



ESCAP Sustainable Business Network

ESBN Monthly Update: September 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

17 September 2023: [Scaling up Gender-Lens Financing: A Catalytic Tool for Advancing all SDGs](#)

Hosted by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), this high-level side event taking place during SDG Action Weekend 2023 promises to be a dynamic platform for dialogue, innovation, and commitment to scaling up gender-lens financing across pivotal sectors, ranging from energy and education to food systems and climate change. The event will convene key stakeholders from national banks, international organizations, global financial institutions, and the private sector, to drive multistakeholder collaboration and propel momentum towards financing sustainable development. For more information, see the [event website](#). To join the conversation, register your participation [here](#) by **Friday 8 September 2023**. Registration guidelines are available [here](#)

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 ESBN 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.

21 November 2023: ESCAP Sustainable Business Network: Task Force meeting, Cocktail Reception, followed by Welcome Reception for the Asia-Pacific Business Forum 2023

ESBN Task Forces will hold meetings prior to the ESBN Executive Council Meeting on 21 November which will be followed by cocktail reception and a welcome reception.

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 and responsibilities 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.

Recently Concluded

3 August 2023: [Inclusive Business in Agriculture and Food Systems Regional Investment Forum](#)

United Nations ESCAP, in collaboration with the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs of Indonesia and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, organized the Regional Investment Forum on Inclusive Business in Agriculture and Food Systems on August 23rd, 2023, in Bali, Indonesia. The event was organized alongside the 6th ASEAN Inclusive Business Summit, which was held in collaboration with the Government of Indonesia, the ASEAN Secretariat, United Nations ESCAP, and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).



16-17 August 2023: [Feminist Finance Forum](#)

The Feminist Finance Forum provided an opportunity for key regional stakeholders to strategize on collaborative efforts to alleviate the constraints faced by women entrepreneurs across Asia and the Pacific. The two-day interactive Forum convened over 200 participants, including policymakers, women entrepreneurs, investors, financial service providers, academics, civil society and women's grassroots organisations, and development partners. During the event, participants explored the climate finance and gender equality nexus, the need to drive investments into the regional care economy, women's financial inclusion and resilience, tools to overcome gender bias in funding processes, support services for women entrepreneurs, and actionable insights on gender lens investing and gender responsive financial products and services. For more information on the outcomes of the Forum, click [here](#).

22-24 August 2023: [Accelerating Sustainable Finance Through Private Sector Participation](#)

The training Accelerating Sustainable Finance Through Private Sector Participation was co-hosted by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI), the Central Bank of Sri Lanka, and the Sustainable Development Council, in partnership with the Luxembourg Green Exchange (LGX) and LGX Academy, which is the world's first and leading exchange dedicated to sustainable finance. Building on the positive momentum of Thematic Bond Issuance Training held in Sri Lanka last year for the regulators, this second training on sustainable finance targeted the private sector stakeholders and was designed to increase the capacity and understanding of sustainable bond issuance, ESG financing products specifically lending, compliance with international best practices, and mainstream ESG instruments and risk management to unlock the potential of sustainable finance in Sri Lanka. This targeted capacity building helped the private sector participants develop a better understanding of sustainable finance instruments, best practices on compliance, and ESG risk identification and management. 80 participants representing 50 organizations and departments attended this three-day training of which 40% were women. Strong links between financial markets, the banking sector, regulators, and key actors in the real economy will help create an enabling environment that looks at sustainable finance as the new business-as-usual and unlocks the potential of the private sector participants in accelerating sustainable finance in the country.

23-25 August 2023: [Sixth ASEAN Inclusive Business Summit](#)

The Sixth ASEAN Inclusive Business Summit was organised by the Government of the Republic of Indonesia in cooperation with the ASEAN Secretariat, the United Nations ESCAP, and, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) from 23 to 25 August 2023, Bali, Indonesia. The Summit focused on three main activities, namely a High-Level Ministers Meeting overseeing MSME, economic, and investment development. multi-stakeholder dialogues on the promotion of IB practices, MSMEs Business and Financial Matching, and IB Showcase and Site Visit in Bali, Indonesia. To advance the promotion, adoption, and implementation of IB in ASEAN, the Sixth ASEAN Inclusive Business Summit commissioned dialogue to explore opportunities to prepare an enabling environment to incentivise businesses for a sustainable future, such as through the establishing the ASEAN IB Acceleration Programme to support and finance inclusive business models. In alignment with the Summit, ESCAP initiated a campaign where interested investors, businesses, and development partners could pledge their commitments and willingness to support inclusive business endeavors.



Upcoming ESCAP activities and events

28 August-11 September 2023: [ESCAP, UNEP & UNCTAD Course on Climate-smart Trade and Investment for Sustainable Development](#)

While globalization has lifted billions of people out of poverty in the Asia-Pacific region alone, the economic growth supported by existing trade and investment policies has come at a steep environmental cost. The latest report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change unequivocally concludes that a human-made climate crisis is unfolding and that we are on the verge of a tipping point. All possible avenues need to be considered in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, including in the policies governing trade and investment. The links between trade, investment and climate change are complex. The key is to ensure that the positive effects of trade and investment are maximized, such as by promoting trade and investment in renewable energy and low-carbon technologies, while minimizing the adverse effects, such as by digitalizing trade and transport systems. As such, this course seeks to explain the relationship between climate-change and trade and investment, and provide recommendations on how trade and investment policies can be more “climate-smart”.

7 September 2023: [ESCAP North and Central Asia Policy Dialogue on the Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific 2023](#)

This policy dialogue is organized by the North and Central Asia office in collaboration with the Macroeconomic Policy and Financing for Development Division of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). The event aims to discuss ideas on policy issues and options to deal with sovereign debt distress while keeping in view the SDGs and long-term climate ambitions.

7 September 2023: [Symposium on Air Pollutant Emissions Inventory and Air Quality Management](#)

The Symposium is jointly organized by the National Air Emission Inventory and Research Center (NAIR) of the Republic of Korea and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and will be held on 7 September 2023 in Seoul, Republic of Korea. The Symposium aims to provide invited stakeholders and experts with valuable opportunities, including: a) Learning from distinguished experts about scientific approaches to tackle air pollution and b) Exchanging experiences related to addressing air pollution.

7 September 2023: [Round Table: Pan-Asia Partnership for Geospatial Air Pollution Information](#)

The theme for the fourth annual International Day of Clean Air for blue skies, "Together for Clean Air", highlights the urgent need for stronger partnerships, increased investment, and shared responsibility for overcoming air pollution. In line with this theme, ESCAP is convening an informal round table discussion for countries involved in the Pan-Asia Partnership for Geospatial Air Pollution Information. This event will promote peer learning and South/South cooperation in promoting a beneficiary lead process for utilizing this data and related equipment to empower action on air pollution. Participants will have the opportunity to discuss the challenges and success they have experienced, and give feedback on planned activities for the coming year to building the Pandora Asia Network and promote cooperation. Opportunities to harmonize with the recently adopted Regional Action Programme on Air Pollution will also be discussed.

7 September 2023: [Asia Pacific Commemoration of the 4th International Day of Clean Air for blue skies](#)

The theme for the fourth annual International Day of Clean Air for blue skies, "Together for Clean Air", highlights the urgent need for stronger partnerships, increased investment, and shared responsibility for overcoming air pollution. According to WHO, almost everyone (99 % of the global population) breathes polluted air. The transboundary nature of air pollution calls for local, national, regional, and global partnerships to tackle the problem. This year's theme highlights that it is time to invest, work together, and contribute to clean air. Collaboration with UN member states, development organizations, international and regional organizations, the private sector, and civil society is crucial to reducing pollution and improving air quality.

7-8 September 2023: [Strengthening older persons' labour force participation and benefitting from the Fourth Industrial Revolution in Asia and the Pacific: Regional Workshop](#)

By 2050, the number of older persons in Asia and the Pacific is projected to double, with one in four people being aged 60 or older. The prevalence of ageing populations across the region, along with the Fourth Industrial Revolution, COVID-19 and environmental changes, will impact the labour force, necessitating investment in skills development, planning for employment shifts and ensuring age-friendly work environments. To address these issues, ESCAP and the Korea Labor Force Development Institute for the Aged of the Republic of Korea are co-organizing a regional workshop on strengthening older persons' labour force participation and harnessing the potential of the Fourth Industrial Revolution in Asia and the Pacific. The objectives of the workshop are to: foster knowledge and awareness of issues facing older

persons, enhancing their labour force participation and increasing opportunities for them to find decent work; facilitate the exchange of knowledge and good practices related to issues affecting older persons among all relevant stakeholders; and contribute to the development of policies and measures that enable more effective responses to creating opportunities for an inclusive society.

8 September 2023: [**Fifth Meeting of Science and Policy Committee of North-East Asia Clean Air Partnership \(NEACAP\)**](#)

The Fifth Meeting of NEACAP Science and Policy Committee (SPC-5) will be organized in Seoul, Republic of Korea on 8 September 2023. The SPC-5 will review the progress and plans of (1) the policy analysis report and the policy dialogues and (2) voluntary BAT collaboration and discuss a work plan for 2024 and 2025. The SPC-5 will also conduct the Mid-term review of the NEACAP Work Plan 2021-2025, based on the secretariat's paper and discussions at the Symposium to be organized in conjunction with the SPC-5.

8 September 2023: [**Together for Clean Air: Air Pollution and Climate Solutions in Southeast Asia**](#)

The Session is organized by Thailand's Hub of Talents on Air Pollution and Climate (HTAPC). The HTAPC is hosted by the Faculty of Public Health, Thammasat University with support from the National Research Council of Thailand (NRCT). Other co-organizers include UNESCAP, UNEP, Asia Pacific Clean Air Partnership (APCAP), Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Korea, Embassy of the Republic of Korea to Thailand, German International Cooperation (GIZ), and Climate and Clean Air Coalition (CCAC). This meeting will introduce recent developments in Southeast Asia to address air quality and climate. It will also introduce the 15 science-based clean air and climate solutions for ASEAN and facilitate sharing of national and sub-national efforts on the integrated air quality management and climate change mitigation. This session contributes to the Commemoration of the Fourth International Day of Clean Air for Blue Skies (IDCABS) in 2023.

9 September 2023: [**Asia Pacific Innovation Forum on Boosting FDI into the Digital Economy, Xiamen China**](#)

The Asia-Pacific Innovation Forum will bring together investment promotion agencies and investors to discuss investment opportunities and investor priorities in the digital economy. The Forum will take part as a special thematic forum during the China International Fair for Investment & Trade from 8-11 September, 2023. More information on the Forum can be found here: <https://www.unescap.org/events/2023/united-nations-asia-pacific-innovation-forum-boosting-foreign-direct-investment-digital>. Register [here](#).

12-13 September 2023: [**5th Meeting of the Working Group on Dry Ports**](#)

The fifth biennial meeting of the Working Group on Dry Ports, to be convened in accordance with article 6 (2) of the Intergovernmental Agreement on Dry Ports. The fifth meeting will be held at the United Nations Conference Centre in Bangkok and online on 12 and 13 September 2023. At the fifth meeting, the Working Group will consider the implementation of the Agreement and any amendments proposed by the parties. In line with the Regional Action Programme for Sustainable Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific (2022–2026), the fifth meeting will also serve to advance discussions on progress towards efficient and resilient transport and logistics networks and mobility for economic growth; environmentally sustainable transport systems and services; and safe and inclusive transport and mobility.

13 September 2023: [**NEAMPAN Webinar 2023: Accelerating Ocean-Based Actions for Sustainable Development**](#)

Our oceans are facing unprecedented threats. With increasing scientific evidence of adverse impacts of climate change, ocean acidification, marine pollution, habitat destruction and the alarming loss of coastal biodiversity, the world stands at a critical juncture where collective knowledge, efforts and partnerships to restore, protect and manage marine ecosystems are urgently needed. In response to this pressing need, the North-East Asian Marine Protected Areas Network (NEAMPAN) is well-positioned to present a webinar of “Accelerating Ocean-Based Actions for Sustainable Development” to advance the subregional cooperation for marine resources and coastal biodiversity conservation.

17 September 2023: [**Scaling up Gender-Lens Financing at SDG Action Weekend 2023**](#)

On Sunday, 17 September 2023, from 13.00-15.00 at UNHQ CR12, ESCAP will host a 90-minute in-person side event during the SDG Action Weekend 2023. The event, "Scaling up gender-lens financing: A catalytic tool for advancing all SDGs", aims to spotlight innovations and multi-stakeholder collaborations that elevate gender-lens financing, aligning with the broader vision of the 2030 Agenda, the Paris Agreement, and the UN High Impact Initiatives. The event will facilitate in-depth discussions, during which expert panelists will zoom in on progress and commitments in gender-centric financing across pivotal sectors, ranging from Energy and Education to Food Systems and Climate Change.

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, seeks 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**](#)

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 will present and discuss the proposed strategy to promote inclusive and sustainable businesses for sustainable development in Sri Lanka. There will also be a small exhibition of inclusive and sustainable enterprises

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). Sessions will draw unique insights from urban thought leaders, government officials and major stakeholder groups, based on real-world experiences of resilience-building and transformation through and beyond the pandemic. 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.

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

[ESCAP paperless trade emissions calculator \(23 August 2023\)](#)

[Increasing the impact of Voluntary National Reviews : the role of South-South and Triangular Cooperation \(22 August 2023\)](#)

[Policy approaches for financial inclusion : an examination of approaches across Asia and the Pacific and Latin America \(16 August 2023\)](#)

[Digital and sustainable trade facilitation in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations \(ASEAN\) 2023 \(09 August 2023\)](#)

[National strategy for electrification of public transport in Nepal \(09 August 2023\)](#)

[Urban transition pathways for the 2030 agenda for sustainable development : developing a national roadmap for sustainable development goal 11 \(08 August 2023\)](#)

[Readiness to implement the action plan to strengthen regional cooperation on social protection: Maldives \(01 August 2023\)](#)

[ICT and Active Ageing \(01 August 2023\)](#)

[Satellite monitoring of the wildfire situation in Kyrgyzstan, 2001-2022 \(31 July 2023\)](#)

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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