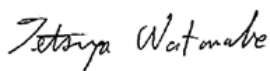


Foreword

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) region's dependence on the ocean and inland water economies is significantly higher than that of most other regions around the world. As evidenced by the findings of this report, these economies contribute a significant 20%–30% share of total gross domestic product for some countries in South-East Asia, both directly and indirectly. Over 90% of global trade passes across the world's oceans and through the Mekong River for some countries in South-East Asia as well. Thus, it is imperative that the development of the Blue Economy be fully supported, especially in finding the most appropriate strategy to achieve the twin goals of economic growth and sustainability.

The Blue Economy offers a promising future as a new engine of growth through (i) job creation in emerging sectors such as aquaculture, renewable energy, and tourism; (ii) promotion of economic diversification, leading to a more resilient economy to withstand future shocks; (iii) strengthened food security, as the ocean and inland water sectors can provide plentiful food throughout the region; and (iv) fostering of innovation and technology in the field, such as marine biotechnology and energy solutions.

This report presents an overview of the current development of the Blue Economy in each ASEAN Member State (AMS). It documents the perspective of each AMS towards the Blue Economy, analyses primary regulations and specific policies related to Blue Economy implementation, reviews major Blue Economy initiatives undertaken, examines risks and challenges towards Blue Economy development, and identifies related cross-border cooperation in each AMS. This report identifies key development processes and suggests potential enablers to inform policymakers in designing the best Blue Economy strategies to promote shared prosperity and sustainability in the South-East Asian region.



Tetsuya Watanabe

President

Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA)

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This collaborative effort has brought together the diverse expertise, perspectives, and resources of each ASEAN Member State, resulting in comprehensive and insightful exploration, as well as a nuanced understanding of the challenges and opportunities associated with the Blue Economy in South-East Asia, which is set to be the new engine of growth in the region.

We hope that this integrative report on the Blue Economy will provide insights to policymakers and other stakeholders as they create future development strategies for their respective countries.