

Regional workshop: International cooperation in complex, cross-border corruption crimes in Southeast Asia

Yangon (Myanmar), 19-20 November 2019- How can financial intelligence units support anti-corruption investigations in Southeast Asia? More than 60 practitioners from financial intelligence units and law enforcement agencies participated in a joint regional training co-hosted by the Anti-Corruption Commission of Myanmar, with the aim **to discuss coordination and foster cooperation for investigating cross-border corruption in Southeast Asia.**



This regional workshop is a follow-up workshop of a series of regional trainings aiming to strengthen cooperation among investigative authorities both nationally and internationally, including through Mutual Legal Assistance (MLA) and informal information or intelligence sharing channels. It results from the UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) reviews and assessments in the region, that have shown that international cooperation channels are still weak due to the lack of knowledge on the specific requirements for MLA (the requirements are often perceived to be too strict, including language requirements); the length of time it takes for requesting States to respond to requests; the lack of MoUs between countries in the region, and the failure to utilize the UNCAC as a base for MLA. To address these challenges and follow-up on the [previous training organized in Hanoi in 2018](#), this regional workshop included both presentation of case studies by investigative authorities in the region, presentation of

financial intelligence unit's role in investigating corruption, and a series of capacity-building activities and group exercises.

During the training, UNCAC requirements and the [UNODC Handbook on International Cooperation for Investigation of Corruption Cases in Southeast Asia published in July 2019](#) were shared with the participants. **Case studies from anti-corruption agencies of Hong Kong, Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore** were presented by each agency, highlighting the need for enhanced cooperation among investigative authorities when addressing transfer of proceeds of crime abroad. In a following session, representatives of **financial intelligence units of Indonesia, Thailand and the Philippines shared their work as relevant for anti-corruption**, which led to a discussion on the necessary cooperation between financial intelligence units and anti-corruption agencies for investigations.

[Three capacity-building sessions from international experts](#) were organized to prepare participants in the group exercises with case studies. Mr. Robert Strang, US Department of Justice, presented the Kleptocracy Asset Recovery Initiative and the need for cooperation when investigating cases of foreign bribery involving multinational companies or persons. Corporate vehicles and their utilization in corruption cases were presented by Mr. Francesco Checchi, UNODC Regional Anti-Corruption Adviser in Southeast Asia, providing an overview of various types of corporate vehicles utilized for hiding financial transactions at the international level. Finally, Mr. Peter Ritchie, American Bar Association Rule of Law Initiative, provided an overview of ways to improve the gathering and sharing of intelligence for domestic and international cooperation against corruption.

Group exercises facilitated by UNODC experts focused on corruption and financial investigations and on foreign bribery.

This regional workshop was organized in cooperation with the American Bar Association (ABA) Rule of Law Initiative and co-hosted by the Anti-Corruption Commission of Myanmar.

The full agenda and shared presentations are [online](#).