

# Trade Digest

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## Driving Thailand's MICE Industry through EMC<sup>3</sup> Model

Thailand has long been widely recognized as a popular location for international events and corporate seminars. The Meetings, Incentive Travels, Conventions and Exhibitions (MICE) industry has therefore become one of the major branches of Thailand's well-established tourism industry. According to the Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau (TCEB), Thailand welcomed 547,623 Mice business travelers, generating revenue of 42.8 billion baht in the first half of the fiscal year 2018.

With the aim of driving Thailand's MICE industry, the TCEB has launched its new EMC<sup>3</sup> Model to transform the Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC) into Thailand's new MICE promotion area, known as the Eastern Mice Corridor (EMC). The EMC<sup>3</sup> Model is driven by six major projects spanning a period of three years from 2019 to 2022. These projects are 1) further equipping the EEC with the capabilities to accommodate MICE Industries; 2) promoting the bidding for the rights to host international conferences, conventions, exhibitions, and mega-events in the EEC in support of the Thailand 4.0 policy; 3) establishing the ASEAN MICE Institute to offer MICE accreditation services, disseminate MICE-related knowledge, and provide MICE labor skill tests; 4) nurturing an ecosystem conducive to the MICE industry through close collaboration between the government, private businesses, and educational institutions; 5) promoting investment in the EEC's MICE infrastructure in anticipation of the rise of new cities in the area; and 6) encouraging community involvement by including local tourist attractions and products in the development of the MICE industry.

To publicize the promotion of MICE tourism, the TCEB recently hosted an International Media Familiarization Trip (IMFT 2018) under the theme of "Sunrise at Eastern MICE Corridor". During 8-12 October 2018, international media representatives from 35 countries were invited to witness the capacity and preparedness of the MICE facilities in the Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC). The tour gave the media delegates an opportunity to explore the growing MICE ecosystem in Chachoengsao, Chonburi, and Rayong.

These initiatives are purposed not only to attract business travelers in the region to the EEC but also to push Thailand to the forefront of Southeast Asia's MICE industry. In addition to advancing Thailand's MICE industry, it is also hoped that the EMC<sup>3</sup> Model will play a key role in driving the ten engine-of-growth industries forward as envisioned in the Thailand 4.0 scheme.

## Thai Culinary Delights to Boost Country's Exports

The "Thai kitchen to the world" program was implemented in 2002 with the ambitious aim of influencing not only global food markets but also international politics and economic relations. To achieve this, the program promoted Thai culture and encouraged the opening of more Thai restaurants abroad in order to increase Thailand's food export and tourism revenues. The initial program was considered a success due to the significant rise in the value of Thailand's food and processed agricultural products and the increase in the number of Thai restaurants across the world.

Now, the Thai kitchen to the world program has been revitalized by several public agencies, including the Ministry of Commerce under the

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direction of Dr. Somkid Jatusripitak, the Deputy Prime Minister. The purpose of the program remains to increase Thailand's food exports, especially the ingredients and seasoning used in Thai cuisine, and to set the standard of "the Thai taste" worldwide. Moreover, the ongoing launch of Thai restaurants abroad is also still considered one of the best ways to promote the country and Thai culture to foreigners.

"Thai Select" is one of the main campaigns launched under the new phase of the Thai kitchen to the world program. The campaign sets the worldwide quality standards for Thai food products and restaurants, and certifies those which pass its stringent criteria. The major factors considered in the standard evaluation includes taste, quality of ingredients, and food safety. In addition, the certified restaurants also benefit from the Thai Select application and website which show the location of the restaurants and stores that sell certified Thai food products, including ready-to-cook meals. In addition, the website and application also make it easier for customers to find the restaurants and stores near them.

With its ability to raise awareness of and interest in Thai food, the Thai kitchen to the world program is seen as an ideal means of creating new export opportunities and penetrating new markets. The Ministry of Commerce has also identified the current trade war between the US and China as a chance for Thailand to boost its food exports to the US and expand Thai food products' market share in the US.

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If you have any comments or questions regarding Trade Digest or any matters discussed herein, or if you are interested in finding out more about Bolliger & Company (Thailand) services, please contact any of the persons below:

Rachda Chiasakul | Partner and Managing Director  
Rachda.C@bolliger-company.com

Sarut Wittayarungruang Sri | Director  
Sarut.W@bolliger-company.com

Tel. +66 (0) 2 230 6399  
Fax. +66 (0) 2 230 6333

[www.bolliger-company.com](http://www.bolliger-company.com)

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