

BUILDING BACK BETTER THROUGH DEEPER REGIONAL COOPERATION AND INTEGRATION

Date: 24 August 2021

Time: 13:00 PM-14:00 PM (Jeddah time)

Venue: Virtual

The COVID-19 crisis has put many countries around the world in difficult situations and has exacerbated problems across the board and in almost all sectors and thematic areas. Tackling this multifaceted crisis requires joint and comprehensive action. Coordination, solidarity and sharing of best practices are essential to deal with the social and economic consequences of the crisis. While governments all over the world have done their best to deal with the crisis, the efficacy of their actions would be strengthened considerably by coordinating with neighboring countries. At this critical time, they need to re-orient their regional cooperation and integration (RCI) strategies as global and regional development institutions are expected to play an intermediary role in facilitating coordination between countries and global policy and financing actors. Therefore, countries need stronger RCI mechanisms for effective and sustainable recovery from the pandemic and to strengthen their resilience for future possible crises.

OBJECTIVES & KEY ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED

- a) To discuss current trends, challenges, and opportunities of RCI during and in the aftermath of COVID-19,
- b) To discuss the role of regional cooperation organizations (RCOs) and multilateral development banks (MDBs) in coordinating responses to the COVID-19 crisis,
- c) To exchange experiences and best practices on RCI responses to the crisis,
- d) To support building consensus around the need to have a coordinated approach to address the economic and social impacts of the crisis,
- e) To come up with a set of policy recommendations for strengthening RCI in IsDB member countries, to be translated into specific actions at regional level.

Amer Bukvic is the Acting Chief Product and Partnership Officer at IsDB. He previously served as the CEO of Bosna Bank International. He received his master's degree from the International University of Japan, and he completed postgraduate executive education at London Business School. As a keynote speaker, he has participated in many prestigious international conferences on banking, finance and international business. He also received various awards as a recognition of his success in international development.



Dr. Bahgat Abu El Nasr is the Director General of the Arab Economic Integration Department at the League of Arab States. He holds a Ph.D. in Economics from Al-Azhar University. He has vast experience in the trade aspects of regional economic integration. His department is overseeing the implementation of major regional integration initiatives including the Greater Arab Free Trade Area and the Arab Customs Union.



Azhar Jaimurzina Ducrest is the Chief of the Transport Connectivity and Logistics Section at the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). She holds a Master of Arts degree in International Relations and Affairs from the University of Chicago. She has served at the UN in various capacities since 2003 with a focus on trade, transportation, and infrastructure services.



Tamerlan Taghiyev is Executive Director in IsDB's Board of Directors and Acting Executive Director of the Centre for Analysis and Coordination of the 4th Industrial Revolution in Azerbaijan. He holds a master's degree in Public Administration from the Andrew Young School of Policy Studies at Georgia State University. He has vast experience in project implementation and management in different areas including road construction, water supply, energy, waste management, agriculture as well as trade facilitation.



En'amulrahman Malkawi (co-moderator) is Lead Youth Empowerment Specialist at IsDB. She holds a master's degree in Social Studies from the University of Kent in the UK. She has over 17 years of experience in the development sector, leading national and regional strategies and programs in youth empowerment, community engagement and resilience, capacity development for NGOs and the public sector.



Kadir Basboga (co-moderator) is Senior Regional Integration and Trade Promotion Economist at IsDB. He has over 10 years of experience in international development, local economic development, cross-border cooperation, and regional integration. He holds a master's degree in Public Administration from the Cornell Institute for Public Affairs, and Ph.D. in Regional Planning from Cornell University.

