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ASOCIO E-Commerce Alliance members at the E-Commerce Malaysia chapter launching ceremony

ASOCIO forms alliance to boost cross-border e-commerce trade

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BY ON JANUARY 17, 2017

MARKET INFORMATION, MARKET NEWS, NEWS, NEWS

The Asian-Oceanian Computing Industry Organisation (Asocio) recently formalised the E-Commerce Alliance to help promote cross-border e-commerce trade across the region, with the participation of 15 e-commerce players from five countries.

The alliance members comprise Malaysia's Lelong, Gemfive, Logon, SiteGiant, Web2Ship, Ipay88, ManagePay, and Fashion Valet; Thailand's Tarad and Buzzebees; Indonesia's Matahari Mall; Singapore's Clozette and Shopback; Vietnam's Peacesoft; and, Hong Kong's 28Mall.com.

The collaboration – officially ASOCIO AEC E-Commerce Alliance – was launched at the ASOCIO ICT Summit in Myanmar in November 2016. It is intended help e-commerce companies grow in cross-border trade within ASEAN and beyond. It will consist of online marketplaces, e-fulfilment services, e-payment services, merchants and other e-commerce related businesses.

"The alliance is an important platform to promote and encourage cross-border activities. ASOCIO will work closely with the industries and governments of its member countries to address issues and challenges faced by the market players," said ASOCIO's newly elected chairman, David Wong Nan Fay. Wong was PIKOM chairman for 2008 and 2009 and is an advisor of PIKOM.

Wong said the ASEAN e-commerce market can grow about 25% per year, driven by increasing purchasing power, growing Internet access and online offers. "Many global and regional players are making inroads into Malaysia. We don't want to just be consumers. We want to be producers, a country that sells abroad," he said.

Malaysia Digital Economy Corp (MDEC) has a National E-commerce Strategic Roadmap to double e-commerce growth, develop a supportive governance framework and establish a good, affordable infrastructure. ASOCIO and PIKOM's E-Commerce Malaysia chapter are collaborating with MDEC.

"The e-commerce Alliance can contribute in three of the thrust areas," Wong said, "namely to accelerate seller adoption of e-commerce, lift non-tariff barriers, and promote the national brand to boost cross-border e-

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commerce. We want to develop regional SME and e-commerce champions.

"We uncovered a lot of issues, some of which require a long time to resolve, but we must take action now. For example, to participate in multiple markets, must a merchant set up another company and be an importer? How can one sell to China?"

"There is also a matter of procurement and payment. Logistics cost may be more than the product itself and it does not make sense to sell cross-border unless we can bring down the cost. The service level requirement is also changing: 14-day delivery is not good enough as people are talking about seven days or less. Alibaba's Jack Ma envisions 48-hour to anywhere in the world! How do we meet this demand to stay in the game?" Wong said.

E-commerce involves shipping large numbers of small parcels, unpredictable demand of shipments, and a wide dispersal of origin and destination.

Apart from this, there are also complexities in cross-border trade compliance and customs documentation. "Goods go through a lot of processes and procedures which differ by country," Wong added.

ASOCIO will engage with the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) to achieve a no-barrier e-commerce trade within ASEAN. It will work on incentives, legal and tax framework, and the infrastructure needed to facilitate e-commerce growth.

To address logistics, ASOCIO will call for a simplified procedure to replace traditional practices and work on reducing costs to USD2.50 per 1000g anywhere in the region. "As an alliance, we will speak with one voice to governments, e-commerce players, couriers and logistics companies," Wong said.

ASOCIO is a grouping of ICT industry associations throughout Asia-Oceania. Established in 1984 to promote trade between its members and develop the computing industry in the region, it comprises 10,000 ICT companies representing USD350bn in ICT revenue in the region.

Presently, ASOCIO represents the interests of 31 economies, comprising 24 members from Australia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei, Cambodia, Chinese Taipei, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Laos, Macao, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, New Zealand, Pakistan, Philippines, Singapore, Korea, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Vietnam and seven guest members from US, UK, Canada, Spain, Russia, France, and Kenya.

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