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**IMMEDIATE PRESS RELEASE

WBAF announces its first Country Office in South East Asia**

[www.wbaforum.org](http://www.wbaforum.org)

*The Office, the first established in South East Asia, will interact and engage with a wide range of institutions including public and private, local and international and commercial and academic, to ensure economic development and help shape the global agenda. Addressing the business community and other key stakeholders at the inaugural ceremony in Bangkok, Deputy Prime Minister said, the private sector was a critical partner for economic growth and sustainable development. The WBAF Thailand which will be represented by National Science Technology Development Agency (NSTDA) of the Kingdom of Thailand.*

*The Grand Opening Ceremony of the WBAF Thailand Country Office in Bangkok on the 28th of August hosted the Deputy Prime Minister of Thailand, 6 Ambassadors, 8 Consuls, 10 Presidents of Technoparks of ASEAN Countries namely Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Laos, Vietnam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Brunei and Myanmar.*

The Global Innovation Index 2018 published by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) of the United Nations ranked Thailand as one of the 20 nations named by WIPO as innovation achievers. Thailand’s seven-place jump was the largest rise among countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

According to the UN’s WIPO report entire region is in a favorable light. “ASEAN economies are making great progress in innovation and socioeconomic development indicators,” the report said.

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), one of the biggest association of the world, was established on 8 August 1967 to accelerate the economic growth, social progress and cultural development in the region through joint endeavours in the spirit of equality and partnership in order to strengthen the foundation for a prosperous and peaceful community of Southeast Asian Nations; namely Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam.

ASEAN represents an economic cooperation of 630 million people of South East Asia and Thailand chairs ASEAN for 2019 with the theme of “Advancing Partnership for Sustainability.

National Science & Technology Development Agency (NSTDA) has an important role in the achievement of the country being ranked as one of the 20 nations named by WIPO as innovation achievers.

NSTDA operates autonomously with guidance and support of policies set by the National Science and Technology Development Board. The Board has 25 members appointed by the Council of Ministers, with equal representation from the public and private sectors. The Minister of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation is Chair of the Board. The Permanent Secretary of the Ministry is Vice Chair, and President of NSTDA is Board Secretary.

The WBAF Thailand which will be represented by NSTDA.

Baybars Altuntas, WBAF’s chairman, says *‘’I am confident that the WBAF Thailand Country Office will open up splendid opportunities for the country and provide a wide range of advantages for Thai start-ups, scale-ups, SMEs, innovators and high-growth businesses. Thai angel investors and aspiring entrepreneurs will now have more opportunity to connect with global leaders in equity and capital markets. As an affiliated partner of the G20 Global Partnership for Financial Inclusion (GPFI), WBAF supports start-ups, encourages the development of entrepreneurial ecosystems globally. It also helps venture capital and companies connect with international companies, fintechs and other relevant institutions. I believe WBAF will contribute to the economic development of Thailand by facilitating connections with entrepreneurial ecosystems. I have no doubt that Thailand will continue to develop its economy in an entrepreneurial atmosphere.’’*

**About the World Business Angels Investment Forum (WBAF)**

An affiliated partner of the G20 Global Partnership for Financial Inclusion (GPFI), the World Business Angels Investment Forum (WBAF) is an international organisation aiming to ease access to finance for businesses from start-up to scale-up, with the ultimate goal of generating more jobs and more social justice worldwide. It is committed to collaborating globally to empower world economic development by creating innovative financial instruments for innovators, start-ups, and SMEs. The Forum interacts with leaders in all areas of society, first and foremost in business and political spheres, to help assess needs and establish goals, bearing in mind that the public interest is of paramount importance. WBAF engages a wide range of institutions, both public and private, local and international, commercial and academic to help shape the global agenda.

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**About GPFI**

The Global Partnership for Financial Inclusion (GPFI) is an inclusive platform for all G20 countries, interested non-G20 countries, and relevant stakeholders to carry forward work on financial inclusion, including implementation of the G20 Financial Inclusion Action Plan endorsed at the G20 Summit in Seoul. Queen Maxima of the Netherlands is the Honorary Patron of the GPFI.

[www.gpfi.org](http://www.gpfi.org)