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‘Early Harvest’ Implementation of the GMS-CBTA

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Brief Background

- The GMS CBTA provides for a common subregional system based on reciprocity, to make it faster, easier and cheaper to move goods and people throughout the GMS.
 - Currently, vehicles are moving under bilateral agreements only.
- The CBTA dates from 1999, completed ratification in October 2015 – Difficult to implement as some provisions are outdated to be implemented.
- Balancing the need to update the provisions vs immediate implementation → ‘Early Harvest’ CBTA implementation package -→ immediate implementation of provisions that can be implemented .



Features of “Early Harvest” Package

- Focusses on the free movement of commercial goods and passenger vehicles
- Each country may issue up to 500 multiple journey GMS Road Transport Permits to transport operators in its own country
- Each vehicle will also be issued with (and required to carry) a Temporary Admission Document (TAD) to be stamped and dated by Customs officials at the border when entering and exiting another GMS country – *vehicle’s “passport”*.
- No limit on the number of journeys, but no single journey can last more than 30 days in any other GMS country



Features of “Early Harvest” Package (ctd)

- Vehicles must stick to the route network described in Protocol 1 of the CBTA. Lao PDR will initially open routes 3, 9 and 13 from at Boten, Houayxay, Thanaleng, Savannakhet, Dansavanh, and Nong Nok Khiene. Myanmar will join in 2020
- Goods transported will continue to observe current Customs procedures (i.e. the CBTA Annex 6 provisions for transit transport will not apply to the ‘Early Harvest’)
- No financial (Customs bond) guarantees are required for the movement of goods and vehicles in line with CBTA Article 18
- JC to review implementation of the “Early Harvest” on annual basis and extend and/or update the MOU timeframe.



Current Status

- Lao PDR signed the MOU at the 6th JCM held in Hanoi, Viet Nam, March 2018 → marking completion of the MOU signing and its entered into force.
- Joint Committee agreed to meet twice a year (originally every three years) to monitor implementation. A special session with operators would also be convened at JC Meeting
- Initial training and outreach sessions for government officials and private sectors have been conducted in all countries.
- Mekong Institute has been mobilized to conduct Monitoring of the EH MOU.
- Commencement of the effective operations of the EH will move from 1 June 2018 to 1 August 2018 (upon request of Lao PDR).



Next Steps

- Countries to ensure issuance of necessary circular to customs and/or the BCPs to process the EH Permits and TADs by 1 August 2018 (Thailand and Viet Nam confirmed their readiness)
- Countries to exchange the list (or Register) of the GMS Road Transport Permits and TADs issued by each GMS Country by mid July 2018 (Thailand has submitted already).
- Lao PDR to undertake domestic clearance on Road User Maintenance Charge Scheme to enable its implementation of the EH
- Further outreach to private sector on enhance awareness to be conducted as required.
- Monitoring of implementing status and issues (vis-a-vis officials and the private sector) to be undertaken



Related activities

- Myanmar is expected to conclude negotiations on a bilateral agreement with Thailand this August (with other agreements with neighboring countries in preparation for its 'Early Harvest' accession in 2019)
- In parallel with the 'Early Harvest', the NTFCs are also working on
 - a) the expansion of the Protocol 1, to expand the benefit of the CBTA → protocol expected to be signed at the 7th JCM in 2019.
 - b) update and improve the existing CBTA with a set of 'CBTA 2.0' texts currently under consideration



Thank you!