EU and Thailand address bio-circular-green-economy

To lead Thailand into a highly developed economy that leaves no one behind, the Thai Government has introduced a bio-circular-green economy (BCG) as its new economic model. BCG includes the production of renewable biological resources and the conversion of these resources and waste streams into value-added products, such as food, feed, bio-based products, and bioenergy.

The Thai Government expects that by adopting the BCG model for economic development, Thailand can raise its GDP by 1 trillion Thai Baht within the next five years and support 20 million jobs in the four industrial sectors targeted by BCG—namely Food and Agriculture; Medical and Wellness; Energy, Material and Biochemical; and Tourism and Creative Economy.

To achieve this goal, H.E. Suvit Maesincee, Thai Minister of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation, says "new knowledge and technology must be used to add more value to more products from various sectors, including food and beverage manufacturing, medicine, energy, biochemicals and tourism." Maesincee led a Thai delegation to participate in a Roundtable Discussion with the EU in January, hosted by Pirkka Tapiola, Ambassador of the European Union to Thailand, along with ambassadors and trade attachés from a number of EU member countries. The Minister was joined by the President of Thailand's National Science and Technology Development Agency (NSTDA), Narong Sirilertworakul and a number of NSTDA executives.

Tapiola said that the "EU has placed the European Green deal at the heart of its policies. It is an opportunity to improve the health and well-being of people by transforming our economic model. We want to cooperate with our partners so that the principles of the green deal can be promoted globally." The EU has already adopted a Circular Economy package covering the whole cycle: production, consumption, waste management, and secondary raw materials, and for the past two years has invested close to 1 billion Euro (33 billion Thai Baht) into research and innovation as well as financing projects and initiatives to support this strategy.

During the event, Maesincee gave a presentation on the BCG model for sustainable development, which was followed by a presentation by NSTDA outlining its research program and infrastructure that support BCG, including the progress of the Eastern Economic Corridor of Innovation (EECi) construction. EECi is a new innovation zone situated on 1200 acres of land adjacent to the Eastern Economic Corridor—which encompasses three Eastern provinces of the country—to serve as Thailand's new growth hub. It will house state-of-the-art essential facilities for bioindustry development such as a plant factory, phenomics greenhouse, and biorefinery pilot plant as well as advanced infrastructure such as a Demo Factory and Industry 4.0 Testbed, fourth generation Synchrotron Facility, an Autonomous Vehicle Testing and Living Laboratory and High Performance Computing Facility.

New call issued for joint Canada-UK projects on quantum technologies

canada-uk-quantum-technologies.b2match.io/home

The Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC) and Innovate UK, part of UK Research and Innovation, are partnering to launch a call for research proposals on quantum technologies. The call builds on complementary interests and research expertise in this area in the UK and Canada, and will allow for the collaboration between leading-edge scientists and potential users from industry and/or government sectors to accelerate the development of quantum technologies.

Innovation in quantum technologies would allow Canada and the UK to access cross-cutting technologies and to function securely in a global ecosystem where the safe exchange and protection of data is paramount. It also aims to bring together dynamic consortia that will foster collaboration between established researchers and the next generation of young scientists in partnership with industry and/or government. According to NSERC, this will help break down silos among disciplines and promote equity, diversity, and inclusion. The research in these collaborations will provide demonstrable evidence of the impacts of quantum technologies for the economy and society.

Applicants and participants may register and create a profile in order to access a virtual matchmaking website, which will allow them to select and contact potential partners from both countries for information exchange and networking opportunities to foster collaborations. □