



## Special Session Proposal

### **Bridging the gap between academia and policy making: The role of productivity boards, research centres and think tanks**

(Rudiger Ahrend, OECD, [Rudiger.Ahrend@oecd.org](mailto:Rudiger.Ahrend@oecd.org); Carlo Menon, OECD, [Carlo.Menon@oecd.org](mailto:Carlo.Menon@oecd.org))

#### **Abstract**

There is often a disconnect in how (and when) academic research is made accessible to policy. Academics typically prioritise methodological rigor and generalisable results that can be linked to theory. Policy makers often struggle to grasp the operational implications of academic research and are concerned that the evidence is outdated and that context-specific information is missing.

Platforms such as regional productivity boards, think tanks, or research centres help fill this gap. They provide the incentive to steer academic research toward timely policy questions and to communicate findings effectively. However, their diffusion in regional policy is still in an early stage compared to other areas, pointing to opportunities to share best practices and foster synergies and peer learning.

The special session, organised by the OECD Spatial Productivity Lab, invites papers that bridge the gap between academia and policy making. Featured papers may contribute to the activities of regional productivity boards, think tank, and research centres. The session also welcome presentations that discuss how academics can better engage with policy makers.

Topics can include, but are not limited to:

- Regional productivity reviews;
- The role of productivity boards, research centres and think tank in regional policy making;
- Monitoring of the implementation of public policies or regional strategies at local level, such as Recovery and Resilience Facility programmes;
- Systematic reviews of empirical research at subnational level in policy-relevant areas;

- Impact evaluation of regional or place-based policies;
- Innovative sources of data and empirical methods for more timely evidence at regional and local level for economic development and productivity.