

# PROTECT Pulse



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## GIZ Project Consumer Protection in ASEAN II (PROTECT II) Newsletter

### BUYERS BEWARE!

Consumers have the right to receive equal access to resources, information, and justice. Therefore, businesses must ensure that they are accessible, including to people with disabilities. The topic of “inclusivity” has been high on consumer protection agenda, for instance at the 4th ASEAN Consumer Protection Conference (ACPC) in August 2024.

As part of the ASEAN-German Practical Cooperation Areas (PCA), **PROTECT II** is strengthening ASEAN consumer protection structures. Coinciding with the International Day for Persons with Disabilities on 3rd December, this edition of **PROTECT Pulse** covers snippets of recent activities, particularly in relation to the protection of vulnerable consumers. As 2024 is coming to end, we would like to thank our partners and look forward to continued collaboration in 2025! **PROTECT II** is commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

## Project Updates



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### 29th ACCP and Related Meetings to Advance Consumer Protection Agenda

From 18 – 22 November 2024, Vientiane, Lao PDR became the epicentre of regional collaboration as the ASEAN Committee on Consumer Protection (ACCP) convened to shape the future of consumer protection across the region. The series of meetings consisted of:

- The 29th ACCP Meeting
- The Validation Workshops on End Term Review (ETR) of ASEAN Strategic Action Plan on Consumer Protection (ASAPCP) 2025 and Development of ASAPCP 2030
- The 12th Project Steering Committee (PSC) Meeting for PROTECT II
- Workshop on Consumer Guarantees and Warranties

The meetings were jointly organised by the Ministry of Industry and Commerce (MoIC) Lao PDR as the host country, PROTECT II, and the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) Consumer Affairs Program (CAP).

## Digitalisation, Sustainable Consumption, and Inclusive Consumer Protection: Themes of the 4th ACPC

PROTECT II together with the United Kingdom Mission to ASEAN is proud to have supported the 4th ASEAN Consumer Protection Conference (ACPC) in Phnom Penh, Cambodia on 26 August 2024 hosted by Cambodia's Directorate General of Competition, Consumer Protection and Anti-Fraud (CCF). The conference highlighted key topics such as digital economy, green economy, online dispute resolution, and social inclusion. On the latter, panellists discussed the importance of protecting vulnerable consumers and sharing best practices from Member States and partner countries.



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## Thailand has completed its ASEAN Voluntary Peer Review on Digital Economy



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Towards establishing a common framework for consumer protection in ASEAN, the ASEAN Voluntary Peer Review on Consumer Protection has been organised. For its second implementation, Thailand volunteered to be the peer reviewed country, with Indonesia and the Philippines as the peer reviewing countries. Supported by PROTECT II, Thailand's Peer Review process began in 2023 and concluded on 23 August 2024 with a Plenary Session. During this session, a team of experts presented the peer review results, including recommendations to mitigate consumer vulnerability in the digital economy, such as by adopting relevant ISO standards.

## Visit of BMUV to Indonesia to Strengthen International Cooperation

Since the first phase, PROTECT is collaborating with the German Federal Ministry for Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection (BMUV) on various topics. From 15 – 17 July 2024, BMUV visited Jakarta to engage in face-to-face discussions with various partners in consumer protection, including the Center for Indonesian Policy Studies (CIPS), GIZ ASEAN Cluster, the ASEAN Secretariat, the Ministry of Trade, the National Consumer Protection Body, and the Indonesian Center for Environmental Law (ICEL). One of the main takeaways from the visit is BMUV and the Indonesian partners are open to exploring new collaborations to enhance international cooperation on consumer protection.



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## Roundtable Dialogues on Social Media, Youth and Consumers

As part of the cooperation with BMUV, PROTECT II engaged in an International Roundtable Dialogue which was held on 12 November 2024 highlighting the theme of Social Media, Youth, and Consumers. The chosen topic derived from the emerging trend of the use of social media platforms to market products and services, especially by businesses and social media influencers who mostly targeting young consumers. Valuable insights were presented by Allstars.id (Indonesian Influencer Platform), COMESA Competition Commission, Childnet, Media Authority of North Rhine-Westphalia (LFM NRW), and the 2nd Winner of Hukumonline-GIZ Content Creation Competition on Consumer Protection in Indonesia.

## Public-Private Dialogue Organised by CCF and GIZ

CCF in collaboration with PROTECT II, co-organized a series of workshop on “Fostering Collaborative Public-Private Dialogue: Navigating Competition Law, Consumer Protection, and Related Regulations in E-Commerce, and Intellectual Property Rights for SMEs” to enhance awareness of fair competition and protect consumer rights in Cambodia, particularly during the transition to digital markets. As part of a nationwide outreach initiative, this series of workshop was held in Siem Reap, Preah Sihanouk, Kampong Cham and Battambang provinces on 29 July 2024, 9 August 2024, 23 August 2024, and 8 October 2024.



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## In-house Training for CCF Officials



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CCF and PROTECT II jointly organised a series of training sessions for CCF officials to improve their skills in investigating capacity related to law of Consumer Protection, Competition, fraud issues, and relevant regulations.

The series of training took place on:

- 10-11 June 2024
- 20 June 2024
- 15 July 2024
- 18 October 2024

The third and final round of mediation training for Consumer Dispute Resolution Bodies (BPSK) was held in Jakarta, from 30 September – 5 October 2024. This round invited 25 BPSK members from all over Indonesia, with a total trained members from the first to final rounds achieved about 70 members. PROTECT II initiated this training to improve human resource capacity of BPSK members to provide accountable and fair dispute resolution to consumers. This is also an important step towards digital access to justice for consumers in Indonesia with the future plan of a national Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) system.

## 3rd Round of Mediation Training for BPSK



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## Promoting Inclusive Consumer Protection via Digiweek 2024

On 15-19 July 2024, PROTECT II collaborated with CIPS to organize the fifth Digiweek. This annual event attracted nearly 500 participants from various sectors. Experts and practitioners from the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs, the National Consumer Protection Agency, Sunyi Coffee and the National Disabilities Commission participated in an insightful and engaging policy discussion. Around 30 MSMEs from various sectors also attended the workshop. The Policy Communique can be downloaded [here](#).

## Enhancing Financial Literacy Among University Students

On 12 September 2024, over 80 enthusiastic students from University of Indonesia joined an exciting Financial Literacy session organised by the CIPS and PROTECT II. The event kicked off with an insightful talk show featuring academics and industry experts, sparking conversations on Financial Literacy.

The second session included the demo of Monetary platform – which was created under cooperation of CIPS and GIZ – where players can dive into realistic financial scenarios that mirror real life decisions. The app is available in Bahasa Indonesia and English.



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## Workshops on Consumer Protection Work and Enforcement of Lao Labelling in Lao PDR



The workshops organised by the Division of Consumer Protection focused on disseminating consumer protection regulations and the Ministerial Order on Lao Language Labelling for both domestic and imported products.

The workshops were held three times with different target groups:

- 19 March 2024: 40 participants, including 1 Chamber and 13 Chinese businesses in Lao PDR.
- 26 April 2024: 40 participants, including the Vietnamese Embassy, Businesses, and Business Associations.
- 30 July 2024: 60 participants, including 50 businesses in Vientiane.

For effective law implementation, the Division of Consumer Protection will continue organising similar workshops in the future. Business owners, especially foreigners, suggested using QR codes to reduce implementation costs.



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## Technical Seminar “E-commerce Trends and Implications for EU-Vietnam Trade”

On 17 October 2024, the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung Vietnam, in collaboration with the Vietnam Institute of Development Strategies (VIDS), hosted a technical seminar as part of the research project titled “E-commerce Trends in the World and Implications for EU-Vietnam Trade.” Insights from our sister project, SME II, examined how EU policies and regulations impact businesses from non-EU countries. The discussion also focused on product safety and consumer protection in e-commerce. The study is designed to help Vietnamese policymakers and businesses uncover new opportunities to enhance cooperation and exchange between Vietnam and the EU.



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## Celebrating the 12th Anniversary of MCU

In celebration of the 12th anniversary of Myanmar Consumers Union (MCU), PROTECT II, along with consumer protection advocates and experts in ASEAN, joined the hybrid event. As a member of the ASEAN Consumer Association Network, MCU is a non-governmental organisation dedicated to promoting consumer rights.

## Workshop on Digital and Green Transformation

In celebration of National Digital Transformation Day, GIZ joined the workshop on "Digital Transformation in Businesses for a Sustainable Digital Economy," hosted by the Agency for Enterprise Development (AED) at the Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI). Among the key insights shared were digital solutions can address environmental challenges, including to reduce emissions.



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## Seminar on the Protection of Consumer Rights in the Context of Digitalisation and E-commerce

On 12 June 2024, AED and PROTECT II hosted a seminar on the "Updates on the Law on the Protection of Consumer Rights 2023 in relation to Digitalisation and E-commerce." The seminar addressed the opportunities and challenges of digital transformation, such as market expansion, online fraud, and consumer privacy. Various international and national regulations were referenced that focusing at protecting consumer rights in e-commerce.



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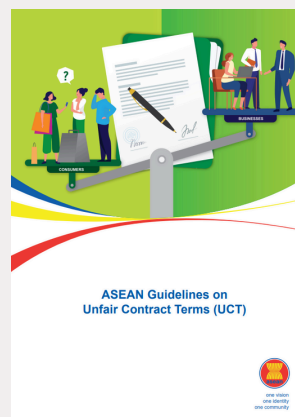
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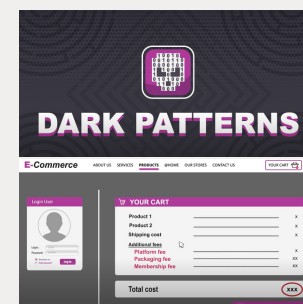
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## New Publications

### The ASEAN Guidelines on Unfair Contract Terms



### ASEAN Regional Information Campaign on Dark Patterns and Deceptive Designs



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