

**AOIP VISION GROUP
RECOMMENDATIONS**
The 2nd AOIP Vision Group Conference
Bali, Indonesia, 26-28 February 2025

Preamble

1. We the members of the AOIP Vision Group are individuals from diverse backgrounds and various countries, including: Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, Thailand, the United Kingdom, the United States, Timor Leste, and Viet Nam.
2. In continuation of the inaugural AOIP Vision Group Conference in 2024, we have engaged in extensive discussions in our personal capacities since March 2024 to February 2025 in our respective Working Groups to identify potential pathways to strengthening the implementation of the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP).
3. With the aim of understanding the current context and challenges for the AOIP amidst our rapidly changing world and to provide policy recommendations for the realization of the AOIP, we have gathered in the 2nd AOIP Vision Group Conference, held on 26-28 February 2025 at Nusa Dua, Bali, Indonesia.
4. We reiterate the importance of the AOIP, as well as the principles it stands for: ASEAN Centrality; openness, transparency, inclusivity, a rules-based framework, good governance, respect for sovereignty, non-intervention in the internal affairs of states, support for existing cooperation frameworks, equality, mutual respect, mutual trust, mutual benefit, and respect for international law such as the UN Charter, the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), and other relevant UN treaties and conventions, the ASEAN Charter and various ASEAN treaties and agreements and the East Asia Summit (EAS) Principles for Mutually Beneficial Relations (2011).
5. Amid growing geopolitical rivalries, economic uncertainties, and evolving security threats, we acknowledge the strategic importance of the AOIP as a mechanism for transforming rivalry into cooperation and bridging trust deficits and thus building mutual confidence. We believe that for this purpose ASEAN needs to accelerate, invigorate, and expand its initiatives to implement the AOIP, especially in the four areas of cooperation identified in the ASEAN Leaders' Statement on the AOIP: (1) Maritime Cooperation; (2) Connectivity; (3) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); and (4) Economic and Other Possible Areas of Cooperation.
6. **On Maritime Cooperation**, we commend ASEAN's recognition of the importance of maritime spaces for the common economic prosperity, security, and environmental sustainability of its member states, as well as its recognition of the multi-faceted nature of maritime issues.
7. Despite our shared vision of the importance of regional maritime cooperation, ASEAN and its member states face significant challenges in closing the gap between the widely recognized need for advancing cooperation to secure a stable and

sustainable maritime environment and the ability to plan and implement effective and coordinated actions.

8. We believe that this gap stems from unresolved complex territorial and maritime disputes, lingering mistrust, intensifying strategic competition between major powers, uncertainty regarding the commitment of the major powers to provide, maintain and enhance international public goods, the multiplicity of non-traditional security threats, and capacity disparities and resource constraints among the ASEAN Member States (AMSs).
9. **On Connectivity**, we recognize that the implementation of the AOIP is still facing challenges across physical, institutional, people-to-people dimensions, as well as persistent challenges to the mobilization of resources to support connectivity in the region.
10. Strategic competition among major powers has led to fragmented initiatives, further intensifying detrimental competition, undermining ASEAN's Centrality, and threatening ASEAN members' agency. Additionally, emerging infrastructure security issues, as well as their politicization and securitization—such as in the cases of submarine data cables and pipelines—complicate efforts to build unified connectivity.
11. We note that there are limitations in the current Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC) 2025 aimed at unifying fragmented projects and facilitating regional and extra regional collaboration. ASEAN needs more effective mechanisms to coordinate and plan connectivity strategies and projects across the region.
12. We also observe that people-to-people connectivity initiatives are overly focused on activities rather than on specific goals, limiting their impact on issues like aging populations, social discrimination, and integration with broader connectivity projects.
13. We realize that ASEAN's capability to mobilize resources for connectivity initiatives is still hindered, limited, and cannot fully optimize diverse financing entities, such as multilateral development banks, sovereign wealth funds, policy banks, and private capital. This problem is compounded by weak coordination between various funding sources and initiatives.
14. **On SDGs, in light of the 2030 target, we recognize the urgency of expediting efforts to achieve the SDGs.** Despite the global community and ASEAN's commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, progress remains uneven. ASEAN countries face financing gaps, policy misalignment, and uneven prioritization of SDGs. In this regard, the AOIP can serve as another platform to facilitate collaboration among countries in the region to achieve SDGs targets by 2030.
15. **On Economic and Other Possible Areas of Cooperation**, increasing protectionism, the fragmentation of supply chains, proliferation of non-tariff barriers, and lack of standardization in trade and logistics threaten regional economic integration. At the same time, digital transformation remains uneven, with infrastructure gaps, cybersecurity risks, and technological disparities widening the socio-economic divides. The region also faces significant challenges in transitioning toward

sustainable and inclusive economies, in the face of climate change, extreme weather events, and dependence on fossil fuels that aggravate climate vulnerabilities. Additionally, demographic challenges such as low birthrates and aging populations in Northeast Asia and some Southeast Asian countries also pose a serious challenge.

16. To address these challenges, we offer a set of recommendations for consideration.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Maritime Cooperation

17. ASEAN could review the role and mandate of the ASEAN Maritime Forum (AMF) so it can take part in overseeing maritime issues, coordinating policies, and implementing the AOIP's maritime objectives, and also in coordinating with the various ASEAN bodies in the APSC as well as in the other two pillars of the ASEAN Community, namely the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) and the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC).
18. We strongly encourage ASEAN and China to expedite the conclusion of a legally binding Code of Conduct (COC) in the South China Sea that upholds international law, including UNCLOS, without affecting the rights of external parties as provided under international law.
19. ASEAN should consider developing a shared regional Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) platform to improve information-sharing and enhance transparency among AMSs, and enhance ASEAN's collective ability to monitor maritime activities, including illegal fishing, piracy, and environmental threats, in its waters and in the airspace above it.
20. ASEAN should increase their voluntary efforts to maintain international public goods, and at the same time, shift from being recipients of support to providers of assistance, with ASEAN as a group or some ASEAN countries contributing to capacity-building in such subregions as the South Pacific and Indian Ocean countries. Countries should be encouraged to participate in Indo-Pacific discussions on maritime security and cooperation based on adherence to international law, rules, and norms.
21. ASEAN and partners should canvas relevant experience, models and best practices and develop legal, regulatory and governance frameworks to pursue practical cooperation in maritime commons without prejudice to competing territorial and sovereignty claims. AMSs and partners should explore modalities for conducting joint marine scientific research and marine conservation efforts, especially for interconnected ecosystems like that of the South China Sea.
22. ASEAN and partners should cooperate to build capacity for responding to maritime security risks and threats like oil and chemical spills, ocean litter, and maritime accidents. AMSs should boost their capacity in such areas as search and rescue, disaster response and preparedness and mitigating the adverse impact of climate change on communities and economies dependent on the sea.

23. ASEAN should consider using the Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum (EAMF) to engage external partners in promoting constructive discussions on maritime challenges to ensure that ASEAN-centric multilateralism remains an important principle in maintaining strategic equilibrium in the maritime environment.
24. Given ASEAN's desire to play a central and strategic role in the Indo-Pacific, ASEAN and partners should consider establishing a track two dialogue forum on the AOIP under the EAS.

B. Connectivity

25. ASEAN should consider expanding connectivity vision beyond MPAC 2025 and integrating it into the ASEAN Community Vision 2045. ASEAN could adopt an integrated political and technical framework that guides connectivity infrastructure planning and enhances communication between ASEAN and its partners, prioritizing regional stability and ASEAN centrality.
26. ASEAN could develop multi-modal transport networks through binding ASEAN agreements. This is in line with the establishment of mechanisms to integrate regional transport networks, including rail, sea, and air.
27. ASEAN should upgrade the ASEAN Power Grid and boost cross-border renewable energy trade.
28. ASEAN should address emerging connectivity issues by focusing on the security and politicization of critical infrastructure like submarine data cables and pipelines to prevent risks associated with geopolitical tensions.
29. ASEAN should address issues in connectivity infrastructure by establishing new guidelines and enhancing existing guidelines or mechanisms including the G20 Principles for Quality Infrastructure Investment to tackle common controversies and enhance transparency in connectivity infrastructure construction.
30. ASEAN should consider extending AOIP connectivity strategy beyond ASEAN through harmonization with extra-regional mechanisms such as PIF, IORA, BIMSTEC, GCC, and African Union.
31. ASEAN should consider elevating the Asia Infrastructure Forum to a regional connectivity planning platform or to establish new regional connectivity planning platforms, which can function as strategic coordination hubs for regional connectivity planning.
32. ASEAN should create specialized working groups focusing on sectors such as digital connectivity to set clear rules and foster regional cooperation, addressing both technical and political challenges.
33. ASEAN should enhance consultation and dialogue with multilateral connectivity mechanisms beyond ASEAN.
34. ASEAN should promote pragmatic initiatives for people-to-people connectivity and design these initiatives to address demographic challenges to foster inclusivity.
35. ASEAN should align people-to-people connectivity initiatives with physical infrastructure projects to bridge skill gaps, address societal issues and promote

inclusive integration, ensuring that connectivity projects foster cooperation rather than conflict across communities and cultures.

36. ASEAN should strengthen transnational PPP frameworks by addressing gaps in regulatory frameworks to attract private capital and establish coordinated Public-Private Partnership models across the region, particularly those that can align with sub-regional initiatives like BIMP-EAGA to support development in underserved regions.
37. ASEAN should explore creative funding mechanisms by engaging with national development banks, Official Development Assistance (ODA) and multilateral financial institutions (e.g., ADB, AIIB) alongside private investments, harnessing blended finance and co-financing to de-risk private investments in projects, as well as establishing cost-benefit analysis frameworks at national/regional levels to guide project prioritization and equitable cost-sharing mechanisms.

C. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

38. ASEAN should establish regional priorities by identifying clusters of the various SDG priorities at sub-regional level among the AMSs, exploring the redirection of existing SDG financing mechanisms to meet emerging priorities and needs, identifying or assigning implementation or coordinating responsibilities for ‘shepherds’ of regional cooperation initiatives to achieve SDGs, as well as identifying and assessing the role of national and international/regional institutions.
39. ASEAN should give more attention to SDG priorities related to economic growth that promote the well-being of women, children, and youth, by identifying underfunded SDGs so that these could be served through alternative funding plans. They should assess the funding status (at national and regional levels) of SDG 8 on inclusive and sustainable economic growth, decent work, and employment, particularly 8.7, which calls for addressing forced labour and human trafficking, and for assessing and linking the social impacts and implications of implementing SDGs related to sustainable economic growth.
40. ASEAN should consider developing a collective position on SDG implementation concerns that it would present to the UN Second World Summit on Social Development scheduled for November 2025.
41. ASEAN should increase the participation of the private sector and civil society, by using the impact investing/ social entrepreneur route to attain SDGs and promote Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) development. This effort should focus on extant impact funds for relevant SDGs, reaching out to various Development Finance Institutions (DFIs) and private impact investors to attract them to regional cooperation for SDGs, and to further enhance the role of private sector financing for climate change and greenhouse gas emission reduction efforts (as GHG emissions also affect social indicators and progress)

42. ASEAN should strengthen private sector financing amid declining ODA by exploring new mechanisms such as a carbon tax, adopting the ASEAN taxonomy for sustainable finance, mapping the existing underutilized climate finance mechanism as well as encouraging technology transfers to complement financial mechanisms for green transitions.
43. ASEAN should monitor and mitigate the geopolitical impacts on climate finance and SDG commitments.
44. ASEAN should consider convening an ASEAN Impact Investment Conference to attract private sector engagement in SDG financing.

D. Economic and Other Possible Areas of Cooperation

45. ASEAN and partners should promote growth of supply chains by harmonizing standards and regulations, reducing non-tariff barriers (NTBs) thereby benefitting partners, as well as digitizing trade procedures through trade platforms (G2G or B2B) to realize the benefits from the broader scope of AOIP which includes countries from Southeast Asia, South Asia, North East Asia, Australia, New Zealand, and the Pacific Island countries.
46. ASEAN and partners should support policies that increase supply chain resilience, thereby enabling greater diversification of sources of input supply.
47. ASEAN and partners should enhance resilience in the supply chain by reviewing and upgrading regional economic integrations (AEC, ASEAN+1, RCEP, CPTPP, and IPEF), both their context and mechanisms, to explicitly promote supply chain resilience.
48. ASEAN should establish a working group of representatives from AMSs and ASEAN partners on supply chain to examine the potential causes of disruption such as an increase in protectionism, retaliatory tariffs, as well as a mechanism to mitigate the adverse effects of such disruptions.
49. ASEAN and partners should enhance skills development and reskilling, and strengthen education, especially STEM education.
50. ASEAN should expand the ASEAN Digital Economy Framework Agreement (DEFA) to include ASEAN Dialogue Partners.
51. ASEAN and partners should enhance cybersecurity, protection against cybercrime, and consumer protection by streamlining digital-related regulations and establishing a platform for members to share knowledge and experience in dealing with these issues.
52. ASEAN and partners should improve the digital ecosystem, including infrastructure and regulations, to promote innovation and solutions-based technology.
53. ASEAN should promote South-South cooperation and ensure financial stability and resilience through the aid agencies in Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and other countries. These should provide support to other developing countries in the Indo-Pacific region. This may be carried out in collaboration with agencies in developed countries. In addition, ASEAN and its partners in supporting the AOIP economies should utilize the Chiang Mai Initiative to ensure financial stability. It

- should also consider establishing a Regional Financing Facility (RFF) to respond to emergency assistance needs.
54. ASEAN and partners should enhance the role of MSMEs in Global Supply Chains (GSC) through capacity building and financial support, so these will become more sustainable and climate-friendly.
 55. ASEAN and partners should consider establishing a platform for sharing knowledge and best practices on nursing care and medical care in order to serve the aging society and relate this effort to the issue of migration in the region.
 56. ASEAN and partners should mitigate the effect of climate change through realistic energy transitions and promote adaptation through the development of climate-resilient infrastructure.
 57. ASEAN and partners should establish SOM/ SEOM-level High-Level Task Forces (HLTF) under the respective frameworks of the ASEAN Summit and East Asia Summit to accelerate the formulation and implementation of action plans for the realization of AOIP.
 58. ASEAN and partners should involve the private sector in creating a system to reflect the demands of industry in economic and industrial cooperation initiatives, including through the joint business councils between ASEAN-Business Advisory Council (ASEAN-BAC) and other business councils in the region.
 59. ASEAN and partners should establish an AOIP Support Fund to move forward with the AOIP-related projects in cooperation with multilateral development banks; aid agencies; and Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) investment funds; among others.

E. The Future of AOIP Vision Group Conference

60. We wish to continue the process of the AOIP Vision Group Conference and are open to the idea of a larger conference with public participation. We are convinced that this process serves as a platform for in-depth discussion about AOIP and helps maintain and strengthen the effectiveness of AOIP.