



ESCAP Sustainable Business Network

ESBN Monthly Update

March 2021

ESBN related events

23-26 March 2021: 8th Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD)

The 8th Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD) will be held in hybrid mode from 23 to 26 March under the theme “*Sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic in Asia and the Pacific*”. As usual, the forum will include multi-stakeholder roundtables to review progress on SDGs in focus, to be held online on 24 March. ESNB members are encouraged to participate in the roundtables, as well as other APFSD sessions of interest. To attend, please register/apply online at: <https://www.unescap.org/Call-for-participation-APFSD-People-Forum-2021>

ESBN side-events at APFSD

In connection with the APFSD, governments, civil society organizations and other stakeholders including ESNB has been invited to propose side-events. In total 52 side-events were approved, including the following four organized by or with ESNB members involvement:

22 March 2021 (14.00-15.30 Bangkok time):

Company action on climate - driving decarbonization through target setting

APFSD Side Event organized by ESCAP, ESNB, the Global Compact Networks in Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and the Philippines and CDP/SBTi.

Limiting warming to 1.5°C will require emissions to be drastically reduced by 2030 and to reach net-zero by 2050, necessitating major transformations of economies and companies. As governments and businesses across the world are announcing net-zero targets, a number of initiatives exist to guide companies on this journey. Organized by ESCAP, ESNB, the Global Compact Networks in Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and the Philippines and CDP/SBTi this session will discuss the importance of corporate emissions target setting and reporting in driving progress on reducing carbon emissions, discuss the benefits for companies, showcase progress in the region and discuss how to drive increased emissions target setting by companies in the region.

<https://www.unescap.org/events/2021/company-action-climate-driving-decarbonization-through-target-setting>

22 March 2021 (17.00-19.00 Bangkok time):

Supply Chain Finance for SMEs: Expanding the opportunities

APFSD Side Event organized by the Advisory Group on Trade Finance of the International Chamber of Commerce.

SMEs in Asia Pacific face great barriers in accessing trade finance, working capital and investment funds, thereby inhibiting their growth, competitiveness and expansion. Though the estimated "trade finance gap" is \$1.5 trillion (according to the ADB), the lost opportunity in terms of growth and job creation has been estimated as much greater. Covid 19 has exacerbated the financial squeeze on SMEs due to supply chain disruptions, bankruptcies of players along the global supply chain, and the banks' vigilance on risk. This session will explore key ways to improve SME access to finance, particularly through the use of technology to drive efficiencies in the trade finance process, to credential and secure transactions, to connect lenders to buyers, and to support paperless trade, all of which have increased in importance due to the pandemic. Roles for private and public sector actors will be defined, as part of a roadmap to enable the expansion of capital flowing towards SMEs, to support growth and development in Asia. For registration, please click: <https://2go.iccwbo.org/un-escap-apfsd-supply-chain-finance-for-smes-expanding-the-opportunities.html>

24 March 2021 (08.00-09.30 Bangkok time):

Financing Sustainable Development — The Challenge

APFSD Side Event organized by ESCAP Sustainable Business Network (ESBN), Pacific Basin Economic Council (PBEC), APRU, KPMG, and HKEx HKGFA.

To meet the UN's Sustainable Development Goals by the target year of 2030, ESCAP estimates that the Asia Pacific region will need to spend USD 1.5 trillion annually — the equivalent of five percent of GDP. Governments will not be able to provision this amount of money through public finance alone. To fill the gap, they must step up their cooperation with the private sector on sustainable finance. This will require countries across the region, especially developing countries, to strengthen their capital markets and make use of emerging sources of finance such as green bonds — now a US\$500 billion market worldwide. This session will discuss sustainable finance and ESG investing prospects and challenges in the region, building off a paper jointly published by ESCAP Sustainable Business Network (ESBN), Pacific Basin Economic Council (PBEC) and KPMG in June 2020 providing a snapshot of the sustainable finance landscape across Asia Pacific. For registration, please click: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_bpAFIJukT3-ATX9aUUWkhQ

24 March 2021 (16.15-17.45 Bangkok time):

An Asia Pacific Green Deal?

APFSD Side Event Organized by ESCAP Sustainable Business Network (ESBN) Green Economy Task Force, and World Green Organisation.

Sustainable development is the responsibility of all of us, governments, businesses, communities and individuals. Can we, in the Asia Pacific, develop a Green Deal that will include business innovation and ambition, new technologies and new industries in pursuit of green competitive advantage? How can business partner with governments and communities and individuals to go green? The green economy will require new thinking and this side event is an opportunity to contribute to the development of key principles, actions and recommendations.

Recently concluded

10th meeting of the Asia-Pacific Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) Network

This year's meeting of the FDI Network was held on 23-24 February 2021. The meeting discussed Trends in National Policies and IIAs during and post-COVID-19, FDI Governance; Sustainable FDI Indicators and Promoting, Regulating and Monitoring FDI in Digital industries. For more information, see: <https://artnet.unescap.org/fdi/asia-pacific-fdi-network>.

1 March 2021: First Meeting of the Asia-Pacific MSME Policymakers Network

ESCAP convened the first meeting of a new network of policymakers that brought together government officials with specific responsibilities for MSME policy. The meeting discussed the current state of MSME participation in the digital economy. While the digital economy has revolutionized some aspects of commerce, many MSMEs still have trouble fully utilizing all the benefits that new e-commerce, fintech, and trade technologies can bring. For more information, see:

<https://www.unescap.org/events/2021/first-meeting-asia-pacific-msme-policymakers-network-msmes-and-digital-economy>

2 March 2021: Regional Policy Dialogue: the role of Competition Policy in supporting MSMEs economic recovery in the post COVID19 crisis

ESCAP, UNCTAD and ASEAN partnered to hold a regional dialogue on the role of competition policy in supporting MSMEs. With the COVID-19 pandemic causing damage to MSMEs across many sectors, some industries are at risk of losing their diversity as businesses fail or are acquired by competitors. Competition authorities from ASEAN member states, as well as representatives of MSME policymaking bodies, came together and discussed the implications of the crisis for competition policy and how policies should support MSMEs in the recovery. For more information, see: <https://www.unescap.org/events/2021/regional-policy-dialogue-cooperation-asean-role-competition-policy-supporting-msmes>



Upcoming ESCAP events

1-5 March 2021: Virtual Training on Digital Technologies for Disaster Risk Management

This training which is based on the APCICT Academy Module on “ICT for Disaster Risk Management”, aims to equip policymakers in South and South-West Asia with a practical skillset to leverage ICT tools and applications for disaster mitigation, prevention, preparedness, response and recovery. It is organized by APCICT-ESCAP in collaboration Geoinformatics Center (GIC) of the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT) and ITC-University of Twente, and held online. For more information, see: <https://www.unapcict.org/news/virtual-training-digital-technologies-disaster-risk-management>

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30 March 2021: Virtual High-Level Regional Roundtable on the WTO Investment Facilitation for Development Negotiations: Perspectives from Asian and Pacific Economies

This virtual Roundtable event aims to offer a platform for strategic exchange on the dynamic policy discussions and negotiations on investment facilitation for development among a selected group of high-level policy makers, government officials, investment promotion and private sector representatives as well as eminent academic scholars, focused on Asia and Pacific. The event will provide an opportunity to reflect on the potential benefits and challenges of international frameworks on investment facilitation for development. The event is being co-organized by ESCAP, the International Trade Centre, the German Development Institute/Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, and the World Economic Forum. For more information, see: <https://artnet.unescap.org/fdi/resources/meetings/high-level-regional-roundtable-wto-investment-facilitation-development>

27-29 April 2021: 77th session of the Commission

The seventy-seventh session of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) will be held at the United Nations Conference Centre in Bangkok and via videoconferencing from 27 to 29 April 2021 under the theme, “Building back better from crises through regional cooperation in Asia and the Pacific.” For more information, see: <https://www.unescap.org/commission/77>

1-4 June 2021: Responsible Business and Human Rights Forum, Asia-Pacific

The Asia-Pacific focused Responsible Business and Human Rights Forum is held annually to discuss progress on advancing responsible business conduct and business and human rights agendas in the region. The next forum will be held as a virtual/hybrid forum on 14 June 2021. More information to follow.

For a short overview of ESCAP related news, please see <https://www.unescap.org/news> or subscribe: <https://unescap.us10.list-manage.com/subscribe?u=c0fdb6e03fa08a5e575b433c0&id=e318af22fc>

All ESCAP upcoming events: <https://www.unescap.org/events>

Recently published by ESCAP

[Latest News on the Framework Agreement \(22 February 2021\)](#)

[Regional Trends Report 2021: Shaping a Sustainable Energy Future in Asia and the Pacific \(22 February 2021\)](#)

[Systematic Review of the Socio-economic Impacts of Rural Electrification \(21 February 2021\)](#)

[Report of the Sixteenth Asia-Pacific Business Forum \(19 February 2021\)](#)

[A Systematic Review of the Impacts of Clean and Improved Cooking interventions on Adoption Outcomes and Health Impacts \(19 February 2021\)](#)

[E-Resilience Readiness of ICT Infrastructure \(10 February 2021\)](#)

[Disaster-responsive social protection Policy brief for the Pacific Small Island Developing States \(9 February 2021\)](#)

[Inventory of Smart Road Solutions in the context of COVID-19 \(9 February 2021\)](#)

[Guidebook on Innovative Analysis for Policymaking that Leaves No one Behind \(8 February 2021\)](#)

[Coal Phase-out and Energy Transition Pathways for Asia and the Pacific \(4 February 2021\)](#)

[Regional integration in Bay of Bengal region in post-COVID-19 period \(30 January 2021\)](#)

[The Future of Asian & Pacific Cities \(27 January 2021\)](#)

[Weaving a Stronger Fabric Managing Cascading Risks for the Climate Resilience \(26 January 2021\)](#)

[APDIM Preliminary Assessment of the Gaps and Needs for Disaster Risk Information and Data Management Platforms in Asia and the Pacific Region \(25 January 2021\)](#)

[Inequality in Access to Information and Communication Technologies \(ICTs\) in East and North-East Asia and South-East Asia \(22 January 2021\)](#)

[User Guide and Explanatory Note for TINA \(21 January 2021\)](#)

Working paper series

Macroeconomics: Click [here](#)

Trade: Click [here](#)

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