



*Ulf Berg, President and CEO of the Swedish Trade Council introduced Mr. Ongarch Phatanachinda and Head of Thailand Office Mr Hakan Nylander to the guests at the opening reception.*

## Collaboration between councils

According to Håkan Nylander the Swedish Trade Council services for companies focus on three main areas. The first is to understand the market conditions in a country in order to know the market potential, customers and competitors of Swedish companies.

The second is helping companies establish a presence in a market.

"We analyze the situation for each company that contact us. We look at the specific conditions for that company and support them either to find a partner, set up sales offices or even support them in setting up a manufacturing facility" explains Håkan Nylander.

According to him there is a great collaboration between the Swedish trade councils in the different ASEAN countries.

"For one company the best

location might be in Malaysia, while it's Thailand for another. We collaborate on helping them choose what is best for them according to their goals."

The third main area of the Trade Council is to help companies grow once they're established. This could for instance mean identifying new customer segments, evaluate distributors or identify acquisition targets.

## Underestimated potential

According to the head of office it's quite important not to rely solely on your distributors.

"The dilemma faced by the distributor is if they portrait the full market potential for the company, they might lose the business as the company decide to set up their own sales office," says Håkan Nylander.

He therefore advises companies to always get a second opinion on the market. This could come from the

Trade Council or by talking directly to end customers..

"Some of the Swedish companies in Malaysia turned to us, because they had a feeling that they could expand their business more than they were told by the distributors," says Håkan Nylander and continues:

"We would then research the market for them and check up on their distributors. In some cases the distributors improved the sales remarkably and became more effective when being checked up upon. In other cases we advised the companies to set up their own sales office to capture the full market potential."

According to Håkan Nylander Swedish companies usually turn to China or India, while they underestimate their opportunities in the ASEAN countries.

"The local trade statistics in many ASEAN countries is poor. They're always lower than actually figures in the market. That is one of the reasons why a lot of Swedish companies aren't aware of their opportunities in the ASEAN countries."



*Many distinguished guest from the Thai Swedish business community attended the opening function at the Ambassador's residence.*

## Business as usual

It was decided to open the office in Bangkok in December last year, when a government was democratically elected. Even though the political situation isn't stabile at this point, Håkan Nylander doesn't see it as a barrier for trade.

"The news in Sweden has exaggerated the situation in Thailand. When you live here you hardly notice the turmoil," he says.

His first couple of weeks in the new office has therefore been spent