AMCHAM Policy Recommendations on the Digital Economy

AMCHAM Thailand supports the Thai Government's goal of creating an environment in which the Digital Economy can flourish. The Digital Economy includes all economic activity mediated by software and enabled by telecoms infrastructure, whether intrinsically digital or as an online substitute for established services. It is the means of enabling everyone's participation in social and economic enterprise, and includes the role played by governments in developing that infrastructure and those services. To that end, we respectfully offer the following points for consideration.

Personal Data Protection and Cybersecurity
Provide opportunities for private sector participation in developing the subordinate laws and regulations being drafted to implement the recently enacted Personal Data Protection Act and Cybersecurity Act. Inclusion of all relevant stakeholders, public and private, will further strengthen the legal framework, facilitate compliance, and ensure alignment with international standards. A "Trusted Internet" is everyone's responsibility, and is the foundation for a holistic and secure digital ecosystem in support of Thailand's vibrant economic potential.

e-Commerce
Harmonize any taxation structure which Thailand may implement for e-Commerce transactions to align with those adopted by other ASEAN countries and, ideally, with emerging global standards. These standards will enable Thailand to compete on the global stage as the volume of e-Commerce continues to increase exponentially.

e-Payments and the Cashless Society
Work with AMCHAM Thailand and its members to collaborate on initiatives to increase e-Payment literacy, combat cybercrime and financial fraud, develop Thailand's financial infrastructure to be at the cutting edge, and create "sandbox" environments for ongoing innovation. Electronic payments have become a fundamental element driving the growth of Thailand's Digital Economy. The Thai Government can be commended for the extensive effort put into enabling and promoting penetration of e-Payments into new sectors and locations, resulting in rapid adoption. This comes with increased risk, however, related to trust and the safety of payment systems.

e-Government
Provide opportunities for AMCHAM to work with DGA, other relevant government agencies, and private sector partners to support development of a roadmap and specific architecture for the creation and implementation of broad digital government capabilities. Beyond financial cybersecurity, the utilization of digital identity is becoming increasingly important as it allows not only for seamless and secure online transactions, but also for highly efficient delivery of government services. The Thai Government should focus its efforts on creating a digital

identification platform that is highly secure, interoperable with, and accessible to the private sector. In addition to improving commercial interactions, this will greatly reduce opportunities for fraud and will help broaden the reach of government services to all Thai citizens.

Telecom Reform
Reform the telecommunications sector to eliminate market inefficiencies which discourage investment and limit Thailand's network readiness. Although Thailand has a high penetration of mobile phone and internet usage, the fundamental underlying structure of its telecom environment remains unevolved, with the two state-owned enterprises (CAT and TOT) granted special deals that distort the market. Optimized spectrum management and frequency allocation require a clear and reliable roadmap in order to attract the billions of baht in investment necessary for the deployment of modern telecommunications infrastructure such as that required for 5G. Spectrum pricing at auction should not be based solely on short-term revenue but also on the longer-term economic benefits, across all sectors, of an efficient and fair wholesale and retail market. Reliance on a transparent and suitably empowered independent regulator to define and enforce a level playing field is also necessary if Thailand hopes to keep pace with the world's rapidly changing telecom landscape.

Streamlining Government Regulations
Continue to drive the "Simple and Smart License" project to eliminate redundant laws and regulations. Many regulations still in force are no longer relevant for and, in some cases, may impede the adoption of modern business models which are an integral part of the Digital Economy. We encourage the development of policies which will promote the online delivery of content and services, support the "sharing economy" while protecting workers' rights, create a viable infrastructure on which to build the "Internet of Things," and enable new technologies such as telemedicine and robotics. AMCHAM welcomes the continued opportunity to contribute ideas and to work closely with the Thai Government in achieving these goals.

Human Resources Development in the Digital Economy
Involve local private and public sector participants, as well as relevant overseas parties, in crafting policies and a roadmap focused on equipping the labor force with key skills, ongoing training, and digital literacy. Policies can be geared towards giving future generations the basic skills necessary to function and thrive in the Digital Economy, with a concentration on STEM programs, creativity, and communication skills, including English language proficiency. Furthermore, lifelong adult-learning programs of both a technical and a non-technical nature can be encouraged, to ensure that all Thais can benefit from participation in the Digital Economy.

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