



Asian Development Bank

Call for Papers

“New Approaches to Measuring and Assessing Regional Cooperation and Integration: Implications for Asia and the Pacific”

The Asian Development Bank's (ADB) Economic Research and Regional Cooperation Department and the Dialogue of Civilizations (DOC) Research Institute are organizing a joint international conference to be held in the second half of 2020.

Regional cooperation and integration (henceforth RCI) is the process by which national economies connect regionally, through mutual cooperation and dialogue. Regional linkages have a pivotal role in enhancing economic growth, bringing productivity gains and creating employment. They are also essential for tackling poverty and inequality, strengthening institutions, and enhancing political stability. National development strategies generally include a regional component and the United Nations recognize RCI as an important pillar for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Over the past decades, regional integration has made significant progress in Asia and the Pacific, driven by trade and investment and the growing role of global production networks. While barriers to trade and investment have been removed through the implementation of free trade agreements and bilateral investment treaties, regional integration in Asia and the Pacific has often lacked the required institutional framework and governance arrangements to reap the benefits of RCI policies.

To properly monitor and evaluate progress in regional cooperation and integration, it has become clear that better metrics and indicators need to be developed. With this objective, initiatives for measuring regional integration more systematically have been introduced in recent years. ADB's Asia-Pacific Regional Cooperation Integration Index (ARCI) and DOC Research Institute's Eurasia Integration Index are some examples of methods to better capture the increasingly complex dimensions of regional integration. Other examples include the Africa Regional Integration Index, the Latin America and Caribbean Integration Index, the EU Index of Integration Effort, or the Composite Index of Economic Integration in the Asia and Pacific region. Most of these approaches are based on a composite index that captures relevant dimensions for regional integration: infrastructure and connectivity, trade and investment flows, regional value chains, movement of people, institutional and social integration, among others.

At the same time, the nature of regional integration is becoming increasingly complex. Digital technologies, for example, are having an impact on regional connectivity, e-commerce, or taxation. Regional technology sharing and R&D collaboration are becoming an important drivers for innovation and sectoral policies. Environmental cooperation is evolving with the inclusion of environmental provisions in trade and investment agreements, all within the perspective of biodiversity and natural endowments as regional public goods.

As the channels of regional cooperation and integration increase, the impact of RCI policies will also need to be further assessed. Better RCI measures can bring novel approaches for assessing the costs and benefits of RCI policies, while providing a more granular assessment. Understanding the mechanisms by which countries can better benefit from regional cooperation and integration, analyzing its impact on economic (productivity, innovation) or social dimensions (poverty reduction, inequality, employment) can be further refined through the construction of better indicators and new data sources. As new forms of regional integration emerge, better measurement and assessment frameworks will be needed.

This conference will gather leading academics, policymakers, and international organizations to discuss the measurement, scope, and policy implications related to regional cooperation and integration. The topics of discussion include, but not limited to, the following:

Measurement and Methodology

- New approaches to measuring regional cooperation and integration in areas such as:
 - Trade and investment
 - Digital connectivity
 - Financial integration
 - Macroeconomic and monetary integration
 - Institutional arrangements
 - Environmental sustainability and biodiversity
 - Technology transfer and innovation
 - Power generation and electricity
 - Air transportation
 - Regional health and vaccination programs
 - Infrastructure connectivity
 - Socio-cultural ties among countries
 - Peace and security, political stability
- Advantages and challenges on the use of composite indicators for regional integration
- Use of official statistics (e.g. administrative data, customs records, firm surveys) for improving measures of regional integration
- Use of new data sources, including geo-spatial data, to measure cross-border activity and regional integration
- Measurement of 'quality' of regional cooperation and integration
- Regional integration and movement of people, including temporary migration, tourism, mutual recognition of skilled workers

Assessing Regional Cooperation and Integration Policies

- Contribution of digital connectivity on regional cooperation and integration
- Potential impacts of regional cooperation for environmental sustainability
- Impact of regional cooperation and integration policies on poverty and income inequality
- Linkages between RCI policies and competition policy
- Analysis linking RCI development to progress in achieving the SDGs
- Sectoral analysis on the role of RCI policies
- New approaches to assess inter sub-regional linkages and regional integration
- Regional integration and SME policies
- Challenges of regional integration for tax policy
- Implications of RCI measurement for multilaterals and MDBs

Note: Asia and the Pacific refers to the 49 regional members of ADB (<https://www.adb.org/who-we-are/about#members>).

The Selection Committee for the conference program consists of ADB, DOC, and external senior researchers. Submitted papers will go through a blind review process. Authors who wish to send their research papers to the conference must send two versions of their papers in pdf format (one version should not have the names and affiliations of the authors). The first page of the paper should only contain the title and abstract.

KEY DATES

Deadline for submission of draft papers	15 June 2020
Notification of acceptance	30 June 2020
Conference dates	2 nd half of 2020 (tbd)



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PAPER SUBMISSION PROCEDURE:

Please send your response to this Call for Papers to:

Rolando Avendano (Email: ravendano@adb.org)
Economist
Economic Research and Regional Cooperation Department
Asian Development Bank

Mara Claire Tayag (Email: mtayag@adb.org)
Senior Economic Officer
Economic Research and Regional Cooperation Department
Asian Development Bank

AND

Behrooz Gharleghi (Email: BGharleghi@doc-research.org)
Senior Research Fellow
Dialogue of Civilizations (DOC) Research Institute

All submissions should be forwarded via email with the subject line “ADBmeasureRCI_{your last name}_{paper title}”. Only selected manuscripts will be notified and will be informed on the details of the conference. For each accepted manuscript and if air travel is possible, ADB will cover the cost of one round trip, economy class airfare, hotel accommodation, and daily subsistence allowance for the duration of the conference.