

## **How to work together at the regional level – projects, forums and capacity building programs for innovative progress in ICT and Transport**

The Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) is among the primary indicators of intellectual and scientific potential, transparency in the public administration, solution of social and economic problems. Thus ICTs are playing pivotal role in the achievement of the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a powerful tool to fight poverty, providing good health and well-being for people, empowering women, ensuring economic growth and logistical support, creating partnership opportunities for innovative transport infrastructures, strengthening educational level, as well as advancing environmental management for clean energy and smart cities.

Azerbaijan has been active in building up its national ICT infrastructure, developing its two National ICT Strategies (2003-2012/2014-2020) within the framework of cooperation with UNDP. Future-oriented government policies have established a fertile environment in Azerbaijan that is ideal for hosting the efforts required to address the issue of ICT in SDGs. In particular, the Government of Azerbaijan has established the State fund for Development of Information Technologies, High Technologies Park, Data Center and High Tech Research Centres to stimulate production of competitive products, creation of innovative economy and widening activities in ICT. Based on the recent successful outcomes of the relevant sector, Azerbaijan has received acknowledgments from a number of international organizations like UNDP, International Communication Union (ITU), UNDESA, UNPAN, UNESCAP, WTO, EU and so forth. Azerbaijan managed to establish close partnership with leading ICT organizations worldwide and gained solid reputation as well-organized and well-managed ICT country. Also, it should be noted that necessary preconditions are being provided for the promotion of knowledge-based fields and innovative economy.

On February 13, 2017 President of the Republic of Azerbaijan signed an order on the establishment of the Ministry of Transport, Communications and High Technologies of the Republic of Azerbaijan (MTCHT) and launched initiative directed towards further development of ICT sector in Azerbaijan.

Within the framework of the MTCHT's recent activities solid successful outcomes were achieved in the sphere of ICT and transport, such as operational progresses of the North-South Corridor, TRACECA and Baku Trade Port. The goal of the relevant programmes is to provide assistance in the restoration of the transport infrastructure of the newly independent states of the region, establish shortest transport corridor connecting Europe and Asia and thereby integrate the region into the West, simultaneously serve as the platform of concentration for the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway line that was commissioned last year. Likewise more than forty government services were developed in the framework of the E-government portal, which is leading to successful foundation of Mobile Government, High frequency broadband radio communication systems were created to increase the number of frequencies for radio-electron broadcasting and public wireless internet was initiated as a pilot project.

Consequently, based on MTCHT's and UNDP CO Azerbaijan's previous successful cooperation, including the abovementioned achievements of Azerbaijan in ICT and transport spheres, there are number of perspective opportunities to further improve mutual collaboration of stakeholders within scope of the "Modernization of Sustainability and Efficiency of ICT infrastructure and ICT services in the Republic of Azerbaijan" project.