

The 13th ASEAN Connectivity Forum

10th December 2025, Westin Seoul Parnas

I. BACKGROUND

ASEAN has been working to become a deeply integrated and globally connected region. It has been reinforcing its competitive position by implementing the world's largest Free Trade Agreement (FTA), i.e., the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), covered approximately USD 2 trillion in trade in 2023, up almost 25% over pre-COVID pandemic levels, which accounts for more than half of ASEAN's total trade.¹ In 2024, ASEAN made substantial progress in enhancing regional connectivity through its continued cross-Pillar and cross-sectoral implementation of the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC) 2025 under Lao PDR's Chairmanship.

In 2025, the launch of the ASEAN Connectivity Strategic Plan 2026-2035 at the 46th ASEAN Summit in May marked another significant milestone in ASEAN's long-running journey for Connectivity under Malaysia's Chairmanship. Succeeding the MPAC 2025, it set out six Strategic Goals, operationalised through 14 Objectives and their respective Strategic Measures. Building upon the complementary and synergistic role of the MPAC 2025 within the Blueprint frameworks of the three ASEAN Community Pillars (Political-Security Community, Economic Community and Socio-Cultural Community), the transition towards ASEAN Community Vision 2045 elevates Connectivity to a Strategic Plan of equal importance, structured alongside these established Community Pillars, which provides a significant impetus for expanding the scope of participating nations to Indo-Pacific partners this year.

The Republic of Korea (ROK), as a reliable partner in connectivity, has been actively pursuing cooperation in enhancing ASEAN Connectivity. The ROK has been carrying out various projects to facilitate advancements in the strategic areas of MPAC 2025, including 'ASEAN-ROK Digital Innovation Flagship Project (KADIF)', 'Partnership for ASEAN-ROK Methane Action (PARMA)', and 'Inclusive Education Modules Program (IEM).' The Joint Statement on ASEAN-ROK Cooperation on the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP) adopted in 2023, the Joint Statement on the establishment of ASEAN-ROK Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP) adopted in 2024, and the CSP Plan of Action (POA) 2026-2030 adopted at the 28th ASEAN-ROK Foreign Ministers' Meeting also certify the facilitation of deeper connectivity in the region for the next 20 years.

In an effort to support ASEAN in enhancing connectivity and the strategic areas of the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC) 2025, the ASEAN-Korea Centre has been holding the ASEAN Connectivity Forum for twelve consecutive years since 2013. Last year, reflecting on the MPAC 2025, the AKC has successfully explored the efforts and achievements made by ASEAN in enhancing connectivity across its various pillars, under the theme of "Strengthening ASEAN Connectivity: Collaborative Pathways with Korea."

This year, the 13th ASEAN Connectivity Forum will continue to deepen ASEAN-Korea cooperation by addressing the challenges of coordinating and advancing diverse initiatives. This year's forum will focus on discussing the strategic goals of the newly adopted ASEAN Connectivity Strategic Plan (ACSP), which includes a new strategic area of Smart and Sustainable Urban Development. Embracing a whole-of-community approach, the forum will feature keynote speech, expert sessions, and panel discussions, incorporating insights from various stakeholders across diverse nations to foster a connected, sustainable, and resilient future.

¹ Remarks from the Secretary-General of ASEAN at the 'RCEP High-Level Dialogue on Economic and Trade Cooperation', 24 September 2024

II. OBJECTIVES

- To support ASEAN's connectivity efforts and promote Korea's engagement in ASEAN connectivity priority projects
- To prospect a way forward for ASEAN Connectivity in partnership between ASEAN and Korea for greater synergy

III. EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Increased understanding on ASEAN connectivity and its strategic areas beyond 2025
- Provision of a platform to support ASEAN-Korea cooperation and Korea's engagement in connectivity priority projects

IV. PROGRAM OUTLINE

1. DATE AND VENUE

- Date: 10th December 2025
- Venue: Seoul, Korea
- Format: Offline
- Theme: Catalyzing the Evolution of ASEAN Connectivity: Strategic Action Plan for the Decade

2. COOPERATING/SUPPORTING ORGANIZATIONS

- ASEAN Secretariat

3. PARTICIPANTS (TARGETS)

- ASEAN Secretariat, international organizations, academia, and relevant stakeholders
- ASEAN connectivity project owners from public and private sector
- Korean businesspeople

4. PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

- Keynote speech: ASEAN connectivity's latest development status, challenges of ASEAN connectivity, opportunities in ASEAN-ROK cooperation on connectivity
- Panel discussion: Address up-to-date issues related to ASEAN connectivity
- Expert presentations: Present up-to-date projects and provide insights to enhance ASEAN-Korea cooperation

5. CONTACTS

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PROGRAM (TBC)

Time	Program
Catalyzing the Evolution of ASEAN Connectivity: Strategic Action Plan for the Decade	
09:00 - 09:30 (30')	Registration
09:30 - 09:55 (25')	<p>Opening Ceremony</p> <p>Opening Remarks H.E. Kim Jae-shin, Secretary General, ASEAN-Korea Centre</p> <p>Welcome Remarks Mr. Lee Dong-gy, Director-General of ASEAN and Southeast Asia Affairs Bureau, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of ROK</p> <p>Congratulatory Remarks H.E. Tanee Sangrat, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Thailand to ROK, Country Coordinator for ASEAN-ROK Dialogue Relations</p>
09:55 - 10:10 (15')	Coffee Break
10:10 - 12:00 (110')	<p>Session 1. Connecting the Connectivities: Driving Regional Connectivity through Indo-Pacific Cooperative Partnership</p> <p>This session provides a platform for ASEAN’s Indo-Pacific partners – including the United States, China, regional middle powers such as Japan and Australia and Korea – to share their perspectives and initiatives in support of the AOIP.</p> <p>Moderator Dr. William Choong, Senior Fellow, ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute</p> <p>Discussants (5)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “Synchronizing U.S Private Sector’s Support with ASEAN’s Long-Term Connectivity Vision” Mr. Hai Pham, Senior Research Director, Policy and Strategic Initiatives, US-ASEAN Business Council - “ASEAN-Japan Cooperation in Connectivity: Co-creating Golden Opportunities for ASEAN Outlook on Indo-Pacific” Dr. Kei Koga, Associate Professor, Nanyang Technological University (NTU) - “Australia-ASEAN Integration and Connectivity – An Independent Australian Perspective” Mr. Connor McGuinness, Independent Consultant on ASEAN Economic Integration

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “Complementing the AOIP: ASEAN-China Pathways to Regional Linkages” Ms. Louise Loo, China Lead Economist, Oxford Economics - “Leveraging Korea’s Capability to Advance Digital-Driven ASEAN-Korea Connectivity and Collaborative Ecosystems: Challenges and Opportunities” Mr. Kim Doh-yeon, Executive Principal, National Information Society Agency
12:00 - 13:30 (90’)	Luncheon
13:30 - 15:00 (90’)	<p>Session 2. From Policy to Practice: Building Resilient and People-Centered ASEAN through Reconfiguration of Supply Chains and Coordination of Cross-sectoral Ecosystem</p> <p>This session is structured to move from the foundational enabler of connectivity – regulatory excellence – through the economic system (supply chains) and its practical execution (freight transport) and finally conclude with the human dimension. This order ensures a logical flow from “how” integration is made possible, to “what” system it supports, to “how” it is implemented, and ultimately to “why” it matters for a people-centered community.</p> <p>Moderator Mr. Salvador Buban, Senior Policy Fellow, ERIA</p> <p>Discussants (4)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - (Regulatory Excellence) “Setting the Foundation: Achieving Regulatory Excellence and Cooperation” Mr. Safwan Sulaiman, Assistant Director, Connectivity Division, ASEAN Secretariat - (Supply Chain) “Tangible Blueprint: Enhancing Supply Chain Resilience and Integration” Dr. La Mi-ryeong, Research Fellow, Korea Institute for International Economic Policy (KIEP) - (Transport for Seamless Logistics) “The Physical Engine: Upgrading Freight Transport Connectivity” Dr. Atit Tippichai, Assistant Professor in Urban and Regional Planning Programme, King Mongkut’s Institute of Technology Ladkrabang - (Labor and Talent Mobility)

	<p>“Labor and Talent Mobility: The Human Element on Fostering Greater People Mobility”</p> <p>Dr. Songheang Ai, Director of Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization Regional Centre for Technical Education Development (SEAMEO TED)</p>
15:00 - 15:10 (10’)	Coffee Break
15:10 - 16:40 (90’)	<p>Session 3. From Digitalization to Environmental Sustainability: Shaping Innovative and Dynamic Future through the Twin Transitions</p> <p>This session is designed to progress from establishing the essential digital foundation – cybersecurity and regulatory trust – toward showcasing its practical impact through regional payment connectivity, before shifting to the broader imperative of climate action. It then concludes with smart and sustainable urban and rural development, where the digital and green transitions visibly converge to shape ASEAN’s future communities.</p> <p>Moderator</p> <p>Dr. Hwang Jun-seok, Director of Seoul National University Global R&DB Center (SNU GRC)</p> <p>Discussants (4)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - (Cybersecurity and Digital Policy) “Towards a Resilient Cyberspace in Southeast Asia” Ms. Citra Nasruddin, Program Director, Tech For Good Institute - (Regional Payment Connectivity) “Bridging Borders: Seamless Payments as the Catalyst for a Unified ASEAN” Mr. Toan Long Quach, Associate Economist, Macro-Financial Research Department, AMRO - (Climate Action) “The Green Imperative: Fostering Climate Action in a Connected ASEAN” Mr. Ryu Hak-seok, Director of Partnerships and Governance, GGGI - (Urban and Rural Development) “The Sweet Spot of Convergence: Leveraging the Twin Transition for Smart and Sustainable Urban Development” Ms. Lim Hui Yi, Senior Director, Economic Advisory Team, EY

16:40 -	Closing
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