
WORKSHOP ON INVESTMENT FACILITATION

SUPPORTING LAO PDR'S PARTICIPATION IN WTO IFD NEGOTIATIONS

09 – 11 NOV 2022, VIENTIANE, LAO PLAZA HOTEL

Foreign direct investment (FDI) plays a significant role in the economic development, as FDI brings capital, technology and knowhow, and connection to supply chains and global markets.

Global FDI flows were significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, dropping by 35% in 2020. In 2021, FDI flows rebounded strongly, up 77% to an estimated \$1.65 trillion, surpassing their pre-COVID-19 level. However, the recovery is highly uneven, with almost three quarters of total increase in global FDI flows in 2021 recorded in developed economies. Developing economies, especially least developed countries (LDCs), saw more modest recovery growth. Facilitating investment flows into developing countries and LDCs is key to recovery and sustainable development.

Beyond such economic fundamentals as market size and growth, the quality of infrastructure and the level of skills, difficulties related to investment procedures, predictability and transparency of the regulatory framework, and lack of incentives to contribute as much as possible to sustainable development are also key impediments to sustainable FDI flows to developing countries.

The Joint Statement Initiative on Investment Facilitation for Development (IFD), launched in 2017 by a group of developing and least-developed WTO members, aims at developing a multilateral agreement on Investment Facilitation for Development that will improve the investment and business climate, make it easier for investors in all sectors of the economy to invest, conduct their day-to-day business and expand their operations, and facilitate greater participation of developing and least-developed members in global investment flows. The initiative does not cover market access, investment protection and investor-state dispute settlement.

By December 2021, 112 WTO members participate in the IFD negotiations. A consolidated text has been agreed to serve as the basis for the negotiations and members aim to conclude the text negotiations by the end of 2022. A self-assessment guide is being developed which will serve as a template for countries to assess their regulations and practices and identify needs for future implementation of the IFD agreement.

Beyond WTO, investment facilitation is also becoming a key issue at national/regional/bilateral level. At the national level, countries have adopted national investment legislation and policies that focus on investment facilitation. At the regional level, many of the recently concluded regional trade agreements contain investment facilitation measures. At bilateral level, EU and Angola have recently launched negotiations for a Sustainable Investment Facilitation Agreement.

Lao PDR is an active participant in the IFD negotiations at the WTO, actively advocating for the IFD negotiation to address concerns of developing and least developed countries, as well as greater technical assistance. Participation in the IFD negotiations and implementation of the future IFD agreement can help Lao PDR improve its investment climate, making the country more attractive to FDI and therefore increasing its competitiveness in the region.

In this context, the International Trade Centre (ITC), the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the German Institute of Development and Sustainability (IDOS) will jointly conduct a workshop on investment facilitation on 9-10 November in Vientiane. The workshop will be supported by the ITC-IDOS project on Investment Facilitation for Development. The objective of the workshop is to:

- Increase awareness of investment facilitation and the IFD negotiations among the stakeholders
- Enhance understanding of the key provisions of the future IFD agreement
- Discuss opportunities and challenges for Lao PDR through participation and implementation of IFD agreement
- Present results of a preliminary study on investment facilitation conducted by IDOS
- Discuss follow-up activities to support Lao PDR in improving investment climate

The workshop will be conducted in English, with interpretation to Lao language. The workshop will be a combination of in-person presentations by the experts from ITC and IDOS (in the morning of 9th and 10th November) and virtual sessions delivered by the experts from the WTO (in the afternoon of 9th and 10th November).

Please register your participation through the [link](#), please note participation in the workshop is in-person.

Draft agenda for the workshop:

Time	Agenda
Day 1 - November 9th, Vientiane	
08:30 – 09:00	Registration of participants
09:00 – 09:30	Opening session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Remarks by DG/DDG, Department of Foreign Trade Policy - Remarks by DG/DDG, Department of Investment Promotion - Remarks by ITC and IDOS
09:30 – 10:30	Session 1. Investment facilitation for development and experiences/observations from ITC IFD projects <u>Mr. Quan Zhao, Trade Policy Advisor, International Trade Centre</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Investment facilitation as a policy tool for increasing investment flows and improving business climate - Lessons learned from ITC projects on investment facilitation - ASEAN Investment Facilitation Framework and its implementation
10:30 – 10:45	Coffee Break
10:45 – 12:00	Session 2. Results of the pilot Needs Assessment for the implementation of a future IFD Agreement in Lao PDR <u>Ms. Zoryana Olekseyuk, Senior Researcher at the German Institute of Development and Sustainability (IDOS)</u> <u>Mr. Florian Gitt, Researcher, German Institute of Development and Sustainability (IDOS)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Investment facilitation framework in Lao PDR

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Description of country's current regime using the updated Investment Facilitation Index (IFI) database from 2021 - Background of the IDOS research project "Implementation of a future WTO IFD Agreement: Identification of reform needs and development policy measures" - Results obtained for Lao PDR during the pilot Needs Assessment in April 2022 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Current implementation status of selected IFD measures in Lao PDR ○ Main barriers to successful implementation of the selected IFD measures ○ International support needs for IFD implementation
12:00 – 14:30	Lunch Break
14:30 – 16:30 (9:00 Geneva time) Coffee break at 15:30 – 15:45	<p>WTO session: Introduction to a future WTO IFD Agreement (hybrid, see programme in Annex)</p> <p><i>Ms. Claudia Locatelli, Counsellor, Division of Trade in Services and Investment, WTO</i> <i>Ms. Pamela Apaza Lanyi, Legal Affairs Officer, Division of Trade in Services and Investment, WTO</i> <i>Co-coordinator of the Structured Discussions on IFD</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Importance, objectives, status and implementation of the IFD Agreement - Walk through the key provisions of the IFD Agreement
Day 2 – November 10th, Vientiane	
09:00 – 10:00	<p>Session 2 (continued). Results of the pilot Needs Assessment for the implementation of a future IFD Agreement in Lao PDR</p> <p><i>Ms. Zoryana Olekseyuk, Senior Researcher at the German Institute of Development and Sustainability (IDOS)</i> <i>Mr. Florian Gitt, Researcher, German Institute of Development and Sustainability (IDOS)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enhancing investment facilitation framework in Lao PDR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Key policy actions needed for enhancing investment facilitation, based on the preliminary research - Technical advice on future Needs Assessments with regard to the implementation of the IFD Agreement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Capacity building needs for IFD implementation
10:00 – 11:00	<p>Session 3. Discussion of follow-up issues with stakeholders</p> <p><i>Ms. Zoryana Olekseyuk, Senior Researcher at the German Institute of Development and Sustainability (IDOS)</i> <i>Mr. Florian Gitt, Researcher, German Institute of Development and Sustainability (IDOS)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - IDOS to discuss follow up issues with workshop participants related to the IDOS pilot needs assessment.
11:00 – 11:15	Coffee Break
11:15 – 12:30	Session 4. Consultative meeting

	<p><u>Ms. Zoryana Olekseyuk, Senior Researcher at the German Institute of Development and Sustainability (IDOS)</u> <u>Ms. Quan Zhao, Trade Policy Advisor, International Trade Centre</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interactive discussion led by ITC and IDOS on implementation of IFD Agreement in Lao PDR <p><u>Mr. Axel Berger, Deputy Director (interim), IDOS</u> <u>Ms. Vilayphone Xindavong, Deputy Director General, Department of Foreign Trade Policy</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Key takeaway messages on implementation of IFD Agreement in Lao PDR
12:30 – 14:30	Lunch Break
14:30 – 16:30 (9:00 Geneva time) Coffee break at 15:30 – 15:45	<p>WTO session(continued): Introduction to a future WTO IFD Agreement (hybrid, see programme in Annex)</p> <p><u>Ms. Claudia Locatelli, Counsellor, Division of Trade in Services and Investment, WTO</u> <u>Ms. Pamela Apaza Lanyi, Legal Affairs Officer, Division of Trade in Services and Investment, WTO</u> <u>Co-coordinator of the Structured Discussions on IFD</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Importance, objectives, status and implementation of the IFD Agreement - Walk through the key provisions of the IFD Agreement
Day 3 - November 11th, Vientiane	
10:00 – 11:00	ITC-IDOS bilateral meeting with Department of Investment Promotion
11:00 – 12:00	ITC-IDOS bilateral meeting with Department of Foreign Trade Policy

Workshop Facilitators



Quan Zhao, Trade Policy Adviser, International Trade Centre

Quan Zhao is Trade Policy Adviser at the Trade Facilitation & Policy for Business, ITC. He has almost 20 years of experience in trade policy development and trade negotiations. He worked for the Ministry of Commerce of China, in the Division for Trade in Services, Department for WTO Affairs. Later, he spent 5 years as a trade negotiator on services trade, digital trade, and e-commerce for the Permanent Mission of China to the WTO. Since 2014, he works for the International Trade Centre (ITC) on the design, management and resource mobilization for technical assistance projects on services trade, e-commerce, digital trade, investment, G20, south-south cooperation and SME competitiveness.

He holds a Master of International Law and Economics from the World Trade Institute, University of Bern (Switzerland) and a bachelor's degree in International Relations from the Nanjing University (China).

Zoryana Olekseyuk, Senior Researcher, German Institute of Development and Sustainability



Dr. Zoryana Olekseyuk is a Senior Researcher at the German Institute of Development and Sustainability (IDOS). Her research focuses on economic integration/disintegration, trade, FDI and investment facilitation mainly for developing and emerging countries. Being an experienced Computable General Equilibrium (CGE) modeller, she developed many innovative CGE models, e.g., incorporating heterogeneous firms and FDI. Dr. Zoryana Olekseyuk has contributed to many international research projects and regularly advises governments and international organizations such as the World Bank and the WTO. Her research is published in different journals such as *World Economy*, *Empirica*, *Review of Development Economics*, *Economic Modeling*, the *Journal of International Trade and Economic Development*.

She holds a PhD and Master of Science in Economics from the University of Duisburg-Essen, Germany and a bachelor's degree in International Relations from the Lesya Ukrainka Volyn National University, Ukraine.

Florian Gitt, Researcher, German Institute of Development and Sustainability



Florian Gitt is an Economist and Researcher at the German Institute of Development and Sustainability (IDOS). As part of the Trade and Investment Division at IDOS, his research interests focus on international political economy, economic integration, international trade and investment agreements, foreign direct investment as well as the G7 and the WTO. He served as the T7 process coordinator at IDOS during the German G7 presidency in 2022 and was part of the team developing the Investment Facilitation Index (IFI). Before joining IDOS he has worked in private banking and in the office of a Member of the European Parliament.

He studied Economics and Business Administration in Bonn, Cologne and Shenzhen and holds a Master of Science in Economics from the University of Cologne and the Bachelor of Science in Economics from the University of Bonn.

**HYBRID NATIONAL WORKSHOP
FOR LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC
ON INVESTMENT FACILITATION FOR DEVELOPMENT (IFD)**

9 - 10 November 2022, 14:30 – 16:30 Lao PRD time (8:30 – 10:30, CET)

(WTO Secretariat will participate online, through zoom, link will be sent to the speakers)

PROPOSED PROGRAMME (DRAFT)

The online national seminar will be conducted in English, with interpretation to Lao language

Moderator: [TBC]

Wednesday, 9 November 2022

Time	Title of Session	Speakers
14:30–14:45 (Lao PDR time)	Opening session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opening remarks by Lao PDR Opening remarks by the co-Coordinator 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moderator Representative from Lao PDR H.E. Mr Jung Sung PARK, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to the WTO, Co-coordinator of the Structured Discussions on IFD (TBC)
8:30–8:45 (Geneva time)		
14:45–15:00 (Lao PDR time)	Structured Discussions on IFD <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Importance of investment facilitation Origin, objectives and key milestones of the negotiations WTO Members participating in the negotiations Q&A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WTO Secretariat Moderator
8:45–9:00 (Geneva time)		
15:00–15:20 (Lao PDR time)	Introduction of the latest negotiating document ('Easter Text' revision 8) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction and structure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WTO Secretariat Moderator

Time	Title of Session	Speakers
9:00–9:20 (Geneva time)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preamble, objectives, scope of application and general principles Q&A 	
15:20 – 15:30 (Lao PDR time)	Transparency of investment measures (Section II of the 'Easter Text')	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WTO Secretariat Moderator
9:20–9:30 (Geneva time)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction – importance of transparency <u>Key disciplines</u>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> publication of measures and information; information to be made publicly available if an investment authorization is required; single information portal; publication in advance and opportunity to comment on proposed measures; no fees for access to information; and notification to the WTO. <p>Q&A</p>	
15:30-15:45 (Lao PDR time)	Coffee break	
9:30–9:45 (Geneva time)		
15:45–16:00 (Lao PDR time)	Transparency of investment measures (Section II of the 'Easter Text') - <u>continued</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WTO Secretariat Moderator
9:45–10:00 (Geneva time)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction – importance of transparency <u>Key disciplines</u>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> publication of measures and information; information to be made publicly available if an investment authorization is required; single information portal; publication in advance and opportunity to comment on proposed measures; no fees for access to information; and notification to the WTO. Q&A 	
16:00–16:30 (Lao PDR time)	Streamlining and speeding up investment-related administrative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WTO Secretariat Moderator

Time	Title of Session	Speakers
10:00–10:30 (Geneva time)	procedures (Section III of the 'Easter Text') <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction – importance of good governance of investment-related procedures • <u>Key disciplines</u>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – administration of measures of general application; – general principles for authorization procedures; – definition of authorization; – disciplines on authorization procedures; – multiple applications; – authorization fees; – use of Information and Communications Technologies/e-government; – independence of regulatory authorities; – appeal or review; and – periodic review. • Q&A 	

Thursday, 10 November 2022

Time	Sessions	Speakers
14:30–15:00 (Lao PDR time)	Focal points; domestic regulatory coherence and cross-border cooperation (Section IV of the 'Easter Text')	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WTO Secretariat • Moderator
8:30–9:00 (Geneva time)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focal points • Domestic regulatory coherence • Domestic supplier databases • Cross-border cooperation on investment facilitation 	
15:00–15:30 (Lao PDR time)	Special and differential treatment (SD&T) for developing countries and least-developed Members (Section V of the 'Easter Text')	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WTO Secretariat • Moderator
9:00–9:30 (Geneva time)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction and overview of SD&T • <u>Key disciplines</u>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – general principles; – categories of provisions (A, B, C); 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - notification and implementation of the different categories of provisions; and - other SD&T provisions • Q&A 	
15:30–15:45 (Lao PDR time) 9:30–9:45 (Geneva time)	Coffee break	
15:45–15:55 (Lao PDR time) 9:45–9:55 (Geneva time)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investment facilitation needs assessment and ongoing process of developing a Self-assessment Guide • Q&A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WTO Secretariat • Moderator
15:55–16:15 (Lao PDR time) 9:55–10:15 (Geneva time)	Sustainable investment (Section VI of the 'Easter Text') <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible business conduct • Measures against corruption • Q&A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WTO Secretariat • Moderator
15:15–16:30 (Lao PDR time) 10:15–10:30 (Geneva time)	Concluding remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work priorities and key remaining issues • Closing remarks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WTO Secretariat • Moderator
