The annual Research Institutes Network (RIN) meeting was held in Jakarta, Indonesia on 29 January 2019, and was attended by 13 Research Institutes from across Southeast Asia.

Organised by the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA) with the Institute of Developing Economies - Japan External Trade Organization (IDE-JETRO), the meeting was moderated by Dr Hank Lim Giok-Hay from the Singapore Institute of International Affairs who is the RIN Chairperson.

ERIA President Prof Hidetoshi Nishimura welcomed the RIN members and thanked IDE-JETRO for their support as he delivered his opening remarks. He introduced the new representative from Australia, Dr Shiro Armstrong, Director of the Australia-Japan Research Centre, Crawford School of Public Policy, Australian National University.
During his remarks, Prof Nishimura highlighted the importance of human resource development under the new digitalized economy.

‘In 2040, It will be significant for all countries to develop young talents who can create innovation -employing new technology such as ICT, AI or IoT. It is not only for the higher education, but also strengthen as the primary and secondary education level.’

Mr Shigeki Kamiyama, Director General for Research Administration, ERIA gave a report on ERIA’s research projects in FY2018, followed by reports on ERIA collaborative research in FY2018 presented by Dr Tony Cavoli, Associate Professor of Economics, University of South Australia, Dr Armstrong, Dr Vo Tri Thanh, Senior Expert, Central Institute for Economic Management, and Dr Wisarn Pupphavesa, Senior Advisor, Thailand Development Research Institute.


Dr Ponciano S. Intal Jr, Senior Economist ERIA, introduced ERIA’s key research project for 2019 ‘ASEAN Vision 2040.’ Dr Armstrong lead a discussion on ‘Collective Leadership for East Asia and ASEAN’s Trans-Asian Role’.

Closing remarks and general wrap-up were delivered by Dr Lim.
Thoughts from ERIA

Indonesia and Japan: a role model in bilateral relations for ASEAN

‘Understanding the potential and existing challenges of Indonesia’s economic progress, Japan stepped in to help Indonesia achieve its vision of becoming a top-five global economy by 2045. Investment is fundamental for Japan to help Indonesia reach its 2045 economic goal, as it will enable the Southeast Asian country to be more competitive in the global value chain.’

Cantika Rustandi
Communications Consultant

The past few years point to signs of a changing global order that has significantly impacted global stability. Many countries are working together to strike a new equilibrium, symbolizing a modern era in international relations.

One example of the changing global times is China’s expanding economic and political power, which has caused tensions with the United States, Japan and Southeast Asian countries. Further, significant economic powerhouses have shown a growing appetite for unilateralism evident through protectionist and populist rhetoric as well as policies. Today’s reality is that the global order has not only shifted, it has shifted drastically.

During these uncertain times for international cooperation, particularly among the major powers, a solution is needed to counter the negative effects of growing unilateralism, which encompass instability and an economic slowdown. One possible solution is spearheaded by Japan and Indonesia through their Project 2045, the cooperation vision between the two maritime democracies moving in line with Indonesia’s 100th anniversary.

The project is more than a blueprint on how Indonesia can achieve prosperity and peace in 2045 with Japan’s assistance; it is also the coming together of two middle powers to bring stability to the region. Due to their significant roles in the global economy, the impact of Japan and Indonesia in the future can shift the power of Asia’s economic foothold.

Japan and Indonesia have shared 60 years of diplomatic ties, which have flourished into one of East Asia’s most robust diplomatic relationships, and the region should take note. To think of the Japanese and Indonesian governments reaching such a high-level of solidarity 60 years ago would have been a far-flung idea.

Now, both maritime democracies have linked arms to plan for the next 26 years in understanding the importance of their relations for the stability of the East Asian region.

Indonesia and Japan are on different spectrums of the global economy in terms of development yet both countries have found a way to reciprocally prosper. Even though Indonesia makes up the largest share of ASEAN’s GDP, is one of the most sought-after emerging markets and is consistently predicted to become one of the world’s top ten economies by 2030 by McKinsey and PricewaterhouseCoopers, the country still has miles to go before establishing a strong industry. For Indonesia’s economy, the expectations are high, and challenges are aplenty, however, if Indonesia can realize its “high scenario”, the country’s economy will rank as the fifth largest while Japan will be fourth largest globally.

Understanding the potential and
existing challenges of Indonesia’s economic progress, Japan stepped in to help Indonesia achieve its vision of becoming a top-five global economy by 2045. Investment is fundamental for Japan to help Indonesia reach its 2045 economic goal, as it will enable the Southeast Asian country to be more competitive in the global value chain.

The benefit for Indonesia is such a likelihood would reinforce its export-oriented economy, stabilizing its current account. Proper investment in the Indonesian economy would also help the more than 1,750 Japanese companies operating in Indonesia through the production of export-quality goods, greater customer loyalty and a boost in demand.

Economic cooperation by the two maritime democracies has become an increasingly natural decision considering Japan’s active role in Indonesia’s economic expansion. Based on statistics from Indonesia’s Investment Coordinating Board (BKPM), Japan ranked first in investment realization with a total FDI of $4.7 billion in 2013, whereas in the fourth quarter of 2017, Japan ranked second in investment realization covering 2,069 projects. If the collaboration succeeds in the coming future, a stronger Indonesian economy along with Japan’s would thus lead East Asian countries to rely less on major powers, while helping to generate greater stability in the regional economy.

On the political front, both countries are strong supporters of democracy in spite of the different maturity levels of their governments. As one of Asia’s oldest stable democratic governments, Japan offers in-depth insight for Indonesia, which has a relatively young democracy. Indonesia, on the other hand, has defended its “Bhinneka Tunggal Ika” or “Unity in Diversity” national motto and democratic principles in times of political hardships. The decision has proven to be crucial with the country battling recent waves of mass demonstrations and rising intolerance. Moving forward, both governments must continuously foster their diplomatic relations as defiance against democracy grows, while attending to the changing global climate, namely by 2045.

Japan and Indonesia have also worked on stabilizing regional security in East Asia, where countries, which are part of the Indo-Pacific, have been prone to conflict since equipoise in the region changed against China’s rising influence. Ensuring that the waters of the Indo-Pacific, including the South China Sea, are free and open is crucial for stimulating continued trade and economic activity.

As part of the Indo-Pacific, Japan and Indonesia have similar strategies to control the quarrel over regional waters, which often involves the South China Sea. Indonesia is guided by its “free and active” foreign policy, and hence turns to diplomacy and cooperation for a resolution. Japan has also opted for international cooperation and diplomacy, evident in its “Free and Open Indo-Pacific” foreign policy strategy which works to promote the rule of law, connectivity and stability to establish a free and open maritime order in the Indo-Pacific. Future territorial disputes in the Indo-Pacific are imminent, thus it is up to Japan and Indonesia to ensure that tensions do not escalate and East Asian governments refrain from the use of force.

What six decades of Japan-Indonesia relations have shown is that more is achieved through collective action. Achieving prosperity and peace as stated in Project 2045 is not unrealistic, however, considering the political, economic, and social hurdles along the way, the journey will instead be difficult. Nonetheless, Japan and Indonesia are prime examples that differences can be celebrated without the need to backtrack on international cooperation. As such, East Asia ought to look at Japan-Indonesia relations to understand the importance of regionalization amid a changing global order, and the advantages gained when diversity is utilized as a binding force.
Thailand as ASEAN Chair Will Focus on Sustainability of Things

As the ASEAN Chair in 2019, Thailand would focus on Sustainability of Things (SOT), which means sustainability in all dimensions, said Dr Suriya Chindawongse, Director General of ASEAN Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand, in a public forum, ‘Thailand’s ASEAN Chair: Challenges Ahead’ held in Bangkok on 12 February 2019 by the Institute of Security and International Studies (ISIS) and the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA) at the Faculty of Political Science, Chulalongkorn University.

Dr Chindawongse added that in their capacity as ASEAN Chair, Thailand would encourage advancing partnerships in sustainability with multiple stakeholders, including its dialogue partners.

In preparation for the Chairmanship, Dr Chindawongse has asked ERIA to prepare a study to envision the next 20 years of the ASEAN Community and to provide recommendations on the measures that ASEAN should take to prepare for those future scenarios. ERIA’s Senior Policy Fellow Dr Ponciano S. Intal, Jr. presented the key findings of the study entitled ASEAN Vision 2040: Stepping Boldly Forward, Transforming the ASEAN Community. The report will be forwarded to other ASEAN members for further discussions regarding its recommendations.

Dr Chindawongse expressed his appreciation for ERIA’s work on the study. Furthermore, he underlined ASEAN’s long-term objective to promote a people-centred ASEAN Community that leaves no one behind and that looks toward and is prepared for the future. He added that in so doing, ASEAN will become more effective in addressing the challenges within ASEAN and implement its decisions in a timelier manner.

‘This will enhance ASEAN’s strategic value-added and make it a dynamic partner in promoting win-win cooperation that would increase strategic trust and benefits in the region,’ said Dr Chindawongse said.

Ms Chotima Iemsawadikul, Director of the Bureau of ASEAN Economics, Department of Trade Negotiations, Ministry of Commerce, explained Thailand’s Priority Economic Deliverables based on global trends such as the Fourth Industrial Revolution, a balance of national and regional agendas, and the Prime Minister’s interests particularly on environmental issues like bioenergy and renewable energy. While new themes are included, some deliverables are the continuation of past achievements, such as ‘ASEAN Digital Integration Framework’ and ‘ASEAN Single Window’. According to Ms Iemsawadikul, one of the deli-
ERIA and Thailand Ministry of Energy Hold Workshop on Biomass Supply Chain

The Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA) and Thailand Ministry of Energy held a joint launching workshop for Biomass Supply Chain for Power Generation and Transmission Highway in the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) on 31 January 2019 in Bangkok.

Minister of Energy of Thailand H.E. Dr Siri Jirapongphan delivered the opening remarks for the workshop, followed by a keynote speech by Dr Veerapat Kiatfuengfoo, Director of Power Policy Bureau in the Energy Policy and Planning Office in the Ministry of Energy.

The presentations in the workshop were divided into two parts: Biomass Supply Chain for Power Generation and Transmission Highway in GMS. ERIA’s Energy Economist Dr Han Phoumin delivered his presentation ‘Cost Estimation of Biomass Power Generation’ in the first part.

According to Dr Han, his study aimed to assess the economic viability of the introduction of more biomass power plants in the southern part of Thailand, in order to provide the necessary policy recommendation for the Ministry of Energy.

This project is expected to be completed in May 2019. The outcomes will be presented to the Thailand Ministry of Energy.
ERIA, IDE-JETRO, and RIETI Hold Roundtable on Digital Economy

‘It is necessary to develop digital technology from primary or secondary school level to deal with the dramatic transformation of business model,’ said ERIA President Prof Hidetoshi Nishimura.

The Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA), Institute of Developing Economies Japan External Trade Organization (IDE-JETRO), and the Research Institute of Economy, Trade and Industry (RIETI) co-organised a Roundtable Discussion on ‘New Global Era of Digital Economies’ in Jakarta on 30 January 2019. This Roundtable is a T20 Japan associated event.

‘In order to participate in the new global value chain, the human resource development for the digital economy is critical for the coming twenty years. The Phase 5.0, “Digital Transformation”, is presently progressing in this region and the ICT ability of “Digital Coordination” has been the most important in this phase. It is necessary to develop digital technology from primary or secondary school level to deal with the dramatic transformation of business model,’ said ERIA President Prof Hidetoshi Nishimura in his opening remarks.

Following the opening remarks were two keynote addresses in the morning session. The first keynote address entitled ‘Statistical Machine Learning in the Era of Big Data and AI’ was delivered by Prof Tomoyuki Higuchi, Director General of the Institute of Statistical Mathematics, Japan. According to Prof Higuchi, a great social change has been underway at a speed faster than expected, and the use of search engine further transformed the world.

‘Before the search engine appeared, knowledge was structured and communicated as objects such as books. For example, in a library, you can imagine when you want to search for content written in one chapter of a book. You know, or eventually know, what chapter, which book, which bookshelf, which aisle in the room. After the search engine appeared, knowledge is no longer structured for the general public. In other words, it became a flat knowledge system,’ said Prof Higuchi.

Prof Higuchi added that for the young generation, the concept of sharing economy and citizen science occupies great value for life; therefore, it has become possible to start a business with relatively easy investment.

Director of European Centre for International Political Economy Dr Hosuk Lee-Makiyama delivered the second keynote address, entitled ‘Platform Business and Protection of Personal Information: Cases of the EU, the United States, and China’ in which he talked about digitalisation of the economy, evolution of platform economies, as well as regulatory and cybersecurity issues that arise.

The presentations in the afternoon were divided into two sessions. The first session, ‘Development of ICT and Industrial Development in East Asia and the Pacific’, was moderated by Dr Hyung-Gon Jeong, Senior Research Fellow from the Korea Institute for International Economic Policy. The second session, ‘Economic Growth and Narrowing Development Gap by Utilizing Communication Technologies’, was moderated by ERIA Chief Economist Prof Fukunari Kimura.
Energy Outlook and Energy Saving Potential in East Asia 2019

Edited by Shigeru Kimura and Han Phoumin

The Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA–EAS) Energy Outlook was updated in 2017–2018 through a revision of macro assumptions, such as economic and population growth as well as crude oil prices in the current lower price situation. This outlook also incorporates more recent information on the EAS17 member countries’ energy-saving goals and action plans, and power development plans such as renewable electricity. The EAS17 Outlook 2018 includes an estimation of the investment cost required for power generation and the whole energy infrastructure, including liquefied natural gas (LNG) receiving terminals and oil refineries. The outlook still focuses on analysing the additional energy savings that might be achieved by the individual countries above and beyond the Business-as-Usual scenario (BAU) projection. It continues to examine two scenarios – BAU and the Alternative Policy Scenario (APS) – and predicts energy supply, consumption, and CO2 emissions from 2015 until 2040. The APS includes not only more ambitious energy-saving targets but also rapid advances in low-carbon energy technologies, especially renewable energy. The outlook also assesses the Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDC)/NDC reported by EAS17 countries. Energy supply security has become a top priority energy issue for the EAS17 region. Implementing Energy Efficiency and Conservation measures and increasing renewable energy shares will certainly contribute to maintaining regional energy security through the reduction of imported fossil fuel consumption and increasing the use of domestic energy. Regional energy networks, such as the Trans-ASEAN Gas Pipeline and the ASEAN Power Grid, and oil stockpiling are recommended to be set up and accelerated to maintain energy supply security. Nuclear power generation always remains an option for securing the energy supply in this region.

World Trade Evolution
Growth, Productivity and Employment

Edited by Lili Yan Ing and Miaojie Yu

The book provides theoretical and empirical evidence on how world trade evolves, how trade affects resource allocation, how trade competition affects productivity, how China shock affects world trade and how trade affects large and small countries. It is a useful reference which focuses on new approaches to international trade by looking into country-specific as well as firm-product level-specific cases.

Cross-border Transport Facilitation in Inland ASEAN and the ASEAN Economic Community

Edited by Masami Ishida

The ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) was realised in 2015 and the Master Plan of ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC) was implemented between 2010 and 2015. This report examines transportation facilitation through the development of hard and soft infrastructure development. Regarding hard infrastructure, the report reviews the missing links identified in the MPAC and the effects of newly developed roads. As for soft infrastructure, the report reviews bilateral and multilateral agreements on exchange of traffic rights including the Cross-Border Transport Agreement (CBTA), the ASEAN Framework Agreement for Facilitation Goods in Transit (AFAFGIT), road traffic laws, and road signs of countries in the inland ASEAN subregion. The final chapter of the report also simulates the impacts of the newly developed roads on the economies of the whole subregion.

In this report, road signs are examined in detail, especially in the ‘CLMV countries’ (Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, and Viet Nam). What will happen if road signs are different once vehicles are able to cross borders freely? It was found that road signs in the countries of the subregion follow the Vienna Convention on Road Signs and Signals in 1968 and, while there are some differences between the road signs in some countries, no potentially dangerous incompatibilities were discovered.
Rethinking Migration Governance in the Mekong Region: From the Perspective of the Migrant Workers and Their Employers

Edited by Naomi Hatsukano

ASEAN RISING: ASEAN and AEC Beyond 2015 puts together ideas, thoughts and Workers in the Mekong Subregion migrate within their countries and beyond their country borders in search of better opportunities. Factories and other enterprises in the region also relocate within their home countries and beyond their home country borders to optimise opportunities and minimise costs in the era of the ASEAN Economic Community. This project explored the various aspects and dimensions of migration in the Mekong Subregion, including workers’ decisions to work within or beyond their home country border, the related consequences, the situation of employers and enterprises, their attitude towards migrant workers, and the policy environment for migration and development in the Mekong Subregion.

Technical Change, Exports, and Employment Growth in China: A Structural Decomposition Analysis

By Doan Thi Thanh Ha and Trinh Quang Long

This paper analyses the sources of employment growth and assesses the contribution of exports to job creation in China. To do so, we utilise an input–output table to decompose employment growth into contributions from technical change, labour productivity, domestic final demand, and exports of domestically produced output. Our main data source is the annual input–output data from the China Industrial Productivity Database covering 1981–2010, of which employment figures have been adjusted to account for serious structural breaks observed in official statistics. The input–output framework allows us to explore both the direct impact of exports on employment within a given industry and the indirect impact through inter-industry transactions. Our major findings are fourfold. First, the increase in final demand, including both domestic demand and exports, is the main driver of employment growth in China. The strong growth in final demand offsets the decline in employment caused by enhanced labour productivity, especially during the 2000s. Second, the contribution of exports to job creation has increased significantly, especially in manufacturing and agriculture, following China’s accession to the World Trade Organization. Third, labour productivity accelerated in all sectors, led by manufacturing. Last, most technical upgrading occurs in manufacturing, while agriculture experiences increased technical upgrading through the decline in labour usage.
Multi-product Firms, Tariff Liberalisation, and Product Churning in Vietnamese Manufacturing

By Doan Thi Thanh Ha

Utilising firm-level data covering the 2010–2015 period, this study documents the frequency and characteristics of multi-product firms in Vietnamese manufacturing. Our major findings are as follows. First, multi-product firms are larger, more capital-intensive, more productive, and are more likely to export. Second, multi-product firms are active in the market. Approximately 60% of firms adjust their product scope within a 6-year period. Third, the contribution of firms’ product extensive margin to aggregate output growth is limited due to the prevalence of product dropping, which offsets the positive impact of product adding. Most output growth during the period is thus generated by the intensive margin. Turning to the link between tariff reduction and product shedding, we do not detect any significant impact. However, we find that exporters have an important role in product adding, which suggests they may contribute to aggregate growth through the channel of product scope expansion. Contrary to our expectation, our analysis offers limited support for the heterogeneity of product turnover across ownership types. While we find that state-owned enterprises are more likely to spread economic activities across products and industries, there is little difference in terms of product churning amongst foreign direct investment, state-owned enterprises, and the domestic private sector.

Quantitative Assessment of the Impact of EMS Standards on the Firms’ Attitude towards Product Safety

By Duong Lan Huong, Tsunehiro Otsuki, and, Etsuyo Michida

In response to regulatory policies on environmental and consumer safety, firms implement various initiatives to enhance their environmental compliance to enter or stay in the markets where those regulatory policies are present. Using firm-level data from Japan, this paper examines the impact of ISO14001 adoption and internationalisation status of firms on their compliance with product-related environmental regulations (PRERs) imposed by the European Union. We apply a bivariate probit model to estimate the relationship between adoption of ISO14001 and compliance with the European Union’s RoHS (Restriction of Hazardous Substances) Directive and REACH (Registration, Evaluation, and Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals) Regulation, taking into account the potential simultaneity between ISO adoption and PRER compliance. Also, the effect of internationalisation status such as participation in global value chains on PRER compliance is examined. The results indicate that the effect of ISO14001 on those PRERs may occur only when firms operate in a stringent regulatory environment.
Upcoming Events

The Seventh International Conference for Universal Design 2019
Date: 3-6 March 2019
Venue: Bangkok, Thailand

ATISA Negative List Approach Workshop
Date: 4-5 March 2019
Venue: Hanoi, Viet Nam

Socialization Workshop on Baseline Study on Regulatory Management Systems (RMS) Questionnaire
Date: 5 March 2019
Venue: Phnom Penh, Cambodia

Socialization Workshop on Baseline Study on Regulatory Management Systems (RMS) Questionnaire
Date: 5 March 2019
Venue: Manila, Philippines

Socialization Workshop on Baseline Study on Regulatory Management Systems (RMS) Questionnaire
Date: 7 March 2019
Venue: Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar

The 13th Empirical Investigation on Trade and Industry
Date: 7-9 March 2019
Venue: Sapporo, Japan

The Third workshop of Better Expenditure Management of Infrastructure Finance
Date: 10-11 March 2019
Venue: Bangkok, Thailand

Launching Ceremony on Myanmar Energy Statistics
Date: 11 March 2019
Venue: Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar

Launching Ceremony on Cambodia Energy Basic Plan
Date: 20 March 2019
Venue: Phnom Penh, Cambodia

The First Workshop of Reaping the Benefits of Digital Economy
Date: 20-21 March 2019
Venue: Bangkok, Thailand

About Us

The Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA) is an international organisation based in Jakarta, Indonesia that conducts in-dept research on issues facing the people and governments of ASEAN and East Asia.

ERIA works closely with the ASEAN Secretariat and research institutes from across East Asia and beyond to provide innovative and analytical research and policy recommendations. Our projects are organised under three research pillars:

• Deepening Economic Integration
• Narrowing Development Gaps
• Achieving Sustainable Development