

Strategic national assets: competing for investment and innovation in a fragmenting global economy

Governments spend considerable time thinking about the strategic assets that underpin economic security—from energy and semiconductors to critical minerals and AI. Yet so often, the health of their populations is treated as a social good or a cost to contain, rather than an asset to build. Healthy populations support workforce longevity, productivity and growth, while strong life-sciences sectors attract investment, create high-value jobs and drive innovation.

At the same time, the global environment is becoming more challenging. As supply chains fragment, geopolitical competition intensifies and public finances come under pressure, governments face difficult choices about how to strengthen strategic assets and compete for global investment and innovation.

What policy choices best support this? How can governments create the conditions that attract investment, accelerate innovation and improve population health while maintaining fiscal discipline?

Alongside the G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors Meeting in Bangkok, Economist Enterprise, supported by MSD, will convene policymakers, business leaders and innovators to explore how governments can use health, trade and investment policy to strengthen competitiveness, national resilience and long-term economic growth.

The discussion will explore:

- In an increasingly competitive global economy, what sets successful countries apart when attracting innovation, investment, and high-value industries?
- If health innovation is a strategic national asset, what policy conditions are most important to sustaining investment and competitiveness?
- How should governments balance short-term fiscal pressures with long-term objectives such as productivity growth or economic resilience?
- What signals do governments send to innovators and investors through their approaches to value recognition, intellectual property, and policy?
- What are the economic consequences when innovation is more delayed or undervalued than in peer markets?