

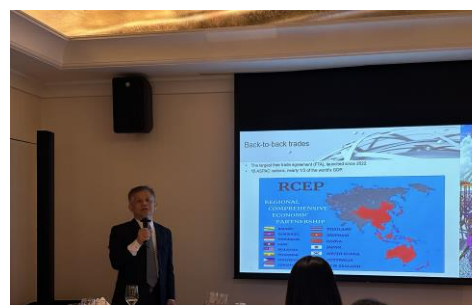
THE ASEAN TABLE | China+1 Dialogue (17 Sept. 2026)

WTS China and Shaohe jointly hosted an ASEAN-themed roundtable in Shanghai amid the general concern over the impact of the tariff war on global trade. The event provided an opportune moment to pool heads together—in a setting somewhere between a formal seminar and a casual dinner—to once again explore ASEAN's role in the China+1 strategy.



01 | Risk and opportunity in international trade

Martin Ng (WTS China) approached the topic from a back-to-back trade and offshore trade perspective, examining the devils and angels in implementing a regional operating model. He discussed the challenges posed by trade transshipment and re-export trade amid ongoing US-China tensions, as well as the opportunity offered by the Chinese government's push to boost offshore trade. Nationwide policies and measures are in place to facilitate offshore trade, creating new operational opportunities for China+1 structure.



02 | Value of a Singaporean regional hub

Sebastian Blasius (Gateway Law, Singapore) outlined the fundamental strengths of Singapore's legal system and business structures, noting that Singapore's light regulation, low tax rates, employer-friendly employment regime and highly predictable legal environment make it an ideal platform for regional operations. Essentially, the value of a regional hub lies in its practical functions rather than its structural elements.

03 | Building ASEAN bridges under a China+1 strategy

Pascal Brinkmann (straitly.legal, Malaysia) noted that, with tariffs, sanctions and export controls now the norm, ASEAN—with its neutral stance, large market and extensive free trade network—has become an ideal landing point for a China+1 strategy. Malaysia, with its mature manufacturing base, cost advantages and incentives that encourage substantive investment, is a pragmatic choice for establishing regional production capacity.



The discussion, moderated by Raymond Kwok of Shaohe, focused on more practical questions: how to build a more resilient regional footprint while continuing operations in China. China+1 is not simply about changing a shipping origin—it is about redesigning a regional structure that is substantive, compliant and sustainable.