

Concept Note

Structured Learning Visit (SLV) cum Business Matching in Thailand

Group 1 (August 15 – 21, 2017)
Group 2 (September 10-16, 2017)

1. Background

Mekong Institute (MI) is implementing a two year project on “Enhancing Competitiveness of SMEs in the Southern Economic Corridor (SEC) of ASEAN Mekong Subregion (AMS)” funded by Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund (JAIF). The Project aims to enhance the competitiveness of SMEs through (i) capacity development for SME clusters and networks; (ii) trade and investment promotion through Public and Private Partnership (PPP); and (iii) strengthening of Business Development Services (BDS) providers. The Project is being implemented in partnership with the national and sub-national stakeholders in 19 provinces along the SEC in Cambodia, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam (CMTV).

As part of the Project framework, MI is organizing two Structured Learning Visits (SLVs) cum Business Matching in Thailand to bring the representatives of selected SMEs and public and private BDS providers in the 19 SEC Provinces to observe and learn from the successful industrial clusters and value chains integration best practice. The SLVs will also expose them to the emerging business opportunities in Thailand through business matching and networking.

2. Objectives and Expected Outputs

The overarching objective of SLV for SMEs and BDS Providers from 19 SEC provinces is to promote regional value chain integration and linkages through direct learning exposure to successful regional industrial clusters and business matching with leading industries in Thailand. It also aims to support these stakeholders in developing their product value chains and clusters in their provinces.

In particular, participants are expected to:

- have direct exposure to the successful industrial clusters and value chain integration models in Thailand;
- understand state-of-the-art production systems, packaging, processing, standards & certification process, quality control technologies, R&D, skill development opportunities and suppliers of some leading organizations (businesses / associations / institutions) in the related industries in Thailand;
- identify emerging opportunities for business development in Thailand and vice versa;
- establish network and linkages with different key stakeholders in Thailand.

3. Expected Outcomes

- At least 50% of the SMEs and BDS providers participated in the SLV establish new cooperation and collaboration for business development through business matching activities;
- BDS providers apply knowledge and skills and learning experience from SLV to improve their services for SMEs;
- At least 75% of participants in the SLV are fully satisfied (Average overall evaluation rate at the end of the activity should be at least 3.5)

4. Program Features

The program has the following main activities:

3.1. Structured Learning Visit (SLV):

- i. For preparation, participants will upload their business profiles and technological requests in the SEC business database (www.sec4business.com). Based on these information, organizing team will arrange SLV. There will also be an orientation workshop in the first day of the SLV;
- ii. During the SLV, the participants will have group assignments at each visit, which are related to general key observations, best practices and challenges, opportunities for business collaboration and further applications to SME cluster development in the SEC. Each day, assigned participants will assist the organizing team to facilitate and synthesize the activities of the day. For each visiting place, participants will receive (i) introduction of business / organizational profile; (ii) sharing of best practices and challenges; and (iii) facility tour;
- iii. In the last day of the SLV, the participants are required to share their learning experience and set the way forward to forge their business collaboration. The MI will also design the Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) form to assess the effectiveness of the SLV and gain the feedback from the participants for future program improvement.

3.2. Business Matching:

- i. For preparation, participants will upload their business profiles and technological requests in the SEC business database (www.sec4business.com). Based on these information, organizing team will arrange business matching;
- ii. The participants will also have the opportunities to join the on-site business matching with relevant stakeholders in order to showcase their products and interact with potential business partners in Thailand.

3.3. Monitoring, Evaluation and Follow Up:

- i. During the SLV, the participants will have group assignments (SWOT analysis) at each visit, which are related to general key observations, best practices and challenges, opportunities for business collaboration and further applications to SME cluster development in the SEC;
- ii. In the last day of the SLV, the participants are required to synthesize and evaluate the SLV and set the way forward to forge their business collaboration. The MI will also design the

Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) form to assess the effectiveness of the SLV and participants' satisfaction and gain the feedback for future program improvement;

- iii. At post-SLVs stage, MI will monitor the progress on application of knowledge, skills and learning experience from the SLV and business and collaboration through online platform (SEC business database and E-mail) and M&E Form.

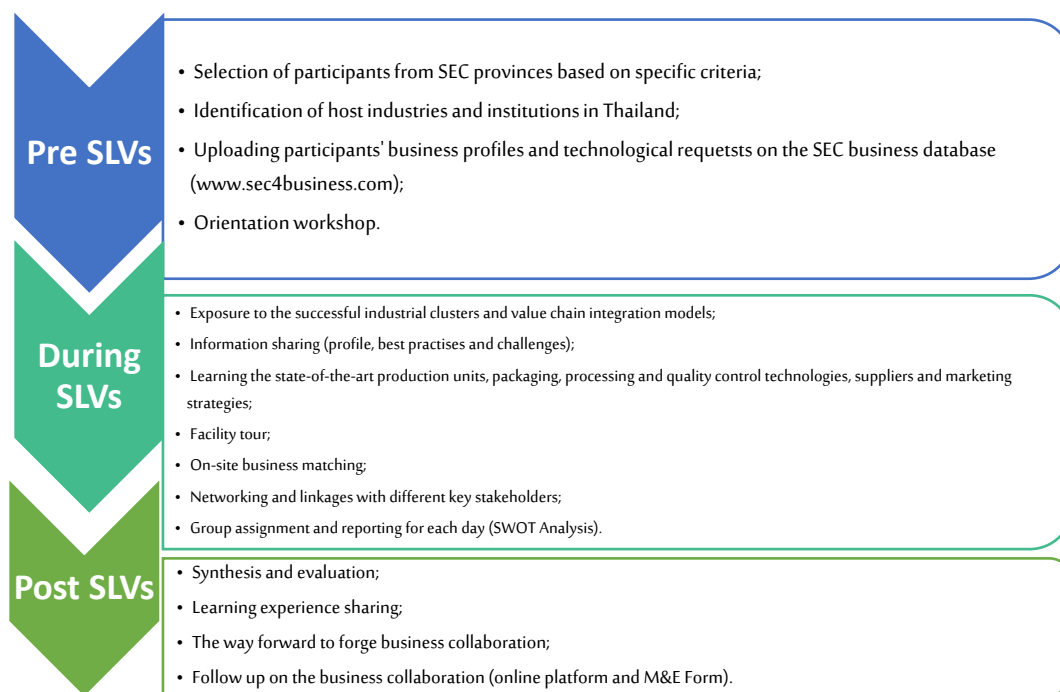


Figure 1: Flow of SLV

4. Target Participants

A total of 38 participants from the 19 Provinces in CMTV (two from each province) are invited to participate in the SLV. Target group includes selected SMEs and public and private BDS providers from the 19 SEC provinces.

Participants are divided into two groups and each group will visit different provinces in Thailand.

Group 1 (Pisciculture products) 14 Participants

- Battambang (Fresh Water Fish Sauce)
- Koh Kong (Sea Water Fish Sauce)
- Preah Sihanouk (Dry Shrimp)
- Kampot (Flower of Salt)
- Tanintharyi / Dawei (Mackerel Fish)
- Ca Mau (Dried Snakeskin gourami)
- Can Tho (Pangasius)

The group will visit pisciculture related industries and associations / institutions to learn about their best practices on key components of the respective value chain, production systems, product packaging, processing techniques, standards & certification process, quality control technologies, R&D, skill development, suppliers, cold storage, fish farm management and marketing.

Group 2 (Agribusiness products) 22 Participants

- Banteay Meanchey (Silk Production)
- Kampong Chhnang (Pottery and Ceramics)
- Pursat (Pursat Orange)
- Svay Rieng (Smach Rice)
- Chanthaburi (Fresh Druain)
- Kanchanaburi (Banana Processing)
- Prachinburi (Organic Rice)
- Ratchaburi (Aromatic Coconut)
- Sa-Kaeo (Aromatic Herb)
- Trat (Community Based Tourism: CBT)
- Tay Ninh (Custard Apple)

The group will visit related industries and associations / institutions to learn about their best practices on key components of the respective value chain, input management, food safety, processing, packaging, certification, lab, export and import procedures, R&D and advanced technology in farming.

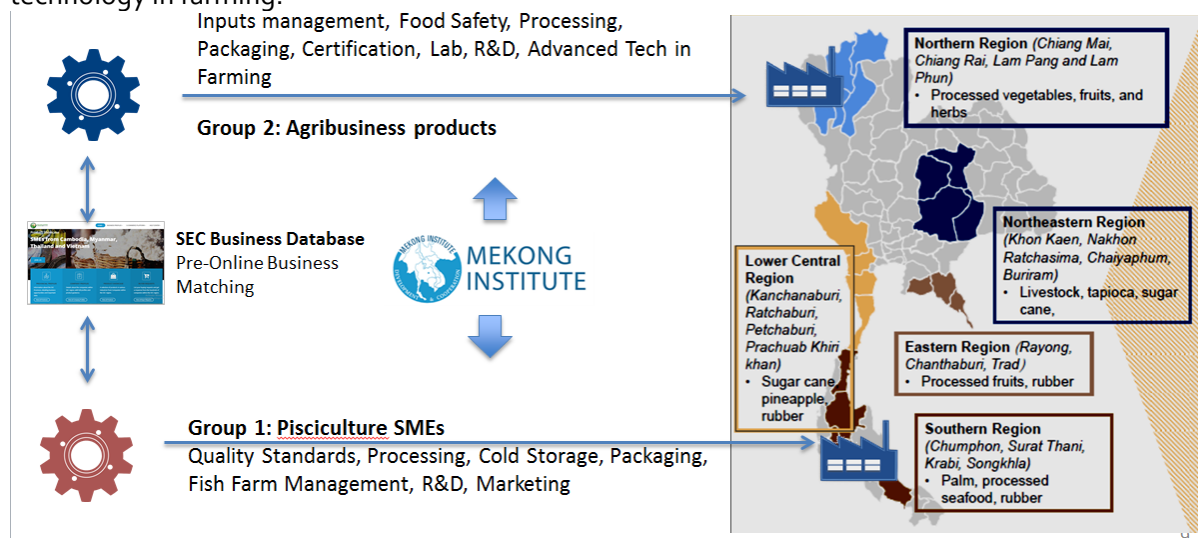


Figure 2: Feature of SLV

4. Organizing Team and Contact

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