

Book Review

Biswa Nath Bhattacharyay, Masahiro Kawai, Rajat M. Nag (eds) (2012) *Infrastructure for Asian Connectivity*, Joint Publication of the Asian Development Bank Institute and Asian Development Bank with Edward Elgar Publishing, Cheltenham, pp. xi+498

Connectivity is a key concept in Indonesia's current development strategy. The long-term Master Plan for Acceleration and Expansion of Economic Development, locally referred to as MP3EI, includes a connectivity strategy that aims at improving domestic integration and strengthening global integration. This should lead to lower logistics costs and improved competitiveness. Connectivity is also high on the agenda of ASEAN and an ASEAN connectivity master plan has been designed to support the implementation of the ASEAN Economic Community. Strengthening infrastructure, by better maintenance and more investments, is seen as of key importance to improve connectivity.

This book is the second publication coordinated by the ADB and the ADB Institute focusing on infrastructure and connectivity in Asian countries. This book looks at *regional (across border) infrastructure* that is needed to facilitate growth and development through better connectivity and integration *among* countries. The introduction by the three editors notes that weak infrastructure has been a constraint on the region's future competitiveness and growth. The focus of the book however is on *regional* connectivity and on how to promote *regional (across borders)* investments in infrastructure. This voluminous book of almost 500 pages takes an in-depth look at three issues. Firstly, it explores the demand for infrastructure in the full Asian region with a focus on ASEAN. It is a bold and interesting attempt to estimate future demand for regional infrastructure in Asian countries under various growth scenarios. Secondly, the book includes a number of chapters that discuss the policies needed at national and regional levels to generate the investments. Thirdly, the reader addresses the crucial question on how the infrastructure needs for regional connectivity can be met and pays specific attention on the potential role that public-private partnerships might play. Many chapters provide useful reference to experiences in promoting regional connectivity and infrastructure in other regions on the world. In particular, there are many references to experiences in Latin America and the European Union.

This is a thoroughly researched book and discusses the issues in-depth. It focuses especially on continental Asia and there is a specific chapter dealing with the development and socio-economic impact of regional transport infrastructure in the Greater Mekong Subregion. It is a pity though that there is limited attention for the specific connectivity and infrastructure challenges for maritime nations such as The Philippines and Indonesia. The foreword of the book mentions that it is hoped that the book will be a valuable reference for policymakers, academics and practitioners. That is probably correct. It is not an easy read and appears not to aim at reaching a wide audience or usable as a textbook for students. Rather it is a robust and in-depth analysis that will be appreciated most by experts that need references while designing new policies and investment plans aimed at further boosting regional infrastructure and connectivity in Asia.

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