staff who can navigate compliance frameworks while delivering business value.

Together, these insights reinforced a common message: ASEAN's green transition cannot be achieved through technology alone. It requires a workforce trained to operate, innovate and critically adapt within industries that are themselves transforming at unprecedented speed.

**Ground-level Engagement**

The fair itself was designed as a living laboratory of green skills. Over three days, it drew 5,000 attendees, from students and job-

Mathew and Azman talking to one of the exhibitors

**Malaysia's Green Jobs at a Glance**

- 5.1 million vacancies in green industries advertised since 2020
- 390,000 placements into green roles (manufacturing, construction, renewable energy, waste management)
- 35 employers offering 5,000 jobs at ASEAN Green Skills Fair 2025
- Salaries from RM2,500-RM12,000

**Demand vs Supply Gap**

Green Skills in Malaysia's Workforce	Demand	11.6%
	Supply	5.6%

**ASEAN's Green Skills Strengths**

- Malaysia**: Energy transition and carbon neutrality roadmap.
- Vietnam**: Renewable energy leadership.
- Indonesia**: Sustainable agriculture and forestry.
- Singapore**: Green finance and ESG hubs.
- Philippines**: Climate resilience adaptation.
- Thailand**: Circular economy and EV adoption.

**Building ASEAN's Green Workforce**

**2020**: MyFutureJobs green vacancies begin scaling up.

**2023**: Malaysia launches National Energy Transition Roadmap.

**2025**: ASEAN Green Skills Fair and launch of AGJCQE.

**2030**: ILO projection: 24 million green jobs globally.

**2050**: Malaysia's carbon neutrality target.

Asri put it even more bluntly: "This carnival is more than an event; it is a catalyst. It is a partnership between government, industry and the workforce, all aligned towards a common goal.

"Together, let us ensure that ASEAN's transition to a green economy is just, inclusive and filled with opportunities for all," he said.

The ASEAN Green Skills Fair 2025 may be only a beginning, but it sends a decisive signal that the region's green future will not be built by policy alone, but by people — the skills they acquire, the jobs they perform and the responsibility they take for a sustainable tomorrow.

**MYFUTUREJOBS CAREER COUNSELLING**

MyFutureJobs provides free career counselling for attendees at its booth

The fair draws 5,000 attendees, from students and jobseekers to SMEs and training providers