

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 (SCSI)

Issue No. 13
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Editorial



Dear Reader,

Welcome to the latest edition of our SCSI Programme newsletter covering our work as well as recent trends in the field of regional cooperation and integration (RCI). Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) requires great endeavours to coordinate global resources and strengthen political

commitment for improved international cooperation. RCI plays a crucial role in supporting the implementation of the SDGs by fostering employment and income opportunities as well as improving knowledge exchange on regional best practices. In doing so, RCI directly contributes to the targets of Goal 8 of the SDGs including inclusive and sustainable economic growth and decent job creation. It encourages the formalisation and growth of small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and increases Aid for Trade (Aft) support for developing countries. To make all of this work, it is inevitable to include the private sector from the beginning in global, regional and national measures to combine aid, trade, innovation, and investment, meeting the challenges of poverty alleviation and sustainable development.

In this light, the SCSI Team is currently working with partners as well as GIZ programmes in Cambodia, Viet Nam and Lao PDR. By developing product specific export guidelines local SMEs will be qualified to export their commodities more efficiently to the Chinese market. With moderating a session of the recent Logistics Sub-Committee Meeting of the Greater Tumen Initiative (GTI) Local Cooperation Mechanism we emphasised the inclusion of the private sector as a source for information to identify bottlenecks in regional value chains. The session was part of the Preparatory Meeting for the 5th GTI Northeast Asia (NEA) Local Cooperation Committee (LCC).

To find out more about our activities regarding RCI during the last months, I kindly invite you to this newsletter as well as our website www.connecting-asia.org. As always, we are happy to provide you with our own reports as well as selected publications of other institutions on recent trends in Asian regionalism.

With the best wishes from the SCSI Team

Florian Miß
Editor

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- 2nd GTI AEO Working Group Meeting
- Workshop: Opportunities and Challenges of Belt and Road Initiative
- Recent Trends in Regional Integration and Trade
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Dates and Events

05-07 July

15th ASEAN Ports&Shipping
Exhibition and Conference
Yangon, Myanmar
Myanmar Port Authority
[transportevents.com/...](http://transportevents.com/)

11-13 July 2017

Aid for Trade Global Review 2017:
“Promoting Trade, Inclusiveness
and Connectivity for Sustainable
Development”
Geneva, Switzerland
Aid for Trade, WTO
[wto.org/...](http://wto.org/)

13-15 July 2017

13th Annual Conference of the
Asia-Pacific Economic
Association
Seoul, Republic of Korea
APEA
[apeaweb.org/...](http://apeaweb.org/)

27-28 July 2017

GTI Tourism Forum
Hunchun, PR China
GTI
[tumenprogramme.org/...](http://tumenprogramme.org/)

16 August 2017

GTI NEA Local Cooperation
Committee Meeting
Heihe, PR China
GTI
[tumenprogramme.org/...](http://tumenprogramme.org/)

29 August 2017

Workshop on Facilitation of Trade
in Northeast Asia through
Paperless Trade
Bangkok, Thailand
UNESCAP
[unescap.org/...](http://unescap.org/)

31 August 2017

GTI Trade and Investment
Roundtable
Changchun, PR China
GTI, GIZ, Jilin Province
[tumenprogramme.org/...](http://tumenprogramme.org/)

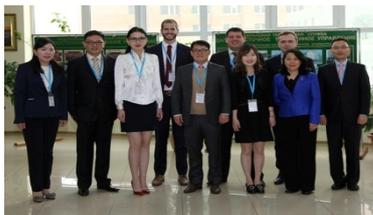
01-05 September 2017

China-Northeast Asia Expo
Changchun, China
Jilin Province

Programme News

Regional Cooperation

Working Meeting on GTI Authorised Economic Operator (AEO) held in Vladivostok



On 24 – 25 May 2017 the Federal Customs Service of the Russian Federation hosted the second Working Meeting of the Authorised Economic Operator (AEO) Working Group of the Greater Tumen Initiative (GTI) in Vladivostok. The meeting, being part of series of four meetings in

total with the first held in November 2016 in China, was co-organised by the GTI Secretariat. The objective was to lay a further foundation for a GTI standardised AEO Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA) as well as GTI AEO Guidelines based on the member states' national AEO strategies and legal frameworks. It aims to be in line with the World Customs Organisation (WCO) Framework of Standards to Secure and Facilitate Global Trade (SAFE) which provides global standards for AEO. Participants from the customs agencies of the People's Republic of China, Mongolia, Republic of Korea and the Russian Federation took part in the meeting.

After developing common ground based on the introduction of national AEO implementation processes, participants deepened their understanding of each nation's AEO legal framework. With the outcome of the fruitful discussions, participants and the GTI Secretariat set the frame for a 3rd AEO Working Group meeting in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, in September 2017. In order to strengthen regional cooperation, the SCSi Programme will further support the GTI Secretariat and the AEO Working Group in course of the process to set up GTI AEO Guidelines and a standardised MRA.

You can find further information at the GTI website [tumenprogramme.org/...](http://tumenprogramme.org/)

Contact: Florian.Miss@giz.de

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Regional Knowledge Sharing

Joint research on Opportunities and Challenges of Belt and Road Initiative



On 14 May several delegates for landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) in Asia, as well as GIZ programmes from the region and representatives of The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) met in Bangkok, Thailand, to discuss the issues of opportunities and

challenges arising from the Chinese driven Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Previously, UNESCAP and the GIZ Integrated Mineral Resources Initiative (IMRI) Project in Mongolia had launched a joint research project in 2016 to look deeper into the specific impact BRI may have on the economies of landlocked countries. The BRI - first announced by the Chinese government in 2013 - focuses on connectivity and cooperation among more than 60 countries mainly in Central and South East Asia, promoting the establishment of multiple economic corridors. Thus, the impact on developing countries could be immense. Especially so for landlocked countries which are highly dependent on connectivity.

The objective of the workshop was to discuss outcomes of a country study on opportunities and risks of the BRI for Mongolia that was commissioned as part of this project. The aim is also to learn from participants about challenges in economic diversification and infrastructure development that other LLDCs in the Asia-Pacific region are facing. The SCSi team joined the workshop to enrich the discussion with the perspective on connectivity and regional cooperation between the People's Republic of China and their neighbouring countries, focusing especially on the needs of the SCSi focus countries Mongolia and Lao PDR.

To deepen the discussion a similar study utilising the previously developed research design and the outputs of the workshop's discussion is currently under preparation between the SCSi Programme, UNESCAP and potential local

JUHN PROVINCE

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

05-08 September 2017

Asia-Pacific Trade Facilitation Forum 2017

Yogyakarta, Indonesia
ESCAP, ADB, Coordinating Ministry of Economic Affairs Indonesia

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

11-17 September 2017

APEC Small and Medium Enterprises Ministerial Meeting and Related Meetings

Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam
APEC

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

12-15 September 2017

14th China-ASEAN Expo
Nanning, PR China

Trade related Ministries of the PR China and ASEAN MS, ASEAN Secretariat

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

21-24 September 2017

GTI International Trade&Investment Expo 2017
Donghae, Republic of Korea

Gangwon Province, GTI Secretariat

gtiexpo.org

25-27 September 2017

Trade for Sustainable Development Forum
Geneva, Switzerland
ITC

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

04-08 October 2017

FIATA World Congress
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
FIATA

[fiata2017.org/...](http://fiata2017.org/)

05-08 October 2017

18th Annual Conference
Seattle, USA
CESS, ESCAS

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

09-12 October 2017

APEC Transportation Ministers Meeting and Related Meetings
Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea
APEC

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

24-26 October 2017

TradeTech Asia Conference
Singapore
TradeTech Asia

tradetechasia.wbresearch.com...

10-11 November 2017

APEC Economic Leaders Meeting
Da Nang, Viet Nam
APEC

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

partners in Lao PDR.

Contact: Magnus.Brod@giz.de

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Recent Trends in Regional Integration and Trade

United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific Unlocking the Potential for East and North East Asian Regional Economic Cooperation and Integration

The report contains an exploration of the issues of market integration (trade, foreign direct investment and movement of people), connectivity (transport and energy), financial cooperation, and shared vulnerabilities (environment and disaster risk) under the framework of the Bangkok Declaration on Regional Economic Cooperation and Integration (RCI) in Asia and the Pacific. It aims to propose a set of recommendations for East and North East Asia to support the sub-region in gaining greater benefits from RCI and become a building block for cooperation and integration at the regional level. Therewith, it also gives new incentives to the Greater Tumen Initiative (GTI) and its member countries to intensify cooperation on a sub-regional level.

Access the full report here: unescap.org/... (5 MB)

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Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation

APEC Regional Trends Analysis on Globalisation: the Good, the Bad, and the Role of Policy

Globalisation is a complex development with both advantages and disadvantages for businesses and people. This APEC analysis shines a light on not only the benefits of globalisation in terms of economic growth and poverty reduction but also on the downside of the process. Trade has increased overall prosperity and employment but also brings with it structural unemployment. To detect who benefits most from trade growth, the publication analyses the relationship between increases in exports and imports and increases (or decreases) in employment. In the end, it argues that the opportunities of globalisation for a fairer and more equal society can only be taken with strong policies and political commitment.

Read the full publication here: apec.org/... (1,3 MB)

Asian Development Bank

Asian Development Bank 2016 Annual Report

In December 2016 the Asian Development Bank (ADB) celebrated its 50th anniversary. The publication is looking back on the ADB's development since 1966 but mainly recaps the data and outcomes of the last year. In 2016, the bank approved USD 5.4 billion in projects supporting regional cooperation and integration (RCI), thus, exceeding the USD 3.8 billion of 2015 invested in RCI by far. It furthermore approved its first operational plan on RCI, covering 2016–2020 and focusing on strengthening regional connectivity, enhancing competitiveness, and improving regional resources. To improve infrastructure and trade between the border areas of Guangxi, PR China, and northern Viet Nam provinces, USD 450 million were approved. USD 27 million were granted to enhance border services and trade flows at the Mongolian Altanbulag, Bichigt, and Zamiin-Uud border crossing points.

Read the full paper here: adb.org/... (8 MB)

United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific Regional Economic Cooperation and Integration in South Asia

This report identifies potential areas for further strengthening sub-regional linkages in the South Asian region. Stating that more than 67% of trade potential in South Asia is not being exploited, the report emphasises that the region needs to integrate more broadly into Asia-Pacific as well as the greater Eurasian economic space. Therefore, ESCAP's report recommends developing a South Asia Comprehensive Economic Partnership (SACEP), which would build on existing initiatives such as the three overlapping groups of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO) Initiative and Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), to liberalise trade, increase investment and improve transport links.

Access the publication at: unescap.org/... (1 MB)

Asian Development Bank Institute

International Single Window Environment: Prospects and Challenges

The authors of this publication highlight the necessity of the internationalisation

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 websites:

giz.de/scsi/...

connecting-asia.org

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Publications

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

[Recent Developments in Exporting Agricultural Goods to China - Cambodia](#) (1.2 MB)

[Recent Developments in Exporting Agricultural Goods to China - Viet Nam](#) (1.3 MB)

[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:

connecting-asia.org/...

of national and/or regional Single Windows. As a case study, they discuss the ASEAN Single Window (ASW) in terms of legal and economic viability of interoperability and identify prospects and challenges that might be relevant for implementing an International Single Window Environment (ISWE). The findings include that such integration would be beneficial for SMEs in the global supply chain but at the same time requires the ability to capture the complex relationships between various transport actors from legal and technical standpoints.

Access the full publication at: [adb.org/...](#) (670 KB)

Business Council of Mongolia

32 Projects to be Implemented in Scope of China-Mongolia-Russia Economic Corridor

On 19 June, government officials of Mongolia, the Russian Federation, and the PR China met at the 2nd Business Council of Mongolia (BCM) Summit in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, to discuss opportunities to accelerate trade and economic development in Asia. The Summit was held under the theme "Regional Connectivity in Asia" and the presidents of the three countries agreed to implement 32 projects related to the China-Mongolia-Russia Economic corridor. However, due to the high number of projects the most urgent six were chosen to be implemented in the near future.

Access the report on the Summit at: [slideshare.net/...](#)

Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia

ERIA Annual Report 2016

The publication introduces how the Economic Research Institute of ASEAN (ERIA) through various activities is continuously supporting the community building efforts of the ASEAN and the East Asian region from April 2016 to March 2017. The report highlights research in the field of deepening economic integration, narrowing development gaps, and sustainable economic development. With UNCTAD and the cooperation of government officials and experts of each country in the region, ERIA completed the comprehensive database of non-tariff measures (NTMs) in ASEAN. A study on 21st Century Regionalism, Mega FTAs, and Asian Regional Integration was completed in April 2017. Further studies and reports regarding an ASEAN SME policy index, regional cross-border e-commerce or the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) are currently ongoing processes.

Access the full report at: [eria.org/...](#) (7 MB)

News on Digital Tools for Trade Facilitation

Asian Development Bank Institute

Paperless Trade in Regional Trade Agreements

The paper examines the coverage of paperless trade issues and measures in regional trade agreements (RTAs) globally, with a special regard to the Trans-Pacific Partnership as well as ASEAN agreements in the Asia-Pacific region. It presents a typology of paperless trade measures and provisions in RTAs, providing a basis for the evaluation, which as a result highlights differences in coverage by geographic regions and identifies least and most common measures. On the basis of the case studies, it provides an assessment of relevant paperless trade measures in terms of substance and nature (binding vs. best endeavour), linking the analysis to the new Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-Border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific (FA-PT).

Access the full paper at: [adb.org/...](#) (930 KB)

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Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation

App Provides SMEs with a Global Trading Identity

Many small businesses in the Asia-Pacific are still not sufficiently benefiting from globalisation in the digitalised 21st century. In order to enhance small businesses' connectivity and access to international marketplaces, the APEC Symposium on Trade and Innovation with support of The Asia Foundation as well as Google set up a competition for the development of a mobile or web application that helps SMEs take advantage of the internet to begin exporting. The winning app of the 2017 APEC App Challenge, called APEC CONNECT, offers several features to help even the smallest businesses to establish their own global trading identity.

Access the full article at: [apec.org/...](#)

For further information on the competition please see: [asiafoundation.github.io/...](#)

Registration information

Deutsche Gesellschaft für
Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

Registered offices

Bonn and Eschborn, Germany

Friedrich-Ebert-Allee 36 + 40

53113 Bonn, Germany

Phone: +49 228 44 60-0

Fax: +49 228 44 60-17 66

Dag-Hammarskjöld-Weg 1-5

65760 Eschborn, Germany

Phone: +49 61 96 79-0

Fax: +49 61 96 79-11 15

Email: info@giz.de

Internet: www.giz.de

Registered at

Local court (Amtsgericht) Bonn, Germany: HRB 18384

Local court (Amtsgericht) Frankfurt am Main, Germany: HRB 12394

VAT no. DE 113891176

Tax no. 040 250 56973

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If you no longer wish to receive this newsletter, please click [here](#).

In charge of this newsletter:

Magnus C. M. Brod, magnus.brod@giz.de

Editor(s):

Florian Miß, florian.miss@giz.de

Contributors:

Aya Adachi, aya.adachi@connecting-asia.org

Magnus C. M. Brod, magnus.brod@giz.de

Khulan Lkhagvasuren, hulan.lhagvasuren@connecting-asia.org

Florian Miß, florian.miss@giz.de

Kim Vender, kim.vender@giz.de

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