

Capacity Building

ERIA's Capacity Building Programme (CBP) continued to adapt and tailor its activities to the needs and requests of governments in a timely manner. Over the course of the year, activities resumed being delivered in-person as well as continuing in hybrid format. Over the year, the CBP expanded its audience to include both the private sector and government officials at the provincial level for outreach concerning the RCEP. In this way, the CBP fulfilled its mandate to strengthen the link between ERIA expertise and policymakers on issues critical for the development of the region.

By the end of the year, more than 300 government officials had participated in capacity building activities based around three components: (i) participation in ERIA research, (ii) ASEAN

and regional priorities, and (iii) increased research capacity. In addition, about 180 members of the public – primarily the business community – participated in public-private dialogues on the RCEP.

Integrating government officials in ERIA research continues to benefit officials as they gain a stronger understanding of complex issues, and it allows them to exchange perspectives with ERIA academics and government counterparts. In FY2022, officials participated in ERIA studies titled 'Servicification, Structural Transformation and Pandemic Recovery, and Global Value Chains' and 'Cities, Urban Amenities, and Global Production Value Chain: New Developments in Trade and Service Liberalisation in East Asia and ASEAN'; and a study workshop on climate change adaptation.





Throughout the year, the CBP supported workshops on (i) rules of origin under the RCEP; (ii) Transposition of Tariff Commitment from ASEAN Harmonized Tariff Nomenclature, and (iii) Training for Collecting NTMs. Government officials were also able to join ASEAN Secretariat–ERIA events and workshops on the 4IR Programme to Reinforce Professionals and an Introduction to GRP in ASEAN.

Responding to a request from Cambodia’s Ministry of Commerce, the CBP held a series of public–private dialogues around three key themes of the RCEP agreement: trade in services, investment, and trade facilitation. In partnership with the Government of the Lao PDR, the CBP held a 2-day in-person public–private

dialogue to cover the same themes, along with trade in goods and e-commerce in Vientiane, before going on to hold information sharing events about the RCEP in Luang Prabang and Savannakhet.

To increase officials’ capacity to conduct evidence-based policy modelling around forward-looking issues, the CBP held the first workshops in two series of workshops, one on RCEP, Regional Integration, and Structural Transformation; the other on Structural Transformation, Sustainable Growth, and Regionalism: Challenges and Opportunities for Cambodia.

The CBP continues to be funded through a grant from the Australian Government.

Strategy and Partnership

The Strategy and Partnership Programme (SPP) continued to expand the development of programmes and knowledge products (policy briefs, discussion papers, event reports, and op-eds) on innovation, start-up ecosystems, economic empowerment of women, disability, and social inclusion. The SPP also contributed to strengthening and widening collaboration with stakeholders in the region to advocate ERIA's work more broadly by establishing several partnerships with relevant stakeholders.

A. Policy Dialogues and Partnership in Collaboration with the ASEAN+6 and Relevant Stakeholders

The SPP contributed to developing and strengthening partnerships and strategic outreach with key stakeholders. Several policy dialogues and peer learning activities to discuss policy initiatives in catalysing the post-COVID-19 economic recovery were conducted in partnership with relevant ASEAN+6 and international organisation stakeholders, and a global high-level forum. Key activities included the following:

- The SPP joined the Startup20 Inception Meeting under G20 India as a global policy dialogue to promote start-up creation and scale-ups. Under the G20 Presidency, India created the

Startup20 group as a new G20 engagement group dedicated to new business ventures, entrepreneurship, and innovation ecosystems.¹

- The SPP represented ERIA at a webinar organised by APEC as a workshop for micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) to assess their readiness to adapt to an evolving market in the post-pandemic recovery process.² The SPP presented the findings of the Entrepreneurship–Startup–Innovation (E-S-I) Knowledge Lab research on entrepreneurship, digital connectivity, and policy approaches for boosting the entrepreneurial mindset and ecosystem.
- The SPP team was involved in the G20 Indonesia Presidency, especially working with Indonesia's Ministry of Communication and Information of Technology in a Digital Innovation Network event.³ The forum aimed to share knowledge, encourage discussion, and build partnerships amongst global innovation players including start-ups, venture capitalists, and corporations. Highlighting the theme of the rise of the digital economy in the post-pandemic era and beyond, ERIA experts and the SPP team took part in the forum as judges and as the authors of the G20 Digital Innovation Network Whitebook.⁴

¹<https://www.eria.org/news-and-views/eria-joins-startup20-inception-meeting-under-g20-india/>

²<https://www.eria.org/news-and-views/trends-in-micro-small-medium-sized-enterprises-discussed-at-apec-workshop/>

³<https://www.eria.org/news-and-views/eria-contributes-to-writing-the-g20-digital-innovation-network-whitebook/>

⁴<https://g20innovationnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/g20dinwhitebookcompendium.pdf>

- The SPP supported a side event of the ASEAN Summit 2022 and the first big technology and start-up event in Cambodia – Cambodia Tech Expo (CTX) – in November 2022. This expo reflected the spirit of collaboration and a multi-stakeholder approach towards Industry 4.0, followed by panel discussions and start-up business pitches.
- In collaboration with CIIE.CO, the Innovation Continuum from India, SPP conducted a peer learning session that aimed to share knowledge and tools relevant to entrepreneurship ecosystems in South and Southeast Asia. Four webinar episodes were conducted and four event reports produced on several topics – incubator as catalyst for innovation, health technology (health tech), agricultural technology (agritech), and women entrepreneurs. The reports also present a comparative analysis of some of the major policies in India and ASEAN.⁵
- The SPP established partnerships with several international institutions including the UNCTAD eTrade for All initiative, ADB Southeast Asia Development Solutions, and the Asian Network. Several activities focused on the digital economy, trade, and women’s empowerment.

B. Entrepreneurship--Startup--Innovation Knowledge Lab

The SPP continued the success of the E-S-I Knowledge Lab as a platform to discuss and share ideas and develop knowledge on how innovation and business creation contribute to the post-COVID-19 pandemic recovery across ASEAN and East Asia. ERIA’s E-S-I Knowledge Lab website⁶ and LinkedIn page⁷ were formed as an open and collaborative platform that engages a multi-range of stakeholders across academia, the business community, policymakers, and international organisations. Since its establishment in mid-2022, the E-S-I Knowledge Lab LinkedIn page has more than 500 subscribers. As several activities resumed in person in 2022, the SPP in partnership with the Asian Network conducted live discussions with experts in Brunei Darussalam,⁸ Malaysia,⁹ and Viet Nam¹⁰ from September to October 2022 to gather inputs on the challenges and opportunities of this ecosystem.

C. Economic Empowerment of Women and the Participation of Women in the Digital Economy

The SPP continued to develop analytical work, policy dialogues, and involvement in a high-level discussion on the participation of women in the economy. Key actions included the following:

⁵<https://www.eria.org/publications/category/event-reports>

⁶<https://www.esi-eria.org/>

⁷<https://www.linkedin.com/showcase/e-s-i-knowledge-lab/>

⁸<https://www.eria.org/news-and-views/eria-the-asian-network-launch-e-s-i-knowledge-lab-in-brunei/>

⁹<https://www.eria.org/news-and-views/eria-the-asian-network-launch-e-s-i-knowledge-lab-in-kl/>

¹⁰<https://www.eria.org/news-and-views/eria-launches-e-s-i-knowledge-lab-in-ho-chi-minh-city/>

- The SPP participated in the G20 Women Ministerial Conference on Women's Empowerment in 2022 under the Indonesia Presidency. The conference highlighted issues including missing opportunities in the labour market, closing the digital gender gap: women's participation in the digital economy and future work, and women's entrepreneurship. H.E. I Gusti Ayu Bintang Darmawati, Indonesia's Minister of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection, Indonesia's Minister of Finance, and Italy's Minister of Equal Opportunity and Family were amongst the ministers who delivered special ministerial notes.¹¹
- As part of the 2nd ASEAN Women Leaders' Summit, the SPP participated in the 2022 ASEAN Women Entrepreneurs Conference with a theme focused on 'Unlocking the Potential of Women's Entrepreneurship in ASEAN.' The event was hosted by H.E. Dr Ing Khanta Phavi, Minister for Women's Affairs of Cambodia, and joined by women entrepreneurs, as well as representatives from UN Women, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, and others.¹²
- The SPP held a collaborative webinar on women in the digital economy. The E-S-I Knowledge Lab conducted a webinar on 'Female Entrepreneurs in the ASEAN Region: Innovation to Tackle Marine Plastic Waste' in collaboration with the RKC-MPD; a webinar titled 'Dare to Start: Addressing Gender Gaps in Entrepreneurship in Asia', held with the Tokyo Centre of OECD; a session on women and digital entrepreneurs, organised at the UNCTAD eCommerce Week; and a session on Women in Health, with the Asian Network.
- The SPP published several publications focusing on women in the digital economy, including a discussion paper on the availability of gender-disaggregated data on the ASEAN digital economy and empowering women entrepreneurs in eastern Indonesia.¹³



¹¹<https://www.eria.org/database-and-programmes/women-empowerment-closing-gender-gap-reaffirmed-in-g20-ministerial-conference/>

¹²<https://www.eria.org/news-and-views/asean-women-entrepreneurs-are-key-for-the-post-pandemic-recovery/>

¹³<https://www.eria.org/publications/availability-of-gender-disaggregated-data-on-the-asean-digital-economy/>; <https://www.eria.org/publications/empowering-women-entrepreneurs-in-eastern-indonesia/>



D. Disability and Social Inclusion

The inclusion of persons with disabilities is one of the key priorities for ASEAN. The SPP continued to work on this issue by producing two research project reports:

1) Inclusive Education in ASEAN: Fostering Belonging for Students with Disabilities

This study summarised key national and international frameworks in the ASEAN region that foster awareness and commitments to inclusive education, and provided a country-by-country analysis of the interconnected domains of inclusive education.¹⁴ A dissemination event dedicated to this issue was conducted on 21 July 2022. Adrian Gilbert and Antonella Noya, representatives from the Australian and OECD missions to ASEAN, opened this session.¹⁵

2) Technology and Disability: Trends and Opportunities in the Digital Economy in ASEAN. This research project report examined the current and potential role of digital technology in fostering the inclusion and economic empowerment of people with disabilities in the ASEAN region. The dissemination event was conducted on 9 February 2023. Kate Goodfruit, the representative of the Australian Mission to ASEAN, delivered the opening remarks.¹⁶

The SPP also became a partner in the establishment of the Neurodiversity at Work Research Centre, the first Southeast Asia hub of inclusion research dedicated to connecting workers with disabilities to meaningful employment. Together with the centre, ERIA will be a partner in conducting evidence-based research whose outputs aim to improve the diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) journeys in the region.

¹⁴<https://www.eria.org/publications/inclusive-education-in-asean-fostering-belonging-for-students-with-disabilities/>

¹⁵<https://www.eria.org/news-and-views/inclusive-education-in-asean-fostering-belonging-for-students-with-disabilities/>

¹⁶<https://www.eria.org/news-and-views/discussion-on-technology-disability-trends-opportunities-in-the-digital-economy-in-asean/>

