



Strengthening Regional Structures for Small and Medium Enterprises Promotion in ASEAN (ASEAN SMEs)

The Challenge

Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in ASEAN are often face challenges in limited availability of information on how to enter and tap into markets within and outside of the region. Improving access to relevant information and networks, along with targeted capacity building programmes for internationalization, play a critical role in enhancing market access for SMEs in the region, both from a regional as well as an international perspective.

Acknowledging the importance of SMEs for most of the economies in ASEAN, the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) Blueprint 2025 and the corresponding Strategic Action Plan for SME Development (SAPSMED) 2025 put a special emphasis on promoting SMEs. The SAPSMED outlines key initiatives and deliverables to raise the level of competitiveness and resilience of SMEs, as well as to enable them to reap the benefits arising from regional integration in ASEAN.



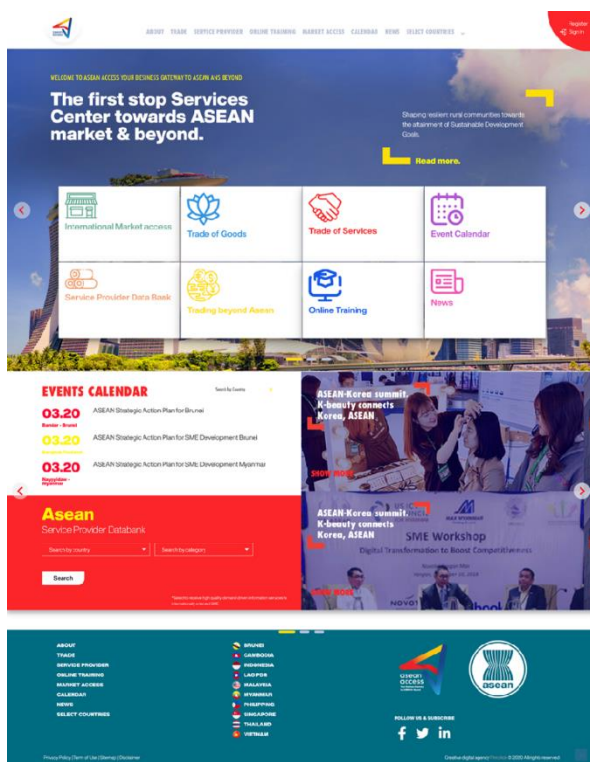
Project name	Strengthening Regional Structures for Small and Medium Enterprise Promotion in ASEAN (ASEAN SMEs)
Commissioned by	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Project region	Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, Viet Nam
Lead executing agency	Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)
Project duration	January 2019 – August 2022

In close cooperation with the ASEAN Coordinating Committee on Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (ACCMSME), the project will support the implementation of the SAPSMED 2025 with a dual focus on improving the market access and internationalization of SMEs (Strategic Goal C), as well as enhancing the policy and regulatory environment (Strategic Goal D).

The Objective

The SME Promotion in ASEAN aims to strengthen the ASEAN SME Services Center for improving cross-border business development and National SME Information Centre within the framework of the ASEAN Strategic Action Plan for SME Development 2025, by implementing the following thematic fields: (1) Improving the ASEAN SME Service Centre; (2) Strengthening national SME information centres, and (3) Promoting national SME services for internationalization.

Screenshot of ASEAN ACCESS web portal.
Photo: GIZ/Thailand team.



Our Approach

With a holistic, multi-level approach in mind, the project will work with the focal points and members of the ACCMSME, as the lead Sectoral Body. These are expected to act as intermediaries vis-à-vis related stakeholders from the public and private sector in the ASEAN Member States (AMS).

The focus of project assistance will lie on addressing needs that are pertinent for SMEs in the context of the AEC. Therefore, the main beneficiaries of the project are SMEs in the AMS, but only those possessing the intention and potential for internationalization.

Cambodia

Working closely with the Department of Small and Medium Enterprises of Ministry of Industry, Science, Technology and Innovation (MISTI), the country team and relevant stakeholders developed structure, layout and content of future National SME Information website with the name of KhmerSME (www.KhmerSME.gov.kh).

The official launching of the website will be by mid of 2021. In between, three studies have been conducted to identify the needs of information for SMEs in Cambodia as part of the support in the website development and the establishment of the National SME Information Center. The KhmerSME website will be linked to ASEAN ACCESS portal to strengthen and support the internationalization of SMEs in ASEAN.

Indonesia

Collaboration closely with the Indonesia Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs develops the umbrella portal named SMESTA (universe in English and SMEs Station as the acronym, <http://smesta.kemenkopukm.go.id/>). It provides key information for SMEs actors in the areas of market access, access to finance, capacity building, and permits and standards.

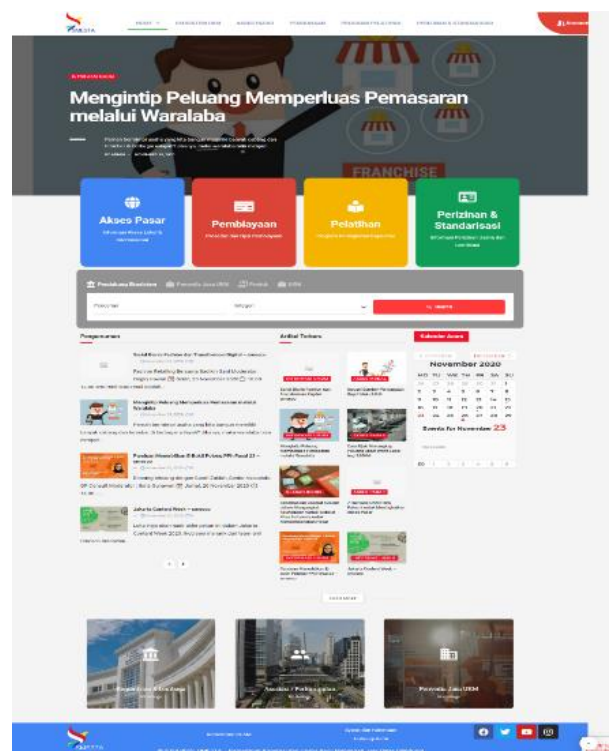
The four features enable SMEs to explore information about governments' support, enabling environment for business, and access to regulation and standards, and establish business networks. The portal showcases a national supporting ecosystem with a current list of 55 ministries and agencies in Indonesia. SMESTA will be connected to the ASEAN ACCESS, the new web portal to support the internationalization of SMEs in ASEAN, serving as a First Stop Service Centre towards the ASEAN market.



Food sellers were getting ready at the Phnom Penh Night Market, 2020. Photo: GIZ/Frank Jattke.



The 4th Taskforce Meeting. Photo: GIZ/Cambodia team.



Screenshot of the SMEs Station (SMESTA) national portal. Photo: GIZ/Indonesia team.



ASEAN SME project planning meeting in August 2020.
Photo: GIZ/Lao PDR team.

Website Design



Lao PDR

Partnering with the Department of SME Promotion, the Ministry of Industry and Commerce (MoIC) and the Lao National Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LNCCI), the ASEAN SME project introduced the ASEAN ACCESS web portal to relevant stakeholders in the Lao PDR as well as explored national SMEs portals to link them to ASEAN ACCESS in mid of 2020. Another discussed key topic was the support on internationalization of SMEs to obtain the national SMEs perspective regarding collaboration and assistance of relevant government agencies.

A next step is to establish a national steering committee and to implement the ASEAN ACCESS workplan as well as strengthening the national SMEs Service Center as a one-stop service.

Myanmar

Together with the Ministry of Planning, Finance, and Industry (MoPFI), the portal planning meeting has resulted with a formation of the national taskforce for SME web portal development in Myanmar. In 2020, the prototype of national web portal has been developed and approved. The National SMEs web portal will be launched in 2021 with national SMEs portal and service providers will be linked to the ASEAN ACCESS with information on the SMEs internationalization.

Screenshot of the SME web portal in Myanmar.
Photo: GIZ/Myanmar team.

Thailand

Together with the Office for Small and Medium Enterprises Promotion (OSMEP) Thailand, the project has disseminated and shared best practices on the implementation of a National Web Portal to CLMV and Indonesia, to further improve the access to information and services for local SMEs. In addition, the ASEAN SME Web Portal (ASEAN ACCESS) with the goal of becoming a “one-stop service for ASEAN SMEs” underwent development and to date is almost fully developed.

Through the development of a regional initiative, the cooperation structure and enhancement of networks within AMS has strengthen, thus improving the institutional capacities of SME related agencies. The partnership with the German-Thai Chamber of Commerce (GTCC) was established to improve cross-border service provision and online matchmaking. The 2021 activities will continue to strengthen cross-border cooperation and improve capacity among national service providers in ASEAN. This includes to keep on developing the content for ASEAN ACCESS portal and linking the national to regional portal.



Representatives from OSMEP had a meeting with the German-Thai Chamber of Commerce to enhance cooperation and discuss potential collaboration in the future, mainly towards networking and matchmaking opportunities.
Photo: GIZ/Thailand team.

Contact persons:

Mr. Till Ahnert
till.ahnert@giz.de
 Principal Advisor, Indonesia

Ms. Astrid Faust
astrid.f Faust@giz.de
 Team Leader, Myanmar

Mr. Frank Jattke
frank.jattke@giz.de
 Team Leader, Cambodia

Mr. Yosthana Siphomsay
yosthana.siphomsay@giz.de
 Advisor, Thailand

Ms. Thepphaphone Bounthavone
thepphaphone.bounthavone@giz.de
 Advisor, Lao PDR

Mr. Daniel Herrmann
daniel.herrmann@giz.de
 Team Leader, Viet Nam

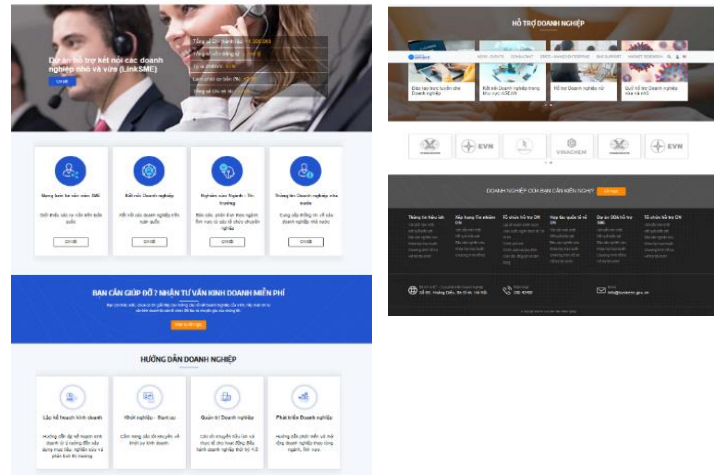


ASEAN SME Project Steering Committee Meeting in Bangkok, August 2019.
 Photo: GIZ/Thailand team.

Viet Nam

In Viet Nam, the project supports the Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI) in the development of a comprehensive national business information portal hosted by the ministry at www.business.gov.vn. The Portal aims at providing the best support, information services and web-based services to SMEs, business association and agencies involved in SME development.

The launch of the national business portal is scheduled for 2021 and will be accompanied by outreach activities and trainings targeting both ASEAN ACCESS and the national business portal. Further support will comprise the development of new SME services and piloting cross border matchmaking services for SMEs in prioritized sectors.



Beta version of Viet Nam national business portal.
 Photo: GIZ/Viet Nam team.

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Strengthening Regional Structures for Small and Medium Enterprises Promotion in ASEAN (ASEAN SMEs)

Menara BCA, 46th Floor
 Jl. MH. Thamrin No.1
 Jakarta 10310 – Indonesia

T: +62 21 23587111
 F: +62 21 23587110
 E: giz-indonesien@giz.de
 I : www.giz.de

In cooperation with:



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