ASIAN THINK TANK NETWORK FORUM 2026

Resilient and Sustainable Supply Chains: The Strategic Role of Foreign Direct Investment

6-8 October 2026 | NUSS Guild House, 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.

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.

Against this backdrop, 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 Foreign Direct Investment"**.

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.

For inquiries, please contact the ATTN Secretariat through attn-secretariat@adb.org.

PROGRAM OUTLINE

TUESDAY | 6 OCTOBER 2026	
09:00 – 09:40	**Opening Session** Moderator: Iqbal S. Sevea, Director, Institute of South Asian Studies (ISAS), National University of Singapore (NUS) Welcome Remarks (7 minutes) • Iqbal S. Sevea, Director, ISAS, NUS Opening Remarks (15 minutes) • Bambang Brodjonegoro, Dean and CEO, ADB Institute (ADBI) • Abdul Abiad, Deputy Chief Economist, Economic Research and Development Impact Department (ERDI), Asian Development Bank (ADB) Keynote Address (15 minutes) • Heng Swee Keat, Chancellor of the Singapore Institute of Technology; Former Deputy Prime Minister of Singapore (2019-2025)
09:40 – 09:45	Photo Session
09:45 – 10:00	Coffee Break
10:00 – 11:15	**High Level Session I: Global Value Chains and Inclusive Development** Drawing from the findings of the Asian Development Policy Report (ADPR) 2026, the session will explore how global value chains can support inclusive growth amid emerging trends. It will highlight how targeted and well-coordinated policies alongside strong regional cooperation can help economies enter global value chains and upgrade their roles while ensuring the benefits are more widely shared. Moderator: Abdul Abiad, Deputy Chief Economist, ERDI, ADB Presentation (15 minutes) • Neil Foster-McGregor, Principal Economist, ERDI, ADB Panel Discussion (40 minutes) • Bambang Brodjonegoro, Dean and CEO, ADBI • Rupa Chanda, Director of Trade, Investment and Innovation Division (TIID), United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) • Radhika Rao, Senior Economist and Executive Director, DBS Bank Q&A (20 minutes)

11:15 – 12:30	**High Level Session II: Impact of FDI on ASEAN countries: Looking Back to Look Forward** This session examines how FDI from Japan, People's Republic of China (PRC), and Republic of Korea (ROK) shapes ASEAN's structural transformation, productivity, and regional integration amid global supply chain shifts, informing policies to maximise opportunities and manage risks. Moderator: Sanchita Basu Das, Senior Economist, ERDI, ADB Presentation (15 minutes) • Kian Heng Peh, Group Head and Lead Economist, ASEAN+3 Macroeconomic Research Office (AMRO) and Rolando Avendano, Senior Economist, ERDI, ADB Panel Discussion (40 minutes) • Ahmad Zafarullah Abdul Jalil, Director, ASEAN Integration Monitoring Directorate ASEAN Secretariat • Evelyn Devadason, Professor, Faculty of Business and Economics, University Malaya • Cassey Lee, Principal Fellow, Coordinator, Regional Economic Studies Programme, ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute Q&A (20 minutes)
12:30 – 13:30	Lunch Break
13:30 – 14:45	**Special Session: Advancing Digital Trade and Cross-Border E-Commerce** Drawing on insights from the ATTN 2025 publication on Advancing Digital Trade and Cross-Border E-Commerce, this session explores the key issues and challenges hindering the growth of cross-border e-commerce and digital trade in the Asia-Pacific region, particularly barriers preventing MSMEs from participating fully. While digital economy agreements promote regulatory harmonisation and interoperability, further efforts are needed to translate these commitments into effective policies and implementation. Moderator: Shu Tian, Principal Economist, ERDI, ADB Presentation (15 minutes) • Jong Woo Kang, Director, Regional Cooperation and Integration Division, ERDI, ADB Discussion (40 minutes) • Rupa Chanda, Director, TIID, UNESCAP • Kiyoshi Taniguchi, Regional Lead Economist, ERDI, ADB • Ashutosh Bajpai, Vice President, APEC Gateway and Customs, DHL Express APEC Regional Office, Singapore

	Q&A (20 minutes)
14:45 – 16:00	**Session I: State and Trends of FDI and Supply Chain Transformation in Asia and the Pacific** This session will feature selected papers from the ATTN call for papers on Resilient and Sustainable Supply Chains: The Strategic Role of Foreign Direct Investment. Moderator: Rachita Gulati, Research Economist, ADBI Practitioner's Perspective (10 minutes) • Geethanjali Nataraj, Principal, (International Trade Policy & EXIM), Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) Paper Presentations (15 minutes each) • Digital FDI and Smart Supply Chains in India: Exploring Pathways for Resilience in a Changing Global Environment *Maitri Ghosh, Joint Director of Public Instruction & Officer on Special Duty, Department of Higher Education, Government of West Bengal* • Global Supply Chain Reconfiguration: The Evolution of Asymmetric Dependence between China and the United States and the Third-Party Effects *Kun Cai, Postdoctoral Researcher, Wuhan University* • Has RCEP Created Trade Among Its Members? Product-Level Evidence from Member and Non-Member Supply to RCEP Markets *Ivan Harris Tanyag, Graduate Student, University of the Philippines Diliman* Q&A (20 minutes)
16:00 – 16:15	Coffee Break
16:15 – 17:15	**Session II: FDI Policy, Geopolitics, and Strategic Enablers of Supply Chain Resilience** This session will feature selected papers from the ATTN call for papers on Resilient and Sustainable Supply Chains: The Strategic Role of Foreign Direct Investment. Moderator: Kiyoshi Taniguchi, Regional Lead Economist, ERDI, ADB Practitioner's Perspective (10 minutes) • Elizabeth Chelliah, Regional Trade Advisor, Centre for the Future of Trade & Investment, Singapore Business Federation Paper Presentations (15 minutes each)

	• Shifting Sources and Drivers of Greenfield FDI in Southeast Asia *Carlos Mangunsong, Senior Advisor, DTS Indonesia* • Enhancing Tourism Resilience in the Context of Foreign Direct Investment: Strategic Development of Transnational Tourism Routes along the Middle Corridor *Arzu Huseyn, Visiting Professor, Ankara Haci Bayram Veli University* Q&A (20 minutes)
17:15 – 17:20	Wrap-up for Day 1
18:00 – 20:00	**Welcome Reception (by invitation only)**

WEDNESDAY | 7 OCTOBER 2026

09:15 – 10:30	**High Level Session III: Trade and Quality Growth** Asia's middle-income economies risk stalled convergence as traditional export-led models and policies lose traction amid geopolitical shifts, technological change, and supply chain reconfiguration. The policy challenge is to combine trade openness with domestic capability-building, digital adoption, and regional cooperation, while lowering non-tariff barriers, harmonizing standards, and building interoperable digital and trade infrastructure to turn disruption into opportunity and support quality growth in a fragmenting global order. Moderator: Jong Woo Kang, Director, Regional Cooperation and Integration Division, ERDI, ADB Lead Speaker (15 minutes) • Bambang Brodjonegoro, Dean and CEO, ADBI Panel Discussion (40 minutes) • Lili Yan Ing, Secretary General, International Economic Association • Allen Ng, Group Head and Lead Economist, AMRO • Carlos Lopez-Gomez, Head of Policy, IfM, University of Cambridge Q&A (20 mins)
10:30 – 10:45	Coffee Break
10:45 – 12:15	**ASEAN Regional Roundtable** ASEAN's Regional Investment Promotion Action Plan (RIPAP) 2025–2030 provides a platform to position ASEAN as one investment destination, leveraging shared advantages rather than competing country by country. The session will explore how ASEAN and its partners can deepen investment cooperation, strengthen regional value chains, and accelerate the green

	transition. Speakers will discuss opportunities to mobilize investment in priority sectors such as carbon capture and storage, biofuels, smart grids, green shipping, sustainable building materials, and medical devices, while enhancing coordination among investment promotion agencies and connecting ASEAN's capabilities with complementary strengths across the region. Moderator: Phongpob Ben Methakullawat, Capacity Building Specialist, ADBI <u>Roundtable Discussion</u> • Ahmad Zafarullah Abdul Jalil, Director, ASEAN Integration Monitoring Directorate, ASEAN Secretariat • Roberto Lai, Deputy Execute Director, TradeInvest Timor-Leste • Masni binti Muhammad, Senior Executive Director, Malaysian Investment Development Authority, Malaysia • Corazon Halili-Dichosa, Executive Director, Board of Investment, Philippines • Edgard Rodriguez, Senior Development Economist, International Development Research Centre (IDRC)
12:15 – 13:30	Lunch Break
13:30 – 14:45	**Session III: Impact of FDI, Digital Governance, and External Shocks on Supply Chain Resilience and Sustainability** This session will feature selected papers from the ATTN call for papers on Resilient and Sustainable Supply Chains: The Strategic Role of Foreign Direct Investment. Moderator: Vinod Rai, Distinguished Senior Research Fellow, ISAS, NUS <u>Practitioner's Perspective</u> (10 minutes) • Edgard Rodriguez, Senior Development Economist, IDRC <u>Paper Presentations</u> (15 minutes each) • Digital Trade Restrictiveness and the Integration–Resilience Trade-Off: The Role of Foreign Direct Investment in ASEAN Global Value Chains *Vighneswara Swamy, Professor, ICFAI School of Social Sciences* • Resilience and Fragility in Bangladesh's Garment Global Value Chain: Evidence from COVID-19 Disruptions, Exchange-Rate Shocks, and Buyer Market Power *Aminur Rahman, Advisor, Office of the Chief Economist and Director General, ERDI, ADB* • Does efficiency-seeking FDI promote sustainable and resilient supply chains? Firm-level evidence from Thai manufacturing under the Green Industry policy

	Minh Tam Bui, Assistant Professor, Faculty of Economics, Srinakharinwirot University Q&A (20 minutes)
14: 45 – 15:45	**Panel Session: FDI and Regional Mechanisms for Supply Chain Resilience** This session will feature a panel discussion with selected authors from the ATTN call for papers on Resilient and Sustainable Supply Chains: The Strategic Role of Foreign Direct Investment. Moderator: Aminur Rahman, Advisor, Office of the Chief Economist and Director General, ERDI, ADB Panel Discussion (10 minutes each) • Leveraging the "ABCDE" Framework to Enhance Supply Chain Resilience: The Strategic Role of FDI in Developing Asia's Green and Digital Transition *How Tze Koh, Director, BSYS Solution (M) Sdn Bhd* • RCEP as a Trade Shock Absorber under Global Fragmentation: Implications for FDI Resilience and Industrial Upgrading in Vietnam *Adeel Ahmed, Lecturer in Economics, RMIT University* • Is FDI Enough? Rethinking Sustainability in ASEAN-6 Supply Chains under Macro-Financial and Institutional Conditions *Nurul Hasanah Uswati Dewi, Dean of the Faculty of Economics and Business, Hayam Wuruk Perbanas University, Indonesia* Q&A (20 minutes)
15:45 – 16:00	Coffee Break
16:00 – 17:30	**Think Tank Policy Roundtable** Heightened uncertainties for the global economy have prioritized safeguarding national and regional economic securities being reshaped by geopolitics, supply chain shifts, and security-centric views on foreign investment. Foreign investment inflows are no more limited to creating industrial capacities, technology diffusion, and local jobs. They're essential for making supply chains resilient through greater diversification, sustainability, and strategic cooperation. The roundtable will explore how countries from the Asia-Pacific, especially smaller ones, can address unforeseen geo-economic challenges by collaborating on investments and supply chains. It will consider the roles of existing and evolving rules-based frameworks - CPTPP, RCEP, ASEAN+1 FTAs, DEFA and FTIP, in this regard, in the context of regional impacts of major geopolitical conflicts.

	Moderator: Iqbal S. Sevea, Director, ISAS, NUS Roundtable Discussion • Ong Keng Yong, Executive Deputy Chairman, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies • Joseph Liow, Dean, Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy • Peter Govindaswamy, Executive Director, Energy Studies Institute • Chan Heng Chee, Chairman, ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute
17:30 – 17:35	Wrap-up for Day 2
18:00 – 20:00	**Networking Dinner (by invitation only)**

THURSDAY | 8 OCTOBER 2026	
09:15 – 10:30	**High Level Session IV: Creative Economy and its Role in Enhancing Economic Resilience** Creative industries positively impact economic outputs and drive contemporary sustainable tourism. Such tourism draws competitive advantages from creativity, cultural identity, knowledge, sustainable practices and experience creation. The discussions will reflect on synergies between creative economy and contemporary tourism and the prospects of encouraging more investments in tourism-facing creative industries in the region. Moderator: Vinod Rai, Distinguished Senior Research Fellow, ISAS, NUS Presentation (10 minutes) • Amitendu Palit, Senior Research Fellow and Research Lead (Trade and Economics), ISAS, NUS Panel Discussion (50 minutes) • Carlos Kuriyama, Director, Policy Support Unit, APEC • Sanchita Basu Das, Senior Economist, ERDI, ADB • Evelyn Devadason, Professor, Faculty of Business and Economics, University Malaya Q&A (10 minutes)
10:30 – 10:45	Coffee Break
10:45 – 12:00	**Forward Looking Session: Digital Trade and AI: New Opportunities and Risks for Growth, Trade and Investment** Digitalisation and AI are becoming increasingly important in policy discussions for supply chain resilience and inclusive growth. The session will examine their macroeconomic implications for jobs, productivity, economic growth, finance,

	as well as regulation practice to leverage AI for development. It will also explore their impact on trade and FDI with particular attention on the growing gap in various economies between participations in digital trade and evolution of national digital regulations. The session will discuss existing and upcoming digital cooperation agreements for their impact on FDI, as well as on encouraging investments focused on sustainability, competitiveness, and long-term growth. Moderator: Abdul Abiad, Deputy Chief Economist, ERDI, ADB Presentation on Digital FDI: Trends and Impact (20 minutes) • Shu Tian, Principal Economist, ERDI, ADB and Rolando Avendano, Senior Economist, ERDI, ADB Panel Discussion (40 minutes) • Amitendu Palit, Senior Research Fellow and Research Lead (Trade and Economics), ISAS, NUS • Maria Monica Wihardja, Fellow, ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore • Kah Mei Chan, Director, Ministry of Trade and Industry, Singapore • Parijat Deshpande, Head – TCS Pace Port, Singapore Q&A (15 min)
12:00 – 13:00	Lunch Break
13:00 – 14:15	**Policy Learning Session: Aligning Investors and Policymakers for Resilient, Sustainable Supply Chains** This session moves through two parts—from the investor's perspective to the government's. Part 1 examines what drives firms to establish, expand, or retain strategic investment in Asia. Part 2 explores how governments can offer investment predictability while preserving space for sustainable development. Part 1: Corporate strategies in a fragmenting world: How firms are reconfiguring investment and supply chains Moderator: Phongpob Ben Methakullawat, Capacity Building Specialist, ADBI Panel discussion • Selena Ling, Chief Economist and Head, OCBC Group Research • Marcus Ng, Head of APAC and Economics Strategy, Access Partnership • Elizabeth Chelliah, Principal Trade Consultant, Singapore Business Federation Coffee Break

14:15 – 14:30 14:30 – 16:00	Part 2: Making strategic investment work: sustainability, policy predictability and public-private risk sharing Panel discussion • Neil Foster-McGregor, Principal Economist, ERDI, ADB • Masni binti Muhammad, Senior Executive Director, Malaysian Investment Development Authority, Malaysia • Corazon Halili-Dichosa, Executive Director, Board of Investment, Philippines • Carlos Lopez Gomez, Head of Policy, IfM, University of Cambridge Wrap-up for capacity building • Phongpob Ben Methakullawat, Capacity Building Specialist, ADBI
16:00 – 16:30	**Closing Session** Closing speakers • Sanchita Basu Das, Senior Economist, ERDI, ADB • Amitendu Palit, Senior Research Fellow and Research Lead (Trade and Economics), ISAS, NUS