



ESCAP Sustainable Business Network

ESCAP Sustainable Business Network – Monthly Update

October 2020

Dear ESNB members,

We hope you are doing well and staying safe. This monthly update aims to help ESNB members stay updated with ESCAP activities to plan your engagement and volunteer for opportunities.

ESBN related news and activities

ESBN expansion and conversion to corporate/organizational membership

The conversion to corporate membership of ESNB is ongoing. As high-level corporate endorsement may take time, we encourage ESNB members to liaise within their organizations and submit their company/organization's application/commitment form as soon as possible. Meanwhile the Secretariat has started reaching out to ESNB observers and selected Global Compact signatory companies in the region. If you have any questions regarding the conversion, or any companies to recommend as new members, please contact us at esbn@un.org.

ICC launches high-level advisory group to prime trade finance to power COVID-19 recovery - ICC - International Chamber of Commerce

The International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), the institutional representative of 45 million businesses worldwide, has announced the creation of a new Advisory Group on Trade Finance (ATF) – a cross-sectoral coalition of leaders in global trade.

<https://iccwbo.org/media-wall/news-speeches/icc-launches-high-level-advisory-group-to-prime-trade-finance-to-power-covid-19-recovery/>

SME Climate Hub launched by ICC and partners

On Monday 21 September, ICC, the Exponential Roadmap Initiative, the We Mean Business Coalition and the Race to Zero campaign launched an “SME Climate Hub” – an online one-stop-shop to help SMEs make a climate commitment and access resources to help measure, set targets, reduce emissions, track and communicate progress. The SME Climate Hub will encourage SMEs to commit to halve greenhouse gas

emissions before 2030 and reach net-zero emissions before 2050. SMEs signing up to this commitment – which will be recognized by the UN Race to Zero Campaign – will be able to take advantage of accessible tools and resources to help them reduce emissions and build business resilience. The platform will couple these tailored resources with opportunities for businesses to unlock commercial incentives – from government tax breaks to procurement preferences provided by major businesses. For more information see: www.smeclimatehub.org

Regional conversation on Resilient Supply Chains and Connectivity

On 25 September, this session of the Regional Conversation was held to explore the challenges and opportunities for economies in the region as they recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and reestablish supply chains and connectivity. Ms. Pamela Mar, Executive Vice President –Knowledge and Applications, Fung Academy, Fung Group, Hong Kong, China, joined the panel discussion, highlighting the importance for the region of ensuring trade finance, digitalization and of being in the frontline of delivering sustainable supply chains. Ms. Mia Mikic, Director of Trade, Investment and Innovation Division of ESCAP, moderated the session. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Y5c7qfQGts>

Call for Applications: Green Recovery Ecosystem Builder Programme Southeast Asia

Offered by SEED in partnership with Yunus Thailand, the Green Recovery Ecosystem Builder Programme Southeast Asia will take place from November 2020 to February 2021 in a hybrid format: digital & face-to-face. The programme targets organizations who work at the interface of business, civil society and politics, and support business or entrepreneurial solutions in Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam. The programme is designed to deliver impact at an organizational level. Two target groups are invited to join; 1) Programming institutions: Government agencies, development partners, international organizations, donors, corporates and foundations and 2) Implementers: Incubators, accelerators, business advisors and hubs. Deadline for application is 16 October 2020. For more information, please visit: <https://app.seed.uno/green-recovery-asia>.

Upcoming events of interest to ESNB members

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/upcoming>

20 October-10 November 2020: Webinar series on science-based targets for business

CDP Hong Kong, WWF Singapore, WRI Indonesia, UN Global Compact Malaysia (GCMY) and UN Global Compact Network Singapore (GCNS) will be organizing an SBTi Asia webinar series (1.5 hours each) for a region-focused discussion, guidance and deep dive into science-based target setting. The webinar series will be held as detailed below (all timings in GMT+8). For more information, and to register, see: [link](#)

- 20 October 4:00pm: The business case for setting Science Based Targets (SBTs)
- 27 October 10:00am: Technical guidance on setting and achieving SBTs
- 3 November 4:00pm: Demystifying SBTs, featuring companies with committed/approved targets
- 10 November 4:00pm: SBTs for Financial Institutions

26 October 2020: Regional Conversation with SDG Innovators: Shaping our Future Together and Commemoration of the 75th Anniversary of the United Nations in Asia and the Pacific

The event is expected to bring together different perspectives of stakeholders in Asia and the Pacific to 1) Reflect upon the work of the United Nations over the past 75 years and 2) Discuss the opportunity to leverage innovations and new technologies, including those by young people, to help the region achieve the SDGs by 2030 and building a more inclusive, resilience and green “new normal”. ESNB’s Executive Council Member, Prof. Barbara Meynert will be featured in the event. Registration link: <http://bit.ly/RegionalConv>. More information is available at <https://www.unescap.org/events/2020-regional-conversation-6>.

27 October 2020: Launch of the STI Index 2020 (TBC)

ESCAP together with Hinrich Foundation tentatively plan to organize the launch of the STI Index 2020 on 27 October 2020. More details will follow.

29 October 2020: Executive Council of the ESCAP Sustainable Business Network (ESBN), 4th meeting

The fourth meeting of the Executive Council of the ESCAP Sustainable Business Network (ESBN) will be held on 29 October 2020 through video-conference. (Executive Council members only)

<https://esbn.unescap.org/events/executive-council-escap-sustainable-business-network-esbn-4th-meeting>

29 October 2020: Third Asia-Pacific Day for the Ocean

The Third Asia-Pacific Day for the Ocean will take place on 29 October 2020, virtually, offering interactive dialogues focusing on a) Fostering tourism and fisheries for sustainable development; b) Sustainable maritime connectivity; c) Ocean accounts, data and statistics; and d) Solutions for land-based marine pollution. The event will seek to identify elements for a regional “Decade Program”, currently in preparation by the secretariat, within the scope of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030). The outcomes of the Asia-Pacific Day for the Ocean will also provide a regional perspective to inform the 2020 UN Ocean Conference. For more information, and to register, please see: <https://www.unescap.org/events/third-asia-pacific-day-ocean>

30 October 2020: Asia-Pacific Business Forum (APBF) 2020

As the annual ESNB summit event, the Asia-Pacific Business Forum will be held virtually on 30 October 2020 under the theme “The Future of Global Value Chains and Implications for SMEs”. The Forum will discuss innovative solutions to address the challenges and capitalize on opportunities to recover from the Covid-19 induced crisis and global trade tensions, and restore global trade and investment links through GVCs, while supporting the transfer to more world. Various members of the ESNB Executive Council have agreed to moderate sessions of the Forum. The latest version of the programme can be found at the official website of the Forum which is now active and also has the registration portal: www.apbf2020.com

25 November 2020: ESCAP Sustainable Business Network (ESBN), 8th Meeting

The next meeting of the ESNB will be held on 25 November through video-conference.

<https://esbn.unescap.org/events/escap-sustainable-business-network-esbn-8th-meeting>

9-10 December 2020: Committee on Environment and Development, Sixth Session

The sixth session of the ESCAP Committee on Environment and Development will take place from 9-10 December 2020 as a virtual meeting via videoconference. The Committee will deliberate on the region's environmental challenges in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, and focus on necessary actions across four key environmental domains critical to the Asia-Pacific region: Raising Climate Ambition, Safeguarding Ecosystem Health, Clean Air for All, and Cities for a Sustainable Future.

<https://www.unescap.org/intergovernmental-meetings/committee-environment-and-development-sixth-session>

Other recent events of interest

Third ASEAN Inclusive Business Summit, 29 September 2020

The [Third ASEAN Inclusive Business Summit](#) was virtually held on 29 September 2020. The Summit was organized under the ASEAN umbrella by ESCAP in collaboration with the Inclusive Business Action Network (iBAN) and the OECD. <https://www.aseanibsummit2020.com/>

Uniting Business LIVE, 21-23 September 2020

To mark the opening of the 75th session of the UN General Assembly, the special event Uniting Business LIVE, from 21-23 September, virtually convene leaders from business, Government and civil society to showcase their commitment to the UN's mission. Uniting Business LIVE included the Private Sector Forum (Monday 21 September), the Global Impact Forum (Tuesday 22 September) and the SDG Business Forum (Wednesday 23 September) which UN Global Compact co-organised with the UN Department of Social and Economic Affairs (UN DESA) and the International Chamber of Commerce. Through these three high-level online events, Uniting Business LIVE took stock of the state of the world, addressed gaps in progress, drove business ambition on the SDGs and highlighted practical examples and actionable solutions. <https://unglobalcompact.org/take-action/events/1786-unitingbusiness-live-un-general-assembly>

Recently published by ESCAP

Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises' Access to Finance in Nepal (14 September 2020)

This study provides a broad overview of the access to finance by micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) in Nepal based on extensive interviews with entrepreneurs, financial institutions, and government officials. The study finds that micro- and small enterprises have the most serious difficulties to access credit, as the typical loans of microfinance institutions are too small, while the minimum amounts of loans offered by commercial banks are too large for their needs. To address this "missing middle problem", the study proposes a rich set of policy options, ranging from a mandated minimum allocation of banks' loan portfolios to SMEs, to expanding the scope of the Micro Enterprise Development for Poverty Alleviation (MEDPA) program to cover SMEs as well as micro-enterprises, and expanding financial and business literacy programs for MSME entrepreneurs.

<https://www.unescap.org/resources/micro-small-and-medium-sized-enterprises-access-finance-nepal>

How COVID-19 is changing the world: a statistical perspective Volume II (8 September 2020)

Since the release of the [first volume in May 2020](#), the COVID-19 pandemic has continued to spread around the world. The pandemic presents tough choices for governments, local communities, health and school systems, as well as families and businesses.

More than ever, the world needs reliable and trustworthy data and statistics to inform these important decisions. The United Nations and all member organizations of the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities (CCSA) collect and make available a wealth of information for assessing the multifaceted impacts of the pandemic. This report updates some of the global and regional trends and offers a snapshot of how COVID-19 continues to affect the world today across multiple domains.

<https://www.unescap.org/resources/how-covid-19-changing-world-statistical-perspective-volume-ii>

Working paper series

Macroeconomics: <https://www.unescap.org/publication-series/mpfd-working-papers>

Trade: <https://artnet.unescap.org/publications/working-papers>

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

Best regards,

ESBN Secretariat