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“Forum on Harnessing Artificial Intelligence (AI) for Health Equity”

25 – 26 March 2026

ASEAN’s AI Strategy and guidance for Member Countries

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Why ASEAN AI Governance?



Each of the 11 member states have individual AI and/or Digital Economy strategies / roadmaps and varying levels of AI maturity



ASEAN has common goals for both a digital economy and a digital society

ASEAN as an integrated, secure, trusted, innovative, and inclusive digital community, that empower every citizen and business to access opportunities, build innovation capabilities, and thrive in the global digital economy

\$1 TRILLION
(10-18% of 2030 GDP)
potential uplift in the region's GDP by 2030

Source: AT Kearney

Accelerating AI adoption in the region will enable countries to realise the value that AI brings

ASEAN needs an **intergovernmental common** standard for AI that defines the principles of AI governance and provides guidance for policymakers in the region to utilise AI systems in a **responsible and ethical manner**



ASEAN Initiatives on Emerging Technologies: **ASEAN Guide on AI Governance and Ethics**

The Guide was approved at the 4th ASEAN Digital Ministers' Meeting (ADGMIN) in Feb 2024, serves as a **practical guide for organisations in the region that wish to design, develop, and deploy traditional AI technologies¹**.



Establishes common principles for trustworthy AI and **suggest best practices** for how to implement trustworthy AI in ASEAN.



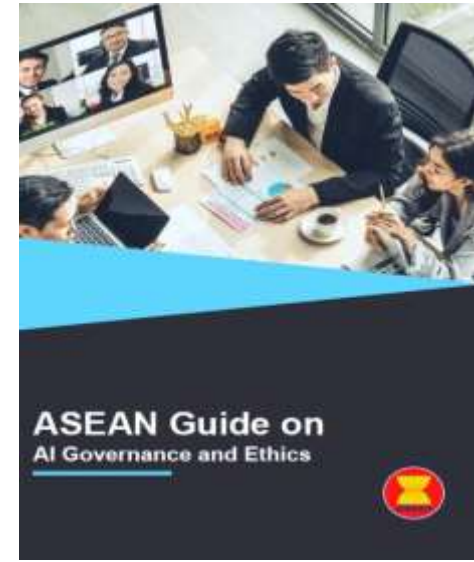
The Guide also contains **specific 5 national-level and 3 regional-level recommendations** that are targeted towards ASEAN policymakers.



Developed with feedback and input from **all ASEAN Member States, Dialogue/Development Partners (e.g., US, China, EU, ITU), and industry.**



ASEAN's first concerted effort on AI governance, and one of the **world's first regional guideline** on AI governance with a **market driven approach** by striking balance between the advantages of AI and its associated risks.



- ### 7 Guiding Principles
- Transparency and Explainability
 - Fairness and Equity
 - Security and Safety
 - Robustness and Reliability
 - Human-centricity
 - Privacy and Data Governance
 - Accountability and Integrity



4 Key Components



Internal **governance structures** and measures



Determining the **level of human involvement** in AI- augmented decision-making



Operations management



Stakeholder interaction and communication



1. [ASEAN Guide on AI Governance and Ethics](#)



Other ASEAN initiatives on AI



ASEAN Responsible AI Roadmap”, endorsed at the 5th ADGMIN in Jan 2025, that will complement and enhance ASEAN Guide on AI Governance and Ethics by providing customised and step-by-step guidance for ASEAN Member States to prioritise and operationalise responsible AI.

Expanding the ASEAN Guide on AI Governance and Ethics to include **guidelines for generative AI**. This new section will address the **unique risks of generative AI and adapt existing principles for its responsible use**.

Establishment of the **ASEAN Working Group on AI Governance** since March 2024, based on the recommendations from the ASEAN Guide on AI Governance and Ethics, to discuss pertinent issues related to governing AI and promote safe and responsible use of AI.

Feasibility study for the **establishment of ASEAN AI Safety Network (ASEAN AI SAFE)**, aimed at institutionalizing AI ethics, safety, governance and standards in the ASEAN Region. Based on the study outcome, a Declaration for the Establishment of the ASEAN AI Safety Network was adopted by the Leaders at the 47th ASEAN Summit in October 2025 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. ASEAN AI SAFE will be established in 2026.



Priority Economic Deliverables (PED) for 2026: ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on AI Powered MSME Growth

Addressing Regional Challenges:

- **Governance Fragmentation**
- **Infrastructure Disparities**
- **Talent Shortages**

Strategic Objectives:

- MSME AI Readiness & Standards Adoption
- Regional MSME AI Awareness Initiative
- Strategic Partnership Ecosystem
- MSME Productivity & Revenue Growth

Output: A Leaders' Declaration, and Action Plan

ASEAN Digital Economy Framework Agreement (DEFA)

Nine core DEFA elements
were endorsed without prejudice



Digital Trade

aims to facilitate cross-border trade by creating a seamless trade experience with electronic documents and interoperable processes.



Cross-border E-Commerce

aims to create a more efficient and fairer environment for cross-border e-commerce, including digital goods and services.



Payments and E-Invoicing

aims to promote digital payments and electronic invoicing by fostering technical interoperability, encourage innovation and competition, and developing relevant regulation.



Digital ID and Authentication

aims to develop a mutual recognizable and interoperable digital identity and electronic authentication framework within the region.



Cross-border Data Flows and Data Protections

aims to facilitate cross-border data flow and establish frameworks to protect data privacy.



Online Safety and Cybersecurity

aim to improve cooperation in cybersecurity and create an open and secure online environment, with comprehensive protection to parties in a digital transaction.



Cooperation on Emerging Topics

aims to establish mechanisms for regulatory cooperation for relevant standards and regulations to keep up with technological innovations in emerging topics such as AI.



Talent Mobility and Cooperation

aims to facilitate digital talent mobility between countries and close collaboration on talent building.



Competition Policy

aims to create a fair/non-discriminatory, transparent competitive environment with consistent guidelines on enforcement and better choice for consumers

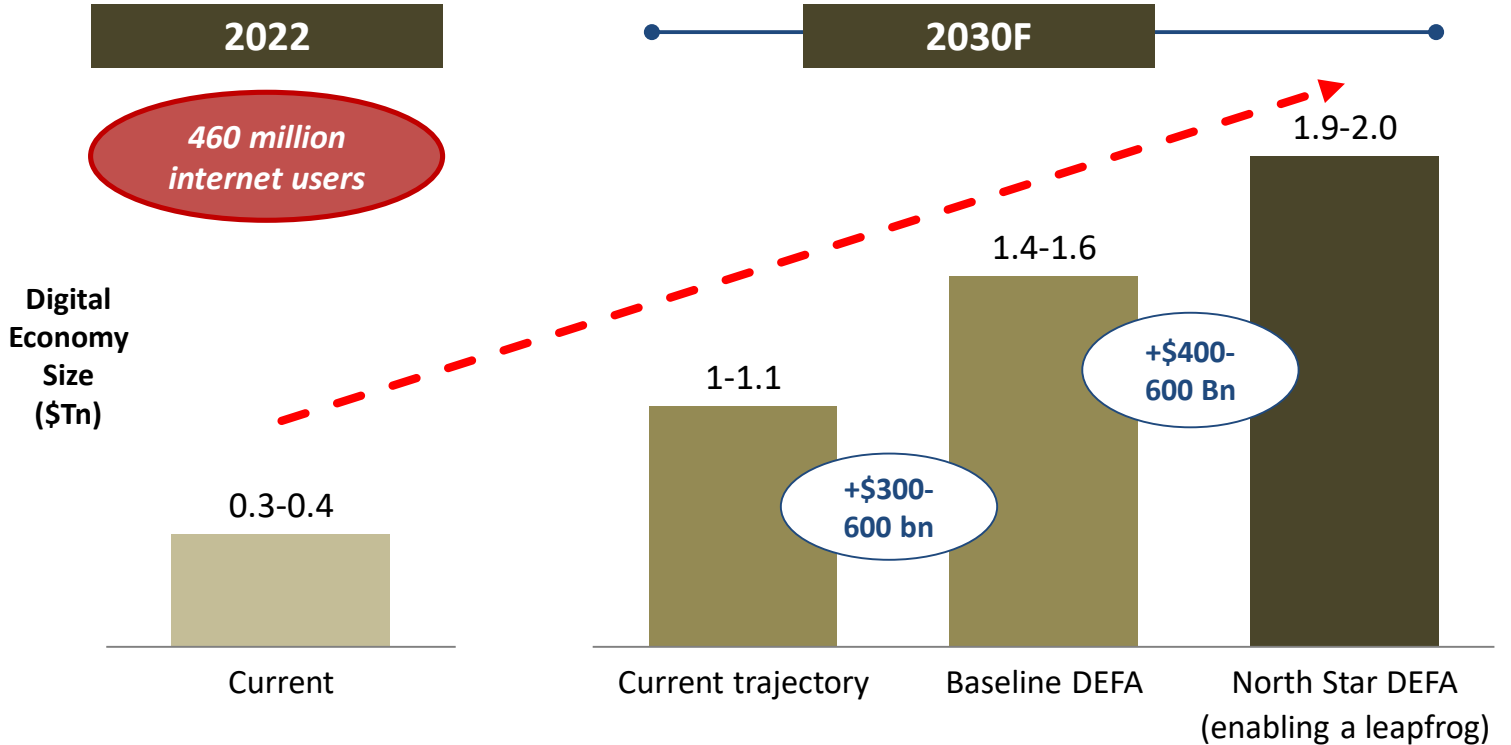




ASEAN is negotiating the Digital Economy Framework Agreement (DEFA) with the aim to fully conclude the negotiations in 2026, which will further accelerate the digital integration initiatives

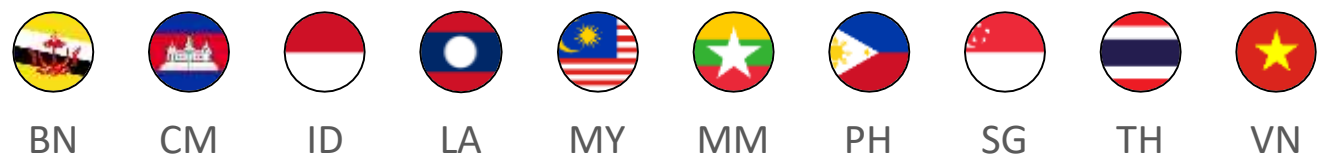
At current trajectory, ASEAN Digital Economy will grow 3X to reach \$1Tn+ by 2030

An effective DEFA could double the value of ASEAN's Digital Economy to ~\$2Tn



460 million internet users

DEFA also benefits for all AMS, especially emerging ASEAN



Value Multiplier¹ ← *The multiplier value can be as high as 6.5x for lower middle income ASEAN countries* →

Source: Oxford Economics; Gartner; IDC; VMWare; Straits Research; EDBI; BCG Analysis;



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THANK YOU



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