



Thailand's E-Commerce Fee Debate: Growing Regulatory Pressure on Digital Platforms

Thailand's digital economy may be approaching a new regulatory inflection point as merchants call for tighter oversight of major e-commerce platforms following repeated fee increases, opaque pricing structures, and alleged restrictions on logistics choices. The dispute reflects broader questions about how Thailand intends to regulate increasingly powerful digital marketplaces and balance platform innovation against fair competition and merchant protection.

At the centre of the debate are concerns over escalating platform costs, including commissions, advertising charges, infrastructure fees, mandatory programme participation, and logistics-related costs that, according to industry groups, can consume a significant share of merchant revenue. Merchants argue that frequent fee revisions and limited bargaining power create substantial operational pressure, particularly for SMEs and sellers operating on narrow margins.

From a Thai legal perspective, the issue sits at the intersection of trade competition law, digital platform regulation, consumer protection, and electronic commerce governance. The recent introduction of the Trade Competition Commission of Thailand (TCCT) guidelines governing multi-sided digital platforms suggests growing regulatory recognition that platform conduct — including commission increases, mandatory service bundling, and potentially discriminatory business practices — may warrant closer scrutiny.

The complaints also test the evolving scope of Thailand's Digital Platform Services regulatory framework, which has generated a growing volume of disputes relating to fees, contractual changes, and platform transparency. Increasing complaints regarding automatic charges, sudden policy amendments, and mandatory logistics arrangements may intensify pressure on regulators to clarify acceptable platform conduct and strengthen enforcement mechanisms.

For businesses, the debate extends beyond disputes between merchants and platforms. Platform pricing models increasingly influence market access, profitability, logistics strategies, and ultimately consumer pricing. Smaller Thai merchants may face heightened competitive pressure

from dominant international platforms and cross-border sellers if regulatory safeguards fail to keep pace with market concentration and evolving fee structures.

The discussion surrounding an “Open Online Trade Platform” model and comparisons with regulatory approaches in jurisdictions such as China, Indonesia, and India also indicate that Thailand may be considering broader structural reforms to digital commerce governance.

Ultimately, the controversy signals a wider regulatory trend: Thailand’s digital platform ecosystem is moving from a growth-focused phase toward a more mature compliance and competition environment. Businesses operating in e-commerce, technology, retail, logistics, and digital services should closely monitor developments, as future reforms may materially affect platform governance, pricing practices, commercial contracting, and competition compliance obligations in Thailand’s digital marketplace.

Should you have any question, please do not hesitate to contact us via info@bgloballaw.com

