



ESCAP Sustainable Business Network

ESBN Monthly Update: October 2023

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>

Upcoming events of ESNB interest

1 November 2023: [Asia-Pacific Green Deal for Business Roundtable: Building smart, low carbon, climate-resilient infrastructure in developing countries](#)

The upcoming Roundtable will provide a forum for discussing the challenges of developing sustainable infrastructure in LDCs and LLDCs. The meeting will be held as part of the Asia-Pacific Green Deal for Business initiative, which seeks to promote a green transformation of the economy for the well-being of all people in the region. The meeting will focus on the infrastructure pillar of the Green Deal and will gather representatives from LDCs, LLDCs, experts in public-private partnerships, and major private sector stakeholders. The objective is to develop some recommendations and mutual understanding on how the private sector can work with public sector entities to deliver the sustainable infrastructure necessary for a green transformation. By engaging multiple stakeholders, the meeting aims to leverage the unique strengths of both sectors creating green and climate-resilient infrastructure for sustainable growth.

15-17 November 2023: [Seventh Asian and Pacific Population Conference](#)

ESCAP in collaboration with UNFPA is organizing the Seventh Asian and Pacific Population Conference from 15 to 17 November in Bangkok and online. The Conference is a statutory organ of ESCAP and convenes every ten years. The Conference will provide an opportunity for member States, CSOs, UN entities and the private sector to review the implementation of the 2013 Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Population and Development and the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development in the region. It will focus on intersecting population and development considerations as they relate to sustainable development, both now and in the future. The outcome of the meeting will inform the 30-year global review of the Programme of Action in the Commission on Population Development in 2024. The meeting is intended to provide an inclusive platform for member States and stakeholders to share experiences and good practices, discuss lessons learned and identify a way forward.

21 November 2023: **Executive Council, 10th Meeting**

The Executive Council of the ESCAP Sustainable Business Network (ESBN) will meet on 21 November in Hong Kong. The meeting will review the work of the ESNB Task Force and the progress in implementing the Asia-Pacific Green Deal for Business. The meeting will also review preparations for Asia-Pacific Business Forum that will be held in 2024.

22-23 November 2023: [Asia-Pacific Business Forum 2023](#)

ESCAP together with the Hong Kong Environment and Ecology and the ESCAP Sustainable Business Network (ESBN) will jointly organize the APBF 2023 in Hong Kong. The theme of APBF 2023 is “An Asia Pacific Green Deal for Business: Driving the Green transformation” Under this theme, participants of the APBF 2023 will have the opportunity to discuss the role of business in driving the Asia-Pacific Green Deal for Business. The Forum will showcase current and future business opportunities in the Pacific and allow participants an opportunity to hear and meet key decision makers, business leaders and emerging entrepreneurs committed to sustainable development across the Asia and Pacific region.

ASIA-PACIFIC BUSINESS FORUM (APBF) 2023

"An Asia-Pacific Green Deal for Business: Driving the Green Transformation"

22 -23 November 2023
Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre

Organised by: ESCAP Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific ESBN ESCAP Sustainable Business Network APBF Asia-Pacific Business Forum

Supported by: Environment and Ecology Bureau The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China

Recently Concluded

25 September 2023: [Inclusive Business in Agriculture and Food Systems National Investment Forum](#)

To meet the ambitions of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the private sector will need to play a greater role. Inclusive businesses are companies that: “provide goods, services, and livelihoods on a commercially viable basis, either at scale or scalable, to people living at the base of the economic pyramid making them part of the value chain of companies’ core business as suppliers, distributors, retailers, or customers.” There are valuable models of inclusive business - many agribusinesses - across Asia and the Pacific that are commercially viable and have social impact at scale. By providing capacity building and technical assistance, inclusive business models promote MSME development in agribusiness and support smallholder farmers and MSMEs integrate into regional and global value chains. Inclusive businesses are supporting sustainable and inclusive economic growth through digital transformation by harnessing technologies to improve production and link farmers and MSMEs to global markets, and through business innovations that create entrepreneurship opportunities. 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 Office of SMEs Promotion (OSMEP) of Thailand, sought to identify concrete actions to promote inclusive business models and facilitate investments towards this sector.

27 September 2023: [Forum on Promoting Inclusive and Sustainable Businesses for Sustainable Development in Sri Lanka](#)

Sri Lanka is exploring the means to support economic diversification, business innovation and promote inclusive and sustainable growth. The latter requires a range of policies that encourage enterprise development, and in particular policies that seek to engage, facilitate and incentivize enterprises to develop businesses that support inclusive and sustainable growth. The Sustainable Development Council in partnership with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) aim to support the development of a Strategy for private sector action towards inclusive and sustainable development in Sri Lanka. This forum presented and discussed the proposed strategy to promote inclusive and sustainable businesses for sustainable development in Sri Lanka. There was also a small exhibition of inclusive and sustainable enterprises.

Upcoming ESCAP activities and events

16-26 October 2023: [Introduction to digital trade regulations in Asia and Latin America](#)

The online course is organized by the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (UN-ECLAC), the UN Economic Commission and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN-ESCAP), and the European University Institute (EUI), with the support of a project by the Forum for East Asia-Latin America Cooperation (FEALAC). This interdisciplinary course is designed for policymakers and researchers who want to develop a critical understanding of global digital trade regulations. On the one hand, policymakers are applying policies designed for an 'offline' world to the new online world. On the other hand, they are designing policies to consider broad economic and non-economic concerns, including public security, law enforcement, national security, privacy, consumer protection, and free speech. The course will shed light on this topic by introducing the concept of digital trade and its regulations, highlighting the importance of informed policy-making decisions, including in the context of the recent negotiations of trade agreements.

17 October 2023: [Policy Dialogue on the Electrification of Public Transport](#)

This event, held as part of the Third Asian and Pacific Energy Forum, will bring together government representatives, the private sector and the international community. The key objectives of the event are to: 1) Share international, regional, and national experiences on transitioning to electric mobility in public transport; 2) Raise awareness and enhance capacity of policymakers and other key stakeholders on the development of national policy frameworks for electric mobility in public transport; 3) Explore the constraints and opportunities for the electrification of transport with an emphasis on public transport; and 4) Propose and discuss the various pathways available under national energy policies along with opportunities for regional cooperation to accelerate the uptake of electric public transport options.

18 October 2023: [Policy Dialogue on Phasing Down the use of Coal in the Asia-Pacific Region](#)

The event, held as part of the Third Asian and Pacific Energy Forum, will bring together government representatives, the private sector and the international community. The key objectives of the event are to: explore the constraints and opportunities for the region's transition to a future less dependent on coal; discuss the current status of coal use, the challenges of phasing down coal in Asia and the Pacific; and propose and discuss the various pathways available under national energy policies along with opportunities for regional cooperation to accelerate the phase down of coal.

19-20 October 2023: [The Third Asian and Pacific Energy Forum](#)

The third Asian and Pacific Energy Forum (APEF3), is co-hosted with the Ministry of Energy of Royal Thai Government, to be held at the United Nations Conference Centre (UNCC) in Bangkok and online on 19 and 20 October 2023. The Third forum will be organized under the theme “Building a secure, sustainable and interconnected energy future for Asia and the Pacific”. The participants of APEF3 will have chance to review the progress made in achieving Sustainable Development Goal 7 (Affordable and clean energy) in the Asia-Pacific region and in implementing the Ministerial Declaration on Regional Cooperation for Energy Transition towards Sustainable and Resilient Societies in Asia and the Pacific, which was adopted at the Second Asian and Pacific Energy Forum, in 2018.

23-25 October 2023: [Eighth Asia-Pacific Urban Forum \(APUF-8\)](#)

For the past three decades, the Asia-Pacific Urban Forum has played a pivotal role in convening the region's premier multi-stakeholder forum on sustainable urban development. The 8th Asia-Pacific Urban Forum (APUF-8) will be held from 23 to 25 October 2023 in Suwon City, Republic of Korea. The Forum brings together the experiences of diverse stakeholders to reflect on the colliding crises faced by cities in Asia and the Pacific, synthesize innovative approaches and actions to support sustainable urban development in the context of the New Urban Agenda and the decade for action for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). APUF-8 is co-organized by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and Suwon City, in strategic partnership with the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport of the Republic of Korea, and in cooperation with UN-Habitat, Habitat for Humanity International and CityNet as well as a range of supporting partner organizations.

25-27 October 2023: [Stakeholder Workshop: Financing Bhutan's Green Transition](#)

ESCAP and the Ministry of Finance will co-host this workshop to socialize the draft framework and work towards consensus in its finalization. The sessions will take place over two/three days and will include a range of government and relevant private sector stakeholders who will be involved in future thematic bond issuance. The workshop will review the draft Sustainable Finance Framework and its key features, address stakeholders' questions regarding the proposed draft Sustainable Financing Framework, define the next steps and agreement on the timeline for finalizing the Sustainable Financing Framework, and develop a common understanding of the Second Part Opinion process and define the steps and timeline for getting an SPO.

30 October 2023: [Asia-Pacific Stats Café Series: What ISI can mean to you?](#)

This session will overview International Statistical Institute (ISI) and its offerings, with a focus on its roles in ethical practice, and fostering the production and sharing of high-quality scientific content plus the development of statisticians.

30 October 2023: [Sixth Asia-Pacific Day for the Ocean](#)

In line with resolution ESCAP/RES/76/1 on “Strengthening cooperation to promote the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific”, the Sixth Asia-Pacific Day for the Ocean will provide a platform for member States, and key stakeholders, for systematic and inclusive dialogue on priority areas and challenges in our region. This Day for the Ocean will be co-hosted as a tripartite event of ESCAP, UNEP and UNDP, within the framework of a Joint Contribution to the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development.

31 October-2 November 2023: [Expert Group Meeting on Boosting affordable and longer-term financing for governments](#)

The objective of this three-day hybrid meeting is to engage experts, policymakers and other development stakeholders on enhancing fiscal resources to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Asia and the Pacific. In particular, it will examine a range of policy actions that can be taken by debtor countries in the region and the international community to reduce sovereign borrowing costs and increase the availability of long-term development financing for governments. The meeting will also discuss economic prospects and emerging macroeconomic challenges and policies in the Asia-Pacific region.

1-2 November 2023: [Seventh North and Central Asia Multistakeholder Forum on the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals](#)

The Subregional Office for North and Central Asia is organizing the Seventh North and Central Asia Multi-Stakeholder Forum on the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG Forum). The SDG Forum facilitates dialogue and deliberations between government officials, civil society, think-tanks, academia, experts, and other stakeholders, providing a unique platform to share information on subregional implementation efforts, highlight subregional priorities and good practices. The outcomes and recommendations from the Forum feed into regional and global processes, including the Eleventh Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD) and the 2024 UN High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF).

3 November 2023: [North and Central Asia Workshop on Next Generation of Voluntary National Reviews](#)

The voluntary national review (VNR) is a process through which countries assess and present national progress made in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The aim of the VNR workshop is to facilitate the exchange of good practices in preparing VNRs and present ESCAP's support for the VNR process. It will provide an overview of ESCAP's VNR support opportunity to discuss the role of VNRs as enablers for multistakeholder partnerships and improve policy frameworks to accelerate SDG implementation. The VNR workshop is an associated event of the [Seventh North and Central Asia Multistakeholder Forum on Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals](#).

5 November 2023: [National Investment Dialogue for Inclusive Business in Agriculture and Food Systems India](#)

India is one of the world's largest producers and consumers of food products such as milk, rice, wheat, nuts, various fruits and legumes, amongst others. Recognising this, the Ministry of Food Processing Industries, (MoFPI), Government of India, has adopted measures to channel investments into the entire food processing value chain of the sector and transform India into the food basket of the world.

Value chains and knowledge sharing play a key role in generating opportunities for everyone and the government of India is strengthening its support of participants in the value chain that includes MSMEs, women's self-help groups, and farmers' producer organizations. Special incentives are being given to ensure geographic inclusion, and efforts are being made to improve market and financial access for all by supporting the provision of affordable credit to the food processing sector, especially to micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), enhancing market accessibility, facilitating access to technology and incentivizing skills development in the workforce and employment generation for marginalized groups.

This national investment dialogue sought to establish opportunities for cross country learning and identify concrete actions to promote inclusive business models and facilitate investments towards this sector. This

is a one-day event which is organized with the support of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and in collaboration with Invest India, and will attract new participants to World Food India, as well as benefit from it.

6-7 November 2023: [Seventh South - East Asia Multi-Stakeholder Forum "Reinforcing the 2030 Agenda and Eradicating Poverty in Times of Multiple Crises: The Effective Delivery of Sustainable, Resilient, and Innovative Solutions in Asia- Pacific"](#)

In preparation for the 2024 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development review of SDGs 1 (No Poverty), 2 (Zero Hunger), 13 (Climate Action), 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions), and 17 (Partnerships for the Goals), focusing on eradicating poverty while addressing the impacts of multiple crises. This Forum is part of a series of five sub-regional forums taking a holistic approach towards addressing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the new global environment and delivering urgent near-term action. The Forum will highlight salient points emanating from the discussions and aims to foster the development of partnerships to overcome challenges and achieve the countries' sustainable development aspirations, positively impacting the environment, society, and economy. The primary objective of this initiative is to enhance the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Southeast Asia by adopting innovative, resilient, and sustainable solutions to eradicate poverty, counter the impacts of crises, and promote regional cooperation for a better future.

20-22 November 2023: [7th North-East Asia Multistakeholder Forum on Sustainable Development 2023](#)

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. The sessions of the 7th North-East Asia Multistakeholder Forum on SDGs will discuss on themes in line with the goals in focus for 2023; no poverty (SDG1), zero hunger (SDG2), climate action (SDG13), peace, justice and strong institution (SDG16). Also, there are dedicated sessions to highlight countries' national progress in their SDG implementation and voluntary national reviews (as applicable) as well as on revitalizing partnerships for sustainable development (SDG17).

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

Recently published by ESCAP

[Sustainable finance : bridging the gap in Asia and the Pacific \(02 October 2023\)](#)

[Overcoming challenges in Bangladesh's textile & garment sector \(26 September 2023\)](#)

[SDG progress and transformative Pathways : perspectives from the five regions \(13 September 2023\)](#)

[Feasibility study on cross-border electronic exchange of trade data – Bangladesh \(07 September 2023\)](#)

[Valuing and Investing in Unpaid Care and Domestic Work: Indonesia \(01 September 2023\)](#)

[Readiness to implement the action plan to strengthen regional cooperation on social protection : Mongolia \(31 August 2023\)](#)

[Strengthening social protection in Cambodia \(31 August 2023\)](#)

[Strengthening social protection in Maldives \(31 August 2023\)](#)

[Review of disaster riskscape of Democratic People's Republic of Korea \(31 August 2023\)](#)

[Jakarta declaration on the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2023-2032 \(31 August 2023\)](#)

[Strengthening social protection in Uzbekistan \(31 August 2023\)](#)

Working paper series

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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