Addressing the Transboundary Dimensions of the 2030 Agenda through Regional Economic Cooperation and Integration in Asia and the Pacific

ESCAP has conducted a project titled "Addressing the Transboundary Dimensions of the 2030 Agenda through Regional Economic Cooperation and Integration in Asia and the Pacific (RECI)" from 2018 to 2021. ESCAP's RECI agenda has brought target countries together through a multi-dimensional and disciplinary approach that includes the integrated markets for goods, services, information, and capital: infrastructure connectivity; financial cooperation; and economic and technical cooperation. Promoting seamless connectivity comprising transport, energy, and ICT connectivity, is a central pillar of RECI.

RECI Outcomes

Through the RECI project, over thirty knowledge products across sectors were developed and various capacity-building workshops and cross-sectoral consultations were conducted, on policy planning and resilient infrastructure assessment tools, in the RECI target countries.

More than 14 regional/subregional consultations and national capacity building workshops highlighted that increased awareness of building infrastructure development, climate and disaster resilience, sustainable financing components and seamless connectivity, comprising transport, energy, and ICT connectivity through the application of ICT tools and platforms, is essential for an inclusive digital economy, and for achieving sustainable development. RECI promoted the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway (AP-IS) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), on: (i) connectivity: SDG 1, 5, 9, 17; (ii) e-resilience: SDG 9, 13, 17; (iii) traffic & network management: SDG 9, 16, 17; (iv) broadband for all: SDG 9, 17.

Online Tools

- **Smart corridors Simulator**
- **Infrastructure Co-deployment Portal**
- **E-resilience Monitoring Dashboard**

**Policy Messages**

**Infrastructure co-deployment** saves the cost of investments and improves physical and digital connectivity in countries. The RECI project developed online tools to identify infrastructure projects, leverage extended and efficient cooperation, and provide technical solutions. The online tools help determine good economic and technological flows, scenarios for the development of new, integrated infrastructure corridors, the optimal combination of potential partners, and the estimation of economic efficiency of co-deployment of road transport, energy, and IT infrastructure.

**E-resilience**, as defined by ESCAP, is the ability of ICT systems to withstand, recover from and change in the face of an external disturbance. To boost cooperation on this issue, a tool measuring e-resilience was created providing countries with the means to identify ICT and digital areas which require attention from the perspective of pandemic management, and overall support data-driven decision-making.

**E-resilience monitoring dashboard** visualizes high-level findings from measurements and scoring of data per pillar in the Radar Chart (Pentagon), and the country profile short narrative, diving inside the data, giving pin-point cues for possible actions, while also identifying and encouraging best practice from the region. This tool is a potential regional cooperation framework, and is intended to evolve via a membership-driven process. To better help this process, a robust methodology and a common reference framework are established to promote a holistic view of e-resilience.

**Promotion of digital transformation and development in Central Asia is supported by** in Central Asia is supported by ESCAP research inputs on establishing the Digital Solutions Centre for Sustainable Development (DSC SD), in Kazakhstan. DSC SD can accelerate digital and green transformation in Central Asian countries, and beyond, by providing analytical solutions for senior policymakers, enhancing the knowledge and capacity of government officials and think tanks, and coordinating digital-related agendas and cooperation.

**Partnerships and Decision-Making**

**Cross-sectoral partnerships were established** for the implementation of Asia Pacific Information Superhighway Action Plan 2022-2026

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