

DAVAO CITY

Advancing an ambitious public transport program in the Philippines through a bus driver training framework

Davao City is pioneering the first road-based mass transport modernization project in the Philippines. The Davao Bus Driver Training and Technology Study – Pilot Preparation and Implementation Support project is supporting this groundbreaking program with a study of bus drivers' needs and a market analysis of appropriate training technologies that will prepare the drivers, including former jeepney drivers, to meet the standards and safety of the new public bus system.

CONTEXT AND STRATEGIC ISSUES

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved a \$1 billion loan to support the Davao Public Transport Modernization Project. This project will establish a public bus transport system with modern electric buses and Euro-5 standard diesel buses using standardized operations and reliable timetables backed by an intelligent transport system and an automatic fare collection system. It will also see the construction of bus stops, depots, and terminals, and a bus driving school.

Currently, public transport – such as public utility jeepneys and modified vans – accounts for 80% of trips in Davao City. However, these transport modes are typically not safe and user-friendly, contribute to air pollution, and are not optimized in terms of routes, thus adding to congestion and lost productivity.

The modernization project aims to improve the lives of all Davaoeños, especially the vulnerable and marginalized, through better mobility. It will also include a social development program for the jeepney drivers and operators that will be affected by the shift to modern buses.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



End poverty in all its forms everywhere – By supporting the Davao Public Transport Modernization Project, the training framework helps to ensure that everyone, especially, the poor and vulnerable, has equal access to basic services, i.e., transportation.



Reduce inequality within and among countries – Since former jeepney drivers are the immediate target of the bus driver training, the framework supports the social protection component of the modernization project, which seeks to alleviate adverse risks from the public transport overhaul.



Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable – The training framework contributes to providing a safe, accessible, and sustainable public transport system with ample consideration given to the needs of women and girls, the elderly, and persons with disabilities.



Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts – The drivers trained under the framework will be part of the bus system that includes electric bus fleets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

ASSESSING DRIVERS' NEEDS AND TRAINING TECHNOLOGIES TO DEVELOP THE FRAMEWORK

Aside from the infrastructure and systems, having quality transport service will also rely on drivers' skills. The ASEAN Australia Smart Cities Trust Fund (AASCTF) has been working with the City Government of Davao on the Davao Bus Driver Training and Technology Study – Pilot Preparation and Implementation Support project, focusing on how drivers could be trained at scale.

AASCTF conducted multiple workshops and meetings with various stakeholders, including former jeepney drivers and operators. This was to understand their needs and experiences; identify baseline competencies and special considerations, such as handling of persons with disabilities and emergency response; and discuss the core themes and functional requirements for the training framework.

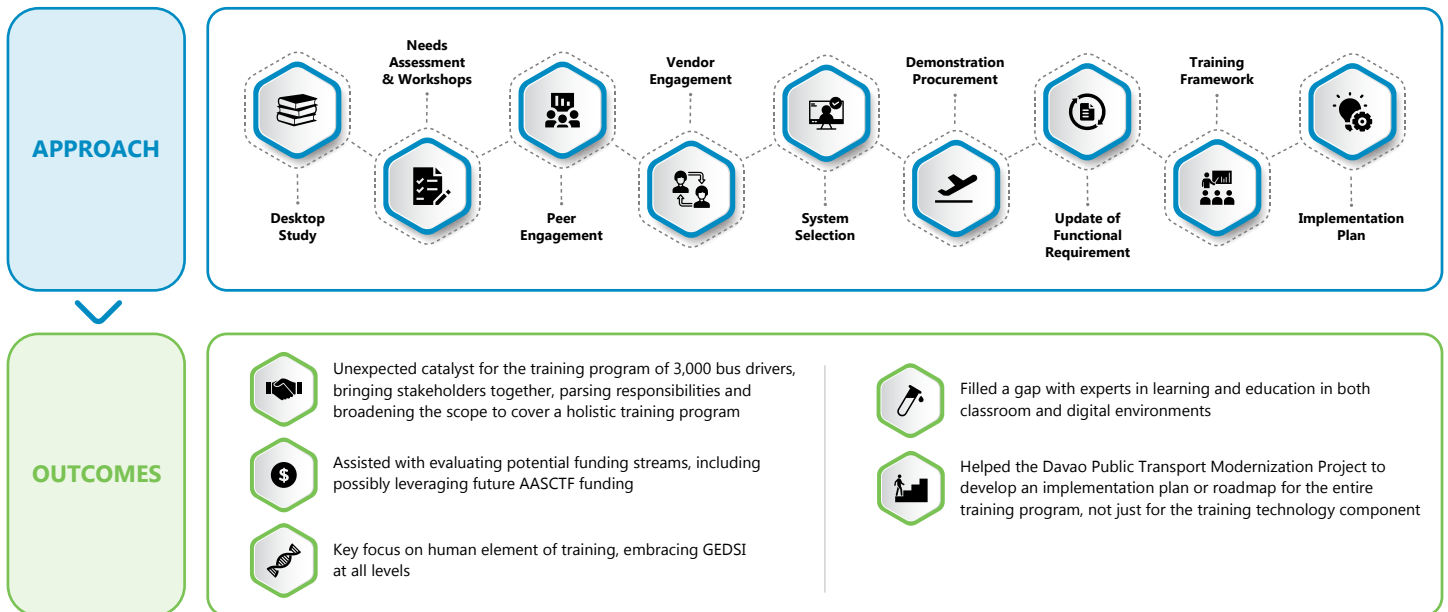
A desktop study of 30 vendors was also prepared to determine the appropriate technologies for the training. The functional and detailed requirements developed were matched against these vendors to shortlist the technologies providers.

In early 2023, AASCTF held a successful [demonstration](#) of the potential technologies that could be used for training the bus drivers. This consisted of a driving simulator with different driving scenarios, a Virtual Reality headset to replicate real-life pre-trip assessments, and a digital learning component for additional lessons. Feedback from this and succeeding discussions informed the final [training framework](#). This will guide not only the modules that could be developed for a comprehensive training program, but also the regulatory requirement needed for implementing the training and receiving certification.



A jeepney operator tries the driving simulator during the three-day public demonstration in Davao City.

PROJECT APPROACH AND OUTCOMES



AASCTF = ASEAN Australia Smart Cities Trust Fund, GEDSI = gender equality, disability, and social inclusion.

Source: Ramboll.

ABOUT THE ASEAN AUSTRALIA SMART CITIES TRUST FUND

The ASEAN Australia Smart Cities Trust Fund (AASCTF) assists ASEAN cities in enhancing their planning systems, service delivery, and financial management by developing and testing appropriate digital urban solutions and systems. By working with cities, AASCTF facilitates their transformation to become more livable, resilient, and inclusive, while in the process identifying scalable best and next practices to be replicated across cities in Asia and the Pacific. The Trust Fund is supported by the Australian Government through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), managed by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and implemented by Ramboll.