

**INTERSESSIONAL PANEL OF THE UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION  
ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPMENT (CSTD)**

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Contribution by ESCAP

to the CSTD 2023-2024 priority theme on “Global cooperation in science,  
technology and innovation for development”

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## **PRIORITY THEME 2: Global cooperation in science, technology and innovation for development**

### **United Nations Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD)**

To whom it may concern

The [26<sup>th</sup> CSTD annual session](#) selected “Global cooperation in science, technology and innovation for development” as one of the priority themes for its 27<sup>th</sup> session (2023-24 period). This theme addresses SDG 17 “Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development” at the 2030 Agenda.

Although the contribution of science, technology and innovation (STI) to the achievement of other sustainable development goals (SDGs) is discussed in every session of the CSTD, SDG 17 itself has not been specifically addressed for several years in the Commission. Interaction among CSTD members has resulted in several pilot programmes for international collaboration in STI. However, there is a need to consider from a broad strategic perspective the question of international collaboration in STI, including its digital dimensions. Under this priority theme the Commission could discuss the status of global STI cooperation (including coordination and funding) in knowledge creation and dissemination, the diffusion and sharing of technology and alternative modes of technology creation and distribution such as open-source approaches.

Under this theme, the Commission will examine how STI organizations at the global and regional levels collaborate better to scale up their impact on key development challenges; how to ensure that the international STI agenda is aligned with the development priorities of the Global South and includes adequate mechanisms for cooperation and sharing; and finally what could be the role of the CSTD in coordinating and imparting directionality to international STI collaboration and technology sharing.

The CSTD secretariat is in the process of drafting an issues paper on the theme to be presented at the CSTD inter-sessional panel meeting to be held in the second half of October 2023 in Portugal. In this context, we would like to solicit inputs from international organizations, UN entities and agencies, and regional commissions on this theme. We would be grateful if you could kindly answer the following questions based on your organization’s work at the global, regional, and/or national levels:

1. What STI cooperative mechanism(s) at global or regional levels has your organization initiated or joined in?

[ESCAP promotes regional cooperation on digital transformation, that includes digital aspects of science, technology and innovation \(STI\) through the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway \(APIS\) initiative. The APIS initiative is a region-wide intergovernmental platform for digital cooperation which aims to bridge the digital divides and accelerate digital transformation through regionally coordinated actions for promoting digital technology and applications, digital connectivity, and the use of digital data.](#)

[The Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology \(APCTT\) of ESCAP strengthens regional technology cooperation through different modalities such as organizing technology facilitation consultative meetings, supporting regional and subregional technology networks, and offering online technology databases. Examples include: Technology facilitation consultation to address COVID-19 pandemic; ASEAN Network of Excellence Centre of Biomass Conversion Technology \(ANEC\), Thailand; Asia-Pacific Regional Innovation Knowledge Network for Fourth Industrial Revolution Technologies \(APRIKNET-4IR\), China; and online technology databases such as Technology4SME and Renewable Energy Technology Bank \(RET-Bank\).](#)

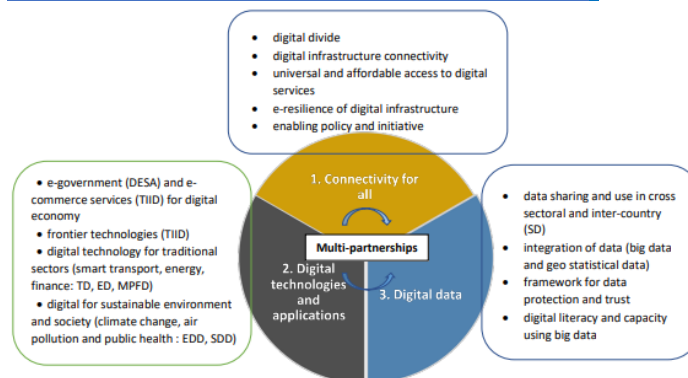
2. To what extent the existing cooperation programmes are aligned with the development priorities of participating developing countries?

[The APIS initiative aligns with the development priorities of participating developing countries by focusing on 3 pillars:](#)

- Pillar 1: Connectivity for All
- Pillar 2: Digital Technologies and Applications
- Pillar 3: Digital Data

These three pillars including 25 priority actions at regional and national level are directly linked with SDG 4 (targets 4.4 and 4.a); SDG 5 (targets 5.b); SDG 9 (target 9.c); and SDG17 (targets 17.6 and 17.8). APIS initiative is also aligned with the World Summit on Information Society (WSIS) Action Lines.

### Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway Pillars:



In recent years, APCTT's regional technology cooperation activities have contributed to SDGs 3, 7, 9, 11, 13 and 17 to meet the demands of member States as expressed in the Governing Council sessions of the Centre.

### 3. What are the main outcomes of such mechanism(s)? And what are the impacts of the resultant cooperation on participating countries? Pls. include the gender dimension.

The main outcome of the APIS initiative is the adoption of the Action Plan 2022-2026 of the APIS which includes improved digital connectivity, increased access to information, and enhanced digital data governance. The APIS Action Plan 2022-2026 provides member States with targeted goals towards an inclusive digital society through improved connectivity, resilience to disaster risks, air pollution mitigation and digital transformation. In terms of the gender dimension, ESCAP emphasizes the importance of enhancing the participation of women and girls, in the digital economy and ensuring that they benefit from the ensuing digital dividends.

APCTT's regional cooperation mechanisms have identified opportunities for technology collaboration to address critical challenges (e.g., COVID-19 pandemic, healthcare biotechnology and city air pollution control); strengthened knowledge and skills of stakeholders in key aspects of technology and innovation (e.g., technology transfer and commercialization, intellectual property management, new and emerging technologies including 4IR technologies, climate adaptation and mitigation technologies); and facilitated technology cooperation and transfer through online databases.

### 4. What are the main difficulties your organization has encountered or is facing when implementing the cooperation mechanisms?

Some of the main difficulties encountered include resource constraints, including securing a stable budget for implementation of the APIS Action Plan and challenges in coordinating efforts across different levels of countries and contexts.

The main difficulties faced by APCTT are in meeting the diversified needs of member States and ensuring maintenance and sustainability of technology databases.

### 5. In respect of achieving the objectives and goals, what are the factors contributing to the success or failure of the cooperation mechanism(s) in which your organization has joined?

The success of the APIS initiative requires strong political commitment and in 2023, the ESCAP members and associate members adopted ESCAP resolution 79/10 which aims to promote digital cooperation and inclusion through the Action Plan for Implementing the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway Initiative, 2022–2026.

The factors contributing to the success of APCTT's regional cooperation mechanisms include strong support from member States in terms of financial and in-kind support, long term cooperation with national focal points and partner institutions, and active participation and contribution of experts in the capacity building and regional cooperation activities.

6. What cooperation could your organization propose to CSTD in coordinating and imparting directionality to international STI collaboration and technology sharing?

Joint research initiatives, knowledge-sharing events, joint capacity-building programs, and policy dialogues may be undertaken under the global coordination of CSTD. Such initiatives aim at promoting digital inclusion and ensuring that digital technologies are accessible and beneficial to all, including women and girls.

APCTT would propose joint regional consultations, expert group meetings, capacity building events in technology scale up, transfer, adoption and diffusion, analytical activities and knowledge products focussing on climate adaptation and mitigation technologies, new and emerging technologies including 4IR technologies, and air pollution control technologies.

Please indicate contact person(s) responsible for projects/policies and international collaboration in this context in case we need clarification on the inputs.

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Please send your responses and any further inputs on the theme to the CSTD secretariat ([stdev@unctad.org](mailto:stdev@unctad.org)) by **15 August 2023**. We look forward to receiving your valuable inputs.

Sincere regards,  
CSTD secretariat