

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

Series of Expert Meetings on Enriching the Mechanisms for Assessing and Advancing Digital Development in the Arab region

The First consultative Expert Group Meeting on Emerging Technologies and Pressing Issues from the 2030 Agenda

Online, Monday, 27 November 2023



UNITED NATIONS

الاسواق
ESCWA

Shared Prosperity **Dignified Life**





Shared Prosperity **Dignified Life**



Integration of environmental issues in regional digital agendas

Digital technologies and environment

Main focus: DT as a transformative technology that would contribute to support environment and climate actions in other sectors.

Help with mitigation, adaptation, disaster risk management, and environmental sustainability.

Examples:

Satellite imagery for detection of plastic pollution in oceans.

Exchange of data through Internet about Drought-resistant crops and methods for farmers.

Computing power for big data analysis (local air and water pollution data and their health effects).

IoT and smart systems to optimize vehicle traffic in cities

But what about the strategic level ?

Several regions in the world have strategies (or agendas) for DT.

Big Q: To which extent these relationship between DT and environment is present in these documents ?

Important: These strategies drive the DT actions over several years

Environment in Regional Digital Strategies

In Asia Pacific AP-IS 2022-2026:

- Second pillar: Digital Technologies & Applications
- Covers (among others): Digital for environment and society (climate change, air pollution and public health).
- But no specific action in the associated matrix of actions

Environment in Regional Digital Strategies

In Latin America Digital Agenda 2024:

New pillar: Digitalization for sustainability, with three goals.

Goal 17: Promote **the digital transformation of strategic sectors** such as agriculture, health, industry, trade, tourism and mobility, among others, with the aim to contribute to development, productivity, innovation and **sustainability**.

Goal 18: Promote the use of digital technologies to **prevent, mitigate and adapt to the effects** of climate change, natural disasters and health emergencies.

Goal 19: Promote **policies** and **instruments** that enhance sustainability through digital technologies that can **reduce negative environmental impacts** with an emphasis on greenhouse gas emissions and polluting sectors

Environment in Regional Digital Strategies

In the digital transformation strategy for Africa (2020-2030):

Policy recommendation with 3 actions:

Invest in green ICT

- Mobilize resources to invest in **Green ICT**
- Develop a continental **green ICT** program
- Encourage environmental protection actions through the management of **electronic waste**

More related to ICT itself than its impact on other sectors.

Environment in Regional Digital Strategies

European Digital Decade (2030), A specific goal about DT :
“contributing to a sustainable circular and climate-neutral economy and society in line with the European Green Deal”.

- No specific targets for this purpose. Only 2 target marginally related to the environment:
 - Production of 20% of semi conductors.
 - 10000 “climat-neutral” edge nodes (could computing).

Environment in Regional Digital Strategies

Important policy document in the EU: Digitalization for the Benefit of the Environment.

- A European data space for the European Green Deal
- Leveraging digital solutions to enhance environmental protection, climate action, nature conservation and circularity
- Investments in digital solutions for a sustainable transformation of the economy and society
- More environmentally friendly information and communication technology
- Using artificial intelligence (AI) to advance environmental protection
- Strengthening support for research and innovation

Conclusion

Environment-related goals included the regional digital agendas and strategies

Recognition of the transformative role of digital technologies

Goals remain described in generic terms, no clear targets/actions.

Important for the Arab DA update: identify possible goals/targets/ actions. In line of the ADA methodology.