

CALL FOR PAPERS

SPECIAL ISSUE

TRANSNATIONAL CORPORATIONS



International Knowledge Sourcing by TNCs in Services

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Scope of the special issue

In the last 30 years transnational corporations (TNCs) have increasingly located innovation and R&D activities outside their home countries to gain access to knowledge not available at home. This trend is known as international knowledge sourcing, or the internationalization of R&D.

This special issue focuses on papers that examine international knowledge sourcing in service industries. A focus lies on digital multinational enterprises (MNEs) including platform-based TNCs, content providers, e-commerce firms, providers of hardware and software, or telecommunication providers. Empirical evidence suggests that service industries gained a prominent role in international knowledge sourcing in recent years. Digital MNEs – e.g. Alphabet, Microsoft and Facebook – today appear among the largest R&D performers globally.

The trend towards more international knowledge sourcing by service firms is, on the one hand, a result of the diffusion of information and communication technologies which have increased the tradability of services and created new business opportunities. On the other hand, there is general trend towards a higher knowledge intensity in services. The shift towards services, however, is hardly reflected in the academic literature which still focusses on knowledge sourcing in manufacturing firms.

Indicative topics

We encourage contributions from a variety of perspectives, including international business, innovation economics, economic geography, management, or an international economics perspective. In particular, we welcome papers related to policies towards international knowledge sourcing in services and studies that take an emerging economies perspective on the topic. Contributions may cover, but are not limited to, the following topics:

- How did international knowledge sourcing by service firms and digital TNCs evolve over the last decades? What are important host and home countries?
- What differences can be found between developed and developing countries? What is the evidence for international knowledge sourcing outside the OECD, in China and India?
- What differences can be observed across service industries? How can the characteristics of service industries such as the knowledge base explain international sourcing strategies?

- Does the structure of ownership and the size of the domestic market determine the respective knowledge sourcing strategies?
- How do the knowledge sourcing strategies of larger service TNCs differ from those of International New Ventures (INVs), Born Globals (BG), or Born Digitals? What is the role of outsourcing and the fragmentation of value chains for international knowledge sourcing in service firms?
- How relevant is the knowledge base and specialization of the home country for international activities in services? How much local embeddedness in the host country does international knowledge sourcing by service firms need? What is the role of innovation hot-spots, agglomerations, and localized knowledge spillovers for the process?
- What can emerging economies do to attract R&D investments by service TNCs from developed countries? Examples of successful policies are welcomed in particular.
- How do the international knowledge sourcing activities of service TNCs contribute to sustainable development and the SDGs?

Guidelines for submission

Transnational Corporations is an official United Nations academic policy-orientated journal. In line with the scope of the journal (<https://unctad.org/Topic/Investment/Transnational-Corporations-Journal/Editorial-Statement>), papers submitted to the Special Issue need to include:

- appropriate policy framing and explicitly stating the policy relevance of the paper
- draw clear policy conclusions from the findings of the study
- include a substantial section on policy implications and policy recommendations engaging with concrete and substantive policy issues relevant to the study and key take-aways for policymakers
- where relevant and where there is a (potential) development angle to the research, address the development impact.

Authors should refer to the *Transnational Corporations* website and the guidelines on submitting papers: <https://unctad.org/Topic/Investment/Transnational-Corporations-Journal/Guidelines-for-Contributors>

Questions and informal enquiries should be directed to any of the guest editors.

Submission deadline:

15 September 2022

Approximate date of publication:

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Submissions should be sent to:
tncj@unctad.org

Home page:
<https://unctad.org/Topic/Investment/Transnational-Corporations-Journal>