

# CLAIR Singapore Newsletter

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## Japan–Singapore Study Program 2014

CLAIR Singapore conducted the “Japan–Singapore Study Program” on 26 – 29 August 2014, making this the second year in which this program has been held. Targeted for Japanese local government officials and staff, the program explores on topics that are of interest and relevance to Japanese local governments in the planning and formation of their own policies, and aims to allow participants to learn in greater depth about Singapore’s stance and strategies in these areas, through visits to related Singapore and Japanese government agencies as well as local businesses and enterprises in Singapore. The program was separated into 2 main themes this year, the first of which focused on Singapore’s advanced tourism promotion strategies and recent tourism infrastructure developments, while the latter-half looked at how Japanese local governments could attract more inbound tourists to Japan as well as expand their product distribution channels in overseas markets.

### **Track 1: Singapore’s Tourism Strategies and Infrastructure Developments (26 – 27 Aug)**

Through visits to world-renowned facilities such as Changi Airport and the country’s 2 integrated resorts – Resorts World Sentosa (RWS) and Marina Bay Sands (MBS), program participants were able to first take a closer look at how tourism resources are being managed in Singapore, as well as gain a better understanding on the strategies that lie behind these infrastructure developments. A tour through the Marina Bay City Gallery then allowed them to study more about Singapore’s current and future plans to further develop the Marina Bay area into becoming both a

key financial district and tourist destination; while a separate visit to Singapore Airlines let them gain a deeper insight into the successful branding concept behind one of the world’s most reputable airlines, where they were also given a rare view of the training facility for its cabin attendants. Lastly, a briefing was also conducted at the Singapore Tourism Board (STB), where participants were able to learn in greater details some of the tourism strategies that Singapore is adopting to achieve the nation’s vision of attaining “quality tourism”, through developing a sustainable and mature tourism industry.

### **Track 2: Tourism Promotion and Overseas Market Development Strategies of Japanese Local Governments in Singapore (28 – 29 Aug)**

To allow program participants an overview of some of the latest economic and tourism trends in both Singapore and the ASEAN region, a briefing was first conducted by representatives from the Singapore offices of Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) and Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO) respectively. Next, participants then visited the local offices of Japanese banks, supermarket chains as well as travel agencies in Singapore, namely Iyo Bank Ltd., Isetan, Ban Choon Marketing and JTB Singapore, where they were able to hear first-hand information about actual situations and experiences that they had faced in the development and promotion of Japanese products in Singapore. Finally, on the last day of the program, participants were given the opportunity to visit and take part in NATAS – the largest international travel fair in Singapore, where they were given brief stints to man some of the booths within the Japan Pavilion (set up by JNTO Singapore) and helped to provide tourist information on Japan to fair visitors.

The Japan–Singapore Study Program not only aims to let Japanese local government participants gain insights on some of the most advanced policies and strategies of Singapore, but also the opportunity to engage with related counterparts and obtain useful information that could help them further expand their activities within the region. Backed by encouraging feedbacks from past participants and together with the support from our partners, CLAIR Singapore will continue to organize such study programs in the future and promote an even higher level of exchange between Japanese local governments and our counterparts in Singapore and ASEAN as a whole.



Participants observing the training of cabin attendants at SIA Training Centre



## Discover the Appeal of Japanese Local Regions with Food – Linking Tourism Promotion with Local Signature Products

In collaboration with Japan National Tourism Organization Singapore Office (JNTO Singapore), CLAIR Singapore participated in the Japan Travel Fair 2014 from 3 – 6 October 2014 which was held at Takashimaya Shopping Centre along Orchard Road, one of the most popular shopping streets in Singapore. This is the fourth consecutive year that JNTO Singapore has organized the travel fair in Takashimaya.

As a new initiative by CLAIR Singapore to link destinations with local products so as to create a stronger impression on Singapore travelers, we had specially installed some booths at the fair that allowed exhibitors to conduct sampling and sales of local Japanese signature products in addition to providing tourism information. Although Japanese food has a very high visibility in Singapore, there is still a lack of appreciation of products as the specialties of particular regions. This new approach strives to instill in travelers the association of certain products with the specific local regions in which they are famous in, thereby raising travelers' awareness of "must-eat" foods that are unique to each of the individual local regions. Kyoto Prefecture, Kitakyushu City and Chuo City in Tokyo participated in this initiative, bringing local specialties such as Matcha green tea, rice crackers, different varieties of Japanese confectionery as well as destination pamphlets for promotion.

In particular, Uji Matcha green tea from Kyoto Prefecture proved extremely popular as many visitors could be seen walking around the fair with a sampling cup and pamphlets of Uji City in their hands. Japanese green tea has long been accepted by consumers as a prominent product of Japan. By giving out tea samples while introducing Uji City as a famous Matcha green tea producing area, many consumers became conscious of a new destination in Kyoto that is synonymous with Uji Matcha.

In other instances, rice crackers and dried seaweed brought in by Kitakyushu City and Chuo City respectively were also among the well-liked products in the fair. The exhibitors' explanations about the products origins led consumers to learn more about Fukuoka Prefecture



Souvenirs depicting Japan's famous Nihombashi bridge being promoted by Chuo City

where Kitakyushu City is located, as well as the various traditionally celebrated products that are indigenous to Tokyo. It is hoped that the combined effects of taste and travel will entice more visitors to consider travelling to the local areas of Japan.

The fair attracted 11 other exhibitors from Japan that provided travel information to various local destinations in Japan, and 10 travel agencies that sold Japan-bound tourism products. According to JNTO Singapore's flash report, there were 727 buyers of tourism products during the fair, an increase of 26% from last year. Apart from the scenic attractions and culinary delights, many visitors have also expressed interest to go for exclusive experiential tours in which they would be able to participate in traditional cultural activities. While Hokkaido, Tokyo and Kyoto remained the most popular destinations, there were also many enquiries about the Tohoku region, Chubu and Hokuriku regions, Chugoku region and Okinawa, which suggests that there is a strong growing demand for new destinations in the mature Singapore market that has seen many repeat travelers to Japan.



Kyoto Prefecture promoting Matcha green tea and Japanese confectionery



CLAIR Singapore staff attending to visitors' queries at JNTO's tourism information booth



# EROPA's 60th Executive Council Meeting and Conference in Hanoi

As a member of the Executive Council of The Eastern Regional Organization for Public Administration (EROPA), CLAIR attended the organization's 60th Executive Council Meeting and Conference held in Hanoi, Vietnam from 19 to 24 October 2014.

Established in December 1960, EROPA is an organization consisting of states, groups and individuals in Asia and the Pacific. EROPA was founded in response to a common desire among developing countries to promote regional cooperation in improving knowledge, systems and practices of government administration so as to help accelerate economic and social development in the region. In fact, EROPA was the first organization in the region devoted to the development of public administration so as to catalyze the economic and social advancement of countries in Asia and the Pacific.

During the 60th Executive Council Meeting on 19 October, a report on EROPA's activities in year 2013 was made and the organization's operational policies were also discussed. In addition, executive council members also exchanged their views on matters relating to the organization's efforts in enhancing its presence and membership through increased publicity, as well as strengthening its development of next generation leaders.



The 60th Executive Council Meeting of EROPA

The EROPA Conference officially started on 20 October, whereby the Prime Minister of Vietnam, Mr. Nguyen Tan Dung graced the opening ceremony and delivered a keynote address. Based on the main conference theme of "Public Administration and Governance in the Context of Regional and Global Integration", a series of simultaneous workshop sessions was held from 21 to 22 October, witnessing 42 professional academic papers being presented. This includes papers such as "E-Governance in the 21st Century - Opportunities and Challenges for Vietnam" from Vietnam's National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA), "The Government Institutions and Economic Performance in ASEAN" from Thailand's National Institute of Development Administration (NIDA), "Dynamics



Group photo of Mr. Nguyen Tan Dung, Prime Minister of Vietnam and foreign delegates

of Supranational Institutions and Nation States: Issues and Challenges for Public Administration" by the University of the Philippines.

Several speakers from Japan, including assistant professors and researchers from leading academic institutions in Japan such as Tokyo University, Nagoya University and Meiji University also presented their papers during the workshop sessions. Representative from Japan's Local Autonomy College (LAC), which is a national member of EROPA, delivered a presentation entitled "Challenge and Innovation in Training Systems for Japan's Local Public Employees in the Age of Decentralization" during one of the workshop sessions.

During the conference, academics and practitioners of public administration presented their papers on various issues of common interests to governmental organizations in the region, and the conference provided an effective platform for the participants to exchange their views with the speakers.

Held annually, the EROPA meetings will be conducted in Shanghai, China for year 2015 and in Manila, Philippines for year 2016.



A simultaneous workshop session

## CLAIR Singapore Visits Cambodia's Ministry of Interior and Local Governments

In order to conduct a more in-depth study on Cambodia's local administration structure, a group from CLAIR Singapore visited Cambodia on 6 – 11 October 2014, during which the group members met with leaders and representatives from various local governments in Cambodia including Phnom Penh Capital Hall, Preah Sihanouk Provincial Hall and the No. 3 Sangkat in Sihanoukville City, through the kind assistance and coordination from Cambodia's Ministry of Interior (MOI).

During a courtesy call to H.E. Prum Sokha, Secretary of State at the Ministry of Interior, the group from CLAIR Singapore had the opportunity to learn in greater details about the current decentralization situation in Cambodia, as well as some of the issues that the Cambodian government is facing and the various efforts that they are actively undertaking to push for further local administrative reforms in the country. The Secretary of State also expressed hopes to further collaborate with organizations such as CLAIR and JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency)



Meeting at MOI with the Secretary of State, H.E. Prum Sokha (left)

in the future, especially in the area of education and training of civil servants in Cambodia.

Through such visits and research, CLAIR Singapore looks forward to further strengthening our ties with the Ministry of Interior and our counterparts in Cambodia, and continue contributing towards a higher level of understanding between local governments in Japan and Cambodia.

## CLAIR Singapore Visits Pune Municipal Corporation in India

Staff from CLAIR Singapore visited Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) in India on 5 September 2014, with the aim to further enhance our understanding of the roles and functions of Indian city governments.

Mr. Omprakash Bakoria, Additional Commissioner of PMC, briefed the staff from CLAIR on the various policies the city has adopted on a variety of issues. These include implementing a Bus Rapid Transit System and improving its solid waste management system in response to a population increase due to a corresponding increase in

the number of business ventures in Pune in recent years; putting more effort into promoting children's education and giving out scholarships; computerization of various administrative procedures such as e-procurement, property tax management, grievance resolution and the accounting procedures etc. PMC has also drawn up a city development plan in which the development targets and methods of implementation will be set solely by PMC, with the Central and State Governments monitoring the city's progress.

Thanks to the coordination of PMC, the visiting delegation was able to visit the Pune-Okayama Friendship Garden which is a Japanese garden built with the collaboration from Okayama Prefecture, an e-learning school which predominantly uses media content in its teaching and which is a groundbreaking initiative in India, as well as a new organic waste management facility that employs Pyrolysis technology to convert organic waste into electricity.

CLAIR will continue to engage and build mutually beneficial relations with India's local governments. It is hoped that cooperative ties between CLAIR and India's local governments could be leveraged to greater heights in future through CLAIR's programs such as the Specialist Dispatch Project and the Local Government Exchange & Cooperation Seminar.

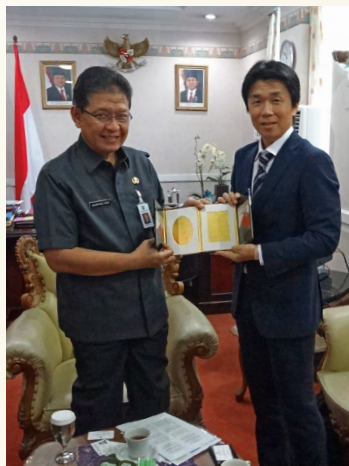


CLAIR Singapore staff in a meeting with PMC officials



## CLAIR Enhances Cooperation with Indonesia's Ministry of Home Affairs

The Director of CLAIR Singapore, Mr. Adachi Masahide and his staff called on Mr. Agung Mulyana, Director General of Governance Affairs in Indonesia's Ministry of Home Affairs on 2 September 2014, with the objective of further strengthening the collaborative ties between both organizations. Since 2012, the Directorate General of Governance Affairs under Indonesia's Ministry of Home Affairs has officially become CLAIR Singapore's counterpart



Mr. Adachi Masahide, Director of CLAIR Singapore (right) with Mr. Agung Mulyana, Director General of Governance Affairs (left)

in the implementation of its programs and activities in Indonesia, and the two organizations have enjoyed years of constructive relations thus far.

With the strong support and assistance from the Directorate General of Governance Affairs, CLAIR Singapore has been able to conduct many of its programs and activities, for example the Regional Exchange Promotion Program, Local Government Exchange

and Cooperation Seminar, Specialist Dispatch Project and many others in Indonesia. During the meeting, Mr. Adachi provided explanations on the various activities conducted by CLAIR Singapore and explored new channels of cooperation with the Directorate General of Governance Affairs. In addition, Mr. Adachi also showed his appreciation towards the Directorate General of Governance Affairs for its assistance in CLAIR Singapore's "2012 Japan-Indonesia Regional Exchange Promotion Program" which was implemented in Indonesia.

Mr. Agung Mulyana, Director General of Governance Affairs who greeted representatives from CLAIR Singapore during the visit showed great interest in CLAIR Singapore's programs, and he has personally proposed several new ideas on the form of collaboration that could be materialized to carry the cooperation between both organizations further. Mr. Agung was particularly interested in promoting the knowledge transfer between local authorities in Japan and Indonesia, especially in fields such as disaster management whereby Japan is very much advanced.

It is hoped that CLAIR Singapore's cooperative relations with the Directorate General of Governance Affairs and Ministry of Home Affairs in Indonesia could be leveraged to greater heights in the future through CLAIR's programs and activities.

## Visit Japan Travel Seminar and Business-Meeting Session 2014 in Vietnam

Organized by the Japan Tourism Agency (JTA) and Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO) Bangkok Representative Office, the "Visit Japan Travel Seminar and Business-Meeting Session 2014" was successfully held in both Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City earlier this October. Following last year's inaugural event, this was the second consecutive year in which the event is being held in Vietnam, and CLAIR Singapore is very happy to have been able to participate in both sessions. This year's event received an even better response and larger group of participants as compared to the previous year, with a total of 27 groups from Japan (including 13 Japanese local governments and related organizations), as well as 32 companies from various travel agencies, airline operators and media agencies in Vietnam attending the event at Hanoi; while at Ho Chi Minh City, a total of 28 groups from Japan (including 13 Japanese local governments and related organizations) and 45 companies from Vietnam attended the session.

According to the latest tourism statistics released by JNTO, visitor arrivals from Vietnam to Japan from January to October 2014 saw a 47% increase as compared to the same period in the previous year, hitting a record-high of 106,000 visitors in total. Together with further relaxation in

the multi-entry visa requirements for Vietnamese nationals visiting Japan starting from 30 September, the Vietnamese market for inbound tourism to Japan is expected to grow steadily in the coming years and through such events, CLAIR Singapore hopes to continue to support Japanese local governments in their tourism promotion efforts within the region.



Business-meeting session at the venue in Ho Chi Minh City

# CLAIR's Overseas Economic Seminar in Tokyo: Looking at the Strategies of Japanese Local Governments when Entering Markets in Southeast Asia

CLAIR's Overseas Economic Seminar, organized by CLAIR Singapore, was held at Tokyo's Todofuken-Kaikan (Hall of Prefectures) on 19 May 2014. Targeted towards Japanese local governments and related organizations in Japan, representatives from both Singapore and Japan were invited to speak at the seminar, to share with participants on some of the latest updates and information about Singapore and the Southeast Asia region.

Divided into 2 sections, the first-half of the seminar consisted of presentations by 2 of our guest speakers, followed by a panel discussion during the latter half. Starting off the seminar presentation was Mr. Lee Hoi Leong, Regional Director of North Asia and Pacific Group of International Enterprise (IE) Singapore, who spoke on the merits of venturing into overseas markets through Singapore. Using successful case studies of third-country collaborations between Singaporean and Japanese companies, Mr. Lee explained and emphasized how Japanese businesses' advanced technology and product knowledge coupled with the overseas trade and sales network that Singaporean businesses possess, could lead to a win-win partnership for both. On top of that, suggestions for Singaporean and Japanese businesses to collaborate through joint product development, distributorship, or even overseas joint investments and joint ventures were also raised.



Presentation by IE Singapore

Next, Mr. Moriya Tomohiro, General Manager of Rakuten Singapore was invited to speak about the business potential of marketing Japanese specialty products overseas through the effective utilization of e-commerce. With regards to the lack of continuity and progress in the overseas promotional activities of Japanese local governments, he suggested that Japanese local governments and businesses alike could

consider an internet solution to this issue by pushing out their products on Rakuten's websites to coincide with the holding of their promotional events, and leverage on the growing e-commerce market to sustain sales and expand distribution channels of their products in these overseas markets.

Following next was the panel discussion, where Japanese local government representatives from Shizuoka, Kochi, Nagano Prefectures and Kitakyushu City were invited as panelists to speak about their respective working experiences during their secondment in Singapore, with CLAIR Singapore's Director, Mr. Adachi Masahide acting as the facilitator. During the discussion, a common point that was shared by all panelists was that while it is important and necessary for Japanese local governments to work together in terms of tourism promotion, it was however extremely difficult to collaborate across different local governments when it comes to the promoting of their local products.

This is because unlike big cities such as Tokyo and Osaka, many local areas and smaller cities in Japan are generally less-known abroad and so it is necessary for them to promote themselves as a greater region that is more easily identifiable to foreign travelers. However, many Japanese local governments tend to view one another as competitors when it comes to the promotion of more specific and tangible items such as local foods and products. With respect to this, Mr. Adachi cited that with effective use of new marketing channels such as Oishii Japan (an annual Japanese F&B trade fair held in Singapore) and Rakuten Asia's e-commerce sites etc., perhaps it was time for all Japanese local governments to come together and promote the "Japan Brand" as a whole.

Many of the seminar participants indicated that it was very helpful and informative for them to have been able to hear about first-hand experiences from those who had worked in Southeast Asia, while some pointed out that their local governments are currently still exploring on the kinds of approaches that they will be adopting towards the region. CLAIR Singapore looks forward to continue to provide timely updates and support for Japanese local governments who are looking to venture into markets in Southeast Asia, and we would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank all our invited guests and participants for making this seminar a success.



## ABOUT CLAIR

CLAIR is a joint organization founded in 1988 by 47 prefectures and 20 major cities in Japan in order to assist Japanese local authorities with the implementation of their international exchange policies. With its headquarters in Tokyo, CLAIR has seven overseas offices in New York, London, Paris, Singapore, Seoul, Sydney, and Beijing.

CLAIR Singapore office was set up in October 1990. It supports and promotes international activities and friendly relations between local authorities in Japan and their counterparts in Singapore and the ASEAN countries as well as India.

For further information on our activities, please contact CLAIR Singapore

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