



AGROINDUSTRY'S ROLE IN ACHIEVING ZERO HUNGER: WHAT STRATEGIC ACTIONS CAN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES TAKE?

Developing countries face an urgent need to provide more and better food for their growing populations. These countries currently only process very little of their own agricultural output, resulting in widespread malnutrition among their citizens. A large share of processed food consumed domestically is still being imported, while little value is added to locally produced food, which is often exported in its raw form. Although developing countries are the largest producers of primary food products, it is developed countries that dominate global food exports due to their processing capacity. Agroindustry presents a significant opportunity for developing countries to substitute imports and add value to their agricultural products, thereby improving their food security and generating jobs and income. The barriers to value addition in food production across developing countries are explored and policy recommendations to overcome these challenges are presented.

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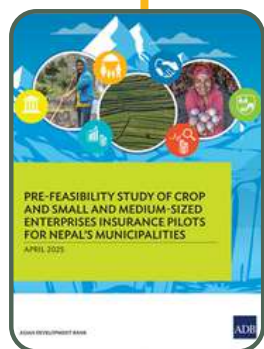
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AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRIES

PRE-FEASIBILITY STUDY OF CROP AND SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES INSURANCE PILOTS FOR NEPAL'S MUNICIPALITIES

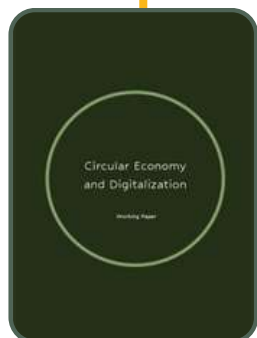


This report analyzes how Nepal can use disaster insurance to mitigate risk for vulnerable farmers and small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and recommends scalable solutions that can help boost disaster preparedness and financial resilience. The report considers issues including low insurance penetration, difficult terrain, and a lack of awareness, and recommends Nepal undertake parametric pilot studies including for rice farmers against extreme weather events. It shows why Nepal should consider high-level solutions such as insurance risk pools and premium subsidies, combined with measures to improve data, tackle gender disparities, and reduce capacity gaps to help restore livelihoods following disasters.

Published by the Asian Development Bank, May 2025

CIRCULAR ECONOMY

CIRCULAR ECONOMY AND DIGITALIZATION



The Circular Economy and Digitalization working paper is developed in collaboration with the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD). Its purpose is to provide action-oriented recommendations for mainstreaming digitalization technologies to support the circular economy and enhance collaboration among policymakers, businesses, and relevant stakeholders to overcome barriers.

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FINANCE SECTOR DEVELOPMENT

THE DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD: UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES OF SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISE PROMOTION POLICY



This paper examines the effects of a revenue-based threshold for tax incentives for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Thailand. It explores the challenge of designing policies that support SMEs without discouraging their growth. The paper focuses on the introduction in 2011 of the B30 million revenue cap as a criterion for Thailand's SME tax scheme, noting a bunching of firms just below the cap. It highlights the double-edged nature of size-based SME policies: while intended to help small businesses, such measures may inadvertently suppress growth for firms near the threshold and potentially create resource misallocation.

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INDUSTRIALIZATION

THE FUTURE OF INDUSTRIALIZATION: HARNESSING MEGATRENDS FOR SUSTAINABLE GROWTH



The global industrial landscape is undergoing transformative change, driven by megatrends such as the energy transition, artificial intelligence and digitalization, global value chain reconfiguration, and demographic shifts. These trends present unique opportunities for developing countries to foster sustainable and inclusive industrial growth. However, foundational challenges, including deficits in infrastructure, skills, and technological capabilities, must be addressed. This policy brief highlights the potential of targeted industrial policies to harness these megatrends while overcoming barriers.

Published by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, 2025

INDUSTRIALIZATION

LOOKING AT THE FULL PICTURE: INDUSTRIALIZATION, POVERTY ALLEVIATION AND CLIMATE ACTION



Industrialization is widely acknowledged as a powerful driver of inclusive and sustainable development. This policy brief summarizes new empirical findings applying Causal Mediation Analysis to assess how industrialization contributes to selected Sustainable Development Goals. The results show that indirect effects can account for up to half of the total impact of industrialization on socioeconomic and environmental outcomes, thus underscoring the importance of considering these effects in industrial policymaking.

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LABOR SUPPLY

THE MULTIPLIER EFFECT OF INDUSTRIAL JOBS




Industrialization has historically been regarded as the main avenue to move upwards in the income ladder due to its potential to create a large number of well-paid, high-quality jobs. In recent years, rapid technological change and the automation of many industrial processes have questioned the potential of industry to drive development and create productive jobs. This policy brief challenges this pessimistic view. It provides fresh estimates on the multiplier effect of different sectors of the economy on job creation and shows that manufacturing industries have the largest employment generation potential.

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TARIFF

NAVIGATING A NEW ERA OF RECIPROCAL TARIFFS: STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS FOR THE PHILIPPINES AND SELECTED ASEAN ECONOMIES




Amid the evolving US-China tariff realignment and the broader restructuring of global value chains, this paper evaluates the vulnerability and strategic positioning of the Philippines alongside four other ASEAN economies—Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, and Vietnam. For the ASEAN-5, the key challenge lies in minimizing exposure to import flooding from displaced Chinese goods and potential exclusion from global value chains if competitiveness falters, while also capitalizing on trade and investment diversion opportunities. Using a Tariff Exposure Composite Index (TECI), the assessment reveals that the Philippines and Malaysia fall within the moderate-to-low risk tier, owing to relatively low reciprocal tariff rates and strong exemption coverage—particularly for high-value electronics. Absent a coordinated and forward-looking policy response, the Philippines and its ASEAN neighbors risk becoming passive bystanders in an increasingly fragmented trade landscape. However, with strategic alignment of trade and industrial policy, the deployment of robust trade defense tools, and deeper ASEAN collaboration, these economies can reframe the current disruption as a platform to reposition themselves as high-trust, tariff-resilient production hubs in the new global trading order.

Published by the Philippine Institute for Development Studies, April 2025

WOMEN-OWNED BUSINESS ENTERPRISES

EMPOWERMENT AND HUMAN FLOURISHING OF WOMEN SARI-SARI STORE OWNERS IN THE PHILIPPINES



This Policy Note highlights the vital role of women-owned sari-sari stores in shaping the Philippine socioeconomic landscape. Using the Participation-Empowerment framework and the Human Flourishing Index, this study assesses how these microenterprises contribute significantly to women's empowerment and human flourishing while fostering social capital and community engagement. Based on survey data from 311 female store owners in Central Luzon and Metro Manila, the research examines their empowerment across various dimensions. Findings indicate that women entrepreneurs experience a sense of pride, purpose, and confidence, viewing their businesses as tools for financial independence and family support. However, challenges persist, including limited access to capital, inadequate business skills, and restricted government engagement. Statistical analysis confirms a strong correlation between entrepreneurship and well-being, linking sari-sari store ownership with social connectedness and resilience. The study recommends addressing information gaps, refining intervention programs, and recognizing sari-sari stores as integral to the care economy.

Published by the Philippine Institute for Development Studies, March 2025