

Message from the President



◀ **Prof. Hidetoshi Nishimura**
President



ERIA was ranked 14th in the international economic policy think tanks category of the 2018 Global Go To Think Tank Index Report. ERIA's research seems to have been highly valued globally.

Fiscal year (FY) 2018 was the year ERIA expanded the scope of its activities as it needs to help chart the further direction of ASEAN and East Asia. This came after the establishment of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) in 2015 and as it looked forward to its 10th anniversary.

A review of ERIA's deliverables for FY2018 reveals that ERIA widely expanded its field of activities to help clear the path for the economic integration and development of East Asia.

One such deliverable is the 'ASEAN Vision 2040' project. Based on the cooperation and support of the chairs of ASEAN and the East Asia Summit, ERIA provided more than 30 themes for background papers on the prospects of ASEAN and East Asia in 2040 from political-security, economic, and socio-cultural perspectives. In this publication ERIA proposed a message of collective leadership of the East Asia region, which means strengthening

ASEAN centrality for it to become the institutional hub for regional integration and economic and social development. ERIA invited many of the region's experts and conducted several workshops with the key institutions, before submitting the integrated report to the ASEAN Foreign Minister's Meeting of January 2019. The ministers mentioned the importance and contribution of ERIA in their ministerial statement.

On economic research, ERIA, together with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the ASEAN Coordinating Committee on Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (ACCMSME), supported by the Government of Canada, officially launched the ASEAN SME Policy Index (ASPI) 2018 in September 2018 on the occasion of the ASEAN Economic Ministers Meetings in Singapore. The ASEAN SME Policy Index 2018 maps and benchmarks SME development policies across ASEAN Member States. ERIA continued work



on the joint feasibility studies of the ASEAN–Canada free trade agreement and reported the findings at the Seventh AEM–Canada Consultations. The Policy Design Department of ERIA also made policy recommendations on the trade and investment issues in particular. ERIA submitted a Discussion Paper to the East Asia Summit Economic Ministers Meeting (EASEMM) that identified three key challenges to the further economic integration of the region in the current period of global uncertainty.

Another important field is energy-related issues. About 30%–40% of research projects undertaken by ERIA relate to energy issues. In FY2018, ERIA conducted various studies on energy policy based on the EAS Mid-Term Energy Policy Research Roadmap. First, projects related to ASEAN Power Generation and Transmission System Planning Institution (AGTP) and ASEAN Transmission System Operator Institution (ATSO). Second, issues concerning the natural gas market. Third, delivery of liquefied natural gas to islands in the Philippines. Fourth, a hydrogen potential study in the EAS region. ERIA reported the progress of each project to the EAS Energy Ministers Meeting of October 2018. ERIA also developed collaboration with each member state. It produced the first energy statistics of Lao PDR and the Myanmar Gas Master Plan, cooperating with the governments of Lao PDR and the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, respectively.

The scope of ERIA's activities is continuously expanding and deepening to tackle the key regional issues. Based on the experts' network on population aging and long-term care, which was built up during the first year (2017–2018) of ERIA's Healthcare Unit, the unit undertook several studies, participated in forums and conferences, and organised an

event. The activities of the Healthcare Unit are implemented in line with the Asia Health and Wellbeing Initiative (AHWIN), which was launched by the Government of Japan and aims to create vibrant and healthy societies where people can enjoy long and productive lives. The AHWIN website (<https://www.ahwin.org/>) was set up in January 2019 for the purpose of publicising the activities related to AHWIN, including the outcomes of studies carried out by ERIA's Healthcare Unit. In the area of the environment, ERIA conducted several studies on waste management systems in the region, and on circular economy and innovation. ERIA attended the World Circular Economy Forum in Yokohama on October 2018 to report the results of our studies.

ERIA has also kept good relations with several external partners such as the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA) with which ERIA has developed cooperation. ERIA and AIPA held a dialogue entitled Parliamentarians Supporting the 'Quiet Revolution' for Better Regulatory Governance in April 2018. ERIA is well placed to contribute to a dialogue with parliamentarians focusing on non-tariff measures and barriers as well as good regulatory practice and reducing unnecessary regulatory burdens thanks to its various projects and in-depth surveys on these issues.

ERIA's effort in 2018 continued to expand, and received unabated recognition from regional leaders. They commended ERIA's continuous support through the chairman's statement of various ASEAN and its related summits. At the 12th East Asia Summit, leaders 'commended the 10th Anniversary of ERIA and its contributions to deepening research on economic integration, narrowing the development gap, achieving sustainable development, and

strengthening regional health services in ASEAN and East Asia. We encouraged ERIA to continue providing targeted high quality research on topics that highlight and address the challenges facing the region.'

ERIA held its 10th anniversary events in Singapore in August, in Tokyo in October, and in Jakarta in December. We were very honoured to receive the ministers, parliamentarians, high-level officials, and representatives from the business sector who have continuously supported ERIA's activities over the first 10 years of its existence. Especially on the occasion of the event in Jakarta, which is the back-to-back event of the High Level Seminar of 'Project 2045' commemorating the 60th anniversary of Indonesia–Japan diplomatic relations, ERIA collaborating with United Nations Development Plan, and the Committee of Japan and Indonesia, launched the final report of the Japan–Indonesia 60 year anniversary of the diplomatic relationship, which focuses on the long-term vision for the cooperation between the two countries.

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We are proud of these achievements in 2018 but we will not be complacent. As ERIA celebrates its 10th anniversary in 2018, we will be more vigilant in helping to address the challenges of deeper economic integration and development in ASEAN and East Asia in the years to come.



Prof. Hidetoshi Nishimura
President

