

# DLA-CLAIR-MIC Joint Hybrid Seminar

## on Tourism Promotion in Local Regions

J.CLAIR Singapore

On 30 August 2022, J.CLAIR Singapore, together with the Department of Local Administration (DLA) of the Ministry of Interior of Thailand, and the Japanese Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC), jointly organized the “Japan-Thailand Local Administration Joint Seminar” for local government officials from Japan and Thailand. In the past, this seminar has been held by inviting speakers from Japanese local governments to give presentations in the host country by sharing Japan’s best practices and insights as to how to tackle certain issues in ASEAN countries. Besides being a knowledge-sharing event, this seminar has also served as a platform for subsequent inter-municipal exchanges as well. This year, in order to also provide Japanese local governments with an opportunity to learn about Thailand’s best practices, we held the event for the very first time in a hybrid format (physical seminar and online webinar combined), and invited Japanese local governments to participate online. In addition to the participants in Thailand that were physically present, approximately 300 participants from both countries watched the webinar online.

The theme of this year’s seminar was on “regional tourism promotion,” with presentations on advanced case studies from both Japan and Thailand regarding the two sub-topics of “Development of Local and Community Attraction” and “Utilizing Roadside Stations” to attract inbound visitors. With the cooperation of the MIC, Japanese speakers from Saga Prefecture and Niseko Town in Hokkaido were invited to introduce the initiatives of their respective organisations in which areas are making advanced efforts with regard to each sub-topic.

Mr. Shimohira, Deputy Manager of the Tourism Division, Culture and Tourism Bureau, Department of Regional Exchange, Saga Prefecture, gave an overview of the prefecture's efforts in increasing the number of Thai tourists to Saga Prefecture by 25 times in six years— thanks to the film commission's efforts in promoting filming locations in the prefecture. The Thai participants had a strong interest in the efforts of Saga Prefecture through this method, even asking specific questions related to the actual situation of the participation of local residents in attracting tourists and so on.



Saga Prefecture Speakers

Mr. Saito, Manager of Commerce, Industry, and Tourism Division, Niseko Town, Hokkaido, spoke about the town's efforts in "Utilizing Roadside Stations to attract inbound tourism," including involving the JET Programme Coordinator for International Relations (CIR) to provide a four-language hotline (English, German, Chinese, and Korean), cashless payment, and smooth tax exemption procedures at the roadside station "Niseko View Plaza". Participants from both Japan and Thailand were very much interested to know more about how SNS was utilized to attract inbound visitors and what were some ways to increase viewership. The questions posed by the local governments in both countries were quite similar, and we also felt the high level of interest in Japan and demand for travel to Japan, with participants expressing that they were eagerly waiting for Japan's borders to reopen once again, and inquired when the travel restrictions will be completely lifted.



Niseko Town Speaker

For the Thai presentations on the same themes, the current mayors and town mayors who served as speakers shared case studies in their respective local governments in Thailand, which provided a good opportunity for participants to learn more about specific happenings in both countries. Throughout the seminar, the speakers who gave presentations were asked many questions and they shared their knowledge and experience with the participants to the best that they could.



Group photo of organizers and speakers

The Thai speakers actively spoke to the Japanese speakers and J.CLAIR Singapore staff members during the breaks, and even shared with us that the case study initiatives they presented on Thailand were actually based on their experiences when they visited Asakusa and Kyoto in Japan previously.

J.CLAIR Singapore will continue to deepen cooperation with DLA and other counterparts, and conduct projects that lead to solutions to issues in both Japan and Thailand, as well as continually promote exchanges between local governments.