

**Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)**

Committee on Technology for Development
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Item 14 of the provisional agenda

**Proposed programme plan for 2020
in the field of technology for development****Summary**

The present document contains the proposed programme plan of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) for 2020 in the field of technology for development. Activities are implemented under subprogramme 4 of ESCWA on technology for development and regional integration. The proposed ESCWA programme plan for 2020 was welcomed by the Executive Committee of ESCWA at its fifth meeting held in Beirut, on 18 and 19 December 2018. It will be presented to the United Nations General Assembly for adoption in 2019.

The present document features the global orientation of the work of ESCWA in the field of technology for development and the list of deliverables for 2020 as endorsed by the Executive Committee. The Committee on Technology for Development is invited to take note of its content.

SUBPROGRAMME 4: TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPMENT AND REGIONAL INTEGRATION

Objective: To support member States to advance technology and innovation as drivers of development in the Arab region.

1. In 2020, the ESCWA secretariat will provide support to member States to harness technology and innovation for inclusive and sustainable development. Advice on building development and transfer ecosystems for technology and innovation will underpin its work towards that goal.

Digital technologies for sustainable development (SDG 9)

2. At the thirtieth ESCWA ministerial session in June 2018, member States adopted the Beirut Consensus on Technology for Sustainable Development in the Arab Region, stating their “firm belief that technology and innovation are key enablers of the 2030 Agenda, and can provide creative solutions to achieve people-centred, sustainable and inclusive development”. In response to requests addressed to it in the Consensus, the ESCWA secretariat will launch the first edition of the Arab Digital Development Report in 2019, in order to assess progress in digital technology policies and highlight gaps in Arab States’ preparedness to absorb fast digital developments. The secretariat will also convene the second Arab High-level Forum on the World Summit on the Information Society, with the same thematic focus on empowerment and inclusiveness as the 2019 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (including financial inclusiveness).

3. In 2020, the ESCWA secretariat will support member States to promote the outcomes of the 2019 Arab Internet Governance Forum (Arab IGF) and will produce outputs related to the second Arab Internet Governance Road Map issued in January 2018, further exploring relationships between Internet governance and the 2030 Agenda. Regional workshops will be convened to outline the themes and agenda of the 2021 Arab IGF. The secretariat will continue to support member States in increasing their capacity to leverage digital technologies for sustainable development. Activities will include a regional expert group meeting and workshop to review progress in the preparation of national digital development reports. These activities will also contribute to the regional consultations for the 2021 High-level Political Forum.

Innovation policies and an enabling environment for technological development (SDG 17)

4. Innovation is increasingly becoming a key player in enhancing the productivity and competitiveness of small and medium enterprises, boosting entrepreneurship and supporting local development. Since 2017, the ESCWA secretariat has proposed policy frameworks to integrate innovation in the development agendas of Arab countries, developed recommendations to improve the innovation ecosystem, including intellectual property systems, and advocated for open government that harnesses digital transformation.

5. In 2020, the ESCWA secretariat will hold expert group meetings and undertake technical cooperation activities to deliver innovative solutions for development challenges. It will also provide actionable recommendations and tools to further develop innovation capacity in member States and increase the number of entrepreneurs, especially among youth and women. It will also promote innovative products and services to improve the interaction between government and citizens.

Technology development and transfer ecosystems (SDG 9)

6. Technology development and transfer ecosystems are paramount to advance the use of technology in the productive sectors of the economy and stimulate job creation, local research and innovative development activities. In the past years, the ESCWA secretariat had assisted member States in developing technology ecosystems and had hosted several high-level meetings and workshops to discuss policy formulation in that area.

7. In 2020, the ESCWA secretariat will work to further facilitate the engagement of stakeholders of the productive sectors of the economy with government officials. It will produce policy advice in the area of technology development on the regional and national levels to forge productive relations between knowledge producers and consumers, such as the private sector, small and medium enterprises and individuals, and support the establishment of a regional matchmaking platform to that end.

8. In 2020, the ESCWA secretariat will address the links between national plans towards sustainable and inclusive industrialization and national strategies for frontier technologies and artificial intelligence, tackling their role in achieving sustainable development. In close cooperation with the League of Arab States and relevant regional organizations, it will support member States to fully utilize technological development to achieve economic growth, and improve social welfare and the quality of life. It will also continue to provide policy options aimed at bolstering the technology ecosystem in Arab countries through a series of publications, meetings and workshops, including a bulletin on technology and the digital economy. In addition, the ESCWA secretariat will convene the intergovernmental Committee on Technology for Development and the meetings of the directors of e-government programmes in Arab States.

PROPOSED LIST OF DELIVERABLES FOR THE YEAR 2020

A. FACILITATION OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL PROCESS AND EXPERT BODIES

Parliamentary documentation

Substantive parliamentary documents to the thirty-first ESCWA ministerial session.

Substantive services for meetings

1. High-level meeting of the directors of e-government programmes in Arab States.
2. Expert group meeting on Internet governance: infrastructure and emerging Internet ecosystems.
3. Expert group meeting on technology transfer and adaptation for sustainable consumption and production.
4. Expert group meeting on theme of the 2021 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and implications on the national digital development reports.
5. Expert group meeting on the role of technology and innovation for reconstruction and recovery in the Arab region.

B. GENERATION AND TRANSFER OF KNOWLEDGE

Publications

Technology and Development Bulletin.

Technical material

1. Technical paper on the measurement of e-Government services in the Arab countries.
2. Technical paper on innovative solutions to enhance future smart government systems in the Arab region.
3. Technical paper on trends of technology and innovation and their applications in the Arab region.
4. Technical paper on science, technology and innovation for advancing the SDGs in the Arab region.

C. COMMUNICATION DELIVERABLES

Outreach programmes, special events and information materials (including booklets and pamphlets)

Promotional material on digital technologies for development.

Digital platforms and multimedia content

Portal on open government and open data in the Arab region.
