

December 7, 2017
ASEAN-Japan Centre

AJC promotes tourism services trade in ASEAN



Seminar on promoting tourism services trade in ASEAN organized by the AJC in Hua Hin, Thailand

The ASEAN-Japan Centre (AJC) organized a seminar on promoting trade in tourism services in ASEAN at Novotel Hua Hin Cha Am Beach Resort & Spa, Thailand from November 30 to December 2, 2017. This is the fourth seminar of a series of seminars on promoting services trade.

This series of seminars have the following objectives; enhancing domestic capacities in select services through understanding better the issues, difficulties and challenges faced by ASEAN and options for ASEAN to consider how they can overcome them; providing participants with opportunities to learn and gain capacities; and exchanging best practices and policy options among ASEAN Member States and contributing to the AEC (ASEAN Economic Community) process in the area of AFAS (ASEAN Framework Agreement on Services) and ATISA (ASEAN Trade in Services Agreement).

In cooperating with the Ministry of Commerce and the Ministry of Tourism and Sports of Thailand, the Centre invited 52 participants including the relevant government officials from 10 ASEAN Member States, private sectors both from Japan and Thailand, officials from the ASEAN Secretariat, the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) and the Hua Hin / Cha-Am Tourism Association Secretariat.

With the 50th year anniversary of the establishment of ASEAN, the region achieved almost full liberalization in the goods trade. However, there is slow progress in services trade liberalization. This seminar aimed at promoting concrete policy recommendation for sustainable tourism development, using the Centre's technical paper, Promoting Services

Trade in ASEAN: Tourism, as a background document.

All members shared and agreed that tourism contributed to the world welfare and economic growth as well as promote peace and stability for the world. Particularly, the meeting discussed important factors to increase expenditures; value added to the economy through direct impact or direct spending in the tourism sector; indirect impact via multiplier effects of tourism sector or indirect value added created in tourism; and total value added created in the economy through the tourism activities.

With the policy objective that all ASEAN Member States shall raise the level of travel expenditures and value added to the economy while minimizing downside effects emanating from tourism activities (e.g. environment downgrading, social devaluation), they discussed how to maximizing the value added falling onto the economy at the community, country and regional (ASEAN) levels.

As the result of the questionnaire evaluation on the current status of policy framework to comply with the policy objective, the average number is 6.37 (1-10 with 10 being the highest), implying that there is room for improvement to raise the number of visitors, per-capita spending and the local or domestic procurement, and to leverage tourism large linkage effects.

Followed by a field trip to Hua Hin and Cha-Am for exchanging the best practices related to tourism on education and tourism destination in Hua Hin and Cha-Am, Thailand, the activities concluded.

The paper on promoting tourism services, including a host of policy recommendations discussed at the seminar, will be posted on the Centre's website, contributing to the AEC process in the area of the AFAS and ATISA.

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The ASEAN Japan Centre is an intergovernmental organization established by the ASEAN Member States and Japan in 1981. It has been promoting exports from ASEAN to Japan while revitalizing investment, tourism as well as people-to-people exchanges between the ASEAN Member States and Japan.

URL : <http://www.asean.or.jp/en/>

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