

26 September 2025

Terms of Reference

ORGANIZATIONAL LOCATION:	UN-Habitat
DUTY STATION:	Home-based or Bangkok, Thailand
FUNCTIONAL TITLE:	Lead Technical Author
DURATION:	Start: as soon as possible until 30th June 2026 (First contract until 31st December 2025)
CONTRACT MODALITY:	UNOPS IICA/LICA-10 (Output-Based)

United Nations Core Values: Integrity, Professionalism, Respect for Diversity

Organizational Context:

The United Nations Human Settlements Programme, UN-Habitat, is the agency for human settlements and sustainable urbanisation. It is mandated by the United Nations General Assembly to promote socially and environmentally sustainable towns and cities with the goal of providing adequate shelter for all. Leading efforts to advance UN system-wide coherence for sustainable urbanisation, UN-Habitat is playing a key role implementing the Goal 11 of the Sustainable Development Goals adopted in September 2015 as well as the New Urban Agenda (NUA) adopted in Quito, Ecuador in October 2016.

Founded in 1967, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, ASEAN, was established with the signing of the ASEAN Declaration, aiming to promote collaboration and cooperation among Member States, as well as, to advance the interests of the region as-a-whole. Today, there are currently 10 Member States: Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Brunei, Laos, Myanmar, Cambodia and Vietnam, forging ahead together towards the achievement of ASEAN Community Vision 2025.

Since 2008, UN-Habitat and the ASEAN Secretariat have engaged in a variety of UN and ASEAN Secretariat engagements. Most notably, UN-Habitat has been developing a new generation of sub-regional programmes which target all or selected ASEAN countries, especially in the area of cities and climate change. Meanwhile, the Bangkok Multi-Country Programme Office of UN-Habitat is increasingly engaged in knowledge programmes with fellow UN agencies, on issues of migration, health, resilience and urban data in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and implementation of the New Urban Agenda.

About the Project:

Since 2020 UN-Habitat has established a strategic partnership with the ASEAN Secretariat to advance sustainable urbanisation across the ASEAN Member States. As a key first phase of this collaboration, the project ‘Accelerating the Implementation of the ASEAN Sustainable Urbanisation Strategy’ (known following as ‘ASUS Project – Phase I’) was implemented from 2020 to 2022, combining technical support at the local-level to eight pilot cities in ASEAN and knowledge management and advocacy initiatives at the regional level, including delivery of the ASEAN Sustainable Urbanisation Forum and the ASEAN Sustainable Urbanisation Report. The project contributed to increasing ASEAN Sustainable Urbanisation Strategy (ASUS) understanding and application in cities, and bridge ASEAN cities' experiences to regional and global levels. The ASUS Project – Phase I was conceived as a first step to support the achievement of the expected ASUS goals by 2025.

This ASUS Project – Phase II builds on the accomplishments of its previous phase and aims to scale-up and improve the approaches and initiatives adopted, to:

- Deliver strengthened technical support and advice to ASEAN cities, including existing pilot cities and a new group of cities;
- Further build capacity within cities to develop viable project proposals within an ASUS framework;
- Strengthen the engagement of national governments and stakeholders in the adoption of ASUS and to support cities efforts in the definition and implementation of urban project and plans, in line with ASUS;
- Facilitate regional advocacy and research that enhance knowledge management and production to support a broader adoption of ASUS across the region.

The key components of this proposal and the ASUS Project – Phase II are: (i) Technical and Strategic Support to Cities and (ii) National and regional Advocacy, Knowledge Management, and Capacity Building. The main project targets are ASEAN local governments and stakeholders, especially secondary and intermediary cities, which have been identified by ASUS as the main actors of current and future urban development across ASEAN. All proposed project components and related outputs aim to strengthen local capacities, whilst complementing technical support for regional advocacy, knowledge management, and capacity building.

ASEAN Sustainable Urbanisation Report (2022)

The ASEAN Sustainable Urbanisation Report (ASUR) was one of the main outputs of the ASUS Project – Phase I. Thematically and practically, its structure ties together the ASUS Project outputs, the ASUS framework, the SDGs and NUA, and city experiences across ASEAN.

The objectives of the Report were to:

- 1) Build on the key findings and frameworks of the ASUS, offering an updated perspective on development trends across the region and how potential transformations for sustainable urbanisation can be achieved;
- 2) Enhance knowledge on the current sustainable urbanisation practices and approaches across the ASEAN region within the ASUS framework, particularly in secondary cities; and

- 3) Increase synergy between the ASUS, SDGs and NUA, and how this can serve to strengthen mobilisation for sustainable urban development across ASEAN.

The Report was primarily targeted at national and sub-national authorities across ASEAN. However, it also served as a useful resource for a range of stakeholders including national, regional, and local policymakers, academic and research institutions, NGO, and international organisations across the region.

Second ASEAN Sustainable Urbanisation Report

As part of the ASUS Project Phase II, a second edition of the Report (the “Report”) will be developed to further update the trends and practices of countries and cities, and to strengthen the linkages between ASUS and national frameworks.

The tentative objectives of the Report are to:

- 1) Build on the priorities of the ASEAN Community Vision (ACV) 2045 and ASEAN Connectivity Strategic Plan (ACSP) and key findings of ASUS to offer an updated perspective on regional development trends and explore how potential transformations for sustainable urbanisation can be achieved;
- 2) Provide brief country-wide urbanisation profiles for each ASEAN Member State to understand key trends at the national level;
- 3) Provide a compendium of best practices on implementing ASUS focus areas and enablers in the region to enhance knowledge on the current sustainable urbanisation practices and approaches, particularly in secondary cities.

A preliminary Expert Group Meeting (EGM) on the Report was organised as part of the ASEAN Sustainable Urbanisation Forum 2025 in Kuala Lumpur on 14 August 2025.

Functional and Reporting Relationships:

The consultant will be home-based. Periodic meetings online or in-person with the UN-Habitat Bangkok Multi-Country Programme Office are expected. Under overall guidance of the Chief of the UN-Habitat Bangkok Program Office and the Programme Manager, the consultant will work closely with the Knowledge Management Coordinator.

Responsibilities and Expected Outputs:

The Consultant is responsible for the development and finalisation of the second ASEAN Sustainable Urbanisation Report (the “Report”). The tasks include:

1) *Inception report and full annotated outline:*

- Review ASUS and ASEAN Smart Cities Framework, ACSP, ACV 2045, Agenda 2030, the New Urban Agenda, Paris Agreement and Sendai Framework documents to ensure that the Report

approach is consistent with the regional trends, strategic goals and priorities related to smart and sustainable urban development, as well as global urbanisation and climate change frameworks.

- Based on the areas of focus, review recent and relevant normative guidance of the UN, including UN-Habitat, to ensure normative alignment of the analysis framework and key messages.
- Review the ASEAN Sustainable Urbanisation Report published in 2022 to ensure continuity and complementarity in the second Report.
- Conduct literature review of country-level ‘state of the cities’ reports, especially those published by/for ASEAN Member States or national including relevant sectoral organisations in ASEAN Member States. Where relevant, this review should also include Timor-Leste.
- Review urban dimensions and key urban indicators of national reports and development plans on relevant sectors.
- Conduct analysis of urbanisation in ASEAN, with a focus on secondary cities and collect updated data, statistics, best practices and case studies.
- Develop a work plan, milestones, consultation process and consultation arrangements and agreements, and ensure regular updating and reporting.
- Define the Report outline, structure, data requirements and objectives in agreement with UN-Habitat team.
- Conduct analysis across the cities of the ASUS Project Phase I and II of overarching challenges and opportunities of urban development, with the support of the UN-Habitat's Bangkok team and the local project officers based in ASEAN Member States.
- Define a consultation approach for the development of the Report, ensuring geographical, thematic and demographic representation.
- Lead consultative activities and virtual consultations with key experts.
- Support the mainstreaming of gender, environmental and social inclusion considerations, with particular attention to marginalized and disadvantaged populations such as children, ethnic minorities, refugees, migrants, persons with disabilities and those living in poverty.

2) ***Draft Report:***

- Support the operation of working groups or other mechanisms for the purposes of preparing and agreeing upon an overarching structure for the Report.
- Coordinate participatory and consultative processes with UN-Habitat Country Offices, Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific and Headquarter relevant branches to ensure alignment with UN-Habitat methodologies and relevant initiatives.
- Lead consultative activities and virtual consultations with key experts.
- Coordinate participatory and consultative processes with academia, relevant UN agencies, international organisations and multilateral banks to ensure alignment with past or ongoing relevant initiatives.
- Liaise with national government, local authorities and key stakeholders and organise consultation for relevant data collection and validation, collection of best practices, with the support of UN-Habitat's local project officers.
- Update the work plan, milestones, consultation process and consultation arrangements and agreements, and ensure regular updating and reporting.

- Facilitate organisation and delivery of multi-stakeholder consultations and/or targeted interviews (virtual), including Expert Group Meetings, to collect feedback on the draft Report.
- Coordinate the progressive review of the Report contents and structure with relevant focal points and ensure that the final report reflects all received feedback.
- Ensure that data and process records and documents are well organized and saved in appropriate online folders, for knowledge management purposes as well to support future audits and evaluation.
- Produce content for visual representation, including graphs, tables, images, diagrams, maps, photographs, drawings etc.
- Update the work plan, milestones, consultation process and consultation arrangements and agreements, and ensure regular updating and reporting.
- Deliver presentations and briefs on the draft report to UN-Habitat, ASEAN and other stakeholders upon request of the Supervisor.

3) *Final Report:*

- Produce an executive summary, key messages, abstract, forewords, references.
- Engage in peer-review processes and incorporate peer-review inputs in the final Report.
- Review graphic material including graphs, tables, images, diagrams, maps, photographs, drawings etc. to be integrated in the Report.
- Deliver presentations and briefs on the final report to UN-Habitat, ASEAN and other stakeholders upon request of the Supervisor.
- Assure Report's adherence to the publication policy principles of UN-Habitat; Submit Report's Inception Report and full annotated outline for review by the UN-Habitat Publication Board.
- Coordinate with the Communication Expert and provide and review content for advocacy and knowledge management on the Report.

All the information gathered, communication, resources and materials along with documents developed will become assets of UN-Habitat, with respect for copyright as applicable. The General Conditions of the Contract will provide further guidance.

Deliverables /Outputs:

The deliverables/reports are to be prepared as per the instalments below. The payment shall be made on satisfactory completion of work and approval of submissions by the Senior Human Settlements Officer and the Programme Manager.

Instalments	Deliverables	Payment Amount
1	Inception report and endorsed full annotated outline: literature review, validated workplan, and validated initial outline, consultative activities, updated work plan.	30%
2	Draft report: draft chapters, consultative activities, content for visual representation, updated work plan.	35%

3	Final report: peer review engagement, chapters, key messages, executive summary, abstract, forewords, references, review of graphic materials and communication contents.	35%
		100%

Competencies

- Professionalism:** Ability to perform a broad range of administrative functions, e.g., budget/work programme, human resources, database management, etc. Ability to apply knowledge of various United Nations administrative, financial and human resources rules and regulations in work situations. Shows pride in work and in achievements; demonstrates professional competence and mastery of subject matter; is conscientious and efficient in meeting commitments, observing deadlines and achieving results; is motivated by professional rather than personal concerns; shows persistence when faced with difficult problems or challenges; remains calm in stressful situations. Takes responsibility for incorporating gender perspectives and ensuring the equal participation of women and men in all areas of work.
- Teamwork:** Works collaboratively with colleagues to achieve organizational goals; solicits input by genuinely valuing others' ideas and expertise; is willing to learn from others; places team agenda before personal agenda; supports and acts in accordance with final group decision, even when such decisions may not entirely reflect own position; shares credit for team accomplishments and accepts joint responsibility for team shortcomings.
- Planning & Organizing:** Develops clear goals that are consistent with agreed strategies; identifies priority activities and assignments; adjusts priorities as required; allocates appropriate amount of time and resources for completing work; foresees risks and allows for contingencies when planning; monitors and adjusts plans and actions as necessary; uses time efficiently.

Qualifications

Education

An Advanced university degree (Master's degree or equivalent) in literature, social science, urban planning, architecture, development studies, geography, international development or other urban related discipline (urban planning, urban sociology, politics, economics), or Bachelor's degree with additional seven years relevant and progressive experience in the fields may be accepted in lieu of the post-graduate or Advanced university degree (Master's degree or equivalent).

Experience

A minimum of 5 years of relevant work experience as a writer/researcher on the themes of urban planning, mobility, and sustainable development, preferably in the region. Work experience with international organisations, and general knowledge of UN rules and regulations or comparable organisations are desirable.

Language

For this position, fluency in oral and written English is required. Knowledge of another official United Nations language will be considered an advantage.

Contract period, level of engagement and duty station

The initial contract will start as soon as possible and will run until 31 December 2025 with an extension up to the 30 June 2026. The post is home-based or based in Bangkok, Thailand.

Remuneration

In compliance with UN-Habitat policy.

HOW TO APPLY:

Interested and qualified candidates are requested to please indicate their immediate availability to undertake the assignment as per terms of reference above. The application must be accompanied with a completed UN Personal History Profile (PHP) or P11 (**MANDATORY**):

- **PHP – Online** : (1) Please create your profile in inspira.un.org, (2) Go to “My applications”, (3) “Create Draft Application”, (4) fill all required steps, (5) save the application and go back to “My applications”, (6) “Print the Admin Profile” and download it to be submitted via email. (*Your online PHP profile can be updated and used for future applications*)
OR
- **P11 – Offline**: Please download the form (MS-Word) from UN-Habitat ROAP website: https://fukuoka.unhabitat.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Personal_History_P11-1.doc

The application should comprise of:

- UN Personal History Profile or P11 – without detailed one of those forms, application would be rejected.
- Recent Curriculum Vitae (CV)
- Selected samples of reports and other relevant publications personally authored and publicly accessible online.

Please indicate the Post Title: “Lead Technical Author” in your email subject.

All applications should be submitted to:

UN-Habitat Bangkok Office

habitatbkk@un.org

Please note that applications received after the closing date stated below, will not be given consideration. Only short-listed candidates whose applications respond to the above criteria will be contacted for an interview. Overall remuneration will be determined according to the qualifications, skills and relevant experience of the selected candidate. In line with UN-Habitat policy on gender equity, applications from female candidates will be particularly welcome.

Deadline for application: Monday, 13 October 2025