

Concept note for ESCAP 80th Commission Session side event
“Technologies of the future - Role of critical minerals in digital
infrastructure and SDGs”

23 April 2024, 17:30 – 18:30 (GMT+7)

UN Conference Centre CR4 and online via MS Teams

Background and Rationale

In an era of rapid digital transformation, Asia and the Pacific is uniquely placed to leverage digital technologies to overcome sustainable development challenges and transition to net zero. As countries across the globe transition to low-carbon energy futures the demand for Critical Raw Materials (CRMs) will increase significantly. Therefore, ensuring security and sustainability of supply is essential for the energy transition.

Given the rapidly-increasing demand for CRMs, the mining and processing of CRMs poses both opportunities and challenges for local communities in the Asia and Pacific region: CRM-related activity offers opportunities for communities to benefit from job and value creation, but the CRMs sector can also have significant ESG implications. It is therefore key that partners come together to share best practice on how communities can be supported and to identify what more can be done to ensure positive outcomes for communities.

This event will focus on how to ensure local communities benefit from CRM mining and processing sites occurring near their communities. It will highlight opportunities to generate and support local community value alongside best practice for community engagement, and provide examples, including those from other countries and regions, of positive outcomes and how these successes can be replicated in communities across the Asia and Pacific region. This event will bring together representatives from different governments and other relevant stakeholders to gain a better understanding of how local communities in the Asia and Pacific region can benefit from CRM-related activity.

The scope of this event is regional, with a particular emphasis on how to engage with communities to ensure they are included in the CRM value chain. The guiding questions are as follows:

- How can we ensure that local communities are included in the CRM value chain to enable them to benefit from CRM-related activity?
- What more can be done to include local communities in the decision-making process around CRM production?
- What policies should be implemented to align CRM production with sustainable development?

Programme:

Time	Agenda
25 mins	Opening remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduction from Lin Yang, Deputy Executive Secretary, ESCAP (In-person)• Remarks from Uyanga Bold, Vice Minister of Mining and Heavy Industry, Mongolia (Online)• Tim Stern, International Energy Director, Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office, United Kingdom (Online)• Marina Ruete, Senior Law Advisor, the Intergovernmental Forum on Mining, Minerals, Metals and Sustainable Development (IGF) (Online)• Songyang Wu, Regional Expert, Coordinating Committee for Geoscience Programmes in East and Southeast Asia (CCOP) (In-person)
30 mins	Questions from the floor
5 mins	Summary and conclusions