

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

CONFIDENTIAL

Advisory Services on the Implementation of Independent Advisory Panel (IAP) Work Plan	Project number/ cost centre: S-011377-046
	Tender number 10038726

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0. List of abbreviations

ACCMSME	ASEAN Coordinating Committee on Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises
AEC	ASEAN Economic Community
ASOEN	ASEAN Senior Officials on Environment
BMZ	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
COSTI	Committee of Science, Technology, and Innovation
FG-CE	Focal Group on Circular Economy
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH
IAP	Independent Advisory Panel
SEOM	Senior Economic Officials Meeting
SFF CBAM	Study and Expert Fund Navigating the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism
SOME	Senior Officials Meeting on Energy
SOM-AMAF	Senior Officials Meeting on ASEAN Ministers on Agriculture and Forestry
STOM	Senior Transport Officials Meeting
TRACE	Promoting Trade-related Aspects for Circular Economy in ASEAN
WC-CMD	Working Committee on Capital Market Development

1. Context

The Deutsche Gesellschaft für internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH is implementing multiple measures in ASEAN on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). One of the key areas is strengthening the circular economy by implementing relevant policies, trade and investment agreements, and sectoral strategy plans together with private sector and public partners. Against this backdrop, the “Promoting Trade-related Aspects for Circular Economy in ASEAN” (TRACE) project has been implemented since May 2025 until June 2029 to improve trade-related aspects of the circular economy by relevant public and private sector actors in the ASEAN region. With regard to the circular economy, the Study and Expert Fund (SEF) Navigating the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) was also commissioned on 1 June 2026. It will be implemented in close cooperation with the TRACE project to support the Independent Advisory Panel (IAP) under the Focal Group on Circular Economy (FG-CE) for the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC).

The FG-CE was established in 2023 and serves as a coordinating sectoral body established under the Committee of the Whole for the AEC to ensure timely and impactful implementation of the Framework, manage engagement with stakeholders and partners, and outline the next phase of Framework implementation. It draws participation from eight sectoral bodies, namely, Senior Economic Officials Meeting (SEOM), Senior Officials Meeting on Energy (SOME), Senior Transport Officials Meeting (STOM), Senior Officials Meeting on ASEAN Ministers on Agriculture and Forestry (SOM-AMAF), ASEAN Senior Officials on Environment (ASOEN), Committee of Science, Technology, and Innovation (COSTI), ASEAN Coordinating Committee on Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (ACCMSME), and Working Committee on Capital Market Development (WC-CMD).

The IAP was established by the FG-CE in 2025, following the adoption of its Terms of Reference (ToR), to provide industry and practitioner perspectives on the prioritisation, design, and impact of initiatives under the Framework. The IAP comprises of private sector representatives, business associations, and knowledge partners, and its Work Plan for 2026–2027 was endorsed by the FG-CE intersessionally on 2 March 2026.

The proposed Work Plan for the IAP during the year of 2026-2027 appears as follows:

Timeline	Activities/ Proposed Topics	Participating Members of the IAP
August - September 2026 (indicative)	Indicative thematic virtual interface with FG-CE*	
	Energy Session - 20 August 2026 (indicative date) Virtual interface on alignment for sustainable energy system requirements, energy leasing, as well as harmonise specialised inspection process for energy intensive products. The Interface will incorporate environmental safeguards discussion to assess resource efficiency, lifecycle	Technical lead/Champion: ASEAN Centre for Energy ASEAN Business Advisory Council <i>*The members are expected to lead thematic</i>

	assessments, and environmentally sound management of secondary materials, as well as circularity considerations for clean energy technologies.	<i>discussions and invite relevant private sector beyond members to enrich the discussion</i>
	Agriculture Session – 8 September 2026 (indicative date) Virtual interface on voluntary circular economy labelling/eco-labelling standards for relevant agricultural products, voluntary eco-label standards recognition, as well as standards and requirements on packaging and extended shelf-life of agricultural products. The Interface will incorporate environmental safeguards discussion to assess resource efficiency, lifecycle assessments, and environmentally sound management of secondary materials.	• Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research • Southeast Asia Recycling Coalition • ASEAN Circular Economy Business Alliance <i>*The members are expected to lead thematic discussions and invite relevant private sector beyond members to enrich the discussion</i>
	Transportation Session – 28 September 2026 (indicative date) Virtual interface on reverse logistics and harmonisation of standards in secondary materials for transportation sectors. The Interface will incorporate environmental safeguards discussion to assess resource efficiency, lifecycle assessments, and environmentally sound management of secondary materials.	• ASEAN Federation Forwarders Association • ASEAN Circularity Coalition – EU-ASEAN Business Council • ASEAN Bio-Circular-Green Economy Network <i>*The members are expected to lead thematic discussions and invite relevant private sector beyond members to enrich the discussion</i>

August – September 2026	The IAP will provide policy papers to the FG-CE intersessionally to provide insights on effective implementation of the Framework and to propose new initiatives under the Implementation Plan of the CE Framework for the AEC.	All members of IAP
November – December 2026	At the 4 th FG-CE, the members of the FG-CE to note and discuss the recommendations in the IAP's policy papers for the purpose of reviewing and updating the Implementation Plan of the Framework for the CE for the AEC.	
January – February 2027	The IAP to exchange views at the 5 th Meeting of the FG-CE, focusing on the unimplemented initiatives from 2026–2027, and provide preliminary insights/advice to facilitate their effective implementation.	Representatives of IAP to brief and all members of IAP to attend
March – July 2027	Based on the outcomes of 5 th FG-CE, the IAP is welcome to submit project proposal outlining resource support considerations for initiatives that remain unimplemented in 2026–2027.	All members of IAP

*The three sessions—Energy, Agriculture, and Transportation—have been agreed by FG-CE. However, additional topics outside from these three topics may be raised during the interface meetings.

GIZ has been invited to serve as Secretariat to the IAP, providing substantive, logistical and coordination support to enable IAP to fulfil its advisory mandate effectively. In doing so, GIZ will also coordinate closely with the ASEAN Integration Monitoring Directorate (AIMD) of the ASEAN Secretariat, which provide technical and administrative support to the FG-CE, to ensure coherence between IAP activities and FG-CE processes, and to facilitate structured communication between the two bodies.

To this end, GIZ seeks a consulting team to support the delivery of the Secretariat's functions and implement the IAP's agreed workplan under the FG-CE.

2. Tasks to be performed by the contractor

The contractor is responsible for providing the following services:

1. Drafting of white paper / policy brief

Based on the above IAP work plan 2026 – 2027, the contractor should support GIZ to consolidate substantive inputs and recommendations from IAP sectoral sessions into structured post-session reports and policy briefs, for review and endorsement by IAP members, prior to submission to the FG-CE. Each policy brief shall be developed for each thematic sector and then compiled into a single consolidated brief for ministerial level consideration. An additional policy brief on the potential of further sectors will be compiled to widen the approach of the CE Framework for AEC. The briefs should be structured to

present practical, implementation-oriented insights that support the FG-CE's consideration of the circular economy framework and its associated Work Programme. The Contractor will draft the policy brief in consultation with GIZ and the Champion for each sectoral session.

The brief shall include, as appropriate:

- a. A summary of the key issues and opportunities identified during sectoral sessions;
- b. Concrete recommendations for FG-CE consideration, including proposed new initiatives, adjustments to existing initiatives, or areas warranting further technical study;
- c. Identification of specific areas where private sector collaboration, co-investment, or technical assistance could advance the implementation of the Framework;
- d. Proposals for how the private sector may serve as a technical arm and vehicle for implementation of relevant initiatives under the Framework, including through partnership arrangements, pilot programmes, or capacity support to ASEAN Member States.

The policy brief will be presented by IAP representatives at the relevant FG-CE meeting, for the FG-CE to note, deliberate upon, and determine appropriate follow-up. Through this process, the IAP's outputs are intended to inform the FG-CE's decisions on implementation priorities and to position the private sector as a strategic partner in the operationalisation of the Framework. The policy brief process thereby serves as the primary mechanism through which the IAP's advisory function translates into concrete policy engagement, reinforcing the complementary roles of the FG-CE as a policy body and the IAP as a practitioner-led technical resource.

2. Overall support to the implementation of the IAP Work Plan

2.1 Substantive and Strategic Facilitation

- Support GIZ in curating the thematic agenda for IAP meetings and sectoral sessions in consultation with the ASEAN Secretariat and the Chair of the FG-CE, to ensure that discussions are aligned with the priorities of the Framework and the IAP Work Plan
- Proposing expert inputs and background materials on thematic areas covered by the IAP Work Plan, including energy, agriculture, and transportation, as well as cross-cutting issues such as environmental safeguards, lifecycle assessments, and resource efficiency
- Support facilitation of sessions (as needed and agreed with GIZ) to ensure structured, outcome-oriented deliberations and clear action points
- Identifying and proposing relevant thematic topics for discussion, in consultation with IAP members and the FG-CE, to ensure that sessions remain responsive to evolving regional and global circular economy developments.

2.2 Session and Meeting Management

- Together with GIZ, coordinating the scheduling, notification, and logistics of all IAP meetings, sectoral sessions, and interfaces with the FG-CE, in both virtual and in-person formats.
- Preparing meeting agendas, briefing notes, background documents, and guiding questions for circulation to IAP members and relevant stakeholders in advance of sessions.
- Recording the proceedings of IAP meetings and sectoral sessions, and preparing accurate and concise session summaries for circulation and consultation by participants.

2.3 Coordination and Communication

- When needed, support GIZ in coordinating administrative and logistical matters related to IAP activities with IAP members, relevant sectoral bodies and external partners.

2.4 Documentation and Reporting

- Consolidating the substantive inputs and recommendations arising from sectoral sessions into structured post-session reports and policy briefs, for review and endorsement by IAP members prior to submission to the FG-CE;
- In coordination with GIZ, maintaining a repository of IAP documents, including session summaries, policy briefs, technical notes, and correspondence, for the reference of the IAP, the FG-CE, and the ASEAN Secretariat;
- Preparing any other documentation as may be requested by the FG-CE or the ASEAN Secretariat in connection with IAP activities.

IAP meetings and sectoral sessions will be held three to five times per year, in hybrid, or in-person format in one of the ASEAN Member States, as agreed by GIZ, the IAP, and the ASEAN Secretariat. If a session is held in person, the contractor shall be available to attend on site, in consultation and coordination with GIZ.

3. Develop project proposals for unimplemented initiatives

- During the 5th meeting of the FG-CE, the consultant may support GIZ in facilitating exchange between IAP to organise insights/advice focusing on unimplemented initiatives from 2026 – 2027
- Prepare project proposals outlining resource support consideration for IAP initiatives that remain unimplemented in 2026-2027

4. Facilitate ad-hoc requests in relation to the implementation of IAP Work Plan

- Coordinate with the Mid-Term Review (MTR) expert team to obtain relevant inputs, data, and findings from the MTR of AEC and if feasible to integrate relevant insights into IAP agendas.

The consultant should treat all materials and deliberations of the IAP as confidential and shall not disclose such information to external parties without the prior agreement of the FG-CE, IAP, the ASEAN Secretariat, and GIZ.

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

Milestones/process steps/partial services	Deadline/place/person responsible
Preparation, implementation, and reporting of thematic interface (Energy, Agriculture, Transportation) sessions	3rd week of August – end of September 2026, hybrid or in-person in ASEAN REGION Countries (specific location is to be announced).
Submission of the draft white papers/policy briefs	27 August – 5 October 2026
Finalisation of the white papers/policy briefs based on inputs from GIZ, ASEAN Secretariat, IAP, and FG-CE	2 nd Week of October – 31 December 2026
Submission of project proposal on unimplemented initiatives for FG-CE	January - July 2027

Period of assignment: from August 2026 until 31 August 2027.

The timeline is to accommodate further revisions or delays in the implementation and subject to the actual commencement of the assignment.

3. Concept

In the tender, the tenderer is required to show *how* the objectives defined in Chapter 2 (Tasks to be performed) 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 draw up a **personnel assignment plan** with explanatory notes that lists all the experts proposed in the tender; the plan includes information on assignment dates (duration and expert days) and locations of the individual members of the team complete with the allocation of work steps as set out in the schedule.

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 3.1 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. Personnel concept

The tenderer is required to provide personnel who are suited to filling the positions described, on the basis of their CVs (see Chapter 7), the range of tasks involved and the required qualifications.

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

Company Profile

- A firm consultancy/research institutions/think tank relevant entity based in ASEAN Member States with a high recognition and credibility record in the economic policy, sustainability, circular economy, and private sector in ASEAN level are desirable; 5 years of experience in this sector;

- Experience in developing high-level policy documents and recommendations;
- 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 private sectors and business associations;
- Demonstrated ability to facilitate dialogue and establish relationships with various stakeholders particularly ASEAN mid to senior government officials

Team leader

Tasks of the team leader

- Overall responsibility for the contractor's advisory packages (strategy, quality and deadlines)
- Ensuring high-quality content for the policy briefs and consistency between each sectors (no duplication, complementary recommendations and clear responsibilities/follow-up).
- Coordinating closely with GIZ, ASEAN Secretariat, FG-CE and IAP members in building and managing a clear work and communication plan (milestones for meetings, briefs, reviews, submissions).
- Curation of relevant thematic agenda in coordination with GIZ, ASEAN Secretariat, FG-CE Chair and IAP Champion.
- Resource and task management in the advisory team (responsibilities, ToR alignment, capacity planning).
- Attendance coordination for virtual, hybrid and face-to-face formats and representation of the team on site after consultation with GIZ.

Qualifications of the team leader

- Education/training **(2.1.1)**: University qualification: Master's degree in economic policy, environmental management, sustainability, energy, agriculture, transportation, international relations, development
- Language **(2.1.2)**: C-2 level / Fluency in English (written and oral)
- General professional experience **(2.1.3)**: 10 years of professional experience in the political economy sector with a focus on policy development and/or private sector engagement
- Specific professional experience **(2.1.4)**: 5 years of professional experience in circular economy, sustainable energy, sustainable agriculture, sustainable transportation, and other relevant fields in relation to sustainability and circular economy.
- Leadership/management experience **(2.1.5)**: 5 years of management/leadership experience as project team leader
- Regional experience **(2.1.6)**: 5 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)**: 4 years of experience in economic DC projects
- Other **(2.1.8)**: Proven track record in drafting policy briefs/white papers, including synthesis of technical inputs into clear, implementation-oriented recommendations. Please submit 1 writing sample (policy briefs/white papers) as attachment of the CV.

Short-term expert pool with 3 members

For the technical assessment, an average of the qualifications of all specified members of the expert pool is calculated. Please send a CV for each pool member (see below Chapter 7 Requirements on the format of the bid) for the assessment.

Tasks of the short-term expert pool

- General management and technical backstopping of all activities, incl. planning, quality, and deadlines,
- Day-to-day liaison with GIZ for the planning, implementation, and reporting of the thematic interface (Energy, Agriculture, Transportation) sessions
- Prepare post-event reports from IAP meetings and support team leader in the development of policy briefs and (if applicable) proposals for FG-CE
- Ensuring that feedback from GIZ, ASEAN Secretariat, and IAP is integrated on the policy briefs, post-event reports/minutes of meetings, agenda, and etc
- Delivering documents in GIZ/ASEAN formats in a timely manner
- Regular coordination with MTR AEC consultant team to collect relevant data/insights and to integrate it into IAP agendas or briefs
- Implementation and delivery of ad hoc requests related to IAP work plan

Qualifications of the short-term expert pool

- Education/training **(2.6.1)**: Master's degree in economic policy, environmental management, sustainability, sustainable energy, sustainable agriculture, sustainable transport, international relations, development
- Language **(2.6.2)**: C-2 Level / Fluency in English (written and oral)
- General professional experience **(2.6.3)**: 5 years of professional experience in the political economy sector, particularly on private sector engagement
- Specific professional experience **(2.6.4)**: 4 years in circular economy sector, sustainable energy, sustainable agriculture, sustainable transport, and similar fields with strong relation to sustainability
- Regional experience **(2.6.5)**: 4 years of experience in projects in ASEAN region, of which 3 years in projects in selected ASEAN countries
- Development Cooperation (DC) experience **(2.6.6)**: 2 years of experience in DC projects
- Other **(2.6.7)**: Strong technical writing skills to prepare concise, high-quality post-event reports

The tenderer must provide a clear overview of all proposed short-term experts and their individual qualifications.

5. Costing requirements

Assignment of personnel and travel expenses

As indicated above, IAP meetings and sectoral sessions will be held three to five times per year, in hybrid, or in-person format in one of the ASEAN Region Countries, as agreed by GIZ, the IAP, and the ASEAN Secretariat. If a session is held in person, the contractor shall be available to attend on site, in consultation and coordination with GIZ.

Accommodation, return economy flight, and airport transfers fare reimbursed as detailed in the specification of inputs below against evidence.

All business travel must be agreed in advance by the officer responsible for the project.

Sustainability aspects for travel

GIZ has undertaken an obligation to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (CO₂ emissions) caused by travel. When preparing your tender, please incorporate options for reducing emissions, such as selecting the lowest-emission booking class (economy) and using means of transport, airlines and flight routes with a higher CO₂ efficiency. For short distances, travel by train (second class) or e-mobility should be the preferred option.

CO₂ emissions caused by air travel must be offset. GIZ specifies a budget for this, through which the carbon offsets can be settled against evidence.

There are many different providers in the market for emissions certificates, and they have different climate impact ambitions. The [Development and Climate Alliance \(German only\)](#) has published a [list of standards \(German only\)](#). GIZ recommends using the standards specified there.

Specification of inputs

Fee days	Number of experts	Number of days per expert	Total	Comments
Designation of TL/key expert/short-term expert pool	1	30	30	Lump sum, Timesheet required
Short-term expert pool	3	30	90	Interim 1 – October 2026 1. Preparation, implementation, and reporting of thematic interface (Energy, Agriculture, Transportation) sessions Team Leader: 6 Short term expert pool: (3 experts x 6 = 18) 2. Submission of the draft white papers/policy briefs Team Leader: 6 Short term expert pool: (3 experts x 6 = 18) Final payment - August 2027 3. Finalisation of the white papers/policy briefs based on inputs from GIZ, ASEAN Secretariat, IAP, and FG-CE Team Leader: 9

				Short term expert pool: (3 experts x 9 = 27) 4. Submission of project proposal on unimplemented initiatives for FG-CE Team Leader: 9 Short term expert pool: (3 experts x 9 = 27)
Travel expenses	Quantity	Number per expert	Total	Comments
Overnight allowance in country of assignment	9	2	18	against evidence. Quantity: Up to 3 round trips to ASEAN REGION countries (specific countries to be confirmed) to attend IAP meetings and sectoral sessions and estimated at 3 nights per trip. Each trip should only be attended by up to 2 experts
Transport	Quantity	Number per expert	Total	Comments
International flights to ASEAN Member States (Destination country is to be confirmed)	3 (return flights)	2	6 (return flights)	against evidence. Travel to ASEAN Region Countries (specific countries to be confirmed) to attend IAP meetings and sectoral sessions. Quantity: Up to 3 return economy flights
CO₂ compensation for air travel Link to working aid and table for determining the budget and Guidance for GIZ service providers on avoiding, reducing and offsetting GHG emissions on setting the budget.	3	2	6	A fixed budget of EUR 240 is earmarked for settling carbon offsets against evidence for 2 experts x 3 return flights.
Travel expenses (train/car) Airport transfer	12	2	24	against evidence. Transfer to/from airport in home country and country of assignment.

				Quantity: 2 experts × 3 round trips × 4 transfers/round trip = 24 airport transfers total.
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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. As mentioned above, the bidder should submit 1 writing samples (policy briefs/white papers) as attachment of the CV.

Please calculate your financial tender based exactly on the parameters specified in Chapter 5 Quantitative requirements. The contractor is not contractually entitled to use up the days, trips, workshops or budgets in full. The number of days, trips and workshops and the budgets will be contractually agreed as maximum limits. The specifications for pricing are defined in the price schedule.