



Foreword

People know it when they see it, but it is hard to define the boundaries' is a description as apt for international regulatory cooperation (IRC) as it is for art, notes Derek Gill in the book, *Interconnected Government: International Regulatory Cooperation in ASEAN*. This may seem surprising for a practice that goes back to at least 1874 with the establishment of the Universal Postal Union and since then has become ever more deeply enmeshed at the bilateral, regional, and multilateral levels around the globe.

Yet, while the practice has been growing, questions remain as to what it actually is, what its different forms are, why do it, what is promoting it, what the barriers to it are, and how it is governed. These questions will be explored in this book, specifically intended as a guide to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Member States (AMS). To help understand perceptions of IRC within the AMS, this study used interviews and a survey of issues and attitudes relating to IRC in each AMS, along with New Zealand, to gain insight into its persuasiveness and pervasiveness.

But why do this study now? There is currently a lack of literature on and understanding of this issue in ASEAN. With more insight into the practice of IRC, we hope this study will promote IRC at a time when ASEAN is focused on good regulatory practice – of which IRC is a subset – as critical to achieving the goals of the ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint 2025. Within this blueprint, Element B7 'Effective, Efficient, Coherent and Responsive Regulations and Good Regulatory Practice', under the second characteristic of 'A Competitive, Innovative and Dynamic ASEAN', is key. While there are many drivers of IRC, good regulatory practice is seen as fundamental to reducing costs by streamlining regulations, thereby increasing trade and competitiveness.

The Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA) has a long history of research in this field, and we are honoured to partner again with Derek Gill, Principal Economist at the New Zealand Institute of Economic Research, and co-editor of the 2016 two-volume series *The Development of Regulatory Management Systems in East Asia*. This book, like the 2016 series, was intended to be co-edited by Derek Gill along with Dr. Ponciano Intal, Jr. Tragically, Ponciano was taken from us in August 2019. ERIA, his family, friends, and colleagues still mourn his demise and miss his reassuring presence dearly. Like so many research projects and so much out-of-the-box thinking within ERIA and the ASEAN Community more broadly, this research project was inspired by Ponciano, and we would like to dedicate this book to his memory.

While it has been difficult to complete this book without Ponciano, I would like to give special thanks to Derek Gill who stepped in to take charge and complete this important study in a timely way, sharing insights we hope will inspire AMS to move forward in undertaking IRC.

This book was originally intended to contain individual country studies from each AMS, as well as New Zealand. While it has not been possible for us to proceed with this original plan, I am very pleased that this book can shed light on practices found in all AMS. I would therefore like to thank all contributors to this study whose case studies do not appear in this book. They are Prof. Ahmed M. Khalid and co-authors Dr. Nazlida Binti Muhammad and Dr. Masairol Bin Masri from Brunei Darussalam, Dr. Ngov Penghuy from Cambodia, Dr. Yose R. Damuri and co-author Mr. Dandy Rafitrandi from Indonesia, Dr. Leeber Leebouapao and co-author Dr. Aloun Phonvisay from the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mr. Kyaw Soe Thein from Myanmar, Dr. Hank Lim Giok-Hay from Singapore, and Dr. Vo Tri Thanh from Viet Nam. My thanks also go to the authors of the country studies as presented in this book.

This project would not have succeeded without the support and close cooperation of the governments of the AMS, especially their support in implementing the survey on IRC.

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May this book shed light on and improve understanding of IRC in ASEAN, and may it provide insight and inspiration for IRC to contribute to the development of an economically integrated and prosperous region.



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