



Meeting Report (as of 17 July 2020)

Key Highlights

- Participants of the webinar from three RECI project pilot countries - Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Mongolia (See **Annex 1** on LoP) – reported on common key challenges, which they are facing during COVID-19 pandemic. With respect to opportunities, countries observed the increased role of the digital connectivity in all aspects of peoples' lives.
- The Member States and intergovernmental bodies- RECI project partners highlighted the urgent need to invest in digital infrastructure, as a fundamental infrastructure and foundation of a new normal built on all digital technologies and vital applications, including telemedicine, e-government services, distance work and learning.
- Speakers noted that pandemic caused serious issues and emphasized that the **digital divide was widening**. In this regard, governments must take accelerated measures to address it.
- Speakers expressed their appreciation to the organizers of the webinar and the work that ESCAP has been doing in this project, and demonstrated a good spirit of collaboration to accelerate implementation of the highlighted recommendations (See **Annex 2** evaluation)

Key Recommendations for the Way Forward for the ESCAP Secretariat:

1. To further develop the concept of a proposed single information portal on sectoral infrastructure projects with a goal of improved cross-sectoral -, inter-ministerial information sharing and knowledge.

The centralised portal is planned to be a digital platform, where officials and interested stakeholders can learn more on existing infrastructure projects, pipelines and projects that are about to start in a specific sector. Putting this information online in a user-friendly way can promote an early and timely sharing information across sectors and across countries, and, thus, reveal where the emerging opportunities are for the cross sectoral infrastructure synergies to be made, reveal opportunities for infrastructure co-deployment and sharing, harmonize the planning process. The single information portal could either be part of the existing government investment and construction portals, or newly created outside of the government framework.

2. Following the interest expressed on 3 potential smart corridors, to conduct further studies on the cost-benefits of development of the 3 smart corridors. The aim is to continue encouraging member states to strengthen coordination and cooperation between departments of government agencies, and private companies for ICT infrastructure sharing and co-deployment with road transport and energy infrastructure.

These corridors need to be built ready for the present and for the future needs of an even more digitally driven world, where smart infrastructure needs to be talking through internet to other infrastructures. The studies may include:

- a. A simulation model aimed to determine the development scenario of the smart transport corridors,
- b. More precise quantification of the economic, and, also the social benefits that could emerge

from the development of these corridors.

c . Tools, means and mechanisms to achieve the stakeholders' common goals.

3. To explore the possibility of developing an instrument to monitor e-resilience, e.g. e-resilience index, which can strengthen preparedness for future emergencies, and ensure that networks can withstand shocks and quickly get back to the work afterwards. Index analysis can help to find out and recommend to countries the specific policies, regarding their specific needs, history and current development stage.
4. To explore the possibility to include the social aspect of digital preparedness (and possibly of e-resilience), in terms of people readiness and capacity for transition of their everyday activities to online.
5. As a first step in the development of the above instrument to monitor e-resilience: to distribute e-resilience perception based survey as widely as possible, with the aim of collecting as many responses as possible, and mitigating the subjectivity bias by increasing the number of responses (See **Annex 3** and **Annex 4** with overview of results of Survey A-Readiness and Survey B -Policy)
6. To further cooperate with ECE on “Digital Readiness” survey and to share the findings of the ESCAP perception-based survey on e-resilience readiness. Speakers recommended that outcomes should contribute to SPECA Innovation Strategy for Sustainable Development, which ECE and ESCAP are working on jointly.
7. To develop partnership with other interested organizations: ITU, WHO, Center for Emergency Situations and Disaster Risk Reduction (Kazakhstan), International Think Tank for LLDCs (Mongolia) and ECE to support efficient work on the project, promote e -resilience and share the ideas and experience. For example, ITT for LLDCs (Mongolia) has a single platform arrangement for transit transportation and customs related issues: e.g. Mongolia-Russia-China economic corridor, successful Nepal-India model of transit transportation.
8. To propose continuation of the ESCAP work on the project, and to take the recommended actions forward, the member countries are encouraged to:
 - a. report on outcomes of webinar and request the secretariat to further this work at the 3rd Session of CICTSTI, scheduled on 19-20 August 2020.
 - b. take active part in other coming meetings: 12th session of the SPECA Working Group on Innovation and Technology for Sustainable Development on 30 July; Steering Committee of AP-IS on 11th of August; and SPECA Economic forum in November 2020 under the chairmanship of Kyrgyzstan .

Annex 1- List of Participants

Annex 2- Webinar Evaluation

Annex 3- Survey A: E-resilience readiness (perception-based)

Annex 4-Survey B: Policy for e-resilience

Note: The meeting participants were connected to KUDO and YouTube streaming in real time and was attended by 41 participants from 3 countries (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Mongolia), Intergovernmental Bodies, Experts and the Secretariat. Among them, 5 were from Kazakhstan, 8 were from Kyrgyzstan, 6 were from Mongolia, 5 were from Intergovernmental Bodies, 2 international Experts and 21 participants from the ESCAP and ECE Secretariat. During the meeting 14 people made interventions , among them 6 policymakers from target countries (Kazakhstan-2, Kyrgyzstan-2, Mongolia-2), 2 people from Intergovernmental bodies (CESDRR-1, ITT LLDCs-1), 1 international Expert, 2 speakers from ESCAP (Opening remark-1 and moderator-1), 1 speaker from ESCAP SONCA (Opening remark and moderator), 2 participants from ECE.