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## Concept Note

### Virtual Seminar on Social Infrastructure: Financing and Use of Digital Technologies

Thursday, May 13, 2021

16:30 to 18:30 India Standard Time | 19:00 to 21:00 China Standard Time

In connection with the BRICS 2021 Economic and Financial Cooperation Agenda, the Ministry of Finance of India and the New Development Bank (NDB) will co-host a virtual Seminar on Social Infrastructure Financing and Use of Digital Technologies on May 13, 2021. The seminar will explore key considerations around financing for social infrastructure in sectors including education and health in the BRICS countries, with a special focus on the use of digital technologies as value enhancers. It will also provide an opportunity for NDB to bolster its social infrastructure financing through interaction with the relevant stakeholders.

This concept note outlines some of the key topics around social infrastructure that will be addressed in the seminar, as well as the target audience.

#### **The social infrastructure financing landscape**

While the economic case for financing social infrastructure is universally proven, investments into sectors such as health and education infrastructure across the globe have long remained subdued. At the same time, the demand for social infrastructure, especially in emerging markets and developing countries, has continued to grow and has been re-emphasized in the current context of the fourth industrial revolution and the COVID-19 recovery.

The disruptive effects of the pandemic have stressed the need for a resilient social infrastructure base and highlighted the essential role of digital technologies in enhancing social infrastructure. For example, in emerging markets such as the BRICS, harnessing advanced medical technologies to improve efficiency and reduce costs in overburdened healthcare systems is pinpointed as an effective strategy for a sustainable COVID-19 recovery. Similarly, the ability of countries to leverage the use of digital infrastructure to not only ensure continuity but enhance the delivery and quality of education is becoming an ever more defining factor for achieving their education goals.

Provided that affordable, smart and viable financing models are made available, investments into social infrastructure that integrate digital technology components could play a catalytic role in spurring socio-economic development in the BRICS countries. Advancements in these areas can also help to drive the BRICS countries' efforts towards the fulfillment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which places health and education at the center of the vision for a world free from poverty, hunger and disease.

#### **NDB's role in financing social infrastructure**

NDB's mandate focuses on mobilizing resources for infrastructure and sustainable development, of which social infrastructure constitutes one of the most effective and inclusive components. As NDB prepares for

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its second General Strategy period, to run from 2022 – 2026, social infrastructure is gaining an increasingly important space as one of the Bank’s main operational priorities. NDB is building on its existing experience in the social infrastructure space to play an ever-more meaningful role in supporting the sustainable development ambitions of its member countries.

As the development bank established by the BRICS for mobilizing resources for infrastructure and sustainable development, NDB is well positioned to help facilitate knowledge sharing and dissemination of leading practices to overcome the current challenges to social infrastructure financing. The Bank is also continuously improving its approach to better harness the opportunities around social infrastructure financing and will benefit significantly from exchanging expertise with the relevant stakeholders from the BRICS countries and beyond.

### Focus-themes of the seminar

Against the backdrop of the current social infrastructure financing landscape, the discussions of the seminar will focus on the following topics:

- **The importance of investing in social infrastructure** to promote sustainable development.
- **Steps that could be taken by policymakers, financial institutions and relevant stakeholders** for tackling the challenges related to social infrastructure financing.
- **Ways to de-risk the projects** to enhance private sector participation.
- **The value of integrating digital technology** into social infrastructure to enhance delivery of health and education in the fourth industrial revolution and post-COVID-19 recovery.
- **The range of viable models and instruments for financing social infrastructure** in the BRICS countries, across both the public and private sectors.

The agenda of the seminar is defined jointly by NDB and the Ministry of Finance of India to cover each of the focus-themes through a keynote address, a high-level panel and two thematic sessions.

### Seminar arrangements and target audience

The seminar will be hosted virtually and registration for viewers will be open to the public. The target audience for the seminar will include experts and representatives from:

- Relevant government agencies across the BRICS countries (including ministries of finance, health, education, etc.);
- The international development community, including global and regional development finance institutions;
- Global academia, consultancy firms, think tanks and centres of excellence focused on the topics of social infrastructure; and
- Private sector entities from the BRICS countries (including health and education providers, as well as leaders in the digital technology space).

Registration is open now via the following [Seminar Registration Link](#).

For any questions or suggestions ahead of the event, please contact [registration@ndb.int](mailto:registration@ndb.int).