

Preface

This report is the outcome of a Collaborative Research Project between the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA) and the Institute of Developing Economies, Japan External Trade Organization (IDE–JETRO), titled ‘Regional Waste Management – Inter-municipal Cooperation and Public and Private Partnership’.

Most of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries are facing challenges to improve waste management. Traditionally, urban areas had been the main target of waste management, to prevent the spread of infectious waste. The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the importance of collection and proper treatment of not only clinical waste, but also municipal solid waste, which may contain infectious waste. ASEAN countries have also experienced air and water pollution from open dumping sites and incineration plants without pollution control. Such pollution has resulted in residents opposing the construction and operation of waste treatment and disposal facilities.

Recently, the marine plastic debris issue has moved to the top of the agenda in the negotiations on global environmental problems. Southeast Asian countries are regarded as major sources of marine plastic debris. To prevent leakage of plastic waste into the ocean, governments should provide waste collection services not only in urban area, but also in rural areas. In addition, collected waste should be treated and disposed properly. Even if waste is collected, without pollution control plastic waste and microplastics may leak from dumping sites.

Some waste treatment and disposal technologies, including sanitary landfills and waste-to-energy plants, exhibit economies of scale. To achieve economies of scale in waste management, each country should consider introducing regional waste management schemes, in which municipalities jointly use waste treatment and disposal facilities.

This report reviews efforts on regional waste management in Asian countries, especially Japan, the Philippines, Indonesia, and Thailand.

In the course of this project, we conducted interviews and site visits in several countries. In addition, we organised two seminars in Indonesia and Thailand, and had discussions with various stakeholders from central and local governments and private companies, and experts, researchers, and others. We would like to express our special thanks to the stakeholders, especially the co-organisers of the seminars – the Ministry of Environment and Forestry of Indonesia, the Department of Local Administration of the Ministry of Interior in Thailand, the National Municipal League of Thailand, the Solid Waste Management Association of Thailand, and the Faculty of Environment Management of Prince of Songkhla University. We would also like to thank the Ministry of Environment, Japan for the financial contribution to ERIA's research projects on recycling and waste management, including this project.

We hope this report will contribute to some initiatives on regional waste management in the region.

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