



TECHNOLOGY AND THE TRANSITION FROM INFORMAL TO FORMAL ECONOMY

ON-LINE RESEARCH FORUM

18-19 January 2021

INFORMATION NOTE



International Labour Organization



Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

Rationale

An increasing number of governments are promoting the application of new technologies that have the potential to simplify and facilitate the transition from the informal to the formal economy. Technology can facilitate providing access to social protection, simplify registration, enhance access to finance, increase productivity, support inspection and compliance with laws, and give a voice to those working in the shadows of the informal sector. These policy innovations (simplified to “e-formality”) have the potential to transform the way formalization policies will be implemented in the future.

The ILO and UN-ESCAP are leading a research project and South-South learning exchange on the topic of e-formalization. The expected outcome of the project is an increased knowledge base of ILO tripartite constituents in the Asia-Pacific Region on how and to what degree the application of digital technologies in public policies and programmes contributes to the process of formalization. After a Call for Abstracts launched earlier this year, the ILO and UN-ESCAP invite the authors of five research abstracts to present their work at the on-line Research Forum on 18-19 January 2021.

Participants

The on-line Research Forum brings together researchers who have submitted innovative research papers on the use of digital technologies in support of the transition from the informal to the formal economy and ILO experts on the topic of formalization. The researchers are invited to present their papers for peer-review.

Objectives

The objectives of the on-line Research Forum are to share the findings of research on e-formalization in different countries in Asia. The Research Forum will be an opportunity for mutual learning, peer review and agenda setting for a longer-term research and knowledge sharing programme. The conclusions of the on-line Research Forum will feed into an on-line Tripartite Knowledge Sharing Forum to be held in May 2021.

What to prepare?

Researchers are expected to prepare a presentation of maximum 20 minutes on their research findings. They are also invited to read the draft reports submitted by other researchers before the start of the on-line Research Forum. All drafts and presentations will be shared with all participants before the event.

Provisonal agenda

Hour (ICT GMT+7)	18 January
13:00 – 13:30	Welcome, introduction, objectives Sara Elder (ILO), Mia Mikic (ESCAP)
13:30 – 14:00	Session 1: E-formalization: What do we know so far? Presentation by ILO, evidence on use of technology with potential to boost formalization in the Asia-Pacific region
14:00 – 15:30	Session 2: Technology and enterprise formalization Upalat Korwatanasakul: <i>Digitalisation, enterprise formalisation, and global value chains: A cross-country, firm-level analysis</i> Hannah Thinyane and Michael Gallo: <i>Supporting labour inspection, private compliance initiatives, and formalization through technological innovation</i> Discussants: Judith van Doorn, Christian Viegelahn
BREAK	
16:00 – 16:45	Session 3: Technology, protection and well-being of informal workers Ying Gao: <i>Social capital and compliance among informal workers during the Covid-19 crisis: Rapid survey evidence from Indonesia</i> Discussant: Vicky Leung
16:45 -17:00	Wrap up, day 1

Hour (ICT GMT+7)	19 January
13:00 – 13:15	Welcome and presentation of daily programme
13:15 – 14:45	Session 4: Technology, protection and well-being of informal workers (cont.) Aditi Surie: <i>Digital platforms and induced structural changes: Evidence from platform work in a Southern City</i> Wei Tu and Wenjing Li: <i>Using information technology to guarantee wage payment to construction workers in China</i> Discussants: Juan Chacaltana, Phu Huynh
BREAK	

15:15 – 16:00	Session 5: Technology and agriculture
	Joana Cassinerio: <i>Agriculture 4.0: The potential of labour inspection technology to transform the agricultural sector in CLMV</i>
	Discussant: Haidy Seang Ear-Dupuy
16:00 -16:30	Wrap up and open discussion on future research plans

Language

The language used in the on-line Research Forum will be English.

On-line platform

Registered participants in the Research Forum will receive an invitation to join the forum in Zoom.

List of participants

Name	Position	Organization	Email Address
Cassinerio, Joana	PhD Graduate Associate Independent Consultant	Mahidol University, Thailand	joanamtacken@hotmail.de
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		Institute of Technology (MIT)	
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Yu, Sandra	Specialist, Local Strategies for Decent Work	ILO-Bangkok	yu@ilo.org
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