



Facilitating the Growth of Micro, Small, and Medium-Sized Enterprises in ASEAN

A Consultative Workshop on Enabling Environment Reforms

22–24 September 2026 | Marco Polo Ortigas, Manila, Philippines



ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK

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PROGRAMME

About this workshop

This workshop will bring together government officials from across ASEAN, together with ADB staff and invited experts, for three days of practical work on how to make it easier to invest in micro, small, and medium enterprises.

It is a working session rather than a conference. Presentations are kept to the minimum needed to introduce the methods and the analysis; the large majority of the time is spent working at your country table. Drawing on analysis prepared in advance, which you are invited to correct, you will identify the sectors where MSMEs hold the greatest potential in your country, pinpoint the practical legal, regulatory, and institutional obstacles standing in the way of investment in those sectors, and begin shaping realistic reform ideas.

The discussion is tailored to each country's own circumstances and priorities. It is not a ranking, and it is not a comparison between countries.

What your delegation will leave with

- **A sector shortlist** — your delegation has reviewed and endorsed, refining the draft brief in your folder.
- **A prioritized list of constraints** — the obstacles blocking investment in those sectors, with a view on which matter most and which are most tractable.
- **Three to five reform concepts** — practical ideas, each with a mechanism, an owner, and the stakeholders who would need to be involved.
- **A roadmap** — agreed actions, owners, and dates for the period between now and the second workshop, scheduled for early December.

A note on how the sessions will run

Each working session uses a different technique, and each is introduced by a facilitator. The workshop is intended to be very interactive and dependent on your understanding of your country's MSME private sector and, especially, how they are impacted by the legal, regulatory and institutional environment.

The ultimate goal for this activity is a tangible and measurable set of 5-10 detailed roadmaps describing the sectors, the constraints, the legal pathways, and how, with specificity, to efficiently clear the obstacles.

The working methods

In the order you will meet them.

Card sort <i>Day 1 · Breakout 1A</i>	Candidate sectors are printed on cards and sorted in silence into confirm / question / wrong, then the disagreements are worked through as a group.
Gallery walk <i>Day 1 · Session 1.7</i>	Delegations post their shortlists; everyone circulates and leaves written comments on color-coded sticky notes.
Silent brainstorm and grid build <i>Day 2 · Breakout 2</i>	Obstacles are written silently, clustered, decomposed through the four lenses, then filed against the ten regulatory domains on a wall grid.
Rotating café <i>Day 2 · Breakout 3</i>	Domain-themed tables with fixed hosts; participants choose where to sit and move every fifteen minutes to compare experience.
Physical scatter plot and dot-voting <i>Day 2 · Breakout 4</i>	Constraints are placed on an impact-against-feasibility grid, argued over aloud, then prioritized by dot-voting.
Solo draft, then build, with an expert clinic <i>Day 3 · Breakout 5</i>	Everyone drafts a reform concept alone first; the table then merges the drafts and develops two or three, with experts on call.
Paired critique protocol <i>Day 3 · Breakout 6</i>	Delegations pair up and critique each other's reform concepts against a fixed checklist. The side being critiqued may ask questions but may not defend.
Backwards planning <i>Day 3 · Breakout 7</i>	Start from what must be true by Workshop 2 and work backwards to actions, named owners and dates.

Stand-ups

Longer working blocks have a short stand-up built into them. Each is a working activity: you move, look at what another table has produced, and bring something back.

The silent walk <i>Day 1 · Breakout 1B</i>	Two minutes at each of two neighboring tables, looking at their emerging shortlists. No talking.
Steal shamelessly <i>Day 2 · Breakout 2</i>	One person visits another table, photographs their work, and brings back anything worth adding.
The sixty-second pitch <i>Day 3 · Breakout 5</i>	Pitch a half-formed reform concept to a neighboring table and take sixty seconds of reaction.

DAY 1 · Tuesday, 22 September**Sectors — where the opportunity lies**

By the end of today your delegation will have a sector shortlist it has reviewed, challenged, and endorsed.

Time	Session	Format	What it is for
08:30 – 09:00	<i>Registration and welcome coffee</i>		<i>Collect your badge and delegation folder and find your country table.</i>
09:00 – 09:20	Opening remarks Presenter(s): <i>Christine Engstrom, Director General, Sectors Department 3</i>	<i>Plenary</i>	Welcome from the Asian Development Bank, and why this work matters now.
09:20 – 09:25	Group photo		
09:25 – 09:50	Objectives and ways of working Presenter(s): Kina Pascua, Associate Project Officer, SD3-PSMG Mark Walter, Legal and regulatory reform expert	<i>Plenary</i>	What we will produce together over three days, how the sessions run, and introductions at your table.
09:50 – 10:30	Framing: from sector opportunity to investment Presenter(s): Mark Walter, Legal and regulatory reform expert	<i>Presentation and discussion</i>	The logic behind the analysis — sector opportunity, regulatory constraint, targeted reform, investment — with a worked example.
10:30 – 11:00	<i>Coffee</i>		
11:00 – 11:30	How the sector screening was done Presenter(s): Mark Walter, Legal and regulatory reform expert	<i>Presentation and discussion</i>	The method behind the Country Sector Selection Brief in your folder, including its limits — so you can challenge it in the next session.
11:30 – 12:30	Testing the sector picture	<i>Country tables · card sort</i>	Work through your draft sector shortlist and record where you agree, where you disagree, and what has been missed.
12:30 – 13:30	<i>Lunch</i>		
13:30 – 14:45	Refining and endorsing the shortlist	<i>Country tables</i>	Settle on three to five sectors, each with a named MSME segment and a stated reason, and prepare a poster.
14:45 – 15:15	<i>Coffee</i>		<i>Posters go up around the room.</i>
15:15 – 16:30	The sector picture across the region	<i>Gallery walk</i>	See every delegation's shortlist, leave written comments on others, and read what colleagues have said about yours.
16:30 – 17:00	Day 1 synthesis and preview of Day 2 Presenter(s): Mark Walter, Legal and regulatory reform expert Joel Syquia, Principal Public Sector Specialist, SD3-PSMG	<i>Plenary</i>	What emerged today, what remains unsettled, and what tomorrow asks of you.

DAY 2 · Wednesday, 23 September**Constraints — what stands in the way**

By the end of today your delegation will have a structured, prioritized list of the obstacles blocking investment in the sectors you chose.

Time	Session	Format	What it is for
08:30 – 09:00	<i>Arrival coffee</i>		
09:00 – 09:15	Recap and unfinished business Presenter(s): Mark Walter, Legal and regulatory reform expert	<i>Plenary</i>	Day 1 in five minutes, and how the questions we parked yesterday will be handled.
09:15 – 10:00	How constraints are identified Presenter(s): Mark Walter, Legal and regulatory reform expert	<i>Presentation and discussion</i>	The working method for today: decomposing each obstacle through four lenses, then filing it against ten regulatory domains.
10:00 – 10:30	<i>Coffee</i>		
10:30 – 12:30	Constraint mapping	<i>Country tables · silent brainstorm and grid build</i>	Build a structured list of the legal, regulatory, and institutional obstacles to investment in your priority sectors.
12:30 – 13:30	<i>Lunch</i>		
13:30 – 14:30	Peer exchange on common constraints	<i>Mixed groups · rotating café</i>	Compare how the same constraint types show up in different countries, and what has been tried — including what did not work.
14:30 – 15:00	<i>Coffee</i>		
15:00 – 16:15	Prioritization	<i>Country tables · scatter plot and dot-voting</i>	Weigh each constraint by the investment it blocks and how realistically it could be changed and name your top three to five.
16:15 – 17:00	What the room found	<i>Plenary</i>	Patterns across the region, checked against what participants said on Monday morning.

DAY 3 · Thursday, 24 September**Reform — from constraints to practical action**

By the end of today your delegation will have two to three drafted reform concepts and an agreed roadmap to the second workshop.

Time	Session	Format	What it is for
08:30 – 09:00	<i>Arrival coffee</i>		
09:00 – 09:15	Recap of Day 2 Presenter(s): Mark Walter, Legal and regulatory reform expert	<i>Plenary</i>	Where every delegation stands going into the final day.
09:15 – 09:45	What makes a reform practical Presenter(s): Joel Syquia, Principal Public Sector Specialist, SD3-PSMG	<i>Presentation and discussion</i>	The anatomy of a reform concept: mechanism, owner, sequencing, and who has to be brought along.
09:45 – 10:15	<i>Coffee</i>		
10:15 – 12:30	Reform design	<i>Country tables · solo draft, then build, with an expert clinic</i>	Draft two to three reform concepts for your priority constraints, with subject experts on call throughout.
12:30 – 13:30	<i>Lunch</i>		
13:30 – 14:00	ADB Policy Based Lending Presenter: Cigdem Akin, Director, SD3-PSMG	<i>Plenary</i>	
14:00 – 14:30	Peer stress-test	<i>Paired delegations · critique protocol</i>	Have your reform concepts challenged by another delegation, and challenge theirs, while there is still time to revise.
14:30 – 15:00	<i>Coffee</i>		
15:00 – 15:45	Roadmap to the second workshop Presenter: Mark Walter, Legal and regulatory reform expert	<i>Country tables · backwards planning</i>	Agree the actions, owners, and dates that get your country from here to Workshop 2 and name a focal point.
15:45 – 16:45	Closing plenary Presenter(s): Mark Walter, Legal and regulatory reform expert	<i>Plenary</i>	Each delegation states one commitment; what happens next with the work; closing remarks. <i>Evaluation forms and departure.</i>
16:45 – 17:00	Concluding remarks Joel Syquia, Principal Public Sector Specialist, SD3-PSMG	<i>Plenary</i>	

Practical information

Venue	Marco Polo Hotel, Manila
Meeting room	Oud A & B
Registration	From 08:30 on Tuesday 22 September, outside the meeting room
Daily timings	Sessions run 09:00 – 17:00. Coffee is served mid-morning and mid-afternoon; lunch is provided each day.
Seating	You will be seated at your country table. Please keep to the same table across all three days — the work carries over from session to session.
Working language	English
Dress	Business casual

What to bring

- The pre-read package circulated in advance — in particular your Country Sector Selection Brief, which you will be asked to challenge and correct on Day 1.
- Any national data, recent legislation, or sector knowledge that the desk analysis is unlikely to have captured. This is the most valuable thing you can bring.
- A laptop if you prefer to type; worksheets are provided on paper and no laptop is required.

Contacts

Workshop lead	Mark Walter
ADB focal point	Jose Luis (Joel) Syquia
Registration and logistics	Olive Rillo, Kina Pascua, Lyka Lopez
Email	psmgknowledge@events.adb.org

Programme subject to minor adjustment. Session timings are indicative.