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Press Release

## **The Institute for Global Environmental Strategies and the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia Sign MoU to Strengthen Policy Research for Circular Economy and Prevention of Marine Plastic Pollution in ASEAN+3 Countries**

On 7 January, the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES) and the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA) signed a Memorandum of Understanding to promote data-driven policy-making and knowledge dissemination over the next 5 years.

Though the MoU covers comprehensive collaboration between the two institutions, the initial focus is on promotion of circular economy, such as prevention of marine plastic pollution. The first collaborative project, “Data Driven Policy Research Programme on Marine Plastic Debris”, will be implemented jointly through ERIA’s Regional Knowledge Centre for Marine Plastic Debris (RKC-MPD). Within the framework of this institutional collaboration, an IGES staff member has recently been seconded to ERIA as a project coordinator.

The Southeast Asian region has increased its resource consumption in recent years due to its high population density and rapid economic growth. Motivated by the alarming recognition that Southeast Asia and East Asia have become the biggest contributors to marine plastic pollution, the RKC-MPD was established by ERIA with financial support from the Government of Japan in October 2019. The RKC-MPD serves as an information clearinghouse on marine plastic pollution in ASEAN+3 countries, aiming to facilitate national and regional cooperation by promoting relevant policies and good practices among the member states.

IGES has longstanding expertise in the areas of circular economy and resource efficiency, and experience in many international efforts including policy advisory activities for Southeast Asian countries on marine debris, along with its technical contributions to G20 process. ERIA has contributed to conducting research and policy analyses to facilitate the building of the ASEAN Economic Community, promoting wide economic integration and sustainable development in East Asia, and narrowing development gaps in the region.

IGES President Kazuhiko Takeuchi stated, “IGES is eager to collaborate with ERIA to jointly address the pressing regional problem of marine plastic litter in the region. Through this collaboration, my hope is for IGES to contribute, more broadly, to the promotion of a more circular economy and sustainable policy making.”

“We have identified IGES as our valuable partner given the rich expertise they have in policy recommendations towards more sustainable consumption and production patterns in Asia. I hope that this MoU will be the beginning of a fruitful institutional collaboration towards the development of ASEAN and the East Asia region” said Hidetoshi Nishimura, President of ERIA.

The challenge of marine plastic pollution is emblematic of the globalised world in which we live, where one country alone cannot provide long-lasting solutions to a collective problem. Being aware of the need to tackle this issue regionally, with the full engagement and support of the ASEAN+3 member states, IGES and ERIA will utilise their expertise to formulate regional policy recommendations by promoting circular economy as the key to sustainability in the region.

#### **About the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES)**

The Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES) is a collaborative research and outreach organisation working to accelerate the transition to a sustainable, resilient, shared, and inclusive Asia-Pacific region, both across borders and within the world at large. Our strategic research and operations are defined by a mission — to drive action on the world’s most critical environmental and social challenges through the delivery of trusted expertise on sustainable development and resilience. IGES operates as an agent of change. Together with key international organisations, governments, academic institutes, business and civil society leaders we seek to foster a world where planetary boundaries are fully respected, a green economy is flexibly implemented, and the well-being of people is steadily improved. In so doing we emphasise workable and inspired approaches to cross-cutting global development issues ranging from climate change, natural resources and ecosystems management, and sustainable consumption and production, among many others. The Institute — established in 1998 with support from the Japanese government and Kanagawa Prefecture — maintains its international headquarters in Hayama, Japan. With offices and local centres in Tokyo, Kansai, Kitakyushu, Beijing, Bangkok and New Delhi, IGES supports a regional and global network for groundbreaking sustainable development research and practice. More information can be found at: <https://www.iges.or.jp/en/>

#### **About the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA)**

Headquartered in Jakarta, Indonesia, the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA) is an international organisation that provides support to the chair of the ASEAN and East Asia Summits through policy research focusing on three pillars: deepening economic integration, narrowing development gaps, and achieving sustainable development in the region. It was established by the 16 heads of government at the Third East Asia Summit in Singapore on 21 November 2007 to work closely with the ASEAN Secretariat, government officials, research institutes and the private sector to provide analytical research and fact-based policy recommendations. More information can be found at: <https://www.eria.org/>

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