

## Connect Asia Newsletter

**Information on trade, economic cooperation and integration in Asia**  
From the GIZ programme Support for Economic Cooperation in Sub-Regional Initiatives in Asia

**Issue No. 10**  
**October 2016**

### Editorial



Dear Readers,

I welcome you back after the summer for the third instalment of Connect Asia in 2017. The period covered in this issue has been rather busy and the Support for Economic Cooperation in Sub-regional Initiatives in Asia (SCSI) programme successfully concluded a number of events as well as participated and

contributed to events of our partners in the region. As usual you will find more in-depth information on a selection of those below. At the same time, strategic planning activities for the coming year are already underway both internally within the team and with our partner countries in the region.

The issue of regional cooperation and integration has received a lot of attention recently. Here in Asia, the stakes are high as shown by the recent discussion about the cancellation of the 19th Summit of South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). However, this just shows the importance of political commitment as a key factor for successful regional cooperation as demonstrated by the fact that at the same time the sub-regional cooperation mechanism Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) was highlighted during the BRICS Summit in India. Certainly sub-regional cooperation mechanism and frameworks are not a mean in itself, but rather a tool for common prosperity through economic development.

For more insights on this topic you will find short reviews of studies and other related types of documents pertaining to regional integration and trade in Asia and beyond in this newsletter. We are also happy to share our own output to give you more in-depth information about our work, and especially distribute findings and policy recommendations. Please find the links on the right column under the heading "Publications".

As usual, please provide your feedback or refer this newsletter to your colleagues and peers via this handy link: [Recommend this newsletter](#)

**With the best from the SCSI Team,**

**Magnus C. M. Brod**  
Editor

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### Programme News

### Dates and Events

#### 24-28 October 2016

Training  
GTI Trade Facilitation Capacity Building  
Daejeon, RoK  
GTI

#### 26-27 October 2016

Workshop  
Services Trade and Regulatory Reforms in Asia: In Search of a Comprehensive Approach  
Kolkata, India  
ADB  
[adb.org/...](#)

#### 28-29 October

Forum  
North-East Asia Development Cooperation Forum  
Suzhou, PR China  
UNESCAP  
[unescap.org/...](#)

#### 3-5 November 2016

Conference  
Asia-Pacific Conference of German Business  
Asia-Pacific Committee of German Business (APA)  
[asiapacificconference.com](#)

#### 5-6 November 2016

Convention  
Sustainable and Inclusive Development in East Asia and the Global Economy  
Bandung, Indonesia  
East Asian Economic Association  
[eaea2016.events/...](#)

#### 9-10 November 2016

Conference  
Inter-Regional Connectivity: South Asia and Central Asia  
Lahore, Pakistan  
Government College University  
[ps.gcu.edu.pk/...](#)

#### 15 November 2016

Call for Papers  
Shadow Silk Road: Non-state Flow of Commodity, Capital, and People across Eurasia  
Hong Kong, Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of

## Regional Cooperation

### Working Meeting on GTI Agriculture Cooperation Strategic Action Plan held in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia



On 5-6 July 2016 Mongolia hosted the first Working Meeting of the recently established Agriculture Committee of the Greater Tumen Initiative (GTI) in Ulaanbaatar. The meeting was co-organized by the GTI Secretariat and the Ministry of Food and Agriculture of Mongolia. The objective was to lay the foundation for the GTI

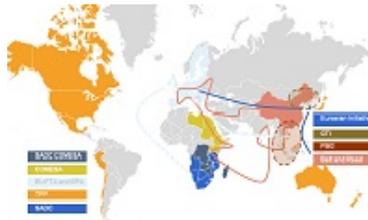
Regional Agricultural Strategic Action Plan (SAP) based on the member states' national strategies as well as the findings and suggestions of the Regional Report on Agricultural Cooperation in the Greater Tumen Region commissioned by GTI. Participants from the Ministry of Agriculture of the People's Republic of China, Ministry of Food and Agriculture of Mongolia, Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs of the Republic of Korea and Ministry of Agriculture of the Russian Federation took part in the meeting. In order to support regional cooperation the SCSI Programme facilitated the discussion. After developing the common ground based on the introduction on national and regional policies of the respective member states participants jointly defined the vision for agricultural cooperation in the Greater Tumen Region. Based on the outcome of the fruitful discussions during the meeting the GTI Secretariat will prepare the Agricultural SAP Draft for submission within the GTI cooperation framework.

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## Development Cooperation

### SCSI Co-organises Joint Session on Regional Trade and Investment Initiatives



Together with the Programme on Cooperation for the Enhancement of SADC Regional Economic Integration (CESARE) and the German Development Institute (DIE) Trade and Investment Team, the SCSI programme organised a session during the 2016 'Global Retreat on Private Sector

Development, Economic Policy and Cooperation with the Private Sector' organised by GIZ which took place in Bad Neunahr, Germany from September 5 to 6. The event was headed 'Develop, Perform, Achieve: Innovative Approaches to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)' and provided an exchange platform for development professionals, private sector managers and political officials.

The jointly organised session, comprised of three presentations based on practical work and research in Southern Africa and Asia, also took into consideration the interaction among the regions and the European Union. The input was followed by a discussion. During the exchange it was highlighted that pragmatic approaches focusing on cross-regional economic opportunities – such as concrete transport corridors and regional value chains – can be a particularly promising approach for development cooperation. By building up the capacity both within countries, as well as within secretariats of regional economic communities (REC), GIZ can ensure that partners are equipped to deal with the opportunities and possible challenges growing out of the proliferation of mega-regional trade and investment initiatives, especially where they overlap with existing partnerships. It was concluded that cooperation at the regional level is critical to ensure a coordinated and strategic approach toward implementation of the sustainable development goals and often it will be necessary to find elements that unite regions beyond existing political arrangements. Proceedings of the overall event will be made available shortly through the GIZ website [www.giz.de](http://www.giz.de)

Contact: [Benjamin.Klinger@giz.de](mailto:Benjamin.Klinger@giz.de)

For more information on the Global Retreat please refer to the event's website: [www.giz.de/](http://www.giz.de/)

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## Capacity Building

### SCSI facilitates two Trainings for GTI in Beijing and Ulaanbaatar



SCSI organised two trainings in

region of the People's Republic of China  
International Institute for Asian Studies  
[ias.asia/...](http://ias.asia/)

#### 18 - 20 November 2016

Conference  
20th East Asia Day  
Duisburg, Germany  
Institute of East Asian Studies  
[uni-due.de/...](http://uni-due.de/)

#### 24-25 November

Conference  
Trade Promotion Organization  
Network World Conference and Awards  
Marrakesh, Morocco  
ITC  
[intracen.org/...](http://intracen.org/)

#### 25 November

Briefing Session  
Briefing Session on the Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific  
Bangkok, Thailand  
UNESCAP  
[unescap.org/...](http://unescap.org/)

#### 1 December

Expert dialogue  
Follow-up and Review for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific  
Bangkok, Thailand  
UNESCAP  
[unescap.org/...](http://unescap.org/)

#### 1 December

Call for Papers  
Regions in Transition  
Karlstad, Sweden  
Regional Studies Association  
[regionalstudies.org/...](http://regionalstudies.org/)

#### 5-9 December

63rd Session of the Board Meeting  
Trade and Development Board  
Geneva, Switzerland  
UNCTAD  
[unctad.org/...](http://unctad.org/)

#### 6-9 December 2016

Meeting  
16th Asia and the Pacific Regional Meeting  
Bali, Indonesia  
ILO  
[ilo.org/...](http://ilo.org/)

#### 12-14 December 2016

Seminar  
Trade Facilitation in Northeast Asia  
Beijing, PR China  
GTI, UNESCAP  
[unescap.org/...](http://unescap.org/)

#### 7-12 May 2017

Conference  
30th World Part



September 2016 in Beijing and Ulaanbaatar. From September 22-23, SCSI hosted a training in Beijing to enhance the communication capacity for the Secretariat of the Greater Tumen Initiative (GTI).

Participants that attended the workshop included GTI Secretariat staff, as well as representatives of the Chinese Ministry of Commerce and the Russian Federation's Trade Mission. As successful regional economic cooperation within the Greater Tumen Region depends on effective communication between national focal points and the GTI Secretariat, SCSI invited trainer Karsten Weitzenegger to mentor the workshop and to present participants with a broad range of communication tools. After assessing the challenges of communications among the GTI Secretariat, the National Coordinators and other stakeholders, the participants actively engaged in elaborating new concepts to take effective measures towards building communication capacity. From September 26-27, a training on proposal writing for Mongolian GTI Focal Points followed in Ulaanbaatar. Based on the positive feedback from a similar training last year this event brought together participants from many of the ministries and government agencies involved in GTI cooperation such as the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Agriculture, and the Development Bank of Mongolia as well as representatives of provincial governments. Through sessions on proposal writing as such and input on the particularities of guidelines and regulations of proposing projects within the GTI framework provided by officer Mr. Batkhuyag Baldangombo from the GTI Secretariat, the training provided the opportunity for the participants to exchange information about Mongolia's engagement in the GTI framework.

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## Recent Trends in Regional Integration and Trade

South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia

### Recent Developments in the Field of Non-Tariff Measures

Various organisations have made contributions towards enhancing transparency in the field of Non-Tariff Measures. The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) in cooperation with its partners, including the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH have published a Trainer's Manual on NTBs and NTMs. UNCTAD launched the largest global database on Non-Tariff Measures during the Ministerial roundtable in Nairobi. The Trade Analysis Information System (TRAINS) covers 56 countries accounting for 80 per cent of world trade. Prior to the release of the world wide TRAINS data base, UNCTAD and the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA) had launched a Website that provides information on NTMs in the ten ASEAN countries prior to the release of the world wide TRAINS data base.

Access the full training manual at: [www.saarctrade.info...](http://www.saarctrade.info...) (3.06 MB)

Access TRAINS at: [i-tip.unctad.org/...](http://i-tip.unctad.org/...)

Access ASEAN NTM database at: [asean.i-tip.org...](http://asean.i-tip.org...)

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S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies

### Economic Integration in South Asia

In this commentary, Pradumna B. Rana from the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS) argues that bilateralism, sub-regionalism, and inter-regionalism are the way forward for South Asian integration. As five countries are boycotting the SAARC summit in Pakistan this November, South Asian countries need to adopt a multi-pronged approach to reinvigorate economic integration in their region including a 'SAARC minus x' scheme similar to the ASEAN model.

[www.rsis.edu.sg/...](http://www.rsis.edu.sg/...) (382 KB)

European Centre for Development Policy Management

### EU Prospects for Supporting Regional Integration Effectively

The European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM) has published a discussion paper on how to effectively support regional integration. The paper analyses the EU's approach to the 11th European Development Fund regional programming, which constitutes EU's main instruments for supporting regional integration in the Africa, Caribbean and Pacific regions. As regional

South World Forum

Nusa Dua, Bali, Indonesia

IAPH

[iaphbali2017.com/...](http://iaphbali2017.com/...)

10-12 May 2017

Forum

World Economic Forum on ASEAN

Phnom Penh, Cambodia

World Economic Forum

[weforum.org/...](http://weforum.org/...)

### More on GIZ SCSI Programme

Sub-Regional Initiatives play an increasingly important role in Asia's regional economic cooperation and integration. They help countries to overcome the limitations of domestic markets and foster inclusive development, both by boosting economic growth and by providing the resources for appropriate policies. The GIZ SCSI Programme supports regional stakeholders with the aim to strengthen selected core processes of regional economic cooperation and integration and to contribute to a sustainable and inclusive economic development in the region.

Visit our website:

[www.giz.de/scsi/...](http://www.giz.de/scsi/...)

### Stay up to date with GIZ SCSI

If you would like to continue receiving regular updates on our programme activities and further insights on regionalisation processes in Asia, please refer to the GIZ Newsletter mainpage and subscribe [here](#).

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### Publications

The following selection of event documentations and background papers are available:

[Roundtable Meeting: Regional Infrastructure Investment Initiatives](#) (4.3 MB)

[Expert Input: European Experiences of Cross-Border Cooperation](#) (3.1 MB)

[Expert Forum: Asian Regional Integration Revisited](#) (5.1 MB)

Find the publications on our website:

[www.connecting-asia.org/...](http://www.connecting-asia.org/...)

integration remains a key aspect of EU's future foreign, development and security policies this discussion paper stresses the importance of a more feasible EU approach and lays out various pointers to help refine EU's capacity to support regional projects.

Access the full paper at: [www.ecdpm.org/...](http://www.ecdpm.org/...) (2.67 MB)

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#### The Diplomat

### **AIIB's role in Myanmar in the framework of China's 'One Belt, One Road'**

The article argues that the recently established China-led Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) might play an important role for regional integration of Myanmar. Although the establishment of the AIIB, was feared to serve as a tool for spreading Chinese geoeconomic primacy throughout the Asia-Pacific, the interaction between the still-new AIIB and China's state-led One Belt, One Road Initiative across Eurasia remains blurry. However, especially Myanmar could become an interesting test case for the AIIB's role in light of current geoeconomic developments. Myanmar, one of the founding members, has a great need for infrastructure financing. The AIIB, along with the ADB and the World Bank, can provide the financial means, thereby making an important contribution to support the development of one of Southeast Asia's poorest states, complementary to China's Belt & Road Initiative.

Access to the article at: [www.thediplomat.com...](http://www.thediplomat.com...)

#### South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation

### **SASEC and ADB Release Operational Plan for 2016-2025**

South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation (SASEC) has published its first comprehensive longterm plan. SASEC members include Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka. The Operational Plan includes a long list of potential projects of which a subset could be funded by the ADB. The overarching aim of SASEC is not only to promote trade and economic cooperation within South Asia but also to foster sustained economic linkages to East and Southeast Asia.

Access the operational plan at: [www.adb.org/...](http://www.adb.org/...) (1.63 MB)

#### Xinhua

### **China-Mongolia-Russia Economic Corridor**

China, Mongolia and Russia will cooperate in seven areas to build a trilateral economic corridor, according to guidelines that were released in mid September. The three neighbors will improve transport facilities by expanding land, air and sea connections and renovate ports of entry and overhaul customs procedures for easier clearance. Further, the three countries agreed to expand trade at border regions and widen trade in services, as well as improving cooperation in education, science and technology, culture, tourism, medical care and intellectual property. In addition, they promised to strengthen cooperation in environmental protection and push partnerships of local governments and border regions.

For the full article: [news.xinhuanet.com/...](http://news.xinhuanet.com/...)

#### Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia

### **International Comparison of Transparency in Non-tariff Measures**

The paper analyses an index of transparency in non-tariff measures (NTM) based on notifications to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) under the agreements on sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures and on technical barriers to trade as well as further NTM data from the private sector. The results show that industrial countries in general lead the ranking but also show that ASEAN efforts towards NTM transparency are effective. ASEAN countries score higher in data collection and experimental results than in compliance with WTO transparency requirements.

Access at: [www.eria.org/...](http://www.eria.org/...) (589 KB)

#### UN Regional Commissions

### **Regionalism and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

A Regional Commissions' Side Event titled "Regionalism and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" was held during the 71st session of the General Assembly. The event was opened by Secretary-General Ban-Ki Moon, who stressed the importance of UN Regional Commissions in implementing and assessing progress towards the 2030 Agenda. UN Under-Secretary-General and ESCAP Executive Secretary Dr. Shamshad Akhtar particularly emphasised the leading global efforts of the Asia-Pacific region to implement the Sustainable Development Goals. The event promoted inter-regional peer learning by sharing experiences from the regions, including on regional partnerships among States, regional and subregional organisations and other stakeholders.

Read the full press release here: [www.regionalcommissions.org/...](http://www.regionalcommissions.org/...)

Asian Development Bank, Greater Mekong Subregion

### 13th Annual Meeting of the Working Group on Agriculture of the Greater Mekong Subregion

The 13th Annual Meeting of the Working Group on Agriculture (WGA) of the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) was dedicated to assessing how market access of GMS-produced safe and climate-friendly agriculture products can be improved regionally and globally. Thus, officials reviewed the implementation of the GMS Core Agriculture Support Program Phase II (CASP2). Participants from its member countries Cambodia, People's Republic of China, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Thailand, and Viet Nam expedited to finalise their respective first letter of agreement (LOA). The LOA mechanism enables direct involvement in program activities, therefore fostering country ownership.

Access the full country profiles at: [www.adb.org/...](http://www.adb.org/)

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