



**SECRETARIAT OF THE CONFERENCE ON INTERACTION  
AND CONFIDENCE BUILDING MEASURES IN ASIA**

**СЕКРЕТАРИАТ СОВЕЩАНИЯ ПО ВЗАИМОДЕЙСТВИЮ  
И МЕРАМ ДОВЕРИЯ В АЗИИ**

**№ 17-5/275**

*Enclosure:  
as stated, on 6 p.*

The Secretariat of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) presents its compliments to the CICA Member States and, in accordance with the CICA Plan of Confidence Building Measures for 2021 and in addition to the Secretariat's Notes No. 17-5/100 emb dated March 3, 2021, has the honour to forward herewith the updated Concept paper to the Workshop on "COVID-19 and SME: sharing experience, best practices and bounce-back strategy" and the registration form for the mentioned seminar to be held on May 24, 2021 by Thailand in capacity of co-coordinator of CBMs in "Development of small and medium enterprises" area.

The Secretariat avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the CICA Member States the assurances of its highest consideration.

Nur-Sultan, 19 May 2021



**MEMBER STATES  
OF THE CONFERENCE ON INTERACTION  
AND CONFIDENCE BUILDING MEASURES  
IN ASIA**



**SECRETARIAT OF THE CONFERENCE ON INTERACTION**

**AND CONFIDENCE BUILDING MEASURES IN ASIA**

**СЕКРЕТАРИАТ СОВЕЩАНИЯ ПО ВЗАИМОДЕЙСТВИЮ  
И МЕРАМ ДОВЕРИЯ В АЗИИ**

**№ 17-5/275**

Секретариат Совещания по взаимодействию и мерам доверия в Азии (СВМДА) свидетельствует свое уважение государствам-членам СВМДА и, в соответствии с Планом реализации мер доверия на 2021 г. и в дополнение к ноте Секретариата № 17-5 / 100 emb от 3 марта 2021 г., имеет честь препроводить обновленную Концепцию к Семинару COVID-19 и МСБ: обмен опытом, передовая практика и стратегия восстановления», а также и регистрационную форму для участия в упомянутом семинаре, который будет проведен 24 мая 2021 года Таиландом в качестве со-координатора МД по области «Развитие малого и среднего предпринимательства».

*Приложение:  
упомянутое,  
на 6 л.*

Секретариат пользуется случаем, чтобы возобновить государствам-членам СВМДА уверения в своем весьма высоком уважении.

город Нур-Султан, 19 мая 2021 г.



**ГОСУДАРСТВА-ЧЛЕНЫ  
СОВЕЩАНИЯ ПО ВЗАИМОДЕЙСТВИЮ И  
МЕРАМ ДОВЕРИЯ В АЗИИ**

Қосымша:  
аталған 6 п.

Азиядағы өзара іс-қимыл және сенім шаралары кеңесінің (АӨСШК) Хатшылығы АӨСШК мүше мемлекеттеріне өзінің зор ілтипатын білдіре отырып, АӨСШК-тің 2021 жылға арналған Сенім шараларын жүзеге асыру жоспарына сәйкес және Хатшылықтың 2021 жылғы 3 наурыздағы №17-5 / 100 емб нотасына қосымша ретінде Таиланд 2021 жылғы 24 мамырда «Шағын және орта бизнесті дамыту» саласының тең үйлестірушісі ретінде ұйымдастыратын «COVID-19 және ШОБ: тәжірибе алмасу, озық дағдылар мен қалпына келтіру стратегиясы» семинарының жаңартылған тұжырымдамасы мен аталмыш семинарға қатысуға арналған тіркеу формасын жолдауды өзіне мәртебе санайды.

Хатшылық осы мүмкіндікті пайдалана отырып, АӨСШК мүше мемлекеттеріне өзінің зор ілтипатын тағы да растайды.

Нұр-Сұлтан қаласы, 2021 жылғы 19 мамыр

**АЗИЯДАҒЫ ӨЗАРА ІС-ҚИМЫЛ ЖӘНЕ  
СЕНІМ ШАРАЛАРЫ КЕҢЕСІНІҢ МҮШЕ  
МЕМЛЕКЕТТЕРІ**

**- Draft -**

**Concept Paper**

**Workshop on**

**COVID-19 and SMEs: sharing experience, best practices and bounce back strategies**

**Date: Monday, 24 May 2021, Time: 09.30-13.00 hrs. (GMT+7) (Thailand Time)**

**(Via Zoom Application)**

**Background**

Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) play an important role in contributing to global employment and economic development. This is particularly so for the developing economies. According to the World Bank<sup>1</sup>, they account for about 90 per cent of businesses and 50 per cent of employment worldwide. Formal SMEs contribute up to 40 per cent of GDP in emerging economies; while, if informal SMEs are included, these numbers are argued to be significantly higher. In addition, their role is increasingly important due to the need of Governments to absorb the growing workforce worldwide. Furthermore, they also possess certain qualities – flexibility and resiliency - including capability to adapt quickly, requirement of less capital to operate with low cost of management resulting in relatively cheap production, which make them advantageous economic enterprises especially during the crises<sup>2</sup>.

In CICA Member States, SMEs represent notable figures. In Central Asia, despite their recent development starting from the 1990s, SMEs are estimated to contribute anywhere between 31 and 45 per cent of the economy, and somewhere between 25 and 60 per cent of employment. By estimates, there are about 11 to 28 SMEs per 1,000 people<sup>3</sup>.

In the Middle East and North African (MENA) region, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) typically account for 10 to 40 per cent of all private employment representing about 80 to 90 per cent of total businesses in most countries<sup>4</sup>.

For some East Asian countries like China and the Republic of Korea, they constitute a significant share of the manufactured exports of over 40 per cent, wherein China, SMEs are considered one of the main industrial forces for social-economic development. Likewise in India, 95 per cent of the industrial units are in small-scale sector contributing to about 40 per cent of the total employment or the second highest level compared to agriculture<sup>5</sup>.

In a similar vein, SMEs including MSMEs are key sources of livelihoods of the ASEAN region. They make up of over 90 per cent of the region's businesses contributing to overall employment of between

---

<sup>1</sup> "Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) Finance", World Bank, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/sme/finance>

<sup>2</sup> Hidayet Keshin et al., "The Importance of SMEs in Developing Economies", presented at 2nd International Symposium on Sustainable Development, June 8-9 2010, Sarajevo, <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/153446896.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Pasadilla, G.O. 2010, "Financial Crisis, Trade Finance, and SMEs: Case of Central Asia", ADBI Working Paper 187, Tokyo: Asian Development Bank Institute, <http://www.adbi.org/workingpaper/2010/01/25/3440.financial.crisis.trade.smes.central.asia/>

<sup>4</sup> "Small and Medium Enterprises in the MENA Region: SME sector contribution to wealth generation", The Middle East Investment Initiative, <https://www.meii.org/small-medium-enterprises>

<sup>5</sup> Rajesh K. Singh, Suresh K. Garg and S. G. Deshmukh 2009, "The competitiveness of SMEs in a globalized economy: Observations from China and India", *Management Research Review* 33(1): 54-56, (PDF) The competitiveness of SMEs in a globalized economy: Observations from China and India ([researchgate.net](https://www.researchgate.net))

57 to 91 per cent. MSMEs represent between 52 to 97 per cent of the region's total employment<sup>6</sup>. SMEs are considered an essential sector for many ASEAN member countries including Thailand and Vietnam.

The sudden and rapid spread of the COVID-19 worldwide has brought unprecedented challenges to the world economy, which appears to have been experiencing the deepest recession since the 1930s according to OECD<sup>7</sup>, leaving many countries with a GDP decline of over 20 per cent and a rapid unemployment surge. According to *The Enterprise Policy Responses to COVID-19 in ASEAN: measures to boost MSME resilience*<sup>8</sup>, providing that the virus is brought under control, the median debt-to-GDP ratio will rise by only slightly less. These trends are expected to happen worldwide while the situation might be more challenging for emerging economies with particular stress on specific sectors and constituencies. It is also argued that businesses will face extraordinary constraints especially MSMEs due to their fewer informal resources and more limited access to information which are essential to strive through the crisis.

Meanwhile, the role of SMEs and MSMEs is considered an important catalyst for world's economic recovery after the pandemic. "Protecting jobs, small and medium-sized enterprises, and the informal sector workers"<sup>9</sup> through economic response and recovery programmes are addressed as one of the five streams of work under the UN framework response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In terms of policy action, *A UN Framework For The Immediate Socio-Economic Response To COVID-19 (2020)* suggests supporting workers' incomes and employment be at the core of emergency and recovery effort. These include, for example, active monetary and fiscal policies to stimulate the overall economy and employment, tax relief to enterprises, interest rate waivers, wage subsidies. On the other hand, the Asian Development Bank (2020)<sup>10</sup> emphasises that private sector should play a part in this bound-back strategy while taking into consideration challenges faced by small businesses which will remain once the pandemic is contained and when recovery begins. In this regard, it is recommended that SMEs adopt digital transformation and e-commerce into practice and assist the Governments on how the 'new normal' could take place. Additionally, they should not be dissuaded from engaging in the global supply chain due to the trade induced restrictions temporarily deployed.

Following the pandemic fallout, the ASEAN Summit held virtually on 12 November 2020 has highlighted priority areas for the region to be able to build back better. These include sustainable development, human capital development, digitalisation and digital economy capacity building, poverty eradication, among others. In compliance with the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework (ACRF), Thailand urges regional cooperation in the pursuit of the Post-COVID-19 regional recovery with a particular attention to the vulnerable groups hardest hit by the pandemic - SMEs and MSMEs.

Therefore, Thailand, as co-coordinator of the CICA plan on implementation of confidence building measures and activities in economic dimension relating to development of SMEs, is proposing a Workshop entitled "COVID-19 and SMEs: sharing experience, best practices and bounce back

---

<sup>6</sup> *Enterprise Policy Responses to COVID-19 in ASEAN: Measures to boost MSME resilience*, OECD and ASEAN (2020), <https://asean.org/storage/2012/05/Policy-Insight-Enterprise-Policy-Responses-to-COVID-19-in-ASEAN-June-2020.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> "General Assessment of the macro economic situation", OECD Economic Outlook, vol. 2020 (1), OECD, [https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/economics/oecd-economic-outlook-volume-2020-issue-1\\_3b2afabb-en#page1](https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/economics/oecd-economic-outlook-volume-2020-issue-1_3b2afabb-en#page1)

<sup>8</sup> *Enterprise Policy Responses to COVID-19 in ASEAN: Measures to boost MSME resilience*, OECD and ASEAN (2020), <https://asean.org/storage/2012/05/Policy-Insight-Enterprise-Policy-Responses-to-COVID-19-in-ASEAN-June-2020.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> *A UN Framework For The Immediate Socio-Economic Response To COVID-19*, United Nations (2020), <https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-04/UN-framework-for-the-immediate-socio-economic-response-to-COVID-19.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> Paul Vandenberg 2020, "How SMEs can bounce back from the COVID-19 Crisis", Development Asia, Asian Development Bank, <https://development.asia/policy-brief/how-smes-can-bounce-back-covid-19-crisis>

*Draft as of 12 May 2021*

strategies” in the year of 2021. The Workshop primarily aims to share Thailand and Thai SMEs’ experience and best practices in handling the COVID-19 and in preparation for the Post-COVID-19 recovery in the ASEAN region and beyond. It is also aimed to provide a platform for all CICA members – public and private sectors, especially SMEs entrepreneurs - to exchange insights, information technologies and explore business opportunities and collaborations across regions.

It is designed to cover both policy responses and practical case studies in the selected SME sectors of Thailand’s expertise namely, tourism, accommodation and food services.

The programme will be organised by the Thailand International Cooperation Agency (TICA) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in collaboration with its partners including the Office of Small and Medium Enterprises Promotion (OSMEP), research institutes, and the private sector.

**Objectives:**

- To share Thailand and Thai SMEs’ experience and best practices in handling the COVID-19 and in preparation for the Post-COVID-19 recovery in the ASEAN region and beyond
- To exchange insights, information technologies, and strategies on building stronger SMEs
- To promote business opportunities and collaborations among SMEs entrepreneurs

**Expected outcomes:**

- Increased understanding of the current and future directions/strategies of SME investment promotion in Thailand and the ASEAN region as a tool to aid a comparative analysis of how to better develop the SME sector in CICA member countries
- Enhanced SME networking and economic cooperation across different regions in the SME sector

**Proposed date of workshop:**

**24 May 2021** via Zoom Application

**Target participants:**

Public and private SMEs and MSMEs agencies/entrepreneurs in the areas of tourism, accommodation and food services from all CICA member and/or those interested in such SME/MSME areas.

**Resource experts (TBC):**

Thailand’s Office of SMEs Promotion (OSMEP)

Thai academia and researchers

Thai SMEs and MSMEs entrepreneurs

**Note:**

*We welcome representatives – public and private sectors - from CICA members who wish to be resource experts. Please kindly contact our coordinator.*

*Draft as of 12 May 2021*

**Coordinator:**

Ms. Orndaporn Pewngern

Second Secretary

Thailand International Cooperation Agency (TICA), Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand

Email: [or.pewngern@mfa.mail.go.th](mailto:or.pewngern@mfa.mail.go.th)

Mobile phone/WhatsApp: +66 979 8788 24

**Attachment: *Draft Tentative Programme as of 12 May 2021***

**Draft  
Tentative Programme  
Workshop on  
COVID-19 and SMEs: sharing experience, best practices and bounce back strategies  
Date: Monday, 24 May 2021 Time: 09.30-13.00 hrs. (GMT+7) (Thailand Time)  
(Via Zoom Application)**

\* \* \* \* \*

Time	Activity
<b>Opening Session (09.30-9.40 hrs.)</b>	
	<b>Introduction</b>
	<b>Opening remarks by Director-General of TICA (pre-recorded video)</b>
<b>Session 1</b>	
<b>COVID-19 impact on SMEs, response and recovery measures adopted by Governments in ASEAN and other CICA members (09.40-10.20 hrs.)</b>	
	<b>Moderator:</b> Dr. Jarungwit Wongsaroj Executive Geotechnical Engineer
	<b>Panelists</b> - Dr. Wimonkan Kosumas, Deputy Director-General Office of SMEs Promotion (OSMEP) of Thailand - Dr. MD. Mafizur Rahman, Managing Director SME Foundation, Bangladesh
<b>Session Break (10.20-10.30 hrs.)</b>	
<b>Session 2</b>	
<b>Bounce back strategies adopted by SMEs entrepreneurs (10.30-11.50 hrs.)</b>	
	<b>Moderator:</b> Dr. Walaiporn Rewtrakunphaiboon Assistant Professor in Tourism and Hospitality Management, Bangkok University International
	<b>Case studies from Thailand</b> (including strategies, SME digitalisation and tools) - Ms. Marisa Sukosol Nunbhakdi, President, Thai Hotels Association - Mr. Somsak Boonkam, CEO and Founder, Local Alike Co.,Ltd. - Mr. Lapon Sormpradit, CEO, Grand Booking (Thailand) Co.,Ltd. - Mr. Marut Chumkuntod, CEO and Founder, CLASS coffee Co.,Ltd. - Mr. Wilas Techo, President, Population and Community Development Association (PDA) and Cabbages and Condoms restaurant <b>Views from CICA countries</b>
<b>Session 3</b>	
<b>Q&amp;A and Conclusion (11.50 hrs.)</b>	

*Note: Please note that the programme is tentative and subject to change.*

*The Workshop's online meeting room will be opened for access from 9.00 hrs. (Thailand time).*





**SECRETARIAT OF THE CONFERENCE ON INTERACTION  
AND CONFIDENCE BUILDING MEASURES IN ASIA**

**СЕКРЕТАРИАТ СОВЕЩАНИЯ ПО ВЗАИМОДЕЙСТВИЮ  
И МЕРАМ ДОВЕРИЯ В АЗИИ**

**Registration form for workshop**

“COVID-19 and SME: sharing experience, best practices and bounce-back strategy”

**Date: Monday, 24 May 2021, Time: 09.30-13.00 hrs. (GMT+7) (Thailand Time)**

**Via Zoom Application**

Member State	Organization	Title, Name, Surname	Position	Contact Information e-mail, telephone

Please fill in CAPITAL LETTERS and return this registration form no later than 21 May 2021 to

Email: [or.pewngern@mfa.mail.go.th](mailto:or.pewngern@mfa.mail.go.th)

Mobile phone/WhatsApp: +66 979 8788 24