

## Application Guidelines

### Call for Proposals for the “Planning work for the Next ASEAN Strategic Action Plan for SME Development” Using AMEICC’s FY2022 Supplementary Budget

#### 1. Project Purpose and Objective

Under the ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint 2025 (AEC Blueprint 2025), ASEAN enhances the development and promotion of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in its economic integration initiatives. In alignment with the ASEAN Strategic Action Plan for SME Development 2016-2025 (SAP SMED 2025), ASEAN through the ASEAN Coordinating Committee on Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (ACCMSME), has strengthened the role of MSMEs in the region by promoting productivity, technology and innovation, increasing access to finance, enhancing market access and internationalization, enhancing MSME policy and regulatory environment, and promoting entrepreneurship and human capital development.

As ASEAN draws close to the end of the implementation period of the AEC Blueprint 2025, the Sectoral Bodies under the AEC are engaged to undertake the following three tasks, namely: (1) commencing the sectoral-level end-term review (ETR) of the current sectoral plans, (2) development of post-2025 sectoral plan, and (3) providing inputs to the draft AEC strategic plan mirrored from the identified measures and activities under the Sectoral Plan(s). The ACCMSME is currently undertaking the ETR of the SAP SMED 2025, and, formulating the new MSME Strategic Plan (“**next SAP SMED**”). In the development of this plan, it is anticipated that close collaboration with ASEAN Member States (AMS), the ASEAN Secretariat and international organizations will be undertaken with a view to deepen discussions based on studies and recommendations on SME policies. These include the ASEAN SME Policy Index 2024 developed by ACCMSME with the technical support from OECD & ERIA, scheduled to be published in September 2024<sup>1</sup>, as well as the updated KPI report as at 2020<sup>2</sup>.

In addition, Japan is the largest FDI country in ASEAN, with more than 9,000 Japanese companies, mainly small and medium-sized enterprises, operating in ASEAN<sup>3</sup>. The Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) of Japan and its Small and Medium Enterprise Agency (SMEA) have been actively supporting SMEs' overseas expansion to date and have been steadily supporting SME development projects contributing to the implementation of the SAP SMED 2025. The list of MSME development projects supported by Japan could be accessed from the [JAIF website](#).

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<sup>1</sup> Previous edition of the ASEAN SME Policy Index published in 2018 can be downloaded here: <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Report-ASEAN-SME-Policy-Index-2018.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/External-KPI-Report.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Quoted from Toyo Keizai Shinposha's "Comprehensive List of Companies with Overseas Operations" as of March 2024.

The formulation and implementation of the strategic plans in ASEAN SME policy will not only contribute to ASEAN's economic development by facilitating ASEAN SMEs to improve their competitiveness, productivity, and resilience, so that they can play an important role in regional and international supply/value chains, but also contributing the development of Japanese SMEs already operating in ASEAN through trade and investment.

Furthermore, supporting the formulation of this strategic plan and thereby creating a business environment that facilitates the activities of Japanese SMEs in the ASEAN region will further contribute to the maintenance and enhancement of the competitiveness of Japanese SMEs. In formulating the action plan, it is also expected to take into consideration the perspective of realizing "economic co-creation" initiatives that combine the strengths of both Japan and ASEAN, while making maximum use of the diversity of ASEAN countries.

## **2. Service to be Commissioned**

The contractor selected through this call for proposals shall be commissioned by the Association for Overseas Technical Cooperation and Sustainable Partnerships (AOTS)<sup>4</sup> to implement the following services (1) through (9).

- (1) Create an Inception Report
- (2) Update SAP SMED 2025 KPI Figures & Propose KPIs for next SAP SMED
- (3) Conceptualize and draft the **next SAP SMED**
- (4) Conduct Stakeholder Workshop to validate findings and recommendations (November 2024)
- (5) Wider Stakeholder Engagements through virtual consultations
- (6) Conduct hybrid Stakeholder Workshop to get acceptance for the next SAP SMED (April 2025)
- (7) Finalize the Next SAP SMED for endorsement by the ACCMSME, Senior Economic Officials, and the ASEAN Economic Ministers.
- (8) Develop **next SAP SMED** Dissemination Kit:
  - in e-publication format
  - presentation kit in power-point format
- (9) Develop communication kit for the next SAP SMED
  - i. Executive Summary summarizing the MSME Strategic Plan in e-publication
  - ii. Infographics to be published on social media
  - iii. One explanatory video for businesses
  - iv. Op-ed for ASEAN published on ASEAN website and major media outlets

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<sup>4</sup> AOTS has been delegated the secretariat (AMEICC Secretariat) by the AEM-METI Economic and Industrial Cooperation Committee (AMEICC).

The details of the commissioned work and the formulation method of the Next SAP SMED are described in 3. Specific Details of the Commissioned Work and 4. Formulation Method below. Based on the project proposal, the specific method of implementation will be determined.

### **3. Details of the commissioned service**

#### **Inception Report**

- (1) Create an Inception Report
  - a. Hold inception meeting to provide basic information to project stakeholders on the objectives, expected results, activities, work plan, monitoring plan, and visibility plan
  - b. An Inception Report to provide a clear and structured overview of the project. This report serves as a foundation for project stakeholders and helps ensure that everyone is on the same page regarding project goals, scope, methodologies, project stakeholders, deliverables and timelines.

#### **Review of SAP SMED 2025**

- (2) Update SAP SMED 2025 KPI Figures and propose KPI for next SAP SMED
  - a. Cooperate with a statistician with a strong analytical background on MSME
  - b. Plan and undertake data collection exercise to update the twelve SAP SMED KPIs. Statistician to advise approach to update KPIs not available through desktop research, especially KPIs for Goal C which were collected through business surveys.
  - c. Output Documents:
    - one report with a set of KPIs data 2024, and comparative analysis of KPIs from 2017, 2020 and 2024
    - Proposed KPIs for next SAP SMED, according to relevant strategic measures identified in the AEC Strategic Plan.

#### **Formulation of the Next SAP SMED**

- (3) Conceptualize and draft the Next SAP SMED
  - a. Based on available documents, conduct literature review to understand the current state of MSMEs in the ASEAN and AMS, against current global socioeconomic development, and ASEAN priorities .
  - b. Develop zero draft of the MSME Action Plan. The zero draft at this point should contain the main elements of the action plan:
    - summary of megatrends and impact to MSME policies
    - vision and mission statements

- strategic measures (*already developed by ASEC*)
- proposed Activities and sub-activities, leveraging recommendations from the ASEAN SME Policy Index 2024

#### (4) Conduct Stakeholder Workshop (November 2024)

- a. Organize in-person or online Validation Workshop for the public (ACCMSME) and private sectors (private sector members of the ASEAN MSME Advisory Board) to present and validate the next SAP SMED
  - Preparing Workshop materials: Agenda, Workshop Pre-reads
  - Facilitating and moderating discussions at the Workshop
  - Objectives of the Workshop:
    - to seek inputs, especially from the private sector, on the vision & mission statements, activities and sub-activities, as well as on priority sectors / high-impact industries to be addressed through the SAP SMED<sup>5</sup>.
    - to discuss and agree on vision & mission statements, activities, and sub-activities.
- b. Produce Workshop Report, synthesising outcomes of discussions and observations, for ACCMSME's review and acceptance.

#### (5) Wider Stakeholder Engagements

Conduct wider stakeholder engagements through online interviews (face-to-face / online) to seek feedback on the draft of the next SAP SMED, including the proposed list of activities and priority sectors. Among stakeholders to be consulted at this stage

- i. Key Sectoral Bodies (Trade, Investment, Finance, Women, Youth, Education)
- ii. Other private sector stakeholders (youth associations, women associations, sectoral-based associations)

#### (6) Conduct Stakeholder Workshop in hybrid (April 2025)

- a. Organise a 2-day workshop in Jakarta, Indonesia (tentative), liaise and coordinate with relevant parties, and perform necessary secretariat duties such as coordination, arrangement, preparation, meeting management, recording, and report writing.
  - Prepare Workshop materials: Agenda, Invitation, Workshop Pre-reads
  - Facilitating and moderating discussions at the Workshop

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<sup>5</sup> Discussions on priority sectors should not be open-ended, and, should be supplemented by research. Priority sector / high-impact industries to be addressed to be validated by the private sector

- Objective of the Workshop:
  - To present the draft of the next SAP SMED
  - To discuss and approve monitoring and evaluation mechanisms including KPIs
- b. Arrange the workshop logistics according to the allocated budget, including:
  - Selecting the venue and vendors, in consultation with METI and the ASEAN Secretariat. The cost estimate shall be based on fifty (50) participants at a unit cost of 45 USD per participant (assuming a meeting package).
  - Respond to inquiries, make logistical arrangements, and coordinate, confirm, and communicate with each Participant as necessary to implement and operate the Program.
  - Arrange flight and accommodation and provide daily allowances for eligible workshop participants, as verified by the ASEAN Secretariat. Please refer to the AMEICC Secretariat's criteria (see Attachment) with conditions below.
    - The cost estimate of flights shall be based on business class. However, the actual flight class shall be determined in accordance with the AMEICC Secretariat criteria.
    - The room for the delegates should be prepared in a standard class. However, if this is difficult, the next higher class, such as Superior, is acceptable.
    - Participants who are subsidized for airfare and lodging will receive a daily allowance based on the AMEICC Secretariat's criteria. In principle, the daily allowance shall be paid directly to the eligible participants at the reception desk on the first day of the workshop, and documentations (receipts, original flight stubs, copies of passport entry stamp pages, etc.) to prove that the allowance will be received shall be collected.
    - The daily allowance shall be paid in the designated currency, and the amount shall be set accurately in cooperation with the AMEICC Secretariat, as adjustments may occur depending on the position of the subject, whether or not meals are provided, and the time of departure.
- c. Produce Workshop Report, synthesising outcomes of discussions and observations, for ACCMSME's review and acceptance.

(7) Produce the Next SAP SMED and get endorsement

- a. Synthesize outcomes of stakeholder engagement and data analysis .
- b. Finalise the next SAP SMED
- c. Submit the next SAPSMED through the ASEAN Secretariat to obtain endorsement from ACCMSME, Senior Economic Officials, and the ASEAN Economic Ministers

(8) Develop the Next SAP SMED Dissemination Kit

- a. The Next SAP SMED in e-publication format
- b. Develop the Next SAP SMED briefing / presentation kit in Power Point format

#### Prepare Dissemination Activities for the Next SAP SMED

##### (9) Develop communication kit for the Next SAP SMED

- a. Develop communication plan to create awareness of the Next SAP SMED to outline the target readers, key messages, communication channels and materials, timeline, and monitoring mechanisms. Key audiences include high-level and technical-level ACCMSME members and ministries / agencies / stakeholders involved in MSME development at the national level. The outreach would also target businesses and the general public.
- b. Create materials for the dissemination of the Next SAP SMED
  - Executive Summary summarizing the MSME Strategic Plan in e-publication
  - Infographics to be published on social media
  - One explanatory video for businesses
  - Op-ed for ASEAN published on ASEAN website and major media outlets

#### **4. Formulation Methods of the Next SAP SMED**

- The project will be implemented through a combination of existing information collection and analysis, and field surveys.
- The overall coordination will be carried out through regular meetings with the countries in charge of ASEAN and the ASEAN Secretariat. Meetings may be held via teleconference, etc.
- Research teams should demonstrate experience and availability of the following skills and competencies:
  - micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), particularly on MSME policies, issues, and trends relevant to and impacting MSME development, especially in the ASEAN context
  - proven track record in research, survey, activity design and delivering technical assistance, including effective capacity-building, related to MSME development
  - past experience in mainstreaming gender (as well as understanding of the gender context in AMS) and social inclusion into socio-economic development programs and plans, particularly in livelihood programs
  - excellent communication skills for building rapport, facilitating participation and effective presentation of results especially during the stakeholder consultation workshop;
  - competency in report writing and design;
  - having existing local networks or industry connections in AMS is beneficial; familiarity with ASEAN, ASEAN Economic Community, ASEAN Structure and implementation arrangements

for ASEAN Strategic Plans is an advantage

- The team from the consultant should include the ASEAN countries in charge of the relevant field, the ASEAN Secretariat, the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA) , and ISEAS –Yusof Ishak Institute in order to maximize the results.
- Provide progress reports to relevant parties. The parties involved are the Asia and Oceania Division, Trade Policy Bureau, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry; the Overseas Development Support Office, Management Support Department, Small and Medium Enterprise Agency; and the AMEICC Secretariat at the AOTS Bangkok Office.
- The timing of the report will be at milestones<sup>6</sup> for ASEAN-Japan economic relations, such as the public-private sector workshop (TBA) described in item 3.(4) above, the ASEAN-Japan Economic Ministers' Meeting, the ACCMSME and AMEICC SME Working Group, the ASEAN Senior Economic Officials Meeting (SEOM), and the ASEAN-Japan SEOM meeting, and the schedule of ASEAN meetings. The Contractor shall report the progress at two ACCMSME meetings during the contract period.

## 5. Points to Concern

- (1) The research team should pay close attention to the MSME policy research and recommendations that ASEAN has conducted in the past<sup>7</sup> and consider maximizing the results by incorporating researchers with knowledge of SME policy in the ASEAN region, such as ERIA researchers, in the research team. The research team should include researchers who are knowledgeable about SME policies in the ASEAN region, such as ERIA researchers, in order to maximize the results of the research.
- (2) To reflect the ACCMSME's past discussions and intentions, the work should be carried out in cooperation with the ASEAN Secretariat and policy makers in ASEAN countries.

## 6. Deliverables

- (1) Reports in **proof-read English, in word document** including the following items:

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<sup>6</sup> Example schedule of milestones for ASEAN-Japan economic relations in 2023 (partial) are the following:

January 2023: ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting (SEOM)/ May 2023: ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting (SEOM)

May 2023: ASEAN Coordinating Committee on Small and Medium Enterprises (ACCMSME) / July 2023: ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting (SEOM)/ August 2023: ASEAN Economic Ministers' Meeting / October 2023: ASEAN Coordinating Committee on Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (ACCMSME)

<sup>7</sup> The ASEAN SME Policy Index compiled by ERIA and the Mid-Term Review of the ASEAN Strategic Plan for SME Development 2016-2025 Evaluation Report, published by the ASEAN Secretariat in September 2021.

- i. ASEAN SMEs Strategic Action Plan [The Next SAP SMED]
  - ii. One (1) report updating SAP SMED 2025 KPI Figures
  - iii. Two Workshop Reports
    - ① Stakeholder Workshop to validate findings and recommendations, November 2024
    - ② Hybrid Stakeholder Workshop to get acceptance for the next SAP SMED, April 2025
  - iv. Documents related to the dissemination activities
  - v. Other materials related to analysis results, etc.
- (2) Form of Delivery of Deliverables: Electronic Media (in English)
- (3) Delivery Due Date:
- Deliverables (draft) due: **Wednesday, April 30, 2025**
  - Final deliverables due: **Friday, August 29, 2025**

Note: The final deliverables shall be revised to reflect the results of the report and discussions in the ACCMSME at the 19th ACCMSME Meeting (Langkawi, Malaysia) to be held in June 2025 and meet the above deadline.

- (4) The Deliverables to be delivered to:
- (A) AMEICC Secretariat Support Group, The Association for Overseas Technical Cooperation and Sustainable Partnerships [AOTS]  
Address: 1-30-1, Senju-Azuma, Adachi-ku, Tokyo 120-8534, JAPAN  
Tel: +81-3-3888-8213
- (B) Enterprise and Stakeholders Engagement Division, Market Integration Directorate, AEC Department, ASEAN Secretariat  
70A, Jl. Sisingamangaraja, Jakarta, 12110, Indonesia  
TEL : +62-21-726-2991
- (C) Asia and Pacific Division, Trade Policy Bureau, METI  
Address: 1-3-1 Kasumigaseki, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 100-8901, JAPAN  
Tel: +81-3-3501-1953
- (D) Office for Overseas Business Support, Business Support Department, Small and Medium Enterprise Agency  
Address: 1-3-1 Kasumigaseki, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 100-8901, JAPAN  
Tel: +81-3-3501-1511

Note: Data shall be submitted in accordance with the data delivery methods and addresses specified by (A) and (B), respectively. In addition, printed materials shall also be delivered upon request as appropriate.

## **7. Contract Requirements**



- (1) Contract Form: Quasi-Mandate contract
- (2) Contract Method: Contract by Rough Estimate
- (3) Number of Contracts: One
- (4) Contract Period: From the date of the contract (scheduled for October 2024) to August 31, 2025.
- (5) Contract Amount: The contract amount shall be up to 100,000,000 Japanese Yen (tax included).

The final implementation details and contract amount shall be determined after confirmation and adjustment of the accepted proposal. The Contractor shall not engage in subcontracting (outsourcing or any other form of entrustment, regardless of the form of entrustment. Hereinafter referred to as "subcontracting".) all of the commissioned services to third parties. The Administrative Expenses shall be calculated by multiplying the Direct Expenses excluding the Subcontracting Expenses by the Administrative Expense ratio, with the maximum Administrative Expense ratio being 10%.

- (6) Contracting party: AOTS
- (7) Payment: The amount of payment shall be determined based on the expense report submitted by the Contractor at the end of the project and the evidence for the expenses incurred for this work. This shall be determined based upon the manual for commission work of METI with on-site surveys conducted and reimbursement made (by bank transfer in yen). Please note that the total amount of payment is based on the total amount of expenses incurred within the scope of the contract and must be less than the contracted amount. Therefore, all expenditures must be supported by appropriate documentation, such as receipts. Any expenditures that do not meet this requirement may be excluded from the amount payable.

## **8. Application Requirements**

- (1) The applicant must be registered as a legal entity in Japan or ASEAN.
- (2) The applicant must not fall under any of the following:
  - A legal entity that does not have the capacity to conclude a business service contract for the Project.
  - A legal entity that has received a decision of commencement of bankruptcy proceedings and has not been reinstated.
  - A legal entity of which a designated organized crime group<sup>8</sup> member is an officer.
  - A legal entity that a designated organized crime group member has a controlling influence over its business activities through investment, financing, transactions, or other relationships.
  - A legal entity that is barred from participating in competitive bidding by Japanese public offices.
- (3) The applicant must not have been subject to suspension of subsidies or suspension of nomination

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<sup>8</sup> A designated organized crime group, Boryokudan, designated by the Prefectural Public Safety Commission of Japan

due to fraudulent or inappropriate acts in the subsidization projects under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry of Japan.

- (4) The applicant shall have the organization, system, and personnel, etc. sufficient to properly perform the services.
- (5) The applicant must have the necessary management infrastructure to smoothly carry out this operation and sufficient management capabilities with respect to funds and other matters.
- (6) The applicant must not be one for which a petition for commencement of corporate reorganization proceedings or rehabilitation proceedings has been filed in the country of incorporation. This does not apply to a legal entity that has been recertified after the decision to commence proceedings.

## **9. Declaration of Willingness to Participate in the Competition and Receipt of Questions**

### **1) Declaration of willingness to participate in the competition**

If you wish to participate in this project competition, you must express your intention to participate by sending an application letter by email attachment by **3:00 p.m. in Japan time, Friday, September 20, 2024** [must arrive by this date and time].

### **2) Q&A**

(1) Question deadline: **3 p.m. in Japan time, Friday, September 20, 2024.**

(2) How to Receive Questions: Only via email

(3) How to Answer Questions: All questions received will be answered by e-mail to those who have expressed their willingness to participate in the project competition by 4:00 p.m. in Japan time, Wednesday, September 25, 2024.

## **10. Application Method**

After carefully reading this Application Guideline for Proposals and confirming that the applicant meets the application requirements in section 8. above, please submit the application documents (files) listed in section 9. below by **4:00 p.m. in Japan time, Tuesday, October 1, 2024.** [must arrive by this time] to AOTS by using AOTS's large file transmission system (the transmission method will be individually guided).

[Address for application materials]

Person in Charge: AIGO (Mr.) and ARAI (Ms.) and YOSHIOKA (Mr.)

AMEICC Secretariat Support Group, AOTS

E-mail: kobo-amcshien-wc@aots.jp

## 11. Application Form

(1) Application Letter (Japanese or English)

(2) Proposal (Japanese or English)

Form 1: Background, employment history, and qualifications of all persons expected to work on the project

Form 2: Experience in similar work (as a legal entity)

Form 3: Project support system

Form 4: Operation plan and personnel plan

Form 5: Estimate of commissioned services expenses\*

\*Estimates should be prepared in Japanese yen.

(3) Organization Profile (Business Outline) (Japanese or English)

(4) Financial reports in Japanese or English (balance sheets and income statements) for the last three years (on a non-consolidated basis. However, if the company is consolidated, submit the consolidated financial statements as well.)

(5) Certified copy of the register in Japanese or English (Certificate of All Historical Matters / not more than 3 months old)

For companies located outside of Japan, a document issued by the competent authorities or authorized agencies in the country concerned (including the location of the head office, the name of the representative, and the date of establishment) should be submitted in place of the "Certificate of All Historical Matters".

\* (1) and (2) are to be submitted in the prescribed forms (downloadable from the public notice of this competition on the AOTS's website). The prescribed form in (2) may be prepared and submitted in a format other than MS Word, such as MS Power Point, as long as all items listed on the form are included. The documents prepared in MS Power Point or other formats may also be submitted as a separate sheet of paper.

## 12. Screening Method

(1) Based on the submitted application documents, the technical review items listed below will be reviewed. Screening will be conducted in writing based on the submitted documents, but hearings, etc. may be conducted in some cases.

[Technical review items]

- Proposal contents (appropriateness and originality of the proposal contents, and appropriateness and originality of the implementation method)
- Experience and ability of the organization (experience in similar projects, ability to implement the commissioned services)

- Knowledge and experience of the project team members (knowledge of the project area, work experience)
- (2) The results of the screening (decision of adoption or non-adoption) shall be promptly communicated. Please note that individual inquiries on the reasons of adoption or non-adoption, etc. cannot be answered.
- (3) Information provided in the application documents will be used only for the purpose of carrying out a series of operations, such as screening, management, finalization, settlement, and verification of policy effectiveness. Please note that application documents will not be returned.

### **13. Contact for Inquiries**

Person in Charge: AIGO (Mr.), ARAI (Ms.) and YOSHIOKA (Mr.)

AMEICC Secretariat Support Group, AOTS

Email: kobo-amcshien-wc@aots.jp

\* Inquiries will be accepted by email only.

(Attachment) AMEICC Office Criteria for Travel Expense (Airfare, Daily Allowance)

Table 1: Ticket Classification Criteria for Invitees and Experts from Each Country

Case	Category	Grade	Air Ticket Class	Accommodation
1	Minister Level, Permanent Secretary	2	Business	Executive Suite, Deluxe Suite
2	Director General			Standard, Superior
3	Chairman, President			
4	Professor, Lawyer, Auditor, Adviser			
5	Deputy Representative	3	Economy	Standard, Superior
6	Director, Head, Expert			
7	Deputy Director, Assistant Director	4		
8	Chief			
9	Secretary, Coordinator, Assistant Coordinator	5	Economy	Standard, Superior
10	Support Staff, Technician & Others			

Table 2: Criteria for daily allowances for invitees and experts from each country

Daily Allowance (per day)

Grade	Japan	Specified city	Area A	Area B	Area C
1	19	54	46	37	33
2	19	54	46	37	33
3	18	46	39	31	28
4	16	46	39	31	28
5	12	40	33	27	24

(currency unit: USD)

Note:

Specified city: Singapore

Area A: not applicable to ASEAN countries

Area B: Thailand, Myanmar, Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos and Brunei

Area C: not applicable to ASEAN countries