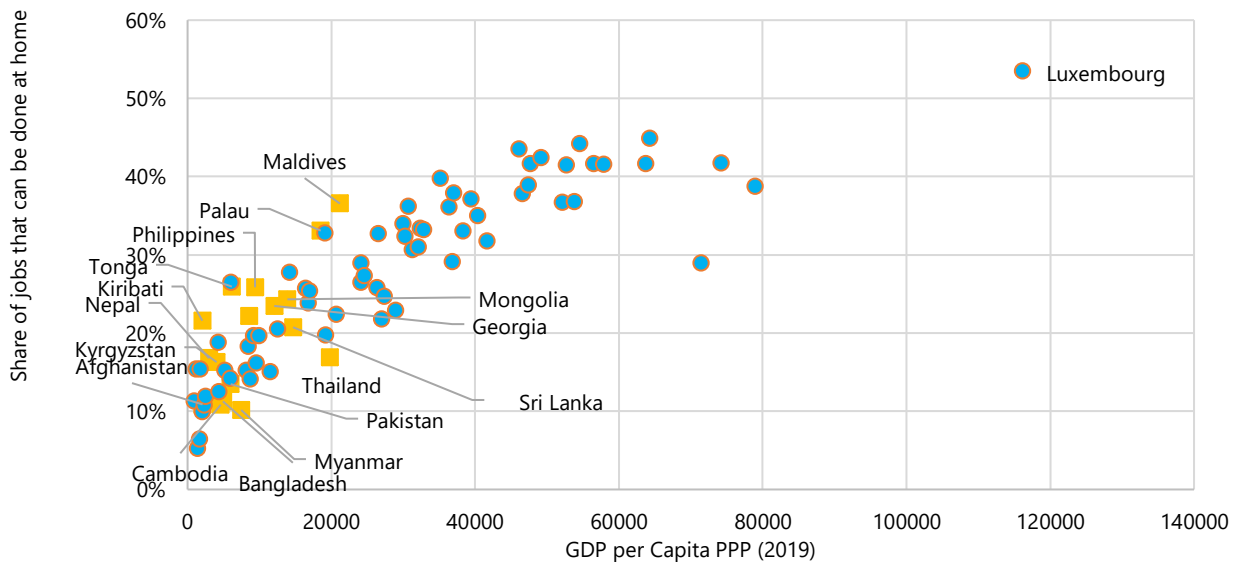


Asian Transport Outlook (ATO)

How effective could be Telecommuting in ATO economies?

Advancements in ICT functionality, accessibility and capacity is rapidly reshaping how work is done. Companies and individual households are increasingly able to adopt telecommuting, thereby creating the opportunity for reducing traffic congestion and pollution in urban areas. Telecommuting essentially involves individuals undertaking a proportion of their work away from the primary place of employment using some form of communications technology. However, the extent and nature of telework in the ATO economies are not well understood, especially its impact on travel demand, land-use and transport emissions. There has been little comprehensive research undertaken on the impacts of telecommuting in the ATO economies. Some recent estimates indicate that close to 15% of jobs could be done at home, i.e., by telecommuting in Asia. In lower-income and lower middle-income economies, percentage share of the remote work is relatively low. Fig. 1 reveals a positive relationship between income levels and the shares of jobs that can be done from home¹.

Figure 1: Share of Jobs that could be done from Home in the ATO Economies



Source: Jonathan I. Dingel and Brent Neiman, https://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w26948/w26948.pdf, ATO indicator used: MIS-GRC-010, SEC-SEG-002

Research indicates that telework could be a double-edged sword. On the one hand, many trips can be eliminated, especially during peak hours. On the other hand, teleworkers could potentially compensate for the time saved by making additional non-work trips. Further, teleworkers could select more remote areas for housing locations leading to more sprawl. This

¹ https://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w26948/w26948.pdf



aspect will be considered in more detail in subsequent versions of the outlook as evidence becomes available due to the high emphasis on telework during the COVID pandemic².

² <https://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/singapore/covid-19-public-transport-fares-telecommuting-12756938>