

Foreword and Acknowledgements

The ERIA Report 'ASEAN RISING: Moving ASEAN and AEC Forward Beyond 2015' highlights the importance of a Responsive Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) as part of an ASEAN strategy to achieve robust and equitable growth in an integrating ASEAN region beyond 2015. A Responsive ASEAN involves ASEAN and ASEAN Member States being responsive to and addressing the concerns of business in the region as they need to maintain and continuously develop business and investment environments that assist the private sector as the key motor of sustained high and equitable growth in ASEAN.

A Responsive ASEAN also entails a responsive regulatory regime, which in terms of process involves consultation, coordination, and evaluation, and in terms of content involves pro-competitive, commensurate, and non-discriminatory regulations, or what the World Bank calls 'Smart' regulations, i.e. streamlined, meaningful, adaptive, relevant, and transparent regulations. Finally, Responsive ASEAN entails regulatory coherence that facilitates an attractive business and investment climate in the integrating region. Regulatory coherence at the regional level in ASEAN calls for greater regulatory convergence of rules, regulations, and standards, helping, in turn, to reduce trade barriers among members. Regulatory coherence at the national level involves a variety of policies and regulations fitting together in a least-cost fashion, free of unnecessary redundancies and conflicting policies that are consistent with regional and other international agreements. It also involves effective coordination among agencies at the national level as well as between national and subnational levels of government.

The Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA) and the governments of Malaysia and New Zealand agreed to undertake a comparative study of regulatory management in countries in the East Asia and Pacific region. The New Zealand Institute of Economic Research (NZIER) joined with ERIA to undertake the study. This project was designed to contribute to connectivity in the Asia-Pacific region by focusing on the development of responsive regulatory regimes. It also has the potential to guide further capacity building in the public sector by sharing understanding across countries and creating a process for learning together.

The countries in the study included Australia, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Singapore, Republic of Korea, Thailand, and Viet Nam. This meant that there was a mixture of ASEAN and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) member countries from the Asia-Pacific region. Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Myanmar participated in the workshops as observers. The project tapped the expertise of both researchers and practitioners in undertaking the country studies. The collaboration among the researchers and practitioners has proven to be very fruitful.

ERIA would like to thank the Study Team headed by Ponciano Intal, Jr., senior economist at ERIA, and Derek Gill, principal economist of NZIER. ERIA would also like to thank the contributions of each member of the study team who are listed in the next section. Finally, ERIA is most appreciative of the support of the Government of New Zealand and the Government of Malaysia. The project is a good example of fruitful collaboration among research institutions and government officials.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "H. Nishimura". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "H" and "N".

Hidetoshi Nishimura
President, ERIA