

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. 14
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Editorial



Dear Reader,

Welcome to the fourteenth and this year's third edition of our SCSI programme newsletter updating on our activities as well as recent trends in the field of regional cooperation and integration (RCI).

Involving public and private stakeholders from the local level, especially peripheral regions, has been a focus of SCSI's approach to support RCI. Due to their geographical locations, border regions have concrete first-hand experience with regional cooperation and are most sensitive to problems and improvements in the area. Studies have shown, though facing with limited means and resources, local actors find concrete projects and practical measures to tackle the constraints and thereby foster RCI. By actively including the local level, decision makers are not only provided with insights and best practices in day-to-day experience in regional cooperation, but also offer the potential to connect communities and transform peripheral regions into sustainable connected economic hubs.

Following this focus, SCSI has been supporting and advising the GTI Local Cooperation Committee (LCC) as well as Logistics Sub-Committee (LSC). As platforms on a local level, these mechanisms foster public-private dialogue and focus on concrete cooperation projects. Having seen the positive outcomes of this approach, SCSI co-organised the first GTI Roundtable Meeting on Trade and Investment Cooperation with stakeholders from central and local government as well as private sectors. In Southeast Asia, in the framework of China-ASEAN cooperation, SCSI provides examples and expertise from European experience in local port collaboration and contributes to the network building of port cities by inviting partners from local ports to the dialogue.

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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Dates and Events

25-26 October

17th World Export Development Forum (WEDF)
Budapest, Hungary
ITC
[intracen.org/...](http://intracen.org/)

26-27 October 2017

Multi-year Expert Meeting on Enhancing the Enabling Economic Environment in Support of Inclusive and Sustainable Development, and the Promotion of Economic Integration and Cooperation
Geneva, Switzerland
UNCTAD
[unctad.org/...](http://unctad.org/)

30 October 2017

Regional Consultation on eCommerce for Sustainable Development
Bangkok, Thailand
UNESCAP
[unescap.org/...](http://unescap.org/)

30 October 2017

Trade and Logistics, and the Sustainable Development Goals
Geneva, Switzerland
UNCTAD
[unctad.org/...](http://unctad.org/)

30 October - 3 November 2017

Fifth Asia Pacific Trade and Investment Week
Bangkok, Thailand
UNESCAP
[unctad.org/...](http://unctad.org/)

08-09 November 2017

Innovative Approaches to SMEs and Entrepreneurial Financing
Jakarta, Indonesia
ADB
[adb.org/...](http://adb.org/)

10 November 2017

Chinas New Silkroads Workshop
Cologne, Germany
Asienhaus
[asienhaus.de/...](http://asienhaus.de/)

13 November - 01 December 2017

Programme News

Regional Cooperation

Increasing Trade and Investment in Northeast Asia (NEA)



Increasing trade and investment across borders is a key element of regional integration. Especially border regions can benefit from closer cooperation between the private and the public sectors. To make cooperation work, close communication and a shared understanding of opportunities as well as challenges are essential.

Hence, as part of our contribution to the Greater Tumen Initiative (GTI) GIZ's Programme on Support for Economic Cooperation in Sub-regional Initiatives in Asia (SCSI) focuses on an inclusive approach. As such, hearing all involved stakeholders and laying out a joint understanding has been an integral part of our endeavour since the beginning of the support back in 2011.

As an outcome of this approach, SCSI, as the co-host of the first GTI Roundtable Meeting on Trade and Investment Cooperation, brought stakeholders from public and private sectors into exchange. In close cooperation with the Chinese Ministry of Commerce (MofCom), the Jilin Provincial Government, and the GTI Secretariat, SCSI planned the event with the clear focus to include officials from local and central government of the four GTI member countries, as well as businesses representatives from regional and international organisations. All participants discussed key areas for future cooperation in the field of trade and investment and shared their views and concerns. This dialogue lays the groundwork for cooperation concepts under the GTI mechanism from 2017 to 2020 and provides an open platform for further exchange

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

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Regional Port Cooperation

China-ASEAN Port Cities Cooperation Network



In September, this year's China-ASEAN Port Cities Cooperation Network Working Conference was held in Nanning during the 2017 China-ASEAN EXPO (CAEXPO) hosted Beibu Gulf Economic Zone and Cooperation with ASEAN Office. SCSI supported the event through including its partners from Haiphong Port Viet Nam and

shared European experiences on port cooperation and regional development.

The working conference brought together not only representatives of ports from ASEAN and China but also maritime experts from academia to deepen port cooperation in the region. Having recognised the importance of this platform as well as the importance of Guangxi in promoting China-ASEAN connectivity, SCSI invited its partners from Haiphong Port. Due to its immediate proximity to the ports of Guangxi Autonomous Province, Haiphong could benefit from improved port cooperation in the region, especially in the focus area of the cooperation network of port construction, port industry, trade and tourism, shipping logistics, customs clearance facilitation and port cities collaboration. Besides Haiphong, the Working Conference was also joined by Phnom Penh Autonomous Port as well as Sihanoukville Port from Cambodia among other members of the Port Cities Network.

You find further Information and the SCSI PPT on our Website [connecting-asia.org/...](http://connecting-asia.org/)

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Trade Facilitation

Regional Course on Key Issues on the International Economic Agenda
Singapore
UNCTAD / Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Singapore
[unctad.org/...](http://unctad.org/)

14 November 2017
Benefits of Geolocation: Central Asia as a Global Transit Hub
Astana, Kazakhstan
KAZISS / GIZ

16-17 November 2017
International Seminar on Trade Facilitation in Northeast Asia
Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia
UNESCAP / GTI

16-17 November 2017
Making Trade Inclusive: How to Manage Trade Adjustment
Tokyo, Japan
ADB
[adb.org/...](http://adb.org/)

12 January 2018
Fourth Conference on Global Value Chains, Trade and Development
Santiago de Chile, Chile
CEPR
[cepr.org/...](http://cepr.org/)

14-16 March 2018
Global AEO Conference
Kampala, Uganda
WCO
[wcoomd.org/...](http://wcoomd.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 websites:
[giz.de/scsi/...](http://giz.de/scsi/)
connecting-asia.org

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](#)

GTI AEO Working Group Meeting



On 22nd of September the Greater Tumen Initiative (GTI) Working Group on Authorised Economic Operator (AEO) systems concluded their third meeting. With this meeting, the AEO Working Group sets out to draft a Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA) between the four GTI member countries. Such a standardised document could

further enhance coordination and cooperation between the customs and serve as a powerful tool to facilitate trade and provide service to businesses operating in the region.

The Working Group, originally proposed by the GTI Trade and Investment Committee (TIC), is managed by the GTI Secretariat and brings together the General Administration of Customs China, Korean Customs Service, Mongolian Customs General Administration, and the Federal Customs Service of the Russian Federation. With the support from GIZ and the World Customs Organisation (WCO), eight representatives of the member countries customs administrations engaged in knowledge sharing and exchange of regional best practices. As an outcome, a first version of the future GTI Regional MRA was drafted, which will provide a framework for closer cooperation.

The "AEO Working Group" Project will be successfully concluded by a 4th meeting in December 2017.

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

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Recent Trends in Regional Integration and Trade

Asian Development Bank / United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

Trade Facilitation for a More Inclusive and Connected Asia

This publication provides an overview of assessments from the 2017 global survey on trade facilitation and paperless trade in the region. The survey uses the final list of provisions included in the World Trade Organization's Trade Facilitation Agreement (WTO TFA) and the draft text of the regional United Nations (UN) treaty on cross-border paperless trade facilitation under negotiation at Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). It also discusses new digital opportunities for SMEs as well as progress and challenges in the regional and subregional trade facilitation efforts being made to streamline trade procedures.

Access the full report here: [adb.org/...](http://adb.org/) (4 MB)

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Economic Research Institute for ASEAN

Summary of ERIA Research projects 2016-2017

ERIA's overview of their research projects includes a detailed chapter on deepening economic integration in the region as well as connectivity projects with Europe and Africa. It shows developments of East Asian economic integration regarding the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) and non-tariff measures (NTMs) in East Asia and ASEAN with renewed databases. It assesses the Asia-Europe connectivity Vision 2025 as well as 21st century regionalism and mega free trade agreements (FTAs) in Asia. Furthermore, challenges and opportunities of maritime connectivity in Southeast Asia and points out innovative ways to a new digital economic integration in ASEAN and East Asia are presented.

Read the summary here: [eria.org/...](http://eria.org/) (5,1 MB)

Asian Development Bank

Aid for Trade in Asia and the Pacific

The role of Aid for Trade (AFT) in promoting the growth and tradability of services stays important, given that it is a major catalyst for inclusive economic and structural transformation. This report highlights emerging trends in AFT in the context of evolving trade performance in Asia and the Pacific. In particular, the impact of AFT on trade in services, thereby helping increase economic and job opportunities for women, and the rise of e-commerce. The report ends by

subscribe [here](#).

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

considering policy implications of the experiences of geographically challenged and smaller economies of the region along the dimensions of trade costs, AfT, trade in services, and the role of the digital economy.
Read the full paper here: [adb.org/...](#) (8 MB)

United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific **Regional Road Map for Implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific**

The paper argues that policy transformations required to put countries on track to achieve the SDGs have yet to take shape. Most current policies and investments are locking countries into unsustainable pathways that will widen the gap between ambition and action. To help address this gap, cooperation and action is needed at the national, regional and international levels. Regional cooperation can support and complement the effectiveness of national mechanisms upon which the success of the global 2030 Agenda rests. RCI - including through regional and subregional organisations - will facilitate better transport, energy and ICT connectivity which in turn increases access to services such as education, health, electricity and markets for marginalised populations.

Access the publication at: [unescap.org/...](#) (0,6 MB)

Mongolian News Agency

Potential Mongolian cooperation with Vostochny Port of Primorsky Krai

At the sidelines of his attendance in the Eastern Economic Forum in Vladivostok, Mongolian President Battulga got familiar with operations of Vostochny port at Nakhodka. During the visit, the Russian side put forward an official proposal on allowing an area for Mongolia at Vostochny port, considering the possibility that Mongolia can establish a similar port as Vostochny to transport coal coming from its Tavantolgoi mine to regional and global markets. Vostochny, an intermodal container port of Russia located in Vranghel of Nakhodka Gulf of the Sea of Japan, is the end point of the Primorie-1 international railway corridor reflected in the Program on Establishing an Economic Corridor of Mongolia, the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China.

Access the full article at: [montsame.mn/...](#) (670 KB)

News on Digital Tools for Trade Facilitation

International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development **Policy Roadmap for Developing Countries**

The roadmap sees the digital revolution transforming players, patterns, and possibilities of world trade. It is opening opportunities for millions of micro entrepreneurs and small businesses to engage in cross-border trade and craft their own global supply chains. One of the biggest challenge is the involvement of SMEs in these digital processes. Only 9 percent of small and 16 percent of mid-size companies in low-income countries sell online. For example, the World Bank finds that the productivity of Vietnamese companies that sell online grows 75 percent faster than that of their peers that use the internet but do not sell online. Large emerging economies such as China and India have recently tabled proposals at the WTO in the area of digital trade. China's proposal prioritises the promotion and facilitation of cross-border trade in goods enabled by the internet, together with services directly supporting this trade, such as payment and logistics services.

Access the full paper at: [ictsd.org/...](#) (2,3 MB)

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UNCTAD Business for eTrade Development

Public-Private Priorities for Aid for Trade in the Digital Era

The enabling environment for digital trade is challenging in many developing countries, impeding the translation of new technologies into trade and growth. Yet there are huge gaps in the data available on private sector views and systematic public-private collaboration. This chapter of the WTO Aid for Trade (AfT) at a Glance 2017 Report discusses the findings from interviews with companies engaged in e-commerce to shed light on the challenges of the enabling environment for digital trade making it difficult for developing country companies to engage in cross-border e-commerce. It provides highlights of various best practice projects by the private sector to cultivate e-commerce worldwide, including among women and rural entrepreneurs. The chapter proposes innovative solutions to these challenges and highlights ways of operationalising public-private partnerships in e-commerce development, as well as fresh ways of financing them, such as social impact bonds.

Access the full chapter at: wto.org/... (1 MB)
Further information on Business for eTrade Development at:
business4etrade.org/...

UNCTAD eTrade for all

Bangladesh, Cambodia and China sign new UN treaty to strengthen digital trade in Asia-Pacific

Bangladesh, Cambodia and China signed the Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific, a new United Nations treaty aimed at strengthening digital trade in the region. Several other countries at the signing ceremony hosted by ESCAP in Bangkok also expressed their commitment to sign the treaty during the September 2017 session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York. Open to all 53 ESCAP Member States, this unprecedented regional treaty illustrates Asia and the Pacific's leadership in adopting innovative trade facilitation measures. According to a recent ESCAP study, regional export gains for the Asia-Pacific region are estimated to reach USD 250 billion annually with the full implementation of cross-border paperless trade.

Access the full chapter at: etradeforall.org/... (1 MB)
For more information on eTrade for all business4etrade.org/...

Asian Development Bank Institute

Digital Trade Facilitation: Paperless Trade in Regional Trade Agreements

Digital trade facilitation refers to the application of modern information and communication technologies (ICTs) to simplify and automate international trade procedures. It is rapidly becoming essential to maintaining trade competitiveness and enabling effective participation in cross-border e-commerce. This ADBI paper examines the extent to which measures aimed at dematerialising trade data and documents and enabling their electronic exchange, commonly referred to as paperless trade measures. They are included in regional trade agreements (RTAs) like the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and ASEAN Agreements, most commonly found in chapters on e-commerce or regarding customs and trade facilitation. Their number has doubled in RTAs between 2005-8 and 2013-16 at the global level. Most recent RTAs also contain deeper paperless trade provisions than those featured in the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement.

Access the full article at: adb.org/... (1 MB)

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