



LANCANG - MEKONG **BUSINESS FORUM**

“Facilitating Agri-business and Investment through Innovations in Processed Food Sector in the Lancang-Mekong Region”

November 15 - 16, 2018 | Bangkok, Thailand
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Business Forum at a Glance

Introduction

Food processing is a fast growing industry in Lancang-Mekong countries. In Thailand, known as the “kitchen of the world”, the food industry, including local consumption and exports was of the value about US\$ 100 billion in 2017¹. Thailand is recognized as a leading exporter of several canned products (classified as moderately processed food) such as canned tuna and canned pineapple – two products in which Thailand is a global leader. Thai food processing industry is also making strides in highly processed food products, ready meals and processed halal food, food seasoning, beverages etc.

The ASEAN is one of the most productive agricultural baskets of the world. The packaged food and beverage sales value in the ASEAN is forecasted to be worth US\$ 164 billion in 2020, an increase from US\$ 108 billion in 2015². In the context of Lancang-Mekong countries, a lot of the discussions related to food processing have been on regarding food safety, food security and developing food processing industries in these countries, which would add value to their economies and enhance income of sizeable percentages of population of each country which are engaged in either agriculture or food industries.

Food processing has emerged as a fast changing sector. There are issues such as changing consumer taste and preferences (e.g. preference for organic food, food produced in

¹ <https://www.slideshare.net/boinyc/thailand-food-industry>

² <https://www.statista.com/statistics/729309/packaged-food-and-drink-sales-value-in-asean/>

environmentally sustainable manner, health food, nutrition consciousness, source of food or food stories), new technology and innovation to produce, process and preserve food in sustainable and cost-effective ways, environmental and livelihood impacts of the food processing industry, food security etc. which shape the developments of the industry.

In terms of the future, the food processing industry need to pay attention to twin needs of feeding the growing as well as the aged population, concerns about obesity (i.e. sugar content in food) and impact of certain kinds of food on health (e.g. sugar substitutes), concerns about meat industry (i.e. treatment of animals), disruptive innovation led by startups in areas such as plant-based proteins, personalized nutrition and food technology (e.g. in packaging or labeling) etc³.

Investment opportunities exist in form of setting up semi-processed and moderately processed, organic food, fisheries products in Lancang-Mekong region as the countries in the region are seeking to move up the value chains⁴. Thailand is relatively advanced compared to the other countries in Lancang-Mekong region. In Thailand, investment opportunities exist in health food, organic food, dietary supplements, high-value added food packaging etc⁵.

Lancang – Mekong countries are pooling resources and expertise to increase the competitiveness of their agro-based food products and encourage investment in agribusiness, while at the same time conserving the environment and natural resources. This involves research and technology that emphasizes climate-friendly agricultural development, including participation by the private sector with a focus on food security and innovations. Food Industry Innovation could bring premium and value-add food and beverage producers together and help them overcome barriers to growth. A range of benefits are offered to farmers, including reductions in agricultural losses, enhanced production efficiency, lower resource costs and improvements to profit margins. Extended shelf life of food products is also possible through innovative packaging that incorporates antimicrobial properties.

Against this background, Mekong Institute (MI) will be organizing a business forum on the theme:“ Facilitating Agricultural Trade and Investment through Innovation in the food industry in Lancang - Mekong Region”.

The Business Forum will be the first of six such forums planned for implementation in each LM countries during 2018-2023 funded under the Lancang-Mekong Cooperation (LMC) Special Fund (LMC). The project is being implemented in close collaboration with the Ministry of Commerce, Royal Government of Thailand. The First Lancang – Mekong Business Forum will be held on November 15-16, 2018 at Bangkok, Thailand.

³ <https://www.foodnavigator.com/Article/2018/01/03/2018-and-beyond-Five-mega-trends-set-to-shape-the-food-industry>

⁴ <http://investasean.asean.org/index.php/page/view/feature-stories/view/895/newsid/998/integration-provides-vast-agricultural-opportunities.html>

⁵ <https://www.slideshare.net/boinyc/thailand-food-industry>

The goals and objectives

The Business Forum would be an important platform for sharing innovations and good practices on new approaches to sustainable and inclusive innovation in the processed food industry. It will provide a unique opportunity for governments, private sector actors, and development partners to work together and discuss concrete investment plans for several countries of the region. It would allow a transition to sustainable processed-food in Lancang-Mekong region to be established as the ultimate objective, and broken down into the following:

- Establishing business linkages among the Lancang Mekong countries businesses;
- Assisting SMEs integrate in the Regional and Global Value Chain (R-GVC);
- Exchanging information on state of art technology and innovative products to push forward the industrial growth;
- Promoting investment through business collaboration in the Lancang Mekong countries.

Business Forum Structure

The First Business Forum will be comprised of 4 parts;

Part 1: Seminar

A seminar will be organized on the first day of the event which is structured as following

Session 1 (9.00 Am – 10. 30 Am) will discuss the key issues for agri business and investment in Lancang-Mekong region. It will also highlight the update situation together with threats and challenges in processed food sector in the region.

Session 2 (11.00 Am – 12.30 PM) will discuss the key issues for innovation in processed food industry with success stories besides showcasing some of the innovation outreach activities by leading companies, and R& D centres.

Part 2: Business matching

The business matching will aim to provide participants with an opportunity to have direct exposure to processed food sector. It will comprise of the following sub-activities:

(i) Dynamic Web platform

A dynamic web portal will be created with relevant information including the introduction to the Business Forum, fact sheet exhibitor list, participants' registration, news and media, venue, floor plan and etc. This platform will provide the facility to register for event (s).

(ii) Pre business matching (online)

Pre business matching will be conducted through the dynamic web portal. The prospective companies from Lancang-Mekong countries will be required to register on this platform and provide their company profile including products/services and indicate their specific business interest. The information would be used to identify the specific business interest to facilitate onsite business-to-business meeting sessions..

(iii) Onsite Business Matching

One-to-one business matching between Lancang-Mekong businesses will be arranged. MI and its cooperation partners will co-facilitate the business matching. MI staff and its cooperation partners will provide onsite consultations to B2B parties arrange meetings based on the pre matching results obtained from web portal, record progress of the business matching and obtain feedback.

(iv) Post-forum Follow Up (duration: three months)

As follow-up of the onsite event, MI will utilize the web-based platform to monitor the progress of the business matching. At the same time, MI will follow up through emails and phone calls, and provide necessary online consultations required, to facilitate investment projects among Lancang-Mekong businesses.

Part 3: Exhibition

Aligning with the seminar, product samples of the selected companies in Lancang-Mekong countries will be exhibited.

Part 4: Structured Learning Visit (SLV)

The SLV aims to provide the participants with an important opportunity to understand state-of-the-art production systems, including packaging, processing, standards and certification process, quality control technologies, research and development (R&D), skill development, and input suppliers in the processed-food business sector in Thailand. The selected companies will visit sites located in Bangkok and surrounding area.



Target Participants

The Forum will be attended by a range of stakeholders over 100 participants representing from the following target groups:

A. Participants from China, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam (6 participants from each country, 30 participants in total) comprising of Agro food processing companies, processed food products exporters, machinery & equipment manufacturer/suppliers, R& D centers involved in food sector, and Heads of key Agri-business sectors association/institutions representatives.

B. Participants from Thailand, comprising of;

- Representatives of Private Sector: - 50 participants from Agro processing Companies, Producers group, Exporters, Equipment and technology suppliers, Producers group, Transport/logistics firms/etc. and Banks
- Representatives of Government Agencies and Intergovernmental organizations: - 10 participants from Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Ministry of Public Health, Ministry of Agriculture, Heads of key Agri-business sectors association/institutions representatives.
- Representatives (10 participants) from Producers associations, Agriculture research/development/extension firms, Policy/advocacy organizations, ADB, World Bank, IFC, International Business Chambers based in Thailand, and Embassies and Foreign Mission in Thailand- China, Laos, Vietnam, Myanmar and Cambodia.

Expected Outcomes

At the end of the Business Forum, the participants will be able to identify potential business partners on wide range of business possibilities including market access, technology, R&D, information, Joint ventures, finance, skill, training etc. in food processing sector. The event participants will also be able to update on the latest technology and product innovation to improve productivity, competitiveness and business networking.

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