

2022 REGIONAL POLICY DIALOGUE on *Building Inclusive Digital Economies through Innovation and Public-Private Partnerships*



Concept Note (as of July 25, 2022)

BACKGROUND

Digital technologies are fundamental drivers of change that are reshaping the development of global economies, governments, and societies. The ongoing pandemic crisis accelerated this transformation, with the fast adoption of digital solutions in many essential areas of life including health care, education, governance, agriculture, finance and commerce. As digitalization and advance of technology pick up pace however, the risk of ‘digital divide’ also deepens, which exacerbates existing socioeconomic inequalities due to uneven accessibility, resources, and skills across demographics. The Asia-Pacific region, home to the largest number of internet users in the world, is particularly challenged with some 4.3 billion left offline. Simultaneously, digital transformation and innovation is a powerful enabler that can respond to development challenges more effectively and provide a platform for building more inclusive societies.

Digital transformation of the economy is particularly important for sustainable development by improving economic efficiency to create new opportunities for traditionally excluded groups. Equitable access to low-cost financial services and digital solutions in underrepresented communities, the informal sector and in the value chain, including micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), women, youth, the disabled, elderly and rural populations, can expand their reach to services and products, leading to skilled employment, strengthened local entrepreneurship, and improved livelihoods. Ensuring that no one is left behind must be accompanied by empowerment and skills building to ensure readiness in adopting the digital ecosystem and an ability to adapt to emerging technologies and trends.

The private sector, including digitally equipped enterprises and impact entrepreneurs, play a crucial role as network suppliers, e-commerce retailers or digital banking service providers. Meanwhile, on the public side, governments are increasingly working on making digital transformation more inclusive by introducing related measures and policies. For example, the Republic of Korea (RoK) has taken up digital inclusion as one of its strategic priorities, with the Department of Digital Inclusion within the National Information Society Agency serving as a leading entity for implementing this strategy since 2019. In 2020, it published a ‘Digital Inclusion Initiative,’ which became the basis for various policies and measures implemented by relevant governmental agencies.

Building a digital economy that works for all requires strengthened collaboration amongst different industries and sectors, including government agencies, policymakers, and the private sector. This in turn necessitates strengthened dialogue and knowledge exchange for multi-sectoral and transnational sharing of lessons resulting in mutual understanding of the related opportunities and challenges in creating inclusive digital systems for economic empowerment.

KEY OBJECTIVES

In this context, the 2022 Regional Policy Dialogue on *Building Inclusive Digital Economies through Innovation and Public-Private Partnerships* (hereinafter ‘Policy Dialogue’) aims to bring together relevant public and private sector actors from across the Asia-Pacific region to:

1. Collectively discuss the opportunities, challenges, and policy practices with regards to inclusive digital transformation with particular focus on supporting economically marginalized groups such as MSMEs and women- and youth-led entrepreneurs
2. Coordinate with relevant actors on tangible actions to build sustainable and inclusive digital economies.

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By exploring several exemplary public and private policies and initiatives aiming to achieve inclusive digitalization of the economy in select countries and cities in the Asia-Pacific, participants will gain:

- Comparative knowledge of policies and practices promoting digital economic inclusion of vulnerable groups such as MSMEs, youth and women within select Asia-Pacific settings;
- Valuable insights into the challenges and prospects for inclusive digital transformation of the economy, such as e-commerce and digital finance industry;
- Opportunities to network, partner and coordinate with other country and sector actors to adopt tangible follow up actions to build an inclusive digital economy

DATE/TIME: Monday, August 8, 2022, [Seoul, GMT+9] 2:00pm-4:00pm [Bangkok, GMT+7] 12:00pm-2:00pm (exact time TBC)

TENTATIVE AGENDA: 2 hours in total with simultaneous interpretation (Korean ↔ English)

TIME	SESSION	SPEAKER
Moderated by UNDP Seoul Policy Centre		
2:00pm-2:05pm (5 min.)	Welcoming Speeches	Ms. Anne Juepner Acting Director, UNDP Seoul Policy Centre
2:05pm-2:50pm (45 min.)	Session 1: Exploring the opportunities and challenges of exemplary policies & initiatives on building an inclusive digital economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Seong-Jun Min, Department of Digital Inclusion, National Information Society Agency, Republic of Korea • Mr. Tohurul Hasan, Digital Financial Service Specialist, ICT Division (Ministry of ICT), Bangladesh • Mr. Jonathan Wong, Chief of Technology & Innovation, UNESCAP, Thailand
<p><u>Guiding questions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are some key examples of effective public policies or initiatives your country (or city or institution) has implemented to promote inclusive digitalization, especially for the economically marginalized in the sector of e-commerce /digital finance? In what broader context were those measures designed, and how do you expect those policies / initiatives to contribute to making the digital economy more inclusive? What were some opportunities and progress made so far? • How does your public policy or initiative incorporate partnership with the private sector, if any? (e.g. collaboration with digitally equipped private sector, upskilling of young impact entrepreneurs to promote business growth and drive inclusive development in their industries) • Are there any digital skills building elements to equip target populations with the readiness to adapt to the necessary technology and digital tools? • What were challenges and bottlenecks in implementing and designing those policies / initiatives, if any? • What are the follow-up programmes and/or next steps, if any? How do you plan to measure the impact of the presented policies/programs? 		
2:50pm-3:35pm (45 min.)	Session 2: Showcasing innovative public and private finance/e-commerce solutions for building inclusive digital economy in national and city contexts	• Mr. Peter J. Morgan, Senior Consulting Economist and Advisor to the Dean, The Asian Development Bank Institute

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Eunielle Yi, TheVentures (venture capital), Republic of Korea • Komerce (e-commerce start-up), Indonesia
<p><u>Guiding questions for private investor of start-up enterprises</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As provider of digitally-enabling investments to impact-driven MSMEs, how do you contribute to or align with the government’s inclusive digital economic transformation policy implementation? What opportunities and challenges do you face as an investor and public-private partner? • What have been some of your key investments to build bottom-up enabling environments to move towards an inclusive digital economy or achieve upskilling for inclusive industry change? • What kind of public policies, public-private partnerships or private sector support do you think would create further synergies to support inclusive digital economic transformation efforts? 		
<p><u>Guiding questions for e-commerce/digital financing provider</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are some key examples of digital solutions (e.g. digital financing and/or e-commerce platforms) in your country that contribute to or align with the government’s inclusive digital economic transformation policy implementation? • What kind of government policies, public-private partnerships and/or innovations have empowered the economically marginalized and businesses to access the digital economy? What are some opportunities and challenges? • What kind of public policies, public-private partnerships or private sector support do you think would create further synergies to support inclusive digital economic transformation efforts? 		
<p><u>Guiding questions for social entrepreneur</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does your business help vulnerable groups such as youth-led startups, women entrepreneurs, or people with disability benefit from the digital economy/technologies? • How does the current government or private sector-led programmes/policies for digital inclusion support your business development? What can be improved? • What kind of policies do you think would support further the inclusive digital transition of your industry? • What are the key opportunities and challenges you see in the field of ‘inclusive digitalization’? 		
3:35pm-3:55pm (20 min.)	Q&A and discussion: Scalable/shareable practices and policies, key takeaways, collective efforts towards achieving inclusive digital economies at the regional level	Speakers from the previous sessions
3:55pm-4:00pm (5 min.)	Closing	

TARGET AUDIENCE

Governmental partners, private sector representatives and entrepreneurs, industry experts and academia from countries and cities in the Asia Pacific

EVENT PARTNERS

Co-organized by **UNDP** and **UNESCAP**, the Policy Dialogue constitutes one of the signature events of the Korean chapter of Youth Co:Lab, an Asia-Pacific initiative co-created by UNDP and Citi Foundation to empower and invest in youth as an accelerator of SDG implementation through leadership, social innovation and entrepreneurship. As the lead of Youth Co:Lab Korea, the UNDP Seoul Policy Centre facilitates this Policy Dialogue in coordination with its Youth Co:Lab partners. UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) is one of the

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five regional commissions of the United Nations. The ESCAP secretariat supports inclusive, resilient and sustainable development in the region by generating action-oriented knowledge, and by providing technical assistance and capacity-building services in support of national development objectives, regional agreements and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.