

CONNECTIVITY INVESTMENT CONFERENCE ON **GREEN AND EFFICIENT PORTS**

Learn about port innovations and MDB financing in a unique environment

3-5 December 2025 | Beijing, China

Connectivity Investment Conference

Green and Efficient Ports

3-5 December 2025 – Beijing, China

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Overview

The Connectivity Investment Conference “Green and Efficient Ports” will bring together a selected group of government officials from all regions of the Global South, staff from seven Multilateral Development Banks, financiers, global port experts, and private sector representatives to exchange innovations and recent trends, lessons of experience, and solutions to the most pressing challenges in the areas of sustainability, digital transformation, operational efficiency, and financing. The conference will take place from December 3 to 5, 2025.

The event will begin with an enlightening technical visit to the Port of Tianjin, the largest port in Northern China and the primary maritime gateway to Beijing. Tianjin is one of the world’s seven largest ports, with an annual container throughput of 20 million TEUs and more than 20,000 employees. It has implemented a range of Smart Port Solutions, including intelligent twins, autonomous driving, 5G, cloud computing, and IoT. These have created a better-connected, smarter, and more autonomous system, and resulted in a 30 percent reduction in operational costs. It has also implemented a wide range of sustainability measures in its Zero Carbon Smart Terminal, resulting in a 17 percent reduction in energy consumption and a rapid increase in the use of renewable energy.

The conference will then have two days of highly interactive sessions at the headquarters of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank in Beijing. These sessions will include plenary technical overview presentations by global port experts, case study presentations, and panel discussions, as well as roundtable exchanges where participating countries will share experiences with other participants on practical issues and challenges they are facing. The conference will include several networking sessions to ensure participants leave Beijing with strong connections with ports around the world.

This Connectivity Investment Conference is co-sponsored by the Multilateral Cooperation Centre for Development Finance (MCDF), African Development Bank (AfDB), Asian Development Bank (ADB), Asian Infrastructure and Investment Bank (AIIB), Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), Latin American and Caribbean Development Bank CAF, and the World Bank Group (including the World Bank and the International Finance Corporation, IFC). The ADB-PRC Regional Knowledge Sharing Initiative (RKSII) is a contributing partner. The participation of technical teams from these seven Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) in a small conference setting will provide unique opportunities for interaction and engagement.

Conference Topics

The Connectivity Investment Conference “Green and Efficient Ports” will cover three core topics:

- **Sustainability:** including environmental and biodiversity issues, climate mitigation (including renewable energy and energy efficiency), and resilience to natural disasters and climate risks, extreme weather events, accidents, malicious attacks, pandemics, and vulnerability of other components of the logistics, value chain, and trade routes. The focus will be on the sustainability of port infrastructure rather than maritime shipping, acknowledging that international shipping is subject to more standard global oversight mechanisms.



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- **Digital transformation and efficient ports:** including frontier technologies and applications to ports, and smart port solutions beyond digitalization processes, including all port-related users and stakeholders, such as port-terminal integration, port-city integration, hinterland connectivity, and broader supply chain integration.
- **Financing sustainable and smart ports:** including innovations in PPPs, green financing, insurance for disasters and technological transformation, thematic bonds, and other innovative IFI tools. Financing issues and instruments specific to sustainability, digitization, and efficiency will be covered in the thematic sessions.

The **sustainability** of the maritime transport sector and ancillary connectivity infrastructure has received increased attention in recent years. Due to the increased volumes of global trade, the maritime transport system has witnessed a rise of approximately 20 percent in its greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions over the last decade. The 2023 IMO GHG strategy calls for significant levels of ambition in the international shipping sector, which will rely on technological innovations and the switching to alternative fuels and energy sources used for propulsion. The strategy calls for a reduction of “CO2 emissions per transport work, as an average across international shipping, by at least 40 percent by 2030, compared to 2008,” and to “reach net-zero GHG emissions by or around, i.e., close to, 2050, taking into account different national circumstances,” and other indicative checkpoints. Supporting the IMO’s net-zero emissions goal by 2050, a new carbon tax structure has been proposed on ship emissions, with a base of \$100 per ton of CO2 emissions, moving to \$380 for ships exceeding stricter emissions benchmarks. This proposal is expected to be reviewed for potential adoption by member states in October 2025.

Similar targets are included in the Nationally Determined Contributions of many countries for the connectivity infrastructure that enables maritime transport to function effectively. Furthermore, the rapid modification of coastal landscapes is affecting ecosystem functions and biodiversity in riverine and maritime environments, with the construction and operation of ports being a critical factor in these trends. The importance of resilience in port infrastructure, services, and connectivity cannot be understated. The attacks on shipping in the Gulf of Aden or major droughts in the Panama Canal are impacting sea routes, as analyzed by UNCTAD.

According to the International Association of Ports and Harbors (IAPH), the past decade has seen a rapid transformation of port and maritime sector operations through a **digital revolution** that continues to accelerate. This digital transformation has allowed for a high level of integration between agents, devices, customs, and all other activities. The digital revolution has created a “new ecosystem in the industry,” and the benefits of connectivity and efficiency have been manifold. Smart ports, as part of an integrated connectivity infrastructure system, can contribute to greater operational efficiency, improved environmental sustainability, and enhanced safety and security, as highlighted by the Asian Development Bank.

The **financing** of investments to enhance the digital, efficient, and environmentally friendly operations of ports will be a central focus of the conference. The design and participation of major MDBs in the conference will make this a unique opportunity to discuss the financing of investments in the conference’s focus areas.



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Conference Objectives

The main objectives of the proposed conference are:

- To highlight the importance of developing resilient, sustainable, digital, and efficient ports to promote high-quality connectivity infrastructure.
- To share the latest technological, institutional, managerial, and financial innovations and reforms globally to support developing and upgrading ports to maximize their role in trade facilitation and economic development.
- To foster peer exchanges and deepen relations between IFIs, developing country port regulators, financiers, and port operators, and to explore opportunities to finance the preparation and implementation of new and retrofit investments for resilient, sustainable, digital, and smart ports.

This combination of objectives makes this conference unique among the many events focused on ports, trade, and maritime transport.

Conference Structure

The conference will take place in China from December 3 to 5, 2025. The first day will be dedicated to a field visit to the port operations in Tianjin, near Beijing. The second and third days would be organized at the AIIB headquarters with technical sessions.

The conference design will be **highly interactive**, allowing participants to engage with MDBs, peer ports, and agencies in the Global South, as well as global experts. The number of in-person participants at the conference will be limited to about 80 to ensure high interactivity and engagement.

The conference will have three types of sessions:

Plenary technical overview presentations, where global experts will present the state and trends of the conference themes: sustainability, digitalization, and finance. The presentations will be designed to be directly applicable to the challenges and opportunities of IFI clients participating in the conference. Highly technical presentations of advanced ports in OECD countries or frontier research topics will not be the focus of this conference.

Case study presentations and panel discussions will feature case studies of high relevance to conference participants, followed by panel exchanges among participants from the Global South, who will reflect on their improvement journeys and share applicable lessons from the case studies. These sessions will be facilitated to ensure ample time for questions and answers.

Roundtable exchanges, where participating countries volunteer to share their questions and challenges or mitigation measures implemented in the preparation of IFI projects, the implementation of specific investments or policy improvements, or the financing of investments in the conference topics. Other participants, including MDB staff, participants, and global experts, will exchange ideas and suggestions on the challenges presented. These exchanges are expected to continue during open networking times specifically designed throughout the conference.



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Draft Agenda

Indicative Field Visit Itinerary (3 December 2025)	
Time	Activity
07:00	Check-out starting at 7:00am for departure at 7:30
07:30-10:00	Travel to Tianjin Bus: Intercontinental Beichen to Port
10:00-12:00	Port Visit
12:00-12:30	Travel to lunch venue Port to Yujiabao Intercontinental
12:30-13:30	Lunch
13:30-15:00	Short visit for cultural sightseeing, buy souvenir, etc.
15:00-17:30	Travel back to Beijing
18:00-20:00	Dinner Venue: Intercontinental Beichen, Italian Restaurant

Conference Day 1 (4 December 2025)	
Time	Activity
08:30-09:00	Registration
09:00-10:00	High-Level Opening Opening remarks by representatives of co-host organizations Technical keynote on State and Trends of Green and Efficient Ports and their linkage to sustainable development, trade, jobs, and skills
10:00-10:30	Group Photo and Networking Exercise at Coffee Break
10:30-11:30	An Overview of the Ports Sector in China
11:30-12:00	Q&A
12:00-12:15	Networking Exercise
12:15-13:30	Networking Lunch
13:30-14:45	Theme 1 – Digital Transformation, Smart, Efficient Ports, and Related Operations Keynote technical presentation – State and Trends of Smart Efficient Ports Case Study presentations and a discussion panel
14:45-15:15	Q&A
15:15-15:45	Networking Coffee Exercise
15:45-17:00	Participating Country Roundtables 1 (rotation 1) Presentation of key questions and challenges by participating developing countries for exchange with participants – 4 tables, rotation 1
17:00–18:00	Networking Opportunity and Marketplace



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18:00-20:00	Welcome Dinner Virtual Showcase of Experiences from North and Latin America Early evening presentation by video conference due to the time difference with China
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Conference Day 2 (5 December 2025)	
Time	Activity
08:30-09:00	Registration
09:00-10:00	Theme 2 – Sustainability and Green Ports Keynote technical presentation – State and Trends in Green Ports Panel 1 Case Study presentations and a discussion panel
10:00-10:30	Q&A
10:30-10:50	Networking Coffee
10:50-11:50	Panel 2
11:50-12:20	Q&A
12:20-12:45	Networking Exercise
12:45-14:00	Networking Lunch
14:00-15:30	Participating Country Roundtables 2 (rotation 2) Presentation of key questions and challenges by participating developing countries for exchange with participants – 4 tables, rotation 2
15:30-16:00	Networking Coffee Break
16:00-17:00	Theme 3 – Financing of Sustainable, Digital, Smart, and Efficient Ports and Related Operations Keynote technical presentation – State and Trends in Innovative Financing for Green and Smart Ports Case Study presentations and a discussion panel
17:00-17:30	Q&A
17:30-18:00	Concluding Remarks Feedback survey, concluding remarks from participants, and next steps
18:30-20:00	Networking Dinner and Marketplace

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Conference Participants

The conference is designed for three primary audiences:

- **Government:** Port authorities, port regulators, ministries of transport, statutory authorities, environment, and industry officials, with a focus on developing countries.
- **Financiers:** IFI staff, developing country financiers, national infrastructure banks, corporate banks, and global climate funds.
- **Private sector:** A selected number of port/terminal operators, designers, builders, technical systems specialists, logistics companies, and global supply chain specialists.

The conference co-sponsoring MDBs have invited clients from more than 20 countries across all regions of the Global South. The diversity of participants and the small number of participants will make this conference a unique opportunity for engagement and learning.

Networking Opportunities

The Conference organizers will use an app to facilitate introductions and networking before, during, and after the conference. More details will be sent to registered participants in advance of the conference.

Expected Outputs

By the end of the Connectivity Investment Conference, the following outputs are expected:

- A summary document with insights learned from the conference;
- Presentations and videos of plenary sessions posted in the MCDF knowledge sharing platform JIGSAW for later access by participants;
- A global network of port professionals established, with possible follow-on virtual activities;
- Feedback from conference participants to countries presenting their experiences and areas or issues they are working on.

Contact and Information

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