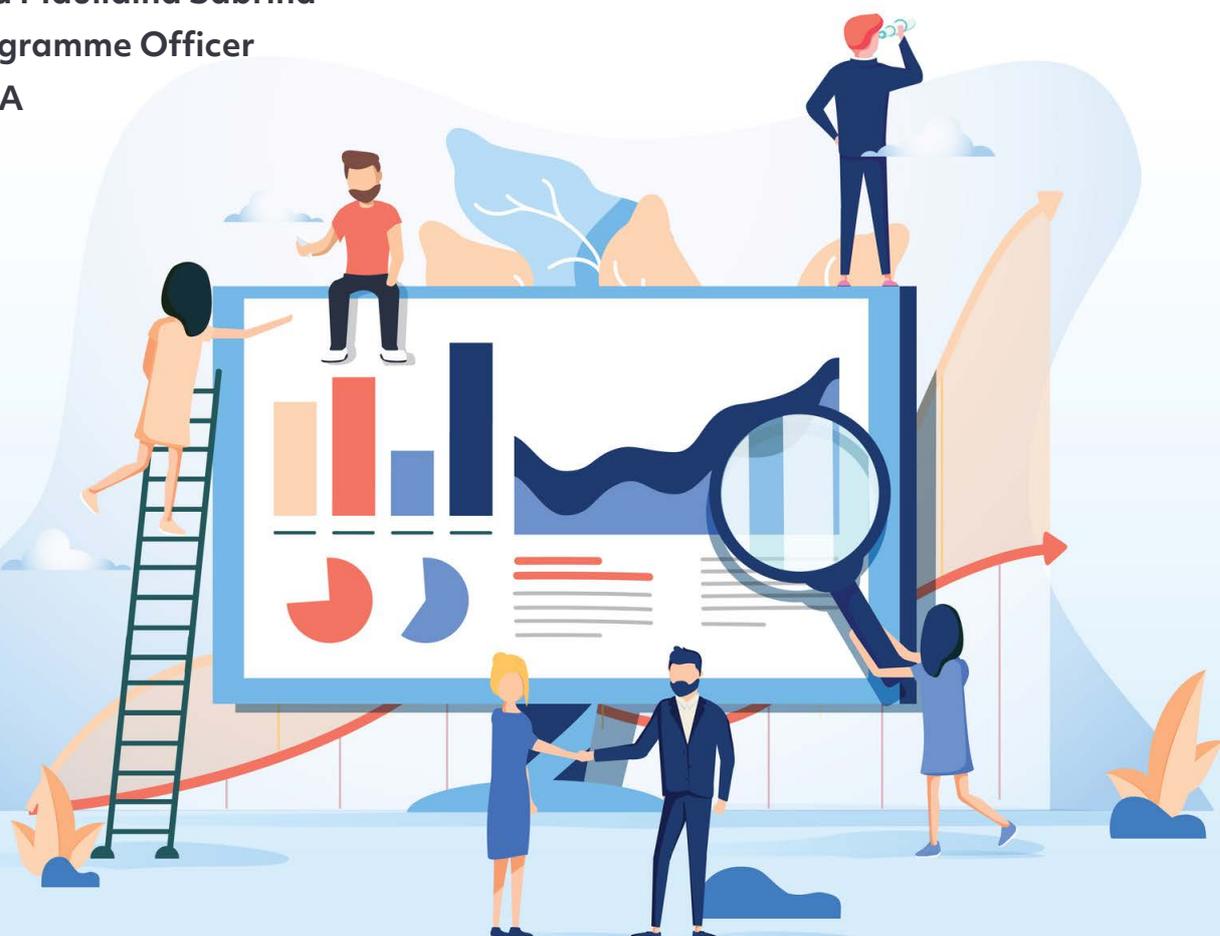


ASEAN MSMEs in a COVID-19 World

Lessons from ERIA MSMEs Talks 1-5

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Abstract

This report summarises the key messages that emerged during the first five episodes of the ERIA MSME Talks, a series of webinars designed to discuss key issues, challenges, and opportunities for ASEAN MSMEs in the COVID-19 world, with a diverse group of stakeholders including entrepreneurs, policymakers, academics, and experts from the region. This report details some of the building blocks for the development of more sustainable and inclusive entrepreneurship ecosystems during the post pandemic economic recovery in ASEAN.

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KEY ISSUES

- **MSMEs represent between 97% and 99% of firms and between 60% and 80% of total employment across ASEAN countries.** ASEAN MSMEs are a very heterogenous group of firms, from micro-firms to high-growth start-ups to small family businesses. Depending on the individual characteristics of firms many “new normals” are emerging and will co-exist in the post-pandemic future.
- **The ASEAN region is one of the fastest growing digital economies in the world.** ASEAN consumers are global leaders in terms of e-wallets and digital payment adoption. This offers many opportunities for ASEAN MSMEs.
- **Women entrepreneurship is key to promoting an inclusive economic recovery across ASEAN as it represents a great and under-exploited opportunity.** ASEAN women need access to better skills, training, and finance to start their own businesses. The number of women entrepreneurs has increased steadily within ASEAN, with more than 60 million women across ASEAN operating businesses, the majority of which are SMEs. However, they have been severely hit by the pandemic and the subsequent economic crisis is jeopardising progress.
- **Sustainability practices across ASEAN MSMEs are gaining traction and will be key for building back better after the pandemic.** The development of more sustainable and smarter ASEAN cities presents an opportunity to MSMEs to participate in this transformation and develop their businesses further.

INTRODUCTION

Micro-, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) represent between 97% and 99% of firms and between 60% and 80% of total employment across Association of Southeast Asian (ASEAN) countries (Lee, Narjoko, and Oum, 2019). These numbers show the importance of MSMEs as economic actors across the 10 ASEAN economies. As in most countries around the world, ASEAN MSMEs have been heavily affected by the coronavirus disease-19 (COVID-19) pandemic (ASEAN, 2020a). Unlike larger companies, MSMEs typically face greater financial constraints, such as more limited access to capital, more limited capacity for future investments, and more limited resources to train and reskill employees. As a result, these are challenging times for many MSMEs in ASEAN and worldwide (OECD, 2020; APEC 2020). Moreover, MSMEs in sectors most impacted by the pandemic, such as travel and hospitality, are struggling even more.

For this reason, most relief packages and recovery measures pay particular attention to MSMEs. Within ASEAN, various economic stimulus packages have been introduced since February 2020 and often include tax incentives/breaks, subsidies, exemptions from certain government fees, and charges (ASEAN, 2020b). While designing these stimulus packages as well as longer-term relief measures, policymakers should pay greater attention to how to rebuild ASEAN economies to make them more sustainable, resilient, and inclusive for the post pandemic future (ERIA, 2020a).

● Section 1

ASEAN MSMEs in a COVID-19 world: many “new normals” are emerging and will co-exist

MSMEs are a very diverse group of firms: they include micro-companies of one or two people; medium-sized and small companies that have existed and remained the same size for a very long time; young dynamic start-ups growing and scaling-up very quickly; small and medium-sized firms in very traditional or very innovative sectors; small and medium-sized firms operating predominantly in domestic markets or well-integrated in global value chains; small and medium-sized firms operating in hyper-digitally connected ASEAN metropolises or in rural areas where Internet connection is problematic or even non-existent. This is why there exists no single new normal for ASEAN MSMEs – many variations of this so-called new normal are emerging depending on the individual characteristics of each firm, the sector in which they operate, the skill level of their employees, the level of integration in regional and global networks, and the level of technology adoption and innovation.

However, even if the practical implications of the COVID-19 new normals may vary significantly for each MSME, there are some common elements that are more likely to lead to successful outcomes: being agile and able to rapidly adapt to the changing business landscape is key to overcoming challenges in the short and medium term, including disruptions of global value chains (GVCs) and traditional regional supply networks. Agility and adaptability also allow MSMEs to quickly seize opportunities presented by COVID-19, for instance, by the increased speed with which ASEAN consumers are adopting digital technologies.

The degree of technology adoption varies significantly from one firm to another, which has important implications for how quickly companies are able to react to shocks and move some of their operations online. Acceleration of digital transformation,

reorganisation of global value chains with possible reshoring of some activities to developed countries, and preparedness to adapt whole business teams are important points for MSMEs to consider in order to survive and to benefit from rising opportunities. Government support to MSMEs (fiscal stimulus, tax deductions, skills development and training programmes, loans and guarantee schemes, etc.) is and will continue to be crucial, but to restore pre-crisis demand new and

innovative policy tools may be required. These tools should be adapted to the different characteristics and needs of MSMEs. For example, the acceleration of online activities or the increased attention to more sustainable business practices require investments in infrastructure and in skills to enable MSMEs' employees to quickly adapt to new business models and seize emerging opportunities.

● Section 2

The acceleration towards digital economies presents both opportunities and challenges for ASEAN MSMEs

The ASEAN region is one of the fastest growing digital economies in the world. The number of digital consumers nearly tripled between 2015 and 2018, from 90 million in 2015 to 250 million in 2018 to more than 300 million by the end of 2020 (Facebook and Bain & Company, 2020). Indonesia's e-commerce market is booming at a rate of over 30% per year. Singapore, Thailand, and Malaysia are also projected to experience double-digit growth (Chen, 2017). The pandemic is accelerating this trend and according

to some recent estimates (Facebook and Bain & Company, 2020), the acceleration that was supposed to take place between 2020 and 2025 took place only in 1 year as individuals, consumers, and companies were moving online due to the restrictions caused by the pandemic. ASEAN economies are also global leaders in terms of e-wallets and digital payment adoption. At least 10% of the adult populations of Malaysia, Viet Nam, Thailand, Indonesia, and Singapore already use e-wallets, and penetration

rates are well ahead of those of advanced economies (BCG, 2020).

Such an acceleration certainly offers many opportunities for ASEAN MSMEs. However, the majority of ASEAN MSMEs still lag behind in terms of digitalisation if compared to other economic actors, such as larger firms in urban areas (ERIA, 2019). Some MSMEs, especially in rural areas, do not have access to stable Internet connections. MSMEs need to be ready and able to compete in the (often global) digital marketplace. For example, the adoption of e-commerce is an opportunity for many ASEAN MSMEs to connect to global customers and to

increase profitability. But the borderless world of e-commerce platforms also means greater competition, so MSMEs need to find their niche to be successful. ASEAN MSMEs therefore need to combine strategic development with new skillsets for the digital economy, which requires a combination of technical skills, interpersonal skills, and problem-solving skills. Digital data analytics is also becoming more important to anticipate future trends and attract new customers, but this is also challenging especially in a region where granular data is particularly difficult to obtain in some countries.

● Section 3

Global Value Chains have been key in accelerating economic integration across ASEAN and East Asia

Global value chains (GVCs) are global production networks for the development of a product or a service where activities, tasks, and production of components occur across multiple locations in different countries. Southeast and East Asia are particularly well integrated in GVCs and this has contributed to economic development and integration of the region over the last decades. GVCs have become more complex

following decades of trade and investment liberalisation, high growth in infrastructure development, and the information and communication technology revolution, which have created increasingly interconnected regions (ERIA, 2020a).

The pandemic has heavily disrupted GVCs across the globe as lockdowns and travel disruptions have affected the entire chain of production of certain ASEAN

MSMEs in a COVID-19 World 8 goods (Pananond, Gereffi and Pedersen 2020a; Pananond, Gereffi, and Pedersen, 2020b). The extent to which GVCs were disrupted and ASEAN MSMEs affected largely depends on the sector in which they operate and on their degree of connectivity to international markets and suppliers. Companies in sectors such as tourism, where many MSMEs are active, have been disproportionately affected. A possible long-term consequence of the pandemic is for GVCs to become shorter – more regional and less global, despite the fact that reshoring can be costly. This is why it is particularly important to promote economic integration at the ASEAN and East Asia level.

As businesses embark on the journey to recovery, business leaders are paying attention to making supply chains more flexible, agile, and resilient to mitigate future risks (MGI, 2020). These adjustments highlight the importance for ASEAN business owners to be creative and open to opportunities to diversify both demand and supply. For example, some Thai hotels owners were quick to adapt and convert hotels into quarantine facilities as tourist numbers are low. In other cases, MSMEs in the personal care and beauty sector were quick to diversify

the production of personal care products to include organic hand sanitiser.

The opportunities offered by innovation and technology will become even more important during the post-pandemic recovery to develop domestic markets, attract foreign direct investment (FDI), and upgrade the activities of many ASEAN MSMEs (ERIA, 2020b). Some innovations like automation can also represent a risk in terms of job losses, but at the same time they may strengthen resilience of business operations. Mitigating risks associated with some types of innovations like automation, upskilling, and reskilling of workers, especially in MSMEs, is key. The availability of skilled labour is one of the key determinants for the relocation of larger firms and FDI attraction. Policymakers have an important role in facilitating the development of integrated regional ASEAN markets as a way to make them more resilient to future shocks. Policymakers can also support connectivity (such as travel bubbles) as well as improving the regulatory framework to continue to attract FDI.

● Section 4

Women entrepreneurship is essential for an inclusive post-pandemic recovery

Women entrepreneurship is key to promoting inclusive economic recovery across ASEAN. Increased women entrepreneurship and economic empowerment may have a huge effect in terms of economic gains: according to some recent estimates, a scenario in which women play an equivalent role in labour markets as men could contribute to up to US\$28 trillion to global gross domestic product (GDP) by 2025 (MGI, 2015); US\$89 billion per year across the Asia-Pacific alone (UNWOMAN, 2011). Across ASEAN there have been positive trends and developments over the past decade. The number of women entrepreneurs has increased steadily within ASEAN: according to the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor 2018, more than 60 million women across ASEAN operate businesses, the majority of which are SMEs.

Women's participation in economic activity and global value chains is key to promoting greater inclusive economic development resulting in poverty reduction and livelihood improvements

within ASEAN and beyond, in the post-pandemic phase. However, the pandemic has disproportionately affected women entrepreneurs for several reasons: lock-downs and working from home translate into extra burdens for women who are most likely to be responsible for child and elderly care; women represent the majority of temporary workers, jobs that are more at risk in time of economic crisis; in many developing countries women represent a large share of informal workers and are less protected by social safety nets and recovery plans; women entrepreneurs – in both developed and developing countries – face more difficulty in accessing credit, which is fundamental for the survival of their firms in times of economic downturn (Ajmone Marsan and Ruddy, 2020). Women also tend to work in sectors that have been acutely impacted by the pandemic – like tourism, hospitality, or textile industries (UNESCAP, 2020).

Digital transformations and innovations are able to accelerate the role of women-

owned and women-led entrepreneurs during the COVID-19 pandemic. Digitalisation has been a major enabling factor, empowering many women able to access Internet connections to start small businesses from their own homes. Despite these positive trends, women are still under-represented as entrepreneurs in general and as high-tech entrepreneurs active in the digital economy in particular.

Given the spectacular acceleration of ASEAN digital economies caused by the pandemic, it is particularly important to make sure women are actively part of this transformation as many of the new jobs of the post-pandemic future will be linked to or enabled by the digital economy.

● Section 5

Sustainability practices across ASEAN MSMEs are gaining traction and will be key for building back better

In recent years, the importance of sustainability practices for MSMEs has become increasingly recognised. An important aspect to consider for sustainability practices is the adoption of circular economy approaches. The circular economy offers an alternative solution to linear economic models that are predominantly applied in Asia. The circular economy provides frameworks to eradicate waste through several circular processes including re-use and re-cycle and also develops new relationships between markets, customers, employees, and natural resources (ERIA, 2018).

Another reason why sustainability practices are becoming increasingly important for ASEAN MSMEs are the changing preferences of ASEAN consumers – new generations increasingly see sustainability as a core value that influences their shopping patterns and preferences, that is they prefer to consume and purchase products and goods that are more sustainable (WEF, 2020).

Digitalisation, technology, and innovation play an essential role in leveraging the adoption and promotion of sustainability practices in business

sectors. Several countries worldwide and in Asia are designing policies to support more sustainable business practices, especially for the post-pandemic economic recovery. Policies and strategies to realise ASEAN smart cities are also part of these efforts. To maximise such potential, governments can provide incentives for MSMEs to become more innovative and equipped with better skills enabling more widespread sustainability practices. MSMEs can operate in different contexts – in clusters, as part of global value chains, or predominantly in domestic markets. Depending on these characteristics the way they can ‘go green’ may differ. The implementation of sustainable practices might vary depending on the MSMEs’ business sectors itself, but it can significantly contribute to better livelihoods,

communities, and economies in the region. MSMEs need to think holistically and in a multi-dimensional way when developing sustainability practices – environmental, human, social, and economic sustainability.

One of the challenges that MSMEs face is the lack of appropriate financial instruments to fund more sustainable practices (T20 Task Force, 2017) as many financial institutions and the traditional banking sector are not yet ready to finance green innovations. This is why business-led initiatives to promote actions to make economic models both economic and environmentally sound and sustainable is key.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- **ASEAN policymakers need to acknowledge and take into account the heterogeneity and variety of ASEAN MSMEs (from micro firms, to family businesses, women-led ventures, high-growth dynamic start-ups, the sector in which they operate, etc.)** when designing and implementing support measures for the post-pandemic recovery.
- **Policymakers need to design specific measures to avoid making the digital divide bigger, as some groups of individuals may struggle more to participate in the digital economy.** These include people in rural areas, women, and the elderly. Measures to strengthen or develop include investments in digital infrastructure, public–private partnership schemes, effective regulation (such as well-designed competition policy, facilitation of cross-border trade, and clear rules for taxation in e-commerce). Measures to encourage digital skills development for MSMEs owners and employees, including data analytics skills, are very important. This also means paying increased attention to digital data collection for better analysis, while at the same time protecting privacy and personal data.
- **Policymakers should encourage the participation of women in the economy and develop ad hoc measures to support women entrepreneurship and access to finance and skills, when crafting post-pandemic recovery plans.** Examples of measures to strengthen and implement include lowering barriers to credit and access to finance for women, including via fintech, and enhancing protections within regulatory frameworks. Promoting public–private partnership to accelerate women’s participation in economic activity is also an important way to support women entrepreneurship. Within ASEAN, there is a need for national and supranational strategies for women entrepreneurship to be supported and to thrive in the future economy.

- **ASEAN policymakers need to pay increasing attention to digital gender equality to empower women for careers in the digital economy.** For instance, by making sure women have adequate access to science, technology, engineering, and maths, and digital skills, especially given that available evidence shows how women are under-represented in these fields.
- **Policymakers need to encourage MSMEs to adopt more sustainable business models (environmental, economic, and social sustainability). MSMEs can be actors of change in this transformation and their efforts should be incentivised and encouraged.** The development of more sustainable and smarter ASEAN cities represents an opportunity for MSMEs to participate in this transformation. Sub-national governments, such as city governments, through smart city development, can be inclined to develop new financial instruments to support the green transition, which MSMEs can use.

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ORGANISERS & SPEAKERS BIOS

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Giulia Ajmone Marsan, Director of Strategy and Partnership, ERIA. Giulia works in close connection with ASEAN policy makers as well as regional and global organisations to support the ASEAN process of socio-economic integration. Before joining ERIA, she worked as an Innovation Economist at the OECD, where she led and contributed to the activities of the OECD Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Regions and Cities and the OECD Directorate for Science, Technology and Innovation. Her analysis focuses on innovation systems, the digital economy, science and higher education policy, entrepreneurship and start-up creation. She has led international projects on innovation eco-systems covering a wide range of countries in Europe, Latin America, North America, Africa and Asia. Giulia holds Bachelor and Master degrees in Applied Mathematics from the Polytechnic School of Turin, Italy and a PhD in Economics and Complex Systems jointly awarded from the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, Paris, France and the IMT Institute for Advanced Studies, Lucca, Italy.

Ooi Tiat Jin (TJ), Founder and Principal Consultant, Curated Connectors. TJ's passion to connect and empower MSMEs stemmed from his earlier career in the Singapore chemical industry, both as secretariat in the Singapore Chemical Industry Council and then General Manager of a local chemical distribution company, Absotech. He managed industry programmes and chaired an industry committee focused on SMEs. His interest grew and expanded to the region during his brief tenure as Director for the Asia Pacific MSME Trade Coalition (AMTC), a pan-regional association focusing on trade empowerment of MSMEs. TJ firmly believes that every small business has the ability to impact and empower lives as they grow and flourish. Hence Curated Connectors was set up with the vision of Empowering Lives through Connecting Businesses. TJ graduated with a Bachelors' Degree (Hons) in Electrical and Electronic Engineering from the University of Manchester, United Kingdom.

Lina Maulidina Sabrina, Programme Officer, ERIA. Lina is a trained officer with extensive working history in international and civil society organisations. She develops and manages strategic programmes under the auspices of intergovernmental cooperation to support socio-economic development within the Asia-Pacific region. At ERIA, she supports the Strategy and Partnership and the Capacity Building Programmes. She coordinated all technical and communication aspects of the ERIA MSMEs Talks. She holds a Bachelors' Degree in English Language Education from the State University of Jakarta.

18th June 2020 | ERIA MSMEs Talk #1

ASEAN MSMEs in a COVID-19 World: Overcoming Challenges to Succeed in the “New Normal”

[link](#)

Speakers

Lucia Cusmano, Deputy Head, SME and Entrepreneurship Division, OECD. Lucia Cusmano is the Deputy Head of the SME and Entrepreneurship Division at the OECD Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Regions and Cities (CFE). Dr Cusmano has a PhD in Economics from the University of Pavia (Italy) and has completed a Master of Science in Economics at Warwick University (UK). She has authored OECD works on SME financing, SME innovation, SME eco-innovation and green entrepreneurship, and benchmarking of SME and entrepreneurship policy. She has also published extensively in international journals on SMEs, entrepreneurship, innovation, structural change, institutions and economic development in advanced and developing regions.

Anthony Gunawan, Founder and CEO, Wakuliner. Anthony has more than 15 years of experience in IT, project management, businesses and start-ups. In the US he worked at the biggest off-price fashion retailer in the world (TJX Companies Inc.). Anthony learned how information and technology can re-form processes and grow businesses. He developed experience with Accenture, IBM, and Microsoft in creating solutions for partners in the US, Canada, Europe and India. Back to Indonesia, Anthony is currently running Wakuliner, Indonesia’s 1st and only all-in-one culinary platform. Wakuliner won the Best E-Commerce Start-up Award in ASEAN by Rice Bowl ASEAN Start-up Awards 2018 and represented Kemkominfo (Ministry of Communication and Information Technology) for the ASEAN Information Communication and Technology Awards 2019. Anthony is a Global Learning System Partner in BINUS University - Digital and New Media class, where he works with lecturers to develop case studies, forum discussion, and tasks for students.

Dan Itsara, Chief Technical Officer, Morphosis. Morphosis is a digital consultancy SME based in Thailand specialising in strategy, product design and development. Dan was formerly the Chief Operating Officer at Glazziq, an e-commerce brand prescription for eyeglasses and sunglasses where he built a just-in-time production system to automate complex decisions, integrate directly with suppliers, and deliver high quality, low-cost eyewear to customers. Prior to Glazziq, Dan worked as a product manager on Amazon's Video Metadata team, where he led efforts to drive customer engagement through better movie and TV data and managed Amazon Video's expansion into the UK and Japan. Dan is a veteran and former officer of the US Air Force, where flew missions as an experimental flight test engineer to develop strike and unmanned aircraft technologies. Dan holds a Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering and Computer Science from MIT, a Master of Science in Aerospace Engineering from the University of Southern California, and an MBA from the Michigan Ross School of Business.

Dionisius Narjoko, Senior Economist, ERIA. Dr Narjoko received his PhD in Economics from the Australian National University. His dissertation was awarded The Ann Bates Postgraduate Prize for Indonesian Studies 2006. His research covers industrialisation in Indonesia and Southeast Asia, economic integration in ASEAN and East Asia (focusing on the ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint and regional economy architecture), and topics such as small and medium enterprises, and interrelationship between human capital and economic growth. Dr Narjoko is also active in 'second-track' policy discussion, extending the links with the Jakarta-based think-tank Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS). Dr Narjoko once taught at the Faculty of Economics, University of Indonesia. He has co-authored and co-edited books and published book chapters, policy papers, and articles in peer-reviewed journals.

9th July 2020 | ERIA MSMEs Talk #2

Riding on the E-Commerce Bandwagon: Now or Never? Perspective from ASEAN MSMEs

[link](#)

Speakers

Anna Melissa Nava, Founder and CEO, 1Export. Ms Nava founded 1Export in 2016, an online platform that allows small and medium businesses to become compliant with international requirements and find buyers so they can sell successfully to international markets. 1Export currently serves more than 3 500 MSMEs and 10 farming communities, exporting their products to over 200 store fronts in US, Qatar, Taiwan, Israel, and Australia. Data analytics is used to connect buyers with suppliers and improve Just-in-Time (JIT) efficiency for faster order and document processing. Her earlier experiences in trade and her entrepreneurial spirit is key to empower Filipinos in other countries embark on their own entrepreneur journeys. Mel has participated in several start-up competitions since 2015, winning seed grants from both the Ideaspaces Foundation (Philippines) and SoGal Pitch (USA) competitions. She holds an MBA in Business Administration as well as an AB in Psychology.

Rashesh Shrestha, Economist, ERIA. Dr Shrestha earned his PhD from the Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics in the University of Wisconsin-Madison. His research interests are labor markets, economic development, and human capital investment. At ERIA, his projects cover human capital development, education, global value chains, trade facilitation, regulatory management system, and financial inclusion. Prior to joining ERIA, he conducted research and taught courses on Applied Microeconomics and Aid and Development Policy at the Arndt-Corden Department of Economics at the Australian National University. He is originally from Nepal.

John Amos Tan, Founder and Principal Trainer, Cutting Edge Learning Hub. John is passionate about inspiring, building and growing companies and their talents. Over

the past 6 years, he has personally trained numerous C-level executives and staff from all levels across diverse industries. He specialises in the areas of sales, leadership, emotional competences and innovation, using cutting-edge and modern training methodologies to achieve the best results throughout the entire learning process. John holds a Masters' degree in International Business Management and a Graduate Diploma in Training and Development. He is also an ISEI certified Social and Emotional Competencies expert, GRASP certified Design Thinking Trainer, NLP (Neuro-Linguistic Programming) Coach, WIAL Certified Action Learning coach, ACTA and Aventis certified trainer and a trained Process facilitator.

Thaung Su Nyein, Founder and CEO, Information Matrix. Information Matrix is a pioneering IT solution provider in Myanmar for government ministries, business enterprises and educational institutions. Information Matrix plays a prominent role in the media market: it publishes some of the highest-circulation publications in Myanmar, with a total estimated readership of 2.5 million. Mr Thaung Su Nyein is an entrepreneur leading over 200 employees in several businesses: print and digital media including 7Day News, eGovernment and ICT, MICE and other service businesses. He is also an active member and contributor to technology and business associations. He studied computer science and City College of New York.

30th July 2020 | ERIA MSMEs Talk #3

Overcoming GVC Disruptions – Thinking Out of the Box

[link](#)

Speakers

Doan Thi Thanh Ha, Economist, ERIA. Dr Doan's research interests include industrial organization, international trade, labor market and income distribution. She has intensively involved in various research-based policy development projects at ERIA, focusing on trade facilitation and economic integration; globalization and firms' behaviour; participation in global value chains and labour market outcome; technology exposure and employment; productivity improvement of the private sector in selected East Asian countries, among others. She is coordinating a capacity building programme, in collaboration with UNCTAD experts, for ASEAN government officials on non-tariff measures. Before joining ERIA, Dr Doan was a Research Associate at the Asian Development Bank Institute in Tokyo. She was also a short-term consultant for the OECD.

Dennis Leu, Managing Director, DLE Steel International. Dennis is a civil engineer by training, Dennis took a bold step to be an entrepreneur after accumulating a wealth of regional experiences in engineering, sales, and site works. DLE Steel International today employs more than 20 employees and has handled projects in Singapore, Myanmar, Thailand, Philippines, Sri Lanka and Guam. Some of Dennis' more prominent projects in Singapore include Changi Exhibition Centre (Airshow building), Decathlon Flagship Store in Kallang, 3 Sea Water Desalination Plants in Tuas, and the Mercedes Benz Centre extension. Dennis's experience stretches beyond engineering to sales and marketing, project planning and execution, business operations and financing. He graduated from The University of Glasgow in with a BEng (Hons) in Civil Engineering.

Pavida Pananond, Associate Professor of International Business, Thammasat Business School, Thammasat University. Pavida received her Ph.D. in Economics (International Business) from the University of Reading (UK), MBA from McGill University (Canada),

and BA in Accounting from Chulalongkorn University (Thailand). She studies the internationalisation of firms, global value chain, and economic upgrading, with specific reference to strategies of firms from emerging economies. Her research has appeared as book chapters and articles in peer-reviewed journals, including *Global Strategy Journal*, *Multinational Business Review*, *Journal of International Management*, and *Asia Pacific Journal of Management*. Her commentaries have been published, and cited in local and international media, including *Nikkei Asian Review*, *The Economist*, and *Financial Times*. She also appears in TV interviews with the BBC, Al Jazeera and Bloomberg. Pavida serves on a number of editorial boards of academic journals, including *Journal of International Business Policy*, and is Honorary Adviser to the Asia New Zealand Foundation, New Zealand's leading non-government authority on Asia. In addition to MBA and executive teaching, she also provides briefings to diplomatic missions, chambers of commerce, and multinational companies. Pavida regularly appears at a broad range of public seminars as speaker as well as moderator.

Tri Suhartini, Founder, Ecovivo. Ms Suhartini founded Ecovivo in Dec 2017, a social enterprise in ecological business, focusing on women empowerment to recycle and harness domestic garbage for cultivating homegrown garden and produce organic personal care products. At Ecovivo, she has been cultivating homegrown plantations for organic raw materials, blending science and nature to produce natural personal care products. She has managed to empower women and marginalized farmers. She has been helping the local community to manage domestic waste and create natural products to promote a sustainable economy. Products include upcycled soap from used-cooking oil, eco-print batik and dried banana midrib eco-packaging. Prior to become an entrepreneur, Tri worked in several multinational companies such as BASF and Ferro Corp, gaining key experiences in chemical analysis, quality control and product development. Tri graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Chemistry from Diponegoro state university, Central Java. She is also skilled in Pattern Drafting and Fashion Design.

3rd September 2020 | ERIA MSMEs Talk #4

Women Entrepreneurs Amidst COVID-19 – Boom or Bane?



Speakers

Ratha Chea, Founder and CEO, Khmum Technology. Mrs Ratha is an accomplished software development executive with over 8 years of experience. She has a proven track record in understanding new technologies, focusing on continuous improvement, and reengineering business processes. Mrs Ratha started her career in the US and worked in Australia as a senior financial analyst at IBM Logistic, where she received the Customer Service Outstanding Award. She received a Bachelor of Computer Science from University of California, Irvine in 2003 and a Master of Business Administration from Cal States University, Fullerton in 2007. She also received the Certified Green Belt Lean and Six Sigma Certificate in 2011 from the USA. Mrs Ratha is a member of the Cambodia Women Entrepreneur Association (CWEA) and of SHE Investments and is a CWEA Representative to MOWA – In charge of Women Development Programmes that will support and accelerate the empowerment of Women in general as well as the entrepreneurs in Cambodia.

Bernard Li, Programme Director, APEC Secretariat. Bernard is a Programme Director at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Secretariat in Singapore, currently responsible for the APEC Policy Partnership on Women and the Economy. He previously supported the APEC committee responsible for economic and technical cooperation, and a high-level post-2020 visioning exercise for the region. Bernard is a diplomat, trade negotiator and lawyer, having served in the Canadian Embassy in Washington DC, the Canadian Mission to the European Union (Brussels), the Privy Council Office (Ottawa) and the Trans-Pacific Partnership negotiations.

Laurentia Lisa, CEO, Cyber Olympus. Laurentia Lisa Setiawan is the Founder of Cyber Olympus IT Solution company in Yogyakarta. Her passion in technology drives her to provide software, applications and social media marketing for companies. She also runs other businesses in robotics, games, computing and a learning center called CROG International where she dreams to bring technology education to kids in their early ages in Indonesia. Her team and her are currently developing IoT. Her mission is to help more business to grow with advanced technology and prepare the young generation for global competition. Laurentia graduated with a Master of Information Technology, focused on Game Design and Mobile Application, from James Cook University Singapore.

Deanna Morris, Programme Management Officer, Technology and Innovation Section, Trade, Investment and Innovation Division, United Nations ESCAP. Deanna manages the Innovative Financing component of a US\$ 10 million programme on “Catalyzing Women’s Entrepreneurship.” She has led the establishment of ESCAP’s Women’s Impact Investment Fund and works with key partners to implement a FinTech challenge fund across the Asia-Pacific region. She also works with regulators and policy makers to support financial inclusion priorities and mainstream gender considerations into respective national strategies/frameworks. Prior to joining ESCAP, Deanna was the Deputy Programme Manager of the Shaping Inclusive Finance Transformations Programme (SHIFT) at the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF). At UNCDF she supported the overall establishment of the SHIFT women’s financial inclusion programme and also oversaw the programme’s monitoring and evaluation, donor relationships management and acted as a member of the programme management and strategic planning team. She has a master’s degree in Sustainable International Development from Brandeis University’s Heller School for Social Policy and Management and a bachelor’s degree in Economics and Management.

Phi Van Nguyen, Chairwoman, Viet Nam Angel Network. Nguyen Phi Van holds an MBA from Australia, majoring in marketing communication. Her experience spans over 20 years as a senior executive in brand, retail, and franchise development across global emerging markets in Asia, The Middle East, Africa, and Eastern Europe. She is currently advisor to Project 844 under the Ministry of Science and Technology of Viet Nam on start-up and

innovation, chairwoman of Viet Nam Business Angel Network, and Open Innovation Viet Nam. Phi Van is the 2015 award winner of Retail Leadership presented by Asia Retail Congress, and 2017 & 2018 award winner of the 100 Top Great Retail Minds presented by World Retail Congress, and 2019 award winner of the ASEAN Outstanding Business Award. Phi Van is the author of five books, "Franchising – The Short Route to Global Markets", "Cross The Rice Field, Reach The World", "Go Global: An MSME's guide to global franchising", and "I, The Future and The World", "In Search of Myself", and "Nym - My Future Self".

24th September 2020 | ERIA MSMEs Talk #5

Sustainability Practices in a COVID-19 World and Beyond – The Practicality for MSMEs



Speakers

Aivonne Chong, Founder & Managing Director, Brown Bag Wines. Aivonne founded Brown Bag Wines in late 2017, and sees herself as a minimal intervention wine entrepreneur who aims to serve clean and expressive wines to a community of organic, biodynamic wine drinkers, growers who believe in enjoying wines and paying it forward. Prior to taking the plunge to be an entrepreneur, Aivonne spent more than a decade in the advertising industry, managing several major accounts locally and globally.

Priyanka Chetry, CEO, Grocerdel. Priyanka founded Grocerdel in August of 2019, an online grocery store that provides plastic-free delivery of the guaranteed-fresh local food, Cambodian-made brands and wholesale products. She believes in promoting sustainable agriculture and the company grew out of a need to connect local, small-scale farmers to the educated consumers seeking their produce. A foundational career in banking showed her the thrill of managing a team, designing the right operations, and bringing a project from start to profit. A constant learner, she is building a mission-centred business combining people and sustainability.

Jootae Kim, Professor, Department of Business Administration, Dankook University of Korea. Prof Kim has been involved in various research projects focusing on green growth and sustainability since 2010. Prof Kim holds a PhD in International Business Strategy from Seoul National University in 2002. Initially, he was the President of the Academy of International Business in Korea in 2019. He was also a Senior Researcher in the International Business Research Center at Seoul National University in 2003. While, he had worked in Samsung Electronics from 1991-1996.

Venkatachalam Anbumozhi, Senior Economist, ERIA. Dr Anbumozhi has over 20 years' experience in economic and environmental policy making besides research interests in a range of sustainability issues relating to climate change, clean energy, circular economy and regional cooperation. He has worked with Asian Development Bank Institute, the University of Tokyo, and the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies. He has published several books, authored numerous research articles and produced many project reports on renewable energy policies, sustainable infrastructure design, and private sector participation in Green Growth. Anbumozhi was a member of the APEC Expert Panel on Green Finance, G20 Task Force Low Carbon Infrastructure and the ASEAN Working Group on climate-resilient growth. He obtained his PhD from the University of Tokyo.