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SMEs and Investors Gather for Investor Forum and Business Matching 2017

Over 33 small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and about 99 foreign investors joined the Investor Forum and Business Matching 2017 on November 13 in Bangkok. The Forum set out to connect SMEs from the 19 provinces in the Southern Economic Corridor (SEC) with prospective investors, and facilitate their integration into regional and global markets. With support from the Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund (JAIF), the business matching was also facilitated through the SEC Business Database, which was used to find investor matches based on the SMEs' business profiles and technological requests. [Read more.](#)



Investor Forum and Business Matching 2017 – opening pathways for trade in the SEC.

MI Holds Second National Food Safety Forum in Vietnam

Mekong Institute (MI) delivered a second *National Food Safety Forum* in Hanoi, Vietnam on November 2, 2017. The 22 participants who were part of the training courses in the New Zealand Aid Programme-funded Food Safety Project reported their action plan implementation. Discussions also identified other food safety concerns that can be useful inputs for mapping future activities to further promote food safety in the country. [Read more.](#)



Mid-term Review of Southern Economic Corridor Project Highlights Role of Network

MI presented the results of the mid-term review of the project, *Enhancing Competitiveness of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) in the Southern Economic Corridor (SEC) of ASEAN Mekong Sub-region (AMS)*, in a dissemination-workshop on November 13, 2017 in Bangkok. Attended by members of the Project Steering Committee, the review pointed to the important role of established networks among stakeholders in the SEC.

The research titled *Cross-border Value Chain Bottlenecks in the SEC* also forwarded business solution recommendations to boost the competitiveness of the SME sector in the corridor. The two-year project is supported by the Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund. [Read more.](#)



Review highlight: established network of stakeholders critical asset in the SEC.

MI, MoH Deliver Training on Good Hygiene Practices

A localized training on *Good Hygiene Practices (GHP)*, held last November 17, 2017 in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, placed emphasis on proper handling, preparation and storage of food as fundamental to food safety. Organized by MI in partnership with the Food Safety Bureau, Department of Drug and Food (DFF) of the Cambodia Ministry of Health (MoH), the training was attended by 22 food handlers in the food catering industry. The training covered basic food safety for food handlers, principles of good hygiene practices and guidelines for applying GHP certificate and hygiene label from DFF. [Read more.](#)



Food handlers are as important as producers in ensuring food safety.

Back-to-Back Food Safety Initiatives of MI Alumni

On November 13, three MI alumni from the Institute of Standards of Cambodia (ISC) organized a consultation workshop on the drafting of iodized salt standard. The event also served to raise awareness on food safety and hygienic practices among salt producers and processors. Twenty participants from 11 provinces and municipalities were invited to provide feedback on the drafted salt standard.

A dissemination training was also held on November 23 on *Food Safety Risks and Control along the Food Supply Chain*. Organized by CAMCONTROL staff who attended MI's food safety course in July this year, the training oriented 42 students from the Royal University of Phnom Penh on the roles and responsibilities of government agencies in consumer rights and food labeling.



Top: Participants of the workshop on iodized salt standard. Below: Students from the Royal University of Phnom Penh.



In Mandalay, Myanmar, MI alumni likewise organized a training-workshop on *Food Safety Awareness in Food Supply Chain* on November 26-27, 2017. The workshop was delivered by MI alumni from the Food Science and Technology Association (FoSTA) and Myanmar Fruit, Flower and Vegetable Producers Association (MFVP).

Workshop on GMS Logistics Update Organized

A workshop on *GMS Logistics Update and Green Freight* last November 14, 2017 in Phnom Penh, Cambodia gathered 54 participants to discuss topics on value chain, outsourcing and benefits of green freight. The event was conducted as part of the action plan implementation of participants in the ToT Training on Certified Logistics Master Program held in May this year. The GMS Logistics Database was also presented during the workshop and to the Ministry of Public Works and Transport.



TIF Holds Synthesis-Evaluation Workshop for SME-Oriented Training Programs

Participants of the training on *Promoting Women Entrepreneurship for Export Business* in July early this year gathered again for a synthesis-evaluation workshop on November 14-16, 2017 at the MI Headquarters. The women entrepreneurs shared lessons learned in their action plan implementation and participation in trade activities geared to expand their exposure to investors and broader markets. On November 28-29, another synthesis-evaluation workshop was organized, this time for the training program on *Trade Events Promotion*. Participants from the SME clusters in the border provinces of the SEC reflected and exchanged ideas on the trade events they conducted in their respective countries as part of their action plan.

■ EWEC (SDC) PROJECT ACTIVITIES



Training on Good Manufacturing Practices Organized in Khammouane and Savannakhet

The push to promote Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) continues as EWEC Lao Field Office delivered back-to-back trainings, with the first kicking off in Khammouane Province last November 17-19, and the second in Savannakhet on November 27-29, 2017.

About 35 rice mill staff and government workers joined the trainings, which aimed to enhance knowledge on rice mill practices as part of promoting GMP. Participants of the training in Khammouane also visited Vanida Rice Mill to further learn on-the-ground practices from a model rice mill. Following the training, the participants committed to apply the knowledge gained in their respective work and businesses.



EWEC Myanmar Meets with Local Brokers



Monitoring for success. EWEC team follows up on the progress of training participants.

The EWEC Myanmar Field Office met with local brokers last October 30, 2017 at City Home, Myawaddy Township to discuss guidelines on collecting information for a systematic record bookkeeping. As part of monitoring work, the team also followed up on the local brokers' progress following their participation in a training early this month on preparing and storing maize.

Farmers and Local Brokers, Traders Join Workshop on Rolling Out Business Linkage

About 44 farmers and local traders and brokers joined the workshop on *Rolling Out Business Linkage among Key Players of Maize Value Chain* on November 11, 2017 at Inn Gyin Myaing Village, Myawaddy. Organized to help facilitate expansion in domestic markets, the workshop informed participants of the procurement practices in local markets, as well as payment mechanisms between maize farmers, input companies and local brokers.



Farmers and local traders and brokers learn ways to better connect with local markets.

Private Sector Link-up Explored to Boost Contract Farming

Seeking to expand its private sector partnerships to promote contract farming of maize in Myawaddy and Hpa-an townships, the EWEC Myanmar team met with representatives of Bio-supreme Company on November 7, 2017 in Yangon. The meeting tackled collaboration mechanisms for promoting rainfed maize production and domestic market development in Myawaddy Township.

Meanwhile, another meeting with existing private sector partner, Mya Htay Kywe Lin Company on November 16 discussed arrangements for contract farming of winter maize in Hpa-an Township. The team also joined a farmer meeting on November 17 in Meinmahla Kyun Island. These meetings served to inform the team of possible support activities that can be organized for the farmers, such as study visits and related trainings to improve capacities for scale-up.



■ OTHER ACTIVITIES

MI Executive Director Shares About Prospects of Belt and Road Initiative in GMS

Dr. Watcharas Leelawath, MI Executive Director, served as panel discussant in the *Policy Seminar on the Belt and Road Initiative* on November 24, 2017 in Bangkok, Thailand. Dr. Leelawath talked about the prospects and roles of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in promoting regional connectivity and sustainable development in the GMS.



Dr. Watcharas Leelawath with H.E. Tun Tun Naing, also MI Council member from Myanmar, and Mr. Li Hong, MI Steering Committee member for P.R. China at the Policy Seminar on the Belt and Road Initiative.



Dr. Watcharas Leelawath speaking about the role of BRI in advancing capacity building initiatives at the Asia-Pacific Forum on Science and Technology Parks.

He also spoke at a similar event in Hefei City, People's Republic of China last November 28-29, 2017. Speaking before delegates at the *Belt and Road Initiatives in the Asia-Pacific Forum on Science and Technology Parks 2017*, Dr. Leelawath shared about how the BRI could play a significant role in furthering capacity-building, networking and infrastructure investment initiatives.



MI Meets with Irish Ambassador to Vietnam

Dr. Watcharas Leelawath met with H.E. Cáit Moran, Ambassador of Ireland to Vietnam on November 2, 2017 in Hanoi, Vietnam. The two discussed MI's initiatives in the region and possible areas for cooperation between MI and the Government of Ireland through Irish Aid.

MI Joins Workshop on Competitiveness and Inclusive Growth

MI joined high-level officials from the government, business, academe and civil sector in the workshop on *Competitiveness and Inclusive Growth: Navigating Towards Thailand 4.0* on November 20, 2017 in Bangkok. Representing MI, Dr. Watcharas Leelawath weighed in on the priorities for national policy and business strategies to boost competitiveness and promote inclusive growth in light of the Thailand 4.0 Agenda. The event was sponsored by the Ministry of Commerce, Thailand, National Economic and Social Development Board, and the World Economic Forum.

Dr. Acedo Speaks at Food Security Symposium



Dr. Jun Acedo, Senior Program Specialist, Agricultural Development and Commercialization Department, served as keynote speaker in this year's *International Symposium on Food Security and Sustainable Development* held at the Industrial University of Ho Chi Minh, Vietnam on November 22, 2017. Dr. Acedo presented the agrifood development strategy and initiatives of MI to forward food security and safety in the Greater Mekong Sub-region.

■ OTHER ACTIVITIES

MI Attends 10th LMI Regional Working Group Meeting

Dr. Watcharas Leelawath attended the *Lower Mekong Initiative Regional Working Group Meeting* on November 16-17, 2017 in Vientiane, Lao PDR. With other delegations from Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Vietnam in attendance, the meeting discussed the restructuring of the LMI Pillars and potential areas and best practices for private sector engagement, including expanding trade and investment and improving business ecosystems.



UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

Modular Training Program on Enhancing the Utilization of FTAs by SMEs

December 4-8

Regional Training Program on Enhancing Trade Competitiveness for Regional Integration

December 11-15



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