



## **Concept paper**

### **CICA - ESCAP side event on "Leveraging digital innovation for sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific – role of regional partnerships"**

Bangkok, UNCC, 24 April 2024, 12:45-14:00

## **Background**

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With diverse countries ranging from developed to developing, Asia and the Pacific faces both opportunities and challenges in sustainable development. In particular, despite the great progress in deepening regional connectivity through information and communication technologies, the region is still the most digitally divided one in the world. Millions of people are shut out from transformative digital opportunities in education, health and financial services.

At the same time, digital innovations are pivotal for building resilience, deepening connectivity, as well as for regional sustainable development. Leveraging digital technologies holds promise for economic growth, social well-being, and environmental conservation. Digital solutions, big data, sustainable digitalization, and green technologies, can catalyze progress for healthcare, education, agriculture, sustainability, environmental and financial inclusion, most importantly aligning with Sustainable Development Goals.

CICA plays a vital role in Asia in advancing SDGs through cooperation, workshops, and partnerships guided by its Catalogue of confidence building measures. Recognizing regional collaboration's essence, CICA engages with international organizations and development partners to promote best practices.

ESCAP promotes inclusive, resilient and sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific by generating action-oriented knowledge, and by providing technical

assistance and capacity-building services in support of national development objectives, regional agreements and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including in close cooperation with other United Nations entities and intergovernmental organizations in the region.

The event could also deepen the policy dialogue among policy-decision-makers and key stakeholders on the key findings and policy recommendations of the Commission's 2024 theme study: "Leveraging digital innovation for sustainable development in the Asia-Pacific region" and the follow-up Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Digital Inclusion and Transformation, to be hosted by the Government of Kazakhstan in Astana<sup>1</sup>, in September/October 2024.

Recognizing the importance of regional partnerships, it is reasonable to explore the potential of CICA and ESCAP collaboration for the benefit of sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific. The proposed side-event could be the first step in this direction.

## **Objectives**

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Objective 1: Highlight sustainable digital innovations in accordance with the CICA Catalogue of Confidence building measures and ESCAP Programme of Work.

Objective 2: Promote cross-border collaboration on digital innovations to address SDGs and climate risks.

Objective 3: Promoting digital inclusion across the region.

Objective 4: Share information on CICA and ESCAP regional profiles.

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<sup>1</sup> Members and associate member States at the 79<sup>th</sup> session of the ESCAP Commission in May 2023 decided to convene a ministerial conference on digital inclusion and transformation to accelerate the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and regional technology initiatives by adopting resolution 79/10 titled "Promoting digital cooperation and inclusion through the Action Plan for Implementing the APIS Initiative, 2022–2026."

**Date and Time**

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Wednesday, 24 April 2024 (as a side event of the 80<sup>th</sup> ESCAP Session)

12:45-14:00

**Venue**

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CR-3, Level 1, United Nations Conference Center, Bangkok, Thailand.

**Format of the event**

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In person and online, to be broadcast via Zoom

**Working languages and interpretation**

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English and Russian with simultaneous interpretation.

**Organizers of the Side Event**

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ESCAP secretariat and CICA Secretariat

- ESCAP secretariat: SONCA with IDD support
- CICA Secretariat

**Target audience**

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Experts from the relevant ministries and agencies, academia from CICA and ESCAP countries, UN representatives, delegates of the 80<sup>th</sup> ESCAP Session, Bangkok's diplomatic corps

**Proposed Agenda**

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Welcoming remarks/keynote speakers:

H.E. Mr. Kairat Sarybay, CICA Secretary General,

Ms. Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and ESCAP Executive Secretary,

High-level representative of the CICA Kazakhstan Chairmanship.

Senior official of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand.

Speakers / Presentations: experts from ESCAP and CICA Secretariats, Regional Director for Asia-Pacific, UNDCO, representatives from Thailand (digital economy and society, sustainable development), Republic of Korea and Bangladesh (Information Technologies, Natural disaster management), members of CICA Think Tank Forum, officials from the Ministry of Emergency Situations of the Kyrgyz Republic to share their experience on the successful deployment of Central Asia Drought Information System in Kyrgyzstan.

Open Discussions: national interventions, Q&A

### **Expected Outcomes**

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Fostering a deeper understanding of sustainable digital innovations and their relevance to addressing pressing regional challenges, as well as promoting increased regional collaboration and partnerships in harnessing digital solutions for environmental and developmental issues, ultimately advancing sustainable development goals in Asia and the Pacific, synergy between CICA and ESCAP.

Outcomes and deliberations of the side-event could be included in a final report.

### **Contact Information**

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- ESCAP secretariat: SONCA with IDD support
- CICA Secretariat, Mr. Arkady Koshcheev, Senior officer – [a.koshcheev@s-cica.org](mailto:a.koshcheev@s-cica.org), Mr. Ugur Turan, Expert - [ugur.turan@s-cica.org](mailto:ugur.turan@s-cica.org)