

PRESS RELEASE



APEN “Only One” SME Mission in Lao PDR was Carried Out

Vientiane, Lao PDR – March 2-5 , 2014:

Asia Professional Education Network (APEN) "Only One" Small Medium Enterprises (SME) Mission in Lao PDR was conducted on March 2-5, 2014 in Vientiane, Laos People's Democratic Republic. It was led by the President of Advanced Institute of Industrial Technology (AIIT), and co-organized by APEN and Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA). The 21 delegates from selected 15 Japanese SMEs participated in this mission.



"Only One" SME is an enterprise which has world leading high technology in specific areas. 15 companies were selected by APEN from those SMEs which have an interest in investment and business expansion in Lao PDR. APEN is an international association established in June 2011. It aims at the development and diffusion of the new system of higher professional education based on the PBL (Project Based Learning) methodology all over Asia, in order to provide and nurture substantial numbers of qualified top and middle managers in Asian industrial sectors.

The Selected 15 SMEs are enterprises which have high technical competencies in various industrial areas, namely: high processing technology for auto parts, jewelry products, agricultural, infrastructure and etc. The Mission took place for four days consisting of series of events, such as visiting the first Specific Economic Zone, VITA Park in Vientiane, some companies in VITA Park area, business matching with industrial world in Lao PDR, and industry-academia workshop.

The delegation paid a courtesy visit to H.E. Mr. Thongsing Thammavong, Prime Minister, Lao People's Democratic Republic, on March 4, 2014 at Prime Minister's office. Prof. Hidetoshi Nishimura, Executive Director of ERIA, expressed his sincere gratitude to Prime Minister Thongsing for receiving the Mission and introduced each SME company. Also, Prof. Nishimura expressed his willingness that ERIA will support the ASEAN's chairmanship of Laos in the year of 2016 by preparing a development vision document for Lao PDR. Prime Minister encouraged each SME company and expressed expectations of their successful investment in Lao PDR in the near future.

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On the same day, the delegates also made another courtesy visit to H. E. Dr. Nam Viyaketh, Minister of Industry of Commerce of Lao PDR and H.E. Bounthavy Sisouphanthong, Vice Minister of Planning and Investment of Lao PDR (A member of ERIA Governing Board). Each company presented for their business to both Ministers. The delegation and the Ministry had a discussion on the importance of the SME developments in the region and future investment to Lao PDR.

The Mission was concluded with the workshop on "Connectivity of SMEs between Laos and Japan" at National University of Laos on March 5, 2014 co-organized by National University of Laos and APEN. In this event, the Japanese and Laos SMEs shared information related to their business and renewed their awareness of importance of the relationship between the Japanese and Laos SMEs for their future business.

For further information, please contact to:

Mr. Hiroshi Okasaki, Director, Public Relations, Phone: +62-813-8904-6956, Email: hiroshi.okasaki@eria.org

Ms. Mitsuko Takayanagi, Executive Secretary, Phone: +62-21-5797-4460, Ext. 770, Email: mitsuko.takarianagi@eria.org