



ESCAP Sustainable Business Network

ESBN Monthly Update

February 2021

ESBN related news

Call for proposals for side events at APFSD

The 8th Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD) will be held in hybrid mode on 23-26 March under the theme “*Sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic in Asia and the Pacific*”. Side events to the APFSD can be organized and sponsored by member States, the UN system, other intergovernmental organizations, accredited CSOs or other stakeholders. Held outside the official programme, they provide an opportunity to discuss the theme of the 2021 APFSD “*Sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic in Asia and the Pacific*”, or one (or more) of the SDGs under review, or to deepen discussions on Voluntary National Reviews, and to share good practices, identify new and emerging issues, and spread greater awareness of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. Interested parties are invited to submit applications to organize a side event using the Proposal Form available on: <https://www.unescap.org/apfsd/8/>. The deadline for submitting proposals has been extended to **7 February 2021**. For more information, see: <https://www.unescap.org/apfsd/8/>



Women Enterprise Recovery Fund Lunched – Call for Proposals Closing Soon!

The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), with support from the Dutch Entrepreneurial Development Bank (FMO), the Government of Canada, and Visa Inc. have launched a ‘Women Enterprise Recovery Fund: Promoting and Upscaling Digital Solutions for Enhancing Women Enterprise Growth and Resilience’. The fund will support innovative business solutions that address the constraints faced by women enterprises in South and South-East Asia. Eligible applicants who can apply for the Fund include regulated financial institutions, FinTechs, technology institutions, among others. Find out [more](#) and apply before 23:59 EST on **15 February 2021** [here](#).



Recently concluded

7th Asia-Pacific Trade and Investment Week

The 7th Asia-Pacific Trade and Investment Week was held on 25-29 January 2021. The week included the Sixth Meeting of the Interim Intergovernmental Steering Group on Cross-border Paperless Trade Facilitation; the seventh session of the Committee on Trade and Investment; demonstration of the Trade Intelligence and Negotiation Adviser (TINA 3.0), developed by the ESCAP secretariat to assist member states in negotiating regional and bilateral trade agreements, of a Regional Integration and Value Chain Analyzer (RIVA) tool, and of an Online Readiness Assessment Guide for Cross-border Paperless Trade; a webinar on Enhancing Trade Information Portals, a webinar on Asia-Pacific LDCs' graduation, trade and pandemic; and an ARTNeT Lecture series on Trade and Trade Policy during the Pandemic. See: <https://www.unescap.org/events/seventh-asia-pacific-trade-and-investment-week>

8th meeting of the ESNB

The summary notes from the 8th meeting of the ESNB on 25 November 2020 are now available on the website: <https://esbn.unescap.org/events/escap-sustainable-business-network-esbn-8th-meeting>

United Nations ESCAP supports SEAF To Launch The Women's Economic Empowerment Fund

ESCAP and the Small Enterprise Assistance Funds (SEAF) announced the successful launch and first close of the SEAF Women's Economic Empowerment Fund (SWEEF) in January. In early 2020 ESCAP and SEAF formalized a [partnership](#) to catalyze women's entrepreneurship through gender lens impact investing in Asia. ESCAP has provided SEAF with technical assistance and grant support to complete the establishment of SWEEF. Find out more [here](#).

Upcoming ESCAP events

23-24 February 2021: 10th meeting of the Asia-Pacific Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) Network

The Network was established in 2011 as a mechanism for knowledge sharing among FDI policy makers from Least Developed and Landlocked Developing Countries of the Asia-Pacific region and was expanded in 2015 to include all ESCAP member and associate member States. Each year, the network meets to discuss topical FDI issues and increase their knowledge through exchange of experiences and interaction with FDI experts. This year's meeting of the FDI Network will discuss 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. <https://artnet.unescap.org/fdi/asia-pacific-fdi-network>.

24-26 February 2021: Committee on Energy, Third Session

The Committee will be organized under the theme “Energy transition for a greener, more resilient and inclusive energy future in the Asia-Pacific”. It will review and discuss relevant issues on energy transition and provide guidance and propose areas for regional cooperation that contribute to enhancing the security and resilience of the region's energy systems. <https://www.unescap.org/events/committee-energy-third-session>

1 March 2021: First Meeting of the Asia-Pacific MSME Policymakers Network: MSMEs and the digital economy

ESCAP will convene the first meeting of a new network of policymakers that brings together government officials with specific responsibilities for MSME policy. This network will be oriented toward sharing experiences of the MSME policies being implemented in the region, bringing attention to the successes, and finding ways to enhance the vitality of this important sector. The inaugural meeting of the network will discuss 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.

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

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

ESCAP, UNCTAD and ASEAN are partnering 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, will come together to discuss the implications of the crisis for competition policy and how policies should support MSMEs in the recovery.

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>

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*”. Some sessions will be organized as hybrid sessions, enabling physical presence in the UNCC, while other sessions (i.e. parallel roundtables on in-depth reviews of SDGs) will be organized entirely as online events. ESNB members are encouraged to participate in the roundtables and other APFSD sessions of interest. For more information see: <https://www.unescap.org/apfsd/8/>

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.” <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

[Trade facilitation in times of crisis and pandemic: Practices and lessons from the Asia-Pacific region \(20 January 2021\)](#)

[Regional Cooperation for Trade and Transport Connectivity in the Age of Pandemics in Asia and the Pacific \(15 January 2021\)](#)

[Guide to Enhancing Trade Information Portals \(15 January 2021\)](#)

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