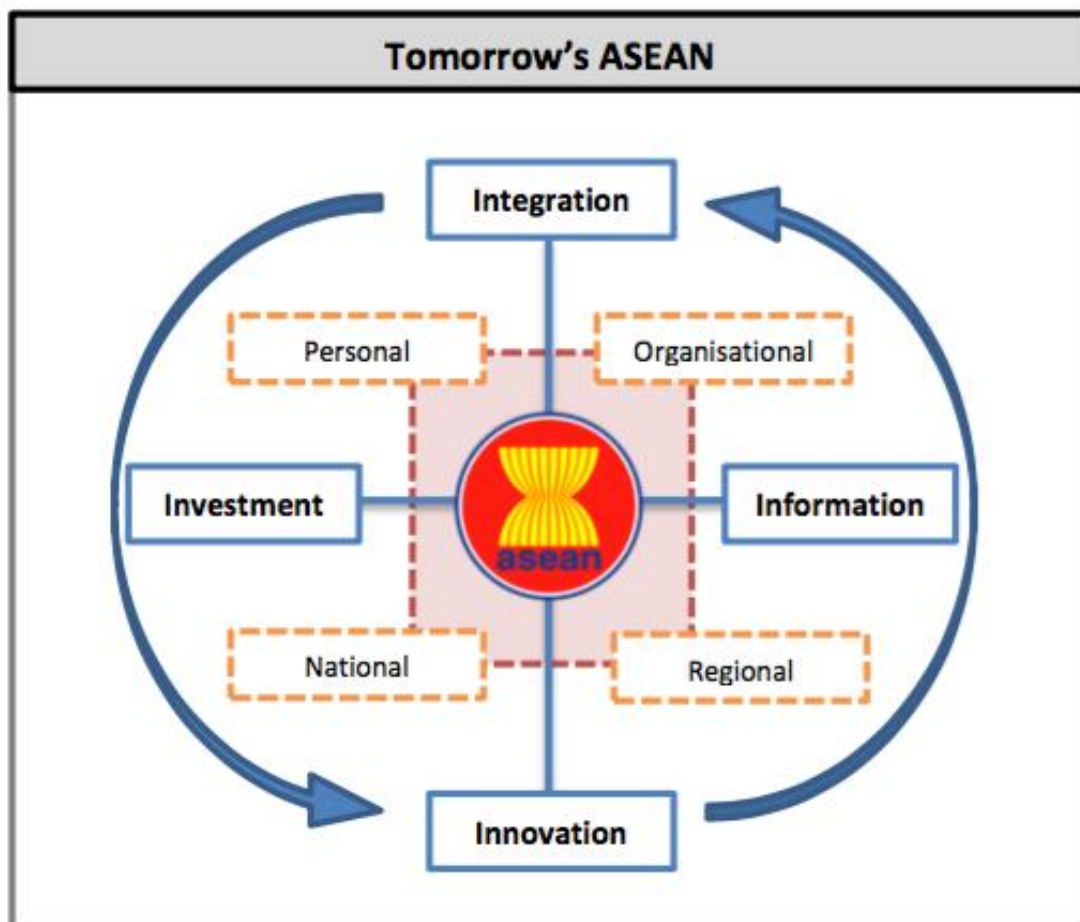


## SHAPING OUR WAY TO TOMORROW'S ASEAN: Let's use the I's to create the WE

It is undeniable that technology is paramount to the development of not only the present, but also the future world. The *Association of Southeast Asian Nations*, or ASEAN, was established in 1967. This rookie regional association aims to promote collaboration among members, and has been the center of attention of other regions around the world. The ASEAN Leaders agreed on the ASEAN vision 2020 that ASEAN is:

“a concert of Southeast Asian nations, outward looking, living in peace, stability and prosperity, bonded together in partnership in dynamic development and in a community of caring societies.”

The main purpose of this essay is not to state what the future of ASEAN is going to be like, but to propose the way to reach tomorrow's ASEAN. I propose the **Four I's** - *Integration, Innovation, Information, and Investment* – as a strategy to reach tomorrow's ASEAN.



Integration and innovation are central element to the development of ASEAN. As a young regional association formed by member states of diverse background, the integration of the economy, culture, and political security are important to the success of ASEAN. Such integration is difficult, if not impossible, without the aid of technological innovations. Consequently, the aim of integration and technological innovation would lead to flows of information and investment that would destine the future of ASEAN. Thus, the **Four I's** - *Integration, Innovation, Information, and Investment* – are crucial for our tomorrow's ASEAN.

Simultaneously, there is four levels of developments that the **Four I's** can enhance: *personal, organisational, national and regional*. As an ASEAN citizen, I have witnessed a number of success stories and the implications of the use of those I's at personal and organisational levels. For example, we use technology to connect with friends and family; or different departments within an organisation by communicating business strategies. In these levels, the measure for integration, the use of innovation, and the flows of information and investments become prominent outcomes. Yet, the use of technology should be enhanced on both a national and regional level. I believed that this is the way we should be heading.

The message from this essay seems simple, descriptive, and generic. However, I strongly believe that the proposed framework would stimulate how we think about our tomorrow, and how to use those elements to create such a desired future.

I would like to finish this essay with my reflection on the quote by Carl Henegan: "Life was so simple when apples and blackberries were fruit, a tweet was the sound of nature, and Facebook were photo albums". The basis for the development of our current society for the future shows no simplicity. Thus, I am really glad and grateful that apples are more than fruit.