

Foreword

ASEAN economic integration as spelt out in the ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint 2015 largely saw the group of 10 Member States working to facilitate market access by removing tariffs, in the case of goods, and removing entry barriers for services. And this ASEAN has done well. The next phase of economic integration in ASEAN calls for the region to focus on regulatory coherence across the 10 Member States. This will enable businesses to make better use of the market access initiatives already in place.

For clearly, there is little value in declaring that businesses are provided duty-free market access if laws, regulations, processes, and procedures make it almost impossible for businesses to take advantage of the preferences provided. Also, if regulations and standards vary widely across the region, or if customs requirements are different from port to port, businesses cannot grow.

It is in the spirit of ensuring ASEAN's competitiveness that we agreed on the need for a comparative study of the regulatory management system (RMS) in Asia-Pacific. This would provide us not only with an understanding of the RMS regimes but also a basis for a conversation on how we can further facilitate business and improve our investment environment; in so doing, help in deepening ASEAN economic integration.

We are pleased to have collaborated with the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA) and the New Zealand Institute of Economic Research (NZIER) in the study. On behalf of the Government of Malaysia, we must thank the Study Team headed by Ponciano S. Intal, Jr., senior economist at ERIA, and Derek Gill, principal economist of NZIER.



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