

Message from the President



Prof. Hidetoshi Nishimura
President

In January 2021, ERIA was ranked 9th in the international economic policy think tanks category, and 5th in the Southeast Asia and the Pacific category of the 2020 Global Go To Think Tank Index Report.

In fiscal year (FY) 2020, ERIA expanded the scope of its activities to help chart the future direction of ASEAN and East Asia.

A review of ERIA's deliverables for FY2020 reveals that ERIA widely expanded its field of activities to help clear the path for the economic integration and development of East Asia. The global coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has also been on the agenda of our research activities this fiscal year. ERIA published numerous policy briefs on its implications for the economy (trade, investment, and fiscal policy), energy, and the environment (waste management). These policy briefs give recommendations to ASEAN Member States for tackling the negative impact of COVID-19 effects in the region. Their key message of sustaining connectivity and the competitiveness of regional supply chains, and utilising digital technology was highly appreciated by the member states.

As for its research activities, ERIA published the Subregional Development Strategy in ASEAN after COVID-19: Inclusiveness and Sustainability in the Mekong Subregion (Mekong 2030). The subregional approach has proved to be particularly effective for addressing development gaps, enhancing connectivity, and promoting international coordination. ASEAN is encouraged to continue to adopt a multilayered approach to deeper economic integration and to activate other subregional initiatives. The publication was commended by the Chairman's statement of the 37th ASEAN Summit in November 2020 as providing useful insights for ASEAN Community building.

Another important field is energy-related issues. In FY2020, ERIA conducted various studies on energy policy based on the EAS Mid-Term Energy Policy Research Roadmap. ERIA has projects related to the demand and supply potential of Hydrogen Energy in East Asia, energy storage for renewable energy integration, and valuation of CO₂ Emissions Reduction by Mobility Electrification and Alternative Biofuel Introduction in EAS countries. ERIA also conducted projects to develop energy outlooks and master plans in the CLMV countries. ERIA reported the progress of each project to the EAS Energy Ministers Meeting of November 2020. ERIA hosted the 3rd East Asia Energy Forum, together with the Ministry of Industry and Trade of Viet Nam, which discussed 'Carbon Capture Utilisation and Storage (CCUS), and Carbon Recycling in ASEAN.'

The scope of ERIA's activities is continuously expanding and deepening to tackle the key regional issues. During FY2020, ERIA's Healthcare Unit published three books and two research project reports. 'Ageing and Health in Viet Nam' is one of them and it reports the result of the baseline survey of the Longitudinal Study of Ageing and Health in Viet Nam. ERIA co-organised an ASEAN-wide workshop in Ha Noi in November 2020 to discuss population ageing in the region and to launch this book, together with the Ministry of Health of Viet Nam, the World Health Organization, and the United Nations Population Fund. Another memorable event handled by the Healthcare Unit was the announcement event of the winners of the first Healthy Ageing Prize for Asian Innovation Award, which was co-organised with Japan Center for International Exchange. Three winners were selected from more than 130 applicants from twelve countries by the international advisory committee,

which is made up of leading experts on population ageing throughout the region. The Unit has been focused on the activities related population ageing in the region, but welcomed a new expert on clinical trials and health development in October 2020. In the area of the environment, ERIA conducted several studies on waste management as well as the issue of marine plastic debris in the region. Since October 2019, ERIA has been setting up a Regional Knowledge Centre on Marine Plastic Debris (RKC-MPD) as part of the ASEAN Plus Three framework. The Knowledge Centre launched a website for sharing best practices of member states. RKC-MPD also launched a private sector platform which highlights the cutting-edge technologies on marine plastic debris. Regarding agriculture, ERIA conducts projects on realisation of higher value added of agricultural products in ASEAN countries through the development of effective cold chains, and enhancing food supply chain resilience and food security in ASEAN through digital technologies. The key messages were reported at the 20th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture and Forestry Plus Three meeting held in October 2020.

ERIA has also kept good relations with several external partners such as the ASEAN Inter - Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA) with which ERIA is now cooperating. AIPA and ERIA renewed their Memorandum of Understanding on January 2020 and conducted the 'Online Joint Dialogue on Waste Management in the Context of COVID-19 Pandemic' on June 2020 to discuss municipal and medical waste management during the pandemic. ERIA attended the 41st AIPA General Assembly on September 2020. The AIPA General Assembly adopted a new resolution on 'Expanding Cooperation between AIPA and ERIA', which

includes the extension of their Memorandum of Understanding to develop AIPA's capacity on matters concerning ASEAN Economic Community and ASEAN Economic Integration. 'The Ministers encouraged ERIA to undertake policy-based research to improve trade and investment including making value chains resilient to shocks of EAS economies, effectively address the impending recession, promote new technologies and develop a framework for the EAS regional economic integration and development after overcoming the COVID-19 pandemic' in the Joint Media Statement of the 8th EAS Economic Ministers Meeting.

In 2020, ERIA's efforts and activities continued to expand and received unabated recognition from regional leaders. Leaders 'encouraged ERIA to continue providing support to the Chair of the ASEAN Summit and the East Asia Summit by undertaking high-quality policy based research, especially those that will help the EAS region respond well to the after-effects of COVID-19

pandemic', in the Chairman's statement of the 15th East Asia Summit on November 2020. 'The Ministers commended efforts by ERIA as a regional think-tank in conducting quality research work to facilitate ASEAN's regional integration process' in the Chairman's Press Statement of The ASEAN Coordinating Council.

In January 2021, ERIA was ranked 9th in the international economic policy think tanks category, and 5th in the Southeast Asia and the Pacific category of the 2020 Global Go To Think Tank Index Report. ERIA was also ranked 43rd globally in the category of 'Top Energy and Resources Policy Think Tanks.' In short, ERIA's research seems to have been highly valued globally.

We are proud of our achievements in 2020, but we will not be complacent. ERIA 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