



## Call for Papers: Asian Think Tank Network Forum 2026

### *Resilient and Sustainable Supply Chains: The Strategic Role of FDI*

6-8 October 2026 | ISAS, Singapore

#### **Background**

Asia-Pacific economies are at the core of global value chains (GVCs). Yet recent shocks – from COVID-19 pandemic to geopolitical and climate risks – exposed concentration vulnerabilities. While foreign direct investment (FDI) is well recognised for its role in economic growth, job creation and knowledge spillovers, it is increasingly being realised as a factor that shapes supply chain diversification and resilience by distributing production decisions across multiple geographies and deepening regional integration under arrangements such as the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) and the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP). FDI also plays an important role in addressing sustainability of supply chains through the transfer of technology and knowledge, and the adoption of sustainable production, management practices and delivery processes. Still, much of the impact of FDI on resilience and sustainability depends on host country characteristics, industry dynamics and firm strategies.

To leverage FDI's potential in building resilient and sustainable supply chains, policymakers are recognising its linkage with trade facilitation and digital infrastructure. While acknowledging FDI as a catalyst for upgrading countries' position in GVCs, economies are in the process of identifying policies that promote diversification, adaptability and resilience.

In Asia-Pacific, efficiency-seeking FDI, i.e. cross-border investments aimed at optimising production efficiency, often helps to expand intra-firm trade. This is primarily influenced by tariff levels and trade facilitation measures – rules of origin, standards and mutual recognition, logistics performance, and digital customs processes. Where countries have strong trade facilitation and regulatory coherence, FDI can expand cross-border trade and offer shorter lead times and greater agility in rerouting flows during disruptions. Conversely, restrictive rules of origin or fragmented standards can push firms into rigid value-chain ecosystem, thus diluting resilience. Hence, examining trade policy frictions, infrastructure bottlenecks, and services connectivity (transport, finance, data) is crucial to assess how efficiency-seeking FDI translates into diversified, shock-mitigating supply chains.

A recent shift of incoming FDI towards digital infrastructure – cloud services, data centers, AI-enabled logistics, and e-commerce platforms – has expanded discussion on supply chain visibility. By enabling real-time tracking, these investments reduce information asymmetries and allow faster reconfiguration across locations. Economies such as Singapore and Republic of Korea, and many parts of People's Republic of China and India are catalysing “smart manufacturing” or “AI+ manufacturing” and platform-based trade that has the potential to lower transaction costs and enhance interoperability across borders. Continuity of such

initiatives depends on the quality of digital public goods, cross-border data governance, cybersecurity, and skills – factors that further determine success of digital FDI in terms of scale.

FDI can also enhance the sustainability of supply chains and help in addressing various sustainability related trade measures through digital and cross border trade infrastructure that reduces carbon footprint and supports cross border paperless trade and the adoption of cleaner technologies in production and delivery.

Looking ahead, the strategic role of FDI in improving resilience and sustainability will gain importance. Asia-Pacific economies have been adopting policies to move higher in GVCs, and these efforts when further supported by initiatives that align investment decisions with diversification strategies and with measures around trade facilitation, technology adoption, and sustainability objectives, has the potential to transform Asia-Pacific from a cost-driven hub into a resilient and sustainable production and trade centre.

### **Asian Think Tank Network Forum 2026**

The Asian Development Bank (ADB), under its [Asian Think Tank Network \(ATTN\)](#) platform, in collaboration with the Asian Development Bank Institute (ADBI), the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and its Asia Training and Research Network (ARTNeT), and the Institute of South Asian Studies (ISAS) at the National University of Singapore (NUS) is organising a project under the theme, “**Resilient and Sustainable Supply Chains: The Strategic Role of FDI**”.

The objective is two-fold: (a) to bridge the knowledge gap on strategic role of FDI in building resilient and sustainable supply chains; and (b) to strengthen the capacity of researchers in developing countries to conduct high-quality research on supply chain resilience and sustainability, thereby contributing to evidence-based public policy discourse within their institutions and governments.

The project explores ways in which FDI can strengthen supply chain resilience and sustainability and help Asia Pacific economies upgrade their position in GVCs. It examines policy frameworks, trade facilitation measures and digital policy infrastructure that enable diversification and adaptability in response to global shocks. Finally, the project aims to provide actionable insights for policymakers on aligning FDI strategies with trade, technology and sustainability goals, ensuring that investment flows not only drive growth but also enhance resilience and competitiveness in an increasingly uncertain global economy.

The project consists of a small grant (US\$1,000) for selected authors to complete a research paper under the guidance of an established researcher, who will serve as a mentor and potential co-author, if needed. The paper will then be presented during the **ATTN Forum 2026** to be held in **ISAS, Singapore, on 6-8 October 2026**.

Submissions, guided by the background and framework presented earlier, may take the form of empirical analyses, survey analysis, or case studies and should employ appropriate methodologies. For all papers, a strong analytical discussion on public policies that promote cross-border cooperation and address existing gaps is essential. All papers must be original and not under consideration for publication elsewhere.

Paper topics of interest include, but are not limited to:

- FDI as a Driver of Supply Chain Diversification, Resilience, and/or Sustainability
- Efficiency-Seeking FDI and Trade Integration
- FDI and GVC Upgrading
- Trade agreements (RCEP, CPTPP and others) and their potential for enabling resilience and/or sustainability
- Digital FDI and Smart Supply Chains for resilience
- Policy Frameworks for Resilient Supply Chains
- FDI Spillovers and Regional Development for Resilience
- Geopolitical Risks and FDI Location Strategies
- Sustainability and Climate Resilience in FDI
- Indicators and Methodologies for Measuring Resilience
- Country-level Case Studies (for example, Indonesia EVs, Vietnam Electronics) in leveraging FDI for Resilience or Industry Case Studies (for example, Electronics, Automotives, Textiles) across Selected Countries in the Region
- Sectoral Studies on the Role of FDI as a Driver of Diversification, Resilience and Sustainability
- Small Medium Enterprises-FDI Linkages and Economic Resilience
- FDI and Regulatory Coherence
- FDI, Employment Creation and Skills Development

### **Submission Procedure**

Authors should submit their extended abstract in English [through this link](#) by **15 April 2026**. Abstracts should be approximately 750 words and include the following: title, author(s) name and affiliation(s), research motivation, research questions, methodology, and the key policy initiative the paper aims to analyse and provide solutions for. Empirical papers, case studies of countries/sectors, and qualitative analyses are all welcome. However, all papers must discuss policy implications and provide policy recommendations. Submissions without a clear research question or methodology will be rejected. Successful applicants will be notified by 15 May 2026.

Up to **15 abstracts** will be selected. Authors of selected abstracts should submit their full draft paper (5,000 words) by 15 June 2026 for review and comment to be shared by assigned reviewers-cum-mentor by 15 July 2026. The revised draft paper should be submitted by 15 August 2026, in discussion with the assigned reviewer-cum-mentor.

Of the 15 papers, **10 will be chosen for full paper presentation**, while the remaining papers may be considered in other capacities during the ATTN Forum 2026.

The ATTN study team expects a revised full paper to be submitted within 2 months of the forum to be considered for publication in a suitable knowledge format. Selected papers will be published in a special issue of UNESCAP's Asia Pacific Sustainable Development Journal (APSDJ, indexed in SCOPUS), while some may be considered for publication on ADB's ATTN website. The full paper should adhere to ADB's author submission guidelines and be 6,000-8,000 words in length.

### **Important dates**

Submission of extended abstract (750 words)	15 April 2026
First cut: Notice for successful submissions	15 May 2026
Submission of full draft	15 June 2026
Mentors feedback	15 July 2026
Submission of revised draft	15 August 2026
Second cut: Notice for selected papers for presentation	31 August 2026
Submission of draft presentations	20 September 2026
Presentation at the ATTN Forum 2026	6-8 October 2026
Revised final paper	2 months after the forum

### **Participation at the forum**

The final forum will bring in researchers, experts, and policy makers together to discuss the policy issue and the papers.

Only one author, who must be from an ADB member country, from each of the selected papers will be invited to present at the forum. An honorarium will be paid to the author upon fulfilment of each milestone: (i) US\$500 for presentation at the forum; and (ii) US\$500 for submission of the revised final paper within 2 months of the forum. In addition, ADB will provide airfare, accommodation, and daily subsistence allowance to the author, in accordance with ADB guidelines.

### **Project Organising Committee**

- Sanchita Basu Das, Economist, Economic Research and Development Impact, ADB
- Rachita Gulati, Research Economist, ADBI
- Rupa Chanda, Director of Trade, Investment and Innovation Division, UNESCAP
- Amitendu Palit, Senior Research Fellow and Research Lead (Trade and Economics), ISAS

### **Contacts**

Inquiries may be directed to ATTN Secretariat ([attn-secretariat@adb.org](mailto:attn-secretariat@adb.org)).