



### PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS 2013 and 2014

July 2014

The AANZFTA Economic Cooperation Support Program continues to support AANZFTA implementation and generate tangible outcomes. In addition to the positive links between the economic cooperation activities and AANZFTA's implementation, the program is also supporting economic integration.

#### Rules of Origin (ROO) and Other Aspects of Implementation of Tariff Commitments

Regional Training for Trainers on AANZFTA ROO was held in early 2013, with 50 officials from ASEAN Member States participating. The Training Modules on AANZFTA ROO from this workshop have been translated into versions for use by Indonesia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Viet Nam. Further translations are being undertaken. The modules, in national languages, will enable in-country training to be undertaken to help ASEAN Member States to participate more fully in ROO issues.

The project to implement a regional scheme to monitor utilization of AANZFTA tariff preferences was progressed through activities in Cambodia and the Philippines and further activities are planned for Indonesia, Lao PDR and Myanmar.

In-country training was provided for Cambodia and Lao PDR on tariff and trade data analysis, and similar in-country training is scheduled for Indonesia.

A policy dialogue was held on Future Harmonized System Transposition of AANZFTA Tariff Schedules and Rules of Origin Product Specific Rules that enabled the Parties to begin work on developing guidelines and procedures. The most recent in-country training on transposition of tariff schedules was held in Myanmar.

#### Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS)

The ASEAN Regional Diagnostic Network (ARDN) Project, launched in 2010, is a multi-year project aimed at enhancing the capacity of ASEAN Member States to certify plant pests and diseases; promote regional networking of this capacity; and supporting the adoption of new diagnostic techniques.

The project has already established a Clearing House for the Network in Malaysia, undertaken training workshops, in-country mentoring activities, mentored field surveys, and procurement of imaging equipment and high-resolution microscopy equipment. Current activities include training of front-line and specialist diagnosticians and diagnostic support activities.

The ASEAN Import Health Standard: Priority Line and Capacity Development project has assisted the development of Import Health Standards for improved ASEAN market access to New Zealand, including for fresh mangosteen (Indonesia), longan and lychees (Thailand), and dragon fruit (Viet Nam), and a range of additional requests are being addressed.

#### Standards, Technical Regulation and Conformity Assessment Procedures (STRACAP)

A workshop on International Standards Development Best Practices was held in February 2013 back-to-back with a meeting of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO)'s Technical Management Board (TMB). The workshop provided an opportunity for AANZFTA Parties to work together with TMB members to identify some of the main issues and challenges facing the Standards and Conformance community. The workshop highlighted considerable scope for AANZFTA Parties to engage more effectively on international standards issues.

#### Customs

A major focus has been the project to review non-tariff measures (NTMs), with a consultant being contracted to assist the Parties better understand the policy issues and to identify measures that may be obstructing trade. The consultant has met twice with the Committee on Trade in Goods to report on work and receive guidance, and is now undertaking a pilot business survey.

A policy dialogue and capacity building workshop is planned on advance rulings.

#### Services

The program has given priority to supporting the development of an ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (AQRf) through assistance to a task force comprising representatives from ministries of education, labour,



trade, and qualification agencies. Technical assistance and support to workshops since 2012 has helped the task force develop and agree on the final text of AQRF in March 2014.

AQRF is a step further towards the achievement of the ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint's goal of free flow of skilled labour. It will be submitted to the next Ministerial meeting for endorsement. The program will continue to support the task force's work, particularly design and pilot-testing for the framework's implementation and bilateral technical exchanges among some of the Parties.

Services statistics are an essential tool for evidence-based policy development. The program thus supported a series of workshops for the development of Statistics on International Trade in Services (SITS). Close to 90 statisticians from ASEAN and APEC economies participated in an international seminar in October 2013 in Jakarta, jointly organized with the APEC Technical Assistance and Training Facility and United Nations Statistics Division.

Ongoing institutional support to Cambodia, Lao PDR and Myanmar in SITS data collection - design and conduct of pilot surveys – is scheduled for later in 2014.

## Investment

The program provides technical assistance and capacity building, with a focus on enhancing the operating environment for investors and improving the competitiveness of the region as an investment destination. Activities included a pilot workshop in Myanmar to strengthen officials' capacity to implement AANZFTA's investment provisions and provide guidance to investors seeking to utilise the Agreement.

The program supported OECD Investment Policy Reviews (IPR) for interested ASEAN Member States. The reviews present an overview of investment trends and policies in the recipient countries and are conducted using OECD investment instruments. Reviews for Malaysia and Myanmar were published and disseminated through roadshows in November 2013 and March 2014, respectively. Reviews for the Philippines, Viet Nam and Lao PDR are underway and will be completed in 2015.

## Intellectual Property

The Regional Patent Examination Training Program (RPET) is assisting IP offices which conduct substantive patent examination to meet Patent Cooperation Treaty standards. The two-year, competency-based program combines face-to-face training and distance education. Eight patent examiners from Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines participated in RPET's e-learning in 2013. A second intake of 13 trainees, including participation of Thailand and Viet Nam examiners, commenced in April 2014.

The program has also supported the development of an Ideal Patent Examination Training (IPET) Model, for training patent examiners. An assessment of training needs and priorities was undertaken in a workshop in 2013. Further development of tools and training is planned.

The Accession to the Madrid Protocol program is helping countries join an international trade mark registration system that will reduce the cost and complexity of doing business in the region. The key benefit of joining the Madrid Protocol is that it enables brand owners to file a single application in one language directly with an owner's traditional trade mark office and to use that application to seek protection in other markets.

A regional IP public education and awareness strategy was published in 2013 and a community of practice was established to guide interested ASEAN Member States IP Offices and their stakeholders to promote effective IP management across business communities. Policy workshops on IP and genetic resources, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions in June 2014 were a forum for government experts and indigenous representatives to share approaches in reviewing or developing policies in this area.

## Competition Policy

In 2014, the AECSP continued its support for the ASEAN Competition Conference (ACC) series aimed at increasing regional awareness and understanding of emerging competition issues. The 4th ACC held in July 2014 focused on approaches to detecting and deterring anti-competitive conduct with experts from government, business and academia contributing to the discussion.

At a national level, the AECSP funded training programs to build investigation skills capabilities for officials in Viet Nam and the Philippines in December 2013 and February 2014, respectively. Malaysia Competition Commission and Viet Nam Competition Agency officials also received in-country training and mentoring from seconded Australian Competition and Consumer Commission staff during 2013.

During 2013-14, AANZFTA Parties worked to design a new Competition Law Implementation Program (CLIP) that will boost skills transfer and institutional capacity within the region's emerging competition authorities. With a focus on individual country needs and regional economic integration objectives, CLIP activities will build on existing cooperation under AANZFTA through phased and practically-focused technical assistance.

