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EU – Thailand Cluster Cooperation and Matchmaking Event

In Support of Healthcare and Medical Technologies

Bangkok, Thailand, 6th – 8th of September 2017

The Medical Fair Thailand (8th International Exhibition on Hospital, Diagnostic, Pharmaceutical, Medical & Rehabilitation Equipment & Supplies) is the most important event for the medical and healthcare industry in the country. In this unparalleled scope, the European Cluster Collaboration Platform (ECCP) joined efforts with the Innovation and Technology Assistance Program (ITAP) under the Thailand National Science and Technology Development Agency (NSTDA) to organise the EU - Thailand Cluster Cooperation and Matchmaking Event.

From the 6th to the 8th of September 2017, nine European clusters met with many Thai public and private organisations in the healthcare area. More than 80 meetings between European and Thai organisations took place over the three day period, through a specific matchmaking session and networking periods at the Medical Fair. These meetings helped EU clusters to explore potential partnerships with key players in the Thai healthcare market. In addition to the networking activities, the agenda involved interesting seminars that provided useful information about the Thai medical and health market and field visits to some of the most relevant locally based organisations.

The EU – Thailand Cluster Cooperation and Matchmaking Event featured a rich agenda destined to provide a comprehensive experience for the participants. The objective of the mission was to facilitate EU clusters access to the Thai medical and healthcare market through close cooperation with locally based organisations. To achieve this, the agenda included seminars on medical and healthcare trends, networking activities (C2C and C2B meetings) and field visits to relevant key players. Over a three day period, the participants enjoyed the

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opportunity to explore possible common areas of interest for cooperation and complementarities in terms of sectoral, value chain, and market focus of their SMEs and other member organisations.

The European cluster delegation was composed of nine cluster organisations related to the medical and healthcare

field across five countries, namely: AgroFood Regional Cluster (Romania), Future Position X (Sweden), Hellenic BioCluster (Greece), Information Technologies in Medicine (Lithuania), Laser & Engineering Technologies Cluster (Lithuania), Lithuanian Medical Tourism Cluster (Lithuania), Medicine Estonia Cluster (Estonia), RoHealth (Romania), and Transylvania Regional Balneotourism Cluster (Romania).

On the 6th of September, Dr. Chanwit Tribuddharat, Acting Vice President, National Science and Technology Development Agency (NSTDA), Ms. Isabelle de Stobbeleir, First Secretary, Delegation of the European Union to Thailand and Ms. Ina Marčiulionytė, Ambassador of the Republic of Lithuania to China, welcomed the participants and opened the cluster cooperation seminar. Organised by the ECCP and ITAP, the seminar aimed to spread knowledge about the market opportunities and the existing initiatives to promote cooperation between European and Thai clusters.

The European Commission was represented by Mr. José Freitas (Policy Officer of Unit Clusters, Social Economy and Entrepreneurship, DG Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs) and Mr. Ramunas Kuncaitis (Head of Entrepreneurship Sector, Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises). Mr. Freitas presented the “European Policy and Programme on International Cluster Cooperation”; while Mr. Ramunas Kuncaitis spoke on “Internationalisation initiatives and programmes managed by the Executive Agency for Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (EASME)”.



Further seminar sessions were devoted to programmes that promote the cooperation between European and Thai cluster-like organisations: Mrs. Noelia Dosil presented the European Cluster Collaboration Platform and its services; Ms. Nora Bihari, Project Manager of the South-East Asia IPR SME Helpdesk, presented “South-East Asia IPR SME Helpdesk Activities”; and Mr. Jon Echanove, Team Leader of the Coaching Network, EU Business Avenues in South East Asia, presented the “EU Gateway | Business Avenues project”. On the Thai side, Dr. Chanwit Tribuddharat, Acting Vice President, National Science and Technology Development Agency (NSTDA), presented the “NSTDA Initiatives for Cooperation with Europe”.

Later in the morning, the Thai organisations and EU clusters gave introductions to assist in the facilitation of informal networking. This was followed by further talks related to Thai-EU cooperation in the medical fields. Ms. Dhinapa Apaivongse, Senior Investment Promotion Officer, Thailand Board of Investment (BOI), presented an “Overview of Thailand Economy as it relates to Medical and Healthcare Sector in Thailand: Barriers and Opportunities for European Companies”. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Somchai Chatratana, Deputy Secretary-General, National Science Technology and Innovation Policy Office (STI), presented the “Science, Technology and Innovation System regarding the Thai Healthcare and Medical Industries”. From Europe, Dr. Andreas Persidis, President, Hellenic BioCluster (Hbio), provided an “Overview of EU Economy as it Relates to Medical and Healthcare Sector: Barriers and Opportunities for Thai Companies”.

The seminar closed with a panel discussion on the “Medical and Healthcare Industry – Perspectives of Cooperation between Thailand and EU”. The panellists exchanged ideas, comments and knowledge among themselves and with the audience. The discussion was co-moderated by Dr. Sarayoot Eaimkhong (NSTDA) and Dr. Sara Medina (ECCP). The panellists included: Mr. Adisorn Apasutirat, Chief Executive Officer of Novamedic and Vice President of Medical & Health Device Manufacturers Industry Club, The Federation of Thai Industries; Dr. Linas Eriksonas, Project Manager, Laser & Engineering Technologies Cluster (LITEK); Dr. Sumol



Pavittranon, Special Programme Director, Center for Cell and Gene Therapy, Thailand Center of Excellence for Life Sciences (TCELS); Ms. Jenny Nylund, Head of internationalisation, Future Position X; and Mr. Narongrid Galaputh, Chief Executive Officer of BDMS Non-Hospital Group and Managing Director of N Health.



In the afternoon, a cluster matchmaking session was conducted between the nine EU cluster delegates and representatives of 15 Thai organisations, interested in developing collaborations to strengthen their internationalisation efforts. This matchmaking session resulted in over 55 meetings, which was an average of 6 meetings per European participant. The delegates ended the day enjoying the business networking reception hosted by the EU Gateway|Business Avenues project.

On the 7th of September, the European delegation toured important public and private organisations in the Thai healthcare sector. The tour commenced at the Chulalongkorn University, where the delegation visited the facilities of the Cognitive Fitness Centre and several laboratories of the Faculty of Medicine. After a full morning at Chulalongkorn University, the delegation met with several representatives of Bangkok Hospital, part of the Group Bangkok Dusit Medical Services (BDMS). BDMS holds more than 45 hospitals and clinics throughout Thailand, as well as in Cambodia. This visit provided the delegates an overview of one of the most important healthcare companies in South-East Asia. The day long tour closed with a visit to N Health, a company of BDMS, which is an ASEAN leading provider of laboratory and other healthcare services.



A debriefing session took place in the evening to assess the activities covered during the first two days of the mission and to collect the impressions, comments and observations from the EU delegation. To this extent, the EU delegation provided very encouraging feedback on the



EU–Thailand mission in regards to the seminar, networking and site visits. As to business outcomes, it appears that collaborative bilateral business is now being examined by both parties with EU clusters expecting to involve SMEs in the field of medical technologies, medical devices, medical services, collaborative research and new business models in the field of healthcare tourism. It is also apparent that EU clusters can count on stakeholders support in Thailand starting with Thailand healthcare clusters and the NSTDA.

On the 8th of September, the last day of the mission, the European delegation had the opportunity to attend the Medical Fair Thailand 2017. At the fair, the delegation participated in business matchmaking and visited the booths of Thai and other Asiatic providers of medical equipment and technologies.



Overall the European delegates gained a greater understanding of the Thai medical and healthcare industry and established initial contacts with relevant local and international organisations. In addition, the delegates acquired information on available resources and tools that facilitate entry to the Thai market. Therefore, one can conclude the EU – Thailand mission was largely successful.

The EU – Thailand Cluster Cooperation and Matchmaking Event was jointly organised by the European Cluster Collaboration Platform (ECCP), in collaboration with the Innovation and Technology Assistance Program (ITAP) under the Thailand National Science and Technology Development Agency (NSTDA).

Further Contacts:

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