



Capacity Building

ERIA Capacity Building Programme

Over the last year, the Capacity Building Programme has taken a new strategic direction under the directorship of its first dedicated Programme Coordinator. This was made possible with generous funding from the Government of Australia in recognition of the unique opportunities and advantages ERIA can contribute in this field.

Building on its in-house experts, their research, and ERIA's strong relations with the programme's participating countries — Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, and Viet Nam — ERIA is well positioned to strengthen the link between research and policymaking. This it is doing with an array of new and expanded activities including

- inviting government officials to participate in ERIA research,
- organising workshops for officials on issues where ERIA has strong expertise,
- providing bespoke trainings, and
- creating momentum for change through policy dialogues.

Component 1: Capacity Building through Participation in Research

Integrating government officials in ERIA research teams offers numerous advantages. Their participation in the discussions, alongside national and international academic and government counterparts, allows them to gain

a strong understanding of the issues as well as ensure an exchange of data with the researchers and promoting a policy focus to the studies. Government officials are currently involved in two ERIA studies:

- **SME Participation in ASEAN and East Asian Regional Integration**

This study commenced in August 2015, and held its second technical workshop in January 2016. It looks into participation of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in regional trade, production networks, enabling factors for SMEs, and policy imperatives to promote participation. As the economies of ASEAN and East Asia become increasingly integrated, how domestic SMEs are doing is of concern for policymakers.

- **Reducing Unnecessary Regulatory Burdens**
Many national regulations have not been crafted using established principles of good regulatory practice. Undertaking a review of existing practices in particular sectors will identify the burdens of most concern; reducing unnecessary regulatory burden can make sectors more attractive in the increasingly competitive and integrated ASEAN. Commencing in September 2015 with a second workshop in February 2016, this study is expected to be completed in late 2016.



Component 2: Increasing Understanding of Technical Issues

Two workshops under this activity are being organised in the first year.

- Non-Tariff Measures

The implementation of non-tariff measures is common but the purpose and difference with non-tariff barriers are often misunderstood. Creating a clearer understanding of the two and how and when they can be used is of growing importance. This workshop was held in Siem Reap, Cambodia, 16–18 February 2016 for 24 government officials.

- Services Liberalisation

This training shared ERIA's approach to analysing services liberalisation from an analytical and methodological approach. The analytical framework explains the ASEAN Framework Agreement in Services within the context of services liberalisation. Understanding this is critical for states to develop a liberalisation plan or strategy. This training, for 17 government officials, was held on 15–16 March 2016 in Bangkok.

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Component 3: Increase Research Capacity

In response to a request from Cambodia's Ministry of Economy and Finance, ERIA has partnered with the Asian Growth Research Centre at the University of Adelaide to provide a series of economic policy modelling workshops for the ministry's young economists. Equipping the officials with new modelling methodologies allows them to undertake better research. After the second workshop, the officials were divided into six groups, all tasked to produce a study on a particular topical issue in Cambodia. The three best papers will be presented to the Minister in May 2016.

Component 4: National Policy Dialogues

The 2015 National Policy Dialogue for Viet Nam was held on 14 December at the Sheraton Hotel on the theme 'Developing an Agricultural Value Chain in the Mekong Region'. The dialogue was opened by H.E. Mr Tran Quoc Khanc, Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade. Over 150 people

from government, academia, the private sector, and international organisations attended the event. The keynote speech was given by Professor Sisira Jayasuriya of Monash University and was followed by two panel discussions looking at the issue from the policy and business perspectives.

A policy dialogue to launch the ERIA study, 'Lao PDR at the Crossroads: Industrialisation Strategy 2016–2030', was held in Vientiane on March 2016.

Component 5: Executive Leaders' Initiative

Each year ERIA holds its Executive Leaders' Initiative for Deputy Directors General (DDGs). The 2015 event themed 'Developing an Agricultural Value Chain in the Mekong Region', was held in Ha Noi and Da Lat, Viet Nam, 14–17 December.

The meeting allowed DDGs to think 'out of the box' in identifying the needs to achieve the goals of a regional agricultural value chain. Supporting the DDGs were world-renowned academics and expert practitioners from across the region. Three DDGs from each country, in addition to a senior level official from Thailand, attended the event.