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## 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)



### Editorial

Dear Reader,

Welcome to the latest edition of the GIZ SCSI programme newsletter. The last three months again held ready new developments and progress in our programme work as well as in regional cooperation processes in Asia.

SCSI was again invited to the annual **Greater Tumen Initiative (GTI) Consultative Commission (CC) Meeting** highlighting the partnership and collaboration with GIZ. Furthermore, SCSI together with the GTI Secretariat and Jilin Province, China, organised the **GTI Policy Dialogue on Industrial Parks**. A detailed policy brief for GTI member countries is currently issued by GIZ and the GTI Secretariat. In Phnom Penh, SCSI and its partners on site introduced a first version of printed **Export Guidelines in Khmer for fresh fruits** to support Cambodian businesses in respective trading processes to China. After current updates due to new policies, an electronic version will be distributed soon.

To find out more about our recent activities, I kindly invite you to browse this newsletter and visit our website [www.connecting-asia.org](http://www.connecting-asia.org) for additional details. We are happy to provide you again with our reports as well as selected publications on Asian regional integration and digital tools for trade facilitation.

With all the best wishes from the SCSl Team

**Florian Miß**  
Editor

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## Programme News

### 7th GTI NEA Tourism Forum

GIZ-UNWTO joint Effort in Tourism Training



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Co-organised by the GTI Secretariat, the 7th Greater Tumen Initiative (GTI) Northeast Asia (NEA) Tourism Forum took place in Hunchun, China, on 3 August 2018. The Forum was held back-to-back with a training on Marketing of Tourism

Destinations and Tourism Planning on 4 August, co-organised by GIZ and UNWTO.

The Forum was opened by Mr. Gao Yulong, Director, Municipal Committee of CPC of Hunchun City followed by respective officials of Jilin Province as well as the Director of the GTI Secretariat and UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)'s.

After the key-note speech of UNWTO on Cross-Border Multi-Destination Tourism Development in NEA, the GTI Secretariat presented on recent developments and planned projects of the GTI Tourism Board. SCSl provided an input on GIZ Approaches in Tourism Planning in Development Cooperation whereas Mekong Tourism showed approaches from Southeast Asia to include the private sector via a participatory web app. GTI member countries then presented on good practices and development in the field of tourism in the region as well as showing latest in-depth research on the topic.

#### Dates and Events

##### 02-04 October 2018

WTO Public Forum 2018 "Trade 2030"  
Geneva, Switzerland  
WTO  
[wto.org](http://wto.org)

##### 02-04 October 2018

Addressing the Transboundary Dimensions of the 2030 Agenda through Regional Economic Cooperation and Integration  
Almaty, Kazakhstan  
UNESCAP  
[unescap.org](http://unescap.org)

##### 09 October 2018

13th Annual PICARD Conference  
Malatya, Turkey  
WCO  
[wcoomd.org](http://wcoomd.org)

##### 09-10 October 2018

Strengthening Transport Connectivity among CLMV-T Countries  
Yangon, Myanmar  
UNESCAP  
[unescap.org](http://unescap.org)

Financed by GIZ, UNWTO and the GTI Secretariat conducted the training on Marketing of Tourism Destinations and Tourism Planning for respective actors from GTI member countries on 4 August. Experts from UNWTO, trained participants on topics of transnational tourism management like market research, customer profiles, branding and marketing plans. Attendees came from local ministerial departments and tour operators. A report with recommendations for the Greater Tumen Region will be published soon.

GIZ SCSi already supported the GTI Tourism Board with studies on multi-destination tourism and inputs on other regional good practices. Tourism can be a strong tool to improve regional cooperation and to integrate the private sector in ongoing cross-border processes. SCSi especially supports the inclusion of eastern Mongolian provinces like Dornod in ongoing regional integration processes.

**You can find further information at the SCSi website:**

» [7th GTI NEA Tourism Forum](#)

## Train-of-Trainer on Export Processes to China for Vietnamese SMEs

Boosting Trade Promotion Capacity in Vietnam



© GIZ SCSi

Building up on the successful introduction of the GIZ-VIETRADE Export Guidelines for fresh fruits, both sides deepened cooperation on private sector development in regard of export processes to China. To enhance capacity of Vietnamese SMEs,

GIZ and VIETRADE conducted a train-of-trainer (ToT) based on the Export Guidelines in Hanoi on 12-13 September 2018.

During a detailed selection process, suitable candidates from export-oriented companies, associations, trade-promotion agencies, and academia were chosen to participate in the ToT. Attendees were trained on respective export strategies and plans, procedures, regulations, certification requirements as well as giving advice on planning to export fresh fruits to China. Furthermore, new digital tools for trade facilitation, like QR-codes to track products throughout the supply chain, were demonstrated.

The ToT trainees came from different regions in Vietnam to guarantee a wide dissemination of knowledge on export processes to China among the Vietnamese business community in the future. It also improved the network among participants' companies and agencies from different regions.

**09-11 October 2018**

NTM Week 2018  
Geneva, Switzerland  
UNCTAD  
[unctad.org](http://unctad.org)

**11 October 2018**

High-Level Policy Dialogue on  
Regional Cooperation to Support  
Innovation, Inclusion and Stability  
in Asia  
Bali, Indonesia  
ADB  
[adb.org](http://adb.org)

**17 October 2018**

Hangzhou Forum: Cross-border  
eCommerce  
Hangzhou, P.R. China  
UN/CEFACT  
[unece.org](http://unece.org)

**25-26 October 2018**

12th World Trade Promotion  
Organizations Conference  
Paris, France  
Business France & ITC  
[intracen.org](http://intracen.org)

**28-29 October 2018**

How Digital Innovation Can Help  
SMEs Access Finance in Asia  
Bangkok, Thailand  
ADB  
[adb.org](http://adb.org)

**01-05 November 2018**

16th Agricultural Trade Fair  
Changsha, P.R. China  
Ministry of Agriculture, P.R. China  
[chinaagradefair.com](http://chinaagradefair.com)

**02 November 2018**

Shaping an Inclusive and  
Gender-Responsive Trade Policy  
Geneva, Switzerland  
UNCTAD  
[unctad.org](http://unctad.org)

The ToT was organised and conducted by a GIZ-VIETRADE expert team that issued the Export Guidelines last year.

To follow-up on the ToT, the trained trainer will conduct trainings for Vietnamese export-oriented businesses and associations in North, Central, and South Vietnam this year. The trainings will be accompanied by the expert team to ensure an effective implementation.

**Follow the link below for more details:**

» [Utilising the GIZ-VIETRADE Export Guidelines for Train-of-Trainer](#)

## Vocational Training along the Agricultural Value Chain

Trilateral Knowledge Sharing Lao-Germany-China



© GIZ SCSi

Supporting agricultural exports from Cambodia, Lao and Vietnam is a core component of SCSi's work on regional integration. However, the lack of SME capacities and supply of skilled labour still impedes value chain development. Raw

products make up the bulk of exports and value creation takes place in neighbouring markets. To overcome this situation, learning from best practices in the region has been a focus of GIZ's cooperation and support to partner countries.

In Laos, the Vocational Education Development Institute (VEDI) has been a partner of German development cooperation in the field of technical education and vocational training (TVET) for several years. Recently the Lao-German Project on Vocational Education (VELA) has produced research, showing the possible impact on increasing food processing skills for Lao in the regional value chain. In China, the German Hanns Seidel Foundation (HSS) has supported several technical education centres as part of Germans support to vocational education in the past 30 years. Here, a particular focus has always been on food processing, utilising German technology and expertise.

Against this background and to increase capacities of Laos TVET teachers in rural job profiles the Vocational Education Centre in Pingdu, China hosted a pilot training of 20 teachers and teaching instructors. Over the course of two weeks, they familiarised themselves with Chinese approaches in food processing and rural occupations such as horticulture. Especially the hands-on experience of German food processing

### 05-14 November 2018

4th UNNExT Masterclass  
Cheonan, Republik of Korea  
UNESCAP  
[unescap.org](http://unescap.org)

### 05-10 November 2018

China International Import Expo (CIIE)  
Shanghai, P.R. China  
MOFCOM  
[ciie.org](http://ciie.org)

### Online Courses

#### 05 November 2018

Introduction to International Transport and Logistics  
ITC SME Trade Academy  
[intracen.org](http://intracen.org)

#### 19 November 2018

How to Analyse Trade Flows  
ITC SME Trade Academy  
[intracen.org](http://intracen.org)

#### 19 November 2018

The Role of Standards in Sustainable Supply Chains  
ITC SME Trade Academy  
[intracen.org](http://intracen.org)

#### 03 December 2018

Helping SMEs Generate Export Business  
ITC SME Trade Academy  
[intracen.org](http://intracen.org)

#### 03 December 2018

Meeting Standards in the Agrifood Sector  
ITC SME Trade Academy  
[intracen.org](http://intracen.org)

### More on GIZ SCSi Programme

The GIZ SCSi Programme supports regional stakeholders with the aim to strengthen selected core processes of regional economic cooperation

techniques - which have been a focus of HSS works in the past - were highly appreciated by the participants.

The results of the training demonstrated the benefit of trilateral cooperation between Germany, China and third countries in the region. The approach of the pilot training is currently under evaluation by the SCSI programme. It will be reflected as an example for trilateral cooperation projects by the Sino-German Centre for Sustainable Development (CSD) within the dialogue in development policy between the two countries.

**You can find further information at the SCSI website:**

» [Vocational Training along the Agricultural Value Chain](#)

and integration and to contribute to a sustainable and inclusive economic development in the region. Visit our website:

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

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## Recent Trends in Regional Integration and Trade

### Handbook on Negotiating Sustainable Development Provisions in Preferential Trade Agreements

United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP)

Regional trade agreements (RTAs) in the Asia-Pacific region have enhanced integration and creation of regional and global value and supply chains, contributing to overall export driven development. However, trade-driven economic growth can also be unbalanced. In order for international trade to provide greater societal and environmental benefits for sustainable development it is crucial to ensure the quality of RTAs. This handbook categorises four core sustainable development provisions: environment, labour, human rights, and cooperation and technical assistance. In addition, the handbook also analyses the enforceability framework around different uses of the term “sustainability” in the four core provisions. Furthermore, the handbook offers comprehensive recommendations for the negotiation process as well as monitoring and evaluation of RTAs for sustainability.

**Access report here:**

» [Handbook on Negotiating Sustainable Development Provisions in Preferential Trade Agreements](#)

### Trade in Developing East Asia: How it has Changed and Why it Matters

World Bank (WB)

This policy paper provides a detailed analysis of the evolution of East Asia’s trade and trade policy in goods and services. It addresses three more proximate national and regional challenges of technological change that may test the East Asian model of labour intensive industrialisation. The first is the

emergence of China as a global trade giant, accounting for nearly one-seventh of global exports and one-tenth of global imports, which brings about fundamental change in trading patterns and opportunities structure for neighbouring countries. The second challenge is the asymmetric implementation of national reform – remarkable openness to goods trade and investment coexists with relative restrictiveness of services policies – which is affecting the evolution of comparative advantage and productivity in each country. And finally the paper addresses the divergence between the relatively shallow and fragmented agreements that regulate the region's trade and investment and the growing importance of regional and global value chains as crucial drivers of productivity growth.

**Access the full study here:**

» [Trade in Developing East Asia: How It Has Changed and Why It Matters](#)

## Achieving Progress in Multilateral Trade Negotiations on Agriculture

International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD)

Despite required action to advance Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2 on ending hunger and promoting sustainable agriculture, the World Trade Organization's (WTO) Eleventh Ministerial Conference was concluded without providing a clear direction for talks on agriculture. Meanwhile, changing trade flows are reshaping markets for food and agriculture, along with preferential trade deals and national policy decisions. In order to ensure progress for the WTO Twelfth Ministerial Conference this policy brief explores a number of avenues to achieve multilateral progress.

**Read the full publication here:**

» [Achieving Progress in Multilateral Trade Negotiations on Agriculture](#)

## Financing the Food Value Chain

Asia-Pacific Research and Training Network on Trade (ARTNeT)

The access to financial services is crucial for a smooth operation of the food value chain. Digital technologies, like e-commerce and blockchain for trade finance, are starting to fill some gaps that traditional banks have not managed to address. However, difficulties of access to financial services remain at all stages of the food value chain, including insufficient infrastructure, information asymmetry and underdeveloped financial markets. This ARTNeT policy brief includes recommendations on financial regulations and laws to encourage the use of asset-based lending, continuing the improvement and expansion of telecommunication and internet connectivity to reach out to new clients and expand services coverage especially in rural areas. It also suggests fostering competition in financial services by removing restrictions for foreign creditors.

**Access the full paper here:**

» [Financing the Food Value Chain](#)

## News on Digital Tools for Trade Facilitation

## Study on Single Window Systems' International Interoperability: Key Issues for its Implementation

Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)

This APEC study on Single Window Systems International Interoperability (SWSII) addresses the issue of international divergence in Single Window Systems (SWS). The study introduces ten SWSII principles, based on a review of national as well as regional SWS at different development stages and analyses common concepts. SWSII solutions must be created to convey a climate of trust through consensus, agreement, security, privacy, confidentiality, harmonisation and standardisation. Therefore, the study underscores the need for ongoing collaboration between economies, the need to establish a pragmatic working definition of “interoperability”, determine how it can be achieved and sustained, and its progress evaluated based on a pre-defined performance criteria. As a possible next step, a “limited” pilot using blockchain technology to demonstrate trust, efficiency and effectiveness alongside usability and scalability is recommended.

**Access the APEC study on Single Window Systems International Interoperability here:**

» [Study on Single Window Systems' International Interoperability: Key Issues for Its Implementation](#)

## Faster Customs, Faster Trade: Using Technology for Trade Facilitation

International Trade Centre (ITC)

By carefully analysing the interplay between the World Trade Organization (WTO) Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) of 2017 and the Information Technology Agreement (ITA) of 1996, this report demonstrates how governments can optimise complementarities at the intersection of technological change and the implementation of trade facilitation policy. Trade agreements, especially the TFA and ITA, are creating a positive feedback loop that is enhancing and reinforcing the effects of each other. This report offers trade facilitation solutions, for both, policies and technologies which is especially important for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs). Policymakers are encouraged to use mutually reinforcing agreements to design more effective trade policies and collaborate with each other in developing an open, transparent, facilitative trade environment.

**Access the full paper here:**

» [Faster Customs, Faster Trade: Using Technology for Trade Facilitation](#)

## WCO Framework of Standards on Crossborder E-Commerce

World Customs Organization (WCO)

E-Commerce, in particular Business-to-Consumer (B2C) and Consumer-to-Consumer (C2C) transactions, is presenting a number of new challenges to governments and businesses alike. The changing trade environment requires consultations among all relevant stakeholders, to find comprehensive solutions to manage growing volumes, overcome the lack of global standards and guidelines, and address associated risks. The WCO developed this framework with the expectation that WCO Members will adopt these standards and practices that are based on mutual trust, communication, collaboration and an understanding of the benefits for all stakeholders, to provide facilitation for cross-border e-commerce without compromising a level playing field with traditional trade. The framework aims to provide guidance for governments, customs administrations, the private sector and other stakeholders. Especially for small businesses in developing countries, e-commerce offers new possibilities for economic development.

**Access the WCO Framework here:**

» [Cross-Border E-Commerce Framework of Standards](#)

# Emerging Opportunities for the Application of Blockchain in the Agri-food Industry

International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD)

This paper aims to provide a better understanding of the opportunities, benefits and applications of distributed ledger technologies (DLTs) in agri-foods. DLTs and smart contracts offer an opportunity to bring greater efficiency, transparency and traceability to the exchange of value and information in agricultural supply chains, by way of digital records, cryptography and the disintermediation of transaction processing and data storage. Furthermore, the vast amount of data generated from transactions in agricultural supply chains could be used for more accurate market information and data for supply chain actors and the public sector. In addition, DLTs also have the potential to improve the implementation and monitoring of international agreements related to agriculture. In order to make use of the promising benefits of DLTs this report recommends that governments together with intergovernmental organisations ought to lead this effort by contributing to technical dialogue on DLTs, providing policy guidance, developing regulations and standards, enhancing public-private partnerships, and improving infrastructure and digital skills in rural areas.

**Read the full paper here:**

» [Emerging Opportunities for the Application of Blockchain in the Agri-food Industry](#)

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