



BUSINESS DISTINGUISHED SCHOLAR SEMINAR

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Moonshots, monkeys and pedestals: Optimal sequencing and stopping of multi-component projects

Abstract: We investigate the optimal strategy to execute multi-component projects, where completing all components is necessary to obtain a reward. Each component might be impossible to complete. This setting is typical for various R&D activities, including software development and academic research. We study a resulting dynamic optimal stopping problem, that involves the decision which component to work on and when to stop. If each component is described by prior probability that it is feasible and constant execution rate, the optimal strategy is to work on one component and abandon the whole project if this component is not completed by the deadline. We also explore which component should be the one to start with.

About the Speaker

Ilia M. Tsetlin is Professor of Decision Sciences at INSEAD. His teaching and research interests are in modeling decisions under uncertainty, with particular focus on decision making with multiple attributes, target-based and contest-based settings, and situations with background risk. Other research streams are related to negotiation, auction theory, and collective choice. His work has been published in a number of academic journals including Management Science, Operations Research, Journal of Risk and Uncertainty, Journal of Economic Theory, Psychological Review, Games and Economic Behavior, and Social Choice and Welfare.

- **Date:** May 12, 2026 (Tuesday)
- **Time:** 10:30 – 12:00
- **Venue:** SEK210
- **Language:** English

All are welcome

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