



ESCAP Sustainable Business Network

ESBN Monthly Newsletter: March 2024

Asia-Pacific Green Deal for Business

The ESNB Executive Council adopted the Green Deal for Business at its 7th Meeting in May 2022. The Green Deal for Business was officially launched at the Asia Pacific Business Forum held in Bangkok Thailand on 26 August 2022.

Pledge your support to the Green Deal for Business at: <https://www.unescap.org/projects/gd>

Activities by ESNB Members

22 February 2024: **Ascent Partners** organized the APFSD Networking Meetup as part of the [APFSD11: Associated and Pre-Events](#) on 22 February 2024.

Upcoming events of ESNB interest

22-26 April 2024: [80th session of the Commission](#)

The eightieth session of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) will be held from 22 to 26 April 2024 at the United Nations Conference Centre in Bangkok. Guided by the theme “Leveraging digital innovation for sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific”, the eightieth session will be an opportunity to strengthen region-wide cooperative action on leveraging digital innovation for the accelerated implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The session will bring together government leaders and ministers from across Asia and the Pacific and other key stakeholders to discuss how digital innovation can more inclusively contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals across multiple disciplines.

Recently concluded

15 February 2024: [Inclusive Business in Agriculture and Food Systems - Telangana Workshop](#)

Invest India and ESCAP, supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, are collaborating to promote inclusive business models in India, with a specific focus on Telangana and Haryana. As part of this initiative, the Inclusive Business in Agriculture and Food Systems - Telangana Workshop was organized by the Telangana State Food Processing Society, Telangana State Government, Invest India and ESCAP, with the support of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The workshop provided a platform for participants to share experiences and best practices, aiming to identify actionable steps to further develop inclusive business models in Telangana.

20-23 February 2024: [Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development 2024 and Side Events](#)

The 11th Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD) was organized from 20-23 February 2024 under the theme: “Reinforcing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and eradicating poverty in times of multiple crises: The effective delivery of sustainable, resilient and innovative solutions in Asia and the Pacific” at the United Nations Conference Center (UNCC) in Bangkok, Thailand. A number of ESNB members

actively participated in the Forum. Dr. George Lam, Chair of the ESNB Executive Council, also gave a statement at the APFSD on 22 February, see: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8sE3NCUI9mE> (time 2:55:34 – 2:58:52).



22 February 2024: [Unlocking investment and financing to tackle biodiversity loss in Asia and the Pacific](#)

ESCAP, in partnership with Agence Française de Développement (AFD), recently hosted a side event on unlocking investment and financing tools to tackle biodiversity loss in the Asia Pacific region with speakers from the Asian Development Bank, the Thai Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, UNDP, and UNEP FI. The panel discussion underscored the interconnectedness of financial systems, nature, and society, the growing awareness of the risks posed by biodiversity loss and the need for transformative change in financing to align business and finance with nature for a sustainable and just future. The panel emphasised the importance of involving local communities, establishing a clear taxonomy, leveraging green finance to de-risk biodiversity projects and innovative financing mechanisms such as biodiversity credits and green bonds.

Upcoming ESCAP activities and events

4-15 March 2024: [Optimizing trade agreement text analysis: How to use ESCAP's Trade Agreement Text Analysis Tool](#)

The number and complexity of trade agreements has boomed. In addition to traditional trade-related provisions, there is a proliferation of provisions addressing other issues, which do not necessarily directly regulate trade, yet have a significant impact on it. In this context, ESCAP developed a web-based tool that allows users to efficiently map topics or provisions in texts of trade agreements. Currently, there are 463 trade agreements in the searchable database, including 237 involving at least one economy from the Asia-Pacific Region. The algorithm is based on detection of keyword combinations in the articles of trade agreements. It allows to accommodate for the variability of the natural language, as well as to map multiple categorized provisions or topics. As the final output, it generates datasets (spreadsheet format) that can be used in quantitative research or to create insightful visualizations. The objective of this course is to teach how to use the online tool so that researchers can make the best use of what it has to offer by conducting automated text analysis and generating quantitative datasets.

11-12 March 2024: [Regional Training on Developing and Financing Sustainable Energy Projects](#)

This training seeks to support ESCAP member States – with an emphasis on those that have completed SDG 7 roadmaps or national cooling action plans – to better understand how to mobilize technical assistance and finance for sustainable energy projects. Development partners will present on sources and types of technical assistance and finance, along with funding criteria and steps towards mobilization. Member States will be invited to present priority areas where support is needed.

15 March 2024: [Inclusive Business in Agriculture and Food Systems National Investment Forum Viet Nam](#)

Access to finance remains an issue for many inclusive businesses seeking to expand their operations or deepen their impact. This national investment forum organized by ESCAP, with the support of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and in collaboration with the Agency for Enterprise Development, Ministry of Planning and Investment, Viet Nam, seeks to identify opportunities to invest in and finance inclusive business models and facilitate the realisation of such opportunities.

20 March 2024: [Launch Event: Legal TINA: Harnessing Technology and Artificial Intelligence for Better Trade Agreement Negotiations](#)

This event is co-organized by ESCAP and the Georgetown Law Center on Inclusive Trade and Development (CITD) to launch the ‘Legal TINA’, a new tool powered by database and artificial intelligence. This event also aims to provide a forum for discussions on trends in regional trade agreement (RTA) negotiations and implications for trade negotiators.

25 March 2024: [Digital Trade and Investment for Sustainable Development: Building on ESCAP-UNCTAD-UNIDO Report Recommendations](#)

This online event draws on the findings and policy implications from the 2023/24 Asia-Pacific Trade and Investment Report, which focuses on “Unleashing Digital Trade and Investment for Sustainable Development”. The report is a collaborative effort between UNESCAP, UNCTAD, and UNIDO. Designed for Asia-Pacific policymakers and business leaders, the session will initiate with a succinct presentation of the report's principal findings and suggestions. Subsequently, experts will provide insights and discuss strategies to optimize digital trade and investment's contribution to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Asia-Pacific Trade and Investment Report 2023/24 is available at <https://www.unescap.org/kp/APTIR2023>.

1-5 April 2024: [Asia-Pacific Trade Facilitation Forum 2024](#)

The Asia-Pacific Trade Facilitation Forum (APTFF) is the leading regional platform for the exchange of good practices and knowledge on trade facilitation. The APTFF has been organized by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), in cooperation with a growing number of partners, since 2009. The Forum attracts over 250 participants from over 30 countries, and offers extensive opportunities for capacity building and cooperation. The 11th APTFF is co-organized by ADB and ESCAP with the Ministry of Investment, Industry and Trade of Uzbekistan, and will be held in Samarkand on 1-5 April 2024.

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

[State of blue carbon ecosystems for climate action in Asia and the Pacific \(23 February 2024\)](#)

[People and planet : addressing the interlinked challenges of climate change, poverty and hunger in Asia and the Pacific \(20 February 2024\)](#)

[SDG 2: Zero hunger \(15 February 2024\)](#)

[SDG 17 : Partnership for the goals \(15 February 2024\)](#)

[SDG 13: Climate action \(15 February 2024\)](#)

[Asia and the Pacific SDG progress report 2024 : showcasing transformative actions \(15 February 2024\)](#)

[Study on challenges and opportunities for electric vehicle development for land-based public transport sector in cities of Indonesia \(14 February 2024\)](#)

[SDG 1: No poverty \(14 February 2024\)](#)

[SDG 16 : Peace, justice and strong institutions: promote peaceful and inclusive societies \(12 February 2024\)](#)

[Feminist Finance Forum: Driving action for a feminist entrepreneurial ecosystem in Asia and the Pacific \(09 February 2024\)](#)

[Operational guide on the implementation of the Jakarta Declaration on the Asian and Pacific decade of persons with disabilities, 2023—2032 \(06 February 2024\)](#)

[Promoting the utilization of transport big data with smart transport systems for sustainable transport in Asia and the Pacific \(01 February 2024\)](#)

[Pathways to sustainable development : the nexus of transport, energy, and urban planning in Asia and the Pacific \(01 February 2024\)](#)

[Strategy to promote inclusive and sustainable businesses to achieve the sustainable development goals in Sri Lanka : background note \(31 January 2024\)](#)

[Building hopeful futures : women-led MSMEs and the pandemic in Samoa \(26 January 2024\)](#)

[A data overview: taking stock of women entrepreneurs in Samoa \(26 January 2024\)](#)

Working paper series

Macroeconomics: Click [here](#)

Trade: Click [here](#)

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

Best regards,

ESBN Secretariat