

BCCT Annual Report 2014

presented to the AGM on 15th January 2015

2013 was a busy year for BCCT and a challenging one for many members due to Thailand's political issues. Much internal activity was devoted to starting the Overseas Business Networks Project with UKTI. This is described in detail below.

However, the main priorities at the beginning of 2014 were:

- an advocacy strategy based on members' needs
- events based on members' needs and the financial needs of the Chamber
- promote UK investment in Thailand
- identify how to use surplus BCCT funds to best support members

Advocacy has followed a mix of direct lobbying and joining forces with other organisations:

- In 2014 BCCT activity concentrated on the prevention of negative changes to and meaningful liberalisation of the Foreign Business Act. The first objective proved successful. BCCT was active in numerous separate forums eg with the Board of Trade of Thailand, British Embassy, Joint Foreign Chambers of Commerce, other foreign chambers of commerce, and in a separate meeting with the Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Commerce.
- feedback from members continued to focus the importance of addressing visa and work permit issues. BCCT Vice Chairman Simon Landy is the only foreign chamber representative on the main executive of the Board of Trade of Thailand. He is working with the Board of Trade to identify the best way of achieving meaningful change to visa and work permit processes.
- Negotiations on the EU-Thailand Free Trade Agreement have been suspended but BCCT continues to work with the European ASEAN Business Centre's (EABC) advocacy groups to ensure that members' interests are represented.

Events continue to be the lifeblood of the Chamber and the principal form of interaction for the membership:

- The BCCT Events team under the guidance of the Events Group led by BCCT Vice Chairman Chris Thatcher successfully organised the four main events that are important to the financial health of the Chamber: the Annual Lecture by Deputy Prime Minister of Thailand, MR Pridiyathorn Devakula; the Bangkok Masters Football Tournament, The Life and Style Garden Party in the British Embassy and the Christmas Luncheon.
- Overall, the Chamber organised 103 events in the year compared to 81 in 2013, an increase of 27%. The focus remains on quality and variety for our members.

- The third annual Member Feedback session took place in May 2014. The comments and ideas received from members formed the basis of much of BCCT and individual group activity in 2014.
- BCCT Groups were active in organising business presentations and management development training events that were well received eg Eastern Seaboard Group, ICT Group, Legal & Tax Group, Professional Women's Group and Property & Infrastructure Group.
- BCCT broadened its reach beyond Bangkok and the Eastern Seaboard with two business dinners in Phuket, the first two networking evenings in Hua Hin and a workshop/networking evening with EABC in Chiang Mai. The scope of this outreach will be broadened in 2015.
- The regular Networking and social events have continued to be popular, especially the Third Thursday events, the monthly ESB events hosted with other chambers and our occasional Pub Nights. In November 2014 BCCT returned to The Queen Vic in the British Embassy for the first time in two years.
- In 2015 we will continue to act on members views whether received anecdotally, through event survey monkey questionnaires or via structured membership surveys.

UK Investment in Thailand is an integral part of the Overseas Business Network project described below.

Investing any financial surplus to best benefit members remains a key BCCT objective. In 2014 membership fees were reduced for upcountry and individual members. Further reductions are being considered for very small companies. Beyond simple membership fee reductions BCCT is investing in: the office ICT infrastructure; a telephone membership survey conducted externally and without BCCT involvement selecting 100 members at random; and a complete restructuring of BCCT's social media presence and activity.

BCCT/UKTI OVERSEAS BUSINESS NETWORKS PROJECT

The UKTI/BCCT Overseas Business Network Project's (which we call OBN) principal task is to oversee the transfer of specific work, from UK Trade & Investment/British Embassy, to the Chamber. The mission of the OBN is largely directed towards helping UK SMEs - based in the UK (some with offices in Thailand) – that are interested in developing new or existing business in Thailand. The team provide initial market/sector research, initial advice on market access and introductions to potential customers through bespoke visit programmes in much the same way as was provided by UKTI. The OBN team plus their activities and events are financed by the UKTI and through revenue generated from chargeable services. All Overseas Business Networks in 41 overseas markets are working towards the UK Government's 2020 Vision to double UK exports.

The OBN provides additional services and benefits to BCCT members and is helping to expand membership too. The separate roles of the Project team and BCCT team overlap and

complement each other. Members are seeing an increased level of activity from the Chamber as a whole accompanied by new opportunities and benefits and we expect this to grow during 2015.

The role of the OBN Steering Group is to:

- Provide oversight and governance for the project as a whole including providing input and review of annual performance against goals, and future budget requests
- Report and make recommendations to the BCCT Board as a whole
- Be advised on financial performance by BCCT Treasurer who has financial oversight of the project
- Provide strategic advice and input to ensure the success of the 2017 Vision
- Act as examples to others in BCCT and encourage others to:
 - provide ad-hoc advice on their business sector to the OBN project Team (and occasionally to UK companies that are new to market)
 - identify specific business opportunities available to UK companies
- Support BCCT's work in gaining Accreditation from the British Chambers of Commerce and providing oversight to key metrics once implemented
- Make best efforts to ensure the OBN project is relevant and valuable to the wider BCCT membership

The members of the Steering Group during 2014 were:

- BCCT Executive Director : Mr. Greg Watkins
- UKTI/BCCT Overseas Business Network Project : Mr. Barry Nicholson
- British Embassy UKTI Director : Mr. Bradley Jones and latterly Marcus Winsley
- British Embassy UKTI Deputy Director: Mr. Ben Raby
- BCCT Board Members:
 - Mr. Andrew McBean, Partner; Grant Thornton Thailand [Chair]
 - Ms. Siew Meng Tan, CEO; HSBC Thailand
 - Mr. Boyd Chongphaisa, General Manager; GlaxoSmithKline Thailand
 - Mr. Ata Safdar, General Manager Thailand, Indochina, Philippines; Reckitt Benckiser Healthcare Thailand (who moved to South Korea during the year and his replacement was appointed)
 - Mr. Simon Landy, Chairman, Colliers International Thailand

The OBN steering Group met the hour before every BCCT Board meeting during 2014. During the meeting they discussed the performance of the OBN in the previous month against agreed performance metrics (circulated before the meeting) and also tried to help with any tactical or strategic issues. Minutes are available for each meeting. A précis of this meeting is then given to the BCCT Board during their meeting. The OBN in Thailand is considered by the UKTI to be one of the most successful OBN projects in the world, an accolade to the leadership of the team in Thailand, everyone in the team and to the strong working relationship between the Chamber, the OBN project team and the UKTI team.

In 2015, Reckitt Benckiser will be replaced by Ritu Mohan, the Managing Director of Boots in Thailand. There is no OBN meeting during January due to the AGM however they will start

again from the February meeting. Key areas of focus for this year will be official accreditation from the British Chamber in the UK and also new models of funding and targeting which are presently being discussed in the UK.

2014 Activities Review

2014 was year that saw fundamental changes taking place at rapid speed. Key milestones were the expansion of the team from 2 to 5, the opening of the British Business Centre by British Ambassador Mark Kent in February, the progress and ascent of BCCT to being considered by UKTI as one of the top two organisations within the network of 41 that comprise the OBN.

In May 2014, the BCCT OBN team supported a food and drink trade mission from the Yorkshire and Humber region. Trade mission delegates met with leading Thai retailers and distributors to discuss potential business opportunities. Throughout the year, BCCT continued to support visiting UK companies including delegates from the London Chamber of Commerce mission in November 2014.

In February BCCT partnered with UKTI in a roundtable event with the Board of Trade of Thailand. This was co-hosted by British Ambassador Mark Kent and Board of Trade Chairman Isara Vongkusolkrit and focussed on investment opportunities for Thai companies in UK. This was followed in June by a Board of Trade mission of major Thai corporates to the UK. BCCT help facilitate the visit.

In September 2014, the BCCT's OBN team partnered with Ritu Mohan, BCCT Board member and MD of Boots Thailand to hold a clinic at the Boots HQ in Nottingham, UK, to help UK companies understand the opportunities for beauty and personal healthcare products in Thailand. Around 30 UK companies attended the clinic to hear about the Thai and wider ASEAN market, the types of products that Boots Thailand would be interested in importing, the requirements of market entry and the help that can be provided by the BCCT. In December we also provided a seminar for Boots and the Office of Small and Medium Enterprises Promotion (OSMEP) that involved a presentation from Boots to over 40 Thai companies interested in having their products sold in Boots' Thai stores.

During 2014, the Executive Director and members of the OBN team visited the UK giving presentations at seminars and meeting individual companies to promote Thailand as a market that is highly receptive to UK goods and services.

The OBN team has continued to build relationships with the British Chambers of Commerce, UK regional Chambers and those overseas. It has also been instrumental in developing BiSEA (Britain in South East Asia) into a more effective regional body with a greater emphasis on joint promotion and activities.

BCCT is currently in the advanced stages of gaining formal accreditation to the British Chambers of Commerce - this will further enhance BCCT's reputation as a hugely professional and efficient membership organisation.

Since opening in February, the British Business Centre has held 80 events for 1600 attendees demonstrating its value to the whole membership. We will exceed the annual delivery target set by UKTI by at least 50%, having provided advice and assistance to 600+ UK companies (many of them writing glowing testimonials about the support they received). 2014 has been a highly successful year and 2015 is likely to be even better!

BCCT GROUP REPORTS

EDUCATION

The Education Group has struggled to find members willing to offer support and leadership. It can reasonably be considered to be defunct. The Board of Directors would be happy to hear from any members with an interest in Education in its most general terms if they are prepared to offer leadership to re-energise this group. There are many areas where such a group could offer support in the field of education.

EVENTS

The BCCT Events Group meets on a monthly basis and considers all matters relating to BCCT Events. During 2014 it has been a highly active group, advising on all aspects of BCCT Events and trying to represent what members would wish. The Group also looks at the financial aspects of BCCT Events and is extremely well-supported by Rungjit (RJ to most) the BCCT Events manager and her team.

The quality of BCCT Events has been consistently higher in 2014 than in previous years (according to member feedback).

Naturally it is not perfect but comments received have suggested that more often than not, the BCCT gets it right.

Members views are what matter and feedback is always welcomed. The Group is always open to new members and as perhaps the only group with a predominance of female members, we particularly welcome new female members. However, if you are a man, don't let that stop you from volunteering.

Meetings take place at lunchtimes at the BCCT Office and a sandwich lunch is provided. Contact the Chair of the Group, Chris Thatcher, (christhatcher1@gmail.com) if you want to volunteer.

ICT

We have an incredibly active and passionate ICT Group with 17 members. Early in 2014 we decided that we would like to follow a formula of having more "small but many" activities as opposed to few but large. To that end we have organised a number of events and a number of them hosted in the British Business Centre. This has also driven down the cost of participation for our members.

We decided on a few key themes for the year. These were The Cloud, Security and also using the web conferencing facilities in the British Business Centre (leading the way with technology).

In Feb we started the year with a Smart Cities web conference with the UK which was very well attended and had very good feedback from members. This was also done deliberately as a pre-cursor to physical Smart Cities meetings in mid-March with a number of companies from the UK and hosted by the UKTI. We felt that this was a good formula for the future - organising video conference introductions before the physical meetings.

In March we turned our attention to the Computer Crime Act in Thailand. We had 2 speakers give perspectives of this Act and then a panel discussion with 3 experts.

In April we teamed with American Chamber ICT Committee and were able to offer members and opportunity to attend Seagate's research on industry trends, Big Data, Dark Data, the current and future state of data centers and how all these factors matter for businesses and governments in their planning and project implementation. Jeff Burke, Vice President of Strategic Marketing and Research at Seagate was the speaker for that.

In June we did our first Cloud event. This was presented by Dell and was an overview of the Cloud and what it was. This was followed in August by the second Cloud event which was Shane Torr showing how he had started his business using the services of Cloud computing and how it gave him tremendous advantages and lower costs. He also spent time talking about lessons learned which were useful to other SME's wanting to start using the Cloud for their business.

In September we teamed up with the American Chamber ICT Committee for a trip to the Seagate factory in Korat. The feedback from the event was excellent and attendees enjoyed the networking, informative presentations and the factory tour.

In October we hosted the first of our security events. The speaker at this event was Dr. Teng-amnuay and he showed us that Thailand was one of the biggest sources and destinations of hacking attacks in the world. He also showed us how we could prepare for that and what protections we had under Thai law.

Following up after this in November was an event in conjunction with the UKTI with Professor Humphries, "the internationally acknowledged "father and management guru" of ISO/IEC 27000 family of ISMS standards and the global ISO/IEC 27001 certification movement".

I am very grateful for all the support and passion of the ICT Group members and everyone who attended an ICT Group event in 2014.

Looking forward in 2015 we really want to see how British businesses can take advantage of the new government focus on the Digital Economy. We have been working with the UKTI to see if we can meet senior government officials to discuss this and hear more about the plans using the UK's success with the Digital Envoy concept. We expect our events in 2015 will all

wrap around the Digital Economy plans of the government and how our members can find opportunity in them.

LEGAL & TAXATION

During 2014, the Legal & Taxation Committee met six times. Discussions took place on many different and divergent issues, including:

- the changes to eligibility for BOI privileges;
- Thailand bank reporting requirements under the FATCA Rules; the prospect of AEC 2015 and its possible effects on Thailand;
- the impact of the coup on investment; possible changes to taxation and the inauguration of Inheritance Tax and a new Property Tax;
- changes to the Civil Code regarding guarantees and mortgages, and other matters.

The possibility of changes to the Foreign Business Act was also discussed, but the government's proposals to change the FBA were withdrawn in December. Events were organised on a wide range of subjects:

- infrastructure funds, taxation, visas & work permits;
- employment law; bribery & corruption;
- and a speaker was supplied for the IT Committee event on the Computer Crimes Act.

Committee membership is open to any law firms or accountancy firms in Thailand, or to consumers of legal or accountancy services.

MEMBERSHIP

The BCCT is always keen to find out what members think and early in 2015 a major survey will take place to seek views directly. This will be carried out by an organisation external to BCCT.

We also seek to find ways to reflect the needs of members in many ways and there are regular discussions about such things as subscription rates, membership services etc.

Members own the Chamber and as such, their views are what matter.

Chris Thatcher chairs this group and would welcome any feedback (to christhatcher1@gmail.com).

PROFESSIONAL WOMEN

PWG had its first committee meeting in April 2014 and agreed to be a combined chambers group together with the TCCC and Austcham. This means that chambers will take turns in hosting the events.

PWG events in 2014

1. Sept 10 - Speed Networking hosted by TCCC

Sponsored by KIS International School

It was a successful event attended by 52 women and men

Survey results: the event overall was excellent and very good, participants would very likely to recommend to friends, the event was a great deal of value, the event venue was very good, food/ beverage was fair to very good, the event offered a chance to meet and network, the dislike was the venue was quite too big, a little slow, the evening went by too quickly.

2. November 19 – Pre- Christmas “Get into the Christmas spirit” event hosted by BCCT

Sponsored by: Samitivej Hospital and William Grant & Sons

It was a successful event attended by 62 women and men

PWG plan for 2015 is not only to increase the number of event attendees but for the group to host events that are fun and also related to business.

PWG Committee meets once a month and participating chambers agreed to support bimonthly events.

Upcoming events for 2015

1. Feb 12 – Valentine special hosted by Austcham

Suggested topics

- Prejudice in the workplace (not just women specific); overcoming issues relating to minority groups
- Benefits of Executive and business Coaching
- How to grow your business
- Personal and professional development
- Power networking
- Achieving work-life balance
- Self-empowerment
- Perception and body language
- Competition and self-promotion (confidence related)
- Showcasing women in business success stories during International Women’s Day

The Joint Chambers Professional Women’s Group Statement

Mission: *Promote the professional progress of women throughout their career through mentoring, knowledge-sharing, personal and professional development, and networking*

Our identity *(underpins our decision-making and everything we do)*

- **Inclusive:** we embrace diversity and welcome everyone to engage
- **Collaborative:** we seek opportunities to work alongside likeminded individuals and organisations
- **Supportive:** we are positive, empathetic, encouraging, helpful and accommodating

- **Open:** we openly share our experience and knowledge, and we are open to new ideas and initiatives
- **Empowering:** we are dedicated to inspiring, encouraging, enabling, and energising individuals to be the best they can

PROPERTY & INFRASTRUCTURE

The BCCT Property & Infrastructure (P&I) Group's mission is to support and advance BCCT work in relation to P&I; to organize quality events of interest to members at a reasonable cost; and to compile reports on market developments.

Membership of the P&I Group in 2014 comprised Abigail Evans from Meinhardt; Alan Verstein from Siam Gazette; Ali Adam from Arcadia (Thailand) Co., Ltd; Attakorn Saropala from the British Embassy; Ian Hamilton from Colliers International Thailand; Edward Barrow from Gaysorn Land Asset Management; James Pitchon from CB Richard Ellis; John Mugford from Meinhardt; Stephen Frost from Bangkok International Associates; Colin Bird from Faith and Gould; Jason Simpson from Arup and Greg Watkins (ex-officio) from BCCT.

The group holds four quarterly meetings at which events are planned for each quarter. Meetings were held on January 29, May 16, July 23 and October 13 and minutes have been provided to the BCCT.

The following events have taken place in 2014;

- 11 March 2014: Breakfast briefing by James Pitchon of CB Richard Ellis on "Outlook for the Bangkok Property Market in 2014" an event held at the British Business Centre, BCCT, 7th Floor, 208 Wireless Road- 33 members attended;
- 26 June 2014: Green Buildings and Real Estate in Thailand – current status and opportunities for Bangkok by Dr. Atch Sreshthaputra Assistant Professor of Architecture at Chulalongkorn University. 52 members attended
- 23 July 2014: Breakfast briefing by Dr. Chula Sukmanop, Director General Office of Transport Policy and Planning on "Infrastructure Investment and Development Plan to Strengthen Thailand's Competitive Advantage Among ASEAN". This was a joint BCCT/AMCHAM event. 54 members attended.
- 14 September 2014: Myanmar Update – "Doing Business in Myanmar; A Perspective from the Ground" by John Anderson of Meinhardt, Tony Picon of Colliers International and Gil Amilbangsa of Blue Scope. 56 members attended.
- 27 November 2014; Partnering/Alliancing in Procurement: Developing a Collaborative Working Culture in Delivering Major Rail and Infrastructure Programmes by Neill Carruthers - Associate Director of the Institute for Collaborative Working. 17 members attended

The P&I Group has also supplied various reports on the P&I sector for members which are posted on the BCCT website.

The planned events for 2015 are as follows:

- Q1
 - An pre-inspection of the MRTA Blue Line Extension Project – limited

- numbers. Further visit planned for later in the year for the wider membership
 - Outlook for the Bangkok Property Market in 2015 by James Pitchon; CBRE. This will be a joint BCCT/RICS event
- Q2
 - A site visit to Faithful and Gould project managed New FMG plant in Rayong
 - Visit to MRTA Blue Line Extension Project
- Q3
 - Event on Solar/Alternative Energy – Raymond Schonfeld. Other speakers to be confirmed
 - Update on Thailand's Infrastructure Development Plans – Ali Adam. Other speakers to be confirmed. This will be a joint BCCT/AMCHAM event
- Q4
 - The fourth quarter event will be an update on Environmental Impact Assessments. Speaker to be confirmed

SME

The BCCT SME Group has not met in 2014. It has proved to be difficult to get any members to make a commitment to this group. However despite that, we are hoping to arrange a series of meetings aimed at supporting SME members. Subjects we are hoping to cover are:

1. Visas and work permits
2. Accounting and auditing
3. Taxation (includes PIT CIT VAT withholding taxes and stamp duty)
4. Buying/leasing property
5. Legal
6. Employment law and human resources
7. Customs and import/export
8. Healthcare (doctors, dentists, opticians, hospitals, healthcare for children, health insurance, Thai social security)
9. Education (Thai schools, international schools, universities, Thai language schools).

Suggestions for more events of interest are welcomed. Please let Chris Thatcher, the Chair (christhatcher1@gmail.com) know if you are either prepared to support an SME Group or wish to suggest more events of interest specifically to SMEs.