04th ECCIL – RELATED Seminar on the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC):

***ASEAN Trade in Goods Agreement* (*ATIGA*):**

**Implications on cross-border trade and business operations in Laos**

*Don Chan Palace Hotel, Vientiane Capital, November 24th 2016*

Draft Concept (as of November 16th 2016)

**Background:**

The ASEAN Trade in Goods Agreement (ATIGA) is one of the core ASEAN agreements that took effect in 2010. It aims to liberalize, facilitate and thus to contribute to greater free flow of goods in ASEAN as one of the principal means to enhance seamless movement of goods in a highly integrated and cohesive economy. The ATIGA contains obligations and commitments of ASEAN countries to move forward tariff liberalisation, removal of non-tariff barriers, rules of origin, trade facilitation, customs, standards and conformance, and sanitary and phyto-sanitary measures.

The ATIGA presents significant opportunities for importers and exporters as well as investors, who are expanding their production base on the regional level. Their aim is to reap the benefits of different competitive advantages in ASEAN Member States. In addition, with the larger ASEAN market, economies of scale in production can be realized. Thus, ATIGA has the potential to contribute to the development of regional value chains and an increase in trade and investment in ASEAN.

As regards the achievements until today, the implementation of ATIGA has resulted in a substantial reduction of import duties. For the ASEAN-6 countries, almost all tariff lines/products are between 0%-5%. The so-called CLMV countries (Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam) benefit from transition periods in tariff reduction until 2018. All regulations on trade and customs e.g. tariff rates, documents and procedures for import and export have to be available on the Internet. Good progress has also been made on the harmonization of standards, conformity assessments, mutual recognition arrangements and the simplification of customs procedures. However, important challenges remain amongst others in the areas of non-tariff barriers, trade facilitation and the application of improved procedures for imports and exports at border posts.

The seminar aims at the following **objectives**:

* to introduce into Trade in Goods in ASEAN.
* to present the concept and content of the ASEAN Trade in Goods Agreement (ATIGA), such as tariffs, rules of origin, non-tariff measures, trade facilitation, customs, standards and conformance, sanitary and phyto-sanitary measures.
* to give an overview over other relevant Trade in Goods – related agreements in Asia.
* to present the application of ATIGA in Laos.
* to show the impact of ATIGA on import and export procedures, cross-border trade and business operations in Laos and in ASEAN.
* to share and discuss the experiences of companies in Laos utilising ATIGA.
* to inform the business sector in Laos about opportunities and challenges of ATIGA.
* to present existing support tools, such as information platforms, enquiry points, trade repositories, self-certification processes, related to ATIGA to the business sector in Laos.
* to present services offered by development partners to support the implementation of ATIGA and other related trade agreements in Laos and in ASEAN.

The **target group** of the seminar consists of:

* Lao National Chamber of Commerce and Industry, ECCIL, AMCHAM, AUSTCHAM, Lao Business Sector Associations.
* Foreign and Lao private sector enterprises.
* Lao Ministries in charge of or involved in the ASEAN Economic Integration, trade and investment, transportation and logistics and customs.

**Tentative Agenda**

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| Time (When) | Module (What) | Approach (How) | Resource Person (Who) |
| 08.30 – 09.00 | Registration |  |  |
| **Module 1: Opening** | | | |
| 09.00 – 09.15 | Opening Remarks  Welcome Remarks |  | Mr. Guy Apovy, president of ECCIL (tbc)  Lao – German Development Cooperation |
| 09.15 – 09.20 | Opening Ceremony and Group Photo |  |  |
| **Module 2: Introduction into Trade in Goods in ASEAN and ATIGA** | | | |
| 09.20 – 09.40 | Introduction into Trade in Goods in ASEAN and ATIGA   * Trade in Goods in ASEAN and Asia: Facts and Figures * Content of ATIGA: Overview * Institutional Mechanisms for Trade in Goods in ASEAN * Other relevant Trade in Goods – related agreements in Asia: Overview | Presentation | Dr Witada Anukoonwattaka, UNESCAP |
| 09.40 – 09.50 | Introduction into the Implementation of ATIGA in Laos | Presentation | Foreign Trade Policy Department, MoIC |
| 09:50 – 10:10 | Status of ATIGA and Barriers to Trade in Goods in ASEAN: The Perspective of the EU – ASEAN Business Council | Presentation | Chris Humphrey, Executive Director, EU-ASEAN Business Council |
| 10.10 – 10.30 | Questions and Answers | Discussion | Participants and Speakers |
| 10.30 – 10.45 | Coffee Break |  |  |
| **Module 3: Tariffs and Rules of Origin in ASEAN** | | | |
| 10.45 – 11.10 | Tariffs and Rules of Origin in ASEAN, including   * Why Rules of Origin? * Different concepts for Rules of Origin * Rules of Origin in ASEAN * Rules of Origin and Regional Value Chains | Presentation | Dr Witada Anukoonwattaka, UNESCAP |
| 11.10 – 11.35 | Implementation of ASEAN Tariffs  ASEAN Rules of Origin in Laos  Electronic Self-Certification in Laos | Presentation | Foreign Trade Policy Department, MoIC  Department of Import and Export, MoIC |
| 11.35 – 12.00 | Questions and Answers | Plenary Discussion | Participants and Speakers |
| 12.00 – 13.00 | Lunch |  |  |
| **Module 4: Non-Tariff Measures and Non-Tariff Barriers in ASEAN** | | | |
| 13.00 - 13.25 | Non-Tariff Measures and Non-Tariff Barriers in ASEAN, including   * Distinction between Non-Tariff Measures and Non-Tariff Barriers * Technical Barriers to Trade and SPS * How to deal with Non-Tariff Barriers to Trade in Goods in ASEAN | Presentation | Prof Dr Haniff Ahamat |
| 13.25 – 13.50 | Non-Tariff Measures and Non-Tariff Barriers in Laos | Presentation | Department of Import and Export, MoIC |
| 13.50 – 14.15 | Questions and Answers | Plenary Discussion | Participants and Speakers |
| 14.15 – 14.30 | Coffee Break |  |  |
| **Module 5: Trade Facilitation in ASEAN** | | | |
| 14.30 – 14.40 | Case Study: Trade Facilitation | Presentation | Freight Forwarder or Transport Company in Laos |
| 14.40 – 15.05 | Trade Facilitation in ASEAN | Presentation | Dr Tengfei Wang, UNESCAP |
| 15.05 – 15.30 | Trade Facilitation in Laos  Single Window in ASEAN and Laos | Presentation | Department of Import and Export, MoIC  Department of Customs, Ministry of Finance |
| 15.30 – 15.50 | Questions and Answers | Plenary Discussion | Participants and Speakers |
| **Module 6: Where to get help for Trade in Goods in ASEAN?** | | | |
| 15.50 - 16.20 | The ASEAN Solutions for Investments, Services and Trade (ASSIST) | Presentation | ASSIST expert |
| 16.20 – 16.35 | Lao Trade Portal  ASEAN and Lao Trade Repository | Presentation | Department of Import and Export, MoIC |
| 16.35 – 16.55 | Questions and Answers | Plenary discussion | Participants and Speakers |
| **Module 7: Closing** | | | |
| 16.55 - 17.00 | Closing Remarks |  | ECCIL |
| 17:00 | Farewell Reception |  |  |