6th ASEAN-OECD Good Regulatory Practices Network (GRPN) Digital Meeting 2020:
Summary of Session 2 - Leveraging Digital Tools for More Agile Regulatory Policy Making
October 5, 2020

The sixth ASEAN-OECD Good Regulatory Practices Network (GRPN) Meeting on the theme of *Better Regulation for Post COVID-19 Recovery* held the second of three sessions on 5 October 2020. Over 200 participants around the globe joined online as well as in person at a listening room in Viet Nam to discuss *Leveraging Digital Tools for More Agile Regulatory Policy Making.*

The session was opened by Director General Ngo Hai Phan, Administrative Procedure Control Agency in the Office of the Government of Viet Nam, and H.E. Jon Lambe, UK Ambassador to ASEAN. The session further explored experiences by ASEAN and OECD Member States, as well as from the private sector, and was co-chaired by Hairil Yahri Yaacob, Deputy Secretary-General of Malaysia's Ministry of International Trade and Industry and Mark Steel, Director Regulatory Systems of the Strategic Policy and Programmes Group in New Zealand's Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment.

Key Takeaways

- **Emerging technologies present a number of challenges to governments** such as pacing problems, liability attribution, cybersecurity, privacy, and trans-boundary issues. These force governments to take new approaches to regulatory policy making, including adopting foresight analysis and horizon-scanning, utilising soft law, and leveraging digital tools.
- **The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated these shifts**, providing both an opportunity for governments to experiment with digital technologies to help citizens and businesses during the crisis, as well as to evaluate potential reforms that will make regulatory frameworks more agile and strengthen regulatory enforcement in the long-term.
- **Digital tools can help support evidence-based, data driven regulatory decision making** that strengthens good regulatory practices and improves regulatory delivery. This includes broadening stakeholder engagement to consult with interests groups that have been traditionally less engaged, such as SMEs.
- **Governments can help ease burdens and compliance costs for businesses** by incorporating e-inspections, e-accreditation, e-procurement, and other digital technologies. Integrated IT systems and single access online portals allows regulators to share information across government departments, reducing the need for businesses to respond to similar information requests from multiple agencies. Clear communication and guidance from government helps businesses adapt their operations to the changing context of the pandemic.
- **Increased efficiency and transparency can help protect citizens and build trust in government**. For example, websites updated in real-time and mobile phone applications can facilitate communication and distribute guidance regarding public health measures. Regulators adopting a "coaching approach" can deepen relationships with citizens and businesses by giving proactive advice and answering requests rather than focusing solely on inspection efforts.

Next Steps

The sixth GRPN will have **a third and final webinar session** on *Reforming Regulatory Systems to Prepare for the Future Crises* to be held in **late 2020** (date TBC).

The GRPN builds off the OECD Secretariat's longstanding work with the ASEAN Secretariat and ASEAN Member States, including through country- and regional-level programmes designed to strengthen good regulatory practices and develop more resilient regulatory systems, which can help protect public health and stimulate sustainable economic growth.

The OECD is producing a technical note on regulatory responses to the COVID-19 pandemic in Southeast Asia, which will draw from discussions and case studies presented during the sixth GRPN webinar series.