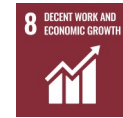


Promotion of Competitiveness within the Framework of the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (COMPETE II)

Competition makes ASEAN markets work better: Best possible quality at reasonable prices



Context

Reducing barriers to trade in services and establishing effective competition regimes are two important core elements of ASEAN economic integration. Intra-ASEAN trade in services offers great potential for economic development in ASEAN, particularly for Cambodia, Lao PDR and Viet Nam.

Further liberalisation of trade in services and its effective implementation at the national level would provide an additional boost to growth and employment in all three countries.

Liberalisation of trade in services tends to stimulate competition. However, market opening can also increase the risk of market concentration and abuse of market power if regional or global players become dominant in national markets. To mitigate this risk, it is important for the CLMV countries to complement the liberalisation of trade in services with efforts to strengthen the effectiveness of their national competition regimes.

Objective

Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Viet Nam implement pro-competitive ASEAN agreements in the areas of trade in services and competition policy in a sustainable way.

Project Title	Promotion of Competitiveness within the Framework of the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (COMPETE II)
Commissioned by	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Project regions	ASEAN with focus countries: Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Viet Nam
Leading executing agency	Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)
Duration	November 2022 – December 2025

Approach

The project operates at both regional (ASEAN) and national levels. At the regional level, the project supports the harmonisation of competition policy and law and its implementation through the development of guidelines and manuals and the promotion of sustainable ASEAN-wide dialogue formats (e.g. the *ASEAN Competition Conference*). This will, among other things, facilitate cooperation between competition authorities in cross-border cases in the long term.

At the national level, the aim in competition policy to strengthen institutional sustainability by promoting strategic cooperation between competition authorities and key public, private and academic institutions in Cambodia, Lao PDR and Vietnam. This is intended to ensure that the newer competition authorities in particular are perceived as important, competent and effective institutions as quickly as possible.



Visit of the Cambodian Competition Commission at the Higher Regional Court in Düsseldorf/Germany. Photo: ©GIZ/COMPETE II



Impact

To date, all ten ASEAN Member States enacted competition laws and set up national competition agencies to address anti-competitive agreements, abuse of dominance and anti-competitive mergers.

The establishment of a cross-border Merger Information Sharing Portal (MIPS) facilitates the sharing of merger information among ASEAN competition agencies, to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of cross-border mergers investigation and to avoid conflicting outcomes.

The ASEAN Competition Conference, hosted by the ASEAN Competition Commission every two years, is the flagship event on competition policy in ASEAN and serves as a regular forum for engaging stakeholders from the business community, judiciary, academia as well as sectoral regulators and the professional public in dialogue with ASEAN competition authorities.

Several ASEAN-Publications like the “Regional Guidelines on Competition Policy” support the ASEAN Member States to move towards greater harmonisation of competition law and policy in ASEAN (<https://www.asean-competition.org/publication>)

Gender Mainstreaming

The focus of the gender related activities of COMPETE II is to support Member States' initiatives on gender mainstreaming which is in line with the *ASEAN Gender Mainstreaming Strategic Framework 2021-2025*. Here the project works closely together with the focal points for gender in the two partner ministries, Ministry of Commerce in Cambodia and Ministry of Industry and Commerce in Lao PDR. New or updated intra-ministerial gender action plans are available in both countries.



Consultation Meeting on Competition Regulations in Savannakhet/Lao PDR.
Photo: ©GIZ/COMPETE II

About GIZ Laos

GIZ, as part of German Development Cooperation, has been active in Laos since 1993, mainly on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). Currently, GIZ is implementing numerous projects in three core areas: a) rural development, b) conservation of nature and natural resource and c) sustainable economic development and d) good governance.

Please visit www.giz.de/laos for further information.

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On behalf of **Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)**

Other important links **<https://www.asean-competition.org/>**