ASEAN AUSTRALIA SMART CITIES TRUST FUND
Asian Development Bank

Australian Government
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

ADB

PROJECT DATA SHEET | DECEMBER 2025

CHONBURI

Strengthening smart and sustainable development for Thailand's Eastern Economic Corridor

PROJECT SNAPSHOT

PROJECT NAME	City Visioning and Strategic Urban Data Platform Assessment
COUNTRY	Thailand
SECTOR	Urban development / information and communication technology
MAIN GOVERNMENT BODY SUPPORTED	Eastern Economic Corridor Office of Thailand (EECO)
SMART SOLUTION	Smart city visioning; Smart City Road Map; ICT/Urban Data Platform assessment; Prioritized data-driven use cases; Governance framework for platform implementation
PROJECT PERIOD	January 2022- September 2023
ADB PROJECT OFFICER	Kyaw Thu, Senior Urban Development Specialist
MAIN PROJECT OBJECTIVE	To support the EECO in defining a smart, future-ready development vision for the EEC New Livable Smart City and to identify requirements, governance arrangements, and strategic options for an integrated urban data platform that can unlock data-driven planning and service delivery across the region.

The Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC) is quickly becoming Thailand's top innovation and investment hub. Positioned along the eastern seaboard across the provinces of Rayong, Chonburi, and Chachoengsao, the EEC connects deep-sea ports, industrial estates, and rapidly-expanding communities, areas now seeing steady growth in population, mobility, and investment.

Within this context, the Eastern Economic Corridor Office (EECO) is planning the EEC New Livable Smart City, an ambitious development intended to demonstrate how digital systems, sustainability principles, and high-quality public services can shape a new generation of Thai cities. As EECO prepared the groundwork for this long-term development, the ASEAN Australia Smart Cities Trust Fund (AASCTF) supported early steps to clarify the city's direction. This included co-developing a best-practice smart city vision and assessing the ICT and data foundations required for a future strategic urban data platform, elements identified in EECO's planning process as critical for guiding early decisions and structuring future investments.

THE CHALLENGE

Guiding Development in a Rapidly Developing Economic Corridor

The EEC's growth is driven by many actors, including national ministries, provincial governments, state enterprises, utility providers, private developers, and academic partners. Each generates its own plans, datasets, and operational systems to support the country's Thailand 4.0 agenda. Project documents note that as the EEC accelerates its development, these parallel efforts risk creating fragmented digital systems and uncoordinated investments.

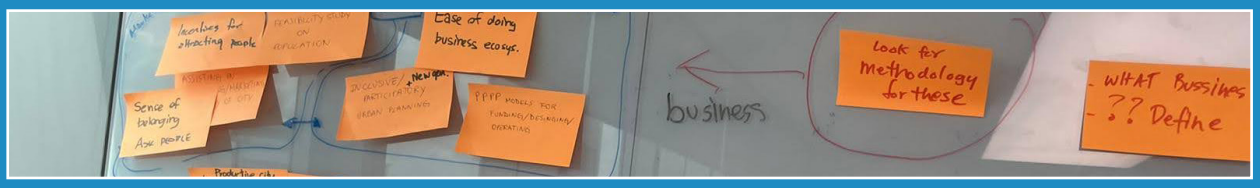
Within this environment, three challenges clearly stood out:

- **A unified vision for the new city.** EECO required a methodology to shape a shared, context-based vision and define outcomes for the EEC New Livable Smart City.
- **A clearer way to interpret dispersed information.** Key planning inputs—population trends, mobility considerations, environmental issues, and ICT elements—sit across different agencies, making early planning difficult.
- **A strategic framework for future ICT and data systems.** EECO needed early guidance on ICT layers, operating models, and digital infrastructure to avoid fragmented solutions later.

EECO needed an organized approach to establish early standards before major procurement and infrastructure decisions advanced. Without this groundwork, smart city components risked being built in silos, limiting interoperability and reducing the long-term benefits of the EEC's investments.

THE SOLUTION

A Shared Smart-City Vision and a Roadmap for Integrated Digital Systems



AASCTF support delivered two complementary outputs, both of which appear as core deliverables in the project reports.

Smart City Visioning and Road Map

The project provided EECO with a best-practice methodology for defining a shared vision and setting outcomes for the EEC New Livable Smart City. This included working with EECO to define what "smart and livable" should mean in the EEC context, and aligning these outcomes with Thailand's national smart city direction. The work also introduced considerations related to mobility, land use, environment, information and communications technology (ICT) architecture, and long-term development priorities. Stakeholder perspectives were incorporated through interviews with Gender equality, disability, and social inclusion (GEDSI) groups—including LGBTIQ+ representatives, persons with disabilities, and women—to ensure that diverse perspectives were centralized during the visioning process. The smart city visioning output integrated GESDSI case studies, recommended approaches, and examples and considerations for targeted GEDSI actions for a people-centric livable city.

Based on this work, the project team prepared a roadmap with short-, medium-, and long-term actions, and outlined priority initiatives that EECO can roll out in phases as planning advances.

Strategic Urban Data Platform (Smart City Platform) Assessment

The second part of the work focused on the ICT layers, operating models, and data foundations required for the EEC New Livable Smart City. This provided EECO with early guidance on structuring its digital ecosystem, covering data governance, agency roles, operational models, procurement considerations, and technical components.

These assessments also include early use cases relevant for EECO, including mobility management, environmental monitoring, and public services. The outputs also included a phased and practical approach for developing the ICT system and a description of risks and constraints EECO will need to address. This assessment forms the initial blueprint to help ensure that digital systems evolve in a coordinated, interoperable, and scalable way as investments in the new city advance.

THE PROCESS

Working Toward a Shared Direction

The project advanced through a series of consultations, technical meetings, and validation sessions with the EECO and partner agencies. These sessions ensured that both the Smart City Visioning work and the Smart City Platform Assessment responded directly to EECO's planning needs for the EEC New Livable Smart City.

Workshops clarified national requirements under Thailand's Smart City framework and discussed how these criteria apply to the new city. These sessions examined existing datasets, data management practices, and institutional roles, helping identify data gaps and governance challenges that could affect future ICT and smart city operations.

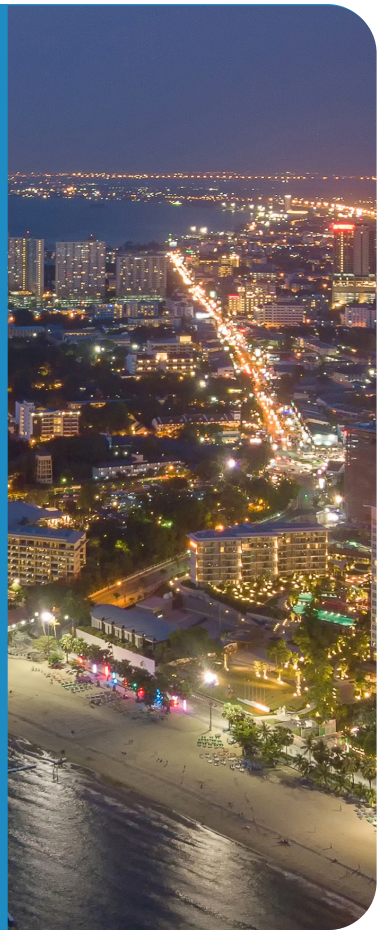
Interviews and technical meetings also supported the understanding of EECO's ongoing plans for the new city. These conversations helped to ensure that recommendations are more practical and aligned with the city's emerging priorities.

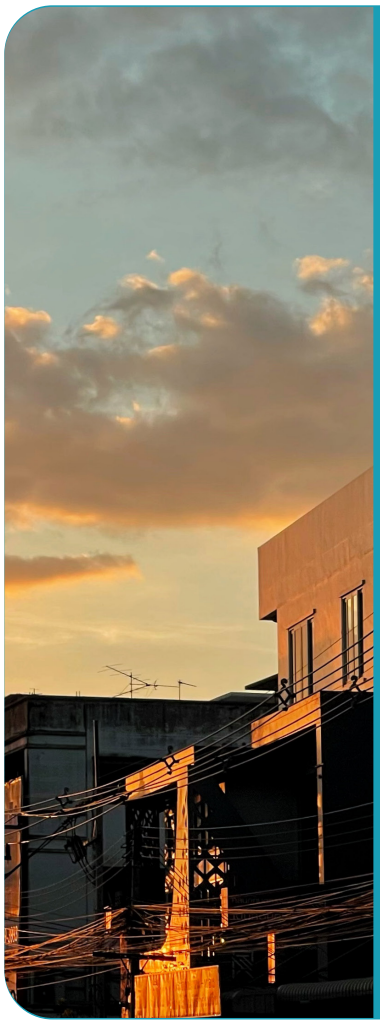
The work introduced a pathway for strengthening gender equality, disability, and social inclusion (GEDSI) in the EEC. This included recommendations for further GEDSI baselining, reflections from interviews with representatives of marginalized groups, and guidance on how to integrate inclusive data and climate justice considerations into the city's planning processes. Understanding the social context by collecting available (GEDSI-disaggregated) data and supplementing it with qualitative data will be important for facilitating a robust understanding of GEDSI in the EEC.

The project adopted a collaborative and iterative approach. Drafts were reviewed with EECO over several rounds, with feedback incorporated at each stage. This enabled the Smart City Visioning methodology and Platform Assessment to function as practical tools that EECO can continue to refine and use as planning moves forward.

Why the Project Matters

- The EEC is a **flagship component of Thailand 4.0**, aimed at shaping a livable, sustainable, and digitally advanced economic zone.
- **A shared smart city vision gives EECO a structured, best-practice methodology** to guide early decisions and avoid fragmented planning as multiple agencies and developers advance major projects.
- **A strategic assessment of the smart city platform helps EECO understand ICT layers, operating models, and data requirements,** ensuring future systems can interoperate and scale.
- Early planning strengthens EECO's ability to coordinate investments, manage expectations, and engage with vendors and partners using a consistent framework.
- **The project lays the foundation for a livable, inclusive, and environmentally responsible new city** by embedding considerations for livability outcomes, sustainability, and GEDSI from the outset.





Lessons and Pivots

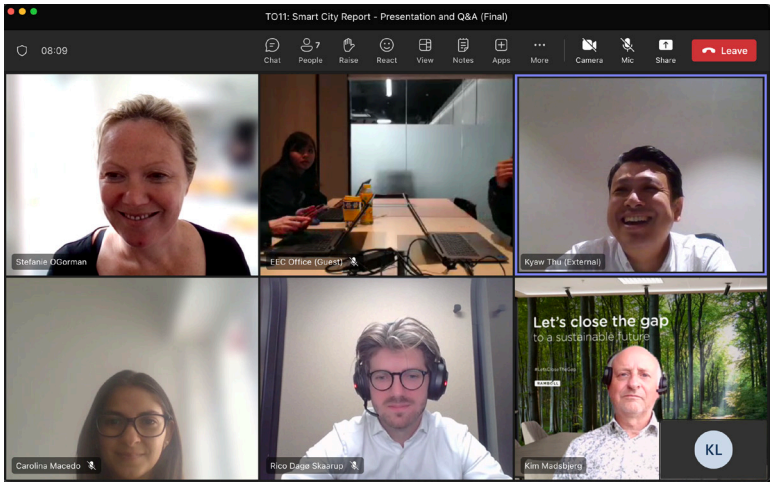
The project highlights several insights useful for the next stages:

- **Early planning is critical. Digital and ICT foundations must be defined** before major physical and infrastructure investments advance.
- **Clear governance matters as much as technology.** Defining who owns, manages data, systems, and operations is essential for long-term sustainment.
- **Prioritizing feasible use cases prevents overreach**. Identifying early applications—such as mobility, safety, and environmental monitoring—helps sequence the development of the smart city platform.
- **Cross-agency engagement builds alignment.** Workshops and consultations helped surface constraints, shape recommendations, and ensure the outputs are practical rather than theoretical.
- **Plans must stay adaptable.** As the EEC evolves and new actors enter the process, the vision and roadmap will require updates to reflect emerging data, priorities, and institutional realities.

Early Results and Emerging Benefits

The project gives EECO a clearer direction as it advances early planning for the EEC New Livable Smart City. The Smart City Vision provides a structured methodology for defining outcomes, reviewing proposals, and aligning decisions with Thailand's national smart city policy. It also serves as a reference for coordinating with partners and shaping investment priorities.

The Smart City Platform Assessment strengthens EECO's readiness to plan future digital systems. It outlines available datasets, identifies key gaps, and highlights initial use cases—such as mobility, public safety, and environmental monitoring—that are feasible for early implementation. The assessment also clarifies roles and responsibilities for data governance and IT operations, giving EECO a basis for organizing institutional duties.



By identifying technical constraints, risks, and interoperability needs early on, the assessment helps reduce future fragmentation and supports more coordinated digital development. Together, the visioning framework and platform assessment equip EECO with practical tools to guide planning, strengthen data governance, and support long-term growth of the EEC New Livable Smart City.

Sustaining the Gains

The smart city vision and platform assessment have been developed to serve as a foundational reference for EECO as planning for the New Livable Smart City progresses. The visioning methodology equips EECO with a structured way to assess proposals, set outcomes, and review priorities as the new city develops. The platform assessment helps EECO consider data governance, agency roles, and the sequencing of ICT investments needed to support future systems.

These tools also support coordination with national ministries, provincial authorities, and private sector partners by providing a consistent framework for aligning plans, comparing options, and structuring early discussions on ICT and urban development. EECO can use these recommendations to inform future decision-making as development continues. ADB's broader technical assistance program on Smart and Livable Cities in Southeast Asia offers a pathway to build on this work, helping EECO refine the guidance and apply it during subsequent planning, procurement, and implementation phases.

Ripple Effect for ASEAN Cities

The EEC experience shows how a city's future can be shaped long before the first roads, networks, or buildings appear. By defining a shared vision early and charting the digital foundations that will support it, EECO can create clarity in a landscape where many stakeholders and priorities converge. This approach, rooted in visioning, benefits-driven planning, and thoughtful ICT architecture, gives cities a way to move from ambition to direction.

Across the ASEAN region, many cities face the same questions: how to align institutions, avoid fragmented systems, and design digital foundations that can grow with the city. The project's visioning approach, benefits-driven planning, and ICT platform guidance have a strong potential for replication across cities beginning their smart city transformation journeys.

For cities seeking to link digital transformation with livability, sustainability, and economic opportunity goals, the EEC offers a reminder that strong beginnings matter. When vision, governance, and data foundations are set early, cities can move forward with coherence and confidence—long before major investments begin.

LEARN MORE

For more information on this project, check the Thailand's Eastern Economic Corridor resources in the AASCTF Data Room:

TO UPDATE QR

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. AASCTF is supported by the Australian Government through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, managed by the Asian Development Bank, and implemented by Ramboll.

AASCTF @aasctf @aasctf @aasctf