



Call for Papers

Joint PRN, ADBI and INSEAD EMI Conference

Fostering sustainable development and firm performance in Asia at the time of de-globalization

ADB-ITokyo (Japan), 5 March 2020

The current multilateral trade rules are under threat as trade wars have become the new reality. The US has increased the average tariff on Chinese imports from 3% to about 26%. Protectionism is on the rise with rising trade barriers and the resurgence of nationalist politics represents significant obstacles for future growth. This is especially salient for Asia and for firms operating in this region, both domestic and foreign, as rising tariffs and threats of protectionism can hugely disrupt the smooth and efficient functioning of global value chains. There is significant uncertainty about the future of WTO rules and even preferential trade arrangements seem prone to renegotiation (see NAFTA, Brexit). Many firms in advanced economies are rethinking their global supply chains, moving to new locations, or postponing investments till such trade related uncertainty is resolved. This in turn has been reflected in a slowdown in global growth, in both advanced economies and emerging markets.

This notwithstanding, becoming part of global production networks, and attracting knowledge capital embodied in FDI remains the most common development strategy for many emerging markets. These countries hope to emulate the Asian model of improving productivity by importing high quality intermediate markets, exporting to new markets and thus improve productivity via the resulting transfers of knowledge and technology. At the same time, at the micro level, increasing discrepancy among firms in terms of efficiency and costs of capital, implies that while high growth is limited to a narrow number of firms, aggregate productivity of the economy increases only slowly. In addition, environmental and income distribution concerns, implies that growth policies need to encompass a much more complex set of issues, spanning trade, industrial, competition and fiscal policies.

The Productivity Research Network (PRN), the Asian Development Bank Institute (ADBI) and INSEAD's Emerging Market Institute (EMI) have joined forces to promote the debate across Asia on the above themes. We are inviting papers addressing one or more of the topics mentioned above from either a micro or macro perspective. We are particularly interested in academic work with strong policy relevance and emphasis on the Asia region on the following topics:

- The Future of the WTO and Preferential Trading Arrangements
- Industrial and competition policy for exports and productivity
- Trade, technology and distributional consequences
- Learning to join global value chains
- New drivers of firm performance and productivity
- Sustainable development and middle-income trap
- Industrial and trade policies with rising inequality and political populism
- Factor reallocation and growth

The deadline for submission is **13 January 2020**. Papers should be emailed to PRN@nus.edu.sg. Authors of selected papers will be invited to the workshop to be held in Tokyo, Japan on 5 March 2020. Limited travel support to one author per paper is available at request. Authors receiving support from ADBI must be citizens of ADB-member countries.

Professor Andy ROSE, Dean of the Business School of the National University of Singapore, will deliver a keynote address.