Application: Robert Summers Fellowship on Economic Measurement for Summer Institute

Klaas de Vries

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Statistics Netherlands

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Statistician at the Dutch National Accounts Branch With a Keen Interest in International Comparisons

Dear Selection Committee,

I am writing to express my interest in the Robert Summers Fellowship offered by the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) and the Conference on Research on Income and Wealth (CRIW). A colleague of mine at Statistics Netherlands was offered the fellowship last year and encouraged me to apply this year.

Allow me to introduce myself briefly. My name is Klaas de Vries and I currently work as a statistician at the National Accounts branch of Statistics Netherlands. Prior to joining Statistics Netherlands I've worked at The Conference Board. My interest in all things related to economic measurement was piqued during my college years at the University of Groningen, where I worked as a research assistant at the Groningen Growth and Development Center. While I have worked on different projects throughout my career so far, economic measurement and particularly international comparisons have been the key themes running through all my work.

Some of the major projects I worked on in the past include EUKLEMS (international industry-level growth accounts), WIOD (global input output tables), ILC (International Labor Comparisons, formerly a program of the BLS), and the Total Economy Database (productivity dataset covering 130 countries). The latter dataset is similar to the Penn World Table, which was originally constructed by Robert Summers (and Alan Heston) in the 1970s and is now maintained by researchers at the University of Groningen. In fact, I've always been in close contact with these researchers during my tenure at The Conference Board where I was responsible for the development and maintenance of the Total Economy Database.

Apart from developing and maintaining the datasets mentioned above, I've also been involved in analyzing and publishing research based on these data in order to inform debates related to either economic growth and development or measurement issues. Furthermore, I'm a regular contributor to the World KLEMS conferences, set up originally be Dale Jorgenson and others. My work currently focuses first and foremost on the Dutch national accounts, but next to that, I'm involved with the UK-based Productivity Institute (led by Bart van Ark), and I am part of an international task force chaired by Jennifer Ribarsky of the IMF on developing guidelines to provide statistics on investment in marketing assets.

The opportunity to be part of the Economic Measurement Conference on Research on Income and Wealth greatly excites me. I consider attending it very relevant indeed, and I expect it to stimulate and enhance my knowledge and skills in this area.

Thank you for considering my application. I look forward to the possibility of discussing how my skills and experiences align with the goals of the Robert Summers Fellowship further.

Sincerely,

Klaas de Vries

Datasets (formerly worked on)

The Conference Board Total Economy Database
https://www.conference-board.org/data/economydatabase

The Conference Board International Labor Comparisons
https://www.conference-board.org/ilcprogram

EU-KLEMS
https://euklems-intanprod-llee.luiss.it/

Economic Transformation Database
https://www.rug.nl/ggdc/structuralchange/etd/?lang=en

World Input-Output Database
https://www.rug.nl/ggdc/valuechain/wiod/?lang=en

Selected academic papers

van Ark, Bart, Dirk Pilat, and Klaas de Vries. Are Pro-Productivity Policies Fit for Purpose? Productivity Drivers and Policies in G-20 Economies. No. 038. 2023.
https://www.productivity.ac.uk/research/are-pro-productivity-policies-fit-for-purpose-productivity-drivers-and-policies-in-g-20-economies/

Van Ark, Bart, Klaas De Vries, and Abdul Erumban. "How to not miss a productivity revival once again." National Institute Economic Review 255 (2021): 9-24.
https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/national-institute-economic-review/article/abs/how-to-not-miss-a-productivity-revival-once-again/CC97E3C5EF2CB0E701E0D6E0101CF348

de Vries, Klaas, Abdul Erumban, and Bart van Ark. "Productivity and the pandemic: short-term disruptions and long-term implications: The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on productivity dynamics by industry." International Economics and Economic Policy 18.3 (2021): 541-570.
https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10368-021-00515-4

van Ark, Bart, Klaas de Vries, and Abdul Erumban. "Productivity & innovation competencies in the midst of the digital transformation age: A EU-US comparison." European Economy-Discussion Papers 119 (2019).
https://economy-finance.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2019-10/dp119_en.pdf

De Vries, Gaaitzen, Marcel Timmer, and Klaas De Vries. "Structural transformation in Africa: Static gains, dynamic losses." The Journal of Development Studies 51.6 (2015): 674-688.
https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00220388.2014.997222

Other

I write a blog reporting on productivity trends in the Euro Area, which is part of the Productivity Measurement Analysis series at the Productivity Institute. The latest installment was in March 2024:
https://www.productivity.ac.uk/the-productivity-lab/q4-2023-labour-productivity-in-the-euro-area-declines-for-the-third-year-in-a-row-while-the-us-is-racing-ahead/