



555 Vibhavadi-Rangsit Road, Chatuchak 10900 Tel. 0 2553- 8111, Fax: 0 2553-8222

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**PRESS RELEASE**

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**BOI confident “SMART Visa” to support targeted industries  
and attract more experts, executives, and investors**

The Thailand Board of Investment (BOI) is confident that the “SMART Visa” to be launched on February 1, 2018 will encourage more investment in technology- and knowledge-based industries, which have seen high growth rate in the past two years. The “SMART Visa” will make it easier for expatriates, foreign experts and investors to work and invest in Thailand long-term.

Ms. Duangjai Asawachintachit, BOI’s Secretary General, has expressed confidence that the brand new visa category, SMART Visa, approved by the Cabinet on 16 January 2018 would support investment in the 10 targeted industries as well as in facilitating the country’s development towards its Thailand 4.0 goal.

“In attracting more foreign investment, in addition to investment promotion incentives, facilitation to enhance convenience for investors to do business in Thailand is very important,” Ms. Asawachintachit said. “In recent years, the Thai government has improved its services and streamlined regulations, resulting in the improvement of the country’s ranking in the World Bank’s Ease of Doing Business report from 46<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup>. The SMART Visa will be another measure aimed at further facilitating investors in doing business in Thailand.”

The SMART Visa is a new visa category issued to foreigners working or investing in technology-based production activities and services as well as in the 10 targeted (S-Curve) industries: namely next-generation automotive; smart electronics; affluent medical and wellness tourism; agricultural and biotechnology; food for the future; automation and robotics; aerospace; biofuels and biochemical; digital economy and medical hub.

According to Ms. Asawachintachit, the SMART Visa comprises four categories: 1) Talents in science and technology; 2) Investors; 3) Executives; and 4) Startup entrepreneurs. Applicants will need to have the qualifications required according to pre-set criteria and be endorsed by the designated government agencies such as the National Science and Technology Development Agency (NSTDA), the National Innovation Agency (Public Organization) and the Digital Economy Promotion Agency (DEPA).

“In the past two years, investment in the targeted industries has shown strong growth. In 2016, investment value in the targeted industries was approximately 299 billion baht and increased to 392 billion baht in 2017. BOI anticipated a continued growth of investment in targeted industries in 2018.” she said.

The SMART Visa holders will receive a number of special benefits. First, the visa validity period is up to four years and on a renewable basis. Second, SMART visa holders will be waived from a work permit requirement. Third, they can report to the Immigration Department on a yearly basis instead of every 90 days as at present. Forth, they can depart from and re-enter into the country without applying for re-entry permits. In addition, SMART Visa holders' family members will also enjoy similar benefits.

### **The SMART Visa promotes knowledge transfer and skill development**

Ms. Asawachintachit added that high-skilled expats eligible for SMART Visa will include high-level executives or professionals with special expertise. Thailand can then benefit from the transfer of knowledge and the skill development, especially in areas where Thailand lacks specific skill sets and knowledge. The SMART Visa will therefore increase convenience for expats and promote the development of Thai human resource at the same time.

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For more information, please contact [thailandinvestmentyear@gmail.com](mailto:thailandinvestmentyear@gmail.com) or visit [www.boi.go.th](http://www.boi.go.th)