



Advancing ASEAN:

A STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN SUPPORTING THE PHILIPPINES' 2026 CHAIRSHIP

PREPARED BY:

*US-ASEAN Business Council in partnership with the
ASEAN Business Advisory Council - Philippines (ASEAN-BAC)*



US-ASEAN BUSINESS COUNCIL Strategic Action Plan for the Philippines' 2026 ASEAN Chairship

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Download the Discussion Papers here: usasean.org/strategic-action-plan

USABC Philippine Office

E: phoffice@usasean.org

A: 5F (Acceler8 – Private Suite 1) PHINMA Plaza
39 Plaza Dr, Rockwell Center, Makati City, 1210 Metro Manila

W: usasean.org

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About the US-ASEAN Business Council

For more than 40 years, the US-ASEAN Business Council (USABC) has been the premier advocacy organization for U.S. corporations operating within the dynamic Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), serving as the leading voice of the U.S. private sector in promoting mutually beneficial trade and investment relationships between the United States and Southeast Asia. USABC believes that opening and investing in efficient, resilient, and competitive markets are critical to the continued growth of its member companies and innovation and job creation in the United States and Southeast Asia. ASEAN now represents more than 650 million people and a combined GDP of USD 2.8 trillion across Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Timor Leste, Thailand, and Vietnam. USABC's members include many of the world's largest American multinational corporations in numerous industries and range from those that have been working in Southeast Asia for more than a century to newcomers entering Asia's most dynamic regional economic community. USABC has its headquarters in Washington, D.C. and offices in New York, Bangkok, Hanoi, Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur, Manila, and Singapore.

Over the next decade, by virtue of its growing middle class, infrastructure development and strategic position at the center of Pacific trade routes, ASEAN's eleven members will enjoy growth rates among the most robust in the world. With more than 65 percent of ASEAN's population under the age of 35, ASEAN's demographic trends will continue to fuel growth well into the future. USABC is convinced on strategic grounds that America's economic vitality depends on its success in the Asia-Pacific region, and ASEAN plays a central role.

USABC is the only U.S.-based organization recognized in the ASEAN charter as a supporting organization of ASEAN. In service to its members, USABC leads major business missions to all eleven ASEAN countries, convenes multiple meetings with ASEAN heads of state and ministers and is the only U.S. organization to be given the privilege to raise member company concerns in consultations with the ASEAN Economic, Energy, Finance, Transport, Travel & Tourism, and Forestry & Agriculture Ministers, as well as the ASEAN Customs Directors-General, at their annual meetings.

USABC's committees serve as umbrellas for its membership's initiatives at both the local and regional level. The committees include one for every ASEAN country, ASEAN, APEC, Customs, Aerospace, Defense & Security, Energy, Financial Services, Food & Agriculture, Health & Life Sciences, Information & Communications Technology, Supply Chains, Travel & Tourism, and Sustainability.

About the ASEAN Business Advisory Council

The ASEAN Business Advisory Council (ASEAN-BAC) was established in 2001 to serve as the region’s apex private sector advisory body, providing essential business insights and recommendations to ASEAN Leaders. As the primary platform for private sector engagement, the Council advocates for economic cooperation and plays a pivotal role in advancing the ASEAN integration agenda. Each ASEAN member government appoints three high-level CEOs to the Council—including a dedicated representative for small and medium-sized enterprises—to ensure a diverse and influential business voice in regional policy.

The Council’s mandate is driven by a commitment to inclusive growth and the modernization of the regional economy. By focusing on critical areas such as MSME empowerment, digital transformation, and sustainable development, ASEAN-BAC works to bridge the gap between government policy and the practical needs of the marketplace. Through its various working groups and legacy projects, it addresses cross-border challenges, promotes circular economy practices, and facilitates the adoption of emerging technologies like AI to ensure that the region remains globally competitive and resilient.

In 2026, ASEAN-BAC Philippines assumes the Chairship under the leadership of Chair Joey Concepcion, alongside members George Barcelon and Michael Tan. Guided by the theme “Advancing Prosperity for All,” the Philippine leadership focuses on four strategic pillars: People, Planet, Platform, and Productivity. To turn these goals into action, the Council is spearheading tangible deliverables such as the ASEAN Food Security Alliance (AFSA) and ASEAN Business and Investment Summit (ABIS), alongside policy papers and recommendations presented directly to ASEAN Leaders to shape the economic landscape toward ASEAN 2045.

Executive Summary

1. Strategic Context

The Philippines holds the ASEAN Chairship in 2026 under the theme, *Navigating Our Future, Together*, at a time of compounding geopolitical and economic pressures. The 2026 Middle East conflict and the closure of the Strait of Hormuz have sharpened the urgency of the reforms that this Strategic Action Plan (SAP) proposes. ASEAN is projected to be the world’s fourth largest regional economy, home to nearly 700 million people and a combined Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of USD 2.8 trillion. However, its growth potential continues to be constrained by fragmented governance, uneven digital adoption, food and healthcare system vulnerabilities, and nascent AI governance frameworks.

This SAP sets out USABC’s consolidated private sector proposals, developed in partnership with ASEAN-BAC Philippines and shaped by exchanges with the Government of the Philippines, across five strategic pillars. It is grounded in five Discussion Papers, each taken up in a dedicated Roundtable Discussion held from March to April 2026 with government agencies, development partners, and civil society. The SAP is designed not to complete the full agenda within a single Chairship year, but to establish institutional foundations and produce technical groundwork that Singapore’s 2027 and Thailand’s 2028 Chairships can build on.

2. Vision and Strategic Objectives

Strategic Vision: “An ASEAN that is resilient against global disruptions, inclusive in the benefits of its growth, and future-ready in its systems — where private sector innovation and public sector leadership converge to deliver shared prosperity across all Member States.”

No.	Strategic Objective	Pillar
01	Strengthen Food Systems and Environmental Resilience	Sustainability and Food Security
02	Build Crisis-Resilient, People-Centered Health Systems	Healthcare
03	Modernize and Secure Regional Supply Chains	Sustainable Supply Chains and Logistics
04	Accelerate Inclusive Digital Transformation and Workforce Development	Digital Economy and Workforce Development
05	Establish Responsible AI Governance as a Regional Competitive Advantage	Artificial Intelligence

3. Proposed Implementation Plan by Pillar

The following tables summarize the flagship projects across five pillars with their descriptions, key ASEAN engagement windows, and proposed 2026 deliverables. The 48th ASEAN Summit (May 8–9) marks the political endorsement transition point. Active implementation runs across Phase 2 (June–September: technical groundwork at ASEAN

sectoral meetings) and Phase 3 (October–November: consolidation and Singapore/Thailand handover).

Pillar 1 — Sustainability and Food Security

Proposed Project	Description	Key ASEAN Meeting	Proposed 2026 Deliverable
P1.1 ASEAN Health and Agriculture Nexus Initiative	Structured regional dialogue platform integrating policymaking across health, agriculture, food systems, and sustainability, with urgent workstream on fertilizer input diversification and buffer stock frameworks	June (TBC): 2nd Capacity Building Workshop on Regenerative Agriculture; Oct 26–30: 47th AMAF	Concept note endorsed by SOM-AMAF; joint workplan with SOMHD; fertilizer vulnerability assessment initiated
P1.2 ASEAN Circular Health Economy Platform	Coordination forum to harmonize extended producer responsibility (EPR) frameworks and mobilize investment in recycling and materials recovery across healthcare and food-and-beverage value chains	Sep (TBC): ASEAN Regional Dialogue on Circular Economy; Aug 26–27: 50th HLTF-EI	EPR harmonization concept note; ASEAN Circular Economy Framework Agreement co-sponsors identified; Global Plastics Treaty linkage proposal
P1.3 ASEAN Sustainable Supply Chain Resilience Initiative	Traceability and standards framework for food, agriculture, and healthcare supply chains incorporating crisis-resilience provisions, alternative sourcing frameworks, and climate-vulnerability assessments	June 17–18: 24th AFSIS Focal Points Meeting; June (TBC): 46th AFSRB Meeting	Food supply chain traceability scoping study; climate vulnerability map of logistics infrastructure; AFSRB–USABC joint workplan on buffer stocks
P1.4 ASEAN Nutrition Security and Health Promotion Collaborative	Regional nutrient profiling standards, mutual recognition frameworks, and health-promoting food environment toolkits, with emergency nutrition protocols linked to food price stabilization	Aug 4–6: ASEAN NCD Conference; Sep 7–11: 17th AHMM	Regional nutrient profiling framework concept note; mutual recognition discussions initiated; food environment toolkit distributed to 3 pilot member states

Pillar 2 — Healthcare

Proposed Project	Description	Key ASEAN Meeting	Proposed 2026 Deliverable
P2.1 ASEAN Preventive Health Systems Accelerator	Public-private platform to scale evidence-based prevention interventions: front-of-package nutrition labeling, multi-channel public health campaigns, school-based education, and ISO malnutrition standards	Aug 4–6: ASEAN NCD Conference; Sep 7–11: 17th AHMM	Front-of-package labeling framework piloted in 2–3 member states; multi-channel health campaigns launched; ISO malnutrition standards advanced
P2.2 ASEAN Health Supply Chain Resilience and Cold Chain Security Program	Regional vulnerability mapping, logistics officer training, and ESG-aligned standards for temperature-controlled supply chains, integrated with ACPHEED emergency response and geopolitical disruption protocols	June 22–26: 20th SOMHD; Oct 6–9: 15th AMDC	Regional health supply chain vulnerability map with ESG metrics; ACPHEED geopolitical disruption protocol concept note; cold chain management standards designed
P2.3 ASEAN High-Level Forum on AI for Health and Preventive Healthcare	Senior-level convening to develop a shared ASEAN vision for responsible AI use in disease prevention and primary care, with policy recommendations for the ASEAN AI for Health working group	June 22–26: 20th SOMHD (side event); Sep 7–11: 17th AHMM	AI for Health Forum concept note endorsed by SOMHD; draft regional AI-enabled preventive healthcare framework; policy recommendations for AI for Health working group (PED 14)
P2.4 ASEAN Digital Health Interoperability and Regulatory Harmonization Laboratory	Technical platform for regulators to accelerate EHR integration, diagnostic data frameworks, and cybersecurity standards under DEFA, enabling continuity of preventive care during supply chain disruptions	June 22–26: 20th SOMHD; Sep 14–22: 58th AEM (DEFA context)	EHR integration standards technical session; digital health cybersecurity framework draft under DEFA; regulatory reliance pathways piloted for 2–3 medical devices
P2.5 ASEAN Health Summit	Senior ministerial convening alongside the 17th AHMM to consolidate the Pillar 2 agenda—health systems, supply chain, digital, and AI—into a Chair's Summary and cross-sectoral public-private health compact	Sep 7–11: 17th AHMM (co-convened)	Health Summit concept note endorsed; Chair's Summary with cross-pillar health commitments; Singapore handover brief for healthcare agenda

Pillar 3 — Sustainable Supply Chains and Logistics

Proposed Project	Description	Key ASEAN Meeting	Proposed 2026 Deliverable
P3.1 ASEAN High-Level Dialogue on Sustainable and Secure Supply Chains	Senior dialogue for trade, customs, and finance officials to advance a cohesive regional agenda on supply chain security and illicit trade prevention, using the 2026 Strait of Hormuz crisis as a live case study	June 2–4: 35th ASEAN Customs Directors-General Meeting, Iloilo	Private sector supply chain resilience perspectives presented; Contingency Trade Protocol concept note endorsed by DG; ASEAN-level follow-up secured
P3.2 ASEAN Technical Program on Digital Customs and Paperless Trade	Capacity-building for customs officials on digital platforms, risk-based clearance systems, and electronic documentation, translating ASEAN Single Window 2.0 commitments into operational improvements	Oct 20–22: 41st CPTFWG; Oct 20–22: 37th ASWSC	Digital customs training curriculum designed; ASEAN Single Window 2.0 implementation roadmap; risk-based clearance piloted with 2 customs authorities
P3.3 ASEAN Regulatory Harmonization Dialogue for Market Access and Circular Economy Integration	Technical dialogue to align product standards, reduce compliance costs across pharmaceuticals, packaging, and recycled materials, and establish circular economy pathways for high-value regulated goods	Sep 14–22: 58th AEM; Aug 26–27: 50th HLTF-EI	Regulatory convergence concept note for 3–5 priority sectors; equivalence pathway frameworks for high-value regulated goods; phased convergence timeline for Singapore
P3.4 ASEAN Joint Program on Strategic Trade Management and Illicit Trade Prevention	Regional coordination platform for trade ministries, customs enforcement, and private sector to implement coordinated STM systems, digital tracking, and anti-counterfeiting/illicit trade frameworks interoperable with the ASEAN Single Window	Aug 18–20: 40th CECWG; June 2–4: Customs DG side engagement	Digital STM tracking system concept note; coordinated enforcement capacity-building plan; real-time cargo diversion monitoring linkage proposed

Pillar 4 — Digital Economy and Workforce Development

Proposed Project	Description	Key ASEAN Meeting	Proposed 2026 Deliverable
P4.1 ASEAN Digital Interoperability and Payments Connectivity Forum	Platform to accelerate DEFA implementation in cross-border payments, digital infrastructure standards, and cybersecurity cooperation, incorporating anti-money laundering-aligned payment flow monitoring	June 15–16: 29th ACCED; Sep 14–22: 58th AEM (DEFA context)	DEFA readiness assessment co-led by relevant government agencies; cross-border payment pilot corridors identified; regulatory harmonization roadmap for ISO 20022 implementation
P4.2 ASEAN MSME Digital Transformation and Inclusive Growth Program	Technical assistance, digital tools access, and e-commerce capacity-building to bring MSMEs into the digital economy, with hybrid delivery model across 3–5 member states and a needs assessment report	Oct (TBC): 22nd ACCMSME Meeting; ASEAN MSME Advisory Board	MSME digital readiness pilots in 3 member states; draft curriculum framework; program design document for 2027 launch under ASEAN Center of Excellence for MSMEs
P4.3 ASEAN Regional Academy for Digital Workforce Development	Regional reskilling framework prioritizing AI readiness, cybersecurity, and digital financial competencies, with dedicated tracks for workers displaced by the 2026 Gulf crisis, building on TESDA's national model	Oct (TBC): 19th ASEAN Forum on Migrant Labour (AFML); ALMM	Regional Academy scoping study (TESDA national model as foundation); Gulf worker reskilling track designed; TOR for adoption under ALMM in Singapore
P4.4 ASEAN Digital Trust, Cyber Resilience, and Online Safety Initiative	Anti-scam frameworks, platform accountability standards, and public-private partnerships to address the organized cybercrime surge and build digital ecosystem trust underpinning all other digital investments	Sep (TBC): 5th ASEAN Consumer Protection Conference; ADGSOM	Regional anti-scam model framework endorsed; platform accountability standards guidelines; joint enforcement capacity-building plan for 3 pilot member states

Pillar 5 — Artificial Intelligence

Proposed Project	Description	Key ASEAN Meeting	Proposed 2026 Deliverable
P5.1 U.S.–ASEAN AI Summit	Flagship multi-track forum on AI governance, data interoperability, secure AI infrastructure, and sector-specific AI corridors, producing a Chair's Summary, policy recommendations, and a shortlist of public-private pilots	June 22–26: 89th COSTI Meeting (concept note); Sep 14–22: 58th AEM (DEFA context)	Summit concept note endorsed by COSTI/ADGMIN/SOM; Chair's Summary with policy recommendations; shortlist of 5–10 public-private AI pilots for Philippines–Singapore–Thailand continuity arc
P5.2 Digital Transformation in Government Workshop Series (AI Edition)	Capacity-building for ASEAN government officials on AI governance structures, responsible procurement, risk and impact assessment, and ethical AI in citizen-facing services	Q3 2026: Regional workshop in Manila alongside COSTI/ADGSOM; country-level workshops in 3–5 member states Q3–Q4 2026	First Government AI Workshop delivered [<i>Implemented in Manila on April 13, 2026</i>]; AI governance reference materials and procurement templates published; country-specific action plans for 3 pilot member states
P5.3 ASEAN Secure AI and Critical Infrastructure Resilience Initiative	Framework for secure-by-design AI deployment in critical sectors, addressing agentic AI risks, cross-border cyber incident simulations, and voluntary real-time threat intelligence sharing mechanisms	Q3 2026: Initial convening of cybersecurity agencies; Q4 2026: First cross-border cyber incident simulation	Reference framework for secure AI deployment; agentic AI security guardrails concept note; first cross-border cyber simulation completed; voluntary threat intelligence sharing protocol designed
P5.4 ASEAN Center for the Workforce of the Future (ACWOF)	Regional coordination platform for digital skills development and workforce transformation, anchored in a Philippine institution, delivering competency frameworks, micro-credentials, and AQRF-linked skills portability.	Oct 2026: ALMM track; Aug–Sep: ADGMIN; AQRF Working Group engagement	ACWOF Terms of Reference adopted; competency-based AI and digital workforce framework draft; peer-learning network launched across 3 member states
P5.5 ASEAN Digital Data Corridor Pilot	Pilot demonstrating DEFA data governance and cross-border data flow provisions through high-impact AI-enabled use cases (trade and customs compliance, disaster risk reduction, or disease	June 22–26: 89th COSTI (pilot parameters); Sep 14–22: 58th AEM (DEFA data governance alignment)	Pilot sector and use case confirmed; governance arrangement co-designed with 2–3 volunteer member states; technical architecture

Proposed Project	Description	Key ASEAN Meeting	Proposed 2026 Deliverable
	surveillance) on a voluntary basis		documented; replication playbook for Singapore and Thailand

4. Call to Action: An Invitation to Champion a Shared Agenda

As a committed partner to the Philippine Chairship, USABC respectfully submits this SAP as a key technical contribution to the broader recommendations being advanced by ASEAN-BAC Philippines as part of the wider work program of the ASEAN Business Advisory Council, where the Philippines serves as member and lead for 2026. Our shared objective is to ensure that private sector expertise and practical solutions directly support the Philippines’ priorities during its Chairship year.

Importantly, USABC reaffirms its continued engagement with ASEAN-BAC Philippines, recognizing its leadership role in advancing national priorities, convening stakeholders, and representing Philippine business interests in the regional agenda.

To maximize the impact of this collaboration, USABC and ASEAN-BAC Philippines propose the following areas of cooperation during the Chairship year:

- a. Supporting the Leaders’ Interface in May.** We aim to work closely with ASEAN-BAC Philippines in presenting consolidated private sector recommendations to ASEAN Leaders. We seek their political endorsement of the strategic pillars, which would provide a formal mandate for deeper engagement with ASEAN sectoral bodies. Such recognition would also create a pathway for the development and submission of project concept notes through appropriate ASEAN mechanisms.
- b. Advancing flagship initiatives at the ministerial level in 2026.** The series of sectoral ministerial meetings in September and October of 2026 – including the ASEAN Health Ministers Meeting, the ASEAN Economic Ministers Meeting, the ASEAN Labor Ministers Meeting, among others – provides a timely opportunity to secure ministerial-level consideration of at least one flagship initiative under each strategic pillar.
- c. Ensuring continuity beyond the Chairship year.** We hope that the Philippines will leverage its convening authority and the spirit of its Chairship theme, *Navigating Our Future, Together*, to encourage succeeding Chairs to carry forward the institutional foundations, concept notes, and pilot programs launched in 2026, while sustaining the public-private partnership model that underpins this SAP.

USABC, in collaboration with ASEAN-BAC Philippines, stands ready to provide continued technical support and private sector input to help operationalize, strengthen, and sustain these initiatives.

5. Philippines 2026 Legacy → Singapore 2027

By November 2026, USABC, working with ASEAN-BAC Philippines, plans to deliver a Singapore Transition Brief per pillar, documenting progress made, commitments secured, and recommended first-90-days priority actions for the incoming Chair.

The table below summarizes proposed legacy targets and handover mandates.

Pillar	Proposed Philippines 2026 Phase 2 Deliverable (June–Sep)	Proposed for Singapore 2027
01 Sustainability and Food Security	SOM-AMAF–endorsed Nexus Initiative concept note; fertilizer vulnerability assessment; AFSRB buffer stock framework scoping; AFSIS traceability framework proposal	Launch ASEAN Agricultural Input Resilience Mechanism; operationalize ASEAN Circular Economy Framework Agreement under HLTF-EI; accomplish a full Nutrition Collaborative rollout under AHMM
02 Healthcare	Health supply chain exposure map; ACPHEED geopolitical disruption protocol concept note; AI for Health Forum concept note endorsed by SOMHD	Operationalize ASEAN Cold Chain Security Standards; formally adopt ACPHEED geopolitical protocol; implement AI for Health roadmap under AHMM; complete Digital Health Interoperability Lab pilot
03 Sustainable Supply Chains and Logistics	Customs DG–endorsed Contingency Trade Protocol concept note; CECWG digital STM tracking design; coordinated enforcement program to address illicit trade, HLTF-EI regulatory harmonization scoping	Launch ASEAN Contingency Trade Protocol under SEOM/CCC; implement ASEAN Joint STM digital platform; adopt a full regulatory harmonization workplan
04 Digital Economy and Workforce Development	DEFA signed; ACCED-USABC DEFA readiness assessment; MSME digital readiness pilots in 3 member states; Regional Academy scoping study; Gulf worker reskilling track designed	Activate DEFA implementation programs under ADGMIN; operationalize the MSME Center of Excellence; adopt the Regional Academy TOR under ALMM; launch reskilling programs
05 Artificial Intelligence	COSTI–endorsed Summit concept note; first Government AI Workshop delivered; Secure AI Initiative framework drafted; ACWOF Terms of Reference adopted; Data Corridor pilot sector confirmed	Host U.S.–ASEAN AI Summit; launch ASEAN AI Governance Peer Review; operationalize ACWOF; implement ASEAN Digital Data Corridor in 2–3 use cases; advance Secure AI cyber simulation series

Strategic Context

As the 2026 ASEAN Chair at a moment of profound geopolitical uncertainty and economic growth potential, the Philippines is tasked to lead regional discussions toward "a resilient, innovative, dynamic, and people-centered ASEAN". Home to nearly 700 million people and a combined gross domestic product of USD 2.8 trillion, ASEAN is now the world's fourth largest regional economy (IMF, 2025). This growth potential, however, is increasingly shaped by a convergence of structural challenges and acute external shocks that demand coordinated, forward-looking responses from both governments and the private sector. A key lesson is that resilience must be a design feature, not a contingency add-on. This paper presents USABC's detailed proposals – drawn from member company inputs, developed in partnership with ASEAN-BAC Philippines, and shaped by exchanges with the Government of the Philippines – on how to move forward at this critical time.

A Global Environment of Compounding Disruptions and Evolving Economic Risks

The ASEAN Community Vision 2045, adopted at the 46th ASEAN Summit in Kuala Lumpur, explicitly recognizes that the region must navigate a rapidly evolving global environment marked by major power rivalries, rising protectionism, supply chain vulnerabilities, digital transformation, food and energy security pressures, climate change, and the growing burden of communicable and non-communicable diseases (ASEAN, 2025, paras. 9, 20–27). These challenges have been sharply amplified by the 2026 Middle East conflict and the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, which the International Energy Agency has characterized as the largest supply disruption in the history of the global oil market. These are directly affecting energy prices, fertilizer costs, aviation connectivity, fiscal sustainability, and financial market stability across ASEAN, with the Philippines among the most acutely exposed economies in the region.

These disruptions do not arrive in isolation. They occur in different but interconnected supply chains which make up systems. They compound pre-existing structural vulnerabilities that the USABC Discussion Papers identify across each of the five priority pillars: 1) fragmented customs and logistics systems that reduce supply chain resilience against shocks (USABC, 2026b, p. 7); 2) health systems under pressure from the dual burden of infectious and non-communicable diseases (USABC, 2026c, p. 7); 3) food and agricultural systems exposed to climate-induced disruptions and input supply risks (USABC, 2026e, p. 5); 4) uneven levels of digital access and adoption that limits MSME participation and workforce competitiveness (USABC, 2026d, p. 8–9); and 5) nascent AI governance frameworks that have yet to keep pace with the technology's deployment across the region (USABC, 2026f, p. 7).

The Philippines' Strategic Priorities as Chair

The Philippines' Chairship is guided by the theme, *Navigating Our Future, Together*, and anchored on three strategic priorities: Peace and Security Anchors, Prosperity Corridors, and People Empowerment (Philippine ASEAN Chairship, 2026). These priorities directly frame the scope and ambition of the five USABC discussion papers, which collectively address the Prosperity Corridors and People Empowerment pillars while contributing to regional stability through economic resilience.

Building systemic connections through economic integration, digital transformation, and inclusive and sustainable development, the Prosperity Corridors priority provides the policy architecture within which the Supply Chains, Digital Economy, and AI pillars operate. Meanwhile, the People Empowerment priority, which looks at fostering social inclusion, protecting vulnerable groups, and promoting shared identity, anchors the Sustainability and Food Security and Healthcare pillars. Together, the five pillars translate the Chairship's strategic compass into practical, investable, and regionally scalable initiatives.

Building on Malaysia's Legacy and Toward Singapore 2027

The 2026 Chairship draws directly on the momentum generated under Malaysia's 2025 ASEAN Chairship, including the substantial conclusion of the ASEAN Digital Economy Framework Agreement (DEFA), the ASEAN Trade in Goods Agreement (ATIGA) upgrade, the adoption of the ASEAN Community Vision 2045, and supply chain digitalization and AI safety governance advancements (USABC, 2026b, p. 7; USABC, 2026d, Appendix 1). The Philippines is positioned to translate these frameworks into concrete implementation, while helping to lay the groundwork for Singapore's Chairship in 2027.

In this environment, the five discussion papers represent USABC's consolidated private sector perspectives, offered as actionable, high-impact, and regionally scalable recommendations to support the Philippines' Chairship agenda in a period of exceptional complexity.

Vision and Objectives

The USABC Strategic Action Plan for the Philippines' 2026 ASEAN Chairship is guided by a unified vision: to advance a resilient, inclusive, and future-ready ASEAN. This means that ASEAN is a region that continues to navigate acute external shocks, harness the opportunities of digital and technological transformation, and ensure that the benefits of regional integration reach all peoples and enterprises across the region.

This vision reinforces the ASEAN Community Vision 2045's aspiration for "a resilient, innovative, dynamic, and people-centered ASEAN" (ASEAN, 2025, para. 1), the Philippines' Chairship theme, *Navigating Our Future, Together*, and ASEAN-BAC Philippines' guiding framework of "Advancing Prosperity for All," organized around the pillars of People, Planet, Platform, and Productivity (USABC, 2026c, p. 4).

Strategic Vision

"An ASEAN that is resilient against global disruptions, inclusive in the benefits of its growth, and future-ready in its systems where private sector innovation and public sector leadership converge to deliver shared prosperity across all Member States."

Strategic Objectives

The following objectives correspond to the five USABC priority pillars and are anchored in the Philippine Priority Economic Deliverables (PEDs), the ASEAN Community Vision 2045, and the immediate imperatives of the current geopolitical environment:

01

Strengthen Food Systems and Environmental Resilience

Build ASEAN's capacity to sustain food security and agricultural productivity in the face of climate disruptions, supply chain shocks, and input market volatility through coordinated governance across health, agriculture, and sustainability, and through investment in regenerative, traceable, and nutrition-sensitive food systems.

02

Build Crisis-Resilient, People-Centered Health Systems

Accelerate the transformation of ASEAN health systems toward prevention, digital integration, and supply chain security to ensure that essential medicines, vaccines, and diagnostics remain accessible even during periods of acute external disruption, and that AI and digital health tools are deployed responsibly and equitably.

03

Modernize and Secure Regional Supply Chains

Advance customs modernization, regulatory harmonization, and Strategic Trade Management capacity across ASEAN by building institutional and digital foundations for supply chains that are transparent, interoperable, and capable of adapting dynamically to chokepoint closures, geopolitical disruptions, and evolving compliance requirements and the prevention of illicit trade.

04

Accelerate Inclusive Digital Transformation and Workforce Development

Translate DEFA commitments into practical implementation by strengthening digital infrastructure, cybersecurity, MSME digitalization, and workforce capabilities with particular attention to closing the digital skills gap, supporting displaced workers, and ensuring that digital economy growth generates decent work and broad-based prosperity.

05

Establish Responsible AI Governance as a Regional Competitive Advantage

Position ASEAN as a global leader in trustworthy, inclusive AI deployment by advancing interoperable governance frameworks, building AI-ready infrastructure and human capital, and deploying AI applications in health, logistics, and public services that directly address the region's most pressing development challenges.

Strategic Pillars

The five strategic pillars that follow form the operational heart of this Action Plan. Each pillar corresponds directly to one of the five Strategic Objectives discussed in Section III and is grounded in a dedicated USABC Discussion Paper developed through extensive consultations with member companies and with the Government of the Philippines. The pillars are meant to translate the Vision and Objectives of Section III into concrete, implementable initiatives that serve both the Philippines' Chairship priorities and ASEAN's long-term community-building agenda. Each pillar also incorporates a crisis-response dimension that reflects the resilience imperative heightened by the 2026 Middle East conflict.

Pillar 1: Sustainability and Food Security

Why This Pillar Matters

Food security and environmental sustainability sit at the intersection of ASEAN's most pressing health, economic, and climate challenges. Noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) now account for roughly two-thirds of deaths across Southeast Asia, with diet-related risks contributing significantly to that burden (USABC Sustainability and Food Security Discussion Paper [S&FS DP], p. 7). Fragmented governance across health, agriculture, and sustainability has resulted in progress that has often occurred in parallel rather than in coordination. This has, in turn, limited ASEAN's ability to mount integrated responses to complex challenges such as nutrition-related NCDs, including diabetes and cardiovascular disease, sustainable food production, and supply chain resilience (S&FS DP, p. 7).

The 2026 Middle East conflict has materially sharpened the need for urgency. Gulf countries supply 35% of ASEAN's urea, 53% of its sulfur, and 64% of its ammonia imports. These are the critical inputs on which the region's agricultural productivity depends. With the Strait of Hormuz closure pushing nitrogen fertilizer costs toward levels that could double from 2024 baselines, and with supply constraints coinciding with the critical spring planting season, the risks to staple crop yields and regional food prices are direct and immediate (Buchanan, 2026).

Alignment with Vision and Objectives

Strategic Objective 01: Strengthen Food Systems and Environmental Resilience

The initiatives proposed under Pillar 1 build ASEAN's capacity to sustain food security and agricultural productivity in the face of climate disruptions, supply chain shocks, and input market volatility through coordinated governance across health, agriculture, and sustainability, and through investment in regenerative, traceable, and nutrition-sensitive food systems. They respond directly to ASEAN Vision 2045 on green and sustainable growth, and to the cross-cutting principle of resilience as a design principle.

The Philippines' priority of Prosperity Corridors entails building systemic connections toward shared prosperity through economic integration and inclusive development. It is directly served by this pillar's focus on integrating smallholder farmers and MSMEs into regional value chains, diversifying fertilizer input sources, and establishing transparent, standards-aligned supply chains for food and agriculture. Simultaneously, the People Empowerment priority is reflected in the pillar's emphasis on nutrition security, food affordability, and the protection of communities most vulnerable to food price volatility.

The pillar also supports the following PEDs: PED 16 (ASEAN Implementation Plan for Regenerative and Resilient Agriculture) by providing the policy framework for sustainable production systems, farmer inclusion, and climate-smart practices; PED 18 (Regional Investment Promotion Action Plan 2025–2030) by mobilizing investment in circular economy infrastructure, sustainable logistics, and health-promoting food systems; PED 1 (ASEAN Declaration on Strategic Trade Management) and PED 6 (ASEAN Critical Minerals Strategy) by supporting supply chain transparency and traceability for high-value commodities and sensitive agricultural inputs.

Proposed flagship Initiatives for 2026

- **ASEAN Health and Agriculture Nexus Initiative:** A structured regional dialogue platform for integrated policymaking across health, agriculture, food systems, and sustainability that includes an urgent workstream on fertilizer input diversification and regional buffer stock frameworks in light of the Strait of Hormuz crisis
- **ASEAN Circular Health Economy Platform:** A coordination forum to harmonize extended producer responsibility frameworks and mobilize investments in recycling and materials recovery infrastructure across healthcare and food-and-beverage value chains
- **ASEAN Sustainable Supply Chain Resilience Initiative:** A traceability and standards framework for food, agriculture, and healthcare supply chains, incorporating crisis-resilience provisions, alternative sourcing frameworks, and climate-vulnerability assessments of logistics infrastructure
- **ASEAN Nutrition Security and Health Promotion Collaborative:** Regional nutrient profiling standards, mutual recognition frameworks, and health-promoting food environment toolkits, recognizing that food affordability and access are primary determinants of nutrition outcomes, particularly for vulnerable populations

Strategic Objective 01 calls for coordinated governance across health, agriculture, and sustainability. The current crisis has made this coordination an operational necessity. ASEAN's food systems cannot remain dependent on input corridors exposed to geopolitical chokepoint closures. The Philippine Chairship should embed resilience as a design principle across this pillar's initiatives, treating supply diversification and emergency buffer protocols with the same institutional weight as the longer-term governance reforms (S&FS DP, p. 5).

Pillar 2: Healthcare

Why This Pillar Matters

ASEAN's healthcare landscape is undergoing a structural transition of historic speed. Southeast Asian nations are shifting from infectious to chronic disease burdens faster than health systems have been able to mature in terms of financial stability, workforce capacity, and service integration (USABC Healthcare Discussion Paper [H DP], p. 7). This dual burden of communicable diseases persisting alongside a rising tide of cardiometabolic diseases, cancers, and other NCDs places sustained pressure on systems historically designed for acute and episodic care.

The 2026 Middle East conflict has exposed a further dimension of vulnerability: health supply chain fragility. Airspace closures across the Middle East have disrupted cargo routes carrying medical products, while rising energy costs are increasing pharmaceutical manufacturing expenses. At the same time, vaccines and diagnostic supply chains that rely on cold chain logistics are becoming more vulnerable to fuel price volatility and rerouting delays. For ASEAN's most import-dependent health systems, these disruptions represent a direct threat to treatment continuity that no amount of digital investment can compensate for if physical supply chains remain fragile.

Alignment with Vision and Objectives

Strategic Objective 02: Build Crisis-Resilient, People-Centered Health Systems

This pillar's initiatives accelerate the transformation of ASEAN health systems toward prevention, digital integration, and supply chain security to ensure that essential medicines, vaccines, and diagnostics remain accessible even during periods of acute external disruption, and that AI and digital health tools are deployed responsibly and equitably. They respond to ASEAN Vision 2045 (para. 32) on a healthy ASEAN populace with Universal Health Coverage, and to the cross-cutting principle of inclusive growth and people-centeredness.

The People Empowerment priority of the Philippine Chairship, which entails fostering social inclusion and protecting vulnerable groups, is the central organizing principle of this pillar. Preventive healthcare, consumer health education, and equitable access to essential medicines are the practical expression of people empowerment in the health domain. The Prosperity Corridors priority is also relevant: a healthy, productive workforce and reduced healthcare expenditures are prerequisites for sustained inclusive economic growth across the region.

The pillar supports the following PEDs: PED 14 (AI for Health) by establishing a regional program for safe, ethical, and effective AI adoption in health, including early detection tools and responsible data governance; PED 8 (ASEAN Digital Economy Framework Agreement [DEFA]) by providing the foundation for secure cross-border data flows and interoperable digital systems essential for digital health integration; PED 1 (Strategic Trade

Management) and PED 18 (Investment Promotion) by supporting health supply chain strengthening, cold chain reliability, vaccine security, and emergency logistics.

Proposed flagship Initiatives for 2026

- **ASEAN Preventive Health Systems Accelerator:** A public-private platform to scale evidence-based prevention interventions which includes front-of-package nutrition labeling, multi-channel public health campaigns, and school-based education, that address the NCD burden without imposing financial burdens on vulnerable populations
- **ASEAN Health Supply Chain Resilience and Cold Chain Security Program:** Regional vulnerability mapping, logistics officer training, and ESG-aligned standards for temperature-controlled supply chains, with integration into ACPHEED emergency response protocols and explicit geopolitical disruption procedures
- **ASEAN High-Level Forum on AI for Health and Preventive Healthcare:** A senior-level convening to develop a shared ASEAN vision for responsible AI use in disease prevention and primary care, producing policy recommendations for the ASEAN AI for Health working group aligned with PED 14
- **ASEAN Digital Health Interoperability and Regulatory Harmonization Laboratory:** A technical platform for regulators to accelerate electronic health record integration, diagnostic data frameworks, and aligned cybersecurity standards under DEFA to enable the continuity of preventive care even when physical supply chains are constrained
- **ASEAN Health Summit:** A gathering of stakeholders, organized in conjunction with the 17th AHMM, to consolidate the Pillar 2 healthcare agenda across preventive health, supply chain security, digital interoperability, and AI governance, and produce a Chair's Summary with actionable cross-sectoral health commitments for handover to Singapore's 2027 Chairship

Strategic Objective 02 establishes the imperative of crisis resilience alongside digital transformation. The 2026 Middle East conflict has collapsed the timeline: the ASEAN Health Supply Chain Resilience Program must be operationalized now instead of just as a medium-term investment. The Philippines, as Chair, should initiate a rapid mapping of ASEAN health supply chain exposures to Middle East-sourced inputs and task ACPHEED to develop a geopolitical disruption protocol that complements existing pandemic preparedness frameworks (H DP, p. 14).

Pillar 3: Sustainable Supply Chains and Logistics

Why This Pillar Matters

Supply chain efficiency, regulatory coherence, and enforcement coordination have become primary determinants of ASEAN's economic competitiveness and security. Fragmented customs systems, regulatory divergence, and inadequate Strategic Trade Management capacity, and the proliferation of illicit trade undermine the predictable logistics and harmonized standards that sustain the region's industrial base (USABC Supply Chains Discussion Paper [SC DP], p. 7). Illicit trade—characterized by weak or absent regulatory controls, counterfeiting, smuggling (including non-compliant products), and trade-based financial crimes—erodes government revenues, distorts legitimate markets, and poses direct risks to consumer safety across the region. While ASEAN has made substantial progress through Malaysia's 2025 Chairship which includes the conclusion and signing of the Upgraded ASEAN Trade in Goods Agreement (ATIGA), completion of the ASEAN Single Window (ASW) 2.0 study, and the advancement of the DEFA, the implementation of integrated, crisis-resilient supply chain governance remains a work in progress.

The 2026 Middle East conflict has delivered the most acute stress test in a generation. The Strait of Hormuz closure reduced traffic through the strait by approximately 90%, rerouted global shipping around the Cape of Good Hope, and added weeks to transit times, while sharply increasing freight rates and maritime insurance premiums (Lindner, 2026; El Safty, 2026). For the Philippines, the impact of the crisis has resulted in a national energy emergency and a record-low peso. These disruptions translate directly into consumer price increases, manufacturing cost pressures, and MSME viability risks (BBC, 2026).

Alignment with Vision and Objectives

Strategic Objective 03: Modernize and Secure Regional Supply Chains

This pillar's initiatives advance customs modernization, regulatory harmonization, and Strategic Trade Management capacity and illicit trade prevention by building the institutional and digital foundations for supply chains that are transparent, interoperable, and capable of adapting dynamically to chokepoint closures, geopolitical disruptions, and evolving compliance requirements. They respond to ASEAN Vision 2045 (para. 26) on ASEAN as an integral part of the global supply chain, and to the cross-cutting principle of resilience as a design principle.

The Philippines' Prosperity Corridors priority of building systemic connections toward shared prosperity through economic integration is the direct policy grounding for this pillar. Efficient, transparent, and secure supply chains, able to combat illicit trade, are vital in regional economic integration. The cross-cutting principle of continuity and build-forward is also central: this pillar explicitly builds on Malaysia's 2025 achievements in customs digitalization and strategic trade management, and is designed to transition those frameworks from architecture to implementation. This would also include the enforcement and compliance dimensions necessary to address illicit trade.

The pillar supports the following PEDs: PED 1 (ASEAN Declaration on Strategic Trade Management for Secured Trade in the Region) by directly supporting coordinated enforcement capacity, digital tracking systems, and regulatory gap reduction and illicit trade prevention frameworks that protect legitimate trade flows from the distortions of counterfeiting, smuggling of non-compliant products, and trade-based financial crime; PED 6 (ASEAN Critical Minerals Strategy for Regional Resilience and Sustainable Growth) by addressing supply chain transparency and traceability for strategic minerals essential to clean energy and advanced manufacturing; PED 18 (Regional Investment Promotion Action Plan) by providing the investment framework for digital customs infrastructure, climate-resilient logistics, and circular economy systems.

Proposed flagship Initiatives for 2026

- **ASEAN High-Level Dialogue on Sustainable and Secure Supply Chains:** Convening senior trade, customs, and finance officials to advance a cohesive regional agenda, with the 2026 Strait of Hormuz crisis serving as a live case study for the ASEAN Contingency Trade Protocol that this pillar proposes
- **ASEAN Technical Program on Digital Customs and Paperless Trade:** Capacity-building for customs officials and trade regulators on digital platforms, risk-based clearance systems, and electronic documentation, translating ASEAN Single Window 2.0 commitments into operational improvements
- **ASEAN Regulatory Harmonization Dialogue for Market Access and Circular Economy Integration:** Technical dialogue to align product standards, reduce compliance costs, and establish pathways for circular economy inputs and high-value regulated goods
- **ASEAN Joint Program on Strategic Trade Management and Illicit Trade Prevention:** Coordinated enforcement capacity-building, incorporating real-time cargo diversion monitoring, and coordinated multilateral enforcement, digital tracking, and crisis-mode protocols applicable to chokepoint-closure scenarios

Strategic Objective 03 calls for supply chains capable of adapting dynamically to chokepoint closures. The Chairship should advance an ASEAN Contingency Trade Protocol that treats geopolitical chokepoint scenarios with the same institutional seriousness as climate and pandemic disruptions, building on PED 1's Strategic Trade Management framework and the lessons of the current crisis (SC DP, pp. 13–16).

Pillar 4: Digital Economy and Workforce Development

Why This Pillar Matters

Digital infrastructure, workforce capabilities, and regulatory frameworks have become the primary determinants of ASEAN's long-term economic competitiveness, yet efforts to strengthen these domains have advanced along separate tracks rather than through a coordinated regional strategy (USABC Digital Economy and Workforce Development Discussion Paper [DE DP], p. 7). ASEAN's digital economy reached USD 363 billion in 2025 and is projected to exceed USD 1 trillion by 2030. The signing of the DEFA under the Philippine Chairship can significantly accelerate this trend. Yet, unequal digital infrastructure, a widening skills gap, fragmented payment systems, and a year-on-year doubling of cyberattacks in ASEAN in 2024 risk excluding the majority of MSMEs from the digital economy's gains. Payment fragmentation also constrains ASEAN's cross-border tourism economy: visitors who cannot pay seamlessly with instruments they carry from home face friction that reduces spending and undermines the visitor experience. Compounding these challenges, the failure of MC14 in Yaoundé (March 2026) to renew the WTO Moratorium on Customs Duties on Electronic Transmissions has introduced significant legal and policy uncertainty into the digital trade environment, risking fragmentation of the rules-based framework underpinning the DEFA and raising the prospect of higher costs for MSMEs and digital service providers across the region (WTO, 2026; PwC, 2026).

The 2026 Middle East conflict has added an energy and labor dimension to the digital resilience agenda. Energy-intensive digital infrastructure faces cost pressure from oil price volatility. Simultaneously, large-scale displacement of ASEAN migrant workers from Gulf states could reduce remittance inflows and increase pressure on domestic labor markets (Esguerra, 2026). Rapid reskilling and digital workforce programs are both an economic necessity and a social imperative.

Alignment with Vision and Objectives

Strategic Objective 04: Accelerate Inclusive Digital Transformation and Workforce Development

The initiatives under this Pillar translate DEFA commitments into practical implementation by strengthening digital infrastructure, cybersecurity, MSME digitalization, and workforce capabilities, with particular attention to closing the digital skills gap, supporting displaced workers, and ensuring digital economy growth generates decent work and broad-based prosperity. They respond to ASEAN Vision 2045 (para. 24) on a leading Digital and Technological Community, and to the cross-cutting principles of inclusive growth and resilience as a design principle.

The Prosperity Corridors priority is served through the economic integration and digital transformation dimensions: signing the DEFA, accelerating cross-border digital payments, and digitalizing MSMEs. The People Empowerment priority is served through the workforce and inclusion dimensions: closing the digital skills gap, reskilling returning migrant workers, protecting vulnerable populations from digital fraud, and ensuring that

digital financial inclusion reaches the estimated 70% of ASEAN adults who remain unbanked or underbanked (DE DP, p. 8).

The pillar supports the following PEDs: PED 8 (Signing of the DEFA) which is the single most consequential digital economy deliverable of the Chairship, establishing the foundational rules for digital trade, payments, data governance, and cybersecurity cooperation; PED 10 (Advancing ASEAN Regional Payments Connectivity) by accelerating cross-border payment interoperability and digital financial inclusion an outcome best achieved through open, technology-neutral ecosystems that preserve consumer and merchant choice, avoid single-rail mandates that reduce competition, and enable consistent payment experiences across tourism corridors and commerce channels; PED 11 (Establishment of the ASEAN Center of Excellence for MSMEs) by providing institutional support for MSME digitalization, digital financial literacy, and e-commerce participation; PED 3 (Cross-Border Movement of Digital Workers) and PED 14 (AI for ASEAN Strategic Framework) by supporting workforce mobility and reskilling for the digital economy.

Proposed flagship Initiatives for 2026

- **ASEAN Digital Interoperability and Payments Connectivity Forum:** A platform to accelerate DEFA implementation in cross-border payments, digital infrastructure standards, and cybersecurity cooperation and, thereby, directly advancing PED 8 and PED 10
- **ASEAN MSME Digital Transformation and Inclusive Growth Program:** Technical assistance, digital tools access, and e-commerce enforcement capacity to bring MSMEs into the digital economy, reducing the digital divide and supporting PED 10
- **ASEAN Regional Academy for Digital Workforce Development:** Regional reskilling framework prioritizing AI readiness, cybersecurity, and digital financial competencies, with dedicated tracks for workers displaced by the 2026 Gulf crisis, supporting PED 3 and PED 14.
- **ASEAN Digital Trust, Cyber Resilience, and Online Safety Initiative:** Implementation and coordination plan of anti-scam frameworks, platform accountability standards, and public-private partnerships to address the organized cybercrime surge and build ecosystem trust, underpinning the integrity of all other digital economy investments

Strategic Objective 04 calls for DEFA to generate decent work and broad-based prosperity. The return of skilled workers from the Gulf presents an urgent opportunity to redirect human capital toward domestic digital economy growth but only if the ASEAN Digital Skills Vision is reoriented quickly to include explicit reskilling pathways for returning migrant workers. This is the most direct way the Chairship can convert a humanitarian challenge into an economic dividend (DE DP, pp. 11–12).

Pillar 5: Artificial Intelligence

Why This Pillar Matters

Artificial intelligence has transitioned from a forward-looking technology agenda to a foundational economic and governance priority. ASEAN's digital economy is expected to be substantially accelerated by the DEFA, which explicitly recognizes AI as a foundational technology (USABC Artificial Intelligence Discussion Paper [AI DP], p. 5). Structural gaps constrain ASEAN's ability to scale AI safely and competitively: fragmented governance frameworks, growing AI-enabled cyber threats, uneven infrastructure access, restrictive cross-border data governance regimes, and persistent shortages of AI-ready talent across public institutions, regulators, MSMEs, and developers (AI DP, pp. 7–8).

The 2026 Middle East conflict has introduced new infrastructure dimensions to this agenda. Helium, a critical input for semiconductor manufacturing, is under supply pressure from the Gulf disruption, and energy cost volatility threatens the viability of large-scale AI computing infrastructure. At the same time, the crisis has created compelling applied use cases for AI tools in supply chain disruption monitoring, energy management, crisis decision-support, and humanitarian logistics. This underlines the argument for treating AI deployment as a core policy objective rather than a downstream benefit of governance reform (AI DP, p. 8).

Alignment with Vision and Objectives

Strategic Objective 05: Establish Responsible AI Governance as a Regional Competitive Advantage

The initiatives under Pillar 5 position ASEAN as a global leader in trustworthy, inclusive AI deployment by advancing interoperable governance frameworks, building AI-ready infrastructure and human capital, and deploying AI applications in health, logistics, and public services that directly address the region's most pressing development challenges. They respond to ASEAN Vision 2045 (para. 23) on ASEAN as an enterprising hub for advanced technology and innovation, and to the cross-cutting principles of continuity, build-forward and public-private partnerships.

The Prosperity Corridor's priority of the Philippine Chairship is most directly advanced by this pillar: AI is the enabling layer for digital transformation, industrial upgrading, supply chain optimization, and services-led growth. This includes the Philippines' own comparative advantage in the BPO and digital services sector. The People Empowerment priority is served through the pillar's emphasis on inclusive AI deployment, equitable access to AI tools for MSMEs, and the application of AI for public good in health diagnostics, agriculture, and disaster resilience.

The pillar supports the following PEDs: PED 14 (Regional Program for Science, Technology, and Innovation on AI) which is the primary governance and institutional framework for responsible AI adoption, aligned with the ASEAN Responsible AI Roadmap and ASEAN Guide on AI Governance and Ethics; PED 8 (DEFA) by providing the data governance and

cross-border data flow architecture without which AI systems cannot function at regional scale; PED 9 (ASEAN Declaration on Responsible AI-Powered MSME Growth) by ensuring

that AI's economic benefits reach MSMEs and do not concentrate among large enterprises; PED 12 (ASEAN Center of Excellence for Creative Industries) by harnessing AI for creative industries as an inclusive growth driver; PED 14 (AI for Health) by deploying AI for the most high-impact preventive and diagnostic healthcare applications across the region.

Proposed flagship Initiatives for 2026

- **U.S.–ASEAN AI Summit:** A flagship multi-track forum on AI governance, data interoperability, secure AI infrastructure, and sector-specific AI corridors and producing a Chair's Summary, policy recommendations for ASEAN bodies, and a shortlist of public-private pilots designed to carry through the Philippines-Singapore Chairship sequence in support of PED 14
- **Digital Transformation in Government Workshop Series (AI Edition):** Capacity-building for ASEAN government officials on AI governance structures, responsible procurement, risk and impact assessment, and ethical AI in citizen-facing services by building the institutional readiness to operationalize PED 14
- **ASEAN Secure AI and Critical Infrastructure Resilience Initiative:** A program to identify and reduce exposure of AI infrastructure to geopolitical supply chain vulnerabilities, including semiconductor and helium dependency mapping, aligned with PED 8 and PED 14
- **ASEAN Center for the Workforce of the Future (ACWOF):** A regional coordination platform for digital skills development and workforce transformation, anchored in a Philippine institution and targeted to deliver competency frameworks, micro-credentials, and AQR-aligned skills portability mechanisms to support ASEAN-wide AI and digital workforce readiness, reinforcing PED 9 and PED 14
- **ASEAN Digital Data Corridor Pilot:** A pilot initiative demonstrating DEFA-aligned data governance and cross-border data flows through high-impact AI use cases such as trade facilitation, disaster risk reduction, and disease surveillance on a voluntary basis, aligned with PED 10 and PED 14

Strategic Objective 05 positions responsible AI governance as a regional competitive advantage. The U.S.–ASEAN AI Summit, if structured as a Philippines-Singapore governance continuum, can lock in a two-Chairship arc that moves AI from framework adoption to operational deployment across ASEAN. This is the moment when the region can define its own AI governance identity before external actors define it for them (AI DP, pp. 7–8, 14).

Implementation Framework

Foundational activities for this Strategic Action Plan including the five Discussion Papers and the presentation of these in roundtables held between March and April 2026 have been completed. Over these roundtables, representatives from various Philippine government agencies, multilateral development institutions, private sector companies, and civil society reviewed the proposed projects, affirmed their relevance at both national and ASEAN levels and committed specific contributions to each pillar. Participants reached consensus that initiatives are actionable, but emphasized that 'how the initiatives will be implemented is the crucial next step,' specifically calling for clarity on lead institutions, coordination mechanisms for public-private partnership, and alignment with existing government programs and ASEAN platforms.

The 48th ASEAN Summit on May 8-9, 2026 serves as the transition point, with the ASEAN Leaders' Interface with ASEAN-BAC on May 9 providing the platform to present USABC's consolidated private sector recommendations to ASEAN Heads of State. From June 2026, the SAP enters active implementation across two remaining phases: Phase 2 (June–September), focused on technical groundwork through side meetings at ASEAN sectoral meetings; and Phase 3 (October–November), focused on consolidating outputs and preparing a structured handover to Singapore. The sections below provide a project-by-project discussion of each initiative, drawing on the Discussion Papers and roundtable inputs, followed by a summary implementation table per pillar.

A. Phase Overview

Phase	Period	Focus
Transition	May 8–9, 2026	Political endorsement of SAP pillars at 48th ASEAN Summit; ASEAN Leaders' Interface with ASEAN-BAC
Phase 2	June – September 2026	Technical groundwork: Side meetings at ASEAN sectoral calendar events; TOR and concept note development; Scoping studies; 2026 Middle East conflict contingency measures
Phase 3	October – November 2026	Consolidation: Ministerial-level endorsements; Singapore Transition Briefs per pillar; final SAP progress report

B. Pillar-by-Pillar Implementation Plan

PILLAR 1 SUSTAINABILITY AND FOOD SECURITY

RTD1, held on March 3, 2026, convened over 30 government officials across eight agencies, eight USABC member companies, and external stakeholders including ASEAN-BAC Philippines, Food Industry Asia, the Philippine Chamber of Agriculture and Food, and the Asia Small Business Federation. The discussion affirmed a central finding of the Sustainability and Food Security Discussion Paper: 'health outcomes, food security, and environmental sustainability are deeply interconnected, yet often addressed through

fragmented policy and institutional approaches' (S&FS DP, p. 5). Participants agreed on the need for strong and sustained public-private-producer collaboration, regulatory harmonization, and a coordinated ASEAN approach. The session closed with a call to make the Chairship 'inclusive and nationally representative,' urging engagement beyond Manila and across the country's agricultural communities.

Project 1: ASEAN Health and Agriculture Nexus Initiative

This initiative is designed to create a structured platform that brings together policymakers, regulators, practitioners, and private sector experts from health, agriculture, food systems, and environmental sustainability. The platform would facilitate expert and policy-level exchanges to examine how agricultural practices, food processing, nutrition outcomes, and environmental sustainability interact across different country contexts, promoting harmonized, evidence-based risk management principles and science-based approaches to nutrition-sensitive food systems.

During RTD1, public sector stakeholders expressed strong support for the initiative and signaled interest in integrating regenerative agriculture development and nutrition-sensitive information as priority workstreams. Government research agencies highlighted existing commodity-based strategic programs and expressed interest in collaborating with the private sector on carbon reduction initiatives. ASEAN-BAC Philippines presented the ASEAN Food Security Alliance (AFSA) as a complementary platform that can reinforce the Nexus Initiative's agenda.

To drive these objectives through a business-led platform, ASEAN-BAC Philippines presented the ASEAN Food Security Alliance (AFSA) as the primary vehicle to reinforce the Nexus Initiative's agenda. As a flagship legacy initiative of the ASEAN-BAC Philippine 2026 Chairmanship, AFSA is dedicated to strengthening regional food security by uniting leading agribusiness and agri-food players across the region through strategic partnerships and ventures. AFSA will catalyze, collaboration among regional agri-industry leaders, cross-investments in priority agricultural commodities, innovation and best practice sharing, and market integration across the ASEAN member states.

By aligning with the Nexus Initiative, we ensure that private sector investments in priority commodities are directly linked to nutrition and sustainability goals. USABC member companies and Agri-Champions in the Philippines, identified specific agri-input innovation contributions. As the key ASEAN vehicle, the 47th AMAF (October 26-30) and the 2nd Capacity Building Workshop on the ASEAN Implementation Plan for Regenerative and Resilient Agriculture (June, TBC) provide the formal institutional pathways for advancing a concept note to SOM-AMAF.

Project 2: ASEAN Circular Health Economy Platform

The second initiative seeks to 'support circular economy objectives by improving the coherence and effectiveness of EPR systems in the healthcare and food and beverage sectors across ASEAN, addressing the reality that 'fragmented EPR systems and inconsistent regulations across ASEAN Member States continue to hinder the development of regional recycling markets, limit economies of scale, and constrain

investment in circular infrastructure' (S&FS DP, p. 11). The platform would identify areas where greater regional convergence could reduce compliance complexity, improve regulatory predictability, and unlock cross-border recycling and materials recovery value chains, with potential outputs including ASEAN-level reference guidelines for EPR and a framework for the ASEAN Circular Economy Framework Agreement as a flagship FDI-attracting deliverable.

During RTD1, USABC member companies raised challenges relating to divergent circular economy and packaging regulations, noting difficulty in meeting sustainability targets across markets. USABC member companies expressed interest to support harmonized packaging standards and EPR alignment across ASEAN as well as highlighting exposure to energy shocks and weak intermodal transport integration, and exploring the promotion of EV adoption in logistics as part of the regional sustainable logistics agenda. Investment promotion agencies highlighted automated compliance systems as a scalable pilot model. Government agencies with investment promotion and climate policy mandates have been identified as suitable key partners for mobilizing investment and policy frameworks. The ASEAN Regional Dialogue on Circular Economy (September, TBC) and the 50th HLTF-EI (August 26–27) are the primary institutional vehicles.

Project 3: ASEAN Sustainable Supply Chain Resilience Initiative

The third initiative focuses on 'strengthening transparent, climate-resilient, and interoperable supply chains across food, agriculture, fast moving consumer goods, excisable products and healthcare, through digital traceability, data standards and targeted capacity-building,' grounded in the understanding that 'supply-chain disruptions undermine health outcomes, food security, and economic stability' (S&FS DP, p. 5, 12). Participating Member States would work toward an ASEAN-wide sustainable supply chain traceability framework with common data standards for pharmaceuticals, food products, key agricultural inputs, and excisable goods. The project would also assess climate vulnerabilities across critical logistics infrastructure (e.g. ports, roads, and storage facilities) and propose elements of a regional climate-resilient logistics network with contingency protocols and cold-chain sustainability benchmarks.

During RTD1, public sector stakeholders highlighted the need for integrated logistics and food reserve systems, underscoring the linkage between energy supply and food system logistics. USABC member companies, drawing on expertise in pharmaceutical and food supply chain management, expressed readiness to contribute to traceability of pilot activities. The acute fertilizer supply disruption arising from the 2026 Middle East conflict makes the buffer stock dimension of this initiative (i.e. developing regional fertilizer and food commodity reserves analogous to oil reserve frameworks) an urgent addition to the original project scope. The 24th ASEAN Food Security Information System (AFSIS) Focal Point Meeting (June 17–18) and the 46th ASEAN Food Security Reserve Board (AFSRB) Meeting (June, TBC) are the priority entry points for advancing this work.

Project 4: ASEAN Nutrition Security and Health Promotion Collaborative

The fourth initiative aims to 'support regional tools for healthier food environments, including nutrient profiling frameworks, mutual recognition pathways, and practical

toolkits, while maintaining affordability, safety, and innovation' (S&FS DP, p. 5). It would develop an ASEAN regional nutrient profiling framework based on science-based criteria for health claims and front-of-pack labelling, alongside mutual recognition arrangements for food safety and quality certifications to streamline approvals, reduce duplicative audits, and facilitate cross-border trade. A central output would be a health-promoting food environments toolkit providing guidance on healthy public procurement, school nutrition standards, workplace wellness programs, and urban food environment planning.

During RTD1, public sector stakeholders signaled alignment with preventive nutrition approaches and interest in regulatory convergence pathways. Active in nutrition science and food product development, USABC member companies have expressed interest in contributing expertise on nutrient profiling, product reformulation, and labeling standards. The ASEAN NCD Conference (August 4–6) and the 17th ASEAN Health Ministers Meeting (AHMM, September 7–11) are the primary ASEAN platforms. The 2026 Middle East conflict’s impact on food prices and caloric access strengthens the case for the ASEAN Nutrition Security and Health Promotion Collaborative] to include emergency nutrition protocols and price-stabilization mechanisms for key staples as an additional workstream.

The following table summarizes the four Pillar 1 projects with their ASEAN implementation anchors, institutional pathways, deliverables, and stakeholders:

Project	Target ASEAN Meeting	ASEAN Implementing Body	Key 2026 Deliverable	Relevant Stakeholder Groups
Project 1: ASEAN Health and Agriculture Nexus Initiative	June (TBC): 2nd Capacity Building Workshop — ASEAN Regenerative and Resilient Agriculture; October 26–30: 47th AMAF	SOM-AMAF; SOMHD (cross-pillar)	Concept note endorsed by SOM-AMAF; joint workplan with SOMHD; fertilizer input vulnerability assessment initiated	Gov: DA (Bureau of Agriculture Research), DENR, DOST-PCAARRD, CCC. Private: USABC member companies. External: ASEAN-BAC Philippines, PCAFI
Project 2: ASEAN Circular Health Economy Platform	Sep (TBC): ASEAN Regional Dialogue on Circular Economy; August 26–27: 50th HLTF-EI	ASEAN Senior Officials on Environment (ASOEN); HLTF-EI	EPR harmonization concept note; ASEAN Circular Economy Framework Agreement co-sponsors identified; Global Plastics Treaty linkage proposal	Gov: DENR, BOI, PEZA, CCC. Private: USABC Member companies.
Project 3: ASEAN Sustainable Supply Chain	June 17–18: 24th AFSIS Focal Points Meeting; June (TBC): 46th AFSRB Meeting	ASEAN Food Security Reserve Board (AFSRB); SOM-AMAF	Food supply chain traceability scoping study; climate vulnerability map	Gov: NFA, DA-BAR, DOE, DSWD. Private: USABC member companies.

Project	Target ASEAN Meeting	ASEAN Implementing Body	Key 2026 Deliverable	Relevant Stakeholder Groups
Resilience Initiative			of logistics infrastructure; AFSRB-USABC joint workplan on buffer stocks	External: Food Industry Asia
Project 4: ASEAN Nutrition Security and Health Promotion Collaborative	August 4–6: ASEAN NCD Conference; September 7–11: 17th AHMM	SOMHD; ASEAN Health Ministers Meeting (AHMM)	Regional nutrient profiling framework concept note; mutual recognition discussions initiated; food environment toolkit distributed to 3 pilot member states	Gov: FDA, DOH, DSWD. Private: USABC member companies. External: ASEAN-BAC Philippines
2026 Middle East Conflict Priority	<i>Integrate fertilizer and input supply vulnerability assessment as urgent workstream in the Nexus Initiative (Partnering with relevant government agriculture and research agencies as possible leads), mapping ASEAN Member States' dependence on Middle Eastern urea, sulfur, and ammonia exports and identifying alternative sourcing strategies. Advance regional food and fertilizer commodity buffer stock framework through the AFSRB, with government food security agencies providing a national model. Expand the Nutrition Collaborative to include emergency nutrition protocols and price-stabilization mechanisms tied to staple crop supply shocks. Accelerate PED 15 to include input substitution and local fertilizer production provisions, with USABC member companies as possible contributors of agri-input innovation expertise.</i>			

PILLAR 2 HEALTHCARE

RTD2, held on March 4, 2026, brought together an extensive delegation representing the Philippine Government's health, ICT, procurement, social welfare institutions, alongside USABC member companies and multilateral partners including ADB and IFC. The session affirmed the urgency of transitioning from curative to preventive healthcare, with participants agreeing that 'strengthening health supply chains, advancing digital health interoperability, and establishing ethical AI governance are crucial' to coordinating at a regional level and ensuring regional competitiveness (Healthcare RTD Notes, March 2026). The discussions surfaced candid assessments of fragmented digital system and the institutional risks involved in digital procurement reform, with public sector stakeholders expressing openness to collaborative solutions and coordinated technical support.

The Healthcare Discussion Paper situates these challenges within a broader regional transition: Southeast Asian nations are 'experiencing a shift from infectious to chronic disease burdens within a relatively short period, often before health systems have fully matured in terms of financial stability, workforce capacity, and service integration' (H DP, p. 7). The 2026 Middle East conflict has amplified supply chain vulnerabilities across this pillar in ways that demand immediate attention alongside longer-term structural investment.

Project 1: ASEAN Preventive Health Systems Accelerator

The Accelerator seeks to 'translate evidence-based preventive health policies into scalable, region-ready pilots,' prioritizing consumer education and empowerment as primary strategies for improving health and nutrition outcomes. It reflects an all-of-society approach and recognizes that 'prevention interventions, particularly those centered on nutrition, education, and early detection, represent the most scalable interventions available to ASEAN, benefiting both rural and urban populations alike while reducing healthcare expenditures' (H DP, p. 13). Specific strategies include development of ASEAN-wide standardized front-of-package nutrition labeling systems, multi-channel public health awareness campaigns, school-based nutrition education programs, community health worker training, and mobile health applications. A cornerstone component addresses hospital malnutrition through advancing ISO standards for the prevention, detection, and treatment of undernutrition by linking improved patient outcomes with reduced healthcare costs.

During RTD2, regulatory agencies expressed openness to supporting stakeholders with implementation and capacity building for improved regulatory processes. USABC member companies signaled readiness to contribute nutrition science expertise and technology capabilities. ADB emphasized the importance of evidence-based metrics and health data systems for measuring preventive care outcomes. The ASEAN NCD Conference (August 4–6) and the 17th AHMM (September 7–11) are the priority engagement platforms for this project.

Project 2: ASEAN Health Supply Chain Resilience and Cold Chain Security Program

This program 'responds to documented weaknesses in vaccine, diagnostics, and medical product supply chains by proposing regional mapping of vulnerabilities, training for health logistics personnel, and the development of standards for sustainable and climate-

resilient cold chain management. By linking routine service delivery with emergency preparedness and environmental and social governance (ESG) principles, the program addresses both immediate health security needs and longer-term system sustainability' (H DP, p. 6). Activities include a regional health supply chain gaps assessment incorporating climate vulnerability analysis, training for health logistics officers on sustainable cold chain management, and development of model standards for temperature-controlled logistics, traceability systems, and low-bandwidth digital solutions for remote populations.

The 2026 Middle East conflict has made this the most time-sensitive initiative in the healthcare portfolio. Airspace closures across the Middle East have disrupted cargo routes handling pharmaceutical and medical products, and energy cost escalation is raising pharmaceutical manufacturing costs particularly relevant for ASEAN countries dependent on imported active pharmaceutical ingredients. During RTD2, public sector stakeholders flagged procurement system vulnerabilities for essential medicines and emphasized the importance of transparent and responsive government procurement. USABC member companies with expertise in medical device distribution, diagnostics, and pharmaceutical supply chains may be tapped for specific contributions. The 20th SOMHD (June 22–26) is the critical entry point for formally requesting ACPHEED to develop a geopolitical supply disruption protocol.

Project 3: ASEAN High-Level Forum on AI for Health and Preventive Healthcare

This initiative is 'intended to convene senior health officials, regulators, experts, and private sector leaders to develop a shared regional vision for responsible AI use in disease prevention, early detection, and primary care.' Expected outputs include policy recommendations to establish an ASEAN AI for Health Working Group and a draft outline for a regional framework on AI-enabled preventive healthcare, directly supporting PED 14 (H DP, p. 6). The Forum would explore AI applications in early detection of cardiometabolic diseases and cancers, AI-supported infectious disease prediction systems, and the deployment of connected diagnostic devices with algorithm-driven screening programs for chronic disease management by emphasizing that 'effective AI deployment must be complemented by strong health literacy programs and workforce readiness to ensure equitable adoption' (H DP, p. 15).

During RTD2, government participants underscored the importance of integrity in government procurement of technology systems and affirmed institutional commitment for AI governance in digital health infrastructure. Research agencies highlighted existing programs linking science and technology to health outcomes and expressed interest in connecting the AI for Health agenda to existing STI frameworks. The critical data governance and privacy protection dimensions of any AI health deployment were emphasized as foundational considerations. USABC member companies are well-positioned private sector partners with AI-enabled diagnostic product lines. The June SOMHD side event and the September 17th AHMM are the primary engagement platforms.

Project 4: ASEAN Digital Health Interoperability and Regulatory Harmonization Laboratory

This project 'serves as a technical working session for digital health leaders and regulators across ASEAN,' aiming to 'accelerate readiness for interoperable digital health platforms,

consistent and internationally converged regulatory standards, and data governance models aligned with the ASEAN DEFA' (H DP, p. 15). Key principles for regulatory harmonization include embedding regulatory reliance principles through the ASEAN Medical Device Directive (AMDD) and Global Harmonization Working Party (GHWP); strengthening international harmonization with IMDRF, WHO, and OECD; and promoting regulator capability building and regulatory sandboxes. The Laboratory would produce an ASEAN digital health interoperability blueprint, a regulatory harmonization assessment, and technical proposals submitted to SOMHD and DEFA implementation bodies.

Candid exchanges among public sector participants on fragmented digital systems captured a dynamic replicated across ASEAN's health system institutions: technical ambition exists, but implementation capacity and system integration remain significant barriers. IFC noted that blended financing models can help bridge the investment gap for digital health infrastructure in lower-capacity member states. The ASEAN Medical Device Committee (15th AMDC, October 6–9) provides a specific technical platform for advancing regulatory reliance discussions for medical devices and digital health tools. The 58th AEM Meeting (September 2026) will provide the broader DEFA implementation context.

Project 5: ASEAN Health Summit

RTD2 participants made a clear and substantive call for a dedicated health convening that brings together the full range of issues addressed across this pillar — from supply chain resilience to preventive care, digital health, and AI governance — under a single high-level forum. This reflects a gap that the four existing projects do not individually address: the absence of a senior-level convening that consolidates the healthcare agenda across its health systems, supply chain, and digital dimensions, and produces a coherent set of political commitments that can be handed to Singapore for implementation.

The ASEAN Health Summit is proposed as a cross-cutting convening to be held in conjunction with, or as a side event to, the 17th ASEAN Health Ministers Meeting (AHMM, September 7–11, 2026). The Summit would serve as an integrating platform for the Pillar 2 agenda: bringing together ASEAN Health Ministers, senior officials, private sector health leaders, development finance institutions, and civil society to consolidate progress across preventive health, supply chain security, digital interoperability, and AI for health. It would produce a Chair's Summary with actionable commitments across all four project areas, a public-private investment compact for health system resilience, and a structured handover brief for Singapore's 2027 Chairship (H DP, pp. 13–15).

The 2026 Middle East conflict has materially strengthened the case for this convening. With airspace disruptions affecting pharmaceutical logistics, energy cost escalation affecting manufacturing, and supply chain vulnerabilities exposed across cold chain systems, the Summit would serve as a platform for ASEAN Health Ministers to issue a coordinated political response to health supply chain fragility alongside longer-term structural commitments on digital health and AI governance. USABC is well-positioned to anchor this Summit under the AHMM framework, in coordination with relevant government health authorities and development finance partners.

The following table summarizes the four Pillar 2 projects with their ASEAN implementation anchors, institutional pathways, deliverables, and stakeholders:

Project	Target ASEAN Meeting	ASEAN Implementing Body	Key 2026 Deliverable	Relevant Stakeholder Groups
Project 1: ASEAN Preventive Health Systems Accelerator	August 4–6: ASEAN NCD Conference; September 7–11: 17th AHMM	SOMHD; ASEAN Health Ministers Meeting (AHMM)	Front-of-package labeling framework piloted in 2–3 member states; multi-channel health campaigns launched; ISO malnutrition standards advanced	Gov: DOH, FDA, PCMC, PHC. Private: USABC member companies. External: ADB, Health Futures Foundation (HFI)
Project 2: ASEAN Health Supply Chain Resilience and Cold Chain Security Program	June 22–26: 20th SOMHD; October 6–9: 15th ASEAN Medical Device Committee (AMDC)	SOMHD; ACPHEED; ASEAN Medical Device Committee (AMDC)	Regional health supply chain vulnerability map with ESG metrics; ACPHEED geopolitical disruption protocol concept note; cold chain management standards designed	Gov: DOH, FDA, DTI-PPPI, GPPB. Private: USABC member companies. External: IFC
Project 3: ASEAN High-Level Forum on AI for Health and Preventive Healthcare	June 22–26: 20th SOMHD (side event); September 7–11: 17th AHMM	COSTI; SOMHD; ASEAN Working Group on AI Governance	AI for Health Forum concept note endorsed by SOMHD; draft regional AI-enabled preventive healthcare framework; policy recommendations for AI for Health working group (PED 13)	Gov: DICT, DOST-PCHR, NPC, PhilHealth. Private: USABC member companies. External: ADB, U.S. Embassy

Project	Target ASEAN Meeting	ASEAN Implementing Body	Key 2026 Deliverable	Relevant Stakeholder Groups
Project 4: ASEAN Digital Health Interoperability and Regulatory Harmonization Laboratory	June 22–26: 20th SOMHD; September 14–22: 58th AEM (DEFA context)	ASEAN Digital Senior Officials Meeting (ADGSOM); SOMHD; ASEAN Medical Device Directive bodies	EHR integration standards technical session; digital health cybersecurity framework draft under DEFA; regulatory reliance pathways piloted for 2–3 medical devices	Gov: DICT, FDA, PhilHealth, NPC, DILG. Private: USABC member companies. External: IFC
Project 5: ASEAN Health Summit	September 7–11: 17th ASEAN Health Ministers Meeting (AHMM); May 8–9: 48th ASEAN Summit (Leaders' Interface)	SOMHD; ASEAN Health Ministers Meeting (AHMM); ACPHEED	Health Summit concept note endorsed; Chair's Summary and policy agenda for Singapore handover; cross-pillar health commitments consolidated	Gov: DOH, DICT, PhilHealth, FDA, PCMC. Private: USABC member companies. External: ADB, IFC, ASEAN-BAC Philippines
2026 Middle East Conflict Priority	<i>Treat Health Supply Chain Resilience (Project 2) as immediate operational priority: request SOMHD (June) to formally task ACPHEED with developing a geopolitical supply disruption protocol. Relevant health and trade authorities to co-lead a rapid mapping of ASEAN health supply chain exposures to Middle East-sourced pharmaceutical inputs disrupted by airspace closures. Explore blended financing with development finance partners to maintain medicine affordability as energy-driven manufacturing costs rise. Fast-track telehealth and remote diagnostics standards under ADGSOM leadership to ensure continuity of preventive care when physical supply chains are constrained.</i>			

PILLAR 3 SUSTAINABLE SUPPLY CHAINS AND LOGISTICS

RTD3 produced a technically rigorous exchange among senior government officials spanning trade, customs, transportation, and revenue authorities, alongside ADB's Trade and Supply Chain Finance Division and ERIA as multilateral partners. USABC member companies across consumer goods, healthcare, payments and trade technology sectors participated. ADB signaled a USD 5.7 billion trade and supply chain finance portfolio available for deployment, with specific technical support capacity for digitalization and trade-based money laundering controls. Blockchain-based customs system and Super Green Lane program were highlighted as models already validated for ASEAN-wide adoption.

The Supply Chains Discussion Paper frames the challenge clearly: the region is 'at a critical juncture where supply chain efficiency, regulatory coherence, and enforcement coordination increasingly determine economic competitiveness,' yet 'fragmented customs systems, regulatory divergence, inadequate Strategic Trade Management capacity, and the persistence of illicit trade undermine the predictable logistics, efficient customs processes, harmonized regulations, and secure trade systems that have sustained the region's industrial competitiveness' (SC DP, p. 7). Illicit trade in particular represents a direct threat to the integrity of regional supply chains, diverting legitimate revenue, exposing consumers to unsafe products, and undermining the enforcement frameworks that secure cross-border trade. With the Strait of Hormuz closure reducing traffic by approximately 90% and diverting global shipping around the Cape of Good Hope, the 2026 Middle East war has elevated these structural challenges from a reform agenda to an acute operational urgency.

Project 1: ASEAN High-Level Dialogue on Sustainable and Secure Supply Chains

This initiative is designed to 'convene senior trade and finance officials, customs commissioners, regulatory authorities, and private sector representatives to shape a cohesive regional agenda for sustainable and secure supply chains.' The dialogue provides a structured platform for discussing customs modernization, advancing regulatory convergence, building Strategic Trade Management capacity, and promoting sustainable logistics frameworks that minimize environmental impact. Sessions would feature panel discussions on risk-based customs procedures, case studies on digital documentation systems, and technical exchanges on sustainable logistics solutions including cold chain management and green corridors. Expected outputs include 'actionable recommendations for strengthening the ASEAN Declaration on Strategic Trade Management, proposals for addressing regulatory barriers, and a roadmap for advancing mutual recognition of standards' (SC DP, p. 13-14).

RTD3 affirmed this project as a primary vehicle for the broader supply chain agenda, with a unified national logistics platform and expanded supply chain finance partnerships identified as priority areas of interest. USABC member companies highlighted exposure to energy shocks and logistics costs and hinted at promoting EV adoption in logistics, directly aligned with the dialogue's sustainable logistics dimension. The Supply Chains DP explicitly identifies the June Customs Directors-General Meeting as the target 'DC business mission,' noting USABC's plan to 'secure endorsement and demonstrate tangible U.S. private sector support for ASEAN customs capacity development' at that event (SCDP,

p. 16). The 2026 Middle East conflict context should be presented as a live case study for why the Contingency Trade Protocol concept is essential.

Project 2: ASEAN Technical Program on Digital Customs and Paperless Trade

The second initiative 'supports customs modernization and trade facilitation objectives by building capacity among customs officials and trade regulators across ASEAN Member States to implement and effectively utilize digital customs platforms.' It would establish a comprehensive technical training and implementation support program complementing the ASEAN Single Window, deploying risk-based systems for efficient border processing and training on digital licensing systems, electronic certificates of origin, real-time supply chain monitoring, and blockchain-based traceability for pharmaceuticals and other regulated products (SC DP, p. 14). The Supply Chains DP also notes that 'the ASEAN Single Window Steering Committee (ASWSC) is expected to hold a Regional ASW Symposium tentatively in August 2026 in Jakarta, Indonesia,' providing an opportunity to engage as co-organizer.

RTD3 surfaced a range of existing national reforms, such as blockchain-based customs systems, port community systems, risk profiling with AI, expansion of AEO/Super Green Lane programs, and automated compliance systems, as ready contributions to regional interoperability and scalable templates for ASEAN-wide adoption. USABC member companies proposed its AI-enabled inspection systems for integration into risk-based customs inspection workflows and pointed to the role of digital payments and government procurement systems in improving liquidity and financial inclusion as complementary enablers. ADB, with its USD 5.7 billion portfolio, may be a source of technical support for digitalization and trade-based money laundering controls. The 41st ASEAN Customs Procedure and Trade Facilitation Working Group (CPTFWG) (October 20–22 in Jakarta) and 37th ASWSC meetings (October 20–22, virtual) may be viewed as the primary ASEAN technical vehicles to deliver this initiative.

Project 3: ASEAN Regulatory Harmonization Dialogue for Market Access and Circular Economy Integration

The third initiative 'seeks to systematically examine regulatory divergences across ASEAN Member States that create obstacles to efficient supply chain operations and market access,' with the objective of identifying areas where 'harmonized standards, mutual recognition arrangements, or common regulatory frameworks could reduce compliance costs, facilitate legitimate trade flows, and advance the circular economy' (SC DP, p. 14). Discussion themes include challenges in managing recycled materials across borders, pharmaceutical approvals and distribution systems, packaging standards and EPR frameworks, and food product regulations where mutual recognition could reduce trade costs. Expected outputs include a regulatory convergence matrix, sector-specific roadmaps for regulatory alignment in pharmaceuticals, recycled materials, packaging, and food products, and proposals for preventing illegal dumping and waste leakage through coordinated compliance mechanisms.

During RTD3, strong support emerged for regional cooperation frameworks on regulatory harmonization, with commitments to promote AI, blockchain, and big data applications for supply chain compliance. USABC member companies raised inconsistent recycling

standards and difficulty meeting sustainability targets across markets and highlighted the critical need for high reliability and safety standards in healthcare supply chains and proposed the Super Green Lane customs reform model as a contribution to regulatory efficiency. The 58th AEM Meeting (September 14–22) and the 50th HLTF-EI (August 26–27) are the primary institutional vehicles.

Project 4: ASEAN Joint Program on Strategic Trade Management and Illicit Trade Prevention

The fourth initiative 'seeks to strengthen the capacity of trade ministries, customs authorities, and enforcement agencies to implement coordinated Strategic Trade Management systems and illicit trade prevention frameworks.' The program would establish a Regional Coordination Platform bringing together trade ministries, customs enforcement agencies, and private sector stakeholders to 'elevate illicit trade as a shared regional security and economic challenge requiring coordinated responses rather than fragmented national enforcement.' It would advance implementation of ASEAN-wide digital tracking systems interoperable with the ASEAN Single Window, creating 'end-to-end visibility for regulated products, incorporating anti-counterfeiting technologies, and enabling customs and regulatory authorities to distinguish legitimate products from illicit goods at border checkpoints' (SC DP, p. 15). The Philippines' Chairship should position Project 4 not merely as an enforcement campaign but as a structural economic reform that simultaneously stabilizes government revenues, restores market integrity, and builds investor confidence, anchored on three practical priorities: harmonizing manufacturing and export controls at origin so that non-compliance is enforceable under origin-country law; establishing mutually recognized inspection rights for high-risk goods in transit, enabled through the ASEAN Single Window and customs digitalization; and securing endorsement for this agenda at the CECWG Meeting (August, Philippines) and, alternatively, the 45th CCC Meeting (November 10–12, 2026). The Supply Chains DP specifically notes that this initiative could be conducted at the 40th Customs Enforcement and Compliance Working Group (CECWG) Meeting (August, Philippines). However, if the global situation persists, alternatively, this initiative could also be proposed alongside the 45th Coordinating Committee on Customs (CCC) Meeting on November 10-12, 2026 (host country – TBC).

RTD3 confirmed the availability of concrete national-level capabilities, including AI-enabled risk profiling and enforcement systems, tax administration data sharing mechanisms, ready for integration into the STM coordination platforms. ADB is a resource for technical support for trade-based money laundering controls. This is significant for the STM agenda. USABC member companies noted existing AI inspection systems offering private sector capability for integration into coordinated enforcement frameworks. The Middle East conflict context adds an energy and critical raw material tracking dimension to the STM framework. Monitoring the movement of petroleum, fertilizer inputs, and other strategic materials during periods of geopolitical disruption is now an acute operational need.

The following table summarizes the four Pillar 3 projects with their ASEAN implementation anchors, institutional pathways, deliverables, and stakeholders:

Project	Target ASEAN Meeting	ASEAN Implementing Body	Key 2026 Deliverable	Relevant Stakeholder Groups
Project 1: ASEAN High-Level Dialogue on Sustainable and Secure Supply Chains	June 2–4: 35th ASEAN Customs Directors-General Meeting, Iloilo (SC DP, p. 16)	ASEAN Directors-General of Customs; Senior Economic Officials Meeting (SEOM)	Private sector supply chain resilience perspectives and Contingency Trade Protocol concept note presented; DG endorsement for ASEAN-level follow-up secured	Gov: DTI (ASEAN desk and Bureau of International Trade Relations), BOC (blockchain customs; AEO/Green Lane models), DOTr (logistics data standards). Private: USABC member companies. External: ERIA (policy support). External: ADB
Project 2: ASEAN Technical Program on Digital Customs and Paperless Trade	October 20–22: 41st CPTFWG; October 20–22: 37th ASEAN Single Window Steering Committee (ASWSC)	Coordinating Committee on Customs (CCC); ASEAN Single Window Steering Committee (ASWSC)	Digital customs training curriculum designed; ASEAN Single Window 2.0 implementation roadmap; risk-based clearance piloted with 2 customs authorities	Gov: BOC (blockchain; port community systems; risk profiling), PEZA (automated systems; traceability pilot), BIR (data sharing). Private: USABC member companies. External: ADB (USD 5.7B SCF portfolio; digitalization technical support)
Project 3: ASEAN Regulatory Harmonization Dialogue for Market Access and Circular Economy Integration	September 14–22: 58th AEM; August 26–27: 50th HLTF-EI	SEOM; High-Level Task Force on ASEAN Economic Integration (HLTF-EI)	Regulatory convergence concept note for 3–5 priority sectors; equivalence pathway frameworks for high-value regulated goods; phased convergence timeline for Singapore	Gov: DTI (ASEAN desk), PEZA (investor-facing systems). Private: USABC member companies. External: ERIA (harmonization advocacy; circular economy dimension)

Project	Target ASEAN Meeting	ASEAN Implementing Body	Key 2026 Deliverable	Relevant Stakeholder Groups
Project 4: ASEAN Joint Program on Strategic Trade Management and Illicit Trade Prevention	August 18–20: 40th CECWG; June 2–4: Customs DG side engagement	Customs Enforcement and Compliance Working Group (CECWG); Coordinating Committee on Customs (CCC)	Digital STM tracking system concept note; coordinated enforcement capacity-building plan; real-time cargo diversion monitoring linkage proposed	Gov: BOC (risk profiling; AI enforcement), BIR (revenue data integration), DTI. Private: USABC member companies. External: ADB (anti-money laundering technical support)
2026 Middle East Conflict Priority	<i>Utilize the June Customs DG Meeting to advance ASEAN Contingency Trade Protocol activating alternative routing, expedited clearance, and emergency trade lanes for chokepoint closures. Enhance STM framework to track energy and critical raw materials. Integrate real-time cargo diversion monitoring into digital customs program. Table port infrastructure resilience investment as regional priority under PED 17 at the September AEM Meeting, supported by ADB trade finance portfolio and ERIA analysis.</i>			

PILLAR 4 DIGITAL ECONOMY AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

The discussions during RTD4 brought to fore a national workforce deficit of over one million ICT workers and more than 365,000 AI-specific jobs, with existing upskilling roadmaps and Digital Skills Passport as scalable models for regional adoption. Regulatory harmonization and ISO 20022 implementation for cross-border payments emerged as priority areas. ADB signaled financing capacity for sovereign and private digital infrastructure investment, noting the persistent digital divide between urban and rural areas and gender disparities in internet access. Across stakeholders, four dominant constraints emerged: the foundations problem (infrastructure, connectivity, data systems), a workforce and skills crisis, trust and governance gaps, and a regional integration gap centered on DEFA implementation (RTD4 Summary, March 2026).

The Digital Economy DP identifies the core tension: 'ASEAN has adopted frameworks including the Digital Economy Framework Agreement (DEFA) and national digitalization strategies,' but 'progress on infrastructure, workforce development, regulatory harmonization, cybersecurity, and digital trust continues largely in parallel rather than through coordinated regional action' (DE DP, p. 5). The 2026 Middle East conflict adds energy cost and labor displacement dimensions to this challenge, with large-scale repatriation of Gulf migrant workers creating urgent pressure for domestic reskilling and digital workforce absorption programs.

Project 1: ASEAN Digital Interoperability and Payments Connectivity Forum

This project is 'designed to advance a regional agenda for interoperable payments, digital identity alignment, and secure data flows,' supporting DEFA implementation by identifying pathways for harmonizing regulatory approaches, strengthening cross-border payments, and improving digital inclusion. The forum would gather central bank representatives, ICT departments, fintech firms, payments networks, and regulators and be implemented in three phases: a preparatory phase (already completed as part of roundtable groundwork); the forum itself in Q2–Q3 2026; and a follow-up phase producing recommendations to DEFA implementation bodies. Building on the PED on Advancing ASEAN Regional Payments Connectivity, the forum would 'incorporate full traceability of cross-border payment flows by integrating monitoring and reporting mechanisms aligned with anti-money laundering standards' (DE DP, p. 12).

The Forum's agenda also advances these principles grounded in the region's digital payments experience: first, that interoperable, open-loop payment acceptance using globally recognized contactless standards allows visitors to pay with instruments they carry from home, removing friction and supporting spending across ASEAN's tourism economy; second, that flexible, cross-border routing and trusted data flows are prerequisites for the real-time, AI-enabled fraud management on which payment security and resilience depend, and that overly prescriptive domestic routing mandates or data localization requirements can fragment security controls and increase rather than reduce risk; and third, that durable payment security investment requires predictable, balanced policy frameworks that support long-term ecosystem-wide investment in fraud prevention, cybersecurity, and resilience infrastructure.

This mandate should extend to two practical enforcement objectives: requiring traceable digital payment channels for cross-border shipments of high-risk goods categories, and

excisable goods with automated AML flags and real-time alerts to destination customs authorities; and advancing a Pre-Export Validation Protocol whereby exporters certify product compliance on a shared digital platform, destination customs validates before shipment departs, and payment is released only upon approval. Together, these measures close the loophole that smuggling networks exploit through untraceable payments and the legal export/non-compliant diversion pattern, and directly reinforce the STM objectives of Pillar 3, Project 4.

Regulatory harmonization, ISO 20022 implementation, and cross-border payment corridor pilots emerged as priorities for advancing regional payments connectivity, directly supported by PEDs 8, 9, and 10 and existing national programs, including the SAIL ASEAN initiative, as ready institutional vehicles. The Philippines is positioned as a potential ASEAN digital gateway, linking the digital economy agenda to FDI attraction and the creative economy. The 29th ACCED (June 15–16) is the primary ASEAN entry point, with the 58th AEM (September 14–22) providing the broader DEFA implementation context.

Project 2: ASEAN MSME Digital Transformation and Inclusive Growth Program

The MSME program 'intends to support MSMEs in building the digital competencies needed to participate effectively in the digital economy,' addressing digital illiteracy, strengthening financial literacy, and providing practical training on e-commerce, digital payments, digital business models, and data-driven decision making. The program deploys a 'hybrid delivery model combining in-person training hubs in three-to-five member states with a digital learning platform accessible region-wide.' During the 2026 Chairship window, the focus is on the foundational groundwork phase: 'conducting needs assessments in interested member states to understand existing digital skills gaps, initiating the co-design of a standardized curriculum framework,' and developing the architecture for a hybrid delivery model. Expected outputs include a needs assessment report, draft curriculum framework, and program design document positioning the program for formal launch in 2027 (DE DP, p. 12–13).

RTD 4 yielded a highly practical regional model, targeting 600–1,000 MSMEs through geographically tailored programs — supply chain programs in Luzon, women MSME programs in the Visayas, and PPP-driven programs in Mindanao — that could serve as a scalable national-to-regional template. Existing national infrastructure, such as the 42-plus Digital Transformation Centers across the Philippines, was highlighted as ready delivery infrastructure for the program. USABC member companies expressed openness to cooperate in activities related to enabling digital payments and improving MSME liquidity, while highlighting that MSMEs 'lack liquidity due to slow payments' as a compounding challenge. The 22nd ACCMSME Meeting and ASEAN MSME Advisory Board (October) are the primary institutional vehicles for advancing MSME-specific deliverables.

Project 3: ASEAN Regional Academy for Digital Workforce Development

The Regional Academy 'seeks to establish a structured program for digital workforce development aligned with DEFA and ASEAN's Digital Workforce Framework,' building expertise in AI literacy, cybersecurity, data governance, regulatory technology, and digital leadership through programs targeting civil servants, MSME owners, educators, and early career professionals. During the 2026 Chairship window, the focus is on establishing the foundational architecture: 'identifying a suitable host institution in the Philippines,

initiating curriculum design in consultation with technology companies and academic institutions, and developing a framework for ASEAN-recognized digital credentials.' A small pilot cohort may be organized to test delivery modalities ahead of a full Academy

launch (DE DP, p. 13). This project may be introduced at the sidelines of the ASEAN Economic Ministers Meeting.

With a workforce gap of over one million ICT workers and 365,000-plus AI-specific positions, the Philippines faces a national crisis in digital skills that mirrors the regional challenge at scale. Existing national contributions include a National AI Upskilling Roadmap, 433 digital micro-credential courses, a Digital Skills Passport, and an Adopt-Adapt training model — all of which could seed the Academy's ASEAN-level curriculum. Advancing mutual recognition of digital skills across member states through ASEAN TVET Council was identified as a priority regional opportunity. The 2026 Middle East conflict creates an added urgency with the return of large numbers of skilled workers from Gulf states — many with technical and professional backgrounds — to channel repatriated human capital into domestic digital economy growth through targeted Academy tracks.

Project 4: ASEAN Digital Trust, Cyber Resilience, and Online Safety Initiative

The Digital Trust Initiative 'would strengthen confidence and trust in digital ecosystems by addressing fraud, scams, and enforcement gaps through model guidelines, joint task forces, and capacity building for regulators and enforcement agencies' (DE DP, p. 5). It responds to a documented surge in cybercrime across Southeast Asia with the UN Office on Drugs and Crime warning that cyber-enabled fraud cost East and Southeast Asia between USD 18 billion and USD 37 billion in 2023, with criminal networks increasingly deploying generative AI as a force multiplier (DE DP, p. 9). The initiative would develop anti-scam frameworks with public-private partnership models, produce e-commerce platform accountability standards, and design cybersecurity capacity-building programs for MSMEs and enforcement agencies. Two emerging areas warrant dedicated attention within this initiative. First, as stable coin activity expands across ASEAN, the Initiative should support the development of clear, proportionate regulatory frameworks that enable responsible stable coin use while preserving financial stability, monetary sovereignty, and compatibility with existing payment systems; regulatory clarity developed in dialogue with industry reduces uncertainty, encourages compliance, and helps ensure that digital asset activity develops within supervised, transparent environments. Second, as agentic commerce expands, ASEAN policymakers should advance outcomes-focused, technology-neutral frameworks that address authorization and accountability requirements for AI-initiated transactions, support interoperability across jurisdictions, and embed resilience by design through auditability, real-time monitoring, and clearly defined recovery mechanisms; early consideration of these frameworks can support innovation while reinforcing trust and stability in ASEAN's digital financial system.

During RTD 4, government representatives highlighted that as the digital economy expands, MSMEs are particularly vulnerable due to limited awareness of data protection obligations and increased exposure to scams, with a Data Privacy Competency Program integrated into national education and technical curricula identified as a priority output. Workforce development emerged as the most critical constraint, with regional competency frameworks incorporating continuous updating mechanisms proposed to close the gap between education systems and industry demand. Payment system security

was also underscored as a priority area, aligned with the trust and safety dimension of this initiative. The 5th ASEAN Consumer Protection Conference (June 8–9) and the Ministerial Roundtable on AI and Information and Media Cooperation (October 9–10) are the primary institutional platforms.

The following table summarizes the four Pillar 4 projects with their ASEAN implementation anchors, institutional pathways, deliverables, and stakeholders:

Project	Target ASEAN Meeting	ASEAN Implementing Body	Key 2026 Deliverable	Relevant Stakeholder Groups
Project 1: ASEAN Digital Interoperability and Payments Connectivity Forum	June 15–16: 29th ACCED; September 14–22: 58th AEM (DEFA implementation agenda)	ASEAN Digital Ministers Meeting (ADGMIN); ASEAN Coordinating Committee on E-commerce and Digital Economy (ACCED)	DEFA implementation gap assessment; private sector readiness inventory; joint ACCED-USABC workplan for DEFA activation; payments interoperability principles	Gov: DTI (ASEAN SAIL; PEDs 8, 9, 10), BSP (payments roadmap; ISO 20022; pilot corridors), DICT, DFA. Private: USABC member companies. External: ERIA (DEFA governance research).
Project 2: ASEAN MSME Digital Transformation and Inclusive Growth Program	October 1–31: 22nd ACCMSME Meeting; October 11–15: ASEAN MSME Advisory Board (AMAB)	ASEAN Coordinating Committee for MSMEs (ACCMSME); ASEAN MSME Advisory Board (AMAB)	MSME digital readiness assessment in 3 member states; e-commerce enforcement standards concept note; digital financial inclusion roadmap aligned with PED 10	Gov: DTI (MSME digitalization; SAIL), DICT (42+ Digital Transformation Centers). External: CIPE (600–1000 MSME regional programs), ADB (MSME financing). Private: USABC member companies.
Project 3: ASEAN Regional Academy for Digital Workforce Development	June 22–26: ASEAN Higher Education Policy Dialogue; August 23–27: 22nd SLOM / 29th ALMM; October 14–15: 19th ASEAN Forum on	Senior Labour Officials Meeting (SLOM); ASEAN Labour Ministers Meeting (ALMM); SOM-ED	Regional Academy scoping study; host institution identified; AI and digital skills curriculum framework; Gulf migrant worker reskilling track	Gov: TESDA (AI Upskilling Roadmap; micro-credentials; Digital Skills Passport; ASEAN TVET Council leadership), DICT (Free Wi-Fi; AI skills-job

Project	Target ASEAN Meeting	ASEAN Implementing Body	Key 2026 Deliverable	Relevant Stakeholder Groups
	Migrant Labour (AFML)		designed for AFML	matching). External: ERIA (skills gap research), Tech for Good Institute (competency frameworks), ADB

Project	Target ASEAN Meeting	ASEAN Implementing Body	Key 2026 Deliverable	Relevant Stakeholder Groups
Project 4: ASEAN Digital Trust, Cyber Resilience, and Online Safety Initiative	June 8–9: 5th ASEAN Consumer Protection Conference; October 9–10: Ministerial Roundtable on AI and Information/Media Cooperation	ASEAN Committee on Consumer Protection (ACCP); ASEAN Digital Senior Officials Meeting (ADGSOM)	Anti-scam PPP framework concept note; e-commerce platform accountability standards draft; cybersecurity capacity-building program for MSMEs and enforcement agencies	Gov: NPC (Data Privacy Competency Program; TESDA/DepEd curriculum integration), DICT, BSP (payment system security). External: Tech for Good Institute. Private: USABC member companies.
2026 Middle East Conflict Priority	<i>Integrate energy resilience dimension into Digital Interoperability Forum: relevant trade authorities and multilateral development partners to co-develop briefing note on renewable energy sourcing for ASEAN data center operators to reduce oil price exposure. Bring Gulf migrant worker reskilling track to 19th ASEAN Forum on Migrant Labor (October), with existing national skills frameworks proposed as scalable model. Add contingency business continuity modules — co-designed by civil society partners and relevant government agencies — to the MSME Digital Transformation Program. Accelerate cross-border digital remittance corridors for displaced Gulf migrant worker families. Expedite national free connectivity infrastructure and AI skills-job matching platforms to support domestic absorption of returning workers.</i>			

PILLAR 5 ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

RTD5 on Artificial Intelligence was held on April 14, 2026, bringing together representatives from Philippine legislative and executive agencies, multilateral partners, USABC member companies, and civil society. Three cross-cutting themes emerged: (i) the need for interoperable, risk-based AI governance to avoid fragmentation across ASEAN; (ii) the critical role of data governance as the backbone of trustworthy AI deployment, particularly as DEFA moves towards signing; and (iii) the imperative to ensure that AI adoption creates, rather than displaces, quality employment across the region. Participants underscored that DEFA's signing represents a critical deadline for establishing the institutional architecture for AI governance before the agreement enters into force. Government agencies affirmed alignment between national AI programs and USABC's proposed projects and expressed readiness to co-develop and co-anchor initiatives. Across sectors, there was a strong consensus that AI security must be treated as a foundational design requirement rather than an afterthought, and that MSMEs should remain the primary beneficiaries of AI-enabled growth.

To operationalize this MSME focus, ASEAN-BAC Philippines is developing ASEAN Mentorship for Entrepreneurs Network (AMEN) 2.0, an upgraded version of its 2017 legacy project, now powered by digital platforms. The Philippines will serve as the proof of concept, with a model designed for regional scalability. At its core is a specialized Learning Management System (LMS) to be deployed region-wide, giving MSMEs access to markets, finance, and growth opportunities needed for digital scaling. Its mentor network will serve as the primary platform for AI-readiness training, ensuring technology adoption translates into real market opportunities and stronger business linkages.

The AI Discussion Paper proposes five flagship projects: the U.S.–ASEAN AI Summit, the Digital Transformation in Government Workshop Series (AI Edition), the ASEAN Secure AI and Critical Infrastructure Resilience Initiative, the ASEAN Center for the Workforce of the Future (ACWOF), and the ASEAN Digital Data Corridor Pilot. These are aligned with PED 14 (Regional Program for Science, Technology, and Innovation on AI), PED 8 (DEFA), PED 9 (ASEAN Declaration on Responsible AI-Powered MSME Growth), and PED 13 (AI for Health). RTD5 confirmed strong institutional alignment across all five proposed AI projects. The 89th COSTI Meeting (June 22–26) is the primary entry point for concept note endorsements under PED 14, with the 58th AEM (September 14–22) providing the broader DEFA governance context. The ASEAN WG-AI and ADGSOM are the key technical vehicles across all projects. National government agencies confirmed co-anchor roles, with the national workforce agency's AI Upskilling Roadmap and Digital Skills Passport positioned as the institutional foundation for the ACWOF. The U.S. government's AI Exports Program (launched October 2025) and the AI Consortiums application window (April 1 to June 30, 2026) provide concrete mechanisms for mobilizing U.S. private sector engagement. USABC member companies across cloud infrastructure, cybersecurity, enterprise AI, and workforce development are ready to contribute technical expertise and training content across all five projects.

Project 1: U.S.–ASEAN AI Summit

RTD5 produced the broadest government endorsement of any AI initiative, with broad cross-agency support expressed for a flagship Summit as the center piece of the

Philippine AI agenda. The AI Discussion Paper frames the Summit as a ‘flagship, multi-track platform that anchors ASEAN’s AI agenda during the Philippines’ Chairship, bringing together policymakers, regulators, industry leaders, and technical experts from across ASEAN and dialogue partners’ (AI DP, p. 14). The Summit will feature three integrated tracks: foundational policy dialogues aligning national approaches with ASEAN instruments, including the ASEAN Responsible AI Roadmap and the proposed ASEAN Declaration on Responsible AI Implementation; technical dialogues on cloud-edge architectures, cybersecurity, and AI-enabling infrastructure; and sector-focused AI corridor dialogues covering healthcare, agriculture, manufacturing, disaster resilience, and public services.

A view shared across RTD5 was that ASEAN must define its AI governance identity proactively through platforms like this Summit before external actors define it for the region. The U.S. government’s AI Exports Program (launched October 2025) and the AI Consortiums application window (April 1 to June 30, 2026) are concrete mechanisms available to co-anchor the Summit’s private sector dimension. The 89th COSTI Meeting (June 22–26) is the primary institutional entry point for securing an ASEAN-level concept note endorsement. Given that the ASEAN Digital Ministers Meeting (ADGMIN) and its Senior Officials Meeting convened in January 2026 with no further session currently scheduled under the Philippine notional calendar, the Philippines should use its prerogative as Chair to request an intersessional ADGMIN engagement ahead of the Summit to ensure digital ministerial-level alignment on the AI governance agenda prior to the 48th ASEAN Summit in May.

Project 2: Digital Transformation in Government Workshop Series (AI Edition)

This capacity-building program builds on the Philippines’ existing Digital Transformation in Government (DIGIT) Workshop Series to strengthen AI readiness and institutional capacity among ASEAN government officials. As the AI Discussion Paper notes, the program focuses on ‘practical challenges that officials face in planning, procuring, deploying, and overseeing AI in public services,’ covering AI governance and coordination structures, responsible procurement, risk and impact assessments, data protection and cybersecurity, and ethical AI in citizen-facing systems (AI DP, p. 14).

RTD5 reinforced the importance of moving from principles to practice, with participants across sectors stressing that practical AI tools must be coupled with ethical education to inform new users (RTD5 Notes, April 2026). A view shared across the session was that operationalization is the priority, with the Workshop recommended as the vehicle for finalizing a shortlist of public-private pilots that can inspire ASEAN Member States. Government agencies with national AI research and innovation mandates confirmed alignment with the program and expressed readiness to co-develop content. USABC member companies offered structured training frameworks and capacity-building platforms for government practitioners. Workshops will be delivered in regional and country-level formats, producing shared reference materials and country-specific action plans for ASEAN-level Chairship deliverables.

Project 3: ASEAN Secure AI and Critical Infrastructure Resilience Initiative

This initiative addresses rapidly evolving AI-driven cyber risks by promoting secure-by-design and resilient-by-design approaches to AI deployment in critical sectors. It will bring

together national cybersecurity agencies, critical infrastructure regulators, and industry experts to co-develop a practical reference framework, with priority focus on four AI-specific security areas: protection of defensive AI in cybersecurity operations; adversarial input detection and mitigation; model security and intellectual property protection; and privacy-preserving AI techniques in high-risk environments. The initiative will also organize AI-enabled cross-border cyber incident simulations and design voluntary mechanisms for real-time threat intelligence sharing under clear legal frameworks (AI DP, pp. 15–16).

RTD5 elevated AI security as the most consequential priority from a national security perspective, with participants citing the weaponization of AI. This includes the rise of deepfakes, foreign data poisoning, and AI-augmented attacks on critical infrastructure as the defining risk. A view shared across defense, intelligence, and regulatory participants was that coordinated response frameworks upholding international sovereignty are needed, and that a joint task force on critical infrastructure resilience would be a meaningful first step for 2026. Private sector participants with cybersecurity mandates underscored that agentic AI introduces a new category of digital insider risk as machine identities vastly outnumber human ones, making identity security and strong access controls foundational. The 2026 Middle East conflict adds operational urgency: the Strait of Hormuz closure has created real-world stress tests for AI-enabled supply chain monitoring and crisis decision-support, directly informing the first simulation exercise scenario.

Project 4: ASEAN Center for the Workforce of the Future (ACWOF)

The ASEAN Center for the Workforce of the Future will serve as a regional coordination and knowledge platform for digital skills development, workforce transformation, and institutional capacity building. Operating as a virtual hub anchored in a Philippine institution with satellite coordination nodes across Member States, the Center will develop a competency-based AI and digital workforce framework, curate training programs, facilitate skills portability, and coordinate peer-learning for women, youth, rural communities, and returning migrant workers. Its AI workforce framework will define skill levels from foundational AI literacy to advanced data science and AI engineering, and link them to micro-credentials, certification pathways, and the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (AQR) (AI DP, pp. 15–16).

RTD5 identified the national workforce development agency as the standout institutional anchor for the ACWOF, with its National AI Upskilling Roadmap and Digital Skills Passport confirmed as scalable models and the President’s budget approval for the AI upskilling module cited as an enabling commitment (RTD5 Notes, April 2026). Participants across government and civil society emphasized the need to move from pilots to pivots, with the enterprise training legal framework cited as a pathway to accelerated implementation. A recurring theme was credential portability: shared competency frameworks that allow workers in the Philippines to receive accreditation recognized across ASEAN are seen as a direct economic multiplier. Representatives from business groups reinforced that with 90 percent of ASEAN businesses being micro or small enterprises, the ACWOF must serve MSMEs as its primary constituency. Labor market participants stressed that building STEM pipelines and knowledge capacity is the priority investment for long-term workforce readiness. The ALMM (October 2026) is the primary ministerial vehicle for advancing the ACWOF mandate alongside the ADGMIN AI workstream.

Project 5: ASEAN Digital Data Corridor Pilot

The ASEAN Digital Data Corridor Pilot will demonstrate how DEFA’s provisions on data governance, interoperability, and trusted cross-border data flows can be operationalized in concrete AI-enabled use cases. The pilot will focus on a small number of high-impact use cases such as cross-border trade and customs compliance, regional disaster risk reduction, or disease surveillance where shared datasets and AI models can deliver clear regional benefits that no single Member State can achieve alone. Participation is voluntary to respect varying levels of readiness across ASEAN, and technical architectures (federated or hybrid models, encrypted channels, audit logging) will be co-designed with participating members to respect domestic laws while enabling regional benefits (AI DP, pp. 16–17).

RTD5 identified the Data Corridor Pilot as the initiative with the greatest potential to translate DEFA governance commitments into tangible outcomes, with participants noting that ASEAN-level data cooperation can generate actionable findings on shared challenges such as climate adaptation and MSME empowerment (RTD5 Notes, April 2026). A view shared across financial regulators, privacy bodies, and education agencies was that AI is fundamentally anchored in data, and that DEFA’s data provisions must carefully balance enabling innovation with protecting security and sovereignty. Participants consistently endorsed a voluntary, sandboxed approach to the Corridor, noting that this prevents an all-or-nothing dynamic and allows practical demonstration before regional replication. The Philippines’ Chairship will convene regulators, industry partners, and technical experts at COSTI (June) and the 58th AEM (September) to specify pilot parameters and implement limited-scope corridors, producing a documented roadmap and replication playbook for Singapore’s and Thailand’s Chairships.

The following table summarizes the five Pillar 5 projects with their ASEAN implementation anchors, institutional pathways, deliverables, and stakeholders:

Project	Target ASEAN Meeting	ASEAN Implementing Body	Key 2026 Deliverable	Relevant Stakeholder Groups
Project 1: U.S.–ASEAN AI Summit	June 22–26: 89th COSTI Meeting (primary concept note endorsement); September 14–22: 58th AEM (DEFA governance context); May 8–9: 48th ASEAN Summit (Leaders’ Interface with ASEAN-BAC)	COSTI; ASEAN Working Group on AI Governance (WG-AI); ASEAN Digital Senior Officials Meeting (ADGSOM); Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC) for security track	Summit concept note endorsed by ADGMIN; Chair’s Summary with policy recommendations to relevant ASEAN bodies; shortlist of 5–10 public-private AI pilots for Philippines–Singapore–Thailand continuity arc	Gov: DTI, DOST (ASTI), DICT, NPC, DND, NICA, BSP. Private: USABC member companies. External: ASEAN-BAC Philippines, ASEAN WG-AI, Global AI Council Philippines, U.S. Embassy Foreign Commercial Service

Project	Target ASEAN Meeting	ASEAN Implementing Body	Key 2026 Deliverable	Relevant Stakeholders Groups
Project 2: Digital Transformation in Government Workshop Series (AI Edition)	Q3 2026 (TBC): Regional workshop hosted in Manila alongside COSTI or ADGSOM track; country-level workshops in 3–5 member states Q3–Q4 2026	COSTI; ASEAN WG-AI; ADGSOM; ASEAN Coordinating Committee on Electronic Commerce (ACCED)	First Government AI Workshop delivered; AI governance reference materials and procurement templates published; country-specific action plans developed for 3 pilot member states in support of PED 14	Gov: DTI, DOST, DICT, DepEd, DOLE. Private: USABC member companies. External: ASEAN-BAC Philippines, ASEAN WG-AI, Access Partnership
Project 3: ASEAN Secure AI and Critical Infrastructure Resilience Initiative	Q3 2026: Initial convening of cybersecurity agencies and critical infrastructure regulators; Q4 2026: First AI-enabled cross-border cyber incident simulation exercise (financial services or energy sector)	ASEAN Telecommunications Regulators' Council (ATRC); SOMTC Cybersecurity Working Group; ASEAN Regional CERT; ADGSOM cybersecurity track	Reference framework for secure-by-design AI deployment in critical sectors; agentic AI security guardrails concept note; first cross-border cyber simulation exercise completed; voluntary threat intelligence sharing protocol designed	Gov: DND, NICA, NPC, DICT, DTI. Private: USABC member companies. External: ASEAN-BAC Philippines, ASEAN WG-AI, U.S. Embassy Foreign Commercial Service
Project 4: ASEAN Center for the Workforce of the Future (ACWOF)	October 2026: ASEAN Labour Ministers' Meeting (ALMM) track; August–September: ASEAN Digital Ministers Meeting (ADGMIN); Q3 2026: ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (AQRF) Working Group engagement	ASEAN WG-AI; ADGSOM; ASEAN Labour Ministers' Meeting (ALMM); ASEAN Coordinating Committee for MSMEs (ACCMSME)	ACWOF Terms of Reference adopted; host institution confirmed (TESDA as national anchor); competency-based AI and digital workforce framework draft; micro-credential and AQRF linkage designed; peer-learning network launched across 3 member states	Gov: TESDA (national anchor), DICT, DOST, DepEd, DOLE. Private: USABC member companies. External: ASEAN-BAC Philippines, ASEAN WG-AI, Access Partnership

Project	Target ASEAN Meeting	ASEAN Implementing Body	Key 2026 Deliverable	Relevant Stakeholder Groups
Project 5: ASEAN Digital Data Corridor Pilot	Q3 2026: Pilot parameters scoped at COSTI and ADGSOM; Q4 2026: Limited-scope data corridor implemented with 2–3 volunteer member states; 58th AEM (September) for DEFA data governance alignment	COSTI; ADGSOM; ASEAN Data Management Framework Working Group; ASEAN Framework on Cross-Border Cloud Computing implementation body	Pilot sector and use case confirmed (cross-border trade and customs or disease surveillance preferred); governance arrangement co-designed with participating member states; technical architecture (federated model, audit logging) documented; replication playbook for Singapore handover	Gov: DTI (data governance lead), DOST, NPC (privacy framework), BSP (cross-border financial data track). Private: USABC member companies. External: ASEAN-BAC Philippines, ASEAN WG-AI, ERIA
2026 Middle East Conflict Priority	RTD5 confirmed four 2026 Middle East conflict priority actions for the AI pillar. First, accelerate the Secure AI Initiative to include real-time AI-enabled monitoring of semiconductor and helium supply chain disruptions, given Gulf region input dependency (AI DP, p. 8). Second, fast-track AI-enabled telehealth deployment under the joint Pillar 2–5 healthcare-AI interface, deploying connected diagnostics and remote screening as supply chain constraints limit physical medical product delivery. Third, advance the ASEAN Digital Data Corridor Pilot to prioritize humanitarian logistics and disaster response as its first use case, given the humanitarian dimensions of the Strait of Hormuz closure. Fourth, incorporate energy-resilient AI infrastructure modules into the Government AI Workshop Series, equipping officials to plan AI deployments that remain operational under energy cost volatility and supply disruptions.			

C. Philippines-to-Singapore Handover Architecture

By November 2026, a Singapore Transition Brief that documents progress made, commitments secured, outstanding gaps, and recommended first-90-days priority actions for the incoming Chair. The table below summarizes the Phase 2 deliverable targeted per pillar and the corresponding Singapore handover expectation for implementation continuity.

Pillar	Phase 2 Deliverable (June–September 2026)	Singapore Handover (Phase 3: Oct–Nov 2026)
Sustainability and Food Security	SOM-AMAF–endorsed Nexus Initiative concept note; fertilizer vulnerability assessment (DA/DOST-PCAARRD); AFSRB buffer stock framework scoping (NFA model); AFSIS traceability framework proposal	Launch ASEAN Agricultural Input Resilience Mechanism; operationalize ASEAN Circular Economy Framework Agreement under HLTF-EI; accomplish a full Nutrition Collaborative rollout under AHMM
Healthcare	Health supply chain exposure map (DOH/DTI-PPPI; USABC Member companies as private sector contributors); ACPHEED geopolitical disruption protocol concept note; AI for Health Forum concept note endorsed by SOMHD	Operationalize ASEAN Cold Chain Security Standards; formally adopt ACPHEED geopolitical protocol; implement AI for Health roadmap under AHMM; complete Digital Health Interoperability Lab pilot
Sustainable Supply Chains and Logistics	Customs DG–endorsed Contingency Trade Protocol concept note (DTI/BOC with ADB technical support); CECWG digital STM tracking design (Astrophysics contribution); HLTF-EI regulatory harmonization scoping	Launch ASEAN Contingency Trade Protocol under SEOM/CCC; implement ASEAN Joint STM digital platform; adopt a full regulatory harmonization workplan
Digital Economy and Workforce Development	DEFA signed; ACCED-USABC DEFA readiness assessment (BSP and DTI as co-leads); MSME digital readiness pilots in 3 member states (CIPE model); Regional Academy scoping study (TESDA national model as foundation); Gulf worker reskilling track designed	Activate DEFA implementation programs under ADGMIN; operationalize the MSME Center of Excellence; adopt the Regional Academy TOR under ALMM; launch reskilling programs
Artificial Intelligence	COSTI/ADGMIN–endorsed Summit concept note; Government AI Workshop Series first session delivered; Secure AI Initiative framework drafted (DND/NICA/DICT as possible co-leads); ACWOF Terms of Reference adopted (TESDA anchor); Data Corridor pilot sector confirmed (DTI/DOST possible leads)	Host U.S.–ASEAN AI Summit; launch ASEAN AI Governance Peer Review; operationalize ACWOF; implement ASEAN Digital Data Corridor in 2–3 use cases; advance Secure AI cyber simulation series

Conclusion

The Philippines' 2026 ASEAN Chairship is at a moment that will be studied for years: a moment when the structural challenges the region has long struggled with were forthrightly addressed, if AMS and partners act together. That includes fragmented supply chains, under-resourced health systems, uneven digital adoption, fragile food security, and nascent AI governance colliding with a geopolitical crisis that reinforced the need for regional integration and rules-based trading system. The outbreak of the Middle East conflict and the closure of the Strait of Hormuz further exposed vulnerabilities. In doing so, they created the conditions for the kind of decisive, coordinated regional response that the ASEAN Community Vision 2045 calls for, and that the five pillars of this Strategic Action Plan are designed to deliver.

This Strategic Action Plan is USABC's consolidated private sector contribution to that response. It is grounded in five Discussion Papers developed through extensive consultation with USABC member companies and validated through roundtable discussions with Philippine government agencies, multilateral development institutions, and civil society. It is anchored in the Philippines' three Chairship priorities: Peace and Security Anchors, Prosperity Corridors, and People Empowerment and aligned with the ASEAN Community Vision 2045 and its aspiration for "a resilient, innovative, dynamic, and people-centered ASEAN." It is designed with a clear and deliberate horizon: not to complete the agenda within a single Chairship year, but to lay institutional foundations, secure political support, and produce the technical groundwork that Singapore's 2027 Chairship can build on.

What the Philippines Can Deliver in 2026

The 48th ASEAN Summit in May, the Foreign Ministers' Meeting in July, and the string of sectoral ministerial meetings through September and October are key opportunities to consider action points coming from the private sector, including the SAP. By November 2026, USABC, working with ASEAN-BAC Philippines, plans to deliver a Singapore Transition Brief per pillar, documenting progress made, commitments secured, and recommended first-90-days priority actions for the incoming Chair.

The table below summarizes what we propose as the Philippines' legacy target for each pillar and the corresponding proposed milestones for the Singapore Chairship.

Pillar	Proposed Philippines 2026 Legacy → Singapore 2027 Launch
01 Sustainability and Food Security	Lay the groundwork for integrated food-agriculture-sustainability governance; fertilizer input vulnerability assessment; ASEAN Food Security Reserve Board buffer stock framework; nutrition security toolkit — for Singapore to launch the ASEAN Agricultural Input Resilience Mechanism.
02 Healthcare	Commission the ASEAN health supply chain exposure map; develop the ACPHEED geopolitical disruption protocol concept note; advance the AI for Health Forum — for Singapore to operationalize cold chain standards and the Digital Health Interoperability Laboratory.

03 Supply Chains	Secure Customs DG endorsement for the ASEAN Contingency Trade Protocol; develop digital STM tracking design; complete regulatory harmonization scoping — for Singapore to launch the Protocol and implement the joint STM digital platform.
04 Digital Economy	Sign DEFA; complete MSME digital readiness pilots; develop the Regional Academy scoping study and Gulf worker reskilling track — for Singapore to activate DEFA work programs and launch the ASEAN Center of Excellence for MSMEs.
05 Artificial Intelligence	Secure COSTI/ADGSOM endorsement for the U.S.–ASEAN AI Summit; pilot the Government AI Workshop Series — for Singapore to hold the Summit and launch the ASEAN AI Governance Peer Review and ACWOF.

The Private Sector's Role and Commitment

The roundtable discussions that produced this SAP were substantive engagements where government agencies named specific institutional contributions, development partners said they could be a source of financing and technical assistance, and private sector companies identified concrete capabilities they are prepared to deploy. ADB's USD 5.7 billion trade and supply chain finance portfolio, TESDA's National AI Upskilling Roadmap and Digital Skills Passport, and the technical contributions of companies ranging from medical device manufacturers to AI inspection systems providers are not aspirational. They are opportunities made on the record and reflected in the project-level implementation tables.

Sustaining this momentum requires continued and simultaneous engagement at multiple levels, including the ASEAN Heads of State level through the ASEAN-BAC interface, the Senior Officials and ministerial level through the June and September meeting windows mapped in the Implementation Section, and at the working group level through the named ASEAN Charter bodies that are the long-term institutional homes for each pillar's initiatives. USABC will maintain active engagement across all three levels through its Manila office and its sectoral committees, ensuring that private sector expertise is embedded in technical deliberations and not limited to high-level advocacy.

Navigating Forward, Together

The Philippines' Chairship theme, *Navigating Our Future, Together*, captures the essential character of the work ahead: the path forward requires careful navigation amid significant uncertainty, and the scale of the challenges facing the region demands coordinated action across governments, institutions, and the private sector.

The year 2026 is proving to be a difficult moment for the region and the world. The Philippines however has the opportunity to lead and bring about regional commitments, institutional endorsements, and private sector partnerships that, in aggregate, demonstrate that ASEAN can act with both urgency and coherence when it matters most.

The only way ASEAN can truly move forward is by navigating our future, together. This Strategic Action Plan is USABC's commitment, from the private sector, in partnership with governments and peoples across the region, to do exactly that.

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Annex

List of Acronyms

Acronym	Full Form	Acronym	Full Form
ACABAI-PH	Advancing Computing, Analytics, Big Data and Artificial Intelligence in the Philippines	ACCED	ASEAN Coordinating Committee on Electronic Commerce and Digital Economy
ACPHEED	ASEAN Centre for Public Health Emergencies and Emerging Diseases	ACCMSME	ASEAN Coordinating Committee for MSMEs
ACWOF	ASEAN Center for the Workforce of the Future	ADB	Asian Development Bank
ADGMIN	ASEAN Digital Ministers' Meeting	ADGSOM	ASEAN Digital Senior Officials' Meeting
AEM	ASEAN Economic Ministers Meeting	AEO	Authorized Economic Operator
AFML	ASEAN Forum on Migrant Labour	AFSA	ASEAN Food Security Alliance
AFSIS	ASEAN Food Security Information System	AFSRB	ASEAN Food Security Reserve Board
AHMM	ASEAN Health Ministers Meeting	AI	Artificial Intelligence
ALMM	ASEAN Labour Ministers Meeting	AMAF	ASEAN Ministers on Agriculture and Forestry
AMDC	ASEAN Medical Device Committee	AMDD	ASEAN Medical Device Directive
AMS	ASEAN Member States	AQRF	ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations	ASEAN-BAC	ASEAN Business Advisory Council
ASOEN	ASEAN Senior Officials on Environment	ASTI	Advanced Science and Technology Institute (DOST)
ATIGA	ASEAN Trade in Goods Agreement	ATRC	ASEAN Telecommunications Regulators' Council
BAC	Business Advisory Council	BIR	Bureau of Internal Revenue (Philippines)
BOC	Bureau of Customs (Philippines)	BOI	Board of Investments (Philippines)
BPO	Business Process Outsourcing	BSP	Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (Central Bank of the Philippines)
CCC	Coordinating Committee on Customs	CECWG	Customs Enforcement and Compliance Working Group
CERT	Computer Emergency Response Team	CIPE	Center for International Private Enterprise
COSTI	Committee on Science and Technology Innovation	CPTFWG	Customs Procedure and Trade Facilitation Working Group
DA	Department of Agriculture	DA-BAR	Department of Agriculture – Bureau of Agricultural Research
DEFA	ASEAN Digital Economy Framework Agreement	DENR	Department of Environment and Natural Resources
DFA	Department of Foreign Affairs (Philippines)	DICT	Department of Information and Communications Technology
DIGIT	Digital Transformation in Government Workshop Series	DILG	Department of Interior and Local Government
DND	Department of National Defense	DOE	Department of Energy

Acronym	Full Form	Acronym	Full Form
DOH	Department of Health	DOLE	Department of Labor and Employment
DOST	Department of Science and Technology (Philippines)	DOST-PCAARRD	DOST – Philippine Council for Agriculture, Aquatic and Natural Resources Research and Development
DOST-PCHRD	DOST – Philippine Council for Health Research and Development	DOTr	Department of Transportation
DSWD	Department of Social Welfare and Development	DTI	Department of Trade and Industry
DTI-PPPI	DTI – Philippine Pharmaceutical and Pharmacist's Institute	EHR	Electronic Health Record
EPR	Extended Producer Responsibility	ERIA	Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia
ESG	Environmental, Social, and Governance	FDA	Food and Drug Administration (Philippines)
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment	GHWP	Global Harmonization Working Party
GPPB	Government Procurement Policy Board (Philippines)	HFI / HFP	Health Futures Foundation Philippines
HLTF-EI	High-Level Task Force on Economic Integration	ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IFC	International Finance Corporation	IMDRF	International Medical Device Regulators Forum
IMF	International Monetary Fund	ISO	International Organization for Standardization
MC14	14th WTO Ministerial Conference	MSME	Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprise
NAIS-PH	National AI Strategy of the Philippines	NAIRCI	National AI Center for Research and Innovation
NCD	Non-Communicable Disease	NFA	National Food Authority
NICA	National Intelligence Coordinating Agency	NPC	National Privacy Commission
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development	PCAFI	Philippine Chamber of Agriculture and Food
PCMC	Philippine Children's Medical Center	PED	Priority Economic Deliverable
PEZA	Philippine Economic Zone Authority	PHC	Philippine Health Corporation
PPP	Public-Private Partnership	PSA	Philippine Statistics Authority
RTD	Roundtable Discussion	SEOM	Senior Economic Officials Meeting
SOM-AMAF	Senior Officials Meeting of ASEAN Ministers on Agriculture and Forestry	SOMHD	Senior Officials Meeting on Health Development
SOMTC	Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime	STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
STI	Science, Technology, and Innovation	STM	Strategic Trade Management
TESDA	Technical Education and Skills Development Authority	USABC	US-ASEAN Business Council
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training	WHO	World Health Organization
WG-AI	ASEAN Working Group on Artificial Intelligence	WTO	World Trade Organization

