"From Ideas to Impact: Youth-led AI Innovation for Climate Action and SDGs"

Connecting Youth-led AI Innovation with Policy and Investment for Climate-Resilient Development

Side Event of 13th Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development
27 February 2026, 13:00 – 14:00 GMT +7
Meeting Room G, United Nations Conference Center (UNCC), Bangkok, Thailand (Hybrid)

Co-organizers

- Department of Scientific & Industrial Research (DSIR), Ministry of Science and Technology, Government of India;
- Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology (APCTT) of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)

Background

The Asia-Pacific region continues to face complex development challenges that require accelerated progress on **industry, innovation, and infrastructure**, as articulated under **SDG 9**, alongside other interlinked Sustainable Development Goals under review at the **13th Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD13)**. Strengthening innovation ecosystems and translating emerging technologies into scalable solutions are increasingly recognized as critical enablers for sustainable and resilient development.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is playing a growing role in this transformation, supporting more efficient infrastructure systems, data-driven decision-making, and innovative service delivery across sectors such as energy, urban development, and risk management. At the same time, a persistent gap remains between youth-led technological innovation and its integration into policy frameworks and investment pipelines necessary for scaling and long-term impact.

Against this backdrop, the **Technology and Innovation Conclave**, jointly organized by the Department of Scientific & Industrial Research (DSIR) and the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology (APCTT), convened key stakeholders to explore the role of emerging technologies in sustainable development. As part of the Conclave, a Hackathon on **"AI for Climate Action and Resilience"** was conducted, bringing together youth innovators and start-ups to develop AI-driven solutions aligned with regional SDG priorities.

Following the conclusion of the Hackathon, **three youth-led teams were selected** based on the innovation potential, applicability, and scalability of their solutions. These innovations demonstrate relevance not only to climate-related challenges, but more broadly to **SDG 9 objectives**, with applications across clean energy systems, sustainable urban services, and resilient infrastructure.

This side event, organized in the context of **APFSD13**, builds on these outcomes to provide a focused, outcome-oriented platform. It aims to examine how selected youth-led AI innovations can be supported

through **policy alignment, technology transfer mechanisms, and investment pathways**, contributing practical insights to the Forum's discussions on accelerating SDG implementation through innovation and partnerships.

Objectives

The side event seeks to:

- **Showcase** selected youth-led AI innovations that contribute to SDG 9 and related SDGs under review at APFSD13.
- **Highlight** lessons and pathways for translating youth innovation into scalable, policy-relevant, and investable solutions.
- **Facilitate dialogue** among youth innovators, policymakers, and investors on strengthening enabling ecosystems for innovation-led development.

Tentative Programme

Time	Agenda
13:00 – 13:05	**Opening** • Dr. Preeti Soni, Head of APCTT
13:05 – 13:15	**Remarks: What it takes for Scale-up** • Investor's Perspective by Mr. Atthakrit Chimplapibul, Co-founder, Bitkub Group, Thailand • Policymaker's Perspective by Dr. Ranjeet Bairwa, Scientist-E, the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research (DSIR), Government of India
13:15 – 13:25	**Showcase of Innovations** • Mr. Saurabh Kapil, Co-Founder, Biosky Space Innovations PVt. Ltd • Mr. Sagar Garg, Chief Data Officer, Himalayan Sustainable Energy Pvt. Ltd
13:25 – 14:00	**Keynote Speech** • Dr. Themba Kalua, Director, Pact for the Future Implementation, Executive Office of the Secretary General, United Nations **Panel Discussion: Policy and Investment Pathways for Youth-led Innovations** • Speakers from previous sessions