



Call for Papers

1st Annual Conference of the Private Sector Development Research Network Private Enterprise and Inclusion Geneva, December 12-13, 2019

Conference Committee

Paddy Carter, CDC Group
Neil Gregory, International Finance Corporation (IFC)
Adnan Khan, International Growth Centre (IGC)
Jonathan Leape, International Growth Centre (IGC)
Nancy Lee, Center for Global Development (CGD)
Alessandro Maffioli, IDB Invest
Alastair McKechnie, Overseas Development Institute (ODI)
Ugo Panizza, Graduate Institute's Centre for Finance and Development (CFD) and CEPR
Alexandros Ragoussis, International Finance Corporation (IFC)
Patricia Yanez-Pagans, IDB Invest

Background

There is little doubt that progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will require investments to grow private enterprise in low and lower middle-income countries (LLMICs) in order to create opportunities for, and provide services to, the poor and other under-served groups. But the behavior of private firms and markets in these countries, and their contributions to sustainable development, are not well understood. In which enterprises is investment most socially beneficial, and how can we obtain evidence of those benefits? In which ways can markets and firms make a difference at a scale that substantially reduces poverty? This conference offers an opportunity to bring together staff of Development Finance Institutions (DFIs) and donor agencies involved in private sector development, with academics who study private firms and markets from the fields of economics (such as industrial organization, international trade and investment), finance, business and development studies. It aims to provide a forum to present and discuss new evidence, data, analysis and set the agenda for future research relevant to development institutions as a basis for collaboration. The conference is intended for researchers who are interested in influencing practice and who are curious about how practitioners perceive the problems that they face, and for practitioners who want to learn from researchers.

The event will focus primarily on the actions and behaviors of private firms, investors and markets rather than on government policy. It is differentiated from other conferences because of the markets it aims to focus – LLMIC, but also the institutions it aims to engage in dialogue – DFIs, think tanks and universities with an active and applied research agenda on private sector development. However, insights for policy and regulation of markets and firms are within scope.

Topics

The first conference of Private Sector Development Research Network will focus on inclusive firms and markets and consider questions around characteristics of inclusive business, ways to measure impact, and ways to support inclusion by a range of actors.¹ The questions of interest focus on two key actors – the private sector and development finance institutions – and aim for research that contributes with actionable insights on the ways businesses affect inclusion, either proactively or not, and the ways development finance institutions and other actors can promote inclusion through private sector activity.

In particular, the conference organizers welcome papers (even in draft format) that address the following questions:

- How can private enterprises best promote access to goods and services for the poor, and greater participation of the poor in economic, social, and political processes?
- In which ways can inclusive business practices raise firm productivity and competitiveness?
- When is private sector activity more likely to raise the incomes of the poor and lower income people indirectly, via general equilibrium effects? How can we obtain evidence of indirect effects?
- How should we measure the inclusiveness of businesses, where are the data gaps, how can we fill them?
- How can we measure the indirect impact of businesses on inclusion through value chains?
- How effective are local capital markets in low and lower middle-income countries in making businesses more inclusive?
- What role can new technologies play in help firms increase the reach and inclusion of private enterprises?
- How effective is development finance and technical services in making businesses more inclusive? What interventions can foster more inclusive markets?
- How can public policies and international actors be more effective in incentivizing firms to adopt inclusive business models?
- How can impact investors, and donors best deploy their capital to promote inclusive growth? What instruments are most effective?
- What is the role of entrepreneurs from vulnerable groups defined by age, gender, race or income, in promoting inclusive business?

While the focus of the conference is on economic aspects of inclusion, the organizers would also consider submissions on the role of private enterprise and investment in promoting other forms of inclusion in low and lower middle-income countries.

Submission Guidelines

There is no submission fee and funding will be available for selected participants. Papers (even in draft format) should be submitted as PDF files to Bettina Santos bsantos@ifc.org by **1 September 2019**. Accepted Authors will be notified by **22 September 2019**. When submitting a paper, please specify if you need funding to attend the conference.

¹ Inclusive businesses, according to the IFC definition, bring people living at the base of the economic pyramid—the poor and underserved—into value chains as suppliers, distributors, retailers, or customers. The focus of that definition is economic, and direct, although in principle the term 'inclusive business' could cover other forms of inclusion and indirect effects. The dual focus of IFC's Inclusive Business approach—achieving both commercial viability and development impact—fosters opportunity and expands access using private sector solutions that are sustainable, replicable, and scalable.