Expert Group Consultations on the Establishment of the Central Asian Digital Solution Centre (DSC) for Sustainable Development

15 November 2021 (12:00-15:00 UTC+7)

Concept Note

The countries of Central Asia and in SPECA are just beginning to view digital transformation from the perspective not only of the economy and business, but also of the social and cultural values that should form the basis of the Information Society. Bishkek Declaration of SPECA countries highlighted the need to "Strengthen Regional Cooperation to support Socioeconomic Recovery in the Wake of COVID-19" on 20 November 2020.

As a response, ESCAP Secretariat jointly with Ministry of Digital Development and Aerospace Industry of Republic of Kazakhstan undertook the new research on scenarios of establishment of the Digital Solutions Center for Sustainable Development in CA as well as developed the vision and the main elements of the draft strategy on "Central Asia as a Platform".

The Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) between the Ministry of Digital Development, Innovations and Aerospace Industry of Kazakhstan (MDDIAI) and ESCAP undersigned on 20 April 2021 scope areas of joint interventions and guide activities. This research is supported by a RECI (DA 11th Tranche) project entitled: “Addressing the transboundary dimensions of the 2030 Agenda through regional economic cooperation and integration (RECI) in Asia and the Pacific,” which started in 2018 and will be completed in December 2021.

The objective of the research is to assess digital maturity: digital connectivity, infrastructure and, transformation, with a focus on five Central Asian countries and Mongolia. It includes:

(1) assessment of current national policy, flagship initiatives and strategies, regulatory framework (rules and regulations) and institutional capacities on digital connectivity, infrastructure, and digital transformation of target countries,
(2) analysis of key relevant programs, and initiatives in the areas of digital connectivity, infrastructure in transformation.

Based on the above analysis a strategy with policy recommendations and actions for promoting digital connectivity, infrastructure, and transformation in Central Asia was developed.

The EGM will have an exchange of views on the subregional roadmap for establishment of the Digital Solutions Center for North and Central Asia for Sustainable Development. The outcomes of the meeting will be further presented at the SPECA GC and EF on 17-18 November 2021 and further at the Digital Almaty Forum in February 2022. The recommendation of the EGM would contribute to the development of the project proposals and would raise funds to the regional interventions.

**Objective of the EGM** is to present findings and recommendations of ESCAP secretariat’s research on digital solutions center (DSC), discuss how to develop the actionable roadmap for establishing a sub-regional digital solutions center to support Central Asian countries, and exchange views on how to promote the concept of DSC as one key agenda of the Central Asia high level meeting.

**RECI project working paper series on DSC:**

* Concept project proposals

**Participants of the meeting:** government officials and experts from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan (representatives of the line ministries, MFAs, R&D, experts) (4-5 participants from each country): IDS staff and consultants (5-6 participants) and partners (see the LoP).

**Attachment:** 2 pages of the draft Roadmap for establishment of DSC SD for feedback
Virtual meeting through KUDO link

The online registration is here or via QR code

For information, please contact Ms. Aida Karazhanova, Economic Affairs Officer, IDS, IDD, ESCAP at email karazhanova@un.org

Background

The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) is the regional development arm of the United Nations for the Asia-Pacific region. Made up of 53 Member States and 9 Associate Members, ESCAP carries out variety of programmes and activities aimed at promoting regional cooperation and collective action in pursuit of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals, assisting countries to achieve shared economic growth and social equity. The ICT and Development Section (IDS) of the Information and Communications Technology and Disaster Risk Reduction Division (IDD) of ESCAP has implemented the project entitled: “Addressing the transboundary dimensions of the 2030 Agenda through regional economic cooperation and integration (RECI) in Asia and the Pacific,” from 2018 to December 2021. As one key component of the project, the project supports governments of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Mongolia in deepening economic cooperation and integration. ESCAP on 20 April 2021 held research of the background and on the steps toward initiation and institution of the Regional Digital Solutions Center for Sustainable Development (DSDSD), its sustainability and effect for the North and Central Asia in closing the gap in digital divide, transformation and further integration, including the importance of the subregional, transboundary approaches with committed contributions and the leadership of Kazakhstan.
## Programme

**Welcome Remarks (15 min)**
- **ESCAP**: Tiziana Bonapace, Director, IDD
- **MDDIAI**: Mr Askar Zhambakin, Vice Minister
- **MoFA of RK**: Mr Didar Temenov, Director of the Multilateral Cooperation Division
- **Introduction of participants**

Moderator of 1 Session: Ms. Aida Karazhanova, Economic Affairs Officer, IDS Moderator-IDS, IDD, ESCAP - Introductions

### Session 1: Presentations (60 min)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Presenter</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Tae Hyung KIM, Chief, IDS, IDD, UNESCAP</td>
<td>Draft action plan 2022-2026 of the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway - ESCAP and Partners for Regional Economic Cooperation and Integration (RECI)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Askar Tazhiyev, ESCAP consultant</td>
<td>Workplan for the establishment of the DCS SD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussants:
- Mr. Arman Abdrassilov, Chairman of the Holding Zerde, MDDIAI, RK
- Mr. Dastan Yeleukenov, CEO of KazAID

### Session 2: Feedback (5 min each, 75 min)

Moderator of 2nd Session: Aida Karazhanova, IDS, SPECA – Discussions and expert proposals and ideas

Moderated overall Interactive Discussions on the DSC SD
- mission, vision
- model and mode
- scenarios and alternatives
- scope and objectives
- institution, participation

Views of Experts
Central Asian country experts e.g. line digital ministries, MFA (see the list of invited persons) | Network Experts: CAREC, ADB, AIIB, WB Digital CASA, RoK, APCICT, ECE |

### Session 3: The Way Forward

The Way Forward on how we should work together on digital transformation in the region and on setting up the DSC SD:
- by MDDIAI and MoFA RK
- by ESCAP (Mr Tae Hyung Kim)

---

## Follow us:

![Website](https://www.unescap.org/)
![Twitter](https://twitter.com/unescap)
![LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/company/united-nations-escap)