

## **Economic and Technical Co-operation Work Programme Pursuant to Chapter 9 of the ASEAN-Hong Kong, China Free Trade Agreement**

### **Introduction**

1. This Economic and Technical Co-operation Work Programme (hereinafter referred to as “Work Programme”) is developed pursuant to Chapter 9 (Economic and Technical Co-operation) (hereafter “ECOTECH”) of the ASEAN-Hong Kong, China Free Trade Agreement (hereinafter referred to as “the Agreement”).
2. The Work Programme is a reference document which aims to provide guidance for the effective implementation of ECOTECH activities within the scope of the Agreement. The Work Programme is implemented through annual programmes. Pursuant to Article 3 (Resources) of Chapter 9, the Parties shall contribute appropriately to the implementation of the Work Programme under Article 4 (Implementation of Economic and Technical Co-operation) of Chapter 9. From 2025 to 2029, the total amount of funds for implementation of the annual programmes is HKD 30 million, to be contributed in five equal installments by Hong Kong, China.
3. The AHKFTA Joint Committee (hereafter “Joint Committee”), established pursuant to Chapter 12 (Institutional Provisions) of the Agreement, will approve the annual programmes and the funding for implementing the annual programmes including the administrative support as detailed in paragraph 6.
4. Notwithstanding the list of ECOTECH activities set out in paragraph 7, the Parties may initiate an amendment of the Work Programme with a view to improving the effectiveness of the Work Programme after the implementation of the Agreement. The revised Work Programme, to be mutually agreed, will take effect upon the endorsement by the Joint Committee.
5. Unless otherwise agreed, a joint review will be conducted towards the end of 2029 to assess the effectiveness of the Work Programme in fulfilling the objectives under the Agreement and make recommendation to the Joint Committee on the way forward.

### **ECOTECH Support Unit**

6. An AHKFTA ECOTECH Support Unit (hereinafter referred to as “Support Unit”) will be established in the ASEAN Secretariat to assist the Joint Committee in the implementation of the Agreement. The Support Unit shall seek the endorsement of the Joint Committee of an annual budget for its operation and the implementation of the annual programmes as well as an annual report for reviewing the progress of work under the Work Programme. The Terms of Reference setting out the functions of the Support Unit shall be endorsed by the Joint Committee.

## **ECOTECH Activities**

7. The Parties agreed to conduct the following ECOTECH activities in pursuit of their mutual benefits subject to their respective laws and regulations:

a) Customs Co-operation

Programmes will be organised to foster better understanding and closer rapport among customs authorities.

Indicative Activities:

- experience-sharing workshops/seminars, covering the following:
  - (i) customs risk management system;
  - (ii) advance ruling on classification;
  - (iii) customs valuation system by using customs value database and electronic commerce technology;
  - (iv) customs post clearance audit according to auditing standards;
  - (v) authorized economics operators;
  - (vi) automatic customs clearance system;
  - (vii) customs enforcement and mutual assistance; and
  - (viii) tax collection from electronic commerce website by linking customs automatic clearance system;
- workshop, seminar or study mission on customs procedures or trade facilitation related to trade in transit; and
- sharing awareness and good practices on the implementation of self-certification system to facilitate trade, reduce transaction cost and enhance participation in global market.

b) Professional Services

Programmes will be organised to facilitate experience sharing and foster closer partnership in various sectors of professional services.

Indicative Activities:

- symposiums, information sharing seminars or training such as internship programmes for building capacity in selected services sectors where the Parties have a competitive edge.

c) Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) Co-operation

Programmes will be organised to facilitate networking and closer partnership with the business community.

Indicative Activities:

- exhibitions and thematic seminars and networking events for SMEs, including raising awareness of competition laws in the region, technical assistance on specific specialty; and
- trade and investment promotion missions to ASEAN Member States and/or Hong Kong, China to identify investment, business and networking opportunities.

d) Trade Facilitation / Logistics

Programmes will be organised to promote communications amongst service providers and authorities involved in customs clearance to provide opportunities for business matching.

Indicative Activities:

- trade and investment promotion and events encompassing conferences, exhibitions and business matching programmes;
- trade missions to ASEAN Member States and/or Hong Kong, China to explore business potentials;
- workshop on trade facilitation and logistics to enhance the trade between ASEAN and Hong Kong, China; and
- workshop on rules of origin, including operational certification procedures (OCP) and product specific rules (PSR).

e) E-commerce Co-operation

Programmes will be organised to provide capacity building opportunities for SMEs as well as policy-makers on SMEs on the benefits and latest development in e-commerce.

Indicative Activities:

- trade promotional activities on products and solutions in information, communication and technologies;
- thematic symposiums and/or workshops on digital development and e-commerce;
- workshop/seminar to share experiences on good practices with regard to e-commerce promotion, legislation and regulation, policies and guidelines; and
- feasibility study on support to the SMEs and start-up companies in e-commerce.

f) Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Co-operation

Programmes will be organised to explore opportunities to strengthen co-operation and networking among SPS-related agencies, as well as collaboration and information exchange on SPS matters.

Indicative Activities:

- workshop/seminar to share experience on the application of international standards related to SPS measures of the Parties; and
- research/study aimed to identify obstacles related to the application of SPS measures and provide recommendations on best practices to implement SPS measures to facilitate trade among the Parties.

g) Standards, Technical Regulations, and Conformity Assessment Procedures (STRACAP) Co-operation

Programmes will be organised to enhance co-operation relating to the development and application of STRACAP among the Parties.

Indicative Activities:

- workshop to promote good regulatory practice in sectors of mutual interest among the Parties, including transparency and management of risks relating to health, safety, the environment, and deceptive practices; and
- research/study aimed to analyse the current application of STRACAP and identify areas for improvement with a view to enhancing participation of the Parties in the existing frameworks for mutual recognition developed by relevant regional and international bodies.

h) Intellectual Property (IP) Co-operation

Programmes will be organised to promote and strengthen co-operation in the area of IP rights.

Indicative Activities:

- workshop for IP regulators to enhance the understanding of legal and international regimes protecting IP rights and their importance to trade and investment in the Parties; and
- research/study aimed to enhance IP regulatory framework of the Parties.

i) Digital Technology to Facilitate Trade

Programmes will be organised to promote the utilisation of digital technology to facilitate trade among the Parties.

Indicative Activities:

- workshop/seminar to promote the utilisation of digital technology to facilitate cross-border trade in goods and services, to identify policy/implementation issues and challenges relating to the use of digital technology, and to share experience on strategies to facilitate digitalisation of trade; and
- research/study to identify on-the-ground and trade policy issues among the Parties on the application of digital technology and make relevant recommendations to policy makers.

j) Promotion and Facilitation of Investment

Programmes will be organised to promote and increase awareness of the region as an investment area and to facilitate investments among the Parties.

Indicative Activities:

- activities to strengthen investment promotion and encourage investment flows among the Parties, including workshops, investment roadshows, conferences, exhibitions and investment matching programmes; and
- workshop to share best practices in investment facilitation among the Parties.

k) Competition

Programmes will be organised to foster a better understanding of competition to promote economic development in the region.

Indicative Activities:

- activities to enhance the knowledge and skills of enterprises, professionals and policymakers in competition policy including workshops, exhibitions, and trainings.
- research/study to identify on-the-ground and trade policy issues among the Parties on competition and make relevant recommendations to policymakers.

l) Government Procurement (GP)

Programmes will be organised to promote and strengthen co-operation in the area of GP.

Indicative Activities:

- activities to enhance the knowledge and skills of enterprises, professionals and policymakers in GP including workshops, exhibitions, and trainings.
- research/study aimed to share best practices and enhance GP framework in the region.

m) Digital Transformation

Programmes will be organised to promote and strengthen co-operation in the area of digital transformation.

Indicative Activities:

- activities to enhance the knowledge and skills of enterprises, professionals and policymakers in digital transformation including workshops, exhibitions, and trainings.
- research/study to identify on-the-ground and trade policy issues on digital transformation among the Parties and make relevant recommendations to policymakers.

n) Sustainable Economic Development

Programmes will be organised to foster a better understanding of sustainable economic development, including green sustainable financing in the region.

Indicative Activities:

- activities to enhance the knowledge and skills of professionals and policymakers in sustainable economic development including workshops, exhibitions, and trainings.
- research/study to share best practices in sustainable economic development among the Parties.