Strengthening policies and regulatory frameworks of digital public services for small and medium enterprises (SMEs)

in support of the Asia Pacific Information Superhighway (APIS) Action Plan 2022-2026

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Mission & Goals

01
Create an analytical tool to assess the needs for development of digital public services for SMEs (DPS4SME)

02
Scope the needs for DPS4SME development within the North and Central Asian countries

03
Provide recommendations on the DPS4SME development based on relevant international and regional experience taking into account the specifics of the North and Central Asia countries
Analytic tool’s structure

1. Needs assessment approaches: National Level
2. Needs assessment approaches: International/Regional Level
3. Definition of SMEs
4. General Principles of developing digital public services for SMEs
5. “Pure” G2B digital public services for SMEs
6. “Additional” G2B digital public services for SMEs
7. Group of stakeholders
8. Questionnaires
## Categorization of SMEs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of enterprise:</th>
<th>Number of employees</th>
<th>Annual income: Turnover, Balance sheet amount etc.</th>
<th>Autonomy level</th>
<th>Special legal criteria: Special regimes for startups, Special economic zones etc.</th>
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<td>Self-employment, Partnerships etc.</td>
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“Pure” G2B digital public services for SMEs

- Registration as an SME
- Starting, registration, closing a business
- Obtaining licenses and permits
- Registration of intellectual property
- Tax compliance and currency control
- Legal compliance: KYC
- Access to e-workflow: e-signatures, e-powers
- Complaints and dispute resolution online
Needs assessment approaches: National Level

- What sources are available? (national statistics, reports etc.)
- Inclusion angle: are there any other stakeholder groups?
- What are the needs of SMEs (assessed via associations/chambers members of commerce etc.)?
- Who are the major stakeholders within the country?
- Which services are already available in the country?
- Scope needs for DPS4SME within the country
Needs assessment approaches: *International/Regional Level*

- Establish a target level of PS4SME based on international practice.
- To what extent external/leading practices can be replicated in the country?
- What innovative PS4SME practices are deployed in countries with similar conditions? (GDP PPP, geographical location etc.)
- Which sources are available on international level: reports by multilaterals, indices (EGDI as core), international consultancies?
General principles of developing digital public services for SMEs

1. Start with analysis of "analogue" business processes
2. Provide a completely remote service cycle
3. Employ risk-oriented approach to licensing and permitting
4. Provide "superservices" (group the services into bundles)
5. Integrate with commercial/nonprofit services
6. Provide services proactively
7. Create "digital-native"/"digital-by-design" services
“Additional” digital public services for SMEs

Access to public procurement and procurement by big companies: digital procurement platforms for SMEs

Access to property and financial support: preferential loans, grants, guarantees, insurance

Access to information: legislative changes, information digests, networking

Access to training and workforce: business training, mentorship, consulting

Access to new markets: partnership opportunities with big corporations, fairs and marketplace, franchising options

Participation in legislative review: digital platforms for participating in legislative review
Group of stakeholders

01. High-level civil servants
02. Civil servants and IT-teams directly responsible for deploying/running digital public services
03. Associations of SMEs and representatives of SMEs
04. IT companies and technical communities
05. Non-profit advocacy groups for groups with special needs (PwDs, youth, women)
06. Academic organizations and researchers
07. International NGOs
Questionnaires’ drafts

- Questionnaire for SMEs and SME Associations: English and Russian.
- Questionnaire for International Experts: English and Russian.
- Questionnaire for Civil Servants providing public services for SMEs: English and Russian.
- Questionnaire for Civil Servants: English and Russian.
Questionnaire for Civil Servants

1. Which sector (direction, industry) is your organization in charge of?
2. Does your organization provide services for SMEs?
3. Is there a definition of “SME” (or similar/similar term) in the legislation of your country? (give a link to the norm that you know).
4. Provide the definition of “SME” from the point of view/understanding of your organization.
5. How many SMEs are there in the country in absolute terms?
6. What is the share of SMEs in the total number of registered companies?
7. What is the share of SMEs in the country's GDP?
8. What is the share of workers employed in SMEs out of the total workforce?
9. Main government bodies responsible for supporting SMEs.
10. Key government agencies responsible for digital government services, in particular for SMEs.
11. Is there a separate section on the government services portal specifically for SMEs?
12. Is there a special government digital platform for SMEs?
13. Are digital services available on a special government digital platform, if one exists? And if so, which ones?
14. Are there statistics on the receipt of digital services by SMEs?
15. What challenges do SMEs face in obtaining digital/non-digital services?
16. Which services, in your opinion, need to be digitized for SMEs first?
17. What challenges do government officials face in providing services to SMEs (digital and non-digital)?
18. What next steps does the government plan to develop digital government services in the interests of SMEs (Plans, Roadmaps, Concepts)?
19. Does your organization have separate plans for the development of digital services in the interests of SMEs?
20. What would you recommend as a state policy or digital product in your country or North and Central Asian subregion to ensure sustainable SMEs?
Questionnaire for Civil Servants providing public services for SMEs

1. Which department/institution do you represent?

2. What percentage of SMEs use digital government services?

3. Name the most popular services among SMEs. Provide usage statistics if available.

4. Give an example of feedback from SME users of the public services portal. Talk about the steps taken to address the feedback.

5. What would you recommend as a state policy or digital product in your country or North and Central Asian subregion to ensure sustainable SMEs?
Questionnaire for SMEs and SME Associations

1. What sector or area of SMEs do you represent?
2. Number of members in of your association?
3. Do you know the total number of SMEs in the country?
4. What government resources do you know for providing services for SMEs?
5. Which of these resources do you use in your work?
6. Rate the ease of use by the following groups of digital government services (from 1 to 10 (when 1 is unsatisfactory, 10 is excellent), with explanations if available):
   - Registration as an SME
   - Opening a business, re-registration, closing a business
   - Obtaining licenses and permits
   - Registration of intellectual property
   - Tax compliance and currency control
   - Legal compliance: KYC
   - Access to electronic document flow: e-signatures, e-powers of attorney
   - Online Complaints and Dispute Resolution
7. Which services are not/are insufficiently implemented in digital format?
Questionnaire for International Experts

1. Which department/institution do you represent?
2. What statistical indices do you use to assess the level of development of digital electronic services, including specifically in the interests of SMEs?
3. Describe an example of best practice that you have encountered in different countries and regions in the field of digital e-services for SMEs. What challenges do countries face in digitalizing such services?
4. Give suggestions on measures that countries in North and Central Asia should take to develop such services.
5. How, from your point of view, should the process of interaction between government departments be structured to ensure fast and convenient receipt of digital government services for SMEs? Have you come across examples of applicable best practice?
6. What would you recommend as a state policy or digital product in your country or North and Central Asian subregion to ensure sustainable SMEs?
Questions for discussion during the seminar

- How to analyze and assess the existing state of development of DPS4SMEs?
- How to prioritize which services should be digitized first?
- What role can UNESCAP play in facilitating DPS4SMEs?
Thank you

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