ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR WESTERN ASIA (ESCWA)

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY DIVISION

The Information and Communication Technology Division (ICTD) aims to increase the capabilities of member countries in harnessing information and communications technology (ICT) for their development. In this respect, it provides support with regard to the development of ICT policies, infrastructure, and applications, and raises awareness to the potential of ICT in promoting sustainable development and enabling ESCWA member countries to integrate into the global economy.

ICTD also endeavours to establish cooperation and coordination mechanisms between regional players engaged in ICT development activities. It promotes ICT applications for development at the national and regional levels, and strives towards the establishment of a sustainable ICT sector in the region.
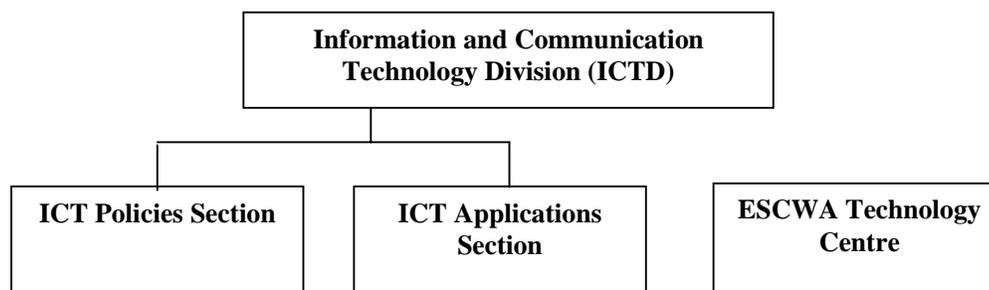
Vision

The Information and Communication Technology Division (ICTD) aspires to play a major role with ESCWA member countries in their transformation toward knowledge-based society and global competitiveness, while striving to increase employment, reduce poverty and enhance quality of life through state-of-the-art ICTs and their applications.

Major tasks

- Use of information and communication technologies as a means for development and regional integration;

- Follow-up efforts of ESCWA member countries to implement the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society;

- Facilitating coordination and cooperation between Governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the private sector for building the information society;

- Assisting member countries in the formulation of policies and strategies for information and communications technology;

- Strengthening the ICT sector at both the national and regional levels;

- Developing indicators of ICT for development contributing to capacity-building in member countries in the area of measuring the information society;

- Strengthening the enabling environment for the development of the information society in the region, and ICT confidence-building and security;

- Monitoring of ICT applications, infrastructure and evaluation at national and regional levels;

- Providing member countries with technical assistance on issues related to information and communications technology.

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ICTD organization

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        │  Technology Division (ICTD)      │
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    │ ICT Policies  │ │    ICT       │ │ ESCWA Technology │
    │   Section     │ │ Applications │ │     Centre       │
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ICT Policies Section

The ICT Policies Section works on the formulation of a regional vision, policies, strategies and plans to establish a knowledge-based society; achievement of the objectives of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals through the creation of information societies and knowledge in the ESCWA member countries; following up the implementation of the World Summit on the Information Society and the Regional Plan of Action for Building the Information Society as well as the Arab ICT Strategy, building the information society and other strategic activities with regional organizations; and conversion of the challenges of globalization and information and communications technology into development opportunities including building an ICT economic sector in the region based on innovation and partnership as well as effectively activating the role of the region in the field of Internet governance and strengthen the Arab identity on the Internet through the activation of the Arabic Domain names, as well as capacity-building of the Government sector leaders in the region in the policy areas.

ICT Applications Section

The ICT Applications Section coordinates the work and the preparation of national and regional ICT profiles that are a major input for the created regional Information Society Portal. The Section also works on the improvement of the enabling environment for the development of the information society in the ESCWA region, and for building trust and confidence in the use of information and communications technology and it contributes to the development and the harmonization of cyberlegislation in the Arab region. It also encourages the use of e-services and digital Arabic content. The Section also seeks the development of ICT core indicators and national capacity-building to support ICT policies.

ESCWA Technology Centre

The mission of the Centre is to assist ESCWA members countries and public and private organizations to acquire the tools and capabilities necessary to accelerate socio-economic development in order to attain technological parity with other nations and regions of the world and to contribute to convert the economies of member countries into economies based on scientific and technological knowledge.

The objectives of the Centre are to assist the member countries by strengthening their capabilities to develop and manage national systems; develop, transfer, adapt and apply technology; determine the suitable technology for the region and facilitate its development and improve the legal and commercial framework for the transfer of technology. The Centre also aims at enhancing the technological and scientific knowledge content of major economic sectors in member countries.

ICTD objectives

The ICTD work programme aims to narrow the digital divide and build an inclusive, people-centred and development-oriented information society in the ESCWA region in accordance with the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society and internationally agreed development goals and objectives, including the Millennium Development Goals, through:

(a) Increased implementation of the Regional Plan of Action for Building the Information Society;

(b) Enhanced the capacity of member countries to provide e-services in Arabic promoting socio-economic development;

(c) Perceptible improvements in the region's ICT production and service sectors;

(d) Enhanced capacity of member countries to measure and benchmark their progress towards the realization of the information society, and realign policies and strategies accordingly, giving due consideration to gender dimensions.

To achieve its objectives, ICTD will:

- Strive to adapt the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the information Society especially Geneva Plan of Action and Tunis Agenda to better serve the region;

- Carry out analytical studies, convene meetings and launch and follow-up pilot projects. Advisory services will be provided aiming at capacity-building;

- Assess and revise plans of action, monitor progress, evaluate impacts and benchmark national development with other countries;

- Place special emphasis on harnessing the development of ICT thematic applications, such as e-government and digital Arabic content;

- Enhance regional collaboration and partnerships in activities leading to an inclusive, people-centred information society;

- Contribute to fund-raising efforts aimed at harnessing ICT for socio-economic development;

- Promote the establishment of mechanisms to exchange information and share knowledge among regional institutions and those outside the region;

- Seek close coordination and joint efforts with the other ESCWA subprogrammes and with international/regional organizations for more effective results.

Publications and studies during the period 2005-2011

- Information society indicators

- Information and communication technologies for employment creation and poverty alleviation in selected ESCWA member countries

- Towards an integrated knowledge society in Arab countries: strategies and implementation modalities

- Digital Arabic content: 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 Names System

- Review of information and communications technology for development in Western Asia, Issues No. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16

- Guidelines for the formulation and implementation of ICT strategy

- Broadband for development in the ESCWA region: Enhancing access to ICT services in a global knowledge society

- Models for cyber legislation in ESCWA member countries

- ICT financing, venture capital and entrepreneurship

- Regional profile of the information society in Western Asia - 2007

- National profiles of the information society in Western Asia - 2007

- Guidelines for ICT indicators measurements

- The ESCWA Technology Centre for Development: detailed assessment of regional needs and priorities and identification of implementation mechanisms

- Building trust and confidence in Arabic e-services

- Regional profile of the information society in Western Asia - 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 Western Asia - 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 Arabic e-services

- Arab regional roadmap for Internet governance: Framework, principles and objectives

- survey on Digital Arabic Content: software, applications and need assessment

- Development of Digital Arabic Content: Incubation requirements and training needs

- Preliminary feasibility study for the establishment of the Domain Name Registry for the "Arab" and "عربي" Generic Top Level Domains

- Information society measurement: Building a common benchmarking model for the ESCWA region