

Entrepreneurship, Start-Ups, and Innovation (E-S-I) in ASEAN and East Asia: Catalysing Collaborations and Partnerships for Scale-Ups

Lessons from ERIA E-S-I Talks 6–10

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Abstract

In 2021, the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA) and Curated Connectors, a Singapore-based start-up, hosted a webinar series to discuss how innovation, start-up creation, and entrepreneurship are contributing to shape the (in-pandemic) and post-pandemic recovery. The discussions in each episode of the webinar series brought in innovators, 'start-uppers', and entrepreneurs from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and its Dialogue Partners as well as experts from international organisations, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and foundations, and policymakers. This report summarises the key messages and trends that arose from the second half of the webinar series.

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Siah Hwee Ang, Professor, Victoria University of Wellington; Jayne Chan, Head, StartmeupHK, InvestHK; Adam Corrall, General Manager, Asia, Australasian Premium Partners; Ji Eun Chung, Chief Executive Officer, CODIT; Nicola Crosta, Founder and CEO, Impact46; Lishia Erza, CEO, ASYX; Jeong Hyop Lee, Senior Adviser, Deep Science and Tech, Programme Management Unit for Competitiveness; Brian Koh, Director, NUS Enterprise; Yukako Idehara, Planning and Coordination Manager, ERIA; Pennie Lim, CEO, HOMA Sdn Bhd; Pranpreya Sriwannawit Lundberg, Policy Specialist, Office of National Higher Education Science Research and Innovation Policy Council (NXPO); Ayako Mizuno, Programme Manager, Regional Knowledge Centre for Marine Plastic Debris (RKCMPD), ERIA; Chan Mun Wei, Founder and Principal Consultant, SustainableSG; Mel Nava, Co-founder and CEO, 1Export; Cheryl Ng, Startup Ecosystem Consultant, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); Wisnu Nugrahadi, CEO and Co-founder, Sampingan; Laurent Tam Nguyen, Co-founder and General Manager, Digital Mekong; Haewon Rah, Engagement Manager, Techstars; Syanaz Winanto, Founder of Rorokenes, Member of eTrade for Women Community; Jirut Watoom, Programme Manager, Sprint Accelerator; Agata Zborowska, Chief Operating Officer, Conception X.

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KEY MESSAGES

- **Diversity of incubators and accelerators – as well as continued collaboration and cooperation across different types of actors – are key factors for developing a robust E-S-I ecosystem.**
- **Borderless entrepreneurship and greater adoption of technology will enable entrepreneurs to compete regionally and globally – providing them with access to human talent as well as business opportunities beyond their local shores.**
- **Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which are often led by women, remain powerful engines for economic growth in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). As the region expects millions of dollars in revenue from the e-commerce sector by 2030, achieving this growth will require greater involvement of female entrepreneurs to drive SMEs and local businesses onto digital platforms.**
- **Sustainability remains a key trend for entrepreneurs to follow during the post-pandemic recovery: a real transition towards sustainable ASEAN economies cannot happen without leading innovative efforts from the start-up community.**
- **The next generations of ASEAN entrepreneurs and innovators have a key role to play in driving an inclusive and sustainable post-pandemic recovery, and need to be supported in accessing global talent and developing cross-border partnerships and networks.**

● Section 1

The Importance of Incubators and Accelerators in Shaping the Future of the E-S-I Landscape

Over the past decade, innovation ecosystems across Southeast and East Asia have flourished, and in global hubs such as Singapore and Hong Kong, the growing numbers of start-ups in different types of industries create a diverse and blooming innovation ecosystem. An estimated 393 tech investments were made across Southeast Asia in the first half of 2021, with 70% of deals done coming from Indonesia and Singapore. Indonesia alone accounted for around 51% of capital invested (Cento Ventures, 2021). Hong Kong had an estimated 3,700 start-ups in 2021, a 12% increase from the year before (StartmeupHK, 2021).

Incubators and accelerators have played an increasingly important role in helping these start-up entrepreneurs on their journeys – from providing a safe ideation testing environment, to capacity building, mentoring, and supporting the scaling up of their businesses. Within Asia, Singapore alone is estimated to have 205 incubators and accelerators

(StartupSG, 2021), while India has more than 520 tech incubators and accelerators spread across more than 100 cities (NASSCOM, 2020).

In recent years, institutions of higher learning have incorporated the role of business incubators as well. This integration is critical as it not only provides platforms, digital facilities, and training programmes for students to learn about start-ups, but it can do it in a safe, risk-free environment. Furthermore, such endeavours help connect students with external organisations in the private sector, allowing for the translation of academic knowledge into real industrial needs. A good example is the NUS Overseas Colleges programme, which partners with several similar set-ups across the region, building partnerships and exchanging innovations to strengthen regional connectivity (NUS Enterprise, 2021).

Southeast Asia continues to be a vibrant region for Entrepreneurship, Start-Ups, and Innovation (E-S-I) ecosystem

growth. In looking beyond the pandemic, and in positioning the region for recovery and growth, it is vital that the environment remain conducive to and welcoming for more incubators and accelerators to establish their presence here.

Start-ups and entrepreneurs will require as much support as possible, and the deepening collaboration between governments the private sector, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and entrepreneurs will help to boost the overall entrepreneurial ecosystem.

● Section 2

Borderless Entrepreneurship – The Way Forward

Technology adoption and digital transformation have allowed entrepreneurs to be instantly connected with people, resources, and ideas all over the world. The growing global connectivity has fostered opportunities and access for entrepreneurs to translate their ideas into business that could reach millions of consumers in the global market, while expanding their connections beyond borders. It is increasingly common for new 'start-uppers' to develop international teams and operations from day 1.

Over the last decades, a growing body of research has revealed the importance of international linkages and connections to foster innovation and entrepreneurship.

Some of what are traditionally considered leading innovation hubs globally (across Asia, Europe, or North America) have benefitted tremendously by tapping into international, if not global, innovation networks of ideas, knowledge, and talent (Saxenian, 2006; Kerr, 2021).

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, which has driven remote working and the increase in digital nomads, has provided an additional push and acceleration towards 'borderless entrepreneurship'. The pandemic has also provided an opportunity for entrepreneurs to scale up their businesses faster as they can mobilise and operate their teams to do

business locally while accessing global markets. Borderless entrepreneurship offers the ability to work without physical boundaries and to have more autonomy to determine a personal and professional life balance. This is particularly important for certain sectors of society, such as women or younger entrepreneurs. Investors are also more likely to support and invest in start-ups that are interested in scaling up their business globally.

However, borderless entrepreneurs face a number of challenges related to lack of regulatory coherence across the countries in the region as well as a wide range of consumer preferences and behaviours. COVID-19 has shaped a profound megatrend, where digitalisation is now the way to do business. But regulation to facilitate and enable these new ways of doing business is lagging.

Borderless entrepreneurship requires a broad range of skills to cope with and take advantage of teams from diverse backgrounds and to access markets with habits and features different from domestic ones. Skills – including

resilience, adaptability empathy, and transparency in managing start-up teams and building businesses – are particularly important for borderless entrepreneurs.

At the same time, although physical interaction remains important in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), digitalisation has helped many entrepreneurs to climb up the competition ladder with their counterparts around the world. This has also given them access to diverse talent at a greater scale, by recruiting workers and developing partnerships across a much broader geographical spectrum than the domestic one alone.

This is also true for ASEAN's larger markets. For example, in Indonesia, where the local market is large with many languages and geographical challenges, technology is an important tool to close the knowledge gap and to connect companies with a higher quality workforce domestically or internationally. Being connected to the global market means more opportunities for companies to invest in the workforces of smaller cities and train them remotely.

● Section 3

Women in E-Commerce – Leading Digital Entrepreneurship

The fast acceleration of digital trade and e-commerce across ASEAN offers many opportunities for women entrepreneurs. At the same time, more women entrepreneurs, including those relying on digital technologies to operate their businesses or develop new and innovative products and services, are needed to make the post-pandemic recovery more inclusive (Ajmone Marsan and Sey, 2021). As digital commerce will continue to be an integral part of the region's growth, empowering leading female entrepreneurs at the centre of the e-commerce sector has become critical for the post-pandemic recovery. Going digital is an important tool for women entrepreneurs as they will be able to access more data, networks, market analysis, branding with purpose, and upscaling business sales in the region and international markets. Across ASEAN, micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), often led and managed by women, are powerful engines that provide the backbone of ASEAN economic growth. As the region expects a significant

expansion of e-commerce by 2030 (Chen and Ruddy, 2020), achieving this growth will require greater involvement of female entrepreneurs to drive small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and local businesses onto digital platforms.

Women still face several challenges in gaining equal market access in the digital sphere. Challenges remain in facilitating access to finance, infrastructure, and assistance for women using e-commerce platforms. In some cases, these challenges are exacerbated by long-standing cultural and social barriers which create important obstacles for women becoming accomplished entrepreneurs, in general and in the digital sphere. Some of these barriers can be addressed relatively quickly (e.g. by providing ad hoc training or access to finance). Important skills for women entrepreneurs who want to go digital include listening to customers, growing the business sustainably and adapting to unprecedented scenarios, and thinking globally, especially when

serving consumers beyond local markets. Additional important factors to support women entrepreneurship in going digital include obtaining new knowledge on technologies and finance, navigating digital solutions for scaling up the business, and having a good sales record.

Examples of how to support women entering e-commerce exist across ASEAN. For instance, Indonesia is paying increasing attention to providing technical assistance for female entrepreneurs in digital and financial literacy. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)-led eTrade for Women initiative helps to connect women entrepreneurs globally

– creating room for more collaboration, mentoring, and information exchange on resources, good practices, and emerging opportunities.

However, it is important to remember that in other cases solutions are likely to be found through much more long-term initiatives and education processes involving and targeting the entire society, not just women alone. It is therefore important to combine both shorter- and longer-term strategies and actions to find solutions that can have a lasting impact on societies, to support the development of more equal and gender-inclusive economies across ASEAN.

● Section 4

Sustainability Entrepreneurship as a Solution to Present-day Social and Environmental Problems

Increasing environmental risks have called for more action and solutions that aim at a structural change towards social development and environmental sustainability, as well as economic viability. This has brought about a rise in a new wave of entrepreneurs who launch new ventures to address urgent

environmental challenges. These ventures either take the form of social enterprises with sustainability or climate change business models, or green technology start-ups.

Over the past decade, investments in green technology have risen steadily, with a significant increase between

2017 and 2019. More than \$1 billion in capital was invested in green technology companies through nearly 30 investment events in January 2020 (Qian and Platonov, 2020).

For the sustainability entrepreneurship ecosystem to flourish, the circle of people–private–public partnerships needs to be strengthened. Governments will have to create a conducive business environment that promotes entrepreneurial endeavours in this space. Policies, funding support, and capability building are some traditional ways that these can be achieved.

Increased engagement between the public and private sectors is critical to build solutions and innovations and to co-formulate policies that are oriented towards present and future sustainability, especially in the post-pandemic recovery world. Through such collaborations, issues such as low market affordability, lack of local capabilities to absorb new technologies, and dependency on foreign technologies can be more effectively addressed.

The Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA) Regional Knowledge Centre for Marine Plastic Debris is a good example. The centre's private sector platform showcases

ASEAN+3 companies' initiatives, technologies, and innovations to manage marine plastic debris and plastic waste reduction. This platform has shown that the private sector can be part of the solution by changing linear consumption and production to a more sustainable and circular economic system. Another initiative from Indonesia, managed via the Octopus app, saw almost 90 tons of waste being recycled in late 2020, through cooperation amongst scavengers, volunteers, and waste banks (Octopus, 2020).

Consumer awareness on sustainability and climate change issues has increased, and this has led to changes in consumer purchasing and consumption behaviours. More consumers are supporting companies that emphasise sustainability in their products – encouraging business to become 'greener'. More can be done in terms of awareness building, and the public sector can take the lead through outreach efforts and engaging NGOs to raise consumer knowledge collectively. This knowledge-building effort is important to address a rise in 'rainbow washing' or 'greenwashing', in which companies or organisations use sustainability as a tagline for commercialisation purposes.

● Section 5

Fostering Next-Gen Entrepreneurs and Innovators

Digital natives, especially younger generations such as Millennials and Generation Z, are transforming the way of doing business by channelling their business activities through social media and other online platforms. The percentage of younger leaders willing to become entrepreneurs is increasing – a survey based on ASEAN youths revealed that more than 30% of the youth in Indonesia and Thailand expressed an intention to be entrepreneurs (WEF, 2019).

Despite these positive trends, comprehensive regional strategies are still missing to foster recent and future generation entrepreneurs and innovators. With the rapid emergence of new technologies and the vastly changing digital world, preparing next-generation entrepreneurs and innovators is key to economic growth. Equipping younger generations with the skills and experience necessary to be more entrepreneurial and innovative therefore represents a considerable economic opportunity. Experiences and learning which foster a growth mindset,

curiosity, and a commitment to lifelong learning are becoming more essential. Higher education and learning institutions play an important role in shaping an entrepreneurial mindset for the next generation. A framework of entrepreneurship education outlining innovative value creation towards knowledge, skills, and attitudes that also allows students to have experiential learning is needed more than ever (Lackéus, 2015). Experiential learning is a way to catalyse students' hard and soft skills to develop solutions to existing problems (i.e. better critical thinking skills). These skills are beneficial in preparing students and individuals to succeed in the vastly changing world and to unlock opportunities in the future workforce, even if they choose a different career path rather than initiating a business or becoming start-uppers.

The synergy of public–private partnerships is also crucial to bridge the disparity gap between educational institutions and workforce industries. Governments, as policymakers, need to

leverage their strategies, e.g. by creating dedicated agencies. One example is the creation of the Office of National Higher Education Science Research and Innovation Policy Council (NXPO) in Thailand – a public agency affiliated with the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation to promote innovative strategies in fostering next-gen entrepreneurs and innovators.

Another interesting concept is the emergence of organisations playing the role of venture builders – organisations (or units within a larger organisation) introducing new ideas and innovations and behaving with an agile and scale-up-oriented mindset. Venture builders could become bridge builders in the formal higher education, research, and innovation ecosystem. It is critical to provide young entrepreneurs with a comprehensive understanding of market and business analysis as well as opportunities, including technical aspects such as finance and

management skills (INSEAD, 2018).

An example of how to transform students into venture builders is Conception X, which supports doctoral students in commercialising their research, transforming their business ideas, and providing training skills including finance and marketing. Not all students participating in Conception X become entrepreneurs, but the skills they learn along the entrepreneurial journey accompany them on their career path, irrespective of their start-up success.

To sum up, skills development is a key component of every strategy to develop the next generation of innovators and entrepreneurs. Moreover, all actors in innovation ecosystems have an important role to play in the development and implementation of these strategies – from educational institutions to ecosystem builders and innovation accelerators, government agencies, and the business community.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- **E-S-I ecosystems will continue to drive the post-pandemic recovery.** Policymakers need to understand and monitor nascent ASEAN E-S-I ecosystems and develop flexible policy support with context-specific features.
 - **Digital and STEM-related skills, in combination with a broader complex portfolio of other skills, drive entrepreneurship and innovation.** These other skills are connected to the ability to navigate uncertainty and complexity, be agile and adaptable, bridge different disciplines, and learn how to learn. Policymakers need to reflect on how to help to develop these skill sets in education cycles by going beyond narrow definitions of digital skills.
 - **Digital technologies provide immense opportunities for entrepreneurs and innovators across ASEAN, but also create complex new challenges.** Policymakers need to be aware of these benefits, but also of the challenges of the new technologies – in particular, the risks of cybercrime, cyber-violence, privacy breaches, and discrimination arising from biases in the digital sphere.
 - **Supporting and increasing the number of women entrepreneurs and innovators participating in E-S-I ecosystems is a fundamental channel to promote a more inclusive post-pandemic recovery.** It is also a tremendous opportunity for economic growth. Policymakers, together with other actors in E-S-I ecosystems, need to develop programmes to support more women and girls undertaking these types of careers.
 - **Collaborations and multi-stakeholder approaches, including at the international level, lie at the essence of E-S-I ecosystems.** Policymakers need to work together and keep dialogue open with the private sector and local communities to support the development of inclusive E-S-I ecosystems across ASEAN.
 - **Start-uppers and innovators are key to the transition towards a more sustainable ASEAN.** Sustainability is becoming one of the trends shaping post-pandemic recovery strategies. Policymakers need to collaborate with the business community – larger companies, traditional MSMEs, innovative start-ups, etc. – to identify and implement solutions.
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**ANNEX:
ORGANISERS &
SPEAKERS BIOS**

Webinars Series – Entrepreneurship, Start-Ups, and Innovation (E-S-I) in ASEAN and East Asia: Catalysing Collaborations and Partnerships for Scale-Ups

Series Organisers and Host

Giulia Ajmone Marsan, Director of Strategy and Partnership, ERIA. Giulia works closely with Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) policymakers as well as regional and global organisations to support the ASEAN process of socio-economic integration. Before joining the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA), she worked as an innovation economist at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (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 ecosystems covering a wide range of countries in Europe, Latin America, North America, Africa, and Asia. Giulia holds bachelor and master's degrees in applied mathematics from the Polytechnic University of Turin, Italy and a doctorate in economics and complex systems jointly awarded by the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (EHESS) in Paris, France and the IMT Institute for Advanced Studies Lucca, Italy.

Lina Maulidina Sabrina, Programme Officer, ERIA. Lina is programme officer of ERIA's Strategy and Partnership Programme and Capacity Building Programme. She has extensive experience in developing and managing international development programmes with a wide range of stakeholders in the Asia-Pacific region. Her interest in development issues began when she worked at civil society organisations in Indonesia, focusing on providing innovative solutions for the national education ecosystem. She is passionate about uncovering multidisciplinary issues to promote regional socio-economic development, particularly those related to digital upskilling in the digital economy ecosystem through policy analysis and engagement. She holds a bachelor's degree in English language education from the State University of Jakarta, Indonesia.

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Ooi Tiat Jin (TJ), Founder and Principal Consultant, Curated Connectors. TJ's passion to connect and empower micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) stems from his earlier career in the Singapore chemical industry as manager, and then general manager of a local chemical distribution company, Absotech. He managed industry programmes and chaired an industry committee focused on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). His interest grew and expanded to the region during his brief tenure as director for the Asia Pacific MSME Trade Coalition (AMTC), a 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 has a bachelors' degree in electrical and electronic engineering from the University of Manchester, United Kingdom.

Thursday, 22 July 2021 | E-S-I Episode No. 6

Of Incubators and Accelerators – Shaping the Future of E-S-I



Speakers

Brian Koh, Director, Ecosystem Development and Digital Infrastructure, National University of Singapore, NUS Enterprise, Singapore.

Brian is a Director at NUS Enterprise, overseeing ecosystem development, digital infrastructure, and corporate partnerships. He has been involved in building ecosystems to support start-ups and entrepreneurs both on and off campus – establishing infrastructure, programs, and networks for the global ecosystem. This includes building up Block71, which has become part of the JTC LaunchPad area, an iconic entrepreneurial space in Singapore. He has also successfully established overseas launchpad centres – US (Silicon Valley) and China (Beijing, Shanghai & Suzhou).

Prior to the National University of Singapore (NUS), Brian was involved in guiding Adroit Innovations from a start-up company to being a publicly listed company on the main board of the Singapore Stock Exchange in 2000. In his last position at Adroit, Brian headed and led its Malaysia operations, sales and marketing, and general management activities – building a profitable market presence for this regional subsidiary.

Siah Hwee Ang, Professor of International Business and Strategy and Chair in Business in Asia, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand.

Siah is also the Director of New Zealand's Southeast Asia Centre of Asia-Pacific Excellence. In these roles, he works closely with various stakeholders and companies on their strategies in Asia and Asia's engagement in New Zealand.

Siah's research is centred around the connection between international business and trade. His works have been published in top-tier international journals and have won several research

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awards. He is also Senior Editor at the Journal of World Business, a leading international business journal. Siah has sat on national assessment panels for the New Zealand Prime Minister's Scholarships for Asia, the Prime Minister's Business Scholarships, and the Marsden Fund.

Before joining Victoria University of Wellington, Siah was Professor and Associate Dean at the University of Auckland Business School, and worked at City, University of London and NUS, where he completed his doctorate in management. Siah is Visiting Professor at several Asian universities and writes frequently in the media.

Jayne Chan, Head, StartmeupHK, InvestHK, Hong Kong.

Jayne is Head of StartmeupHK at InvestHK, the government department responsible for attracting and retaining foreign direct investment in Hong Kong. StartmeupHK is InvestHK's start-up division, established in 2014, aimed at attracting innovative start-ups, investors, and other stakeholders to Hong Kong. It provides a one-stop service platform to support companies setting up in the city, promotes Hong Kong as a premier start-up destination, and helps to build an ecosystem to transform the city into a global hub for innovation and entrepreneurship. Prior to joining InvestHK, Jayne was Executive Director at TiE, a global non-profit network focused on fostering entrepreneurship. She also held management roles at advertising and digital agencies, start-up investors and incubators, management consulting, and manufacturing companies.

Cheryl Ng, Start-up Ecosystem Support Consultant, UNDP Cambodia.

Cheryl is known for her passionate entrepreneurial spirit for creating better and equal economic development opportunities, strengthening local communities and start-up ecosystems, and supporting young entrepreneurs. Her work experience includes a multinational technology corporation, an international social enterprise and charity, and international development – she worked on a global team partnering and engaging the start-up, student, and community developer community at Microsoft, a Toronto-based international social enterprise and charity (WE), and multiple non-profits in Canada.

Cheryl is the co-founder of Gen I, connecting people with world-changing ideas to a network and resources that will help turn their passion project into reality, and has served on the board

of directors for a youth development organisation, Power Unit Youth Organization.

In Cambodia, Cheryl led the design and execution of the first pilot incubation programme, Bluetribe, which launched during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic under the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Cambodia, to help incubate young entrepreneurs and their start-ups within 6 months in partnership with the private sector, local government entities, and international organisations in Southeast Asia. She is currently undertaking research to put together a guidebook for ecosystem support organisations on the existing model of start-up activities in Cambodia, what works and/or does not work for a specific demographic or stage of a start-up, and what success factors organisations measure their indicators against.

She graduated from the University of Toronto with a bachelor's degree in business administration, having spent her third year as an exchange student at NUS.

Tuesday, 31 August 2021 | E-S-I Episode No. 7

Borderless Entrepreneurship – Is That the Future?



Speakers

Laurent Tam Nguyen, Co-Founder and General Manager, Digital Mekong, Viet Nam.

Laurent is a senior business development and marketing specialist with 30 years' experience founding and managing businesses and leading marketing and business development operations in ASEAN and France. He moved to Viet Nam in 2007 after the country joined the World Trade Organization. Based in Ho Chi Minh City since then, he has founded two companies including Digital Mekong, a virtual marketing agency helping companies to develop branding and business development strategies, leveraging freelancing talents (digitalmekong.com). Operating from Viet Nam, France, and Portugal, he has a global clientele from diverse industries. Within Digital Mekong, he also acts as the Chief Marketing Officer on demand, allowing companies to build their marketing foundations and teams in an alternative and cost-efficient way. Under this model, Laurent acted as the first Regional Marketing Director for two preeminent legal firms (DFDL, a leading law firm in the Mekong region, and ZICO, the ASEAN-based network of multidisciplinary services firms based in Singapore), helping to develop their reputation and business in ASEAN. He is currently assisting numerous law firms to transform their business development capabilities and brand.

Laurent is the Viet Nam representative of ASEAN Growth Hack platforms such as N-Strategy Consulting Services (NSCS, Malaysia) as well as the Viet Nam representative for the ASEAN Legal Tech Association. He was nominated No. 13 out of 30 people to watch in 2019 in the business of law in Asia (Asia Law Portal). He is an enthusiastic believer in the future of Viet Nam and ASEAN.

Rah Haewon, Engagement Manager, Techstars, Republic of Korea.

Haewon is the Engagement Manager at Techstars, helping founders to identify business development opportunities by connecting to global networks. She previously worked in project management at a local accelerator, focusing on the implementation of environmental, social, and governance (ESG) indicators in business decisions. Haewon subsequently set up her own company – a design-thinking-based children’s educational content provider for children in marginalised areas. She has a passion for supporting founders and Asian start-up ecosystems, and her heart is in social-mission-driven start-ups.

Jirut Wattoom, Technology Strategy Manager, Chemicals Business, SCG Partner, SPRINT Accelerator, Thailand.

Jirut is an innovation strategist for new growth within the chemicals industry, scouting for new technologies in the petrochemicals, materials, and packaging sectors. He co-founded Sprint Accelerator Thailand in 2017 with academic and corporate partners, with the aim of creating an ecosystem to support science- and engineering-based start-ups, especially those in the early stage. SPRINT has worked with 40 companies, several of which are still going strong and growing despite the pandemic. Start-ups interested in expanding their business in Thailand are invited to join the programme as well.

Wisnu Nugrahadi, CEO and Co-Founder, Sampingan, Indonesia.

Wisnu is CEO and Co-founder of Sampingan, a one-stop workforce management solution with a mission to provide equal job access to workers and seamless workforce management for enterprises. Sampingan has partnered with more than 850,000 temporary and permanent workers, over 150 companies of all sizes, and has a presence in more than 80 cities in Indonesia. Prior to starting his own company, Wisnu held several roles within Go-Jek, Indonesia’s ride hailing and on-demand services start-up unicorn.

Wednesday, 22 September 2021 | E-S-I Episode No. 8

Women in E-Commerce



Speakers

Lishia Erza, CEO, ASYX, Indonesia.

Lishia leads a supply chain collaboration and financial technology company, with offices in Indonesia, Singapore, and the Netherlands. 2021 was a busy year for Lishia, as she reached No. 5 in the Top 100 Women in Supply Chain by Supply Chain Digital and IBM, was listed as one of the Top 15 Fintech Women in Hong Kong and Singapore by FinTech Magazine, featured in SWA Magazine Indonesia's list of the Most Powerful Women in Indonesia 2021, and was SWA Magazine's Businesswomen of the Year 2021.

Lishia promotes digital and sustainable supply chain financing for growth stage SMEs and circular economies. Through the Indonesian Employer's Association, widely known as APINDO, she advocates entrepreneurship for youth and women. She also sits on the International Access Committee of the Indonesian Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Her latest initiative is MELATI Nusantara, an integrated programme for female SME entrepreneurs to support digital and financial literacy for participants. MELATI provides a series of technical assistance, training, and access to finance, supported by the UN Capital Development Fund, Visa, FMO Investment Management, the Government of Canada, and Australian Aid.

Syanaz Winanto, Founder, Rorokenes, Indonesia.

Rorokenes is an Indonesian artisan woven bag company with a sustainability and ethical concept. Syanaz believes that a good business should not only emphasise good products, but also foster a community's prosperity and sustainability. Syanaz is a member of eTrade for Women, a programme for women entrepreneurs facilitated by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). She has participated in several international

exhibitions, including the Japan–Indonesia Business Forum in Osaka, New York Now, and the Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week in Russia. She holds a master’s degree in development management from the Asian Institute of Management in the Philippines.

Pennie Lim, CEO, HOMA Sdn Bhd, Malaysia.

Pennie is the Founder and CEO of HOMA, an online platform that offers building materials and home finishing products at a bargain price with a strong focus on sustainability. The company’s vision is to reinforce the global home makeover community through people-centric values while reducing the environmental crisis. HOMA consciously sources overstock materials from construction sites as well as ageing products from brand merchants. Pennie is a graduate in operations management and has worked in the trading and marketing of architectural products for more than 14 years. She has successfully disrupted the traditional brick-and-mortar business by enabling the construction and renovation industry to progress to more affordable and effective sourcing and repurposing through the overstock O2O business platform.

Mel Nava, Co-Founder and CEO, 1Export, Philippines.

In 2016, Mel founded 1Export, an online platform that assists SMEs to comply with international requirements and find buyers so that they can sell successfully to international markets. 1Export currently serves more than 3,500 MSMEs and 10 farming communities, exporting their products across the United States, Middle East, Asia, and Australia. Data analytics are used to connect buyers with suppliers and improve just-in-time (JIT) efficiency for faster order and document processing.

Mel’s earlier experience in trade and her entrepreneurial spirit have created the perfect blend as she endeavours to empower Filipinos in other countries to embark on their own entrepreneurial journeys.

She was also recently recognised as a Gen.T 2021 Leader of Tomorrow for 1Export’s contribution in shaping cross-border trade for MSMEs.

Thursday, 21 October 2021 | E-S-I Episode No. 9

Sustainability Entrepreneurship – Past, Present, and Future



Speakers

Chan Mun Wei, Founder and Principal Consultant, SustainableSG, Singapore.

Mun Wei is a consultant, trainer, and speaker in the areas of sustainability, organisational strategy, risk management, and corporate social responsibility. He advises companies and associations on sustainability strategy and implementation. He writes and advocates for a greener world and has spoken on climate change, recycling, and other environmental issues at various events.

He works on sustainable tourism developments and consults for SG Enable, a Singapore charity that supports persons with disabilities, on various organisational initiatives. He is an Associate Lecturer at the Singapore University of Social Sciences and Newcastle University's campus in Singapore, as well as a volunteer on the Management Development Institute of Singapore (MDIS) School of Tourism and Hospitality's Advisory Board.

Mun Wei started out his career as a management executive at Singapore Airlines. For more than 20 years, he has worked in Singapore in the private and public sectors, and has experience in functional domains such as strategy, corporate planning, policy development, data analytics, risk management, operations, sales, marketing, investment promotion, and human resources management.

His last position was as Divisional Director of Corporate Planning at Sentosa Development Corporation, which is the government agency that develops and manages Sentosa as an international leisure and tourism destination.

Jeong Hyop Lee, Senior Advisor, Deep Science and Technology, Programme Management Unit for Competitiveness, Thailand.

In his current role, Jeong Hyop Lee has developed an energy innovation strategy and focuses on developing partnerships with public and private stakeholders in the Republic of Korea (henceforth, Korea) on high-value bioenergy by-product developments, aligned with Thailand's circular economy aspirations. He is a steering committee member of the APEC Research Center for Advanced Biohydrogen Technology and a speaker/evaluation committee member at the annual APEC YES Challenges.

He has worked with the Korea Environment Institute, the Stockholm Environment Institute, ASEAN public and private stakeholders, and international agencies to organise three consecutive annual Korea–ASEAN Environment Fora in Bangkok to articulate partnership architecture and components; design partnership models, programmes, and milestones; and develop partnership schemes with the private sector.

Ayako Mizuno, Programme Manager, Regional Knowledge Centre for Marine Plastic Debris, ERIA.

Ayako Mizuno has been a programme manager at the Regional Knowledge Centre for Marine Plastic Debris in ERIA since November 2020. She is seconded from the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies where she is a programme manager in the sustainable consumption and production area.

Previously, she held positions in the international development field as part of bilateral and multilateral cooperation for over 12 years in North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, and the Caribbean.

Nicola Crosta, Founder and CEO, Impact46, Thailand.

Nicola is one of the world's leading experts on impact investment, philanthropy, and non-profit management, with extensive experience in a wide range of impact-driven organisations.

Nicola held senior management positions at the world's top international organisations for 18 years. At the United Nations in New York, he played a key role in helping to define the Sustainable Development Goals. As Executive Vice President and Board Member of Epic Foundation, Nicola helped to build one of the most innovative philanthropic foundations from the ground up. At Epic, he oversaw one of the largest non-governmental organisation and donor surveys ever performed globally and the development of cutting-edge non-profits' due diligence and social impact monitoring methodologies. Nicola is the Founder of Baan Dek Foundation, an award-winning social enterprise that provides access to services to thousands of migrant children across Southeast Asia. In recent years, Baan Dek has become a strategic implementing partner of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and won the MIT Award for Social Innovation (Solve 2017). Nicola's articles and books on social impact, development economics, and philanthropy have been translated extensively and published globally. He has been a visiting lecturer on social impact and innovation at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Harvard University, Sciences Po, and the University of Hong Kong.

Thursday, 25 November 2021 | E-S-I Episode No. 10

Fostering Next-Gen Entrepreneurs and Innovators

[Link](#)

Speakers

Pranpreya Sriwannawit Lundberg, Policy Specialist, NXPO, Thailand.

Pranpreya is a Policy Specialist at the Office of National Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation Policy Council (NXPO) in Bangkok. She is an official contact point of Thailand for the OECD Committee of Scientific and Technological Policy (CSTP). She has also been seconded as an Assistant to the Minister of Science and Technology and the Minister of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation.

Pranpreya has published several articles in academic journals and given lectures in both academic and industrial settings. She has supervised more than 20 students at the master's level in subjects ranging from industrial dynamics to innovation management. She has represented Thailand on a variety of international committees such as the OECD CSTP and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) Committee on Information and Communications Technology, Science, Technology and Innovation.

Pranpreya has a doctorate in industrial economics and management from KTH Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm. Her research analyses the diffusion of innovation, primarily on the use of renewable energy technologies to alleviate poverty. During her doctorate, she was the first and the only doctoral candidate to be elected as a member of the International Association for Management of Technology (IAMOT) Board of Directors.

Lessons from E-S-I Episodes 6-10

Agata Zborowska, Chief Operating Officer, Conception X, United Kingdom.

Agata's mission is to support aspiring entrepreneurs and businesses in their pursuit of success. As Chief Operating Officer at Conception X, she helps people achieve their goals through the programme. She founded – and failed at – one company; launched multiple educational and community projects, including Lean In Portugal, Lisbon's 3,000 strong community of entrepreneurial women; and supported women entrepreneurs through London's Female Founders Accelerator. For the past 15 years, she has worked in programme, account, and partnership management in the United Kingdom, United States, Spain, Portugal, Poland, and Malaysia.

Adam Corrall, General Manager, Asia, Australasian Premium Partners, Viet Nam.

Adam Corrall is an Australian cross-industry business development professional who has called Viet Nam home for 20 years. He is a Managing Partner and Director of Operations for Australasian Premium Partners, a consulting firm which specialises in services related to trade and investment between Viet Nam and Australia. Adam is responsible for evaluating and strategising planning for market entry; and implements supply chain processes, delivery systems, and sales channels for Australian and Vietnamese businesses. Adam brings with him experience working in Australia, South Africa, England, Japan, and Viet Nam.

Adam has a bachelor's degree in horticulture from the University of Melbourne, a master's in education from the University of Technology Sydney, a postgraduate diploma in business management from University of Queensland, and a master's in global trade from RMIT University.

Ji Eun Chung, Chief Executive Officer, CODIT, Republic of Korea.

Ji Eun is co-founder and CEO of CODIT, an artificial intelligence (AI) regulation and policy monitoring platform that helps companies monitor legal, legislative, regulatory, and policy information at the government, local, city, and district level. Public policy managers, legal counsels, and public relations managers use their solutions to quickly monitor risks and identify opportunities at central and local governments and agencies. She is involved in several committees such as the Youth Policy Coordination Committee under the Prime Minister's Office as well as the Data Driven Public Policy Making Committee under the Ministry of Science and ICT.

Prior to starting her own business, Ji Eun spent almost a decade at the OECD and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as a policy analyst, focusing on education related research, policy, projects, and programmes. She studied public policy at the graduate school of Seoul National University and economics at Royal Holloway, University of London.

Yukako Idehara, Planning and Coordination Manager, ERIA.

Yukako Idehara has been the Planning and Coordination Manager of ERIA since August 2020. Before joining ERIA, she worked as an international sales planner at All Nippon Airways (ANA). She has a bachelor's degree in law and politics from Keio University in Tokyo.

As a university student, she captained Keio lacrosse team to win the national championship and led Japan's national team at the Lacrosse World Cup in 2013. She established the Indonesia Lacrosse Federation in Jakarta in April 2021 and has organised clinics/workshops for local children, aiming to develop lacrosse in Indonesia for the Olympics in 2028. She is keen on pursuing opportunities for leadership education.

During her time at ERIA, she initiated the 2021 ERIA-YNG Social Impact Idea Competition. This programme has sought international young talent which contributes to addressing social or economic challenges in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.