

7th ASEAN-OECD Good Regulatory Practices Network (GRPN) Meeting 2021:
Summary of Session 1 - Supporting Businesses through Partnerships for Economic Recovery
8 April 2021

The seventh ASEAN-OECD Good Regulatory Practices Network (GRPN) meeting on the theme of *Innovative Recovery: Responsive Regulatory Systems for Economic Recovery and Prosperity* held the first of three sessions on 8 April 2021. Over 150 participants from ASEAN and OECD economies joined online to discuss the session's sub-theme of *reforming regulatory systems to prepare for the future crises*.

Opened by Pengiran Nirmala Mohammad, Permanent Secretary (Vision, Finance and Cabinet), Prime Minister's Office, Brunei Darussalam and Elsa Pilichowski, Director of the OECD Public Governance Directorate, this first session explored how better regulation can be a driver for supporting domestic, regional and global growth through the channels of investment promotion and facilitation, trade and SME development. The session was co-chaired by Hairil Yahri Yaacob, Deputy Secretary-General, represented by Jaya Singam Rajoo, Senior Director of the Multilateral Policy and Negotiation Division of the Ministry of International Trade and Industry in Malaysia and Mark Steel, Director Regulatory Systems of the Strategic Policy and Programmes Group in New Zealand's Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment.

Key Takeaways

- **A focus on better regulatory practices is key for governments to build confidence and enhance agility** as countries around the world move from response to recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Better regulation is vital in times of crisis and calm as, without it, markets cannot work and the most vulnerable cannot be protected. It also has the power to be a connector between central government priorities and important frontline policy fields, including investment promotion and facilitation, trade facilitation and SME development.
- **Inter-agency coordination for regulatory burden reduction is vital for operational efficiency, transparency, and trust** by streamlining burdensome and divergent regulations domestically while offering an opportunity to harmonise regulatory regimes internationally. Presentations noted how countries can use risk-sharing, program alignment and procedural simplification to support recovery and help create a regulatory environment that is fair, transparent and effective.
- **Digital technologies will continue to be an important tool to ease regulatory burdens and improve the efficiency, predictability and flexibility** necessary for a sustainable and resilient recovery. Speakers highlighted the use of one stop shops and online platforms to support business registration and operation to promote streamlined government decision-making and service delivery.
- **Regulatory innovation, including risk-based approaches and sandboxes, provides the necessary flexibility** for an agile recovery. This can also channel activities to support an inclusive and fair regulatory environment that allows governments to take into account the highly heterogeneous needs of all businesses and citizens who are subjects of regulatory processes.
- **The ASEAN community has developed a strong basis for implanting further better regulation reforms**, which can help them "lock in the gains" from COVID-19 response for an inclusive and sustainable recovery. Delegates shared various reforms in ASEAN and OECD countries on embedding regulatory reforms into government plans for investment promotion and trade facilitation and reducing burdens for SMEs, providing many good practice examples to support further recovery efforts.

Next Steps

The next session for the seventh GRPN will be held on 17 June 2021. The Government of Brunei Darussalam and the OECD will share details in due course with delegates.

The GRPN builds off the OECD Secretariat's longstanding work with the ASEAN Secretariat and ASEAN Member States, including through country- and regional-level programmes designed to strengthen good regulatory practices and develop more resilient regulatory systems, which can help stimulate sustainable economic growth.