

Baker Tilly stands ready as new corporate reforms set to enter force

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Husain Haider / Khmer Times /



Tan Khee Meng, the managing partner of Baker Tilly, a leading accountancy and advisory firm, is guiding clients through a series of forthcoming reforms on the investment and taxation laws. Supplied

With a slew of reforms anticipated to the country's tax and investment laws, Baker Tilly (Cambodia) Co Ltd's offices have been buzzing with auditors and accountants bringing clients up-to-date on new developments and ensuring that firms are not only compliant with new regulations, but also able to capitalise on them.

Baker Tilly is one of the world's leading financial advisory firms. It provides auditing, consultancy, accounting and tax services. Baker Tilly Cambodia is also a full fledged audit firm that licensed by the Accounting & Auditing Regulator of Cambodia, Securities & Exchange Regulator of Cambodia and National Bank of Cambodia.

Tan Khee Meng (KM Tan), its managing partner, has been in the country for more than two decades. He first arrived as a new recruit for a one of the "Big 4" accounting firms before moving to the private sector as the chief financial officer for a major firm.

He told Khmer Times that the experience granted him insight into what clients are looking for from their accountants and auditing firms. He soon took this knowledge and opened a private chartered accounting firm before he was approached by Baker Tilly to head its operations in Cambodia.

Now, the company has an impressive portfolio of clients across a number of industries, including quintessential international companies such as Ford, Industrial and Commercial Bank of China, RHB Bank and Plaza Premium Lounge, among others.

“We set ourselves apart by providing personalised one-on-one, bespoke services and interaction. We approach relationships as a true partnership. Instead of reaching out to businesses for updates when the auditing period comes up or at quarters’ end, we have a standing policy of becoming true partners with clients so we are constantly touching base with clients,” KM said.

“Another important issue that we shouldn’t just gloss over is the amount of energy we have put into our employees. Many of them arrived as diamonds in the rough so, as true stakeholders in Cambodia, we sponsored them so they can receive International Accounting and Auditing training and now many of our senior staff and managers are Cambodian. We valued our talents and we are proud of received award of “Best Companies to work for in Asia 2020” awarded by HR Asia.,” he continued.

Baker Tilly Cambodia’s excellence in tax services in the Kingdom is the area that the firm is always proud of, Baker Tilly Cambodia has been shortlisted by the International Tax Review Asia-Pacific (“ITR”) in nomination of national award categories for 2021 for “Cambodia Tax Firm” of the year. Baker Tilly Cambodia has about 90 professional staffs (90% are Cambodian), the Cambodian office is further strengthened with professional supports by more than 800 additional staffs in Malaysia’s offices. Baker Tilly International has presence in 148 countries/territories with 742 offices and boasts an impressive US\$4 billion in combined revenue globally. In recent months, firms have been increasingly reaching out to the company to glean more information about the forthcoming Law on Investment.

KM believes that the reform is “right on time”. The law grants incentives to firms that invest in technology, science, research and development, value-added products and industrial parks.

“The legislation appears to be clearly timely during by the pandemic. It prioritises digital industries with key sectors being health, green energy, education and the promotion of small and medium sized enterprises. The timing is good and the government is trying to create more forward looking sectors so that we are less reliant on ‘sunset sectors,” he said.

The Malaysian national views the new Law on Investment being critical to the country’s transition to a digital society. He said that it will eventually lead to the internet of things, smart cities and the Industry 4.0.

“Clients are most excited about the new Tax on Income (TOI) incentives, which will extend reduced TOI benefits with reduced tax rate for another six years after tax holiday for QIPs,” he said when discussing new tax reforms under new Law on Investment.

“The law speaks to how open the country is to new investments and ideas. The regulatory framework here is very open to new investors, from tax holidays to the ability to own 100 percent of your business. I don’t think there’s any equivalent to Cambodia regionally in that respect,” KM said. Now, as the legislations await approval, Baker Tilly associates are busy briefing themselves on the draft law, communicating progress with clients and, of course, engaging them throughout the process.