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# **TECHNOLOGY AND SKILLS IN THAILAND**

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**ASEAN Regional Studies Promotion Programme**  
General Editors: C.Y. Ng, R. Hirono, Robert Y. Siy, Jr.

# **EFFECTIVE MECHANISMS FOR THE ENHANCEMENT OF TECHNOLOGY AND SKILLS IN THAILAND**

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and  
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# Foreword

One of the central objectives of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), as embodied in the Bangkok Declaration under which ASEAN was founded, is the promotion of Southeast Asian studies. In this context, ASEAN warmly welcomed the offer of Mr Zenko Suzuki, the Prime Minister of Japan, in early 1981 to support the launching of an ASEAN Regional Studies Promotion Programme.

After extensive consultations among ASEAN member countries and between ASEAN and Japan, it was agreed that the ASEAN Regional Studies Promotion Programme, initially to extend over a period of five years, should focus on policy-oriented socio-economic research. Given the overriding importance that ASEAN attaches to economic development and the vital role of ASEAN-Japan economic relations in this regard, ASEAN-Japan Industrial Co-operation was adopted as the first topic of research under the Programme. The second topic chosen was Effective Mechanisms for the Enhancement of Technology and Skills in ASEAN. An integrated ASEAN-Japan Overview, together with volumes on the individual ASEAN countries, are the fruits of this second phase of research.

The recent history of ASEAN-Japan relations has been marked by a degree of ambivalence. As the first Asian nation to industrialize successfully and to have risen as a phoenix from the ashes of war-time destruction to the leading heights of industrial and technological power, Japan has always been held with a degree of awe and admiration by its southern ASEAN neighbours. Such awe and admiration have, however, been tinged with a certain amount of suspicion derived from war-time memories, especially as the impact of Japan's post-war economic expansion becomes increasingly felt in the ASEAN region.

On the Japanese side, historical circumstances and the need for economic reconstruction in the early post-war years made it unavoidable that, initially, its external relations were largely oriented towards the West, especially the United States. However, as Japan rose to global economic prominence, and its economic presence in Southeast Asia grew, it increasingly came to attach greater importance to its relationship with the ASEAN countries.

ASEAN first approached Japan collectively in the early 1970s on the question of Japan's production of synthetic rubber and its adverse impact on the ASEAN economies. From such narrow beginnings, the dialogue has quickly expanded into the present broad-based consultative framework of the ASEAN-Japan Forum. Given the historical background, there is a general recognition that while economics must remain the central pillar of ASEAN-Japan relations, the socio-political context under

which such economic relations evolve is also of prime importance. Thus, a central objective of the ASEAN-Japan dialogue is the development of greater mutual awareness, understanding, friendship, and trust between the peoples of ASEAN and Japan, especially among the younger generation. In this regard, it is particularly heartening that the present Programme has begun to bring together many young researchers from both ASEAN and Japan in collaborative research on various important and pressing issues of mutual concern. The interactive thought process involved in such research, and the development of *common* perceptions on a wide range of issues, cannot but help improve the effectiveness of the dialogue and establish ASEAN-Japan relations on a firm basis. The ASEAN Secretariat and the Japan Institute of International Affairs, as the ASEAN and Japanese co-ordinating units for the Programme respectively, are happy and honoured to be playing a part in this process.

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March 1986

# Preface

The study on “Effective Mechanisms for the Enhancement of Technology and Skills in ASEAN” was undertaken as the second phase of research under the ASEAN Regional Studies Promotion Programme, the first being “ASEAN-Japan Industrial Cooperation”.

Country research teams from the five ASEAN countries and Japan were required to identify and examine problems in their respective countries in technology transfer and skills enhancement. Such a study, involving different countries with varied experiences, naturally poses problems of comparability. Nevertheless, to maximize comparability across countries, the study relied on the use of a common core questionnaire as well as a common analytical framework and data analysis procedure. In addition, the incorporation of country-specific factors salient and relevant to technology transfer and skills enhancement was encouraged. The final research design therefore attempts to accommodate such requirements.

Thus, primary data were collected through sample surveys taken on selected industries located in the ASEAN countries. Conclusions were then drawn and recommendations made from the findings of such surveys. From this exercise, five ASEAN-country papers were produced by the respective ASEAN-country research teams. These together with two papers prepared by the Japanese team giving Japanese perceptions and historical experiences on technology transfer and skills enhancement in ASEAN form the basis of an integrated overview which has been published under the title, *Effective Mechanisms for the Enhancement of Technology and Skills in ASEAN: An Overview*. The five country-papers are also being published separately. The monograph that follows is one in the series.

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