

## **ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR WESTERN ASIA**

### **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY DIVISION**

The Information and Communication Technology Division (ICTD) of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) aims to enhance the capability of Arab countries to harness information and communications technology (ICT) for their development and prosperity. The Division provides expertise and advisory support for the development of ICT policies, infrastructure and applications, and raises awareness about the capacity of ICT to promote sustainable development and enable Arab countries to integrate into the global economy.

ICTD also endeavors to establish cooperation and coordination mechanisms among regional stakeholders engaged in ICT development activities. It promotes ICT applications for development at the national and regional levels, and strives towards the establishment and promotion of productive ICT sectors in ESCWA member countries.

#### **VISION**

A better quality of life in the Arab region based on the power of knowledge, information and technology.

#### **MISSION**

To help ESCWA member countries leverage modern technology, and guide them in their transition towards a knowledge-based economy and information society as the new development paradigm for the Arab region.

#### **FOCUS**

ICTD tackles a variety of subject matters, including:

- Supporting ESCWA member countries in the implementation of the action lines and recommendations of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) and monitoring their progress towards the attainment of WSIS targets;
- Facilitating coordination and cooperation among governments, NGOs and the private sector;
- Using ICT as a key engine for development and regional integration;
- Assisting member countries in developing, formulating and implementing ICT and STI-based policies and strategies;
- Promoting and standardizing measurements in science, technology and innovation in member countries, including ICT measurement for evidence-based policymaking in the Arab region;

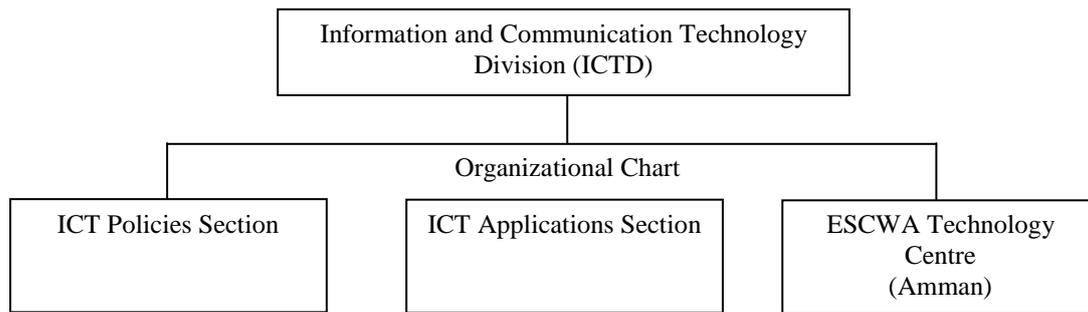
- Encouraging the integration of scientific research and innovative science and technology ventures in various economic sectors;
- Strengthening the ICT sector at both the national and regional levels;
- Promoting online creativity by encouraging the development of digital Arabic content;
- Building trust and confidence in cyberspace in the Arab region and strengthening the enabling environment for the development of an information society;
- Encouraging the development of ICT applications and e-services, with a special focus on e-government;
- Providing member countries with technical and advisory assistance on issues related to science and technology, with a focus on ICT.

#### OBJECTIVES

The ICTD work programme aims at narrowing the digital divide and building an inclusive, people-centred and development-oriented information society in the ESCWA region, in accordance with the outcomes of the WSIS and internationally agreed-upon development goals and objectives, including the Millennium Development Goals.

To achieve its objectives, ICTD:

- Carries out analytical studies, convenes meetings and implements projects;
- Provides ICT advisory services to member countries;
- Assesses and revises plans of action, monitors progress and evaluates impacts;
- Fosters the development of such ICT thematic applications as e-government and digital Arabic content;
- Enhances regional cooperation and encourages partnerships between national, regional and global information society stakeholders;
- Contributes to fundraising efforts aimed at harnessing ICT for socioeconomic development;
- Promotes mechanisms that facilitate knowledge-sharing between regional and global institutions;
- Collects and disseminates data related to the development of an information society in the countries of the ESCWA region;
- Conceives and implements capacity-building programmes aimed at training professionals, particularly scientists and policy analysts;
- Assists member countries in measuring and assessing the impact of science and technology initiatives and know-how.



### *ICT Policies Section*

The ICT Policies Section develops and implements policies, strategies and plans aimed at the establishment of an information society in the Arab region and the transition of ESCWA member countries towards knowledge-based economies. It guides Arab countries in their quest towards achieving the objectives of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals and in implementing the action lines of the WSIS and the Regional Plan of Action for Building the Information Society. The section coordinates and cooperates with various national and regional stakeholders on the formulation and implementation of strategic activities, including the Arab ICT strategy; converting the challenges of globalization and ICT into development opportunities; fostering and promoting competitive and innovative ICT sectors in the region; activating and supporting the role of the Arab region in global Internet Governance; strengthening cultural diversity on the Internet through the promotion and implementation of Arabic domain names and top-level domain names; and building the capacity and know-how of government leaders.

### *ICT Applications Section*

The ICT Applications Section guides the preparation of the national and regional profiles of the information society in the Arab region and promotes these profiles in the Arab region and the international arena. The section also plays an important role in measuring the information society in the Arab region by defining regional indicators and recommending a suitable framework for its enhancement at both the national and regional levels. The ICT Applications Section also works on the improvement of ICT-enabling environments, with a focus on the development, harmonization and enforcement of cyberlegislation. Furthermore, the Section promotes the digital Arabic content industry in two ways: first, by encouraging innovation and entrepreneurship and the creation of start-ups and small and medium enterprises that contribute to the global creative industry; and second, by encouraging the governments of the region to implement national and regional initiatives that increase the presence of the Arabic language in cyberspace. The Section also promotes the development and use of e-services and m-services and promotes new trends in e-government, in particular, open government, open data and e-participation. Through its various activities, the Section focuses on the creation of new job opportunities, especially for youth and women, and seeks to maximize the benefits of ICT.

### *ESCWA Technology Centre (ETC)*

The ETC is located in Amman, Jordan. Its mission is to assist Arab countries and public and private organizations in acquiring the tools and capabilities necessary to accelerate socioeconomic development through the attainment of technological parity with other nations and regions of the world. The Centre also supports the transition of ESCWA member countries towards scientific and technological knowledge-based economies.

The objectives of the ETC are to assist the member countries in strengthening their capabilities to develop and manage national technology systems; develop, transfer, adapt, and apply technology; determine the suitable technology for the region and facilitate regional development; and improve the legal and

commercial frameworks needed for technology transfer. In addition, the Centre aims to enhance the technological and scientific knowledge content of major economic sectors in member countries.

#### PUBLICATIONS AND STUDIES DURING 2005-2013

- Information society indicators
- Information and communication technologies for employment creation and poverty alleviation in selected ESCWA member countries
- Towards an integrated knowledge society in the Arab countries: Strategies and implementation modalities
- Arabic content on the Internet: Opportunities, priorities and strategies
- Enhancing telecommunication infrastructures, services and policies in ESCWA member countries
- Regional profile of the information society in Western Asia – 2005
- National profiles of the information society in Western Asia – 2005
- Development of an Arabic domain name system
- Review of information and communication technologies and development, Issues 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19 and 20
- Guidelines for information and communication technology policy and strategy formulation and implementation
- Broadband for development in the ESCWA region
- Models for cyber legislation in ESCWA member countries
- Information and communication technology financing, venture capital and entrepreneurship in the ESCWA region
- Regional profile of the information society in the ESCWA region – 2007
- National profiles of the information society in Western Asia – 2007
- Guidelines on information and communication technology indicators
- The ESCWA Technology Centre for Development: Detailed assessment of regional needs and priorities and identification of implementation mechanisms
- Building trust in e-services in the ESCWA region
- Regional profile of the information society in the ESCWA region – 2009
- National profiles of the information society in Western Asia – 2009
- Internet governance: Challenges and opportunities for the ESCWA member countries
- Impact of ICT on community development in ESCWA member countries
- Regional profile of the information society in the ESCWA region – 2011

- National profiles of the information society in Western Asia – 2011
- Information society in the ESCWA region
- Promoting the ICT sector to meet the challenges of the knowledge economy
- Mechanism for community-driven, interactive Arabic multimedia content
- A standardization framework to promote an enabling environment for the development of Arabic e-services
- Arab regional roadmap for Internet governance: Framework, principles and objectives
- A survey on digital Arabic content: Software, applications and needs assessment for digital Arab content industry
- Development of digital Arabic content: Incubation requirements and training needs
- ESCWA cyber legislation directives
- Preliminary feasibility study for the establishment of the domain name registry for the “Arab” and “عربي” generic top-level domains
- E-inclusion measurement: Building a common benchmarking model
- Regional profile of the information society in the ESCWA region – 2013
- National profiles of the information society in Western Asia – 2013
- Applying scientific research to the local economy in ESCWA countries
- Towards a legal framework for intellectual property
- Technology transfer, economic models and successes in the Arab countries
- Financing technology transfer process in the ESCWA region: Roadmap for investments and support guide
- Review of ICT for development, issue 1 to 20
- Competitiveness of the ICT sector in the Arab region: Innovation and investment imperatives
- The impact of e-services on socio-economic development in the Arab region
- Status of digital Arabic content industry in the Arab region
- Business models for digital Arabic content
- Impact of ICT on Arab youth
- The ESCWA cyber legislation digest
- Development and harmonization of cyber legislation in the Arab region
- Regional framework for the development of digital Arabic content