Strengthening the Canada-ASEAN Connection: Business Mobility
AGENDA

CABC
Project Challenge
Research Development
Findings
Policy Recommendations
Established in 2012

Registered Canadian non-profit

Mandate to facilitate trade and investment in the Canada-ASEAN economic corridor through policy advocacy
Canadian businesses operating in the ASEAN region identified mobility as one of the barriers that hinder Canada’s plan to strengthen its economic connectivity with the ASEAN region.

Defining the 'mobility of businesspeople' as the movement of people, both short-term and long-term that is generated by economic activity. It involves short-term work-related travel to an irregular place of work such as attending a meeting or the long-term relocation of individuals to a different office in another country.
RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT

I. Understanding the Scope of the Project

1. What is ASEAN?
2. What is the Canada-ASEAN relationship?
3. Why is mobility important?
WHAT IS ASEAN?
CANADA-ASEAN RELATIONSHIP

Canada’s exports to ASEAN in 2016 US$4.3 billion

ASEAN’s exports to Canada in 2016 US$12 billion

Since 2000, Canada has provided $2.7 billion in development assistance to ASEAN and its member states.

ASEAN region is Canada's sixth-largest trading partner, with two-way trade equal to US$25.1 billion in 2018.

Canada is a transitional member of the APEC Business Travel Card (ABTC) which aims to foster ease of travel within the ASEAN region.

More than 23,000 students from the ASEAN region currently study in Canada.
“Given the rise of global business and the fact that the ASEAN region is comprised of some of the fastest-growing economies in the world; the mobility of business executives and investors has become crucial to Canadian companies.”

Neil Williams, Managing Director, Xpansionize
II. ISSUES ADDRESSES

1. Importance of mobility
2. Mobility challenge and advancing trade-relations
3. Increased business mobility and economic partnerships
4. Mobility experiences of global trading partners
III. METHODOLOGY

Primary Research
• Semi-structured interviews in 8 of the 10 ASEAN countries.
• Fieldwork in Singapore, Vietnam, and Indonesia.

Secondary Research
• Academic literature and practitioner/policy-based literature.
"One of the biggest problems is programs and opportunities are not effectively communicated"

Shawn Watson, CEO Senescence Life Sciences

IV. FINDINGS
A. Factors Affecting Mobility

1. Visa regulations and policies are bilateral and vary across the region.

2. Mobility is impacted by multiple factors that affect business operations.

3. SMEs find the visa and work permit processes challenging.
B. Canada-ASEAN Mobility Experiences

- Canadians do not often face difficulty entering most ASEAN countries for short-term stays.

- ASEAN citizens are often unable to obtain visa to enter Canada for short-term business visits.

- Only Singapore and Brunei citizens have visa free access to Canada.

- Employee relocation is challenging for both Canadians and ASEAN citizens.
C. Canada Visa Access Challenges

- Lengthy processing times
- Lack of clear requirements
- Lack of direct embassy access
- Difficulty to provide evidence for ties to country
D. ASEAN Visa & Work Permit Access Challenges

- Expatriate quota
- Lengthy processing time
- Burdensome administrative processes

“If we are hiring an expat next year, then we need to start planning for it this year and include it in the business plan.”

Mr. Suyanto Mahdiputra, Country Director, Hatch
E. Multilateral Mobility Initiatives

**ABTC**
Limited benefit of ABTC for Canadian businesses

**CPTPP**
The CPTPP has had no direct impact on mobility

**One-Visa ASEAN**
ASEAN is in the process of implementing a one visa policy
V. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS: AUS, NZ, & The US

AUSTRALIA
- Bond system
- Multiple visa categories

NEW ZEALAND
- Bond system
- Intra-company transfer

THE UNITED STATES
- Corporate blanket system
"In the West, we are ignorant about Southeast Asia. We think that Asia is just China and India. There is an assumption that most Southeast Asian countries are poor, emerging markets."

Pavel Bains, Bluzelle.

VI. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS
SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

1. ASEAN Government create a comprehensive online resource for visa applications

2. Canadian Government provide applicants with detailed rejection letters

3. Ratify and implement the CPTPP in all signatory countries
MEDIUM-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Develop initiatives on capacity building activities

2. Introduce expedited business visa application process
LONG-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Develop a blanket visa approval process

2. Establish a bond system

3. Create an additional visa category for businesses that maintain relations with a Canadian company.
The experiences of ASEAN’s international trading partners offer good practices for Canada.

Service providers offer information about the regulatory frameworks and challenges.

Mobility issues should be addressed bilaterally.
Thank You!
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