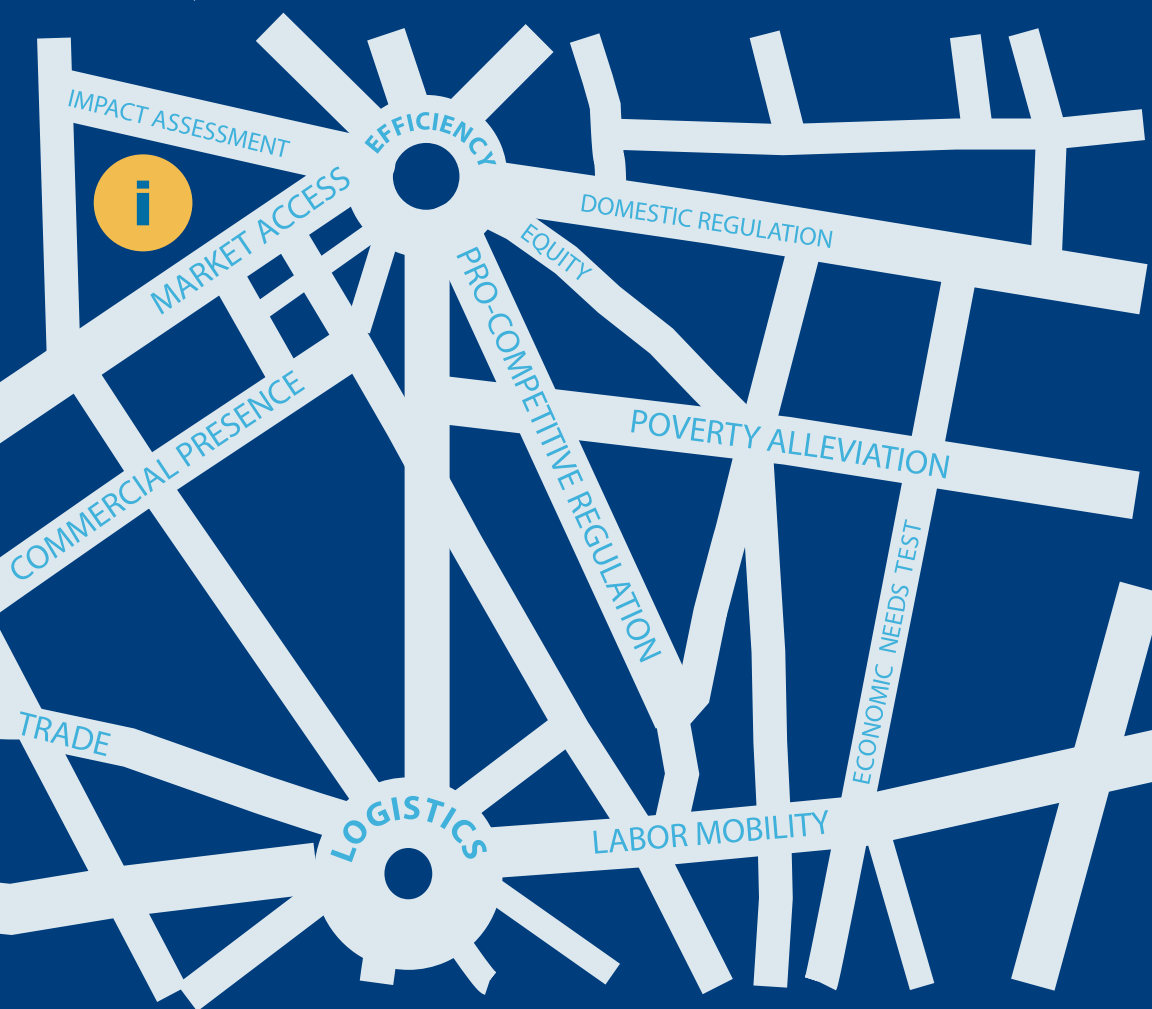


SERVICE SECTOR REFORMS

ASIA-PACIFIC PERSPECTIVES

Edited by **Pierre Sauvé, Gloria Pasadilla and Mia Mikic**





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Foreword

Services, the largest sector in many middle-income and developed economies, holds the key to increased productivity and dynamic growth. Previously unthinkable technologies have resulted in a multitude of new avenues for trade in services, and the future holds still greater possibilities. Yet understanding services remains a challenge, particularly in terms of the impact of services liberalization on development. To design future domestic reforms, policymakers want to have a clearer idea about how the concessions they made on services in various trade agreements or in the unilateral liberalization of key service sectors have contributed to growth and human development. However, very few studies that could shed some light on such questions have been undertaken. The reform of service sectors and their link to equity and increased access have not been explored widely enough to be able to explain the importance of services trade and service sector liberalization to ordinary citizens.

By organizing a conference on “Reforming Services for Inclusive and Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific,” the ADB Institute and its partners, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the Asia-Pacific Research and Training Network on Trade (ARTNeT), hoped to make a contribution to the discussion about how services sector reforms have benefited the poor, and more generally, how regulatory reforms in services have increased the opportunities for more inclusive growth. The papers presented at the conference pointed to several important shared conclusions. First, there appears to be a link between regulatory restrictions in services, wage inequality, and access to services. Second, the service sector faces major data problems that need to be tackled to improve and increase analytical work in this area. Third, an “out-of-the-box” approach to services policy reform that goes beyond a narrow focus on market access is needed.

Considering the number of the economies in Asia and the Pacific and the great diversity of service sectors, the papers put together by the organizers are insufficient to address all the important issues. Nevertheless, they provide a good starting point and make an important contribution to further stimulating services-related work by researchers in the region.

On behalf of the ADB Institute, I thank the contributors to this volume and the discussants who provided their insights during the conference and in the preparation of this book.



Masahiro Kawai
Dean and CEO
Asian Development Bank Institute

Foreword

The global economic crisis of 2008-2009 and the continuing weak economic performance in the major developed economies have hastened the need for the developing Asia-Pacific countries to improve the resilience of their economies to various external shocks. There is solid evidence that economies that are more diversified are also more stable and resilient. Building more diversified economies greatly relies on the share and quality of services activities, both tradable and non-tradable. Despite most of the Asian economies depending on a strong manufacturing sector in their export-led growth during the past several decades, the service sector has been receiving increasing attention by economic planners and regulators, the private sector and international organizations. This is because services are a crucial factor in reducing costs of production; services such as telecommunications, transportation, finance, insurance, accounting, marketing, among others, directly influence the competitiveness of domestic industries in local and international markets. Furthermore, other services such as education, health, energy or environmental services influence changes in national productivity and affect the quality of economic growth.

ESCAP's Trade and Investment Division promotes service sector development through a more coherent approach to liberalization and regulation of services by providing capacity-building programmes for policymakers, negotiators and regulators as well as by producing necessary analyses. As the host of ARTNeT secretariat, the Division also collaborates with other partners and members of ARTNeT in order to strengthen analytical capacity in developing countries themselves – this being indispensable for evidence-based policymaking. We often partner with other international organizations and independent experts to also enrich the results of our own work.

This publication is a result of such collaboration between the Asian Development Bank Institute and ARTNeT. The project brought together researchers, regulators, negotiators, practitioners and other stakeholders from a wide range of Asian countries and international organizations in an effort to offer insights and better understanding of the outcomes of the development of service sector, particularly with regard to how services influence inclusivity of economic growth. These topics are only just starting to be tackled by the research community in the region, and this publication is thus welcomed as an early collection of work relevant to this region.

On behalf of ESCAP and ARTNeT, I thank the editors and contributors to this volume and the discussants who provided their insights, both during the conference and in the preparation of this book.



Ravi Ratnayake
Director, Trade and Investment Division
United Nations ESCAP

Contents

Foreword

Masahiro Kawai

Asian Development Bank Institute iii

Foreword

Ravi Ratnayake

United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific iv

Acknowledgements vii

Abbreviations and acronyms ix

Country codes xiii

List of contributors xv

Service sector reforms: Asia-Pacific perspectives

Pierre Sauv , Gloria Pasadilla and Mia Mikic 1

Part I. Services and development

1. Harnessing services trade reform for inclusive growth: Lessons from the 1980s vs. the 2000s

Bernard Hoekman 27

2. Trade in services and human development: A first look at the links

Ben Shepherd and Gloria Pasadilla 49

3. A comparison of the industrialization paths for Asian services outsourcing industries, and implications for poverty alleviation

F. Ted Tschang 77

Part II. Measurement challenges in services trade

4. Access through presence: Australian perspectives on measuring Mode 3 trade

Jane Drake-Brockman 111

5. Measuring trade in services in Mode 4

Andreas Maurer and Joscelyn Magdeleine 141

6. Measuring barriers to trade and investment in services

Hildegunn Kyvik Nord s 175

**Part III. Sectoral and national liberalization and deregulation:
Progress and unresolved issues**

7. Exploring access and equity issues in private higher education institutions: Insights from Malaysia
Tham Siew Year 197

8. Services liberalization and wage inequality in the Philippines
Glenita Amoranto, Douglas H. Brooks and Natalie Chun 221

9. Economy-wide impacts of liberalization in the Vietnamese banking sector
Huong Dinh 247

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