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EEC Customs Privileges: New Opportunities for Investors

Thailand's Eastern Economic Corridor ("EEC") has established a comprehensive development plan for the period 2023 to 2027, aiming to attract investments of approximately THB 500 billion. These investments cover 12 targeted industries namely: next-generation automotive, smart electronics, high-value and medical tourism, agriculture and biotechnology, food processing, robotics, aviation and logistics, biofuels and biochemicals, digital, comprehensive healthcare, defense, and human resource and education development.

Businesses operating within these targeted industries are typically engaged in import and export activities, including the importation of machinery, raw materials, and essential components for use in manufacturing processes or service provision, as well as the export of finished products to both domestic and international markets. As such, customs procedures and related duty privileges play a critical role in their operations.

Traditionally, operators seeking customs duty relief have relied on established frameworks such as free zones or bonded warehouses under customs laws, or industrial estate free zones under the law governing the Industrial Estate Authority of Thailand.

However, business models have evolved significantly. In particular, targeted industries increasingly require limited physical space and are able to leverage modern technologies for production and inventory management. Consequently, certain traditional requirements and procedural conditions are no longer aligned with current operational realities.

During April and May 2026, the EEC office has conducted a public hearing to consider the amendment to the Eastern Economic Corridor Act to grant operators within EEC promotion zones benefits equivalent to those available in free zones, bonded warehouses, or industrial estate free zones. This allows businesses to access customs duty privileges and procedural facilitation without being strictly bound to conventional structural requirements.

The implementation of this mechanism is intended to reduce operational barriers for targeted industries and accelerate investment within the EEC. It also reinforces Thailand's competitiveness in the global economy, particularly in light of ongoing geopolitical shifts and supply chain disruptions arising from international conflicts and trade protectionism.