



## ASEAN Cooperation Project Proposal

### 1. PROJECT DETAILS

**Project Identification Code:**  
SOM/SOM/20/008/REG

**Project Title:**

**The 18<sup>th</sup> East Asia Forum: Strengthening the ASEAN Plus Three cooperation for economic and financial resilience in face of emerging challenges**

**Brief Project Description – 300 words max:**

The East Asia Forum (EAF) is an annual track 1.5 activity under the ASEAN Plus Three (APT) framework. The APT Leaders have consistently acknowledged the contributions made by the East Asia Forum in fostering an East Asia regional identity and supporting an East Asia community in the long-term.

Given the on-going complicated situation of the 2019 Coronavirus Pandemic (COVID-19), the 18<sup>th</sup> EAF, which used to be a two-day event, is planned to be streamlined into a one-day event via videoconference in late October, 2020. The main activity of the 18<sup>th</sup> EAF is a series of discussions on three topics, which help strengthen the APT cooperation for economic and financial resilience in the face of emerging challenges in East Asia, namely:

- 1) *Strengthening macro-economic surveillance and early warning capabilities to monitor and predict the incidence of economic and financial crises in East Asia;***
- 2) *Enhancing regional capacities and responsiveness to external economic and financial shocks***
- 3) *Sustaining the momentum for regional economic integration.***

The summary of discussion and recommendations of this Forum shall be circulated for comments and inputs after the Forum, and submitted through the APT Senior Officials Meeting and the APT Foreign Ministers Meeting to the ASEAN Plus Three Summit for notation.

The main objectives of this project are:

- 1) To strengthen the important role of the EAF in continuing to serve as an exchange platform between government officials, business circle, academia and think-tanks and in providing recommendations to further deepen the momentum of the APT cooperation towards the realisation of an East Asia community as a long-term objective.
- 2) To contribute to the strengthening of the APT cooperation for economic and financial resilience, particularly in mitigating the economic impact of COVID-19 and in response to emerging challenges in East Asia.

**Recurring Project: Yes  No**

If Yes, Previous Project Identification Code: SOM/SOM/18/003/REG

**Project Classification:**

**Scope:**        **Single Sector**         **Cross-Sector**

**Pillar:** APSC, AEC  
and ASCC

**(Main) Blueprint:** APSC, AEC  
and ASCC Blueprints 2025

**(Main) Characteristic:**

- APSC Blueprint: B. peaceful, secure and stable region; C. ASEAN centrality in a dynamic and outward-looking region
- AEC Blueprint: B. A Competitive, Innovative and Dynamic ASEAN; C. Enhanced Connectivity and Sectoral Cooperation; D. A Resilient, Inclusive, People-Oriented, People-Centred ASEAN; and E. A Global ASEAN
- ASCC Blueprint: B. Inclusive; D. Resilient; and E. Dynamic.

**Action Line(s):**

- APSC: B.3. Enhance ASEAN capacity to address non-traditional security issues effectively and in a timely manner; C2. Deepen cooperation with Dialogue Partners, strengthen engagement with other external parties and reach out to new potential partners for mutually beneficial relations as well as respond collectively and constructively to global developments
- AEC Blueprint: A.4. Financial integration, Financial inclusion, and Financial Stability; B.4. Productivity-Driven Growth, Innovation, Research and Development, and Technology Commercialisation; C.1.

**Connectivity**

**IAI**

**Linkage:**

**Strategy:**

**Key Action(s):**

Transport; D.4. Narrowing the Development Gap; E.80.

- ASCC Blueprint: B.2. Equitable Access for All ; D.2. A Safer ASEAN that is able to Respond to all Health-related Hazards including Biological, Chemical, and Radiological Nuclear, and Emerging Threats.

**Action(s):** - APSC Blueprint: B.3.9.iii Promote studies by think-tanks, universities and other relevant academic institutions to identify new and transboundary challenges arising from non-traditional security issues; C.2.4.iii. Enhance cooperation between ASEAN and other multilateral organisations and fora on relevant international issues of common interest and concern.

- AEC Blueprint: B.4.34.vii. Promote programmes that enhance ASEAN participation in global and regional value chains and production networks, including programmes and joint promotions that attract leading technology firms to set up shop in region, develop industrial clusters and support industries, and improved physical and institutional connectivity within the region and with the rest of the world; C.1.48.iv. Transport facilitation: Establish an integrated, efficient and globally competitive

logistics and multimodal transportation system, for seamless movement of passengers by road vehicles and cargos within and beyond ASEAN;

D.4.75.i. Sustain the pace of economic growth among ASEAN Member States

D.4.75.vii. Identify development donors to provide technical and financial assistance for the MSMEs to focus on potential sectors, which allow them to effectively participate in regional and global value chain activities;

E.80. ii. Continue to review and improve ASEAN FTAs and CEPs to ensure that they remain modern, comprehensive, of high-quality and more responsive to the needs of businesses operating the production networks in ASEAN;

- ASCC Blueprint: B.2.xii. Promote a community that is healthy, caring, sustainable and productive, and one that practices healthy lifestyle resilient to health threats and has universal access to healthcare;

D.2.iii. Enhance institutional and human capacities and approaches to support the effective implementation of policies, strategies and programmes in preparing and responding to all health-related hazards and emerging threats.

Information below to be completed by the ASEAN Secretariat:

*Nature of Cooperation:* *Confidence Building*   
*Harmonisation*   
*Special Assistance*   
*Joint Effort*   
*Regional Integration / Expansion*

*Type of Intervention:* *Policy Initiative*   
*Establishment of Institutional Mechanisms*   
*Human Capacity Building*

**Project Duration:** < 6 months  6-12 months  > 12 months

**Proposed Commencement Date:** dd.10.2020

**Proposed Completion Date:** dd.10.2020

**Participating ASEAN Member States:** All

If not all (or not all in the same way), please indicate reason:

**Sponsoring ASEAN Body**

**Sectoral Committee/Main Body:** ASEAN Senior Officials' Meeting (ASEAN SOM)  
Meeting Number/Date: Ad-referendum endorsement on 18 September 2020

**Working Group/Sub-Committee:** N/A  
Meeting Number/Date: n/a

**Proponent's Name and Address:**

ASEAN Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Viet Nam, #2 Le Quang Dao street, Ha Noi, Viet Nam, email: asean.mfa.vn@gmail.com

Contact Person and Contact Details:

Mr. Ton Thanh Trung. Tel: +84 24 3799 5610

**Implementing Agency's Name and Address (if different from above):**

Contact Person and Contact Details:

**Date of Proposal Submission:** 9/22/2020

**Proposed Funding Source(s):**

ASEAN-ROK Cooperation Fund (AKCF): USD 62,656

In-kind contributions by Viet Nam: USD 20,955

**Proposed Project Budget (total in USD) seeking funding from AKCF: USD 62,656**

*Information below to be completed by the PCPMD of the ASEAN Secretariat*

**Recommendation of the ASEAN Secretariat**

Meeting No./Date : A note from the Director of External Relation Directorate on 24 September 2020, stating that the proposal is a recurring project with a note that it is of an acceptable quality and adheres to the ASEAN Secretariat.

Action :  Endorsed  Not Endorsed

**Approval of Committee of Permanent Representatives to ASEAN (CPR)**

Meeting No./Date : Ad-referendum endorsement on 12 October 2020

Action :  Endorsed  Not Endorsed

**2. PROJECT JUSTIFICATION, REGIONALITY AND BENEFICIARIES**

**(a) Current Problem**

- The APT has been one of the key ASEAN-led mechanisms that aim to accelerate regional integration and promote peace, stability and prosperity in the region. One of the main objectives of the APT is to serve as the main vehicle towards the long term goal of building an East Asian community with ASEAN as the driving force and play the central role.
- Since its inception in 1997, the APT has strengthened economic and financial cooperation, which are key focuses of the overall APT cooperation during the past 23 years, contributing to realising those aims and objectives.
- Since the beginning of the year 2020, the COVID-19 has exacerbated the already complex uncertainties and challenges in the global and regional economic landscapes. Rising trade tensions, the growing trend of protectionism, shifting of capital and investment flows in recent years, now coupled with the impacts of lockdown measures by countries to contain COVID-19, have posed greater risks to the economic and financial stability of many countries, stalling growth.
- Regional economies are facing serious disruptions, affecting regional supply chains, financial markets and human capital. As forecasted by the IMF in June, the global economy may record a growth rate of -4.9% this year.
- The Special APT Summit on the COVID-19 on 14 April 2020 adopted the Joint Statement, reaffirming commitments to keep markets open for trade and investment, maintain market stability, strengthen the resilience and sustainability of the regional supply chain, ensure that supply chains are more resilient, sustainable and less vulnerable to shocks, improve stability and resilience of the regional economy, stimulate economic development and financial resilience, and prevent potential risks of economic recession.
- It is imperative for the APT countries to (i) strengthen macro-economic surveillance and early warning capabilities to monitor and predict the incidence of economic and financial crises in East Asia; (ii) enhance regional capacities and responsiveness to external economic and financial shocks; and (iii) sustain the momentum for regional economic integration, in order to further strengthen their cooperation for economic and financial resilience in the face of emerging challenges.
- Under the 2020 theme of a Cohesive and Responsive ASEAN, Viet Nam as the Chair of ASEAN has utilized a responsive and innovative approach in the organization of ASEAN-related meetings through videoconference, which has helped carry forward the cooperation momentum despite the impacts of COVID-19. In addition to Leaders' and Ministers' level meetings, Viet Nam has

also successfully organized meetings at other levels through a hybrid format, where online participation involves participants from outside of Viet Nam, and offline participation involves participants based in Viet Nam.

- The 18<sup>th</sup> EAF is proposed to be organized in the format of a hybrid videoconference that enables participation through both online and offline methods.

### **Regionality**

This project is regional in nature. The Forum serves as a platform for representatives from the government, business and academic sectors as well as other participants from APT countries and regional institutions to exchange views and experience and best practices. The outcomes of this project will contribute to enhancing APT cooperation and lay the foundation for the East Asia community building efforts in the long run.

### **(b) Project History**

The EAF is one of the recommendations in the Final Report of the East Asian Study Group (EASG) adopted at the 6<sup>th</sup> APT Summit in Phnom Penh in November 2002. Since its inaugural meeting in the Republic of Korea in December 2003, the EAF has continued to serve as a value-added channel for participants from APT countries to exchange views on regional cooperation, so as to strengthen the momentum of East Asian cooperation towards building an East Asia community in the future.

EAF has already been convened 17 times, covering various topics, including energy and food security issues, deepening economic cooperation in East Asia, strengthening social and cultural cooperation in East Asia, enhancing connectivity in East Asia, the internal growth engine of East Asia, sustainable development, narrowing development gaps in rural and urban communities and revitalization of EAF, non-traditional security cooperation in East Asia, deepening East Asia regional integration, and 20 years of APT cooperation towards an East Asia community.

The 18<sup>th</sup> EAF entitled "**Strengthening the ASEAN Plus Three cooperation for economic and financial resilience in the face of emerging challenges**" aims to facilitate extensive and intensive discussion and promote the exchange of views and ideas on how to strengthen macro-economic surveillance and early warning capabilities to monitor and predict the incidence of economic and financial crises in East Asia, enhance regional capacities and responsiveness to external economic and financial shocks, sustain the momentum for regional economic integration, in order to further strengthen their cooperation for economic and financial resilience in the face of emerging challenges and lay groundwork for the long-term goal of establishing an East Asia community.

### **(c) Beneficiaries**

All participants from relevant stakeholders of APT countries will greatly benefit from the interaction and discussions of the Forum as well as possible recommendations for national implementation, which will contribute to further strengthening APT cooperation for the region's economic and financial resilience and towards the goal of East Asia community building.

At the same time, through this project, the role of EAF as a track 1.5 mechanism to facilitate exchange dialogue among policy-makers, academia and business sectors will also be enhanced, thereby further promoting capacity-building of APT participants.

Target participants:

- Online participants: each APT country and the ASEAN Secretariat could nominate 3 or more participants, those from APT countries should include representatives from the government, business and academic sectors;
- Offline participants: representing APT countries who are based in Viet Nam, from business communities, research institutes, relevant agencies and international/regional economic and financial organisations/representative offices in Viet Nam (around 90 participants).
- Representatives from the Embassies of the APT countries in Viet Nam: Ambassadors/High representatives; Diplomats or Trade/Commerce/Investment Counsellor/Attache from the Economic Section/Trade Office of the Embassies (around 30 participants).
- 6 moderators/rapporteurs and 12 panelists/speakers for the whole event.
- Supporting secretariat staff/supporting officers from Viet Nam as the host country.

### 3. PROJECT RESULTS

Results	Indicators (to measure the project's achievements)	Means of Verification
<p>Objective/ Outcome:</p> <p>The main objectives of this project are:</p> <p>a. To strengthen the important role of the EAF in continuing to serve as an exchange platform between government officials, think-tanks, academia and business circle, and providing recommendations to further deepen the momentum of APT cooperation towards the realisation of an East Asia community.</p> <p>b. To contribute to the strengthening of the APT cooperation for economic and financial resilience in the face of emerging challenges in East Asia.</p> <p>The expected output of the project is the conduct of the 18th EAF and a Summary Record of the Forum, which includes recommendations for APT countries on how to strengthen regional economic and financial resilience in</p>		



the face of emerging challenges, which will focus on strengthening macro-economic surveillance and early warning capabilities to monitor and predict the incidence of economic and financial crises in East Asia, enhancing regional capacities and responsiveness to external economic and financial shocks; and sustaining the momentum for regional economic integration.

The Summary Record of the Forum will be submitted through the APT Senior Officials Meeting and the APT Foreign Ministers Meeting to the ASEAN Plus Three Summit for notation.

<p><b>Results / Output:</b> <i>What results will the project lead to, for example any products and services, or changes that are relevant to the achievement of objective(s).</i> Conduct of the 18<sup>th</sup> EAF.</p>	<p>Dissemination of the Summary Record to all relevant stakeholders in APT countries and Submission of recommendations to APT Summit</p>	<p>Sharing of presentations, speeches, papers and other Forum's materials.</p>
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**Main Activities:**  
**The 18th EAF: Strengthening the APT cooperation for economic and financial resilience in the face of emerging challenges.**  
 The main activities of the Forum will be an Opening Ceremony, 3 Sessions and followed by a Concluding Session.  
 Session 1: Strengthen macro-economic surveillance and early warning capabilities to monitor and predict the incidence of economic and financial crises.  
 Session 2: Enhance regional capacities and responsiveness to external economic and financial shocks.  
 Session 3: Sustain the momentum for regional economic integration, in order to further strengthen their cooperation for economic and financial resilience in the face of emerging challenges.

*If applicable, the project can have more than one result/output in the columns below.*

<p><b>Results / Output 2:</b> Summary Record and Recommendations of the 18<sup>th</sup> EAF</p>	<p>Completion of Summary Record</p>	<p>Dissemination of the Summary Record to all relevant stakeholders in APT countries and Submission of recommendations to APT Summit</p>
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Summary Record and policy recommendations to be submitted through the APT Senior Officials Meeting and ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting to the APT Summit for notation. Selected recommendations will be synergized with APT cooperation work programmes in order to inject new impetus to regional integration, particularly the long-term goal of building an East Asia Community.

#### **4. PROJECT MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS**

##### **(a) Management Arrangements**

The ASEAN Department (ASEAN-Viet Nam), Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Viet Nam, is the project proponent and focal point for the arrangement and coordination of the project management and implementation.

As the project proponent and implementing agency, ASEAN-Viet Nam is responsible for the success of the project implementation. In this regard, it undertakes the following:

- Prepare necessary documents, including invitations, administrative arrangements, tentative programme, and all necessary activities to organize the Forum;
- Coordinate with relevant sectoral bodies and stakeholders to identify moderators, speakers and participants of the Forum;
- Prepare, with the assistance of the ASEAN Secretariat, the Summary Record of the Forum to be adopted by all participants;
- Prepare and ensure the submission of key recommendations through the regular ASEAN Plus Three Senior Officials' Meeting (APT SOM), APT Foreign Ministers Meeting, APT Summit;
- Submit a completion and financial report of the project to the ASEAN Secretariat within 60 days upon the project implementation.
- Return unexpended funds, if any, to the ASEAN-ROK Cooperation Fund within 90 days after the project has been implemented.

With the proposed hybrid format of the forum during this unprecedented time, the costs of organization of this forum would be different from a conventional face-to-face forum. A large part of the usual cost such as travel, accommodation and per-diem could be saved, and distributed to the operational budget such as rental of videoconferencing equipment, honorariums for speakers and moderators, etc. The meeting package and other costs remains mostly the same. The cost of meetings in this format would also be reduced compared to conventional meetings.

#### **(b) Human Resource Inputs**

ASEAN-Viet Nam will execute the project through the operation of its existing staff. The team of 30 members consists of: Program Manager, Project Officer, Substance and Public Relations Coordinator, Finance & Budget Office and IT Officer.

#### **(c) Monitoring and Evaluation Arrangements –**

ASEAN-Viet Nam as the project proponent, with the assistance of the ASEAN Secretariat, will prepare and circulate the Summary Record of the Forum for reviewing and adoption by participants at concluding session of the Forum. Project proponent ensures the submission of key recommendations of the Forum to the regular ASEAN Plus Three Senior Officials' Meeting (APT SOM), ASEAN Foreign Ministers and APT Summit subsequently. The project proponent will analyse the outcome of the project activities and progress, and prepare completion and financial report of the project to be submitted to the ASEAN Secretariat within 60 days upon the project completion for final evaluation.

### **5. PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY**

The outputs expected out of the project will be policy recommendations to be

submitted through the APT Senior Officials Meeting and ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting to the APT Summit for notation. Selected recommendations will be synergized with APT cooperation work programmes in order to inject new impetus to regional integration, particularly the long-term goal of building an East Asia Community.

**6. GENDER AND OTHER CROSS CUTTING ISSUES**

**(a) Gender**

The project is an unbiased forum, opening opportunities to participants from wide-ranging sectors from APT countries to attend regardless of gender.

**(b) Other Cross Cutting Issues**

The APT Leaders reaffirmed the importance of engaging all relevant stakeholders from various sectors in exchanging views and ideas on the long-term building of an East Asia Community. As one of the key platforms under APT process, EAF has been recognised as an important platform for interexchange between government officials, think-tanks, academia and business sector on various topics of discussion with a view to boosting regional integration, thereby contributing to the realization of an East Asia community-building.

The main topic of the 18th EAF is “**Strengthening the APT cooperation for economic and financial resilience in face of emerging challenges**”. Therefore, through this topic, it is expected that the recommendations of the project will give emphasis on the cross-cutting areas of strengthening regional cooperation for economic and financial resilience to better respond to emerging challenges in East Asia.

**7. POTENTIAL RISKS**

Risk / threat	Mitigation strategy
The underlying risk is a lack of funding and resources, which may limit to the planned activities.	The proponent will keep close contact and consultation with the ROK and concerned bodies to secure sufficient funding from the ASEAN-ROK Cooperation Fund (AKCF).
Any further challenge to the implementation of the project is probably insufficient nominations from APT countries.	Invitations will be circulated to APT countries well ahead of the Forum through various available channels to ensure that the invitations reach all relevant stakeholders.

**Annex 1 – Budget Proposal**

**Annex 2 – Indicative Work Plan**

**Annex 3 – Notation on Additional Supporting Documents**