



ASEAN SECRETARIAT

Request for Proposal

Improvement to the ARC Database: AI Search Function

PROPOSAL MUST BE RECEIVED BY
Tuesday, 2 June 2026

DELIVER/MAIL PROPOSAL TO:

ASEAN Secretariat
Jl. Sisingamangaraja 70A
Jakarta 12110
Indonesia

Prepared By:
Date:

Information Resources Management Division
May 2026

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The ASEAN Secretariat (ASEC) was set up in February 1976 by the Foreign Ministers of ASEAN. The basic function of ASEC is to provide support for greater efficiency and coordination of ASEAN organs and for more effective implementation of ASEAN projects and activities. In response to this, ASEC needs to be strengthened with sufficient tools and up-to-date technology to remain relevant and future ready.

Information Resources Management Division (IRMD), under the orbit of Community Affairs Directorate (CMAD), is responsible for managing the ASEAN Secretariat Resource Centre (ARC) – the Library and Archives of the ASEAN Secretariat. ARC acts as the repository of the ASEAN documents, such as ASEAN Meeting Reports, ASEAN Legal documents, ASEAN publications, photos, multimedia, and other collections related to ASEAN subject matters, access to these collections is mostly limited to authorized personnel only. The ARC database also maintains documents from the ASEC Website which provides a lot of valuable public information related to ASEAN and its activities. The ASEC Website is managed by Community Relations Division (CRD) which is also under the orbit of CMAD.

As the designated Resource Centre, IRMD frequently receives inquiries and requests for specific information from internal and external stakeholders. Considering ARC Database and ASEAN Website's diverse and rich contents, a reliable, fast and convenient retrieval system to find and locate the information and document collections is very crucial. In this regard, IRMD is of the view that further enhancements to the ARC database, including improvements to the overall search and document search functionalities, are necessary. To address this, the implementation of an AI-based search engine is chosen to significantly improve the user experience by providing faster, more intuitive, and context-aware search results, thereby enabling more efficient and accurate information retrieval.

To support this objective, the selected vendor is expected to design and develop an AI Assistant system powered by Large Language Models (LLMs), integrated with Retrieval-Augmented Generation (RAG) technology or other equivalent advanced architectures. This approach, hopefully, will enable the system to provide reliable, contextually relevant, and human-like responses while leveraging validated enterprise knowledge sources. The system will integrate data from various ARC collections and ASEAN Website documents, creating a unified and comprehensive knowledge base.

For this purpose, ASEC is seeking a vendor who is able to provide and deliver the solutions and to work closely with IRMD and ASEC Webmaster in enhancing the system.

2. SCOPE OF WORK

The selected vendor should provide a clear methodology and approach in carrying out this assignment. They will be responsible for accurately fulfilling the described tasks in a timely and professional manner and to provide regular updates to the ASEC team throughout the period of the consultancy.

The selected vendor shall work closely with IRMD staff and ASEC Webmaster to achieve the above objectives as well as undertake the following indicative tasks:

1. Enhance the ARC Database and ASEAN Website, to create a more secure and reliable system with a high level of security and data protection and common international encryption algorithm method to protect network security and ensure confidential collection such as ASEAN Meeting Reports, Financing Agreements, and other confidential documents are well protected and can only be accessed by authorised personnel. Appropriate access controls and authentication mechanisms shall be implemented to preserve the integrity, confidentiality, and reliability of the information stored within the platforms.
2. Enhance the search and retrieval system, improvements to the overall search and document search functionalities, which require:
 - A. Provide the design and development of an AI Assistant system powered by Large Language Models (LLMs) and Retrieval-Augmented Generation (RAG) or other equivalent advanced architectures to support advanced information retrieval across the ARC Database and the ASEAN website. The system is expected to leverage semantic search capabilities, enabling users to retrieve information based on contextual meaning rather than relying solely on keyword matching, thereby improving the relevance and accuracy of search results.
 - B. Implement appropriate data classification and access controls to clearly distinguish between information intended for public access and content restricted for internal use, ensuring compliance with data governance and security requirements. The AI Assistant must also provide transparent and verifiable outputs, whereby each response includes a clear reference or link to the original source document.
 - C. Furthermore, the vendor will be responsible for integrating existing data sources and documents from the ARC Database and ASEAN Website into the AI system, ensuring seamless interoperability and a unified, efficient knowledge retrieval experience. Provide a team to assist with document processing/data input.
 - D. The platform shall be developed using a trusted, supported, high security solution as well as readily available in the market.
3. Conduct Pre-Project Finalisation, which comprises:

- A. Testing & Debugging (Positive testing, Random testing, Internal testing, Acceptance testing, Debugging, Fixing);
 - B. Conduct of Pilot Trial before full-scale implementation to identify issues and knowledge gaps, fine tune to iron out any mismatch requirement issues;
 - C. User Acceptance Test;
 - D. Maintenance and performance tuning;
 - E. Provision of adequate training to the users and administrators for daily operations;
 - F. Ensure proper hand-over of deliverable with complete report and documentation, including back-end user manual and administrator guidelines.
4. Provide free and immediate support and maintenance during the development, implementation and warranty period (inclusive of on-site debugging/correction, when necessary).
5. Provide Warranty, Maintenance and Licensing fee
 - A. Provide a 12-month warranty period, to ensure that necessary revisions will be made to meet the criteria described in this TOR;
 - B. Provide support, maintain, debug and resolve any system problems during the warranty period;
 - C. A 24-month maintenance and monitoring system period **at no additional cost to ASEC** upon the completion of the project, covering:
 - a. Maintenance, updating, patching, debugging, repairing, replacement, remedying, or otherwise correcting any problem on the website and its hardware environment.
 - b. Ad-hoc technical support on a 24/7 basis. In case of emergency, the expected response shall be within 3 hours.
 - D. Provide a 36-month licensing fee, which shall include all necessary software, plug-ins and user licenses, if needed, for smooth running of the website.
6. The selected vendor is required to demonstrate knowledge and skills warranting that they will be able to implement this project successfully according to the intended timeline.
7. The selected vendor shall be able to provide recommendations of the required services, or better solutions in accordance with the Technical Specification/ TOR.

3. EXPECTED DELIVERABLES

The to-be-selected Vendor is expected to deliver the following:

- 1) A detailed inception report, which includes a clear methodology, detailed work plan, and proposed conceptual model including the name of the proposed technologies;
- 2) A more secure and reliable system with common international encryption algorithm method to protect network security and ensure confidential collection such as ASEAN Meeting Reports, Financing Agreements, and other confidential documents are well protected and can only be accessed by authorised personnel;
- 3) An enhanced ARC Database which enables users to search and retrieve information based on contextual meaning rather than keywords, supported by AI assistant system. The database also equips with appropriate data classification and access controls to clearly differentiate between public information and restricted/internal information, as well as provide transparent and verifiable outputs.
- 4) A comprehensive and systematic user guidelines along with technical support guidelines;
- 5) Necessary trainings to be provided to the users and the administrators;
- 6) A final report, which includes a clear documentation of all technical data, source files, server panel, etc.;
- 7) Provide post-development support, warranty, maintenance, and licencing as mentioned in the SCOPE OF WORK point 5;
- 8) The Consultant shall be able to deliver all outputs within **six (6) months** after the project starts.

The contract for this assignment will be issued by ASEC. The selected vendor shall report and work closely with IRMD and ASEC Webmaster. The ownership of the system and its documentation shall rest with ASEC. The concept and design of the system shall be the intellectual property of ASEC

4. TIMELINE

The following timeline may need to be followed to achieve the expected deliverables. The to-be-selected vendors are encouraged to provide detailed implementation plans within their proposals and may suggest revised timelines or additional activities as deemed necessary to ensure successful project delivery.

No.	Indicative Activities	Estimated Duration
1	Strategy and Assessment	

1.1	Conduct a needs assessment/analysis exercise on the existing ARC Database and ASEAN Website	2 weeks
1.2	Submit an inception report, comprised of a clear methodology, detailed work plan, timeline, and proposed conceptual model, as well as staffing and management plans for each activity for ASEC's approval	
1.3	Provide briefing and clarification	
2	Design, Development and Implementation	
2.1	Develop the system	4 months
2.2	Provide briefing and clarification	
2.3	Perform testing, data migration, data processing, etc.	
2.4	Develop Training Plan and conduct training	
2.5	Conduct UAT	
2.6	Conduct Pilot Trial	
3	Operate and Review	
3.1	Deploy and Configure the system	1,5 months
3.2	System Go-Live	
3.3	Submit a final report and related documents of the entire project	

5. REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS

The Interested companies/firms are invited to submit a proposal in English including the following documents and requirements:

- 1) A legally established entity, in accordance with applicable laws and regulations in their respective country of registration, including small, medium, or large enterprises, - preferably a company based in Jakarta or has a representative office in Jakarta (please provide evidence);
- 2) Has proven records in AI-based/ AI-driven solutions, particularly in the areas of natural language processing (NLP), semantic search, machine

learning, LLM integration, and Retrieval-Augmented Generation (RAG) architectures (please provide evidence);

- 3) Participating vendors are expected to have experience in handling large-scale digital repositories and implementing secure information retrieval systems that support data classification, user access management, and source traceability (please provide evidence);
- 4) Participating vendors must also demonstrate sufficient technical resources, qualified personnel, and project management capability to undertake the assignment within the required timeline and quality standards. The vendor shall assign a dedicated project team consisting of, at a minimum:
 - a. Project Manager,
 - b. Software Developer/AI Engineer,
 - c. Database Specialist,
 - d. UI/UX Designer, and
 - e. Quality Assurance personnel.

All personnel assigned should provide a Curriculum Vitae (CV) that highlights his/her educational background, specialty and experience (proven experience in the design, development, deployment, and maintenance of AI-based systems and enterprise information retrieval platforms, Wordpress database and integration with other system would be an advantage); as well as has ability to communicate in English, both written and verbal;

- 5) In addition to the Project Team, the participating vendor will be expected to assign a dedicated team to support document processing and data input activities, including the integration of existing data sources and documents from the ARC database and ASEAN website into the AI system.
- 6) Provide samples of similar projects that have been previously designed; the demonstration of which can be in the form of thumb-drive or web links.

6. RFP REQUIREMENTS PROCESS

Interested company should submit a Technical Proposal and a Financial Proposal.

3.1. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION INSTRUCTION

- a. All proposals must be submitted in English.
- b. **Vendors should not include any financial/cost data in the Technical Proposal, but only in the separate envelope titled Financial Proposal. Failure to adhere to this will lead to disqualification.**
- c. The proposal should be concisely presented and structured, and should explain in detail the Vendor's availability, experience and resources to provide the requested services.
- d. Proposals must be submitted by the Closing Date and Time, as indicated in the RFP.
- e. Proposals that are incomplete or do not address the required criteria may not be considered in the review process.
- f. All communications with regard to this RFP shall be in writing and send to:

Procurement Unit

Administration and General Affairs Division

ASEAN Secretariat

Email: procurement@asean.org

3.2 CLOSING DATE AND TIME OF SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

All proposals must be submitted not later than **Tuesday, 2 June 2026** by following options:

5.2.1 HARDCOPY (preferable)

The Technical and Finance Proposals must be submitted separately in two different envelopes, in two sets i.e. original and a copy, to the following address:

Chairman of Sub-Committee on Tender
Administration and General Affairs Division
The ASEAN Secretariat
Jl Sisingamangaraja No.70A
Kebayoran Baru
Jakarta 12110
Indonesia

Compliance

In conformance to the ASEAN Secretariat's Financial and Administrative Rules and Procedures (AFARP), the vendor shall submit Tender Bids in **two** sealed envelopes as follows:

1) First Envelope (Technical Proposal):

a. Technical Proposals (original and copy)

First Set, which shall consist, among others, of the technical specifications of the services to be procured; delivery schedule; manpower requirements; printed hardcopies of the duly filled Appendix 1 and 1a - Company General Information and Customer Reference; Appendix 2 – Technical Requirement and completed Compliance Checklist as per Appendix 4;

b. Second Set, which shall consist, among others, the company profile; business name registration issued by appropriate government agency; authority of signatory; valid business permit and other appropriate licenses; taxpayer identification number; latest audited financial statements;

2) Second Envelope (Financial Proposal):

Financial Proposal (original and copy) which shall consist of among others the bid amount; payments schedule; etc; duly filled Appendix 3 – **Price**

Any notices with respect to this RFP should also be mailed to the above contact and address.

All documents not submitted in English shall not be considered and quoted price in the hardcopy submission shall be in **Indonesia Rupiah (IDR) for local company and US Dollar/IDR for overseas company**.

The ASEAN Secretariat may, after the closing date, request additional information or clarification of tenders in writing.

5.2.2 SOFTCOPY

The Technical and Financial proposals shall be sent separately to the following email address:

Chairman of Sub-Committee on Tender
Administration and General Affairs Division
Email: procurement@asean.org

Subject of the Email:

- **Technical Proposal_Title of Tender_Name of Vendor**
- **Financial Proposal_Title of Tender_Name of Vendor**

Compliance

The softcopy of Technical and Financial proposals must be sent **separately** protected by a **different password** for each proposal in encrypted format at PDF/ZIP file.

1. Technical Proposal:

- a. **First set**; which shall consist, among others, of the technical specifications of the services to be procured; delivery schedule; manpower requirements; printed hardcopies of the duly filled Appendix 1 and 1a - Company General Information and Customer Reference; Appendix 2 – Technical Requirement and Completed Compliance Checklist as per Appendix 4;
- b. **Second Set**; which shall consist, among others, the company profile; business name registration issued by appropriate government agency; authority of signatory; valid business permit and other appropriate licenses; taxpayer identification number; latest audited financial statements;

2. Financial Proposal:

Financial Proposal which shall consist of among others the bid amount; payments schedule; etc; duly filled **Appendix 3 – Price**.

All documents not submitted in English shall not be considered and quoted price in the softcopy submission shall be in ***Indonesia Rupiah (IDR) for local company and US Dollar (USD)/IDR for overseas company***.

3. Do not mention the password in the email body.

4. Inform the password only when the procurement staff contact you to request it.

5.3. RFP TERMS & CONDITIONS

5.3.1. BID EXPIRATION DATE

Received tender proposals shall be valid until **31 August 2026**

5.3.2. IMPLEMENTATION / DELIVERY SCHEDULE

Refer to the Term of Reference (TOR)

5.3.3. PRE-BID MEETING is arranged virtually as follows:

Date : Friday, 22 May 2026,
Time : 10.00 a.m – Jakarta time
Link : <https://meet.google.com/mnz-wxpb-esy>

Participant's confirmation to the pre-bid meeting and questions can be share via email to: procurement@asean.org beforehand.

The ASEAN Secretariat may, after the closing date, request additional information or clarification of tenders in writing.

Appendix 1
 Company General Information
To be submitted together in the Technical Proposal

Name:			
Division or Subsidiary (if applicable):			
Address:			
City:			
Province / State:			
Country:			
Postal Code:			
Telephone:			
Business Name Registration: (if applicable)			
Tax Registration Number:			
Valid Business Permit: (if applicable)			
Contact:		Telephone no.:	
Title / Position:		Fax no.:	
E-Mail:			
Indicate number of years involved in similar business			
Are you a subsidiary of a financial institution? *If Yes, Please indicate your Holding Company			

Appendix 1A

List of Clients

To be submitted together in the Technical Proposal

Customer Details	
Company Name	
Company Address	
Telephone Number	
Email address	
Contact Name	
Project Title	

Customer Details	
Company Name	
Company Address	
Telephone Number	
Email Address	
Contact Name	
Project Title	

Customer Details	
Company Name	
Company Address	
Telephone Number	
Email Address	
Contact Name	
Project Title	

APPENDIX 2
Technical Requirements*To be submitted together in the Technical Proposal*

The Technical Requirements should address the requirements and expectations set out in the table below. The vendor should use the section numbers and corresponding titles shown in this tables in their Technical Proposal Submission to allow the ASEAN Secretariat Sub Committee on Tender to evaluate Technical Submissions accordingly.

No	Description	ASEC Requirements	Remarks
1	A legally established entity, in accordance with applicable laws and regulations in their respective country of registration, including small, medium, or large enterprises, - preferably a company based in Jakarta or has a representative office in Jakarta (please provide evidence)	Company profile / company establishment deed	Vendor to submit the required documents
2	Have proven records in AI-based/ AI-driven solutions, particularly in the areas of natural language processing (NLP), semantic search, machine learning, LLM integration, and Retrieval-Augmented Generation (RAG) architectures (please provide evidence)	Company profile / Portfolio or other relevant documents	Vendor to submit the required documents

3	Have experience in handling large-scale digital repositories and implementing secure information retrieval systems that support data classification, user access management, and source traceability (please provide evidence);	Company profile /Portfolio or other relevant documents	Vendor to submit the required documents
4	A dedicated project team consisting of, at a minimum: a. Project Manager, b. Software Developer/AI Engineer, c. Database Specialist, d. UI/UX Designer, and e. Quality Assurance personnel	Curriculum Vitae (CV) of each personnel: highlights his/her educational background, specialty and experience (proven experience in the design, development, deployment, and maintenance of AI-based systems and enterprise information retrieval platforms, Wordpress database and integration with other system would be an advantage); as well as has ability to communicate in English, both written and verbal	Vendor to submit the required documents
5	A dedicated team to support document processing and data input activities	Information on how many people will assist with the document and data processing	Vendor to submit the information
6	Provide post-development support, warranty, maintenance, and licencing as mentioned in the SCOPE OF WORK point 5	Information on the types of post-development support/services included	Vendor to submit the information
7	Provide samples of similar projects that have been previously designed	In thumb-drive or web links	Vendor to submit the required materials
8	Able to deliver all outputs within <u>six (6) months</u> after the project starts.	Provide timeline	Vendor to submit the information

APPENDIX 3 PRICE

To be submitted together in the Financial Proposal

The Financial Proposal should contain the bid amount with detailed estimates i.e. description and allocation for each item. The total proposed budget should be inclusive of all supplies, services, taxes, and any other costs required to complete the project. The Financial Submission should detail the estimates for each item as set out in the table below:

No.	Description	Unit Cost (IDR/USD)	Total Cost (IDR/USD)
1.	Lumpsum Fee		
2	Tax (If Any)		
3	Total Proposed Amount		
4	Payment Schedules	Payment schedules will be made in stages: First payment (25%) will be paid by ASEAN to the Vendor within two (2) weeks after PO is released (Payment Schedule 1); Second payment (50%) will be paid by ASEAN to the Vendor within two (2) weeks after the system Go Live and upon issuance of written approval by ASEAN (Payment Schedule 2); and Third payment (25%) will be paid by ASEAN to the Contractor within two (2) weeks upon completion of all deliverables and upon issuance of written approval by ASEAN (Payment Schedule 3).	

APPENDIX 4

Checklist for the Completeness of Documents Submitted To be submitted in the Technical Proposal

The checklist must be used to ensure that you have provided all documentations for the tender. The checklist must be signed and included in both envelopes of your proposals.

I. General Requirements

No.	Description	Checklist
1	Proposals shall be prepared in English	
2	Proposals are submitted in two different envelopes	
3	The envelope must be sealed and labelled accordingly. i. Technical Proposal ii. Financial Proposal	
4	Title of the tender shall be put on each envelope	

II. Technical Proposal

No.	Description	Checklist
1	Technical Specifications of the proposed requirements	
2	All required information has been addressed accordingly	
3	Schedule of delivery	
4	Manpower/consultant requirement	
5	List of hardware	
6	Printed hardcopies of the duly filled Appendix 1 and 1a – Company General Information and Customer References	
7	Company profile	
8	Copy Company Legal Documents (if applicable), i.e. i. Business Name Registration ii. Valid Business Permit iii. Tax Identification Number iv. List of clients' reference v. Customer testimonials on the similar project	
9	One original signed copy of technical proposal	
10	Other requirements needed to be provided	
11	At least one duplicate copy of technical proposal	

III. Financial Proposal

No.	Description	Checklist
1	Offering is formulated in English	
2	Bid amount in IDR for local company, USD/IDR for overseas company	
3	Payment breakdown and schedule	
4	Latest audited financial statements (if applicable)	
5	Authority of signatory (if applicable)	
6	One original signed copy of financial proposal (hardcopy)	
7	At least one duplicated copy of financial proposal (hardcopy)	

APPENDIX 5
Template for the Proposal Envelope
First Envelope – Technical Proposal

**Company Name &
Address**

Technical Proposal - Title of the Tender

Chairman of Sub-Committee on Tender
Administration and General Affairs Division
The ASEAN Secretariat
Jl. Sisingamangaraja 70A
Jakarta 12110
Indonesia

Second Envelope – Financial Proposal

**Company Name &
Address**

Financial Proposal - Title of the Tender

**Chairman of Sub-Committee on Tender
Administration and General Affairs Division
The ASEAN Secretariat
Jl. Sisingamangaraja 70A
Jakarta 12110
Indonesia**