

Application Guidelines

Call for Proposals for the “Project of future business opportunities for ASEAN and Japan’s next generation for enhancing the industries during the Philippines’s ASEAN Chairmanship” Using AMEICC’s FY2022 Supplementary Budget

1. Project Purpose and Objectives

Addressing critical challenges by the rapid economic development that ASEAN countries are facing, especially in the areas of strengthening the competitiveness of SMEs and responding to the digital economy, sustainable development, innovation, green technology and climate action, necessitates a comprehensive and collaborative approach, especially through fair and mutually beneficial economic co-creation between ASEAN and Japan. Tackling these challenges demands the establishment of a shared future wherein various players such as the youth can play a pivotal role as drivers of innovation and sustainable economic growth. Therefore, it is of importance to create a dialogue where these players could exhibit a heightened interest in ASEAN through activities that empower them and engage communities to instill and implement ideas that enable positive sustainable change. Such a dialogue will lead to sustainable and resilient supply chains between ASEAN and Japan that enable various players to participate. Given the Philippines’s role as the upcoming ASEAN Chairmanship, exploring future business opportunities between ASEAN and Japan in areas that align with their priorities contributes significantly to realizing a more resilient, inclusive and sustainable future for the region.

This project will (i) provide opportunities for various players such as young leaders of ASEAN and Japan to directly engage, collaborate and jointly work towards strengthening close ties between the two regions to promote diverse inclusion in areas such as strengthening the competitiveness of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) and responding to the digital economy, (ii) raise awareness and understanding of current trend of ASEAN’s policy including SMEs development and digital strategy, and methodologies for addressing the persistent vulnerabilities of SMEs to develop a long term and effective mechanisms, (iii) facilitate networking and collaboration among stakeholders and key players in concerned industries for best practices, perspectives, initiatives and practical approaches , (iv) encourage knowledge sharing and community engagement to tackle the poor managerial capabilities, limited access to the finance and market, the digital skill gaps as well as the climate crisis through learning and mentoring from successful strategic businesses focused on digital innovation and developmental partners organizations and (v) explore and implement innovative strategies for building resilient economy and sustainable development as well as offer policy recommendations to the high-level stakeholders in ASEAN.

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)¹ to implement the following services (1) through (3). Detailed contents and methods of implementation shall be based on proposals, and the project shall be implemented after careful consultation with the AMEICC Secretariat and the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, Japan (METI)².

- (1) Organizing the public forum focusing on strengthening the competitiveness of SMEs and responding to the digital economy to achieve sustainable development at multiple levels (e.g. firm, supply chain, nation and region) in 2026.

This service will focus on raising participants' awareness and understanding of the importance of SMEs in the region, digital innovation, and sustainable development as well as ways to contribute to solving SMEs' challenges and achieving inclusive economic growth. Key priorities include supporting SMEs and bridging the digital divide, along with other composition such as a panel discussion engaging diverse representatives from the government, private sectors, and international development organizations in the ASEAN region. Possible initiatives, ideas and viewpoints from different key players could be recognized on this occasion in the following fields:

- (a) Current initiative to strengthen SMEs and digital economy through the collaboration of ASEAN and Japan,
- (b) Innovative financing models and partnerships between the governments and SMEs to support accessing finance and markets, enhancing managerial capabilities and digital skills, utilizing innovative technologies, and building resilient businesses capable of withstanding climate change and economic shocks,
- (c) Strengthening the competitiveness of SMEs and its methodologies,
- (d) Local development and establishment of socio-business to build a resilient economy
- (e) Technology and innovation, and
- (f) Other matters to solve socio-economic issues.

The specifications for this service shall be as follows:

- (a) Period of implementation: The event is anticipated to span approximately three days,
- (b) Location: The event will be held in Philippines,
- (c) Method: The event format will be predominantly offline (face-to-face) with potential for a hybrid model incorporating online elements,

¹ AOTS has been delegated the secretariat (AMEICC Secretariat) by the AEM-METI Economic and Industrial Cooperation Committee (AMEICC).

² Asia Pacific Division is in charge of this project in METI.

- (d) Expected number of participants: A minimum of 200 participants (face-to-face) are envisaged for the public event,
- (e) Targeted participants: The event aims to engage youth (encompassing young professionals, entrepreneurs, SMEs, start-ups) and representatives from various ministries, private sectors, and academia in ASEAN and Japan,
- (f) Hosting arrangements: The event may be co-hosted with multiple organizations,
- (g) Organizing learning visit on SMEs initiatives and sustainable economic growth: This site visit will be conducted to expand engagement and understanding of the various mechanisms and opportunities on empowering SMEs initiatives and its sustainable growth, allowing participants to interact and acquire insights and technology which are the clues to build a resilient economy and to bring innovation, and
- (h) Implementation of human resource exchanges: To include a multinational human resource exchange of young people from Japan and ASEAN countries in order to deepen multicultural and intercultural understanding and explore the possibility of sustainable co-creation in the SMEs issues and economic issues.

(2) Side Event: ASEAN-Japan Collaborative Fieldwork by Youth

As a side event of the public forum mentioned (1), a collaborative fieldwork program involving youth from Japan and ASEAN will be organized with the following conditions:

- (a) Objective: To co-create solutions for common social challenges in ASEAN and Japan (e.g., SME support, digital divide, regional sustainability).
- (b) Participants: A minimum of 15 youth participants each from ASEAN and Japan.
- (c) Location & times: In principle, to be conducted either in Japan or an ASEAN country for more than 3 times (however, partial implementation outside Japan and ASEAN is allowed if highly effective.)
- (d) Duration: Minimum of three days per 1 fieldwork, including activities such as issue analysis, site visits, idea creation, and presentation.

(3) Promoting public relation activities

This service aims to promote and publicize above (1) and (2) through broadcasting on various social network platforms including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and others.

3. Points of Concern

- (1) In implementing the project, the contractor should cooperate well with the AMEICC Secretariat and Asia Pacific Division of METI.
- (2) The progress of the project shall be reported in principle once every two weeks, as appropriate, in

response to instructions from the AMEICC Secretariat and Asia Pacific Division of METI.

4. Deliverables

(1) Reports in **English** including the following items:

- Results of the events specified in 2. (1) and (2) conducted under the project, and
- Analysis of points based on results of the events where Japan and Philippines can co-create in Philippines.

(2) Form of delivery of Deliverables: Electronic media

(3) Delivery Due Date:

- Final report due: Tuesday, March 31, 2026
- Final report on the deliverables specified in 4. (1)

(4) 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) Asia Pacific Division, Trade and Economic Cooperation Bureau, METI

Address: 1-3-1 Kasumigaseki, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 100-8901, JAPAN

Tel: +81- 3-3501-1953

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.

5. Contract Requirements

(1) Contract form: Quasi-mandate contract

(2) Contract method: Fixed Payment Contract

(3) Number of contracts: one

(4) Contract period: From the date of the contract (scheduled for Mid-September 2025) to March 31, 2026.

(5) Contract amount: The maximum contract amount shall be 110,000 USD. The final implementation details and contract amount shall be determined after confirming and adjusting the adopted proposal. The contractor shall not subcontract (outsource, or any other form of entrustment, regardless of the form of entrustment. Hereinafter referred to as "subcontracting".) to a third party more than 50% of the actual amount of the consignment fee (including consumption tax). 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) Client: AOTS

- (7) Payment: The contract amount will be paid after acceptance of the deliverables specified in 4. (1) submitted at the end of the project. However, advance payment of up to half of the amount is allowed. However, if the contractor fails to perform the services specified in the TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR), the AOTS may withhold all or part of the payment.

6. Application Requirements

- (1) The applicant must be registered as a legal entity in 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 juridical entity of which a designated organized crime group³ member is an officer,
 - A juridical entity that a designated organized crime group member has a controlling influence over its business activities through investment, financing, transactions or other relationships,
 - A juridical 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 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. (Excluding a legal entity that has been recertified after the decision of commencement of proceedings).

7. 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 e-mail attachment by **3:00 p.m. in Japan time, Wednesday, August 20, 2025** [must arrive by this date and time].

2) Q&A

³ A designated organized crime group, Boryokudan, designated by the Prefectural Public Safety Commission of Japan

- (1) Question deadline: **3:00 p.m. in Japan time, Wednesday, August 20, 2025**
- (2) How to Receive Questions: By e-mail only
- (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, Monday, August 25, 2025.

8. Application Method

After carefully reading this Application Guideline for Proposals and confirming that the applicant meets the application requirements in 6. Above, please submit the application documents (files) listed in 9. below by **4:00 p.m. in Japan time, Wednesday, August 27, 2025** [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.)

AMEICC Secretariat Support Group, AOTS

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

9. Application Form

(1) Application Letter (English)

(2) Proposal (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 USD.

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

(4) Financial reports in 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 English (not more than 3 months old)

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.

* (1) and (2) are to be submitted in the prescribed forms (downloadable from the public notice of this competition on the AOTS's website).

10. Screening Method

- (1) The application documents submitted will be reviewed through a competitive proposal process. Screening will be conducted in writing based on the submitted documents, but hearings may be held in some cases.

Examination items:

- Proposal contents (appropriateness and originality of the proposal contents, appropriateness and originality of the implementation method)
 - Experience and capability of the organization (experience in similar work, capability to implement the work)
 - Knowledge and experience of the person(s) engaged in the project (knowledge of the project area, work experience)
- (2) The results of the screening (decision of adoption or non-adoption) shall be notified promptly. Please note that individual inquiries about the reasons for 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.

11. Contact for Inquiries

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

AMEICC Secretariat Support Group, AOTS

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

* Inquiries will be accepted by e-mail only.