

Press Release



ERIA, ASEAN SMEWG and ASEAN Secretariat Hold a Joint Workshop on “Developing ASEAN SME Policy Index” in Jakarta, Indonesia

Jakarta, January 24, 2012 - In order to move the preparation of the “ASEAN SME Policy Index Framework” forward, Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA) together with ASEAN SME Working Group (ASEAN SMEWG) and the ASEAN Secretariat held a joint workshop from January 22 - 24, 2012 at ERIA’s Office in Jakarta, Indonesia with 27 participants from the members of the ASEAN SMEWG, ERIA’s research team, ASEAN Secretariat, and leading professionals from the region, OECD, Australia, and the World Bank to extensively discuss the draft framework of the ASEAN SME Policy Index.

In his opening remark, Mr. Hidetoshi Nishimura, Executive Director of ERIA noted that the workshop was a testimony of close collaboration between ERIA, ASEAN policy-makers, and stakeholders in its research work to fulfill high expectations from ASEAN’s leaders to have vibrant, dynamic, and competitive SMEs in an integrated ASEAN community, as expressed in the ASEAN Chair’s Statement at the 19th ASEAN Leader Summit in Bali, November 18th, 2011.



Prof. Fukunari Kimura, Chief Economist of ERIA, recalled the concept of inclusiveness (Geographical, Industrial, and Societal) in the “Jakarta Framework: moving AEC toward into 2015 and Beyond” to narrow income gaps in the region through industrial inclusiveness, where SMEs’ linkages with large enterprises are crucial in ASEAN integration. He stressed that the ASEAN SME Policy Index must base on and be seen as one of economic policies (to enhance efficiency, positive externalities, and to rectify market failures) in the development agenda toward ASEAN integration, in supplement to international commercial policies (such as free trade and investment agreements).

On behalf of the ASEAN SMEWG, Mr. Effandi bin Haji Salleh, Head of the Entrepreneurial Development Centre, Ministry of Industry and Primary Resources, Brunei Darussalam, expressed his appreciation and reiterated supports from the ASEAN SMEWG to this important initiative and stressed that “the ASEAN SME Policy Index helps to create a unifying framework; to identify blockages and stumbling blocks early; and to assist members to take proactive measures for the betterment and social uplifting of SME Community in ASEAN”.

Press Release

During the 3-day workshop, the ERIA's research team, members of the ASEAN SMEWG, and prominent discussants engaged in an extensive and productive discussion to ascertain the appropriateness, measurability, and applicability of sub-dimensions, indicators, and levels of policy reforms for each of the following policy dimensions:

1. General SME policy and business environment.
2. Cheaper and faster start-up and better legislation and regulation for SMEs;
3. Access to finance;
4. Technology and technology transfer;
5. Market access and getting more out of the single market;
6. Entrepreneurial education and training;
7. Information and communication technology (ICT) and information access; and
8. Developing stronger, more effective representation of small enterprises' interests.

In closing the workshop, Dr. Ponciano S. Intal, Jr, Senior Researcher, on behalf of ERIA expressed his profound gratitude for active involvement and supports from the ASEAN SMEWG for the success of the workshop and noted that such a cooperative spirit between research institutions, researchers, and ASEAN bodies could serve as the model for future undertakings. On behalf of the ERIA's Governing Board, Dr. Ramon M. Guesada also congratulated and attributed the success of the workshop to the cooperative spirits and conveyed his appreciation to all participants and full support to this important effort.

Finally, Dr. Wimonkan Kosumas, Deputy Director General, Office of Small and Medium Enterprises Promotion, Ministry of Industry, Thailand, on behalf the ASEAN SMEWG, conveyed her heartfelt thanks to ERIA's research team for this hard work and expressed hope that "ASEAN SME Policy Index is going to be the most important management innovation in ASEAN Countries". She reassured that "ASEAN SMEWG stands ready to cooperate with and support ERIA in order to have this comprehensive index as policy guidance for ASEAN leaders to contemplate and see directions how to push development of mass SMEs in ASEAN forward".

Afterwards, ERIA's research team held a separate technical meeting in the afternoon of the last day to further discuss and incorporate all comments and suggestions from the workshop in order to revise and elaborate the draft framework. The research team planned to submit the revised draft to ERIA in the middle of February 2012 to be forwarded to the ASEAN SMEWG through the ASEAN Secretariat for solicited comments and suggestions. The final draft framework of the ASEAN SME Policy Index is expected to be completed by the end of March 2012 and submit for an endorsement from the ASEAN SMEWG in April 2012 for the next phase of the implementation.

For more information, please contact:

Hiroshi Okasaki (Mr.)

Director, Public Relations

Tel: +62 21 5797 4460 Ext. 201

E-mail: hiroshi.okasaki@eria.org

Sothea Oum (Dr.)

Associate Researcher

Tel: +62 21 5797 4460 Ext. 308

E-mail: sothea.oum@eria.org

Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA):

ERIA is an international organization that supports the ASEAN Secretariat by making policy recommendations at regional governmental meetings such as the East Asian Summit (EAS), aimed at furthering East Asia's economic integration.

Office: Sentral Senayan 2, 6th Floor Jalan Asia Afrika No.8 Gelora Bung Karno – Senayan Jakarta Pusat 10270, Indonesia