

EABC-JETRO Business Outlook Survey 2025

1. Objectives

EABC: The East Asia Business Council (EABC) was inaugurated in April 2004 in Kuala Lumpur, as a result of the recommendations from the East Asia Study Group conducted by the ASEAN+3 governments. It is established as a result of an implementation strategy proposed by the East Asia Study Group and endorsed by ASEAN+3 Leaders on October 7, 2003.

The objectives of the EABC are as follows:

- To provide private sector perspective and feedback to deepen economic cooperation and to promote the region's economic growth; and
- To strengthen cooperation among the private sectors in ASEAN and plus 3 countries namely China, Japan and Republic of Korea, as well as promote intra-regional trade and investment.

2. Basic Information

Company Name					
Your Name					
Country of company					
Country of parent company HQ (if any)					
E-MAIL					
Number of Employees		1 1-50 2 51-100 3 101-200 4 201-500 5 501-			
Experience in doing international trade		1 Yes 2 No			
Manufacturing industry	1 Food and beverages 5 Furniture, building materials 9 Petroleum, coal 13 Iron and steel 17 Electronic components 21 Automobiles	2 Fibers, Textiles 6 Paper, pulp 10 Plastic products 14 Non-ferrous metal 18 Telecommunications equipment 22 Automotive parts	3 Clothing, Apparel 7 Chemicals 11 Rubber products 15 Metal products 19 Electronic Components/Devices 23 Other transportation equipment	4 Lumber, Wood products (excluding furniture) 8 Medical products, cosmetics 12 Ceramic, cement 16 General Machinery 20 Precision Machinery 24 Other manufacturing ()	
	Non-manufacturing sector	25 Trading company, wholesale 29 Electricity, gas, water 33 Medicine, social welfare 37 Food and Beverage	26 Retail 30 Transportation 34 Real estate 38 Professional services	27 Mining 31 Finance, insurance 35 Education, learning support 39 Service sector (please specify:) 39 Others ()	28 Construction 32 Telecommunications 36 Lodging business

1. Business Situation

Please select any difficulty that applies to your business situation **in the first quarter of 2025 (January – March 2025)**.

Q1 【Production and operation】 (Multiple answers allowed)

- Delays in procurement and purchasing (due to operational problems at **DOMESTIC** suppliers)
- Delays in procurement and purchasing (due to operational problems at **OVERSEAS** suppliers)
- Logistics troubles (container shortages, rising air and sea freight costs)
- Soaring raw material costs
- Difficulties in developing new suppliers
- Difficulty in securing human resources and shortage of manpower
- Trade difficulties due to non-tariff barriers and protectionism in the country of operation
- Impact of changes in trade policy by U.S. new administration
- Other (please specify:)
- No difficulty.

Q2.[Sales side]

Please evaluate your company's sales situation **in the first quarter of 2025 (January-March 2025)** compared to the same period in 2024.

- ☐ Sales have decreased by more than 50%.

- ☐ Sales have decreased more than 25% up to 49%.
- ☐ Sales have decreased by 1% - 24%.
- ☐ No change
- ☐ Sales have increased by 1% - 24%.
- ☐ Sales have increased by 25% - 49%.
- ☐ Sales have increased by more than 50%.

Q3. Please select your company's approach to future business plans/activities **in the next 1-2 years**.

- ☐ Expand
- ☐ Remaining the same
- ☐ Reduce

Q3-1. (Only for those who answered "Expand" in Q3)

Please select the function you would like to expand. **(Multiple answers are acceptable.)**

- a. Sales Functions
- b. Production function (general-purpose products)
- b. Production function (high value-added products)
- c. Research and Development functions
- d. Logistics function
- e. Administrative functions in service delivery (shared service centers, call centers, etc.)
- b. Others (please specify:)

Q4. Please select any requests you would like to make to the government to stimulate the economy. **(Multiple answers allowed)**

- a. Responding to Inflation Risk
- b. Easing of restrictions on entry of foreign workers (including VISA issuance)
- c. Support for building optimal supply chains (e.g., subsidies for procurement from multiple locations, including equipment installation costs)
- d. Support for diversification of sales channels, procurement sources, and outsourcing
- e. Addressing non-tariff barriers to facilitate the movement of goods
- f. Others (please specify:)
- g. None

2. Utilization of Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) agreements

*RCEP is an Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) between ASEAN member countries and Japan, China, Korea, Australia, and New Zealand that entered into force in 2022. The agreement covers trade in goods and services, intellectual property, and other areas, and aims to promote trade and investment in the region by reducing tariffs. The agreement is also expected to promote international supply chains and intra-regional trade through the harmonization of rules of origin.

Q5. Are you aware about the implementation of RCEP?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Q6. Have you started utilizing RCEP?

- ☐ Yes → Go to Q7-1
- ☐ No → Go to Q7-2
- ☐ Not currently using but interested → Go to Q7-3
- ☐ Not currently using and not interested in using in the future

Q6-1. If your answer is "Yes," please select the reasons why RCEP is beneficial to your business. **(Multiple answers are acceptable.)**

- a. Sales expansion (**DOMESTIC**)
- b. Sales expansion (**OVERSEAS**)
- c. Profit maximization
- d. Diversification of suppliers
- e. Integration of suppliers
- f. Optimization of the production network
- g. Other (please specify:)

Q6-2. If your answer is “ No” please select the reason(s). **(Multiple answers allowed)**

- a. Do not know where to start.
- b. Troublesome procedures
- c. Products are not eligible for RCEP, or MFN rate for imported or exported goods is 0%.
- d. Already utilized other FTAs and its tariff exemption rate under that agreement is lower or the same.
- e. No request from importer/buyer.
- f. Other (please specify:)

Q6-3. If your answer is “Not currently using but interested,” please indicate your current stage of use.

- a. Steps **to find out the HS code and tariff rate of our products**
- b. Stage of **consideration of which free trade agreement(FTA) to use**
- c. Steps in **the preparation of a Certificate of Origin, CO**
- d. Other (please specify:)

*Q7 Please kindly note the companies that do not need to issue or to submit Certificate of Origin(CO), may skip Q7.

*Q7 is not limited to RCEP, but is a question regarding the digitalization of Certificates of Origin (CO) in EPAs/FTAs related to ASEAN through the data exchange method (e-CO: the issuing organization sends the data on the CO directly to the customs office of the partner country).

*Although some multilateral and bilateral EPAs, such as the ASEAN Agreement on Trade in Goods (ATIGA) and the Japan-Indonesia EPA, have already started to implement electronic CO data exchange (e-CO), e-CO is still not introduced in many of the multilateral and bilateral EPAs. This question aims to understand the needs for the introduction of electronic CO data exchange.

Q7. Do you support the adoption of a digital Certificate of Origin(e-CO) system using data exchange between issuing authorities and customs?

- ☐ Yes (Wish the digitalization in CO data exchange system)
- ☐ No (Do not wish the digitalization in CO data exchange system) → Go to Q9
- ☐ Not sure / No opinion

Q8. What are the potential advantages/benefits compared to CO issued in paper/hardcopy or PDF format exchange **(multiple answers allowed)**?

- a. Data exchange method **reduces time and effort** compared to paper or PDF exchange
- b. **Increases reliability** by reducing the risk of forgery and tampering and ensuring the authenticity of CO
- c. **Simplifies procedures** by eliminating mailing and printing, and by transmitting data directly to the exporter or importer, rather than through them
- d. **Eliminates the risk of theft or loss of paper COs and allows for secure transactions.**
- e. Other advantages (if any:)
- f. I don't see any particular benefit.

Q9.

The introduction of CO's electronically using the data exchange method generally has the following advantages, could you tell us why you do not wish to introduce this system? (If any)

Possible Benefits:

- Data exchange method **reduces time and effort** compared to paper or PDF exchange
- **Increases reliability** by reducing the risk of forgery and tampering and ensuring the authenticity of CO
- **Simplifies procedures** by eliminating mailing and printing, and by transmitting data directly to the exporter or importer, rather than through them
- **Eliminates the risk of theft or loss of paper COs and allows for secure transactions.**

Reason for not wanting to introduce (Please specify:)

3. Supply chain resilience

Q10. With respect to business operations such as procurement of parts and raw materials, product sales, and production, does your company operate in more than one country/region, including ASEAN countries/regions?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Q11. Where are your main suppliers for raw material and components located? **(Multiple answers allowed)**

- a. Local(same country)
- b. ASEAN
- c. Japan
- d. China
- e. South Korea
- f. The United States
- g. Europe
- h. Middle East
- i. N.A.
- j. Other (Please specify:)

(Note) Please select "a. Local" for the status of procurement from the country/region where the company is located.

Q12. Please select the factors that could influence your company's procurement policy. **(Multiple answers allowed)**

- a. Impact of changes in trade policy by U.S. new administration
- b. Rising costs of raw materials and components due to global inflation
- c. Rising logistics costs due to global inflation
- d. Government policies to promote domestic production
- e. Growing momentum for the environment including decarbonization
- f. Growing momentum for human rights in the supply chain
- g. Currency fluctuations creating unpredictability on business margins
- h. Other (Please specify:)

Q13. How are recent or anticipated global tariffs(e.g. U.S. tariff) affecting your supply chain strategy in ASEAN plus 3 countries?

- a. Diversifying suppliers across ASEAN+3
- b. Nearshoring/friendshoring to ASEAN markets
- c. Localising production to reduce tariff exposure
- d. Delaying expansion due to uncertainty
- e. No significant impact

Q14. What are the challenges in local procurement? (Multiple answers allowed)

- a. There are no local supplier available for the raw materials or parts my business needs
- b. The quality or technical capabilities of local suppliers are inadequate
- c. No companies that can handle small lot orders
- d. Local suppliers are not cost-competitive (imports are cheaper)
- e. Local suppliers have management or financial issues
- f. Difficulty in gathering information to find new suppliers
- g. Lack of opportunities for trade shows, matching events, etc.
- h. Inadequate channels to reach out local suppliers e.g. limited local trade events, B2B platform
- i. Other (Specify:)
- j. none in particular

(Only for companies that answered "Yes" in Q10)

Please select your company's business functions that have been transferred (including small scale) from other countries/regions to your location in the last 5 years (after 2020). **(Multiple answers allowed)**

	Production	R&D	Regional Headquarters (Supervision of offices in multiple countries/regions)
Transferred or not	<input type="checkbox"/> Transferred <input type="checkbox"/> No transferred	<input type="checkbox"/> Transferred <input type="checkbox"/> No transferred	<input type="checkbox"/> Transferred <input type="checkbox"/> No transferred

(If "Yes, transferred" for any function, please describe the background and reasons for the transfer.) (Free description)

Feature	Reasons for the transfer (e.g., support measures that encouraged the transfer, concentration of business partners, attractiveness of the investment environment)
Production	
R&D	
Regional Headquarters	

Q15. Do you think your company needs to take any measures to maintain a stable supply chain in the region including ASEAN and plus three countries such as China, South Korea and Japan in the future?

- a. We think some measures are necessary → Go to Q13-1
- b. We do not think any measures are necessary

(If "a. We think some measures are necessary" in Q15)

Q15-1. What measures do you think are necessary to maintain a stable supply chain in the ASEAN region in the future?

Please select the appropriate answer. (**Multiple answers allowed**)

(Measures to be taken by the company)

- a. Diversify risks by setting up diversified production bases
- b. Securing labor and maintaining cost competitiveness
- c. Strengthen environmental, social and governance (ESG) initiatives
- d. Increasing supply chain flexibility
- e. Increase the ratio of local procurement in production site
- f. Strengthen internal compliance systems and export control
- g. Digitalization of Supply Chain Management
- h. Other (Specify:)

(Support required from the government)

- a. Increase trade liberalization e.g. reduce tariff, negotiate FTAs, improve trade facilitation measures
- b. Further infrastructure developments to improve logistics efficiency
- c. Formation of bases for high value-added industries
- d. Expansion of market size and diversification of market
- e. Deregulation and simplification of procedures for trade facilitation
- f. Relaxation of domestic regulations, including non-tariff barriers, to promote trade and investment
- g. Promoting measures for decarbonization
- h. Other (Specify:)

Q15-2. If you have selected b. in Q15, "We do not think any measures are necessary", please provide reasons. (Free answer)

Free description (Specify:)

Q16. Over the next 1 – 3 years, how would your company's investment strategy change within ASEAN+3 region?

- a. Expanding within ASEAN
- b. Shifting from China to ASEAN
- c. Nearshoring to ASEAN
- d. No change
- e. Scaling down regional operations
- f. Others(Specify:)

Q17. What are the main factors influencing your investment decisions within the ASEAN + 3 region? (*Multiple answers allowed*)

- a. Supply chain diversification goals
- b. Rising costs or tariffs in other markets
- c. Access to regional trade agreements (e.g. RCEP)
- d. Availability of skilled labour
- e. Government incentives and support
- f. Political and regulatory stability
- g. Proximity to customers or suppliers
- h. Infrastructure and logistics readiness

Q18. In your supply chain within the ASEAN + 3 region, do you “collaborate” with companies outside your country (e.g., local or foreign companies with setup or facilities in the region?)

*“Collaborate” means cooperation in production, research and development (R&D), etc., joint logistics and delivery, and visualization of supply chains through data sharing.

- a. Yes → Q18-1
- b. No

Q18-1. What are the specific countries of the companies with which you cooperate? (*Multiple answers allowed*)
(e.g., if you are collaborating with a Chinese company operating in Indonesia, please select “China”)

- a. Brunei
- b. Cambodia
- c. Indonesia
- d. Laos
- e. Malaysia
- f. Myanmar
- g. Philippines
- h. Singapore
- i. Thailand
- j. Vietnam
- k. Timor-Leste
- l. Japan
- m. Korea
- n. China
- o. Australia
- p. New Zealand
- q. The United States
- r. EU
- s. Other (Specify:)

Q18-2. What specific areas of cooperation do you have? (*Multiple answers allowed*)

- a. Cooperation in production through contract manufacturing or OEM
- b. Cooperation in research and development (R&D) and technology sharing
- c. Joint logistics and delivery (joint delivery, milk run, etc.)
- d. Wide-area integration of production sites and division of labor
- e. Joint development of supply chain risk management and business continuity plan (BCP)
- f. Visualization of supply chain through information systems and data sharing
- b. Joint implementation of human resource development and technical training
- c. Strengthen cooperation in import/export procedures and customs clearance
- d. Cooperation on environmental and sustainability initiatives
- e. Other (Specify:)

4. Digitalization

Q19. What is the level of digitalization and technology adoption in your company? (*Multiple answers allowed*)

- a. Artificial Intelligence (AI) and AI-based applications (including generative AI)
- b. Cloud computing
- c. Internet of Things (IoT)
- d. RPA (Robotics Process Automation) to improve efficiency of business processes
- e. Streamlining and automating production process
- f. Blockchain
- g. Cyber Security Measures
- h. Data analytics
- i. Digital twin
- j. Augmented Reality (AR)/Virtual Reality (VR)
- k. Digital payments (e.g., introduction of electronic invoicing)
- l. 3D Printing
- m. Other (Specify:)
- n. None in particular

Q20. What is the main objectives for your company's interest in adopting digital technology? (*Multiple answers allowed*)

- a. Increase Productivity
- b. Business streamlining
- c. Cost reduction
- b. Diversification of work styles
- c. Facilitate information management and sharing
- d. Prevention of human error
- e. Data accumulation and utilization

- f. Improve customer experience
- g. Organizational Revitalization
- h. Other (Specify:)

Q21. Cross-Border QR code payment interoperability

*QR code payments allow users to make cashless transactions by scanning a code using mobile apps. Some countries in ASEAN have started enabling cross-border QR code payments (e.g. a Malaysian e-wallet being accepted by a Thai merchant). To enhance regional digital integration, there is growing interest in enabling interoperable QR code payments across ASEAN and East Asia, including for retail and travel purposes.

Would your company support such an initiative to promote cross-border QR code payment interoperability in the region?

- a. Yes, we are interested and see potential for our business
- b. Yes, we support the idea and would be interested to explore how we can be part of these development
- c. No, we do not see a need for this at the moment

Q22.

What are the key challenges, if any, that your company currently faces or anticipates facing in introducing digital technology? (**Multiple answers allowed**)

- a. Lack of know-how to promote digitalization
- b. Unclear if the issues to be solved by digitalization
- c. Lack of management understanding and commitment
- d. Lack of relevant and trained personnel in the specialised technology
- e. Lack of IT literacy within the company
- f. Existence of legacy systems
- g. Budget and cost constraints
- h. Difficulties in internal penetration and utilization
- i. Lack of coordination and data fragmentation between departments
- j. Resistance and lack of commitment on-site for transformation
- k. Other (Specify:)
- l. None at present and anticipated in the future

Q23. What factors do you expect to contribute to the growth of the digital economy in your country or region of operation? (**Multiple answers allowed**)

- a. Develop unified digital-related laws and regulations within ASEAN (e.g., cross-border privacy rules, cybersecurity law, digital taxation, etc.)
- b. Strengthen data governance, including promotion of data free flow
- c. Development of digital infrastructure such as 5G and Open RAN
- d. Increase digitally skilled workforce
- e. Expand e-commerce market within and beyond ASEAN
- f. Strengthen Cyber Security Measures
- g. Data center development
- h. Widespread use of digital payments
- i. Other (Specify:)

*Q24 aims to identify the challenges and needs of industry in the formulation of digital rules in ASEAN.

Q24. What are the key challenges your company faces in relation to digital integration and cross-border digital trade within ASEAN and with China, Japan, and South Korea? (**Multiple answers allowed**)

*The following areas reflect key components of regional digital economy cooperation. Please share the challenges your company faces in each area, where applicable. Your responses will help identify regulatory gaps, infrastructure needs, and collaboration opportunities in ASEAN and across the broader region (China, Japan, South Korea).

1. Digital Trade

In your opinion, what are the main barriers to digital trade within and outside the ASEAN region? (**Multiple answers allowed**)

- a. Differences in regulations and rules in different countries (e.g., digital service regulations)
- b. Tariffs and non-tariff trade barriers
- c. Lack of technical, data and certification standardisation
- d. Inadequate infrastructure (e.g., communication environment)
- e. Unclear legal framework

f. Other (Specify:)

2. Cross-border e-commerce

In your opinion, what are the challenges in cross-border transactions in e-commerce within ASEAN +3 region? (**Multiple answers allowed**)

- a. Delays and high costs of logistics and delivery
- b. Restrictions on unified payment methods and high transaction charges
- c. Navigating diverse tariffs and taxation regulation between countries
- d. Inadequate consumer protection and return policy
- e. Lack in consumer trust and miscommunication in marketing messages caused by language and cultural differences
- b. Other (Specify:)

3. Payments

What are the challenges you face when it comes to using digital payments and electronic invoicing? (**Multiple answers allowed**)

- a. Lack of diversity in cross-border payment methods
- b. High transaction fees
- c. Data security and fraud risk concerns
- d. Varying legal development of electronic invoicing between countries
- e. Data standardization and cross-border data flow between the countries
- f. Lack of recognition and understanding of users
- g. Other (Specify:)

4. Online Safety and cybersecurity

What risks are you concerned about when it comes to cyber security? (**Multiple answers allowed**)

- a. Cyber attacks (hacking, malware, etc.)
- b. Data Leakage / Privacy Breach
- c. Phishing scams and unauthorized access
- d. Inadequate incident response system
- e. Delayed implementation due to lack of skilled personnel
- f. Other (Specify:)

5. The cross-border Data Flows and Data Protection

What are significant challenges regarding cross-border transfer of data? (**Multiple answers allowed**)

- a. Navigating varying and complex data protection regulatory requirements between different countries
- b. Domestic regulatory requirement for data localization.
- c. Lack of regulatory transparency and predictability
- d. Increased compliance burden on companies
- e. Inadequate protection on consumer privacy
- b. Other (Specify:)

6. Competition Policy

What concerns you about the competitive environment in the digital market? (**Multiple answers allowed**)

- a. Market monopoly and oligopoly by major platforms
- b. Unfair trade practices (e.g., exclusionary practices)
- c. High barriers to entry for SMEs
- d. Lack of enforcement of competition policy
- e. Limitations on consumer choice
- f. Other (Specify:)

7. Cooperation on Emerging Issues

What issues do you consider important regarding the adoption of emerging technologies such as AI and blockchain? (**Multiple answers allowed**)

- a. Development of technical standards and guidelines
- b. Establishment of an ethical and legal framework
- c. Lack of human resource training and skills development
- d. Lack of R&D and innovation support
- e. Lack of cooperation and information sharing within the ASEAN region
- f. Other (Specify:)

8. Talent mobility and cooperation

What are the challenges you face with regard to the availability and mobility of digital talent? (**Multiple answers allowed**)

- a. Human Resource Shortage and Widening Skills Gap between countries
- b. Differences in work permit and visa systems in different countries
- c. Outflow of human resources (overseas outflow)
- d. Lack of education and training opportunities within each country
- e. Lack of human resource exchange and cooperation within ASEAN
- f. Other (Specify:)

... and upwards