



ESCAP Sustainable Business Network

ESCAP Sustainable Business Network – Monthly Update

Dear ESNB members,

We hope you are doing well and staying safe in this challenging period. We hope this monthly update will help you stay updated with ESCAP activities to plan your engagement and volunteer for opportunities.

Recent ESNB activities

Executive Council of the ESNB, 3rd meeting

On 15 May 2020 the Executive Council of the ESNB held its third meeting to discuss ESNB direction, including potential roles of the ESNB in relation to COVID-19 and sustainable oceans/plastics. The EC adopted the following decisions:

- 1) ESNB membership shall be company or organization based.
- 2) To strengthen the sustainability credentials of the network and grow it into a network of corporate sustainability leaders in the region, consideration for ESNB membership will be contingent on a requirement to: (a) sign up to implement at least one of the following internationally recognized principles and standards for responsible and sustainable business (Global Compact or similar), (b) measure and show the company progress on sustainability issues in a transparent and verifiable manner, by issuing an annual sustainability report in accordance with reporting standards and guidance of the UN Global Compact, GRI, the Task Force on Climate Related Disclosures (TCFD), CDP, International Integrated Reporting Council (IIRC), or equivalent.
- 3) ESNB members should also strive lead on climate action by performing climate-based reporting and target setting, preferably by committing to set science-based emission reduction targets in line with Science-based Target Initiative¹ and the Business Ambition for 1.5°C.²
- 4) Taskforces will be refocused from generic to specific (issue-based), outcome oriented and time-bound, with clear TOR, deliverables and indicators of success, and objectives and initiatives aligned with the ESCAP work programme.

Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development

The ESNB Executive Council gave a statement to the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development,

¹ <https://sciencebasedtargets.org/companies-taking-action/>

² <https://www.unglobalcompact.org/take-action/events/climate-action-summit-2019/business-ambition>

delivered by Mr. Asif Ibrahim, Chair of the ESNB taskforce on Disaster and Climate Risk Reduction, on 20 May 2020.

Statement available at: <https://esbn.unescap.org/announcement/esbn-statement-apfsd-2020>

Webcast available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s864z8ZyY9Q&feature=youtu.be> (2:13:00)

Upcoming events of interest to ESNB members

9-11 June 2020 (10.00-16.30 Bangkok time daily + side-events on 12 June)

United Nations Virtual Forum on Responsible Business and Human Rights (online)

We encourage ESNB members to attend the Asia-Pacific focused **United Nations Virtual Forum on Responsible Business and Human Rights forum: New Challenges, New Approaches**, to hear discussions on the state of play of responsible business in the region. Organized by ESCAP, UNDP, ILO, UNICEF, UN Women and the UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights, the forum will for the first time be held fully virtually. Over 4700 participants have already signed up to participate in the 20 sessions and 18 side-events of the Forum. The Forum will discuss drivers for and challenges in promoting responsible business conduct in Asia and the Pacific, especially as the region is entering the COVID-19 recovery phase, share best practices by business, and explore how governments and business can collaborate on post-COVID-19 recovery, building back stronger, more sustainable, more resilient and with a focus on responsible business practices. To attend, please register at: <https://www.rbhrforum.com/>

15-16 June 2020 (virtual, round the clock)

Global Compact Leader's Summit

This year's Global Compact Leader's Summit will virtually convene leading voices from the UN, Government, Business and Academia to kick-start a global conversation about how we rebuild more inclusive economies and societies - to set a new course for a socially just, low-carbon and climate resilient world, where no one is left behind. United, we will recover better, recover stronger, and recover together. Participation in the Virtual Summit is complimentary for UN Global Compact Participants, Signatories, Government Officials, and United Nations Representatives. For Non Business and Non Global Compact members the fee for the Virtual Summit is \$99 USD.

<https://registration.unglobalcompact.org/website/12559/agenda/>

ESNB members action in response to COVID-19

- Vanuatu – Corey Huber shared a communications product by the Vanuatu Business Resilience Council (VBRC) under the local Chamber of Commerce and Industry to showcase the work done to assist the local business community weather both the economic impacts of the ongoing pandemic as well as the response and recovery work related to tropical cyclone Harold. <https://www.connectingbusiness.org/system/files/2020-04/TC%20Harold%20and%20COVID-19%20Vanuatu%202020.pdf>
- Malaysia – Michael Yeoh shared a policy Brief prepared by KSI Strategic Institute to the Malaysian Government on assistance to SMEs. <https://kasi.asia/publications/struggle-of-malaysian-smes-during-the-covid-19-pandemic/>

Recently published by ESCAP

Policy Responses to COVID-19 in Asia and the Pacific

This online policy tracker and policy note was developed by ESCAP to provide an overview of policy responses in Asia-Pacific in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Online policy tracker: <https://www.unescap.org/covid19/policy-responses>

Policy note: **Policy responses to COVID-19: Combating COVID-19 in Asia and the Pacific: Measures, lessons and the way forward** (May 2020): <https://www.unescap.org/resources/policy-responses-covid-19-combating-covid-19-asia-and-pacific-measures-lessons-and-way>

Changing Sails: Accelerating Regional Actions for Sustainable Oceans in Asia and the Pacific (13 May 2020)

The ocean and its resources are the lifelines of Asia and the Pacific. As a resource for the economy, livelihoods and identity for coastal communities, the condition of the ocean is inextricably linked to the pathways of sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific.

Produced in line with the 76th Session of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, the theme study Changing Sails: Accelerating Regional Actions for Sustainable Oceans in Asia and the Pacific explores the key areas around which regional platforms can rally interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral solutions for the ocean. It highlights the lack of data and statistics on the ocean, the growing demand for moving towards inclusive and green maritime shipping, deteriorating fish stocks and gaps in fisheries management and the mounting pressure of marine plastic pollution.

<https://www.unescap.org/publications/changing-sails-accelerating-regional-action-sustainable-oceans-asia-and-pacific>

Fast-tracking the SDGs: Driving Asia-Pacific Transformations (20 May 2020)

Reflecting on the theme of the 7th Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development, this report informs regional and global dialogue on sustainable development as well as national and regional implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It invites governments and stakeholders to align COVID-19 pandemic response and recovery strategies with the achievement of the SDGs and provides insights for the way forward. <https://www.unescap.org/publications/fast-tracking-sdgs-driving-asia-pacific-transformations>

Digital Trade Integration in Preferential Trade Agreements (May 2020)

Some recent PTAs contain ambitious provisions to reduce regulatory barriers in digital trade and facilitate cross-border data flows. However, most PTAs fail to holistically support the five pillars of digital trade integration and are particularly deficient in supporting digital development and inclusion, incorporating adequate digital trade facilitation measures, and facilitating meaningful international regulatory cooperation. This paper provides various policy recommendations to address such deficiencies. <https://www.unescap.org/resources/digital-trade-integration-preferential-trade-agreements>

Healthcare products trade and external shocks: The US-China trade war and COVID-19 pandemic (May 2020)

This working paper examines the trade impacts of two external shocks – the US China trade war and the COVID-19 pandemic - from the perspective of the healthcare sector. The paper also analyses likely impacts of the trade tensions on the healthcare sector and the economy at large through secondary impacts on, for example, adoption rates of key technologies. <https://www.unescap.org/resources/healthcare-products-trade-and-external-shocks-us-china-trade-war-and-covid-19-pandemics>

Public-Private Partnership System and Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific (June 2020)

The working paper examines the findings of a survey conducted among 20 member States of the Infrastructure Financing and Public-Private Partnership Network of Asia and the Pacific and discusses common strategies and practices adopted by developing countries in Asia and the Pacific regarding PPP systems. It also highlights the role of an effective PPP system in the pursuit of SDGs.

https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/publications/WP_20_07_PPP%20Network_final_web.pdf

Working paper series

Macroeconomics: <https://www.unescap.org/publication-series/mpfd-working-papers>

Trade: <https://artnet.unescap.org/publications/working-papers>

Please don't hesitate to get in touch with us to provide input, questions or suggestions for the monthly update: esbn@un.org.

Best regards,

ESBN Secretariat