

Concept note for UNDESA regional consultations: *Understanding an ‘ecosystem’ approach to strengthening effectiveness of international development cooperation in the Asia-Pacific Region*

3 December 2021, 10:00 am – 12:00 pm (Bangkok time)
Virtual meeting on [Zoom](#)

Objective: DESA/FSDO and ESCAP will organize an informal virtual workshop for the Asia-Pacific region, which will focus on the conceptualization and development of an ‘ecosystems’ approach to strengthening the effectiveness of international development cooperation, integrating regional perspectives and national realities. Discussions will draw on practical policies, innovative tools and dynamic partnerships that developing countries and their partners are advancing toward achieving their country’s development cooperation priorities.

Background: The [findings](#) of the 2019/2020 DCF survey exercise and the [recommendations](#) from the 2021 High-level meeting of the DCF identified capacity gaps and emphasized the need for an “ecosystems” approach to effective development cooperation. This systems approach uses national development cooperation policies and related enablers as a foundation to address key challenges and opportunities in enhancing quality, impact and effectiveness of development cooperation against a changing risk landscape. The survey exercise and 2021 Forum also underscored the importance of regional variations, with implications for how effective development cooperation ecosystems function in different regional and national contexts. The consultations in the Asia-Pacific region will engage relevant stakeholders in support of the development of targeted policy and practical guidance in 2022 to support developing countries in navigating the technical aspects of strengthening country-level ecosystems for effective development cooperation.

Stakeholders: Key stakeholders invited will be representatives of line ministries (e.g., Ministries of Finance, Development Cooperation, Planning and/or others) from governments in the Asia-Pacific region. Key development cooperation actors in the region will also be invited to contribute to the discussion, including representatives of development partners from other regions, regional organizations, multilateral development banks, national development banks, civil society and the UN system, among others.

Format: The regional consultation will be held online virtually and by invitation only. The discussion will be organized and moderated by ESCAP, engaging participants in candid, interactive discussion under the Chatham House rule. Key messages will be shared with the participants and the discussion points will be reflected in a guidance paper on regional perspectives on an “ecosystem” approach to strengthening the effectiveness of international development cooperation.

Draft programme

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| 10:00 – 10:05 | Mr. Navid Hanif, Director, Financing for Sustainable Development Office, UNDESA |
| 10:05 – 10:10 | Mr. Ganbold Baasanjav, Head, ESCAP East and North-East Asia Office |
| 10:10 – 11:55 | Strengthening quality, impact and effectiveness of development cooperation in the region: National and regional innovations that reduce risk and build resilience |
| | Moderator: Mr. Alberto Isgut, Officer in Charge, FFSD/MPFD, UNESCAP |

Speakers:

- Ms. Ma'u Leha Alipate; Prime Minister's Office, Tonga
- Dr. Chuanhong Diana Zhang, Secretary of China International Development Research Network (CIDRN)
- Dr. Rashed Al Mahmud Titumir, Professor of Economics, University of Dhaka
- DCF Team Presentation, FSDO, UNDESA

Moderated, interactive discussion among all participants

Guiding questions:

- i) What are the most critical challenges to sustainable development in the region, including those revealed by the pandemic, where development cooperation can contribute more strategically and be deployed most effectively? How are developing countries prioritizing these issues in their work with their various development partners?
- ii) How can development cooperation help or contribute in creating fiscal space for investing in an inclusive, sustainable recovery and the SDGs?
- iii) For more effective development cooperation, which specific national and local capacities need to be developed urgently in your country? What role does regional cooperation play in this?
- iv) What is working best and what could be strengthened in current development cooperation systems at the national level? What tools, innovations and partnerships have been used to adapt development cooperation policies and practices to become more risk-informed and resilient to face emerging risks?
- v) What obstacles need to be overcome to ensure that development cooperation responds to realities at the sub-national level and in local communities?

11:55 – 12:00

Final thoughts and comments

- Final comments and recommendations from participants
- Closing comments