

Terms of reference (ToR) for the procurement of services below the EU threshold

ASEAN Economic Blueprint 2025 Interim End-term Review (ETR):
Phase I

**Project number/
cost centre:**

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0. List of abbreviations

AIMD	ASEAN Integration Monitoring Directorate
AVB	General Terms and Conditions of Contract (AVB) for supplying services and work 2018
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
HLTF-EI WG	High-Level Task Force for ASEAN Economic Integration Working Group for AEC Post 2025
AEC ETR	GIZ-assisted project “AEC Blueprint 2025 End-Term Review”
ASEC	ASEAN Secretariat
ToR	Terms of Reference

1. Context

The Deutsche Gesellschaft für internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH is implementing multiple projects on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and other commissioning parties in ASEAN. Additionally, the BMZ Study and Expert Fund (SFF) for ASEAN, allows GIZ to support partners in ASEAN with ad-hoc requests. The ASEAN Integration Monitoring Directorate (AIMD) of the ASEAN Secretariat (ASEC), reached out to GIZ to support the end-term review (ETR) of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) Blueprint 2025 as well as preparing inputs for the post-2025 AEC agenda.

The AEC pillar is in the final stages of implementation of the AEC Blueprint 2025, which charts the broad directions of ASEAN's economic integration process from 2016 to 2025, and its accompanying sectoral work plans¹. It is also in the midst of preparations for post 2025, i.e., the development of the ASEAN 2045 Vision and its attendant documents (i.e., successor roadmaps/blueprints) that the ASEAN Leaders will adopt and unveil to the public during the ASEAN Summit in Q4 of 2025².

ASEAN recognises that the pathway to the next phase and new level of economic integration post 2025 would have to be built upon the current Blueprint, on its accomplishments and successes, as well as reckoning of its strengths and weaknesses, good practices and learning to (i) guide the development of a robust post-2025 successor blueprint and strategic work plans for AEC; (ii) inform future design of the implementation mechanism and process. This is reckoned in the Implementation and Review section of the AEC Blueprint 2025, which underlined and spelled out the need for mid-term and end-term evaluations in furthering the work of ASEAN towards enhancing the level of economic integration in the region. The AEC Council, as the ASEAN organ for AEC and therefore, the principal body accountable for implementation of the AEC Blueprint 2025, has endorsed the conduct of the end-term review (ETR) of the Blueprint at its 23rd AEC Council Meeting in September 2023 with the support of the High-Level Task Force on ASEAN Economic Integration (HLTF-EI).

The Blueprint is a ten-year plan, from 2016 to 2025 and sets out the AEC vision for/by 2025, and the strategic measures to support the realisation of the AEC vision, which are encapsulated in the five (5) AEC characteristics:

- Characteristic A: A highly integrated and cohesive economy, aims toward a seamless flow of goods, services, investment and capital and skilled labour and therefore enhance ASEAN supply chain/production networks and establish a more unified market
- Characteristic B: A competitive, innovative and dynamic economy
- Characteristic C: Enhanced connectivity and sectoral cooperation, aims to enhance the economy connectivity of the region through the strengthening of cooperation among sectors such as transport, energy, ICT, and science, technology and innovation; and leveraging on the complementation of Member States in such sectors as food, agriculture and forestry, tourism and minerals

¹ These are called in various names across elements/sectors including Implementation Plan, Strategic Action Plan, Work Plan, Work Programme and sometimes Master Plan.

² As set out in the Annex: Roadmap for an ASEAN Community Post 2025 Vision

- Characteristic D: A resilient, inclusive, people-oriented and people-centered ASEAN, this aims to increase MSME participation, enhance the role of the private sector, strengthen public-private sector engagement, and narrow the development gap.
- Characteristic E: A global ASEAN, which aims to strengthen ASEAN position in the global economy.

Implementation of the Blueprint are operationalised through the sectoral work plans or action plans for the 29 elements (also called “sectors”) of the AEC Characteristics, and which are carried out by AEC Sectoral Ministerial bodies through their subsidiary bodies including coordinating committees and working groups.

To conduct the ETR for the AEC Blueprint 2025, ASEAN decided to apply **five** of the six evaluation criteria of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Network on Development Evaluation: 1) effectiveness, 2) relevance, 3) efficiency, 4) coherence, and 5) sustainability ([Link](#)).

GIZ is therefore looking for a contractor to conduct the ETR and produce an interim assessment report. The contractor for the ETR of the current AEC Blueprint is supposed to work on the following scope in close coordination with AIMD of the ASEAN Secretariat and GIZ:

1. Evaluation and interim report of AEC Blueprint 2025 are implemented:
 - a. **Inception phase:** Development of a (i) post-ante evaluation approach including methodology, evaluation matrix and design of stakeholder³ analysis; and (ii) a work plan and management arrangements for the ETR exercise. This will involve a pre-inception meeting with ASEC AIMD for orientation and levelling of expectations on the ETR, and an inception meeting (with the ASEC AIMD and key ASEC AEC Desks) to further clarify the AEC Blueprint ETR and sectoral work assessment, and work arrangements and approach.
 - b. **Data collection phase:** Data collection will be undertaken according to the data collection agenda agreed during the inception phase. This will cover information and data from all relevant sources (regional, national and sectoral) including inputs from relevant stakeholders, third party sources and the ASEC, and collected through various means including through desk research, consultations, meetings, interviews and field visits.
 - c. **Review phase and report writing:** The AEC Blueprint performance in terms of the five characteristics and implementation mechanism will be reviewed based on the gathered information and data in the context of the OECD DAC evaluation criteria. The report should review towards results and/or progress towards higher outcomes, and where possible and available, present/showcase actual gains/benefits to stakeholders/constituents.
 - d. **Report phase.**

Main outputs. The main output to be delivered is the interim ETR report, which is expected to be a full report on the review of the AEC Blueprint performance up to 2023. The interim report will feed into the preparation of the successor Blueprint and sectoral work plans post 2025. hence, a preliminary draft is expected in early

³ The term is used in a broad general context.

Q2 of 2024, with the final draft delivered in Q3-Q4 2024. The preliminary report based on the initial consultations and desk work will be prepared to provide an indicative status of the ETR work and secure guidance from the HLTF-EI Working Group on the next steps.

2. The ETR exercise benefits from the consultation and feedback meetings with relevant stakeholders at the regional and national, and sectoral levels

Coordination and Consultation meetings. To clarify the AEC Blueprint 2025 assessment/review work coordination meetings will be conducted with the ASEC with and through AIMD are held. This platform may also focus on de-briefing sessions on outcomes of consultation and national-level engagements.

Consultation meetings will also be conducted with the AEC pillar through the ASEC divisions. This is to get feedback and to capture the status of implementation of (i) around 23 sectoral strategic action plans under the AEC Blueprint 2025, and (ii) of cross-sectoral initiatives under various AEC documents.

National level engagement. To assess the outcomes of the key outputs/accomplishments of the AEC Blueprint implementation and gather feedback/input from the relevant sectoral implementing agencies through the national focal points (SEOM process) by holding ETR workshop sessions.

3. The interim ETR report(s) are delivered to support the works for the AEC post-2025 agenda.
 - a. Assessment of cumulative performance and AEC outcomes, and assessment of the relevance of on-going and unfinished action lines will help elaborate on the focus areas and priorities of future AEC work (i.e., post-2025 agenda) and identify areas for improvement to ensure a more robust implementation of the post 2025 successor blueprint and sectoral work plans.
 - b. Share implementation experiences and leading practices across elements and cross-sectoral work including on circular economy, decarbonisation, climate smart economic development from different AEC sectors (e.g., agricultural, tourism, SME development, trade, consumer protection, etc).
4. **Based on the interim report, a complete ETR of the AEC Blueprint 2025 covering the remaining period up to end of 2025 is expected to be conducted in the next phase of the project.**

2. Tasks to be performed by the contractor

The contractor shall be responsible for the following:

Deliverables	Description of Tasks
I. Assessment and Interim Report on the ETR of current AEC Blueprint 2025 The Interim Report on the ETR is one of the main outputs, which as an intervening output, is targeted to be delivered in Q2 2024. The delivery of this output is an important milestone of the process for the development/formulation of the Post -2025 attendant documents (i.e., AEC Strategic Plan) and AEC sectoral work plans or action plans.	
Compiling an interim report on the results of the review of the AEC Blueprint 2025 implementation and AEC performance evaluating the implementation status of 23 AEC sectoral action plans up to 30 August 2024 (date of submission will be further discussed with ASEC): ▪ The report will assess AEC performance based on (i) effectiveness; (ii) relevance; (iii) efficiency; (iv) coherence; and (v) sustainability of the AEC sectoral strategic action plans outcomes. ▪ The assessment emphasises the desired outcomes as defined with the five mutually reinforcing AEC characteristics in the AEC Blueprint 2025: (1) a highly integrated and cohesive economy; (2) a competitive, innovative, and dynamic ASEAN; (3) enhanced connectivity and sectoral cooperation; (4) a resilient, inclusive, people-oriented, and people-centred ASEAN; and (5) a global ASEAN.	▪ As one milestone of the ETR process, the interim report is intended to serve as a critical reference for the HLTF-EI, the HLTF-EI Working Group and the AEC sectoral bodies in the preparation of the Post-2025 attendant documents (AEC Strategic Plan) and AEC sectoral work plans/action plans. ▪ The review should provide insights that inform the development of the post 2025 documents. Its findings should prompt action on how to enhance the strategic, operational and institutional aspect of the ASEAN economic integration post 2025. ▪ The review will have to be contextualised on how AEC as a regional platform facilitates the economic integration process and creates the enabling environment to achieve the five (5) AEC characteristics and bring benefit to its key stakeholders. This entails a comprehensive assessment of the sectoral outputs mapped against strategic measures that underlie the achievement of the five AEC characteristics. It would be highly useful to provide actual program logic ▪ The review will also have to look into the effectiveness and efficiency of the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system of ASEC in practice. Key learning points from the overall review can help strengthen the planning, implementation, coordination and monitoring of future strategic plans, and establish a more robust monitoring, evaluation, reporting and learning (MERL) system.

II. Preliminary Report	
A preliminary report will be submitted and presented to the HLTF-EI in April 2024 to inform the AEC post-2025 vision process.	The preliminary report shall present the initial assessments and findings to give the HLTF-EI indication of the progress of the End-Term Review, with a view to provide initial comments or guidance to the preparation of the interim and final reports. This may include the initial results of desk work, consultations meetings, and other forms of information gathering.

Certain milestones, as laid out in the table below, are to be achieved during the contract term:

Milestones	Deadline	Payment
Inception Report - Acceptance by the ASEAN Secretariat	Mid-February 2024	First interim payment against preliminary report (40%)
Specific Tools and Instruments for Data/Information Gathering and to assess performance. - Presentation to ASEAN Secretariat	February – May 2024	
Preliminary Report - Submission and Presentation to the HLTF-EI Working Group on AEC Post 2025	April 2024	
Key Activities/Events Report - Submission of Proceedings and Key Outcomes/Highlights of key activities (e.g., national level assessment, industry and sectoral consultation, workshops, focus group discussion, in-depth interviews – virtual approach)		Second interim payment against interims report (30%)
Interim Report of the ETR - Acceptance of the Interim Report	April – August 2024	

Final Interim Report of the ETR		Final payment against Policy Papers and final ETR report (30%)
- Final draft accepted by the HLTF-EI	August 2024	
- Final report accepted by AEC Council	October 2024	

Period of assignment: from mid-February 2024 until 30 October 2024. But this will be subject to the actual commencement of the assignment.

3. Concept

In the tender, the tenderer is required to demonstrate how the deliverables defined in Chapter 2 are to be achieved, if applicable under consideration of further method-related requirements (technical-methodological concept). In addition, the tenderer must describe the project management system for service provision.

Note: The numbers in parentheses correspond to the lines of the technical assessment grid

Technical-methodological concept

Strategy (1.1): The tenderer is required to consider the tasks to be performed with reference to the objectives of the services put out to tender (see Chapter 1 Context) (1.1.1). Following this, the tenderer presents and justifies the explicit strategy with which it intends to provide the services for which it is responsible (see Chapter 2 Tasks to be performed) (1.1.2).

The tenderer is required to present the actors relevant for the services for which it is responsible and describe the **cooperation (1.2)** with them.

The tenderer is required to present and explain its approach to **steering** the measures with the project partners (1.3.1) and its contribution to the **results-based monitoring system** (1.3.2).

The tenderer is required to describe the key **processes** for the services for which it is responsible and create an **operational plan** or schedule (1.4.1) that describes how the services according to Chapter 2 (Tasks to be performed by the contractor) are to be provided. In particular, the tenderer is required to describe the necessary work steps and, if applicable, take account of the milestones and **contributions** of other actors (partner contributions) in accordance with Chapter 2 (Tasks to be performed) (1.4.2).

The tenderer is required to describe its contribution to knowledge management for the partner (1.5.1) and GIZ and to promote scaling-up effects (1.5.2) under **learning and innovation**.

Project management of the contractor (1.6)

The tenderer is required to explain its approach for coordination with the GIZ project. In particular, the project management requirements specified in Chapter 2 (Tasks to be performed by the contractor) must be explained in detail.

The tenderer is required to describe its backstopping concept. The following services are part of the standard backstopping package, which (like ancillary personnel costs) must be factored

into the fee schedules of the staff listed in the tender in accordance with Section 3.3.1 of the GIZ AVB:

- Service-delivery control
- Managing adaptations to changing conditions
- Ensuring the flow of information between the tenderer and GIZ
- Assuming personnel responsibility for the contractor's experts
- Process-oriented steering for implementation of the commission
- Securing the administrative conclusion of the project

4. Assignment concept

The tenderer is required to provide personnel who are suited to fill the expected positions, on the basis of their CVs (see Chapter 0), the range of tasks involved and the required qualifications. The team to be made available to perform the required advisory and administrative backstopping tasks is expected to comprise one (1) team leader/specialist, one (1) project manager, and one (1) project assistant.

The below specified qualifications represent the requirements to reach the maximum number of points.

Company Profile

The assigned contractor shall be available to perform the required tasks with the following specifications:

- A research institution/think tank/legal company/training center/relevant entity with a high recognition and credibility record in the trade, market access, MSMEs, private sector and community engagement, and economy policy strategy in ASEAN level with specific countries experience in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, and Vietnam are desirable; at least 3 years of experience in this sector;
- Experience in developing high-level policy documents and recommendations;
- Proven track record in data collection, management, analysis, and report writing on ASEAN and international research/survey;
- Proven experience in facilitating high-level strategic consultation meetings among various stakeholders with varying levels of involvement representing different political interests;
- Extensive knowledge of ASEAN, its structure and processes;
- Extensive networks with national policymakers, high-level government officials, private sectors, and civil society;
- Demonstrated ability to facilitate dialogue and establish relationships with various stakeholders particularly ASEAN mid to senior government officials

The contractor is required to provide personnel who are suited to fill the expected positions, on the basis of their CVs (see Chapter 0), the range of tasks involved and the required qualifications. The team to be made available to perform the required advisory and administrative backstopping tasks is expected to comprise one (1) team leader/specialist, one (1) project manager, and one (1) project assistant.

The below specified qualifications represent the requirements to reach the maximum number of points.

Team leader

Tasks of the team leader

- Overall responsibility for the advisory packages of the contractor (strategy, quality and deadlines)
- Coordinating closely with ASEC AIMD, respective ASEC Divisions and GIZ
- Personnel management, in particular identifying the need for short-term assignments within the available budget
- Regular reporting in accordance with deadlines

Qualifications of the team leader

- Education/training (2.1.1): University qualification: Master's degree or higher in economics, trade, social studies or related fields
- Language (2.2.2): Fluency in English (written and oral)
- General professional experience (2.1.3): 15 years of professional experience in the political economy sector with a focus on regional economic frameworks
- Specific professional experience (2.1.4): 10 years in economic and trade sector with a history of evaluation expertise
- Leadership/management experience (2.1.5): 6 years of management/leadership experience as project team leader or manager
- Regional experience (2.1.6): 5-10 years of experience in projects in ASEAN region, of which at least 4 years in projects in selected ASEAN countries
- Development Cooperation (DC) experience (2.1.7): 6 years of experience in economic DC projects
- Other (2.1.8): Sound understanding of the political and economic context in ASEAN, as well as policy issues related to economy and trade

Expert 1 (project manager)

Tasks of expert 1

- General management and technical backstopping of all activities, incl. conceptualization and reporting
- Support to expert and media engagement, incl. briefings
- Day-to-day liaison with GIZ

Qualifications of expert 1

- Education/training (2.2.1): bachelor or master's degree in economic or social science or other relevant fields
- Language (2.2.2): Fluency in English (written and oral)
- General professional experience (2.2.3): 2-5 years of professional experience in the political economy sector
- Specific professional experience (2.2.4): 2 years in economic and trade sector
- Leadership/management experience (2.2.5): N/A
- Regional experience (2.2.6): 2-5 years of experience in projects in ASEAN region, of which 1 year in projects in selected ASEAN countries
- Development Cooperation (DC) experience (2.2.7): 2 years of experience in DC projects
- Other (2.2.8): Ability to self-organize and follow up on processes and administrative issues

Expert 2 (project staff)

Tasks of expert 2

- Support to all activities both technical and administrative matters
- In close coordination with the project manager, GIZ and additional partners or external resource persons

Qualifications of expert 2

- Education/training (2.2.1): bachelor or master's degree in economy, political science, social science, or other relevant fields
- Language (2.2.2): Fluency in English (written and oral)
- General professional experience (2.2.3): 2-5 years of professional experience in the political economy sector
- Specific professional experience (2.2.4): 2 years in economic sector
- Leadership/management experience (2.2.5): N/A
- Regional experience (2.2.6): 2 years of experience in projects in ASEAN region, of which 1 year in projects in selected ASEAN countries
- Development Cooperation (DC) experience (2.2.7): 2 years of experience in DC projects
- Other (2.2.8): Ability to self-organize and follow up on processes and administrative issues

Soft skills of team members

In addition to their specialist qualifications, the following qualifications are required of team members:

- Team skills
- Initiative
- Communication skills
- Socio-cultural skills
- Efficient, partner- and client-focused working methods
- Interdisciplinary thinking

5. Costing requirements

The contract shall be assigned as a lumpsum package for the deliverables as outlined above.

6. Inputs of GIZ or other actors

The contractual arrangement shall already cover any additional partnerships and necessary logistics for the completion of the deliverables.

7. Requirements on the format of the tender

The structure of the tender must correspond to the structure of the ToRs. In particular, the detailed structure of the concept (Chapter 3) should be organised in accordance with the positively weighted criteria in the assessment grid (not with zero). The tender must be legible (font size 11 or larger) and clearly formulated. It must be drawn up in English.

The complete tender must not exceed 10 pages (excluding CVs). If one of the maximum page lengths is exceeded, the content appearing after the cut-off point will not be included in the assessment. External content (e.g. links to websites) will also not be considered.

The CVs of the personnel proposed in accordance with Chapter 0 of the ToRs must be submitted using the format specified in the terms and conditions for application. The CVs shall not exceed 4 pages each. They must clearly show the position and job the proposed person held in the reference project and for how long. The CVs can also be submitted in English.

As the contract to be concluded is a contract for works, please offer a fixed lump sum price that covers all relevant costs (fees, travel expenses etc.). The price bid will be evaluated on the basis of the specified lump sum price. In addition, please also provide the underlying daily rate. A breakdown of days is not required.